Exclusion and lack of power at the core of unemployment self-esteem

Ginette Herman (UCL), David Bourguignon (UCL), Ana Guinote (University College London), & Geoffroy Larue, (ULg)

I. Hypotheses

- Socially excluded individuals enter a defensive state of cognitive deconstruction that is characterized by lethargy and alters time flow. They focus on present time rather than future, presumably to maintain a positive level of self-esteem (Twenge et al., 2003).
- On the other hand, exclusion is related to lack of power which negatively impacts wellbeing (Keltner et al., 2003).
- Finally, lack of power alters goal-directed behaviour and present time orientation (Jahoda,1982)
- We therefore hypothesize that
  - present time orientation would prevent self-esteem deterioration
  - power would mediate the relation between exclusion and self-esteem
  - power would mediate the relation between exclusion and present time orientation

IV. Discussion

- Exclusion affects time orientation but contrary to Twenge et al.’s predictions, present time orientation is negatively linked to self-esteem.
- In a context of exclusion, people experience lack of power and therefore suffer from low self-esteem
- Lack of power mediates the relation between exclusion and present time orientation.
  

II. Methods

- Participants: 199 unemployed people
- Procedure: self-administered questionnaire
- Instruments
  - Social exclusion: “Others has treated me as if I am not there” (13 items; α=.90)
  - Power: “I can get others to do what I want” (8 items; α=.70)
  - Time orientation: “I only can think to the present” (4 items; α=.69)
  - Self-esteem: “I feel I do not have much to be proud of me” (10 items; α=.85)

III. Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exclusion</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.15**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.54**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-esteem</td>
<td>-3.88**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Present time</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.46**</td>
<td>-2.80**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LISREL 8.8

Present time orientation

Exclusion

Self-esteem

Power

†: p < .10; **: p < .01; ***: p < .001.

Bibliography