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Justice and emotional reactions to victims

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## Introduction

While the social psychological literature on relative deprivation is rich, comparatively little is known about relative privilege, the focus of the research to be described in this paper.

It could be questioned whether research on relative privilege can yield more than self-evident information. Don't we all strive for relative wealth, social status, freedom, independence, and security? Don't we all attempt to secure for our children positions of relative privilege? For example, what else can you expect, other than contentment or pride, or satisfaction or relief, when a privileged status is achieved? However, not all privileges are results of achievements, and the emotional appraisals of being in a relatively privileged position may depend upon the person or group individuals compare themselves to. Relative privilege alone does not necessarily imply happiness and contentment; instead it very often represents a social condition that one has to cope with.

In a previous study (MONTADA et al. 1986), which focused on the relationship between feelings of guilt and one's own privileged situation, we addressed the issue of what types of individuals are prone to feel guilty when meeting disadvantaged people or confronting issues related to personal, social and/or economic privation. Questions addressed concerned individuals' perceptions of distribution of wealth and goods, views held concerning social responsibility and solidarity, social attitudes towards the disadvantaged and how and to what extent one is able to give support to disadvantaged people (MONTADA, SCHMITT & DALBERT 1986). In the present study the range of emotional and cognitive variables studied was broader, including factors like perceived responsibility to support the needy and readiness to prosocial commitment for relatively disadvantaged people.

Several emotional reactions of relatively advantaged vis a vis relatively disadvantaged people have been observed. These include pity, anxiety about loss of one's own advantages, contentment with one's own status and wealth, derogation of and anger directed toward the disadvantaged, and moral outrage because of apparent injustice in the allocation of goods, wealth, and social positions and guilt because of all this.

Three interrelated questions guided the present study. They were:

- (1) How and to what extent do individuals differ in their emotional reactions toward disadvantaged people?
- (2) What variables are most salient for predicting these differences? Here, special attention was given to beliefs about justice and to attributions concerning responsibility for having caused the disadvantages as well as for supporting the needy.
- (3) What is the motivational impact of different emotional reactions to disadvantage in terms of disposition to prosocial commitment to help the needy?

## **Method**

### **Concepts and their operationalization**

As in the previous study (MONTADA et al. 1986) the data base was derived from responses to questionnaires. Many of the core variables were assessed by the "Existential Guilt Inventory" (ESI; MONTADA et al. 1986). This inventory measures several cognitions (appraising opinions) and emotional reactions by confronting the subject with written scenarios describing the problems and the misery of the disadvantaged. These included scenarios of (1) people out of work and unemployed adolescents who never had a job or a work-related training, (2) poor people in the developing countries, and (3) Turkish foreign workers in Germany. The problems presented included finan-

cial problems, insecurity concerning the future, bad and exploitative job conditions, inadequate medical support, poor housing, and loss of personal and social status. Three different scenarios were included for each group of disadvantaged people.

One of the scenarios is given as an example:

"Imagine, that quite by chance you tune in to a radio report on the consequences of unemployment. The reporter describes how bad most of the unemployed people feel about their situation. For example, a man approximately 40 years old stated: 'I have learned my trade, I can take it up with anybody. But now I got pushed aside like a piece of mud. Friends and acquaintances are shunning me. After all, I have become a nobody. I cannot stand it any longer to hang around the house all day long. My wife, too, is nagging at me constantly. The children no longer respect me. I think that everybody considers me to be a washout. The worst thing is having to go to the unemployment office again and again. It makes you feel like a beggar'."

Emotional and cognitive variables were assessed by pre-formulated statements expressing specific thoughts or feelings about the problems described in a scenario. Using six point Likert scales the subjects were asked to rate the degree to which these statements expressed their own thoughts or feelings.

After presentation of each scenario in varying sequences, the following emotional reactions were assessed:

- pity for the disadvantaged ("Considering the situation of these people I really feel pity"),
- existential guilt about one's own privileges relative to the problems of the disadvantaged ("Comparing my situation to that of the unemployed my conscience starts to bother me"),
- resentment or moral outrage because of the injustice

- of relative disadvantage to others ("I resent the fact that people unjustly have to suffer the consequences of unemployment"),
- anger at the disadvantaged (possibly because their implicit or explicit claims are not perceived as justified) ("I get angry at the fact that many unemployed people do absolutely nothing to solve their problems themselves"),
  - anxiety about the loss of one's privileges or about a possible worsening of one's own situation ("Hearing about unemployment I am afraid that someday my own situation could deteriorate too"),
  - contentment with one's own situation ("Realizing these problems I can really be satisfied with my own situation"),
  - hopelessness concerning the likelihood of improvement of the life situation of the disadvantaged ("I have no hope that the problems of unemployment and its consequences will ever improve").

Aside from these emotional reactions several cognitive appraisals were assessed with the ESI:

- perceived injustice of differences between the quality of one's own life and the life of the group of disadvantaged people described in a scenario ("I think it is not fair that unemployed people should be that much worse off than myself"),
- minimization of the disadvantages of the needy ("I do not think one can generalize. Many unemployed people manage their situation pretty well"),
- justification of one's own privileges ("It is not just because of luck that I am better off. I really deserve what I have"),
- perception of disadvantages as being self-inflicted ("Many of the unemployed people have caused their situation themselves"),
- perception of a causal relationship between one's own privileges and the problems of the disadvantaged ("My

better situation and the situation of the unemployed are not really independent of each other").

Finally, perceived responsibility to help the needy was assessed with the ESI. Subjects were asked to rate

- how much they felt it was up to them to help ("Whenever I hear things like this, I feel it is somehow up to me to help solve the problems"),
- how much they felt it was up to powerful others and institutions (state, government, unions, etc.) to help ("It is the responsibility of governments and the economy to do more to reduce unemployment than they have done so far").

Since there are three scenarios for each of the three disadvantaged groups in the ESI, the scores for each variable were aggregated either over the three items concerning each problem group, or over all nine items together. Psychometric criteria, involving factor analysis and reliability estimates, were employed to assess the adequacy of the scoring and of the summation procedures.

Aside from the ESI, additional variables were included in the study. They were assessed by several newly developed scales, including, for example, a scale to measure "Belief in a just world", a scale to assess "Attitudes toward or beliefs concerning several principles of justice" (the equity principle, the need principle, the equality principle, principle of procedural justice), a scale to assess "Perceived controllability to improve the lot of the disadvantaged", and a scale to measure "Attitudes towards the three groups of disadvantaged people" in terms of attributing positive or negative traits to them. (Examples of items of these scales are given in the appendix.) Once again, traditional psychometric criteria were employed to establish the homogeneity and consistency of the scales which were deemed adequate with respect to these criteria.

Some of the emotional reactions and the other variables were expected to covary to some extent, others were expected to be independent of each other or mutually exclusive. However, a person experiencing one emotion might also experience a seemingly contradictory one, when shifting the focus of attention or modifying the interpretation of the problem described. This is a matter of consistency of focus and interpretation. However, discovering relationships among variables presupposes a certain amount of interindividual consistency. Moreover, this consistency has to be generated by answering the questions spontaneously. In fact, it cannot reasonably be understood as an effect of conscious answering in a consistent way because of the very large number of questions given in the five waves of data collecting.

In the present study, each subject rated all items on six point Likert scales. Since the subjects were not asked to rank their emotional reactions or to make paired comparisons, in a formal sense, ratings on each item of the ESI are considered as independent.

Analyses of the data revealed consistent, reliable, and stable interindividual differences. This was confirmed by a longitudinal follow-up questionnaire given several months after the first questionnaire. Analyses of these data revealed that the various emotional, cognitive, and conative answers were remarkably stable over time.

### **Sample**

The sample comprised 865 subjects. Forty percent of the sample was made up from university students from different academic departments. The remaining 60% of the sample comprised several criteria groups, e.g., civil servants with tenure, business people and employers, and a random sample of individuals drawn from relatively prosperous neighborhoods in a middle-size German city with a comparatively high unemployment rate. As it happened,

there were some 20 unemployed people in the latter sample.

### **External validity of self-ratings**

Since all the data were based on self-ratings, it was necessary to establish the external validity of the scales. Accordingly, a subsample was asked to name three persons (acquaintances, friends, relatives) who would be willing and able to give information about them. In this way we were able to obtain external ratings on a selected representative set of core variables for 173 subjects and, also, to estimate the external validity of the self-ratings. At the level of single items correlations between self-ratings and external ratings ranged from .14 to .68 (mean = .38), aggregated over the factors in the ESI they were .52 and .55. Correlations for "readiness for prosocial commitments" ranged from .28 to .59 for the three problem groups. Moreover, taking external ratings as criteria and self-rating scales as predictors results in significant and meaningful patterns of relationships (whereas the total amount of explained variance was less than for self report data as criteria).

Considering the rather private nature of the feelings, attitudes, and cognitions assessed, the magnitude of these coefficients suggests that the self-rating scales have adequate external validity and allows the tentative conclusion that the responses are not entirely subjective and private, reflecting, instead, a personal orientation which can be observed by other people.

