

Social change in the aftermath of successful minority influence

Radmila Prislin and P. Niels Christensen
San Diego State University, CA, USA

This chapter describes a programme of research on group dynamics in the aftermath of successful minority influence that reverses minority and majority positions within a group. Supporting the authors' gain–loss asymmetry model of change, converging evidence suggests that loss of the majority position generates strong disidentification from the superordinate group whereas gaining the majority position does not yield comparable identification. This overall decrease in identification is associated with a general increase in hostility, reduced helpfulness, and a desire to exit the group. Thus groups may be especially fragile following internal changes in the majority–minority positions. Additional research suggests that such a pattern of reactions to majority–minority change is a specifically *group* phenomenon (versus aggregates of individuals) and occurs when majority–minority reversals follow the attitude change of existing group members (versus an influx of new members). New majorities will increase their identification with the group when converts provide genuine support or when their new majority position persists over time. Implications of these findings for intra-group relations in the aftermath of social change are discussed.

Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better.

Richard Hooker (1554–1600), Renaissance author and theologian

Could it be that even when desired, change is not an entirely positive experience? If longed for and laboured towards, why would change be met with anything but enthusiasm? In this chapter, we attempt to answer this question with respect to social change that occurs within a group whose minority successfully realises its goal of becoming a majority. How does the new majority react to the group in the aftermath of successful social

Correspondence should be addressed to Radmila Prislin, Department of Psychology, College of Sciences, San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, CA 92182-4622, USA. Email: rprislin@sunstroke.sdsu.edu

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influence? How does the new minority respond to the loss of its numerically superior position? What are the implications of change in minority and majority positions for the group as a whole?

To answer these questions, we first present our gain–loss asymmetry model of reactions to change in minority and majority positions. The model builds on the documented socio-psychological and economic ramifications of the minority and majority positions to explain the consequences of departures from these positions on group processes. Next, we summarise research inspired by the model. After reviewing studies that have tested the basic propositions of the model and established its boundaries, we situate the findings in the broader context of dynamic approaches to social influence. Because this chapter is a summary of continuing work, we discuss how the model should evolve to account for the consequences of change on intra-group relations. We conclude the chapter by suggesting that in the aftermath of social change, regulatory mechanisms may be needed to channel social influence processes within a group away from intolerance and towards more constructive norms.

THE GAIN–LOSS ASYMMETRY MODEL OF CHANGE IN MINORITY/MAJORITY POSITIONS

The current popularity of minority influence research is an example par excellence of successful minority influence. Three decades after Moscovici (Moscovici, 1976; Moscovici, Lage, & Naffrechoux, 1969) shook the field of social influence with what was then a minority idea that persuasive power is not an exclusive domain of majorities, minorities are recognised as an important source of influence. The persuasive power of minorities is axiomatic within contemporary theorising about social influence (Crano & Alvaro, 1998; Prislin & Wood, 2005). Empirical research over the past three decades has established conditions under which opinion minorities exert influence, documented processes through which minority influence is exercised, and contrasted these processes with those underlying majority influence (for reviews, see De Dreu & De Vries, 2001; Forgas & Williams, 2001; Moscovici, Mucchi-Faina, & Maass, 1994; Wood, Lundgren, Ouellette, Busceme, & Blackstone, 1994).

Although undoubtedly fruitful, current explorations of minority influence have nevertheless been somewhat narrow in their focus on the cognitive dynamics of individual targets. That is, minority influence research has been carried out almost exclusively at the individual level of analysis with little attention paid to interpersonal dynamics occurring at the group level (Levine & Kaarbo, 2001). This orientation is evident in two prevailing approaches to minority influence: One is focused on attitude change in response to minority advocacy (e.g., Alvaro & Crano, 1996; Baker & Petty,

1994; Clark & Maass, 1988; Mackie, 1987; Martin & Hewstone, 2003; Mugny, 1982), and another is concerned with the quality of thought and problem solving in the presence of a minority (e.g., Doise & Mugny, 1984; Gruenfeld, 1995; Nemeth, 1986; Smith, Tindale, & Dugoni, 1996; Van Dyne & Saavendra, 1996). Both approaches uniformly emphasise cognitive responses to minority influence. Social conditions (e.g., group membership), if considered, are treated as part of the information to be processed.

This reductionist view of the “social” has kept possible effects of minority influence on group dynamics off the research agenda. Yet the effects of a successful minority are evident not only in changed attitudes of individual targets. When a sufficient number of individuals yield to minority influence, the changed attitudinal landscape *ipso facto* transforms a group’s minority into the majority and vice versa. Thus, an unavoidable consequence of successful minority influence is not only cognitive change within an individual but also structural change within a group. Change itself is social.¹

To account for the social nature of change effected by minority advocacy, we recently proposed a model that focuses on the group level of analysis. Our gain–loss asymmetry model of change in minority and majority positions is a pioneering step towards understanding the social dynamics of groups whose active minorities successfully transform themselves into majorities. The model builds on insights from several existing theories and their respective empirical research. First, the model is grounded in the documented psychological, social, and economic ramifications of the minority and majority positions, which indicate the differential valuation of these positions. Second, the model draws on prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982), and self-categorisation theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) to hypothesise about the consequences of social change for group dynamics.

Psychology of numerical size: Differential valuation of the minority and majority positions

Recognising the multidimensionality of the terms “minority” and “majority”, researchers have defined these positions by their size and normativeness. The minority position typically has been defined as

¹Understanding this structural change whereby a minority in a society, science, or any other group becomes a majority (and vice versa) was the original impetus for Moscovici’s innovative theorising about social influence (Moscovici, 1976). Although his analysis of intra-individual conflict presumably triggered by minority advocacy and its cognitive resolution stand prominently in Moscovici’s theorising, they might be considered necessary intermediaries to the ultimately desired social change.

numerically infrequent and antinomic,² which contrasts with the numerically frequent and normative majority position (Moscovici, 1976, 1985). *The first postulate of our model is that these two positions are valued differently: Generally, the majority position is preferred to the minority position.* The presumed differing valuation is derived from the empirically well-documented discrepancy in the instrumentality of the two positions for the satisfaction of important goals (Brendl & Higgins, 1996). Indeed, with the exception of elites,³ majorities have many comparative advantages to minorities (Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972; Prewitt & Stone, 1973). These advantages are both tangible and intangible. They include easier access to jobs and better salaries (Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000), lower mortgage rates (Yinger, 1996), and better means to satisfy basic needs for security, safety, and protection (Harris, Howard, & Howard, 1986; Simon, 1998; Sweeney & Haney, 1992). Intangible advantages include satisfaction of higher-order needs for validation (Festinger, 1954), self-enhancement (Festinger, 1950; Moscovici, 1976), and social status (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In the absence of objective information, people overestimate the majority's determination of group decision outcomes (Allison, Beggan, McDonald, & Rettew, 1995), and the likelihood that they themselves are in the majority (Blanz, Mummendey, & Otten, 1995; Krueger & Clement, 1997).

