

Give Them Fish or Teach Them to Fish? The Effects of Stability of Social Stratification and Forms of Help on Higher Socioeconomic Status Group Members' Attitudes Towards Anti-Poverty Programs

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Building on social identity approach and intergroup helping as status relations model, the current research examined the explored effects of stability of social stratification and forms of help on higher socioeconomic status (SES) members' attitudes towards anti-poverty programs. Two studies were conducted in a 2 (social stratification stability) \times 2 (forms of help) design on willingness to support anti-poverty programs. Study 1 examined the conditions of unstable and stable social stratification that might pattern differences in support of hypothetical anti-poverty programs construed as dependency-oriented or autonomy-oriented help. Study 2 replicated and extended study 1 by examining higher SES (subjective) participants' attitudes towards the cash transfer programs (conditional vs. unconditional, which were determined by their perceptions of the stability of social stratification). Overall, the results of the two studies confirmed that attitudes towards anti-poverty programs could be construed as specific forms of help (dependency-oriented and/or autonomy-oriented help) depending on the nature of the intergroup relations (stability of the social stratification). Finally, the theoretical contribution of the current research is discussed.

Keywords: poverty, socioeconomic status, intergroup helping, dependency, autonomy

The Philippines's economic growth is projected to remain robust at 6.8% in 2017 and 6.9% in 2018 (World Bank Group, 2017). The poverty incidence among Filipinos dropped to 21.6% in 2015 from 25.2% in 2012 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2016). This means that 1.8 million Filipinos have been lifted above the poverty line within three years. In order to maintain this appreciable downward trend in poverty incidence, the Philippine government must put emphasis on redistribution of income and wealth by means of anti-poverty programs (e.g., Kluegel & Smith, 1986). There are several promising anti-poverty programs, but unless these acquire strong public endorsement, they are unlikely to be implemented. However, Filipinos from the higher socioeconomic status (SES) brackets, who strongly prefer social hierarchies in society, are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward poorer

Filipinos (Bernardo, 2013). In a similar vein, recent research has confirmed that individuals who reported higher SES tend to hold negative attitudes toward redistribution (Brown-Iannuzzi, Lundberg, Kay, & Payne, 2014). This is no surprise, as economic growth and prosperity may make people from a higher SES group feel envious and insecure about 'out-groups' perceived as rivals or threats (Mols & Jetten, 2017). As such, they may respond to perceived status threats by supporting social policies that maintain or intensify inequalities, and by opposing social policies that favour the low-status groups (e.g., Rosenthal, Levy, & Moyer, 2011; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Pratto, Tatar, & Conway-Lanz, 1999; Renfro, Duran, Stephan, & Clason, 2006). These differences in support for anti-poverty programs can be understood within the frame of intergroup helping. Research on intergroup helping suggests

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that socio-structural context (i.e., stability of social stratification) are systematically related to how group members construe the consequences of helping aimed at promoting inequality and chronic dependence, or future equality and self-sufficiency (Halabi, Dovidio, & Nadler, 2012; van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2011). The current research focuses on how perceptions of the stability of social stratification and construals of consequences of help might shape higher SES members' attitudes towards anti-poverty programs.