### **Results**

In the following section selected results relevant to the assumed antecedents of emotional reactions and to the motivational impact of different emotions are presented.

### **Interindividual differences in emotional reactions**

The focus of the study was on emotional reactions to problems and needs of relatively disadvantaged people. The first research question posed was "Are there interindividual differences in emotional reactions?". Indeed, as may be seen from inspection of Table 1a which reports the means and standard deviations of several emotional reaction scales, a number of differences are obvious. One should keep in mind that the six point scales used had a midpoint of 3.50 (one = "exactly what I am feeling", six = "this is not at all what I am feeling"). Scores higher than 3.50 indicate that the statements representing an emotion were more or less rejected and they did not reflect the respondent's feelings. Values below 3.50 suggest that the item was rated as more or less corresponding to one's own feelings.

Ranking the different emotions according to mean ratings showed that "contentment" had the highest mean rating. This was followed by "pity", "resentment", "hopelessness", "guilt", and "anxiety". "Anger" directed toward the disadvantaged was the most rejected emotion.

### **Prediction of interindividual differences in emotions**

The ranking of emotional reactions to underprivileged conditions was stable over many **demographic categories**. Yet, a number of interesting and informative exceptions were detected which corroborated the validity of the assessment. A few examples follow.

(1) Members of the "Green" party, a rather radical, relatively new political party with an ecological orientation and "leftist" conception of justice, have a different mean rank order of emotional relation to social deprivation than the subjects who identify themselves with the primary political parties (conservatives and socialists) in Western Germany. As Table 1b shows, contentment is significantly lower for members of the "Green" party

than for members of the conservative parties or the traditional socialist party and members of the trade unions. On the other hand, the "Green" oriented subjects ranked moral outrage or resentment more highly than the respondents in the other political groups.

(2) As expected, employees who considered their job to be insecure evidenced more anxiety over unemployment than employees with a secure job. The latter, however, appeared to have somewhat more contentment, on one hand, and somewhat more guilt feelings over being privileged, on the other hand, than the former.

The data presented in Table 1b represent the category of answers to the question, by which variables the differences in emotional reactions can be predicted, namely differences with respect to demographic dimensions.

What are the key **psychological predictors** of the different emotional responses? Since a number of different variables were assessed which can be ordered in different ways (e.g., by different path models), a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches can be taken.

Let us look at one example of a path model. In appraising the respondents' cognitions to the problems and disadvantages of the needy, we considered the following as proximal predictors: (1) the disadvantaged are responsible for their fate, i.e., the disadvantages are self-inflicted, (2) one's own advantages (i.e., the respondents') are justified as equitable, (3) disadvantages of the needy are minimized, (4) differences between one's own life situation and the life situation of the needy are unjust, and (5) one's own advantages and the disadvantages of the needy are causally connected.

As more distant predictors, two attitudinal variables (attribution of positive and negative attributes to the disadvantaged) and three justice-related variables (belief in just world, ratings of the justice of two al-

location principles, the equity principle and the need principle) were included. These predictors had more general items and were, therefore, placed ahead of the proximal predictors the content of which is directly related to the problems described in the scenarios.

Figures 1 - 6 provide examples of these analyses aggregated across all problem areas described in this study. They reveal that the predictors account for substantial parts of the variance of emotions. In general, the patterns of significant predictors are meaningful. The justice-related variables not only have indirect effects on the emotions mediated by the proximal predictors (see Figure 7) but they also have significant direct effects.

The questions of greatest interest to us were whether there are specific patterns of predictors for each of the emotional reactions, and what the criterial differences are in prediction patterns for different emotions, such as "guilt because of own advantages" vs. "fear to lose the advantages", "contentment with one's own situation" or "resentment because of unjustly large social or economical differences", "pity for the disadvantaged" or "anger" at them, etc.

Comparing the empirical path models is a first approach to discover the criterial differences.

As the figures 1 - 6 reveal, the relationships are complex. A complete description of relevant differences in prediction patterns would be too space consuming. Therefore, only some perspectives on the data are outlined.

**Anger at the disadvantaged:** The prediction pattern for this emotional reaction is clear and psychologically consistent (Fig. 1). High anger scores are to be expected if the needy are blamed to be responsible for their situation, if own advantages are justified as equitable, if the equity principle is accepted as just, if belief in a just world is high, and if the needy are

derogated in terms of attributing negative traits to them.

**Pity for the disadvantaged:** The prediction pattern for this emotional reaction is psychologically less consistent (Fig. 2). As expected, perception of differences as unjust, acceptance of the need principle as a just principle of allocation, as well as the attribution of positive traits to the needy all contribute to the prediction of pity. Insofar, the prediction pattern is contrasting the predictor set for anger. Interestingly, however, there are conflicting effects, namely the positive effect of the equity principle. This pattern will be discussed later in contrast to existential guilt and resentment.

**Existential guilt:** The prediction patterns of existential guilt and pity share the predictors injustice of differences, and attribution of positive traits. The perception of own causal contributions to the misery of the disadvantaged is a much more salient predictor for existential guilt than it is for pity (Fig. 3).

**Resentment** of the injustice of social and/or economical differences does have the same key predictors as existential guilt. In addition, acceptance of the need principle is significant. The criterial difference between resentment and guilt will be outlined later (Fig. 4).

**Anxiety over loss of own advantages:** As is the case for existential guilt and resentment of unjust differences, perception of causal connections between one's own fate and the fate of the needy is a predictor of this variable. The context of further predictors, however, is quite different: derogation of the needy and blaming them for self-infliction (Fig. 5). In the context of these predictors the variable "perception of causal connections" changes its meaning: in the prediction pattern of existential guilt it means perceived responsibility for having contributed to the misery of the disadvantag-

ed, in the predictor set of anxiety it rather seems to be the mere perception of an interrelatedness of fates, suggesting that oneself can be hurt by the fate of others.

One further remark to anxiety: the predictors for anxiety in the problem area of unemployment are different from those in the two other problem areas in this study. Whereas perception of causal connection still has positive effects, there are only three other predictors with negative effects: acceptance of the equity principle, belief in a just world, and justification of one's own privileges. This means that with respect to unemployed people anxiety seems to grow out of subjects' doubts over the justice of unemployment.

**Contentment with one's own situation:** As in the case of pity, this emotion has a somewhat contradictory set of predictors: injustice of differences on one hand, justification of one's own advantages as equitable on the other, and, accordingly, preference for the equity principle (Fig. 6). The positive effect of perceived injustice seems to be inconsistent to the other predictors and more to represent a lip service than the true belief.

However, predicting an emotional reaction one merely has to look for variables that make independent contributions. There might be different ways to generate a specific emotion. Different individuals may have different cognitive pathways toward the same emotion. Psychological consistency is not a necessary precondition for the establishment of a predictor set.

**Determination of the proximal predictors:** A substantial part of the variance of the proximal predictors is determined by the more distant ones (see Fig. 7). In fact, these variables do not only have direct effects on emotions but are also salient background factors determining the cognitive appraisals proximal to the emotions.

Methodologically, the inspection of path models is not the most convincing approach to identify criterial differences between predictor sets. Especially in the case of correlated emotions the approach is insufficient. Alternative approaches are presented for the identification of criterial differences between three correlated emotions. Existential guilt, pity for the disadvantaged and resentment of the injustice of disadvantages are significantly and substantially correlated (for guilt and pity,  $r = .49$ ; for guilt and resentment,  $r = .56$ ; for pity and resentment,  $r = .66$ ), thus complicating the identification of specific patterns of predictors.

The path models shown above indicate that perception of a causal connection between one's own fate and the fate of others could be discriminative between pity and the other two emotions, guilt and resentment. This was tested using a limited set of predictors: perception of differences as being unjust, perception of a causal connection between one's own advantages and the disadvantages of others, and attribution of positive traits to the disadvantaged. Tables 2a and 2b report the results of this analysis.

Consider first Table 2a which presents the results of the regression analyses involving the three emotions "guilt", "pity", and "resentment" as dependent variables and the three cognition variables "disadvantage", "differences" and "traits" as predictors. In each analysis, all three predictor (independent) variables make significant contributions to the prediction of all three dependent variables. As expected, the perception that differences between one's own life condition and the disadvantages of others are causally connected, has a somewhat lower predictive power for pity than for the other two emotions; the magnitude of the differences in beta weights does not, however, convincingly discriminate among the three emotions.

Since the three emotions are highly correlated, partialling out of the two other emotions is necessary to get a residual which may represent the "pure" third emotion. The results of this regression analysis after partialling out the shared variance of these three emotions are reported in Table 2b.

As expected - the perception of a causal connection between one's own life situation and the disadvantages of others was no longer a significant predictor of pity. Consequently, pity could be discriminated from the other two emotions by the "causal connection" variable.