Because of the general tendency for people to place themselves in the phenomenological majority, irrespective of whether they actually are, members of actual minorities tend to strongly overestimate the size of their groups (Krueger, 1998; Krueger & Clement, 1997). When, however, it is hard to deny an objectively indicated minority position, people often experience such a position as imposed by the majority. That is, they often experience their minority position as defined based on criteria originated from and developed by the majority (Tajfel, 1981). This likely stems from the many disadvantages associated with the minority position. Those disadvantages include restricted access to tangible and non-tangible rewards (Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000), discrimination, severe treatment within the criminal justice system (Hood & Cordovil, 1992; Unnervet & Hembroff, 1988), marginalisation, or even direct persecution (Moscovici, 1993, 1994). Although members of the minority may strongly identify with their group (Simon, 1998), their strong identification stems from the minority group's distinctiveness rather than its attractiveness. A minority social identity is likely to suffer unless defended through active

²Moscovici (1976) introduced the term antinomic to the minority influence literature in his extensive discussion about the need for anomic minorities lacking identity to become antinomic or opposing to the majority in order to exert influence.

³Elites are minorities in terms of their numerical infrequency. However, in contrast to other minorities, elites are more likely to be setting standards for the larger group rather than opposing them. Their norm-setting capacity typically derives from their high status, high power, or both.

coping strategies (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). General reluctance to identify with minorities (De Dreu, De Vries, Gordijn, & Schuurman, 1999; Mugny, Kaiser, Papastamou, & Pérez, 1984), especially when they are self-relevant (Crano & Chen, 1998; Wood, Pool, Leck, & Purvis, 1996), is a serious obstacle to minority influence. Indeed, minority is an inhibitory heuristic that triggers resistance to influence (Chaiken & Stangor, 1987; Mackie, 1987). Majority, in contrast, is a facilitative heuristic that promotes yielding to social influence (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Levine & Moreland, 1998). Alignment with a minority is attractive only when it is accompanied with high status; alignment with a majority, in contrast, can be attractive irrespective of the accompanying status (Ellemers, Doosje, Van Knippenberg, & Wilke, 1992; Simon & Hamilton, 1994). In short, the well-documented benefits associated with the majority position make it more attractive than the typically disadvantaged minority position.

Psychology of change: Moving away from the minority position versus moving away from the majority position

The overwhelming advantage of the majority position is in the core of social influence processes whereby the majority strives to maintain the preferred position whereas the minority strives to change it (Moscovici, 1976). When the minority succeeds in attracting a sufficient number of new supporters to its position, it is transformed to a new majority. This transformation necessarily alters the initial majority into a new minority. Because transformation from minority to majority represents movement from a disadvantaged to a privileged position, a *second postulate of our model is that change away from the minority position is experienced as a gain. Change away from the majority position, representing a movement in the opposite direction, is experienced as a loss.*

The seeming correspondence between minority gain and majority loss, however, need not translate into equivalently intense subjective experiences of change. According to prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), people tend to weight losses more strongly than corresponding gains. This general loss aversion manifests itself in many aspects of social life, including judgements of fairness (e.g., Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1991), political decisions (e.g., Jervis, 1992), and conflict negotiations (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 2000). In the context of change in numerical positions, loss aversion should be evident in more intense reactions by new minorities (who lose their initial majority position) than new majorities (who gain by moving away from their initial minority position). That is, *negative reactions to loss of the majority position should be stronger than positive reactions to gain of the majority position.*

The elegant simplicity of the loss-aversion principle, however, is not informative of the processes through which change affects the social dynamics

of groups. To understand these processes, we draw on social identity and self-categorisation theories (Tajfel, 1982; Turner et al., 1987). From this perspective, perceived similarity with others in relevant opinions provides a basis for a shared in-group category. Individuals who find their opinions supported by others (majority) should assimilate with and positively value the in-group category. Because self-categorisation at a socially inclusive level of in-group membership creates expectations of agreement and support (Turner & Oakes, 1989), disagreements should be negatively valued. When disagreements amount to the level that changes one's position from majority to minority, the result should be a decrease in valuation and ultimately de-categorisation from the group. By the same token, individuals whose opinions are initially rejected by others (minority) should be less likely to adopt the group as a social identity. As a result, they should consider others' reactions, including others' subsequent conversion to supporters, less consequential than if they identified with them. Therefore, change in majority and minority position within a group should be associated with an overall decrease in identification with the group: Former majorities should detach from the group whereas former minorities should not show comparable increases in attachment. As a result, the group's overall ability to function should be diminished in the immediate aftermath of change.

EMPIRICAL VALIDATION

Social change and group identification: A short road to separation but a long haul to unification

All tests of the gain–loss asymmetry model have been conducted in experimentally created interacting groups. The basic procedure involves one participant and three or more confederates, each of whom has been trained to provide scripted responses during the course of the group's interaction. These scripted responses place the participant in an opinion-based majority or minority faction, which either remains stable or is reversed during the experiment. Thus, in contrast to the prevailing methodological approach in the social influence research that treats social relations, including majority and minority positions, as merely information to be processed (Levine & Kaarbo, 2001; Prislin & Wood, 2005), our tests included actively experienced social positions within interacting groups.

The first two tests of the postulated asymmetry in reactions to social change involved four-member groups that exchanged opinions about involving social issues (Prislin, Limbert, & Bauer, 2000). In Study 1, one naïve undergraduate student and three confederates gathered for an investigation of “group communication”. Each group member completed a questionnaire on which they indicated their agreement or disagreement

with 15 statements about preservation of the environment. Study 2 was very similar, except that it purportedly investigated political campaigns and, therefore, used multiple issues in each session.⁴ Next, in both studies, the students shared their opinions on the 15 statements with the other group members, one statement at a time. Each person stated his or her (dis)agreement with the statement and then offered an argument for the particular position. The experimenter always structured the conversation so that the participant spoke first on each issue. In Study 1 this was explained as being needed to maintain “consistency” in the discussion. In Study 2 the participant always spoke first because he or she was trying to “win” the other members’ votes in a mock election. Having the participant always speak first allowed the confederates to adjust their agreement or disagreement with each statement and, therefore, place the participant in either a majority or minority position.

Depending on the experimental condition, individual participants either received support from two out of three confederates to enjoy an initial majority position or were opposed by all three confederates to be placed in an initial minority position of one. During the course of the interaction, these positions remained stable for a third of the participants. For another third, initial positions were partially changed when one of the confederates converted from opposing (supporting) to supporting (opposing) the individual participant. For the final third of the participants, initial positions were completely changed when two confederates converted from opposing (supporting) to supporting (opposing) the individual participant. At the end of the study, these participants found themselves in a position that was diametrically opposed to their position at the beginning of the group interaction⁵ (see Figure 1).

⁴The following issues were discussed in Study 2: Tax credit for children, term limits for politicians, crime victims’ families witnessing the execution of the criminal, US assistance to third-world countries, tax exemptions for religious institutions, decrease in legal immigration to the US, increase in military spending, the death penalty, suing a sitting president, assisted suicide, balanced budget priority, prosecuting adolescent murderers as adults, government regulation of healthcare costs, and parental consent for teenagers’ abortions.