The Social Identity Approach to Poverty

Psychological accounts of poverty usually focus on the psychological outcomes, causal attributions, and the personality characteristics of the poor (Bullock & Waugh, 2005; Carr, 2013; Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2009; Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013). Having said that, poverty is more than scarcity of material resources; it can be understood as a result of how social groups in societies make decisions about how to allocate valued resources within a given society (LeMieux & Pratto, 2003). Thus, the social identity approach (SIA) serves as a fitting theoretical basis when examining poverty as it explains the psychological mechanisms of social categories and the relationships between social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner & Oakes, 1989; Turner & Reynolds, 2001). Most studies in the tradition of the SIA have focused on status inequalities in gender, race, or religion, which make the topic of poverty underrepresented in the literature. It has been recently argued that the key premises of the social identity approach are likely to be equally useful in deliberating socioeconomic inequalities (Jetten et al., 2017). The SIA assumes three main social cognitive processes of how the gap between the wealthy and the poor can be understood as distinct psychological groups rather than as separate individuals. First, people categorise themselves and others in order to understand the social environment (social categorisation). Thus, individuals' SES based on income, education, and occupation are stable components of the social structure, which provide the individual with a type of social identity parallel to gender and racial or ethnic identities (Goodman, Huang, Schafer-Kalkhoff, & Adler, 2007). Second, individuals embrace the identity of the groups they belong to (i.e., act in ways how they perceive the wealthy or poor are supposed to act and conform to the norms of the group). As a result, individuals adopt the identity of the group they have categorised themselves as belonging to (social identification). Third, once individuals have categorised and identified themselves as part of a social group, they are inclined to compare their group against another group (social comparison). Poverty, by definition, involves comparison between wealthy and poor groups.

Stability of Social Stratification

On the basis of the key premise of the SIA (i.e., people striving for a positive social identity), poverty is not only

a problem of competing for valued resources but also the result of opposing social identities. Since members of the higher and lower SES groups are structurally situated at different starting positions within stratified societies, they may respond to poverty differently. Lower SES members will aim to achieve higher wealth and status position (either individually or as a group), whereas higher SES groups aim to maintain or protect their higher status position. More importantly, the main driving force that determines group members' efforts at achieving a positive social identity is how they think about the social stratification (i.e., socio-structural conditions; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2000). Past studies using the SIA have consistently demonstrated the effects of socio-structural conditions (i.e., permeability of group boundaries, stability, and legitimacy of status relations) on low-status group members' status enhancement behaviours (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; Ellemers, Wilke, & van Knippenberg, 1993; Islam & Hewstone, 1993; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1999; Mummeny, Klink, Mielke, Wenzel, & Blanz, 1999) and high-status group members' status protection behaviours (e.g., Harvey & Bourhis, 2011; Spears, Greenwood, de Lemus, & Sweetman, 2010). In relation to poverty, the SIA suggests that lower SES members' responses to poverty are driven by relative deprivation perceptions (permeability of boundaries and legitimacy of the wealth gap), whereas high SES members are driven by the stability of their position in the social stratification (Jetten et al., 2017). What appears to be emerging from the body of research on the social psychology of intergroup relations is an increasing interest regarding how higher SES groups respond to poverty when their status position in the social stratification is unstable (Mols & Jetten, 2017). When the social stratification is perceived as unstable (i.e., the presence of status threat and high possibility of social mobility), high SES members will respond to inequality by diffusing threat coming from lower SES groups. For instance, perceptions of economic instability create fear that the status quo will change (i.e., high SES groups may lose their dominant position in the future) and that the boundaries between groups will become more changeable (i.e., lower SES groups may challenge the status quo; Jetten et al., 2017). On the other hand, when social stratification is perceived as relatively stable (i.e., absence of status threat and low possibility of social mobility), it is likely that higher SES groups will respond to inequality associated with sympathy toward individuals living in poverty (e.g., Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008; Moscatelli, Albarello, Prati, & Rubini, 2014). From the recategorisation perspective (derived from the realistic conflict theory), the absence of status threat might reduce intergroup bias if higher SES members conceive the individuals living in poverty to be part of the same group (from 'us' and 'them' to a more inclusive 'we') then they would develop more positive attitudes toward out-group members (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2014; Prati, Crisp, Meleady, & Rubini, 2016; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961; Meleady &

Seager, 2016). Therefore, poverty may shape perceptions of the socio-structural context (i.e., stability of social stratification), thereby determining how high SES groups are affected by poverty and how they respond to it. Higher SES groups' responses to poverty could be understood on the basis of their attitudes towards anti-poverty programs.