As the patterns of predictors for existential guilt and resentment were still basically the same after applying this procedure analogously, other variables were further analyzed. Two of these concerned the question who is responsible for supporting the needy:

- (1) the "subject himself", a variable represented by items like "I feel that it is up to me to do something to help the disadvantaged",
- (2) or "powerful others", represented by items like "It is up to the state or the institutions to do something to help the disadvantaged".

Our expectations were (a) that existential guilt would be related to the first but not to the second of these variables and (b) that resentment, as well as pity, would be related to both of the variables although resentment can involve perceptions related to the "powerful others" variables only and not to the first, the "subject himself" variable. The reason for this is that the object of resentment is not oneself but other persons who are perceived as responsible for a negative outcome or for its resolution. Since, however, one can feel called upon to do something for the disadvantaged by blaming the political and economic leaders for their failure to reduce unjust differences, we cannot expect resentment to be uncorrelated with the first of the above demands. (Indeed, one can feel that it is up to me to accuse others or to bring to their attention that it

is up to them to do something to help the disadvantaged.)

Table 3 summarizes results of the regression analyses incorporating the above discussed variables. As was expected, existential guilt is strongly related ( $\beta = .43$ ) to self-orientated demands. It is essentially unrelated to other-orientated demands ( $\beta = -.08$ ). Consistent with our hypotheses, both resentment and pity are significantly related to both demands.

Summarizing the data presented in Tables 2 and 3 it can be concluded that the predictor variables of "guilt", "pity", and "resentment" are discernable by (a) the perception of a causal connection between one's own advantages and the disadvantages of others and by (b) a demand, addressed to either oneself or to others, that something should be done to aid the disadvantaged.

The results were confirmed by the application of structural equation models (LISREL). (1) Existential guilt and pity are differentially related to the "perception of causal connections between one's own fate and the worse fate of others". (2) Existential guilt and resentment are differentially related to felt or perceived demands to act prosocially in favor of the disadvantaged. The feeling that it is up to me to do something to aid the disadvantaged is related to guilt whereas resentment is related as well to perceived obligation of others to give support to the needy.

Enlarging the set of predictors and including all emotional reactions, all cognitions and beliefs related to justice and the social attitudes (see Tables 4a and 4b), it turns out that existential guilt remains the most salient predictor of the variable "subject himself is responsible", it gets an even negative weight as predictor of the variable "powerful others are responsible" to support the needy, whereas resentment and pity are more salient predictors in this case.

### **Motivational impact of emotions**

The next question concerned the motivational impact of emotional reactions to perceived injustice on prosocial commitments. Questionnaires were used with items assessing the readiness of the respondent to engage in four categories of activities to help each of the three groups of disadvantaged people. The categories were: (1) contributing money, (2) signing a petition addressed to political leaders or institutions, (3) participating in a demonstration, (4) joining an activity group. Two items for each of these four kinds of activities were formulated, one with a more caritative goal (just to help disadvantaged people) and the other with a more emancipatory goal (to help disadvantaged people by changing national or international politics or economies). The first goal could be considered a kind of "downstream" helping, the second goal a kind of "upstream" helping. However, analyses of data revealed that - in general - subjects obviously did not differentiate between these two goals. Accordingly, in the analyses presented in this paper both categories of prosocial activities were taken together.

In a first step overall readiness to prosocial commitments was predicted by the emotions assessed. The results of the multiple regression analysis of prosocial activities on all emotions are presented in Table 5.

Examination of Table 5 reveals that resentment was the most powerful emotional predictor of readiness to prosocial commitment. This was followed by existential guilt. Pity did not contribute substantially to the prediction of the dependent variable. (Pity gained a higher predictive value only when resentment and existential guilt were not included in the analysis).

Table 6 presents corresponding data with respect to the four forms of activities: contributing money, signing a

petition, etc. The results show that existential guilt compared to resentment had relatively more salience for the less political activities (spending money and participating in an activity group) than for the typically political activities of signing a petition or participating in a demonstration.

Table 7 illustrates the corresponding results after disaggregation of the data to separate the three groups of disadvantaged people (unemployed, Turkish workers, developing countries).

Resentment is the most powerful predictor for all three problem groups. This was followed by existential guilt. The differences in predictive strength between existential guilt and resentment are least in the area of the developing countries. Again, pity was not a salient predictor.

#### **Perceptions of entitlement and responsibility for help**

The finding that pity was not a particularly significant predictor variable is somewhat surprising since experimental research on prosocial behavior has demonstrated the importance of empathy. Distinctions could be made with respect to this concept. For instance, differentiations have been made between empathic concern and personal distress (ARCHER et al. 1981, BATSON & COKE 1981) and between empathic and sympathetic distress (HOFFMAN 1976, 1982), the first representing a more ego-centric the latter a more other-centered orientation.

Unfortunately, in the present study we were not able to make these distinctions and a potential reason for "pity" not being as salient as existential guilt and moral outrage for the prediction of prosocial behavior might be due to lack of refinement of the construct. However, there are reasons why pity is failing to get predictive power. These reasons are derived from an em-

empirically corroborated conceptual analysis of the relationship between pity and entitlement.

While both existential guilt and moral outrage conceptually imply recognition of injustice toward the needy, the concept of pity does not. Pity may be offered as a "grace", the victim does not necessarily have to be considered entitled to get help. Existential guilt and resentment, on the other hand, imply the recognition of entitlement of the needy.

Empirically, in this study recognition of the rights or entitlements of the needy may be inferred from several variables, e.g., (a) the perception that disadvantages are unjust, (b) the perception of causal connections between one's own advantages and the disadvantages of the needy, (c) the lack of justifications of the difference between one's own life circumstances and those of the needy, e.g., considering their needs as self-inflicted or their own advantages as equitable, (4) the approval of the need principle and the rejection of the equity principle.

These variables are related differentially to existential guilt, resentment and pity. As we have seen, after existential guilt and resentment were partialled out from pity, perception of causal connections between one's own advantages and the disadvantages of the needy is no longer a predictor of pity.

This is further corroborated by consideration of the justice-related variables. Pity is positively related to the need principle of allocation. The same is true for guilt and resentment. Additionally, and in contrast to guilt and resentment, pity is also positively related to the equity principle. This may imply that individuals with higher scores on pity are expected to have positive attitudes both to the need and to the equity principle and, therefore, to experience a conflict when applying both principles, the latter counterbalancing the first.

These arguments could explain the fact, that while resentment and guilt are predictors of readiness for prosocial commitment pity alone is not a salient predictor.

Moreover, contrary to guilt and resentment, pity is not substantially related to perceived own responsibility to act in a prosocial way, it does, however, contribute to the attribution of responsibility to powerful others. Using a broad set of variables including all emotional and all justice related variables to predict who is responsible for helping the needy - subject himself or powerful others -, it turned out that existential guilt is by far the most powerful predictor for the subject himself-variable, whereas pity contributes very little to it. In contrast to that pity is more salient as predictor of the variable "powerful others are responsible". This raises the question whether the above combination means that pity implies a denial of one's own responsibility.

### **Prediction of readiness to substantial reduction of privileges**

It might be questioned whether the above described forms of prosocial activities have a cost, i.e., whether they imply a real renunciation of one's own status and privileges. It might be easy to sign a petition addressed to political leaders, or to participate in a rally, or to contribute money for some cause, but to redress certain social and/or economic problems, more might be required. Accordingly, additional items were added to the questionnaires which probed the willingness of the respondents to give up a significant part of their own entitlements in favor of unemployed people. These included questions concerning (1) readiness to give up part of one's own weekly working hours without full compensation in earnings, i.e., readiness to reduce actual working time **and** actual income so that new jobs might be sup-

ported by the money saved, (2) readiness to accept a freeze on yearly raises in wages (usually negotiated at least for compensation of inflation rates), and (3) readiness to accept an additional tax to enable the governments to pay for new jobs.

The answers to these three questions were aggregated to a single score representing the respondent's readiness to give up part of his wages in order to help unemployed people. Regression analyses employed to predict the "readiness" score from the "emotion" variables revealed that only one variable was a significant predictor of "readiness to help", that was existential guilt ( $r = .36$ ).

### **Cognitions of justice and prosocial commitment**

Next we turned to the impact on readiness for prosocial commitment of the justice-related variables, i.e., belief in a just world, belief in the equity principle as well as to examination of the three categories of statements apt to reduce the injustice of differences: disadvantages are considered self-inflicted or minimized or own advantages are justified as equitable. As can be seen from inspection of Figures 1 through 7 several emotions are predicted directly or indirectly by one or more of these variables.

The impact of this set of variables is tested more directly by computing a multiple regression of prosocial activities to all these justice related-cognitions and beliefs and the four justice-related emotions guilt, resentment, anger, and pity.

As can be seen in Table 8a, four variables have independent additive effects: Preference for the need principle, preference for the equity principle, perceiving differences as unjust, and belief in a just world. In the analysis presented in Table 8b, the justice variables were forced to enter the regression equation first,

ahead of the emotion variables. Altogether, the justice variables accounted for 31% of the variance of prosocial commitment. Adding the emotion variables in a stepwise procedure, resentment and existential guilt had significant effects and explained an additional 7% of the variance. As mentioned above we did a longitudinal replication of the study several months later and the analysis of data resulted in an essentially similar pattern, with the explained variance being somewhat higher: 37% explained by the justice variables and, again, an additional 7% by the emotion variables.