⁵A preliminary study (Limbert, 1998) documented that conditions created in the first phase of the discussion, prior to any change, were comparable to those in the stable conditions. To establish this comparability, reactions of participants in the stable conditions, equivalent to those created in stable conditions in Study 1, were compared to reactions of participants who engaged in the same but shorter discussion with others. That is, their discussion with others who either supported them (majority) or opposed them (minority) ended at the point where in Study 1 change was introduced. Comparability of reactions in the “short discussion” conditions and stable conditions indicate that the first phase of the discussion clearly established the intended minority or majority experience. Thus, differences in reactions between stable and change conditions can be attributed to movements away from the initially established position rather than to shorter experience in the initially established position.

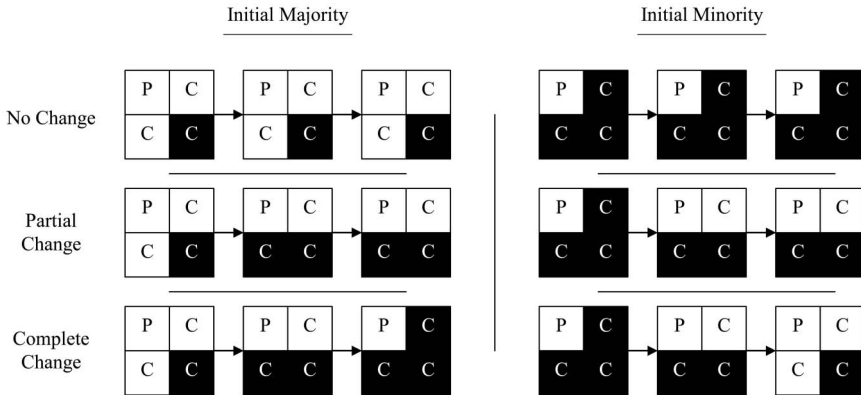


Figure 1. Experimental conditions (Prislin et al., 2000, Study 1). P = participant; C = confederate. Shaded areas indicate disagreement with the participant; white areas indicate agreement with the participant.

To test our hypothesis about the asymmetrical effects of change in minority and majority positions on identification with the superordinate group, self-categorisation and group valuation were assessed as the cognitive and evaluative components of group identification, respectively. These two components of identification, consistent with Tajfel's (1982) multidimensional conceptualisation of the construct, are regularly included in other multidimensional approaches to social identification (for review, see Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). We operationalised self-categorisation as perceived similarity between the group and oneself (Brewer & Weber, 1994; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Simon, Pantaleo, & Mummendey, 1995), and group valuation as attraction to the group (Simon et al., 1995).⁶ It should be emphasised that these measures assessed self-categorisation with and attraction towards the *superordinate* group and not just with one's majority or minority *faction*.

In both studies, the hypothesised asymmetry was observed in both perception of group–self similarity and group attraction. As shown in Figure 2, which combines group–self similarity data across both studies,

⁶To document that self-categorisation (measured as group–self similarity) and group valuation (measured as group attraction) represent two separate, though correlated, dimensions of social identity rather than two indices of a single dimension, we compared the two-factor and single-factor models for each of the reported data sets. Confirmatory factor analyses revealed that the two-factor model consistently represented data better than the single-factor model; all $ps < .01$. As expected, the two factors were positively correlated (r s from .64 to .76). In sum, these data support the contention that self-categorisation and group valuation are two separate, but related, dimensions of social identification. Details of these analyses can be found in Prislin and Christensen (in press).

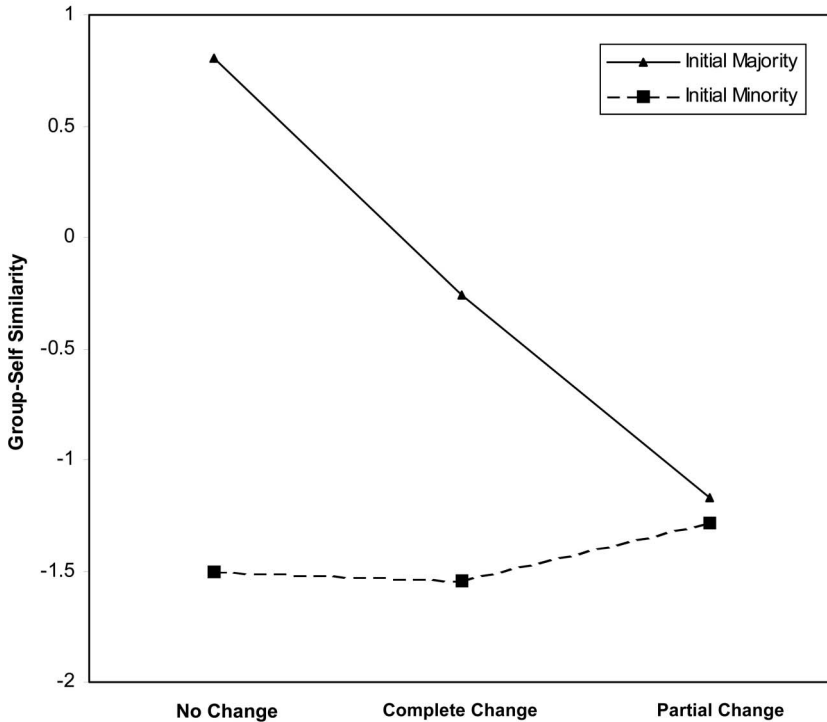


Figure 2. Averaged group–self similarity scores from Studies 1 and 2 in Prislin et al. (2000).

participants who moved from the majority to the minority perceived the group as significantly less similar to themselves than did those who remained in the majority. In sharp contrast, participants who moved from the minority to the majority showed only a small increase in perception of group–self similarity that did not reach the level of statistical significance in either of the two studies. Mirroring this pattern, group attraction data revealed that participants who lost their majority position found the group significantly less attractive than did those who remained in the majority throughout the group interaction. In contrast, participants who gained the majority position found the group as unattractive as did those who remained in the minority.

Findings from these studies strongly support the notion that gain of the majority position is not the mirror image of loss of the same position. As predicted by our gain–loss asymmetry model, the road to identification with the group in response to becoming the majority is much tougher to travel than the road of disidentification in response to becoming the minority. Whereas disidentification in response to loss appears dramatic, identification

in response to gain of the majority position appears more as a weak tendency in thawing the ice (reaction towards the group) than a substantial warming-up to the group.

This interpretation is further supported by additional findings from Study 2 about anticipated future reactions with the group. Gain of the majority position neither significantly increased expectancies for positive interactions nor significantly lowered expectancies for negative interactions in the future. In contrast, loss of the majority position substantially lowered expectations for positive interactions. This was reflected in the new minority's anticipation that the group would be not only less helpful in the future, but also more hostile. Moreover, they intended to respond in kind by being less helpful and more hostile. Given that openly admitting to intended hostility is socially undesirable, the latter finding suggests that the former majority's (new minority's) experience of loss can be so profound as to supersede the normal bounds of decorum.