Attitudes Towards Anti-Poverty Programs

The old Chinese proverb 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime' is a succinct description of the conflicting attitudes towards anti-poverty programs. Within the discourse of aid effectiveness, dependency is commonly seen as undermining recipients' self-sufficiency and its related terms, such as autonomy, independence, self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and sustainability (Harvey & Lind, 2005). In the public's mind, anti-poverty programs are equated with dependency. However, anti-poverty programs are created as a response to poverty that is aimed at promoting long-term self-sufficiency through education, employment, healthcare services, and permanent housing (Swidler & Watkins, 2009). Cash transfer programs are the most applied anti-poverty programs in response to poverty in many countries. There are two different approaches regarding cash transfers, which include conditional cash transfers (widely used in Latin America) and unconditional cash transfers (more prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa). The Philippine government chose to implement the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program) due to its promising results in countries such as Brazil (Bolsa Familia) and Mexico (Oportunidades). These CCT programs transfer the money to individuals who meet certain criteria (i.e., enrolling children in public schools, getting regular medical check-ups, and receiving vaccinations). Research has offered evidence that the CCT program has encouraged greater work efforts for its beneficiaries (e.g., Alzua, Cruces, & Ripani, 2013; Orbeta & Pacqueo, 2016). However, critics perceived that the CCT fosters dependency to its beneficiaries by giving them money with strings attached. On other hand, the unconditional cash transfer program (UCT) provides money without any conditions for the receivers. Recent research confirms that unconditional cash transfers have significant impacts on economic outcomes and psychological wellbeing (Haushofer & Shapiro, 2017). However, by its very nature, the line between conditional and unconditional cash transfer programs is still fuzzy at best (Gaarder, 2012).

Forms of Help

The preceding argument about whether cash transfers should be conditional or unconditional might be based on how people construe the consequences of assistance offered to beneficiaries. However, there seems to be no available empirical research that clarifies the social cognitive processes that could explain people's opposing per-

ceptions and attitudes regarding the anti-poverty programs (Bernardo, 2015). To fill in this gap, the current research seeks to clarify these divergent opinions regarding anti-poverty programs by integrating the intergroup helping as a status relations model (IHSR; Halabi & Nadler, 2017; Nadler, 2002, 2015; Nadler & Chernyak-Hai, 2014) that supports the critical distinction between dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented forms of helping. Dependency-oriented help provides the lower SES beneficiaries with temporary aid from their problems (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, or money), but is less likely to help the recipients escape from the vicious cycle of poverty (Nadler, 1997, 1998). Autonomy-oriented help, on the other hand, refers to the provision of the tools that recipients need to solve their own problems (e.g., education or decent work) and is therefore a potentially long-term solution for low SES beneficiaries (Nadler, 1997, 1998). Moreover, helping may be construed in different ways — as more negatively or more positively promoting intergroup relations — depending on the perceptions of status relations between opposing groups (Halabi, Dovidio, & Nadler, 2012). Additionally, the IHSR model incorporates the structural premise of the SIA (i.e., stability of the social stratification) and the nature of help (dependency-oriented vs. autonomy-oriented help; Van Leeuwen & Täuber, 2010; Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006). Research has demonstrated that high-status group members were strongly motivated to provide dependency-oriented help to members of a low-status group members when status relations were perceived as unstable (Cunningham & Platow, 2007; Halabi et al., 2008), since autonomy-oriented help generates the idea that lower-status groups would challenge the status quo and undermine the dominant position of a high-status group in the social stratification. In contrast, high-status groups may endorse autonomy-oriented help rather than dependency-oriented help towards lower-status groups when perceptions of intergroup status differences are not salient (i.e., as a result of common in-group priming; Halloran & Chamber, 2011; Nadler, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, & Ben-David, 2009). Taken together, the SIA and IHSR models may serve as theoretical foundations in examining responses to poverty, since perceptions of stability of the social stratification and the construals of forms of help appear to combine with high SES group members' attitude towards anti-poverty programs.