By turning around the sequence of entering the variables and entering the emotion variables first, the outcome represented a mirror image of the first results. The emotion variables explained 32% (37% in the replication study) of variance and the justice variables about 5% (6% in the replication study).

Thus, both sets of variables, emotions and cognitions, were shown to be complimentary to each other in predicting prosocial commitment. Each set explained an additional part of the variance, but both sets seem to be exchangeable for the prediction of the largest part of the explained variance.

Since at least the most salient emotional predictors, guilt and resentment, imply cognitions on justice, one may summarize that readiness for prosocial activities is mainly dependent on the appraisal of the rights and entitlements of the needy.

### **Conclusions**

Although the study was broadly conceived, many questions could not be addressed or only partially addressed. For example, we could gain only peripheral information about the influence of trait-like variables, e.g. generalized control beliefs, generalized anxiety, poor motivation, and generalized ethnocentrism.

We have only indirect evidence on the broader conceived value systems. Above all we have only indirect information about the subject's world views apart from their general belief in a just world. It should make a difference, for example in applying allocation principles, whether the leading world view is one of competition between states, groups and individuals, or one of solidarity (DEUTSCH 1985), or whether one's environment and fate seem to be controllable or not, or whether the future is perceived optimistically or pessimistically.

Emotional reactions to social differences depend on one's definition of a social situation. Definition of social life as war of all people against all others as Hobb's conception implies (i.e., socialized version as competition of all with all others) should probably lead to satisfaction with the attainment of a privileged status. When other individuals are incorporated into the "community of responsibility", privilege and special status should be expected to be perceived as problematic.

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## Appendix

Examples of items in several scales. All items were to be rated on a six point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 the meaning of which is explained in the following items.

(1) **Belief in just world (general).**

"I think that in general there is justice in the world."

**Belief in just world (specific).**

"I think, there are no unjustified differences in wealth between the developing countries and the industrial nations."

1 = exactly; 6 = not at all

(2) **Preference for the equity principle of allocation (specific to each group of the disadvantaged).**

"It is just that economy and government select most efficient applicants when unemployment is high."

1 = exactly; 6 = not at all

(3) **Preference for the need principle of allocation (specific to each group of the disadvantaged).**

"It would be just if foreign workers would be supported by an independent government office when looking for living quarters to avoid their being taken advantage of."

1 = exactyl; 6 = not at all

(4) **Perceived control (specific to each group of the disadvantaged).**

"(Even) if I wanted to, I ...

1 = could not influence

6 = could influence considerably

... the change in the financial consequences of unemployment."

(5) **Attribution of positive traits to a group of disadvantaged people.**

"Among the Turkish foreign workers ...

1 = almost all of them

6 = almost none of them

are dependable."

(6) **Attribution of negative traits to a group of disadvantaged people.**

"Among the unemployed

1 = almost all of them

6 = almost none of them

are unwilling to work."

Figure 1  
 Complete Path Model (N = 782)  
 aggregated across all items for all groups  
 of disadvantaged people

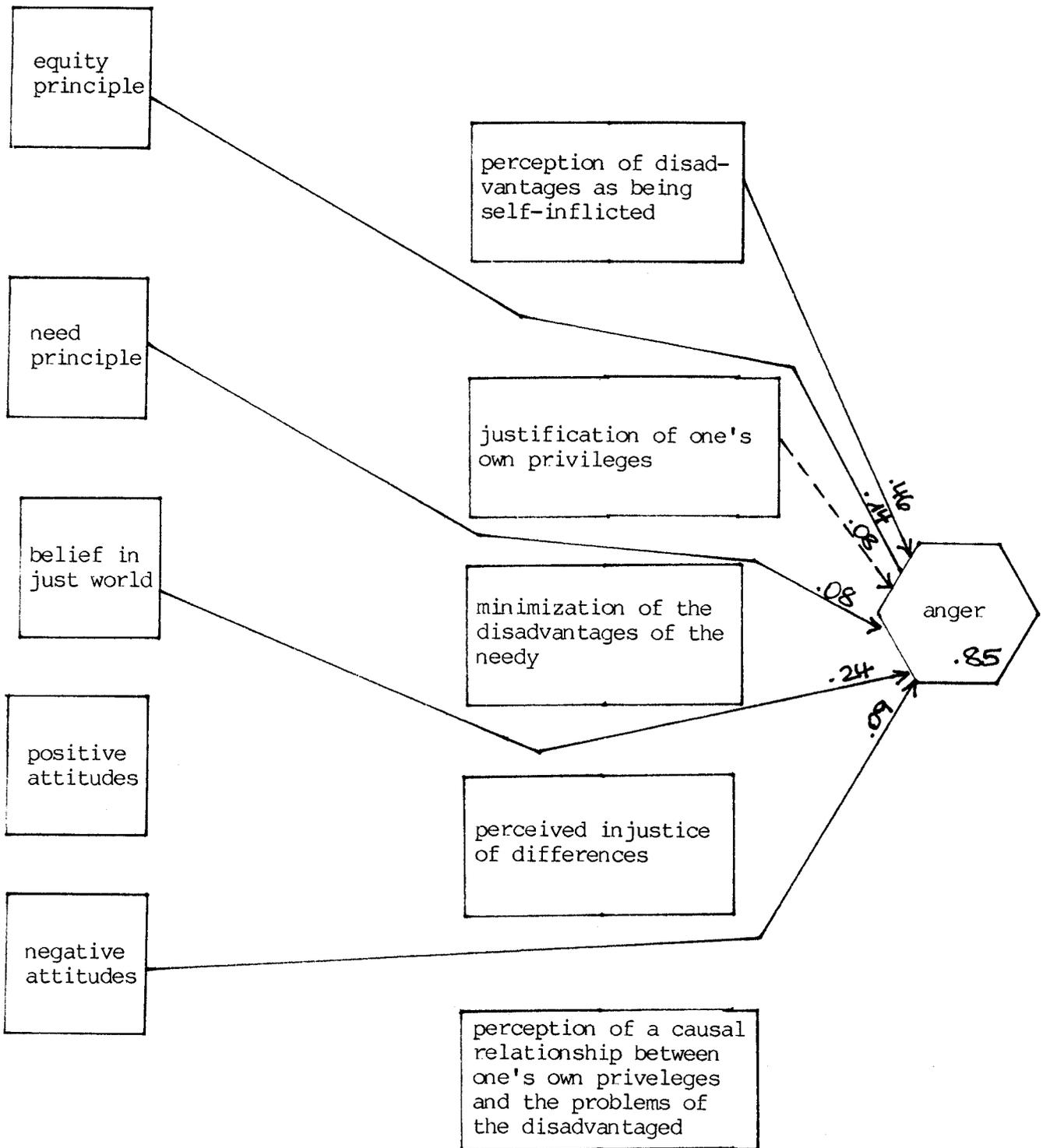


Figure 2  
**Complete Path Model (N = 782)**  
 aggregated across all items for all groups  
 of disadvantaged people