Converging evidence from all the examined reactions supports the hypothesis that change represents more than a mechanical reversal of positions. Although the minority switching a position with the majority still leaves the group with two factions, the group with reversed factions is not the same as the group with stable factions. Because disintegrative forces unleashed by loss of the majority position (e.g., decategorisation, negative group evaluation, expectations for negative interactions) appear stronger than integrative forces activated by gain of the majority position (e.g., self-categorisation, positive group evaluation, expectations for positive interactions), the group as a whole appears weak and fragile in the immediate aftermath of social change. Thus, contrary to the conceptualisation of social change as a cyclical renewal (Patterson, 1999), advocated in several sociological models (Harper, 1998; Prewitt & Stone, 1973), but also in a rare socio-psychological model (Taylor & McKirnan, 1984), our data indicate the group as a whole changes when its factions reverse their positions.

Social change and group membership: Exodus of the disidentified

The changed nature of a group whose minority and majority factions reverse their positions should be evident in the group's functioning. In groups with permeable boundaries (Hirschman, 1970; Tajfel, 1981; Ziller, 1965), a minimum requirement for effective functioning is the relative stability of group membership (Moreland & Levine, 1988). Although the gradual alteration of group membership that occurs through group development need not adversely affect the group's functioning (Moreland & Levine, 1988), a dramatic en masse exit of members must obstruct realisation of

many group goals. We hypothesised that such a dramatic exit would occur in a group whose minority and majority factions reverse their positions. Upon reversal, the value of group membership should decrease for both factions. As a result, the overall tendency to exit the group in the aftermath of change should be stronger than a tendency to exit a group in which no change in the majority and minority positions occurred. This hypothesised increase in the tendency to exit the group should result from the previously documented increase in decategorisation and negative evaluation of the group whose majority and minority factions reverse their positions. Thus, decategorisation and negative evaluation should mediate the effects of change on group membership.

In a study that tested this hypothesis (Prislin & Christensen, *in press*, Study 1), participants were told that the experimenters were studying the functioning of different types of groups, including debate groups, problem-solving groups, and decision-making groups. With an explanation that they may participate in more than one group, all students were assigned, ostensibly randomly, to begin their participation in a debate group. Each group, consisting of a naïve participant and three confederates, debated 15 social issues. The issues and the structure of this debate were nearly identical to the procedure used in Prislin et al. (2000), described above. At the beginning of the debate, half of the participants found themselves in the minority position and the other half in the majority position. These positions either remained stable, or were partially or completely changed. Following the debate, participants indicated their perceptions of group–self similarity, group attraction, and their preferences for participation in the supposed second part of the experiment. Participants were told that they had the option of continuing in the second part of the study with their existing group (stay) or with another group (exit).

As hypothesised, stability of the initial majority position significantly affected participants' preferences for group membership. In contrast to the participants whose initial majority position remained stable and who strongly preferred to remain with their existing group, those whose initial majority position changed to minority opted to exit the group. Stability of the initial minority position, however, did not affect preferences for group membership: When participants initially found themselves in the minority, they opted to exit the group even when their initial positions changed to the majority. Thus, groups with stable factions had majorities whose preferences to remain in the group were significantly stronger than those expressed by minorities. In contrast, groups with reversed factions had new majorities and minorities who preferred to exit the group equally strongly. Mediation analysis corroborated the hypothesis that these effects of change in the initial minority and majority position on preferences for group membership

were mediated by self-categorisation with and evaluation of the group (see Figure 3).

It appears, therefore, that disidentification in response to loss of the majority position, which is not counteracted by an increase in identification in response to gain of the majority position, leaves the group functionally impaired. When there are not serious obstacles to leaving, the group faces a threat of exodus of its members shortly after its minority and majority factions reverse their positions. Members newly in the majority, just as those newly in the minority, prefer to join a new group over staying with their current group. Notably, their preference for social mobility involved a choice of an unknown out-group and not the typically assumed higher-status out-group (Tajfel, 1981).

In summary, the reviewed studies provided strong evidence of asymmetrical reactions to change in minority and majority positions. A host of intensely negative reactions to loss of the majority position (decreases in ratings of similarity, attraction, expectations for interactions, and desire to remain in the group) converge to indicate that losing the majority position triggers disengagement from the group. This deteriorating trend does not appear to be counterbalanced by improved reactions towards the group in response to gain of the majority position. Immediately after gaining the majority position, a former minority appears as disengaged from the group as a stable minority. Strong disintegrative forces activated by loss of the majority position, and an absence of integrative forces in response to gain of the majority position, combine to weaken group functioning. Groups with changed minority and majority factions may suffer an exodus of members

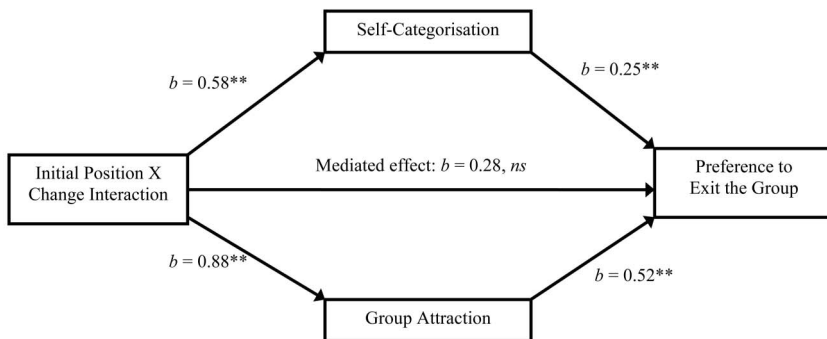


Figure 3. Mediation model based on Prislín and Christensen, Study 1 (in press). The *b*s represent unstandardised regression coefficients for the final model, which indicate that both self-categorisation and group attraction mediate the relationship between the experimental conditions and preference to exit the group (double asterisks indicate $p < .01$). The statistically significant reduction in the effect of the experimental conditions (from $b = 0.89$ to 0.28) was a function of both mediators (both Z s > 3.01).

from both factions if there are no serious obstacles to leaving the group or incentives to remain in the group. Some suggestive evidence of this tendency in “real-life” groups comes from indicators of emigration from South Africa—a country that recently experienced peaceful but dramatic social change. Although a complex aetiology of emigration dictates an extreme caution in interpretation, a substantial increase in emigration immediately after the 1994 change (Meyor, Brown, & Kaplan, 2000), among both Blacks and Whites (Crush, 2000), speaks to the potential generalisability of our laboratory findings to “real-life” groups. Additional suggestive evidence in support of our model comes from a survey showing that in the aftermath of social change in their country, a newly powerful Black South African majority reported little improvement in their lives, whereas a newly powerless White South African minority reported substantial deterioration (Finchilescu & Dawes, 1998).