Overview of the Current Research

On the basis of the SIA and IHSR models, perceptions of the socio-structural context (stability of social stratification) and forms of help (dependency-oriented vs. autonomy-oriented) are complementary psychological mechanisms that might clarify these conflicting perceptions and attitudes towards anti-poverty programs. Two studies were conducted to test the current research's prediction: Study 1 examined whether perceptions of unstable

and stable social stratification might determine differences in support for hypothetical anti-poverty programs construed as dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented help (hypothesis 1). Study 2's purpose was to replicate and extend study 1 by involving the real and contradictory anti-poverty programs (CCT vs. UCT) and decontextualise helping without constraining participants with regard to the consequences and the forms of help. Study 2 examined whether higher SES group members' attitudes towards the cash transfer programs (conditional vs. unconditional) are driven by their perceptions of the stability of social stratification (hypothesis 2).

STUDY 1

Method

Participants and Design

The study focused only on higher SES individuals. Potential participants were recruited from the participant pool of a university known to be comprised of higher SES groups in Cebu City, Philippines. Prior to the actual study, they answered a screening questionnaire based on non-income indicators of SES in the country, such as whether the household head had completed a college degree or higher; studied at private institutions; owned at least two air-conditioning units, vehicles, and other electronic devices (e.g., microwave, computers); had household helpers; and had travelled outside the country for leisure (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2014). According to the screening results, 72 participants (mean age = 21.18, $SD = 1.93$; 41 women and 31 men) were identified as members of the higher SES brackets in the country. Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (perceived status stability; between-participants) \times 2 (forms of help; within-participants) design.

Procedure and materials. At the beginning of the experiment, participants were told that they were participating in a nationwide policy review study conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of two editorials.

Stability of social stratification manipulation. Two editorials were fabricated to look like pages from the country's leading business newspaper (see Jackson & Esses, 2000, for similar manipulation). In the unstable condition, the editorial focused on presenting fictitious data on the narrowing income gap between the rich and poor. It contained statements such as, 'Recently, the data indicate that the gap between the country's rich and poor is narrowing fast, with low socioeconomic status groups enjoying significantly faster growth in incomes compared to members of the higher socioeconomic status groups.' In the stable condition, the editorial focused on statistics on the widening gap between the rich and the poor (e.g., 'The data indicate that the gap between the country's rich and poor is unchanging, with higher socioeconomic status groups sustaining growth in incomes compared to members of low socioeconomic status groups').

Manipulation check. The effectiveness of the perceived stability of the social stratification was assessed by asking the participants' level of agreement with the statement, 'On the basis of the information provided, the income gap between higher and lower socioeconomic groups would remain stable for years to come', on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Forms of help. The second part of the experiment was an adaption from past research (see Abad-Merino, Newheiser, Dovidio, Tabanero, & González, 2013). Following this, participants were told that they were participating in a national tax policy review regarding budget allocation for the proposed anti-poverty programs. All participants were asked to read four vignettes that described typical social problems faced by low SES groups in the country (i.e., access to college education, livelihood, healthcare, and decent housing). After each scenario, participants were then asked to complete items that measure dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented help (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). The items were modified to fit the context of the current study.

Four items assessed dependency-oriented help ($\alpha = .89$): (a) 'I would support a small increase of 0.75% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to programs that would be used for an anti-poverty program that would help the high school students of low socioeconomic backgrounds receive loans that would help them pay for the first year of college'; (b) 'I would support a small increase of 0.5% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to programs that would provide the unemployed heads of low socioeconomic households get contractual (5 months) or project-based jobs'; (c) 'I would support a small increase of 0.5% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to a program that would help sick members of low socioeconomic families pay for treatment in public hospitals'; (d) 'I would support a small increase of .05% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to a program that would help low socioeconomic households get loans to rent a house in a safe and affordable area'. Four items assessed autonomy-oriented help ($\alpha = .78$): (a) 'I would support a small increase of 0.75% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to a program that would help high school students of low socioeconomic backgrounds receive scholarships that would allow them to visit good colleges in the country'; (b) 'I would support a small increase of 0.5% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to a program that would help unemployed heads of low socioeconomic households get trained to develop to the necessary skills to start their own business'; (c) 'I would support a small increase of my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to a program that would help sick members of socioeconomic to become eligible and pay for health insurance to cover treatment in any hospitals'; (d) 'I would support a small increase of .05% in my taxes if the collected money would be allocated to a

program that would help low socioeconomic households get a loan to buy their own house in a safe and affordable area?