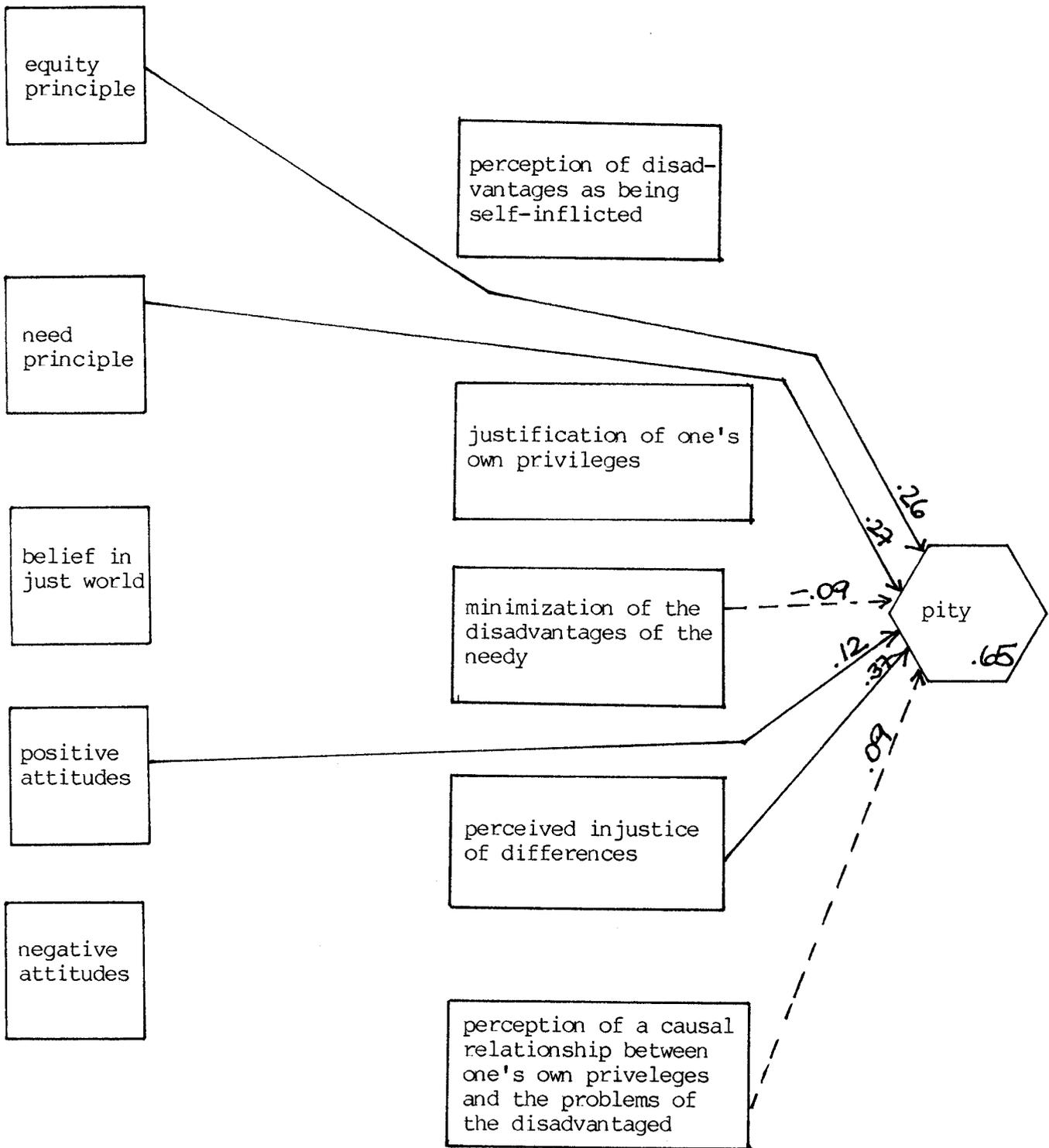


Figure 3  
 Complete Path Model (N = 782)  
 aggregated across all items for all groups  
 of disadvantaged people

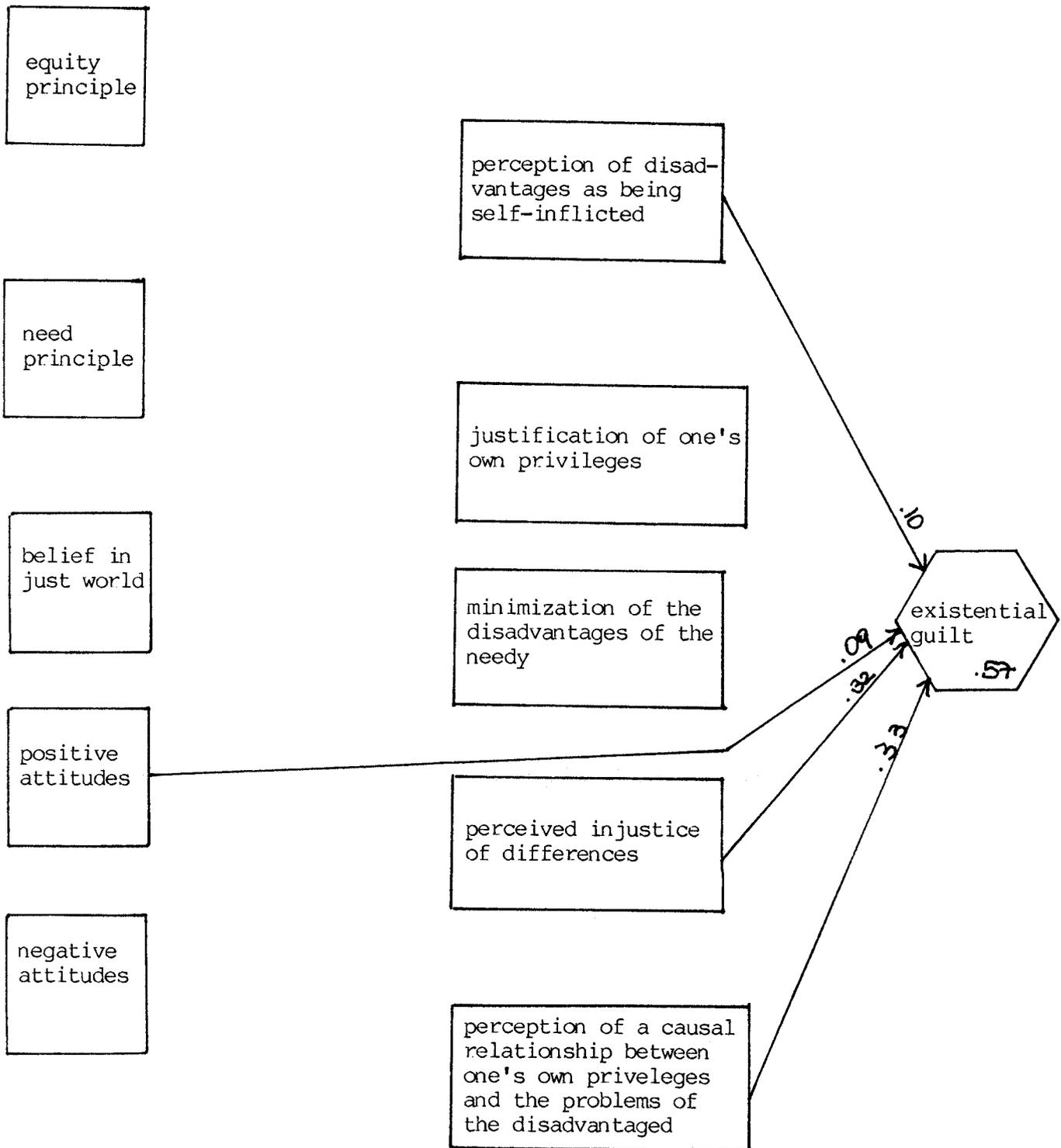


Figure 4  
 Complete Path Model (N = 782)  
 aggregated across all items for all groups  
 of disadvantaged people

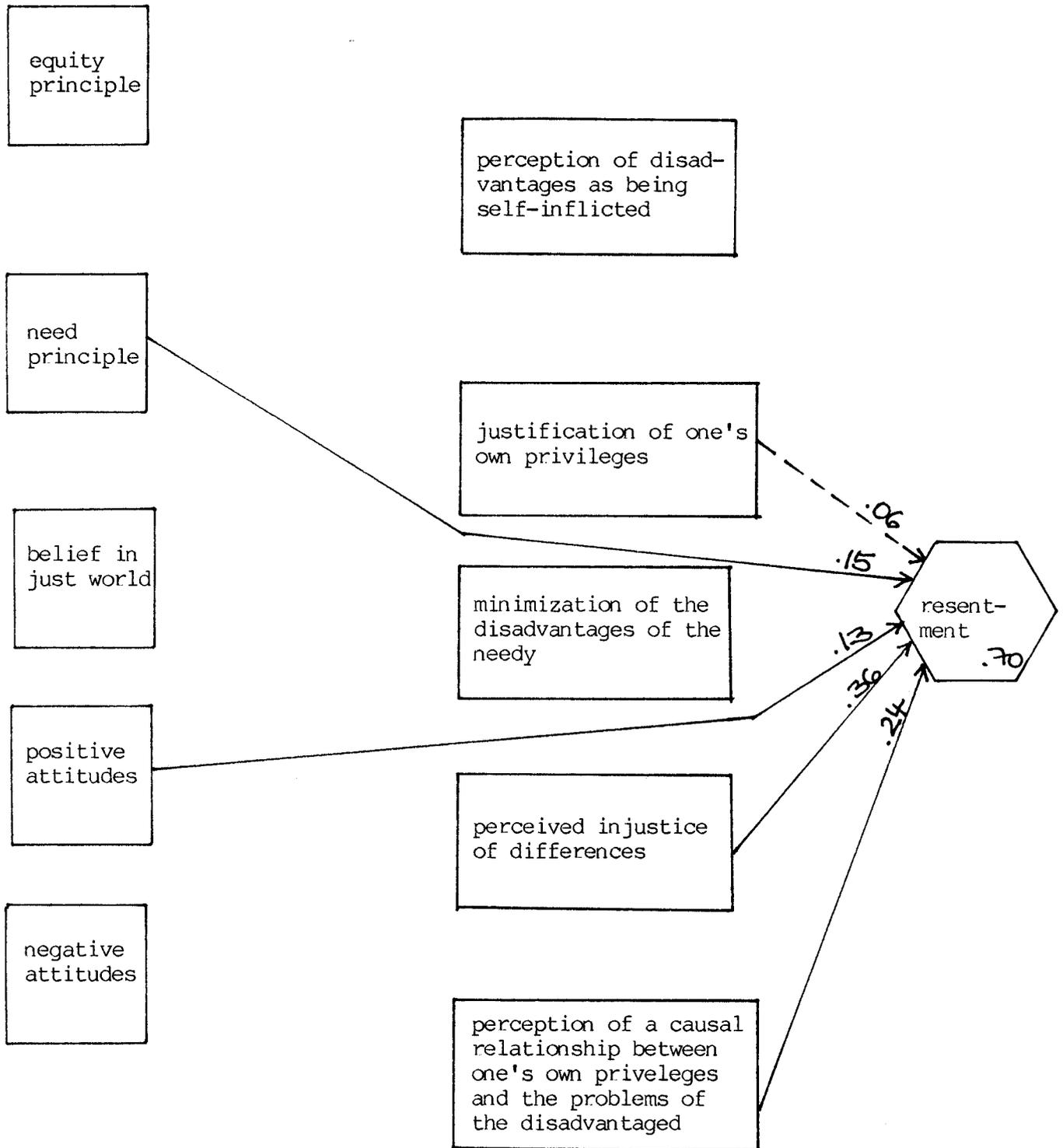


Figure 5

Complete Path Model (N = 782)  
aggregated across all items for all groups  
of disadvantaged people