ESTABLISHING BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

Social change and social context: Asymmetry in a group but indifference in an aggregate

The gain–loss asymmetry model of change in the majority and minority positions is premised on the differential valuation of the two positions. In the introduction, we reviewed extensive empirical evidence in support of the difference in these positions. The remarkable evidence for the superiority of the majority position in satisfaction of psychological, social, and material needs and the resultant preference for the majority position justify our hypothesis that movements away from the majority position are experienced as a loss. Implied in our reasoning (and in much of the reviewed research) is the notion that majority and minority positions acquire their meanings in the specific social context within which they emerge. Social context or interaction with others can be construed at various levels of organisation (Allen, 1985). On the one hand, social interactions may be represented as exchanges among interdependent members who perceive themselves as a group (Campbell, 1958; Turner et al., 1987). Alternatively, social interactions may be construed at an infragroup level, made up of separate individuals who do not perceive themselves as members of a common entity (Allen, 1985).

These variations in the construal of the social environment should change the meaning of the majority and minority positions that emerge in the course of social interactions. When interactions with others are construed at a socially inclusive level of group membership, they are expected to be harmonious. Those who are perceived as members of the self-defining (group) category are expected to be supportive (Turner & Oakes, 1989). Within the group context, therefore, others’ support and the resultant

majority position should be expected and positively valued. Violations of this expectation should be experienced as negative and movements away from the majority position should be experienced as a loss. In contrast, when interactions with others are construed as an aggregate of individuals, there is no basis to expect mutual agreement and support. A lack of shared social identity, which diminishes the relevance of others' reactions and preference for their support, should also diminish concerns about being in the majority. If so, then movements away from the majority position within the context of an aggregate of individuals should be experienced as substantially less negative than within the context of a social group.

This hypothesis was examined in a study that ostensibly compared how opinions that individuals (the aggregate context) or groups (the group context) expressed in a laboratory compare to those expressed in real life (Prislin, Brewer, & Wilson, 2002). Similar to the studies described previously, one participant and three confederates rated their agreement with 10 statements on a variety of social issues (e.g., government regulation of healthcare, the death penalty). In the aggregate context, participants were told that the researchers were interested in their responses as individuals and, therefore, each participant was assigned a code number so that responses within the group could be separated. During the discussion, participants in the aggregate condition stated their code number each time before indicating their opinion, and the experimenter recorded each individual's position in a log immediately after it was stated. In the group context, participants were told that the researchers were interested in the overall attitudes of the group. Thus, the experimenter waited until all four members of the group expressed their opinions, and recorded the prevailing group opinion. Across both conditions, participants were initially placed in either the majority position (when two of the three confederates agreed with him or her) or in the minority position (when all three confederates disagreed with the participant's opinions). These positions either remained stable throughout the session or were changed when two of the three confederates switched from agreeing (disagreeing) to disagreeing (agreeing) with the participant following the fifth issue.

In support of the hypothesis that social context moderates reactions to changes in the majority and minority positions, previous findings about asymmetrical reactions were replicated in the group context but not in the aggregate context. In the group context, loss of the majority position triggered strong negative reactions that were not paralleled with equally intense positive reactions to gain of the majority position. Specifically, participants in the group context whose initial majority position remained stable, in comparison to those who moved to the minority, found their interaction partners substantially more attractive and viewed them as more likely to engage in positive interactions in the future. Participants initially in

the minority found their interaction partners equally unattractive and not particularly likely to be positive in future interactions, regardless of the stability of their positions. In the aggregate context, however, participants were indifferent to their initial positions and stability or change in those positions. All participants found those with whom they interacted equally (un)attractive and had similarly moderate expectations for positive interactions with them in the future.

Social context moderated not only reactions to change but also reactions to stable majority positions. Results supported the hypothesis that stable majorities in a group value their position more than do stable majorities in an aggregate. Specifically, stable majorities in a group, in comparison to their counterparts in an aggregate, found others significantly more attractive and likely to be beneficial in the future interactions. Moreover, an analysis of the participants' free-format responses about thoughts they had had while in the experiment revealed that stable majorities within a group spontaneously interpreted disagreements as deviance, whereas their counterparts within an aggregate interpreted disagreements as diversity. Interestingly, upon losing their majority position within a group, members of the former majority (new minority) reinterpreted the meaning of disagreements towards diversity (see Figure 4). That is, members formerly in the majority, in comparison to those who remained in the majority throughout interaction, were significantly more likely to construe disagreements as welcome diversity in opinions.

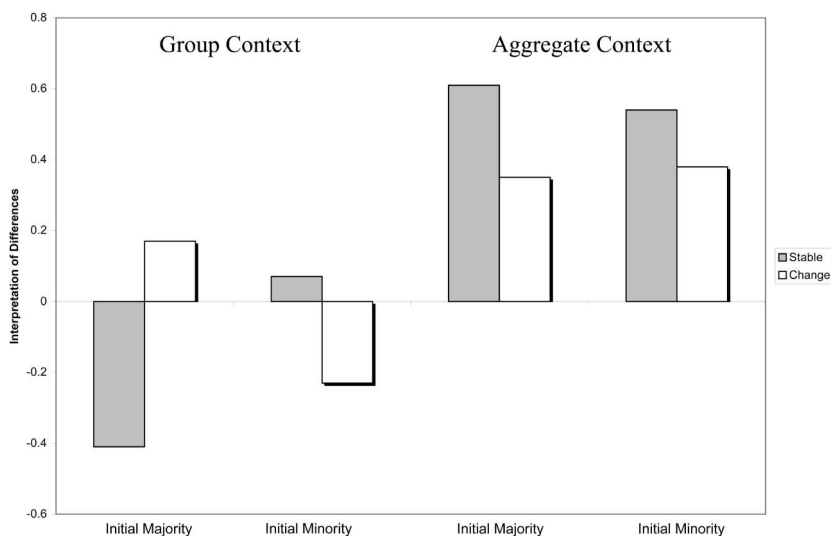


Figure 4. Interpretation of differences in opinions (Prislin et al., 2002). Positive numbers indicate proportionally more thoughts interpreting differences as diversity rather than deviance.

Mode of change: Asymmetrical reactions to change via group conversion but symmetrical reactions to change via group expansion

The research reviewed so far supports the conclusion that the gain–loss asymmetry model explains reactions to change in a group whose members convert from opposing to supporting the minority opinion. Conversion of the existing group members, however, is not the only means of reversal in initial minority and majority positions. As we have already discussed, open groups with permeable boundaries may lose some of their members but they may also attract new members (Levine & Moreland, 1985; Ziller, 1965). When a sufficient number of new members align themselves with the minority, an effective reversal in the minority and majority positions may occur. Change, therefore, may be brought about through the process of group expansion whereby newcomers increase the size of the former minority sufficiently to outnumber the former majority.

