

Sociology Research Assignment

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K226007

BSR-4C

Main Topic: Impacts of Social Stratification

Journal Topic: Intergroup alliance orientation among intermediate-status group members: The role of stability of social stratification

Summary and About Research:

This is an article about alliances among intermediate-status groups. It discusses social stratification and how it can influence alliances. The authors argue that intermediate-status groups are more likely to seek alliances with other groups when their social status is threatened. They conducted three studies to test this hypothesis. In all three studies, participants were led to believe their country was intermediate status. Then, they were manipulated to believe their country's social status was either stable or unstable. Finally, they were asked how likely they were to ally with a higher-status or lower-status group. The results showed that intermediate-status groups were more likely to seek alliances with both high-status and low-status groups when their social status was unstable.

Participants were invited to take part in a study through email, where they were informed about a research project on recalling news articles. Upon agreeing to participate, they were instructed to read a short article and later answer questions about it. The article discussed the economic situations of Italy, Germany, and Greece, portraying Italy as moderate in power and economy, Germany as strong, and Greece as weak. Some participants were told that the economic conditions would remain stable, while others were informed that Greece's economy might catch up to Italy's. A graph illustrating the GDP trends of Italy and Greece was provided, showing either Greece's GDP increasing towards Italy's or remaining stable, depending on the version. After reading, participants were asked to wait before performing a memory task, during which they were asked about their opinions on their own country. Following this, participants completed memory-related questions and provided basic demographic information. Finally, participants were debriefed, informed that the article was fictional, and the true purpose of the study was disclosed. They were then given the opportunity to reaffirm their consent for the use of their data, now that they were aware of the deception employed in the study.

My thoughts:

I found this study interesting because it sheds light on the factors that influence alliances between social groups. It suggests that social anxieties can play a role in motivating alliances, even between groups that might not otherwise cooperate. The study suggests alliances based on immediate threats. These might be temporary, opportunistic alliances formed to address a specific challenge. However, if the threat persists or trust develops, these alliances could become more long-term and strategic. Misperceptions and stereotypes can skew alliance formation. A group might perceive another as a threat based on inaccurate information, leading to unnecessary animosity. This highlights the importance of clear communication and intergroup contact to dispel stereotypes. It's a refreshing perspective to see social

anxiety as a potential motivator for cooperation. Perhaps by channeling anxieties into open communication and collaboration, groups can work together to address shared concerns and improve their collective situation. This could be a powerful tool for social change movements. Overall, this research opens doors to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between social anxieties, social hierarchy, and alliance formation. It compels us to consider these dynamics across various contexts and social groups.

This research was conducted by Luca Caricati, Gianluigi Moscato, and Chiara Bonetti.

[Link to journal](#)