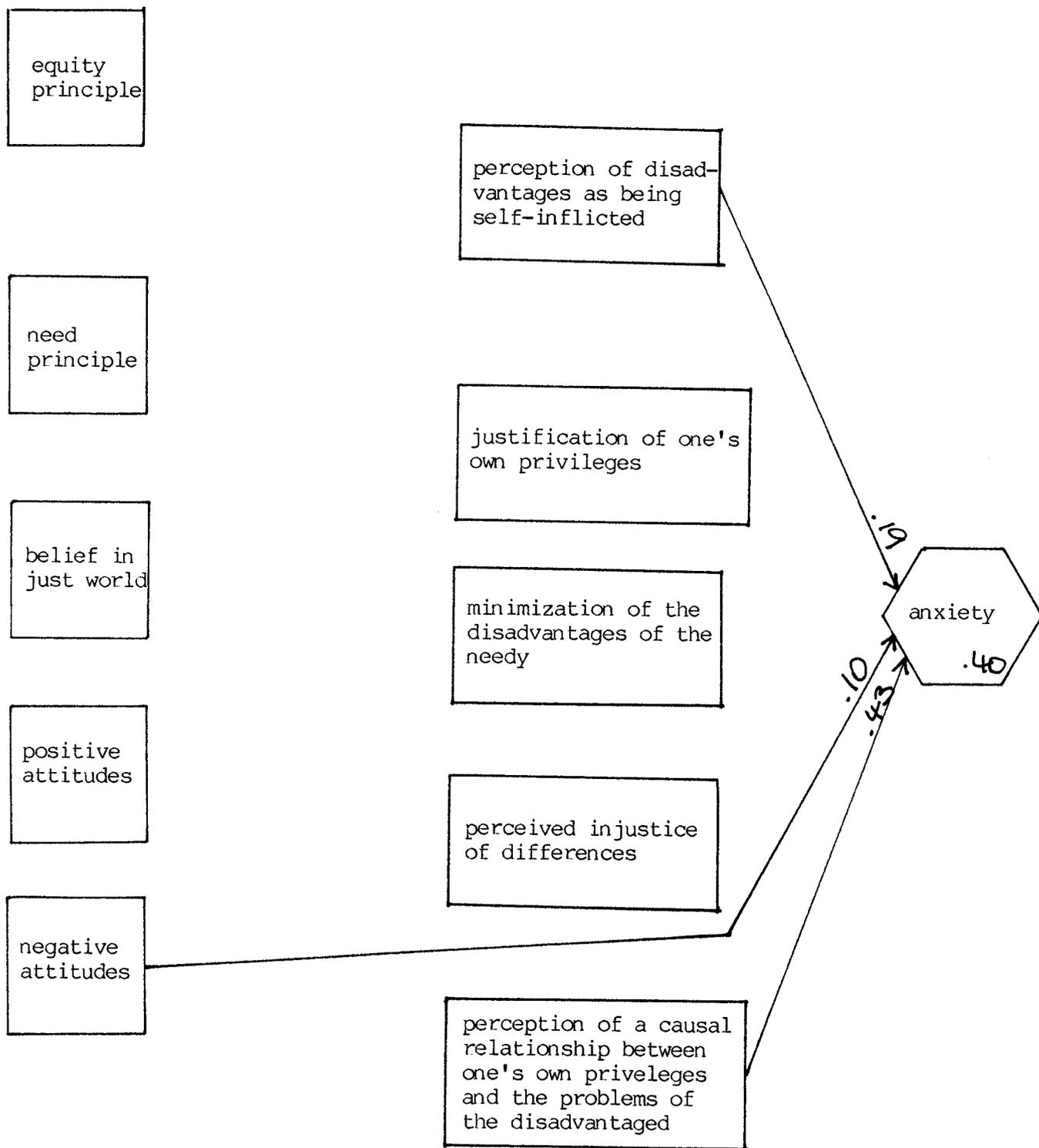


Figure 6  
**Complete Path Model (N = 782)**  
 aggregated across all items for all groups  
 of disadvantaged people

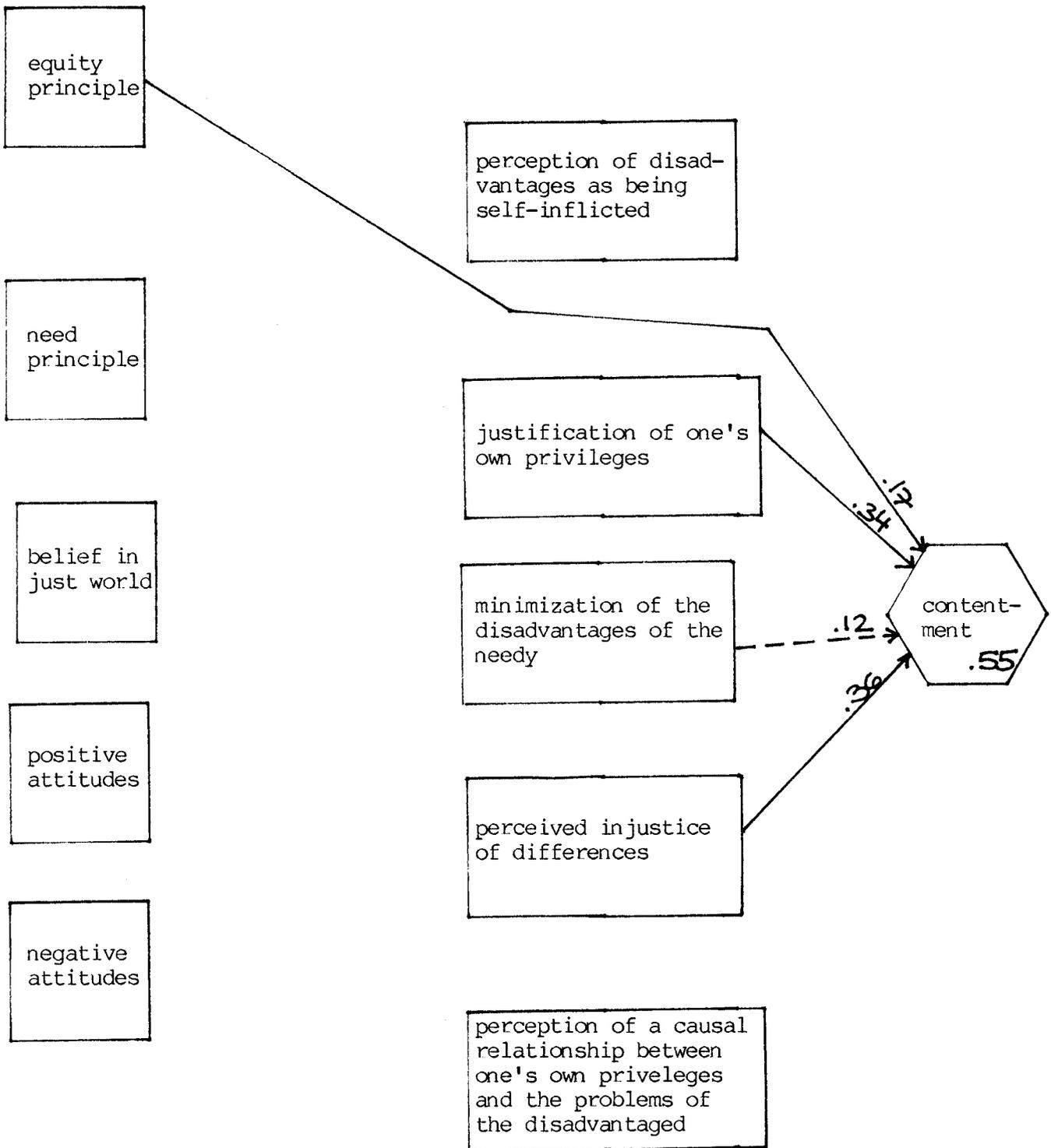


Figure 7

Path Model: first level (N = 782)  
aggregated across all items for all groups  
of disadvantaged people