Newcomers likely differ from converts in terms of the value of their support for the formerly minority position. In contrast to converts whose newly offered support may be ignored or even actively resisted because of their initial opposition (Crano & Chen, 1998; Wood et al., 1996), support offered by newcomers should be welcome (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2004). Not only is the support of newcomers not tainted by previous opposition, but also it is offered in the face of the (initial) majority. The presumed differences in the valuation of newcomers' and converts' support should elicit different reactions to becoming a majority. When providing support, newcomers should be perceived as more similar to the self than converts from the other faction. The hypothesised stronger perception of newcomer–self similarity than convert–self similarity should in turn cause a stronger perception of similarity with the overall group (self-categorisation) among those who gain the majority position. In contrast to differential self-categorisation in response to the two modes of gaining the majority position, decategorisation in response to loss of the majority position should be uniform regardless of the mode of change. That is, negative reactions to loss of the majority position should be comparable when loss is due to opposition from newcomers or converts away from one's position.

In a test of these hypotheses (Prislin & Christensen, 2002), eight-member groups consisting of a naïve participant and seven confederates exchanged opinions about 10 social issues within the context of a mock political campaign. The structure of the first half of this experiment was nearly identical to Study 2 in Prislin et al. (2000) described above. The individual participant, who was required to act as a political candidate, was initially either supported by most confederates to enjoy the majority position or opposed by most confederates to be placed in the minority position. For one half of the

participants, the experiment continued in the same manner as earlier studies. That is, participants' positions either remained stable or were changed when several of the confederates converted from supporting (opposing) to opposing (supporting) the participant in the second half of the "campaign".

The other half of the participants, however, had their "constituency" expanded when several additional confederates joined their session. This expansion was accomplished when a second experimenter, with several supposed participants in tow, knocked on the door following the fifth issue. In a manner overheard by the entire group, this new experimenter explained to the main experimenter that "some professor" was using the room in which their experiment was supposed to be held. After a brief conversation between the experimenters, they agreed that the new participants (actually confederates) should join the existing group. The new confederates either added to the existing support (opposition) for the participants, thereby preserving their initial positions, or reversed the existing support (opposition), thereby changing participants' initial positions.

In support of the hypothesis about the moderating effect of mode of change on reactions to becoming a majority, a significantly stronger perception of similarity with newcomers than converts was found among those whose positions changed from a minority to a majority. Mediation analyses revealed that this difference in supporter-self perception (i.e., self-categorisation with one's *faction*), in turn, resulted in a stronger self-categorisation with the overall group among those who became the majority through group expansion than group conversion. As expected, mode of change did not affect reactions to becoming a minority: New minorities perceived uniformly little similarity with supporters or the entire group, and they had uniformly low expectations for positive interactions in the future (see Table 1).

In summary, the asymmetry between strong negative reactions to loss of the majority position and minimal positive reactions to gain of the majority position appears to be a group phenomenon, occurring when some group members switch their alliances. Our findings indicate that others' support and the resultant majority position acquire their positive connotation only in an interaction with those sharing the same social (group) identity. Lack of shared social identity within the aggregate context strips the value of the majority position, causing indifference to others' conversion and the resultant change (both loss and gain) in one's numerical position. Lack of shared social identity with an initial majority faction within a group likely also causes a minority-turned-majority to meet majority members' conversion to their position with indifference. Although reacting with indifference to support offered by former opponents, an initial minority appears to welcome support from unknown newcomers to the group. Newcomer support facilitates development of shared identity in a new majority, thus stabilising the group in the aftermath of change.

TABLE 1
Group–self and supporter–self similarity

	Conversion				Expansion			
	Initial Majority		Initial Majority		Initial Majority		Initial Majority	
	Stable (<i>n</i> = 15)	Change (<i>n</i> = 15)	Stable (<i>n</i> = 16)	Change (<i>n</i> = 16)	Stable (<i>n</i> = 15)	Change (<i>n</i> = 18)	Stable (<i>n</i> = 16)	Change (<i>n</i> = 16)
<i>Group – self similarity</i>								
<i>M</i>	2.10	– 1.77	– 2.88	– 1.81	1.13	– 2.64	– 3.00	0.56
<i>SD</i>	0.95	1.47	1.31	1.49	2.07	1.85	1.08	2.19
<i>Supporter – self similarity</i>								
<i>M</i>	2.23	1.60	1.59	– 0.44	2.00	1.78	1.56	2.09
<i>SD</i>	0.73	1.57	1.59	2.06	1.46	1.43	1.45	1.55

Perception of group–self similarity and supporter–self similarity as a function of mode of change, initial position, and stability of initial position (adapted from Prisin & Christensen, 2002). Higher numbers, recorded on a scale from – 4 to + 4, indicate more similarity.

ON BECOMING A MAJORITY: FROM CHANGE IN NUMERICAL POSITION TO CHANGE IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL POSITION

There is an irony in our consistent finding that former minorities react less than enthusiastically towards those whom they successfully convert to their position and towards the entire group in which they become a new majority. On the one hand, almost all minorities strive to become a majority (Moscovici, 1993), carefully crafting social influence strategies for converting others to their position (Levine & Kaarbo, 2001). Yet when they succeed, they appear to distance themselves from converts, remaining psychologically disengaged from the group. Change in numerical size is apparently necessary but not sufficient to change the phenomenological position of a former minority.

Several findings from our previous studies suggest that the crux of the problem may be a contradiction in the conversion sought by a minority. Others' instability, inherent in any conversion, is the *conditio sine qua non* for a minority to become a majority. Yet the very same instability desired by a minority may pose a threat to a new majority. That is, the change being sought by an active minority likely is feared by a successful minority that has achieved change (new majority). Our findings about the new majority's reluctance to accept converts as full members of the ingroup (Prislin & Christensen, 2002), and generally low expectancies for future supportive interactions (Prislin et al., 2000, 2002; Prislin & Christensen, 2002), seem to support this possibility. It appears, therefore, that a new majority needs reassurances about the reliability of converts' support to be convinced that its position is not just numerically superior but also enduring.

Becoming a majority over time: Gradual increase in phenomenological change

If our reasoning that an implicit notion of "conversion as inherently unreliable" causes less than enthusiastic reactions to becoming a majority, then evidence refuting the notion should improve a former minority's responses to becoming a majority. For example, even though others' conversion could be dismissed as inconsistency rather than an informed response to the minority's well-argued position (Prislin et al., 2002), continuous support for the minority position should be reassuring. That is, enduring support following conversion should provide evidence about the authenticity of a convert's new position. Thus, prolonged experience in the new majority position within a group should facilitate phenomenological change such that the former minority should increasingly accept the group as its own. The more time that the initial minority spends in a subsequently

acquired majority position, the more likely it should be to perceive the group as similar to the self and the more attracted it should be to the group.

The effects of time spent in the acquired majority position on group identification were examined in a study ostensibly on the functioning of debate groups over a period of time (Prislin & Christensen, in press, Study 2). Across five conditions, participants were initially placed in the minority position in a procedure similar to the one used by Prislin et al. (2000). In one of these conditions, the participant was placed in the minority position for one session. In the four additional conditions participants, who were placed in the minority position in the first session, returned for either one, two, three, or four additional sessions over the period of 1 to 4 additional weeks. During the second session, two of the three confederates, who had opposed the participant in the first session, switched their alliances to move the participant from the minority to the majority. Participants who returned for additional sessions continued to enjoy their majority position for either 1 additional week, 2 weeks, or 3 additional weeks. In total, there were five experimental conditions that began in the minority position: a 1-week stable minority, and 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-week minorities that changed to majorities during the second session.

