Living and Working Toward Social Change: Identity and Occupational/Life Priorities

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Happy Pride!!
What are psychological barriers to political engagement?
A Note on Internalized Stigma

- Discussions of internalized stigma can be perceived as victim blaming.
- Stigma persists through society as a tool of the privileged to maintain their social power.
- Perpetrators of stigma can negatively affect minority group members, with internalized stigma being one such outcome.
Stigma as a barrier to social change?

○ Perceived Stigma
  ○ When individuals perceive that their social identity groups are not valued by society\(^1\).
  ○ Perceived stigma has been associated with many outcomes\(^2-4\), including *Internalized Stigma\(^5\).*

○ Internalized Stigma
  ○ Marginalized group members believe that stigmatizing attitudes apply to the self and their group\(^6\).
  ○ Related to many negative outcomes for minorities\(^7\).
  ○ Is it related to political engagement of minorities?

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Goffman, 1963\(^1\); Canfield, & Cunningham, 2018\(^2\); Hatzenbuehler, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Erickson, 2008\(^3\); Lick, Durso, & Johnson, 2013\(^4\); Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2009\(^5\); Herek, 2007\(^6\); Rosser, Bockting, Ross, Miner, & Coleman, 2008\(^7\)
Relative Deprivation

There are necessary criteria for individuals to see an injustice and act to rectify it \(^1\) & \(^2\).

One criterion is “deservingness.”

If people feel they deserve something (e.g. equal rights) they are more likely to engage to acquire it.

Crosby, 1976\(^1\); Crosby, 1982\(^2\)
Socio-political Engagement

Political Issue Attention

Activism and Political Actions

Life Aspirations
Group-based Aspirations

Focus: Aspirations centered around improving conditions for one’s marginalized group.

- Power and privilege can affect these kinds of goals, leading to further marginalization\(^2\).
- Getting more people to want to devote their work/life to helping their group can be crucial for creating social change.

Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015\(^1\); Diemer, Rapa, Park & Perry, 2017\(^2\)
Why study aspirations?

• How people choose to spend their time and devote their efforts inside/outside of work can have huge societal implications \(^1\).
• Socio-cognitive Career Theory says individual differences and situational factors affect outcomes\(^2\).
• Psychology of Working Theory says that power and privilege can affect work volition and outcomes\(^3\).

But the mechanism are unclear...

Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016\(^1\); Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002\(^2\); Blustein, Kenny, Di Fabio & Guichard, 2019\(^3\)
If not group-based aspirations, then what?

Best Little Boy in the World Hypothesis

• Acceptance is fleeting, because of concealable identity stigma\(^1\).
• Learn to stake self-worth on life elements under their control (i.e. achievement-related)\(^1\).
• Internalized stigma has been associated with academic contingencies of self-worth\(^2\).
• Should be related to similar aspirations focused on extrinsic markers of success\(^3\&4\).

Pachankis & Hatzenbuehler, 2013\(^1\); Blankenship & Stewart, 2017\(^2\); Grouzet, et al., 2005\(^3\); Twenge et al., 2010\(^4\)
Hypotheses

- Perceived stigma will predict lower importance of group-based work/life goals.
- Internalized stigma will mediate this relationship.
- Stigma will predict higher importance of extrinsic work/life goals, using the same pathways.
Procedure

- Part of a larger dissertation on political outcomes of internalized stigma.
- Recruited participants using Amazon Mechanical Turk.
- Only sexual minority or poor/working class participants were recruited.
- People who identified as both poor/working class and sexual minority were randomly assigned to receive one of the sets of measures.
Participants

N = 343

Online
Only poor/working class or sexual minority included

162 Working Class/Poor

181 Sexual Minority

Gender

Woman: 432
Man: 100
Non-binary: 72
Transgender: 15
Genderqueer: 15

Race

White: 134
Black/AA: 10
Latinx: 7
Native Am.: 16
API: 2
Biracial: 10
None of these: 15

Class
Measures: Stigma

- **Perceived Stigma (α = .65)**
  - Adapted the public esteem subscale of the Collective Self-esteem Scale¹.
  - E.g. “Overall, my sexual orientation group is considered good by others.”

- **Internalized Stigma (α = .93)**
  - Factor analyzed several measures including:
    - Private self-esteem subscale ¹
    - Internalized homonegativity ²
    - Adapted Modern homonegativity scale ³
  - Loaded onto one factor.

Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992 ¹; Mohr & Kendra, 2011 ²; Morrison & Morrison, 2003 ³
Measures: Life Aspirations

- **Group-based Aspirations** ($\alpha = .90$)
  - Adapted the “community” subscale items of the A.I. \(^1\)
  - E.g. “The things I do will make other LGBTQ people’s lives better.”

- **Extrinsic Aspirations** ($\alpha = .93$)
  - Four “extrinsic” subscales for the Aspiration Index \(^1\)
  - Financial rewards, image, popularity, conformity
  - E.g. “I will be financially successful.”

\(^1\) Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; \(^2\) Grouzet et al., 2005
Group-based Work/Life Goals

Internalized Stigma

Perceived Stigma
\( \beta = .19^{***} \)

Group-based Aspirations
\( \beta = -.78^{***} \)

Indirect Effect = -.15, 95% CI: [-.26, -.07]
\( R^2 = .16, F (4, 173) = 8.49, p < .001 \)
Extrinsic Life Aspirations

Perceived Stigma → Internalized Stigma
β = .18**

Internalized Stigma → Extrinsic Life Aspirations
β = .24*

β = .11 (.07)

Indirect Effect = .04, 95% CI: [.004, .12]

$R^2 = .18$, $F (4, 173) = 9.46, p < .001$
Discussion

- Perceived stigma was associated with internalized stigma.
- Internalized stigma was associated with a lower desire to help one’s group.
- This accompanied aspirations to acquire extrinsic markers of success (money, status, etc.)
Implications

Internalization is critical for understanding the continuing status of sexual minorities in society.

Stigma can disengage people from collective aspirations, and prioritize meritocratic/individualistic goals that further contribute to social inequality.

Internalized stigma can hinder efforts toward social progress, and should be addressed as a component of social change efforts.
Limitations and Future Directions

- Used an online convenience sample (MTurk).
- Correlational design.
- Future research should examine relationship between group-based life aspirations and collective behavior (activism, volunteering, voting, etc.).
- Similar hypotheses should be studied with other identities.
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All of you for listening!