Prior to the actual experiment, a pilot test of the items (modified version) was conducted to validate whether the items for each scenario presented were perceived as dependency-oriented or autonomy-oriented help ($N = 28$). A two-way analysis of variance revealed that the items for dependency-oriented help and autonomy-oriented help were perceived differently, $F(1, 27) = 52.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .74$. As expected, dependency-oriented items were observed as fostering dependency ($M = 5.67$, $SD = .23$) more than autonomy-oriented items ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .23$), and autonomy-oriented items were perceived as fostering self-sufficiency ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .22$) more than dependency-oriented items ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.23$). Consistent with the past research (Abad-Merino et al., 2013), the items were distinctively perceived as dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented types of help.

Finally, participants were debriefed and informed about the true nature and purpose of the study. Also, they were explicitly encouraged to ask questions and clarifications regarding the details of the experiment.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. The stability of the social stratification manipulation was effective. A significant main effect for the stability of the social stratification was expected, $F(1, 72) = 41.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .38$. In other words, participants in the stable condition ($M = 5.19$, $SD = .88$), more than participants in the unstable condition ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.10$), thought that the differences between the higher and the lower SES groups would remain stable for years to come.

Hypothesis 1 test. A mixed-design (or analysis of variance) with repeated measures on willingness to support dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented anti-poverty programs was performed. The analysis reported an interaction between perceived stability of the status relations and nature of help, $F(1, 70) = 174.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .71$. Analyses of simple effects revealed that participants under the unstable social stratification conditions rated higher support for dependency-oriented, anti-poverty programs ($M = 5.46$, $SD = .71$) and lesser support for autonomy-oriented ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .62$), anti-poverty programs, $p < .001$; whereas participants under the condition of stable social stratification rated higher support for autonomy-oriented ($M = 5.38$, $SD = .71$) and lesser support for dependency-oriented ($M = 3.98$, $SD = .57$) programs for the lower SES recipients, $p < .001$.

As predicted, higher SES participants' mean ratings of support for dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented anti-poverty programs significantly differed under conditions of unstable and stable social stratification. Participants of a higher SES group were willing to support a tax increase policy for dependency-oriented, anti-poverty

programs and lesser for autonomy-oriented, anti-poverty programs when they perceived the social stratification as unstable. This finding adds to the body of empirical support for the SIA and IHSR models by showing that perception of unstable social stratification sparks high SES group members' desire to establish status hierarchy by supporting dependency-oriented (more than autonomy-oriented) forms of help for the poor. In contrast, higher SES participants who perceived the social stratification as relatively stable showed greater support for autonomy-oriented, anti-poverty programs and lesser for dependency-oriented, anti-poverty programs. Such findings accord with earlier works that revealed high-status group members are inclined to provide autonomy-oriented help as long as the low-status beneficiaries were not threatening to their status position (Cunningham & Platos, 2007; Halloran & Chambers, 2011; Nadler et al., 2009).

STUDY 2

Method

Participants and design. A total of 76 (60 females, 16 males) individuals participated in the study with a mean age of 31 years, ranging from 21 to 54 years. Before being selected as participants, the adults were screened using the Subjective Status Scale (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000). The 76 adult participants rated themselves above the midpoint of the scale ($M = 6.23$, $SD = .51$; range 1–9). Participants were randomly assigned to conditions of a 2 (unstable vs. stable social stratification) \times 2 (CCT vs. UCT programs) between-participants design on participants' willingness to support the cash transfer program.

Procedure and materials. The experiment entailed a completion of a questionnaire that began with a cover story that the survey was about recent government programs. This was followed by the random assignment of social stratification stability manipulation (see study 1). After reading the editorials, participants were then told that the next phase of the study would involve their opinions regarding the existing anti-poverty programs that would address the difficulties faced by the low SES families in the country. Participants were presented with photos of the low SES families and were told that these families were identified as beneficiaries of the national anti-poverty program. Next, participants were randomly assigned to read one of the two gazettes containing information about either of the two types of anti-poverty programs (CCT vs. UCT).