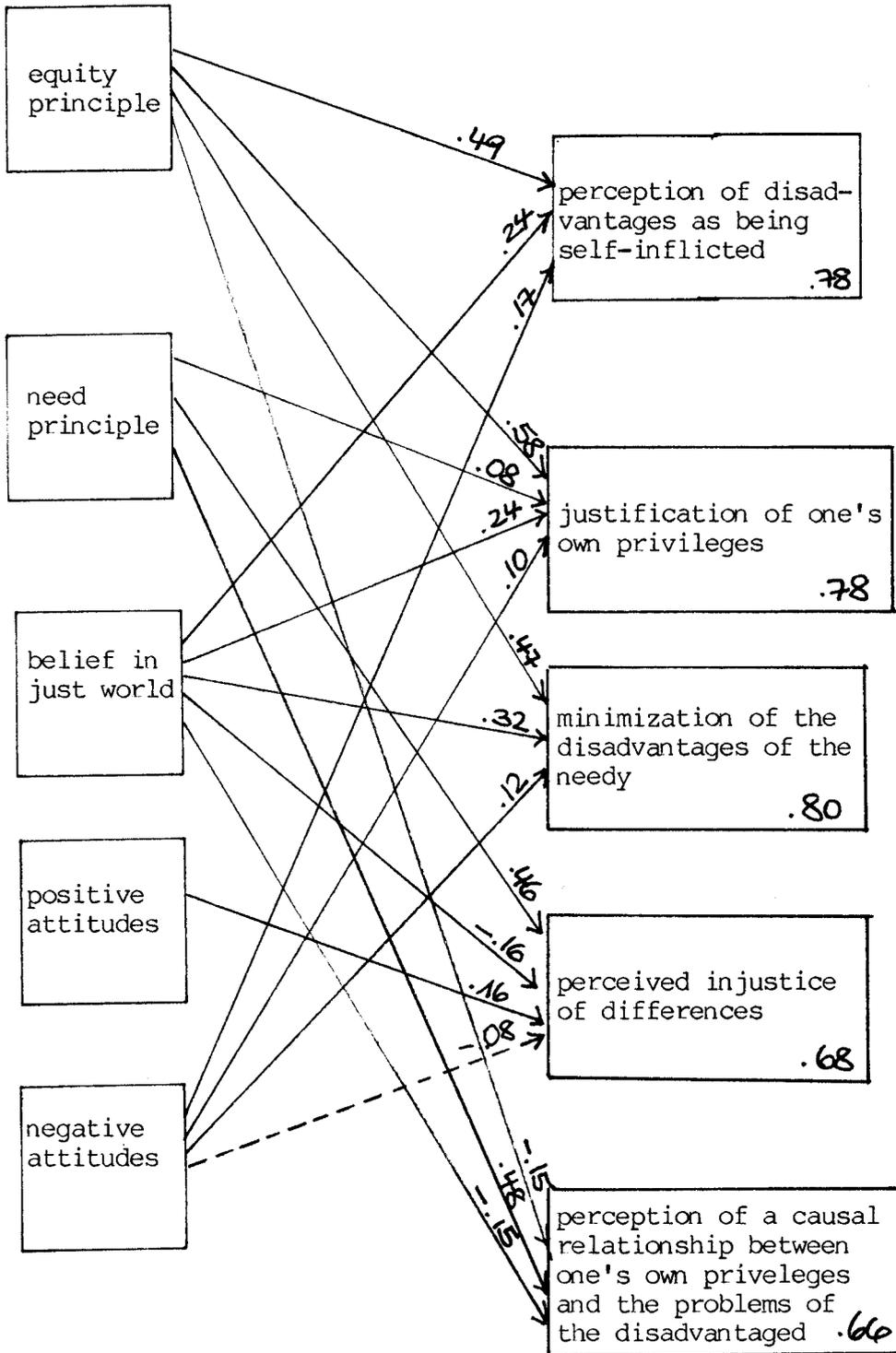


Table 1a: Emotional reactions (aggregated across items concerning all three groups of disadvantaged people; 862 ≥ N ≥ 823)

Emotions	M <sub>x</sub> *	s <sub>x</sub>
Existential guilt	3.68	1.02
Pity for disadvantaged people	2.35	.87
Resentment against injustice	2.96	1.08
Anger about the disadvantaged	4.40	1.11
Anxiety over loss of advantages	3.79	.94
Contentment with own advantages	2.19	.94
Hopelessness with respect to the disadvantaged	3.15	.87

\* scales run from 1 (= exactly what I am feeling) to 6 (= not at all what I am feeling)

Table 1b: Some differences between criteria groups of subjects

Subjects	Exist. Guilt	Pity	Resent- ment	Anger	Anxiety	Conten- ment	Hope- lessness
aggregated across items concerning all three groups of the disadvantaged							
Members of conservative parties (42 ≥ N ≥ 41)	3.87	2.37	3.23*	4.21	4.12	1.75	3.24
Members of socialist party and trade unions (40 ≥ N ≥ 37)	3.27	2.19	2.61	4.60	3.67	1.83	2.94
Members of "Grüne" and civil movements (N=13)	3.65	2.53	2.32	5.02	3.81	3.17*	3.27
aggregated across items concerning unemployment							
employees, job = secure (225 ≥ N ≥ 218)	3.69	2.21	2.85	3.99	3.99*	1.85	3.32
employees, job = unsecure (27 ≥ N ≥ 22)	4.09	2.23	2.61	4.30	2.62	2.44*	3.05

\* denotes pairs of groups significantly different at the  $p \leq .05$  level

**Table 2a:** Differentiation of emotions I: Guilt, Pity, Resentment (aggregated across all 9 items for all three groups of the disadvantaged; 862  $\approx$  N  $\approx$  785)

Set of predictors:

- (1) **disadvantages** are perceived as **unjust**
- (2) **differences** between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are **causally connected**
- (3) attribution of **positive traits** to disadvantaged people

Emotions	Predictors	$r_{crit}$	b	$F_b$	R
<b>Existential Guilt</b>					
	(1) Disadvantages are perceived as unjust	.50	.43	63.24	
	(2) Differences between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are causally connected	.49	.40	76.52	
	(3) Attribution of positive traits to disadvantaged people	.31	.14	5.76*	.57
	(intercept)		1.00		
<b>Pity</b>					
	(1) Disadvantages are perceived as unjust	.57	.48	148.99	
	(2) Differences between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are causally connected	.41	.20	20.22	
	(3) Attribution of positive traits to disadvantaged people	.38	.12	13.59	.60
	(intercept)		.27		
<b>Resentment</b>					
	(1) Disadvantages are perceived as unjust	.63	.57	161.08	
	(2) Differences between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are causally connected	.55	.34	84.37	
	(3) Attribution of positive traits to disadvantaged people	.41	.24	22.88	.69
	(intercept)		-.13		

\*  $.01 < p \leq .05$

Table 2b: Differentiation of emotions I: Guilt, Pity, Resentment (aggregated across all 9 items for all three groups of the disadvantaged; 862 ≥ N ≥ 785)

Set of predictors:

- (a) Existential Guilt, respectively
- (b) Pity, respectively
- (c) Resentment

- (1) **disadvantages** are perceived as **unjust**
- (2) **differences** between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are **causally connected**
- (3) attribution of **positive traits** to disadvantaged people

Emotions	Predictors	$r_{crit}$	b	$F_b^*$	R
<b>Existential Guilt</b>					
	(c) Resentment	.56	.26	32.71	
	(b) Pity	.50	.23	20.41	
	(2) Differences between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are causally connected	.49	.27	36.25	
	(1) Disadvantages are perceived as unjust (intercept)	.50	.20	12.25	.63
			1.05		
<b>Pity</b>					
	(a) Existential guilt	.49	.10	17.23	
	(c) Resentment	.66	.34	144.18	
	(1) Disadvantages are perceived as unjust	.57	.23	35.46	
	(3) Attribution of positive traits to disadvantaged people (intercept)	.38	.10	5.94	.70
			.17		
<b>Resentment</b>					
	(a) Existential guilt	.56	.15	31.89	
	(b) Pity	.66	.44	143.56	
	(1) Disadvantages are perceived as unjust	.63	.29	43.70	
	(2) Differences between own life conditions and the disadvantages of others are causally connected	.55	.23	43.87	
	(3) Attribution of positive traits to disadvantaged people (intercept)	.41	.13	8.33	.77
			-.40		

\*  $p_{F_b} \leq .01$

Table 3: Differentiation of emotions II: Perceived obligation (862  $\cong$  N  $\cong$  823)  
 (1) I feel called upon to do something in favor of the disadvantaged  
 (2) Others (state, economy) should (are obligated to) do something in favor of the disadvantaged

