

**Paradoxical effects of categorization in minority
influence: when being an outgroup is an advantage**

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Abstract

In a 2 x 2 factorial design, 165 high school girls gave their opinions about abortion (direct influence) and about contraception (indirect influence) after reading a message advocating abortion said to have been written by either an ingroup (same sex) or an outgroup (opposite sex) minority and explicitly opposed by the majority opinion of either the ingroup or the outgroup. Results show that there is less direct influence when the ingroup majority is opposed to the minority, and more direct influence when the process of identification is less involved. Indirect influence appears in an intergroup context where categorization of majority and minority into different groups is superimposed on their ideological dissent, which has the effect of allowing recognition of the minority's distinctiveness and validity over and above the discrimination that appears at the direct influence level. In discussing the results, a theoretical integration of social comparison and validation processes is proposed as a step towards explaining the diversity of minority influence phenomena.

INTRODUCTION

Investigations into minority influence (see Moscovici, Mugny and Van Avermaet, 1985; Moscovici and Mugny, 1987) have shown that, broadly speaking, while the minority may exert a weak, non-existent or even negative influence in relation to the explicit content of its position, it nevertheless appears to exert an indirect influence in the form of conversion (Moscovici, 1980). It is as though the recipient, while consciously rejecting the minority opinion, at the same time accepts the fundamental guiding principles underlying the minority position.

Resistance to a minority (difficulty of *direct* influence) is explained by a process of *social comparison* whereby a minority's influence is prevented because of the

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socially undesirable characteristics generally associated with it within the context of intergroup conflict, so that any move by an individual nearer to the minority would threaten the individual's social identity which, as we know, s/he needs to experience as positive (Turner, 1981). In effect, to move closer to the minority position, that is to be influenced, not only entails expressing agreement with the position specifically espoused by the minority, but also in fact implies a process of identification and the attribution to one's self of those minority attributes which have become salient in the relationship (Mugny, 1981).

As to *indirect* influence (which is found in content about which the minority has not explicitly expressed an opinion, or when there is a time lag so that the link between the target's response and the minority statement is less salient (see Pérez, Mugny and Moscovici, 1986), this is explained by the fact that the target does not just pay attention to the source and its particular attributes, but also engages in a process of *validation* (Moscovici, 1980) which involves concentration of cognitive activity on the actual content of the minority message. Indirect influence in fact implies that the subject has inferred the underlying guiding principles of the minority position and recognizes their validity as an alternative point of view. (Pérez and Mugny, 1986).

In this paper, we will investigate the various possible patterns of both direct and indirect minority influence by articulating the two processes of social comparison and validation. To do this, let us begin by taking a look at demonstrations of the most direct minority influence. Various investigations which combined minority and intergroup approaches (Mugny, Kaiser, Papastamou and Pérez, 1984) have shown that increasing the feeling of belonging to a group in common with the minority (either by use of a flexible behaviour style, or by an explicit statement of common identity) can lead to greater influence (Mugny and Papastamou, 1982; Mugny, Kaiser and Papastamou, 1983). As a corollary, no influence or negative influence appear to be the expressions of a real discrimination against the minority source which is in some way categorized as an outgroup (Tajfel, 1978). It has been shown that a minority source explicitly categorized as an outgroup may well find its influence undermined (Nemeth and Wachtler, 1973; Maass, Clark and Haberkorn, 1982; Mugny *et al.*, 1983).

Categorization of the minority as ingroup or outgroup may however have opposite effects from those just mentioned. This may occur when the attributes associated with the minority are particularly negative or conflictual, and would lead to a heavy social cost for the target in the event of identification with the minority. In such circumstances, a minority source may arouse greater resistance or differentiation (Lemaine, 1975) the more it is identified with the ingroup (Mugny, Ibañez, Elejabarrieta, Iniguez and Pérez, 1986), and the more it makes salient a conflict of identification (Mugny and Papastamou, 1982-83; Mugny *et al.*, 1983). This effect is also consistent with the intergroup approach which has clearly demonstrated that differentiation processes occur especially when intergroup comparison is of central importance, that is when operating with the criteria which define the group (Tajfel, 1978).

When we look at *indirect influence*, we find that resistance to the minority may be limited to expression of direct influence only. Recent investigations show that even when subjected to open discrimination, an outgroup minority may nevertheless exert an influence, which may be indirect (Aebischer, Hewstone and Henderson, 1984; Pérez and Mugny, 1985a), or expressed in private (Martin, 1987) or appear after a time lag (Mugny *et al.*, 1983; Pérez *et al.*, 1986).

These apparently contradictory effects of categorization on minority influence make it necessary for us to be more explicit about the mechanisms which can make an ingroup identity as much an obstacle as an advantage for a minority, and an outgroup identity a possible trump card as well as a disadvantage (Mugny and Pérez, 1985).