Types of cash transfers. Prior to the actual experiment, a pretest was conducted to examine whether CCT and UCT could be perceived differently in terms of the consequences of help ($N = 60$). These volunteers were randomly assigned and asked to read one of the two cash transfer programs. Next, they rated two items that asked the degree

to which they perceived the cash transfer program as (1) promoting dependency to the beneficiaries, and (2) promoting self-sufficiency to the beneficiaries (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). A 2 (CCT vs. UCT programs) \times 2 (forms of help items) split-plot ANOVA was employed and revealed a significant interaction between cash transfer programs and help items, $F(1, 58) = 436.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .88$. Volunteers assigned in the CCT program perceived it as promoting dependency ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 1.03$) more than self-sufficiency ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .56$), and volunteers in UCT program perceived it as promoting self-sufficiency ($M = 5.35$, $SD = .80$) more than dependency to the beneficiaries ($M = 2.60$, $SD = .56$). Results might suggest that CCT is predominantly perceived as promoting dependency more than self-sufficiency, whereas UCT as promoting self-sufficiency more than dependency.

Dependent measure. After reading one of the two gazettes (CCT or UCT), the participants' attitudes towards the cash transfer program were measured using five follow-up questions (e.g., 'Would you support the cash transfer program for the the lower SES beneficiaries through a tax increase of one percent per year?'; 1 = *strongly oppose* to 7 = *strongly support*). Finally, participants were asked demographic questions and were debriefed.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. Consistent with study 1, participants in the stable condition ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.02$), more than in the unstable condition ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.40$), thought that the differences between the higher SES and the lower SES groups would remain stable for years to come, $F(1,72) = 26.72$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$. Thus, the manipulation of stability of social stratification was successful.

Hypothesis 2 test. The mean of the five follow-up questions measuring willingness of the cash transfer programs ($\alpha = .81$) was calculated for each participant and analysed in a 2 \times 2 between-participants ANOVA. The analysis revealed an interaction between perceived stability of the social stratification and type of help, $F(1, 72) = 132.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .64$. Analyses of simple effects showed that participants assigned in the CCT program ($M = 5.40$, $SD = .63$) indicated higher mean ratings of support compared to participants in the UCT program ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .86$) when they perceived the social stratification as unstable, $F(1,72) = 86.22$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .40$. However, when social stratification were perceived as stable, participants assigned in the UCT program ($M = 5.09$, $SD = .53$) indicated higher ratings of support than participants in the CCT program ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .86$), $F(1,72) = 48.96$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .40$.

In sum, the findings of study 2 confirmed that higher SES (subjective) participants' attitudes towards cash transfer programs significantly differed under conditions of

unstable and stable social stratification and types of cash transfers. Participants rated higher levels of support for the cash transfer program when social stratification was perceived as unstable and when type of cash transfer was conditional, whereas participants rated greater levels of support for the cash transfer program when the type of cash transfer was unconditional and when the social stratification was perceived as relatively stable. In theory, perceptions of unstable social stratification (presence of status threat) reflect a desire to reinforce group-based dominance by supporting anti-poverty program perceived to promote inequality and chronic dependence. However, if group-based perceptions that provoke detrimental status relations were repealed (absence of status threat), people might desire to support anti-poverty programs perceived to promote future equality and self-sufficiency to the low SES beneficiaries. However, it is important to take into account that these pattern differences in perceptions regarding the two cash transfer programs did not imply that CCT certainly fostered dependency and UCT fostered self-sufficiency. This result may imply, however, that the attitudes towards cash transfer programs could be construed differently depending on the socio-structural context (i.e., stability of social stratification).