In support of our hypothesis that prolonged experience in a gained majority position gradually improves the initial minority's negative reactions towards the group, significant linear increases were found in both perception of group–self similarity and group attraction. Each additional week of support strengthened the new majority's self-categorisation with the group and positive valuation of the group, which indicates that the new majority was in the process of gradual identification with the group (Table 2). It is worth mentioning that the gradual nature of this process was not caused by the new majority's failure to notice the abrupt increase in support for its position. Our measure of participants' awareness of support indicated that gaining the majority position was noticed as soon as it occurred. Numerical change, however, did not translate instantaneously into phenomenological change: The former minority's identification with the group lagged behind the increase in numerical support for their position. Only when the initial increase in support was verified as continuous over a period of time, was it translated into change in the phenomenological position.⁷

⁷It could be argued that mere exposure to others rather than their prolonged support was responsible for these effects. If so, then mere exposure (Zajonc, 1980) to silent others who do not voice either support or opposition would produce the same effects. To the extent that mere exposure to "silent" others signals their benevolence (absence of malevolence), they could indeed become more attractive. However, self-categorisation in the same group with "silent" others is less likely. Self-categorisation requires social comparison on a relevant dimension. Mere exposure, in the absence of support or opposition, does not provide crucial information needed for social comparison.

TABLE 2
Group–self similarity, group attraction, and awareness of others' agreement

	<i>1-week minority</i> (<i>n</i> = 22)	<i>2-week change</i> (<i>n</i> = 22)	<i>3-week change</i> (<i>n</i> = 22)	<i>4-week change</i> (<i>n</i> = 25)	<i>5-week change</i> (<i>n</i> = 23)
<i>Group–self similarity</i>					
<i>M</i>	–2.70	–1.59	–1.36	–1.28	–0.93
<i>SD</i>	1.07	2.10	1.75	2.51	2.29
<i>Group attraction</i>					
<i>M</i>	–0.46	–0.20	–0.09	0.04	0.91
<i>SD</i>	1.99	2.04	1.42	2.31	1.44
<i>Awareness of agreement</i>					
<i>M</i>	–3.86	2.23	3.05	3.12	3.13
<i>SD</i>	0.90	1.15	0.70	0.73	0.58

Perception of group–self similarity, group attraction, and awareness of others' agreement at the end of the group interaction (adapted from Prislin & Christensen, in press study 2). Higher numbers, recorded on scales from –4 to +4, indicate more similarity, attraction, and perceived agreement.

These findings testify to the importance of a time-oriented perspective in understanding social influence and group dynamics. Social constructions of influence attempts and group memberships evolve over time, as do reactions to subsequent changes. Only by incorporating a time perspective in our research can these variations be captured (Arrow, McGrath, & Berdahl, 2000). Yet it may take an exceptionally resilient minority in the research community to overcome the formidable obstacles to the “time-perspective” approach.

Becoming a majority for the right reason: New majorities only value certain types of conversion

Translation of continuous support into gradual increases in a new majority's identification with a group likely occurs because enduring support convinces the new majority that the conversion is reliable and, therefore, the new majority's position is secure. For this gradual increase in group identification to develop, the new majority must remain in the group upon winning numerical superiority. Stability of group membership, however, may be a condition hard to satisfy immediately in the aftermath of social change. As we have demonstrated in a study discussed earlier (Prislin & Christensen, in press), when there are no obstacles to exit from a group, change in minority and majority positions may trigger exodus from the group. The successful new majority appears to be just as likely to exit the group as are their losing counterparts who were forced into the minority position. Thus, unless there

is some external glue (e.g., high cost of leaving) to keep the group together, the new majority may not stay in the group long enough to be convinced of the stability of its position over time.

An alternative to the temporal consistency of converter support is converts' verbal explanation for their shift. If converts indicate that their shift was motivated by a genuine belief in the position they are adopting, the new majority should identify sooner with their new supporters and also with the group as a whole. This could be viewed as a case of reciprocated social influence: If the initial minority successfully persuades others on *issues*, the converts must then convince their new faction of their *sincerity*. In contrast, if the reasons offered for the shift are superficial (i.e., having little to do with merits of the initial minority's position), then the new majority should remain just as detached from their new supporters as they were prior to conversion. Also, faced with superficial reasons for conversion to its position, the new majority should be just as detached from the whole group as it was while in minority. The logic of these hypotheses is empirically supported by the findings indicating that attitudes attributed to rational reasons, perceived as prevalent within one's own group, are regarded as more desirable than attitudes attributed to any other reason (Kenworthy & Miller, 2002).

Using our mock political campaign paradigm (Prislin et al., 2000, Study 2), we tested these hypotheses in a study (Prislin, Levine, & Christensen, 2004) that included sessions with a naïve participant (always a political candidate) and five confederates (voters). The participant attempted to win the support of the confederates, offering them his or her strongest arguments for taking a pro or a contra position on 10 statements related to the legalisation of marijuana. Initially, the participant was placed in a minority position, having received support from a single confederate. The initial minority position either remained unchanged or was reversed to the majority position in the second half of the "campaign" when two confederates converted from opposing to supporting the participant. Upon casting their ballots, confederates who voted for the participant made scripted statements that explained reasons for their endorsement. They offered reasons, selected in a separate study, that were indicative of either a genuine adoption of the participant's position (e.g., "the candidate's arguments made a lot of sense"), or a superficial switch to the participant's position (e.g., "doesn't cost me anything"). Confederates in a control condition offered no reasons for their endorsement of the candidate.

Findings uniformly supported the hypothesis that a new majority's identification with the group is moderated by the quality of support for its position. Genuine support made the group more attractive, and generated greater self-categorisation with the group than either superficial or unexplained support. Similarly, genuine support made the faction of

supporters more attractive and likely to be perceived as in-group members than either superficial or unexplained support. Virtually identical reactions of the new majority to superficial and unexplained support suggest that in the absence of an explanation, conversion is suspected to be inauthentic.