Our thinking has relied on recent work by Mummendey and Schreiber (1983, 1984) whose argument we sum up from our own point of view as follows: social categorization into ingroup and outgroup is not an inevitable source of discrimination. Discrimination would be the result of categorization principally where intergroup comparison presupposes a joint dependence on symbolic resources, or, as in a zero sum game, what is symbolically won by one group is lost by the other. Within the context of comparisons which are thus interdependent and in a sense one-dimensional, intergroup competition, and the outgroup discrimination it entails, would constitute a necessary condition for safeguarding one's social identity. This kind of discrimination would be less necessary, or even unnecessary, where intergroup comparison arises, not in an interdependent context, but in one where evaluation of the ingroup and the outgroup are independent, or where the subject may evaluate and even favour both ingroup and outgroup on orthogonal dimensions, one of which may be specific to the ingroup and the other specific to the outgroup. Peabody's work (1968) suggests that judgments between groups may also reflect recognition of the specific attributes of the groups being compared, which presupposes a multidimensional context going far beyond the single evaluative dimension which implies interdependence on the relevant judgments.

This analysis is, indirectly, relevant to minority influence and suggests by analogy some of the conditions which should or should not permit a minority to exert an influence. Let us suppose that for some reason social comparison between a minority and a majority arises in the interdependent, single dimensional mode. We can then suppose that confrontation with the minority would make the importance of that differentiation psychologically salient since, by the very nature of their interdependence, whatever is symbolically conceded to the minority would inevitably be the detriment of the subjects themselves. In such a case, the minority image can only be evaluated negatively since it is complementary to the necessarily positive image of the majority. In this situation therefore the goal would become differentiation from the minority, and any cognitive activity tending to validation or recognition of the alternative position would be excluded. We might in fact suppose that this kind of one-dimensional comparison, which positively evaluates only the majority position (with judgmental criteria being defined by the majority), would make salient the deviant nature of the minority position and prevent it from appearing as an alternative on any dimension which would be appropriate to it.

Pursuing this line of reasoning, let us consider a corollary of the above: it might be plausible to suggest that a process of validation would allow the minority to exert an influence, indirectly, when minority and majority are for some reason or another judged in independent terms on a multidimensional matrix of identity and attributes. In this situation the specific attributes which create the distinctiveness of the minority can then be recognized as providing the foundation of an alternative position, in some sense independently of the discrimination which may operate elsewhere on a dimension which favours the majority position.

How are we to test these hypotheses experimentally? In the first place it is necessary to create an influence situation which constrains the comparison space between

majority and minority by enclosing them within a single dimension, in the aim of inducing the interdependence of their judgments in a universe rendered one-dimensional. To enclose subjects in this process of comparison on a single dimension, we tried to make salient (as the independent variable) the categorial identity common to the minority and the majority. Majority and minority will diverge (in a constant manner) as to their ideological position, but will both be in a single membership category. In a first experimental condition, the minority and the majority will be presented as both belonging to the ingroup. In a second experimental condition, they will both belong to an outgroup. This manipulation will make the comparison more one-dimensional, i.e. will make the respective judgments mutually more dependent, so that what is conceded to the majority can be in some sense subtracted from the minority and vice versa. Our primary prediction is that in these conditions, the specificity of the minority alternative position will not be recognized and that there will be no influence, certainly not at an indirect level, since as we have seen this would imply that the subject had inferred the organizing principles underlying the minority position. A further prediction is that direct influence will be less when the comparison is made in the ingroup and possible identification with the minority would imply a high social cost.

These two single category conditions will be compared with two further experimental conditions which are designed to allow targets to recognize both the particular qualities of the views defended by the minority and the distinctiveness of its group attributes, and so to allow some indirect influence. To achieve this, we have superimposed on the ideological differentiation a categorization which accentuates the difference between majority and minority. In the third experimental condition, the minority will be presented as ingroup and the majority as outgroup, while in the fourth condition the majority will be the ingroup and the minority the outgroup. Subjects should therefore be able to dissociate the intergroup comparison (which is evoked by the explicit categorization of the source) from the validation and recognize the particular elements of the minority alternative position, and so indirect influence should occur. In the last two conditions, subjects should find they can take up a position on two independent dimensions since they can on the one hand judge the majority and the minority in line with their categorial identity (ingroup or outgroup) and on the other hand as to their respective positions (favourable or unfavourable to the subject under debate). As for direct influence, we expect that will be less when the minority is opposed to a majority in the ingroup.

To sum up, we expect that direct influence will be regulated by the categorial identity of the majority, an ingroup majority making the subject resist the minority more than an outgroup majority, and this even more when the minority is ingroup and accentuates the social cost of identification. As for indirect influence, we expect that there will be an interaction between identity of the minority and identity of the majority, and that influence will be less when majority and minority share the same categorial identity.