General Discussion

Overall, the results of the two studies confirmed the current research's general prediction that perceptions of the socio-structural context (stability of social stratification) and forms of help (dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented) were complementary psychological mechanisms that might shape these conflicting perceptions and attitudes towards anti-poverty programs. Study 1 revealed that conditions of unstable and stable social stratification yielded pattern differences in levels of support for hypothetical anti-poverty programs construed as dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented help. Particularly, higher SES participants (objective SES) rated higher support for dependency-oriented, anti-poverty programs and lesser support for autonomy-oriented, anti-poverty programs when social stratification was perceived as unstable, whereas high SES participants who perceived relatively stable status relations rated higher support for autonomy-oriented, anti-poverty programs and lesser support for dependency-oriented, anti-poverty programs. Study 2 confirmed that attitudes towards conditional versus unconditional cash transfer programs were determined by perceptions of the social stratification (unstable or stable; hypothesis 2). Specifically, high participants (subjective SES) rated higher support for the cash transfer program when the social stratification was perceived as unstable and the approach was conditional (CCT); however, higher SES participants in the stable social stratification condition were more willing to support the cash transfer program when the approach was unconditional (UCT).

Theoretical Contribution

The current research clarified the social cognitive processes that elucidate contradictory attitudes regarding anti-poverty programs. Such divergent attitudes regarding anti-poverty programs could be based on whether people perceive it as dependency-oriented or autonomy-oriented help, which might be shaped by the perceptions of stability of the status relations. The SIA and IHSR models are ideal theoretical groundings in examining responses to socioeconomic inequalities, since economic conditions (e.g., instability or prosperity) shape perceptions of the socio-structural context (stability of the social stratification) and people's construals of forms and consequences of help (promoting inequality and chronic dependence or equality and self-sufficiency), which may serve as the underlying structure for the formation of attitudes and opinions regarding policies and programs helping the poor. Further, the results of the current research provided evidence to the recent SIA to economic inequality among wealthy groups, which hypothesised that responses to inequality by high SES groups were determined by their perceptions of the stability of social stratification (Jetten et al., 2017). With respect to the IHSR model, it is important to acknowledge that the results of the current research cannot be fully acknowledged as a novel theoretical contribution. Nevertheless, the current research makes a decent contribution to the broader literature of group processes and intergroup relations by replicating and extending the IHSR model in an underrepresented intergroup relation (social class) and economic influence (i.e., responses to socioeconomic inequality).

Limitations and Future Research

Some important limitations of the current research should be recognised. For example, both studies 1 and 2 plainly focused on participants' construals of the anti-poverty programs as dependency-oriented and autonomy-oriented help. Such manipulations might not provide a precise differentiation of the anti-poverty programs in terms of two types of help. It is essential to recognise how the type of help should be appropriately conceptualised with regard to anti-poverty programs (e.g., as orthogonal, negatively correlated constructs or opposite poles in the continuum). Thus, future research might constructively examine robust experimental manipulations or direct reliable measurement of the two types of helping in relation to anti-poverty programs.

The current research did not directly induce the perception of common identity (aside from perception of stable social stratification), which might clearly explain participants' willingness to support autonomy-oriented help. Thus, future Philippine research must incorporate the principles of recategorisation to promote positive intergroup relations in areas of long-standing conflict (e.g., social class, religion, politics, regional disparities).

More importantly, the present studies conceptually assumed a face-value assertion of high SES groups (i.e., objective and subjective SES measures). With respect to the social identity approach to poverty and intergroup helping model, future research could examine levels of the two natures of helping and the broader socio-structural context (i.e., permeability, stability, and legitimacy) between members of higher and lower socioeconomic groups. Hence, it would be reasonable to test the main effect of SES on type of help as mediated by perceptions of security of the status relations.

Lastly, the dependent measures were plainly self-reported reactions. It is a given fact that self-reports are highly susceptible to social desirability influences. Within this line of work, it would be interesting to examine the reactions via monetary allocation task. For example, Harvey and Bourhis (2013) examined differences in terms of money allocations made by the rich and the poor under conditions of wealth stratification (i.e., group chance, group merit, and individual merit).

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