In summary, it appears that the minority agenda might be more ambitious than (implicitly) recognised in the social influence literature. Not only do minorities strive to convert their opponents to supporters, but they also strive to make the conversion genuine. That is, before accepting converts and the group within which conversion transforms them into a majority, minorities appear to seek “proof” of the authenticity of change. Consistency in converts’ support appears to signal authenticity on the ground that only genuine change to the originally minority position would sustain conversion over time. As convincing as consistency may be, it may not materialise if general detachment from the group immediately after change causes mass exodus from the group. A comparably authentic alternative apparently is the attribution of conversion to the merits of the minority position. This pattern suggests that minorities seek not only to influence (others to adopt its position) but also to be influenced (by others about the authenticity of change to the minority position).⁸ When, in the process of reciprocal influence, former minorities attain numerical superiority *and* authenticity, they appear to undergo phenomenological change evident in their increased identification with the group in which they became a majority. Their increased identification provides a counterbalance to a new minority’s disidentification, thus stabilising the group.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Social influence research has traditionally focused on the cognitive dynamics of individuals exposed to minority advocacy. Neglected in much of the current thought are the dynamics of a group whose active minority transforms itself into a majority through successful advocacy of its position. We suspect that the paucity of thought on group aspects of change reflects, among other things, an implied subscription to a notion of change as a cyclical recurrence. When, in the perpetual battle of social influence, a minority becomes a majority and a majority becomes a minority, all that changes is the party holding a more (less) desirable position. The larger system or group presumably remains the same. Under this assumption, there

⁸We recognise that seeking proofs of the authenticity of change to their position may not be equally important to all minorities. For example, political minorities whose main goal is to win elections may not be concerned about the motives of those who convert to vote for them (Levine & Kaarbo, 2001). We suspect, however, that even these instrumentally oriented minorities would prefer genuine to superficial converts to their position.

is little reason to focus on a group whose presumed constancy may inspire cynicism about the futility of change rather than scientific interest in it.

Challenging this notion, our gain–loss asymmetry model of change in minority and majority positions posits that winning or losing the preferred majority position alters reality not only for the involved parties but also for the entire group. The group is assumed to be fragile following reversal of its minority and majority factions because general loss aversion triggers more intense negative reactions to a loss of the majority position than positive reactions to a gain of the majority position. In support of this proposition, a series of studies documented that strong detachment from the group in response to loss of the majority position is not counterbalanced by a comparable increase in attachment to the group in response to gain of the majority position. Immediately following change in minority and majority positions, a weakened group is in need of regulatory mechanisms to restore its functioning.

Our conceptualisation of social change and the proposed model subscribe to the idea that in social influence, social relations within a group and evaluative reactions towards attitude objects are closely related. Our position that social influence research in general, and minority influence research in particular, should be extended to examine group aspects of change does not undermine the importance of minority influence research in the tradition of attitude change. On the contrary, it points out that changes in attitudes in response to minority influence can have more profound consequences than typically recognised. Changed attitudes can change group dynamics. The idea, of course, is hardly novel. Half a century ago, Asch argued that “. . . the investigation of attitudes brings us to the center of the person’s social relations and to the heart of the dynamics of group processes” (Asch, 1952, p. 577).⁹ Our research programme has begun to demonstrate how the heart of group dynamics changes in response to alterations in the attitudinal landscape, just as the heart of attitude dynamics changes in response to alterations in the social landscape (for review of the latter, see Prislin & Wood, 2005).

The presented series of studies was a first necessary step towards documenting that the changing distributions of (minority and majority) attitudes in a group also represent change of the group. In keeping with this idea, the next goal in developing the model will be to explain dynamics of intra-group relations in the aftermath of social change. Our present conjecture about relations between newly established minority and majority

⁹Also, Moscovici (1976) argued that “. . . in social influence, relations with others take precedence over relations with objects, and inter-individual dynamics take precedence over intra-individual dynamics” (p. 106). Yet minority influence research has focused on the latter (see Levine & Kaarbo, 2001, for discussion of possible reasons).

factions within a group is informed by the already discussed effects of social change on reactions towards the group as a whole. In addition, equally informative are our preliminary findings about the effects of social change on strength of attitudes targeted in minority advocacy (Prislin et al., 2000, Study 1). These findings demonstrated a significant strengthening of attitudes in the former minority (new majority). Importantly, stronger attitudes were indicated by a substantial increase in latitude of rejection and attitude importance (Petty & Krosnick, 1995). That is, upon acquiring the majority position, former minorities broadened the scope of attitudinal positions they considered unacceptable and simultaneously increased the importance of the issue under consideration. Decreased tolerance on an issue of increasing importance—within a group that they have not yet accepted—will likely make the new majority noncooperative, if not outright hostile, towards a new minority.¹⁰ This echoes John Stuart Mill's warning that "... the majority, or those who succeed in making themselves accepted as the majority... may desire to oppress" (Mill, 1859/1956, p. 6).

If this prediction about enmity of new majorities materialises, what are possible responses of new minorities? Their dramatic disidentification from the group suggests that they are not likely to channel their grievances into an appeal to the group or its segments for support for their cause (Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Wenzel, 2000). Disidentification from the group takes away the common ground needed to legitimise their appeals. Thus, unless they are able to leave, new minorities are more likely to engage in direct negotiations if not adversarial confrontations with the new majority (Wenzel, 2002).

Though highly speculative, these ideas about intra-group tensions in the aftermath of social change appear to be supported by some "real-world" evidence. A relatively benign example of the new majority's intolerance for opposition comes from the recent history of the relationship between two major political parties in the United States. In 1995, shortly after becoming the majority in the US Congress, the Republican Party virtually shut down the government in response to Democratic opposition to its programme. Less benign are examples of intolerance observed in ethnic groups that became majorities in newly founded countries of Eastern Europe, from Baltic states in the north to successor states of the former Yugoslavia in the south. In the latter case, a combination of intolerance in new majorities, adversarial confrontation by new minorities, and mutually agreed refusal of an inclusive identity proved deadly for all parties involved.

The picture of the aftermath of social change painted here appears bleak. Yet change in majority and minority positions is not only likely, but often it is

¹⁰It is worth noting that attitudinal and group-reaction data complemented each other to inform our conclusion about likely enmity of a new majority.

a desirable mechanism that prevents stalemate and provides fuel to the engine of progress. If so, then a challenge for many groups, from work teams to political parties to societies at large, is to develop strategies that will enable them to benefit from change but guard them against negative consequences of change. One possible strategy is to emphasise diversity of opinions rather than any particular opinion as a defining characteristic of a group. This strategy, however, may be more viable for some groups (e.g., work groups, problem-solving groups) than others (e.g., political parties). A more universally helpful strategy would involve divorcing (opinion-based) majority and minority positions within a group from differential access to valued outcomes (Brendl & Higgins, 1996; see also Sidanius & Veniegas, 2000). This should suppress some instrumental motives for preference for the majority and presumably negative reactions (towards minorities or a group in which one became a minority) in service of those motives. Yet as long as being in the majority continues to satisfy a number of psychological needs, it will continue to be the preferred position and minorities will continue to strive to become majorities. Acknowledging this, as well as possible negative consequences of change, groups are well advised to institute regulatory mechanisms that would channel social influence processes in the aftermath of change towards constructive solutions. Normative support for social constructions of most (though not all) differences within a group as diversity rather than deviance should foster such constructive solutions, as should normative opposition to destructive behaviours.

Although it would be naïve to expect that normative regulation would eliminate destructive tendencies, it should make them less likely. This need for people to limit their power over themselves, suggested by our research, was eloquently argued by John Stuart Mill (1859/1956) in a book with a telling title: *On Liberty*. In the book, Mill warned that the need to be on guard against the possible abuse of power (by majorities) especially applies to democracies—the very same societies in which social change occurs through the power of social influence rather than social influence of power. Heeding his warning may well be a secret of the survival of such societies.

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