METHOD

Procedure

Following a brief pre-test regarding their attitudes to abortion, subjects (165 female Spanish high school students between 15 and 18 years) were shown a statement strongly

in favour of abortion and explicitly attributed to a minority. For half the subjects the minority was the same gender as themselves (minority as ingroup conditions) and for the other half, of the opposite gender (minority as outgroup conditions). When they had read the minority message, subjects were asked to express the extent of their agreement or disagreement (on a 7-point scale) with each of the five principal arguments in the minority brief. At this point the second experimental manipulation was introduced: before replying, subjects were told that for each of the arguments a majority either of women (majority ingroup) or of men (majority outgroup) were opposed to each of the arguments. Subjects then gave their impression of the source of the minority message using 30 bipolar scales, and replied to an attitude questionnaire on abortion (measure of direct influence) and on contraception (measure of indirect influence, since the minority did not give its point of view on the subject).

Experimental material

Pre-test

Before the experiment proper, subjects were asked to rate their agreement on a 7-point scale (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree) with the five following statements: 'abortion must be legalized'; 'legalization of abortion is a democratic requirement'; 'abortion should be available in case of rape'; 'minors should be able to have an abortion'; 'abortion should be available free to everyone'. The mean of responses to these five items was used as covariant in analysis of influence measures.

The message

During the experimental phase, all subjects read a message strongly in favour of voluntary abortion (Pérez, 1985): in fact, in normative terms, this message presented a clearly deviant position in the Spain of that time since, for one thing, voluntary abortion is illegal in this country, and for another, there was a parliamentary debate on abortion in strong spate at the time of the experiment, but it was restricted to considering the legalization of what was called therapeutic abortion only. The experimental text was structured along two dimensions, one relating to the total legalization of abortion, and the other to the financial costs of abortion. For each of these two dimensions two demands were produced: for the one, it was argued there was an urgent need to demonstrate publicly the demand for total legalization of abortion and that it was essential to draw up a law making it legal to choose abortion voluntarily; for the other, the text demanded that abortion should be completely free and that costs should be borne by the social security system. The style of the text, which systematically emphasized the absolute necessity of all demands, served to make the text as conflictual as possible.

Image of the source questionnaire

This questionnaire was composed of 30 7-point bipolar scales (Pérez and Mugny, 1985b) on which subjects were asked to judge the minority group which was supposed to have written the message. A canonical factor analysis with Varimax rotation was

carried out on all items. Factors retained for further analysis are described in the section on presentation of results.

Attitude questionnaire

At the end of the experiment subjects were asked to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with 25 statements designed to investigate the two different dimensions (Pérez and Mugny, 1985b) using 7-point scales (1 = totally disagree, 7 = totally agree). Eighteen items made explicit reference to legalization of abortion and to its costs, and seven further items dealt with contraception. As an indication of our results, the mean of all items on the 7-point scale was 4.25 for the first set of questions and 5.52 for the second set. However the essential point lies in the positive correlation of 0.64 between the means of these two series of statements.

Let us note right away that we carried out a canonical factor analysis, with Varimax rotation, on the entire questionnaire and that two factors emerged with an eigen value greater than 1 (Pérez, 1985). The first factor regroups all statements about abortion: the factor scores on these items will therefore represent the measure of *direct influence*. The second factor regroups all items relating to contraception: the factor scores on these items will therefore constitute the measure of *indirect influence* since contraception is not a part of any of the minority message arguments. In both cases stronger influence by the minority will be shown by a higher factor score.

Experimental manipulations

The first manipulation concerned identity of the minority source. Thus the same minority statement in favour of abortion was attributed for half the subjects (all of whom were female) to a minority group of young women (condition minority ingroup) and for the other half of subjects to a minority group of young men (condition minority outgroup).

The second manipulation concerned in turn the identity of the majority of people said to oppose abortion. After reading the minority message, subjects were shown five claims taken from the text they had just read (e.g. 'It is absolutely essential that abortion be completely free of charge for everyone'). For each claim, they were told that 'The minority group of young women (or men) claim that . . . (claim)'. Before expressing their own opinion, subjects were also informed that 'The majority of young women (for conditions majority as ingroup) or young men (for conditions majority as outgroup), are completely opposed to this idea'.

To sum up, using a 2 x 2 factorial design, each claim put forward by the minority, which was either an ingroup or an outgroup (identity of the minority variable), was opposed by a supposed majority which was labelled as either of the ingroup or of the outgroup (identity of the majority variable). Briefly, the ideological opposition between majority and minority was held constant, and the targets' common social identity with the one and/or with the other were varied. In addition, in half the cases, the ideological confrontation between majority and minority took place in a universe which might be considered one-dimensional with the two groups interdependent (i.e. where majority and minority belong to the same social category), while in the other half of cases, minority and majority were further distinguished by their membership of different social categories.