Predictors	$r_{crit}$	b	$F_b$	$R^2$	$R^2_{change}$	Crit.
Existential guilt	.64	.38	216.95	.409	.409	
Resentment	.60	.24	56.52	.494	.085	
Hopelessness	-.05	-.19	44.81	.525	.031	
Pity	.54	.20	26.97	.538	.013	
Contentment	.01	-.07	5.63*	.544	.006	
Anger	-.26	-.05	4.44*	.546	.003	(1)
(intercept)		1.50				
Resentment	.40	.18	36.90	.159	.159	
Contentment	.19	.08	9.81	.191	.032	
Hopelessness	.22	.11	14.82	.212	.021	
Pity	.40	.19	25.94	.231	.019	
Anger	.04	.05	5.22*	.239	.008	
Anxiety	.23	.06	5.32*	.242	.004	
Existential guilt	.22	-.05	4.59*	.247	.004	(2)
(intercept)		.53				

\* .01 < p  $\leq$  .05

**Table 4a:** Multiple regression from feeling addressed to do something to help the disadvantaged on emotions, justice-related variables and attitudes (aggregated across items concerning all three groups of disadvantaged people) (N = 783)

Predictors	r	beta	b	F <sub>b</sub>	P <sub>F<sub>tot.</sub></sub>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>
Existential guilt	.64	.39	.34	179.43		.640	.409	.409
Perceived injustice	.61	.20	.25	34.09		.721	.520	.110
Positive attitudes	.50	.13	.21	23.86		.741	.549	.029
Hopelessness	-.05	-.15	-.18	42.64		.754	.568	.019
Resentment	.60	.13	.12	12.70		.766	.587	.019
Preference of need principle	.53	.08	.12	6.52*		.770	.593	.006
Contentment	.01	-.07	-.08	9.15		.772	.596	.003
Pity	.54	.09	.11	7.26	< .01	.774	.600	.004
(intercept)			.54					

\* .01 < p ≤ .05

**Table 4b:** Multiple regression from feeling that others are obligated to do something to help the disadvantaged on emotions, justice-related variables and attitudes (aggregated across items concerning all three groups of disadvantaged people) (N = 783)

Predictors	r	beta	b	F <sub>b</sub>	P <sub>F<sub>tot.</sub></sub>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>
Resentment	.40	.17	.12	13.79		.399	.159	.159
Justification of one's own privileges	.15	.30	.18	84.71		.472	.223	.064
Preference of need principle	.38	.22	.24	28.86		.532	.283	.060
Perceived injustice	.36	.17	.15	14.09		.544	.296	.013
Hopelessness	.22	.09	.08	8.78		.554	.307	.011
Pity	.40	.14	.12	10.75		.561	.315	.008
Existential guilt	.22	-.11	-.07	8.73		.566	.320	.006
Anxiety	.23	.09	.07	7.29	< .01	.572	.327	.006
(intercept)			-.30					

Table 5: Multiple regression from willingness to execute prosocial activities on the emotions (aggregated across all 9 situations for all three groups of disadvantaged people) (N = 823)

Predictors	r	beta	b	F <sub>b</sub>	P <sub>F<sub>tot.</sub></sub>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>
Resentment	.53	.41	.36	135.99		.527	.278	.278
Existential guilt	.44	.24	.20	47.97		.557	.310	.033
Contentment	-.06	-.10	-.10	10.60		.567	.321	.011
Hopelessness	-.01	-.10	-.10	10.53	< .01	.574	.330	.009
(intercept)			2.57					

Table 6: Multiple regression from different forms of prosocial activities on the emotions (aggregated across all 9 items for all three groups of disadvantaged people;  $823 \leq N \leq 862$ )

Criterion	Predictors	$r_{crit}$	b	$F_b$	$R^2$	$R^2_{change}$
<u>Spending money</u>	Resentment	.42	.26	34.84	.173	.173
	Existential guilt	.39	.22	40.52	.211	.038
	Hopelessness	-.04	-.13	10.71	.227	.016
	Anxiety	.05	-.10	7.20	.234	.007
	Pity	.35	.11	4.30*	.238	.004
	(intercept)		2.80			
<u>Signature</u>	Resentment	.50	.44	114.79	.249	.249
	Anger	-.28	-.15	18.67	.278	.029
	Existential guilt	.38	.15	16.31	.290	.012
	Contentment	-.09	-.11	6.78	.296	.006
	(intercept)		2.43			
<u>Demonstration</u>	Resentment	.44	.39	84.02	.195	.195
	Contentment	-.13	-.21	26.54	.216	.020
	Existential guilt	.33	.15	13.18	.231	.016
	Anxiety	.20	.09	4.00*	.235	.004
	(intercept)		2.67			
<u>Activity with- in a group</u>	Resentment	.38	.28	45.24	.148	.148
	Existential guilt	.35	.20	25.21	.177	.028
	Hopelessness	.01	-.12	6.93	.181	.005
	Anxiety	.19	.09	4.64*	.186	.005
	(intercept)		2.27			

\*  $.01 < p \leq .05$

Table 7: Differences in prediction patterns of readiness to prosocial commitment for the three groups of disadvantaged people ( $800 \leq N \leq 803$ )

Predictors	$r_{crit}$	b	$F_b$	$R^2$	$R^2_{change}$
<u>Unemployment</u>					
Resentment	.43	.26	49.59	.187	.187
Existential guilt	.30	.15	23.91	.208	.021
Contentment	-.04	-.10	10.02	.219	.011
Anxiety	.22	.06	5.30*	.224	.006
Pity	.32	.10	5.29*	.230	.005
(intercept)		2.29			
<u>Turkish foreign workers</u>					
Resentment	.57	.33	76.62	.324	.324
Existential guilt	.45	.16	28.09	.347	.023
Anger	-.29	-.08	7.17	.360	.013
Hopelessness	-.02	-.09	8.00	.366	.006
Contentment	-.05	-.09	7.24	.370	.004
Pity	.46	.12	6.58	.375	.005
(intercept)		2.84			
<u>Developing countries</u>					
Existential guilt	.48	.26	69.10	.233	.233
Resentment	.48	.29	72.70	.295	.062
Hopelessness	-.09	-.13	13.86	.310	.015
Anger	-.22	-.07	6.97	.316	.006
(intercept)		2.51			

\*  $.01 < p \leq .05$

**Table 8a:** Multiple regression from willingness to execute prosocial activities on justice-related variables and the emotions existential guilt, resentment, anger, pity (aggregated across items concerning all three groups of disadvantaged people) (N = 807; first wave of assessment)

Predictors	r	beta	b	F <sub>b</sub>	P <sub>F<sub>tot.</sub></sub>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>
Resentment	.53	.24	.20	34.66		.529	.280	.280
Preference of need principle	.48	.16	.21	16.44		.569	.324	.044
Existential guilt	.45	.17	.14	24.53		.589	.347	.024
Preference of equity principle	-.33	-.21	-.21	28.63		.600	.360	.013
Belief in a just world	-.22	.16	.18	16.93		.610	.372	.012
Perceived injustice (intercept)	.49	.13	.16	10.32	< .01	.617	.380	.008
			1.78					

**Table 8b:** Multiple regression from willingness to execute prosocial activities on the emotions existential guilt, resentment, pity, anger and the justice-related variables (aggregated across items concerning all three groups of disadvantaged people; N = 807; first wave of assessment) justice-related variables partialled out from the criterium

Predictors	r	beta	b	F <sub>b</sub>	P <sub>F<sub>tot.</sub></sub>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>
Preference of need principle	.48	.17	.22	17.53				
Justification of one's own privileges	-.24	-.03	-.02	.22*				
Perceived injustice	.49	.13	.16	10.08				
Belief in a just world	-.22	.17	.19	17.31				
Preference of equity principle	-.33	-.19	-.19	16.09				
Perception of disadvantages as being self-inflicted	-.27	.07	.06	1.45*				
Minimization of the disadvantages of the needy	-.29	-.07	-.06	1.32*		.561	.314	.314
Resentment	.53	.24	.20	34.60		.603	.364	.050
Existential guilt (intercept)	.45	.17	.14	23.25	< .01	.618	.382	.018
			1.73					

\* P<sub>F<sub>b</sub></sub> > .05

**Table 9:** Multiple regression from willingness to execute prosocial activities on the emotions guilt, resentment, pity, and anger and the justice-related variables (aggregated across items concerning all three groups of disadvantaged people; N = 410; second wave of assessment)

Predictors	r	beta	b	F <sub>b</sub>	P <sub>F<sub>tot.</sub></sub>	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>ch</sub>
Resentment	.58	.35	.31	28.44		.584	.342	.342
Perceived injustice	.54	.20	.24	12.32		.628	.395	.053
Preference of equity principle	-.32	-.18	-.19	9.18		.637	.406	.011
Existential guilt	.47	.14	.11	8.20		.645	.416	.010
Belief in a just world	-.20	.14	.17	6.33*		.652	.425	.009
Preference of need principle	.51	.17	.24	9.34		.659	.434	.009
Pity (intercept)	.43	-.13	-.15	4.13*	<.01	.663	.440	.006
			1.58					

\*  $.01 < P_{F_b} \leq .05$

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