



Acting in “Solidarity”: Social Psychological Challenges for Advantaged Group Allies

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- The social psychology of Social Change/Collective Action has been slow to take up the study of Allyship.
- Positive perspective – overly positive.
- However, there are a bunch of interesting new models and frameworks emerging.
 - Distinctions between Allies and Activists;
Allies and Advocates;
Benevolence and Activism;
Allyship and Solidarity;

(e.g., Louis, Thomas et al., 2019; Russell 2011; Radke, Becker et al., 2019)

Outline

- Motives for Allyship
- The “Contact” problem
AGAs have contact with 2 subgroups of disadvantaged group.
- The “Intergroup Helping” Problem
- The “Collective Identity” Problem
- The “Privilege” Problem

Why Allyship?

Intrapersonal (Allyship as “Being True to Myself”)	Radke et al., 2019
Self-centred: Seeking Personal Gain or Avoiding Personal Pain	Klandermans, Simon
Value Expression\Affirmation	Russell, 2011
Interpersonal (Allyship for “Friends and Family”)	Russell, 2011
Inclusion of the Other in Self	Aron & Aron
Interpersonal Empathy & Social Support	Rattan & Ambady
Ingroup-Focused (Allyship as “Strategic Helping”)	Radke et al., 2019
Rebuilding Reputation	van Luewen
Confirming the Legitimacy of Ingroup Status (Patronizing)	Nadler & Halabi
Redefining the Target Group to Include the Self	McGarty & Thomas
Outgroup-Focused (Allyship as “Intergroup Altruism”)	Radke et al., 2019
Intergroup Empathy	Mackie et al
Social Change Motives	Rattan & Ambady

The “Contact” Problem

(Wright & Lubensky, Saguy et al., Dixon et al., Droogendyk et al.,)

- **Close positive** contact with (or even thinking about it, or observing it) an advantaged group member who **endorses** or is **silent** or **ambiguous about the intergroup inequality** can **reduce** disadvantaged group members **engagement in collective action**.
- Close positive contact with an advantaged group member who explicitly describes **inequality as illegitimate** (**supportive contact**) may **empowered** collective action.

The “Contact” Problem

- AGAs are likely to have lots of contact with both activists and non-activists in the disadvantaged group.
- ***Supportive contact requires explicit communication*** of one’s beliefs about inequality and support for social change.
- Where conversations like this are normative (perhaps with other Activists) this could be relatively straightforward, but can still be difficult.
- Where conversations like this are not normative (perhaps with Non-activists), this will be difficult.

The “Intergroup Helping” Problem

- *“If we are discussing racial inequalities... and White voice rise to the top of the conversation... how is that any social change? White voices have long been the arbiters of social understanding and norms.” – **Jay Dodd**, Huffpost*

The “Intergroup Helping” Problem

(Nadler, Halabi, van Leeuwen,...)

- Helping cross group boundaries is not always (is seldom) benign.
 - Reifies rather than reduces status differences.
(particularly ironic in the case of helping to reduce inequality)
 - It is often followed by expectations of gratitude.
 - High-status and Ingroup-focused motivations can lead to Dependency-oriented (patronizing) help.

The “Identity” Problem

- “I wish there was an ‘S’ for ‘Straight’ in the acronym.’ (Yes, people say this.) Rather than “fighting with us,” how about you just try to help out as needed? This means not drowning out LGBT voices.” – ***Parker Marie Molloy***
- “Genuine allies know that when people claim their differences... such as an Indigenous person or a person of color, within the context of challenging the oppressive power structure, that this should not be perceived and argued as being disruptive to the larger goal.”
- ***Lynn Ghel***

The “Identity” Problem

- Expecting Symbolic Ingroup Status.
- Redefining the Group – Who are we?
 - Advantaged group members may seek to redefining the collective in more “inclusive” ways.
 - They may promote an “opinion/belief/value-based” group.
 - Ingroup-Projection - seeing one’s ingroup and oneself as central to this new group.
- Possible Negative Outcomes
 - Misrepresentation of the message
 - Taking on more than one should
 - Failing to see how their presence undermines the message.

The “Privilege” Problem

- Activism from a place of privilege.
 - Expecting to be valued and offered positions of responsibility/power.
 - Engagement can be withdrawn, delayed, and sporadic.
 - Fail to recognize how their privilege can influence the outcome of their activism. (e.g., getting arrested, boycotts)

Conclusions

- Be a better advantaged group contact partner.
 - ***Supportive Contact:*** Clearly communicates recognition of inequality, anger at injustice and willingness to support.
- Be a better ~~allies~~ ***accomplice.***
 - Recognize your own psychology / consider your motives.
 - Seek a better understanding of their own privilege and how it might influence your actions as an accomplice.
 - Offer autonomy-oriented assistance or (in some cases) wait to be asked.
 - Avoid the temptation to broaden or modify the relevant group identity.
 - Use your privilege wisely.