RESULTS

Direct and indirect influence

Let us first look at the influence observed on factor scores corresponding to the direct influence factor, i.e. items which deal with opinions about abortion. Analysis of covariance (covariant was established by the mean of measures taken at pre-test; the means in Table 1 have all been adjusted) shows first a simple effect of the variable majority identity ($F = 5.811, 1,160 df, p < 0.02$; it should be noted that for the sake of simplicity, all tests are two-tailed). We find less influence exerted by the minority source when the majority of the ingroup opposes it (mean = -0.09) than when it is the majority of the outgroup in opposition (mean = +0.09). We thus find overall support for our prediction that a majority from the ingroup should evoke a resistance to innovation which is psychologically more constraining than that evoked by a majority from an outgroup.

Table 1. Means of factor scores relating to questions on attitudes to abortion and to contraception (+ indicates attitudes in favour)

Minority/Majority Identity	N	Abortion		Contraception	
		X	S.D.	X	S.D.
Ingroup	42	-0.07	0.90	-0.02	0.94
Ingroup	41	-0.04	1.03	+0.19	0.75
Outgroup	42	-0.10	0.81	+0.07	1.08
Outgroup	40	+0.23	0.96	-0.25	0.87

Source	df	MS	Abortion		Contraception	
			F	P	F	P
Minority (A)	1	0.557	2.470	ns	1.228	1.740 ns
Majority (B)	1	1.310	5.811	0.02	0.123	0.174 ns
A x B	1	0.980	4.344	0.04	2.900	4.109 0.05
Error	160	0.225			0.706	

Analysis of covariance:

This simple effect is complicated however by the significant interaction of the two variables ($F = 4.344, 1,160 df, p < 0.04$) which means that we must adjust the hypothesis which we have just reported as being upheld by the simple effect. In fact, direct influence is more marked (significantly different from each of the other conditions with $p < 0.02$) in the condition where both minority and majority have a different social identity from the subject (mean = +0.23) and where it is reasonable to suppose that any explicit move closer to the minority position has less impact on the issue of identification. It would appear here that as soon as the subject has a common social identity with one or other of the groups in question (majority or minority), their explicit opposition puts the subject in a situation of conflict of identification which limits the direct influence of the minority. In other words, pressure to conformity with the majority, avoidance of a minority position, and resistance to change are very much determined by reference to the ingroup.

Let us now look at *indirect* influence (see Table 1) as measured by the factor scores on items relating to attitudes to contraception. We find here essentially an interaction between the two manipulated variables ($F = 4.109, 1,160 df, p < 0.05$). From this we

see that the minority has, as predicted, less indirect influence when the comparison between majority and minority is located within the same social category, though this is more marked for the outgroup (mean = -0.25) than for the ingroup (mean = -0.02). As a corollary, more indirect influence is allowed to the minority when it is opposed by a majority of a different social category, when the minority outgroup is confronted by the majority of the ingroup (mean = +0.07), or above all when the minority ingroup is in opposition to the majority of the outgroup (mean = +0.19). Decomposition of the variance shows that there is the greatest contrast in indirect effects with the majority outgroup, for the ingroup minority has more indirect influence than the minority outgroup ($F = 5.55, 1, 160 \text{ df}, p < 0.03$). When we examine the latter, we find, and this is not a commonplace, that the outgroup minority tends to exert more indirect influence when it is opposed to a majority of the ingroup than when it is opposed to the majority outgroup ($F = 2.79, 1, 160 \text{ df}, p < 0.10$). (It should be recalled that for simplification all tests are two-tailed).

To sum up, these are the important points: first, direct influence diminishes when there is explicit conflict between majority and minority, as soon as the subject has a category membership in common with the majority or with the minority, that is when the subject finds herself potentially confronted with a conflict of identification. It seems clear that it is the question of identification, and thus the process of social comparison which dominates direct influence.

When it comes to indirect influence, we note that it occurs in two conditions where there was little direct influence. This indirect effect is linked to the superimposition of categories on the ideological differences between majority and minority. We should thus find indirect influence when the influence situation places the minority (from the point of view of the subjects' mental representation of it) outside the majority camp, and therefore when the process of validation can be dissociated from the intergroup comparison and recognition of the minority alternative made possible. Let us see how the mental image subjects had of the source stands up to such an interpretation.

Additional evidence: Analysis of mental image of influence source

A factor analysis of the 30 questions about the image of the minority source produced eight factors. While acknowledging that this is not an exhaustive analysis, we will here only look at two factors which provide additional findings in support of the processes we had hypothesized as underlying direct and indirect influence.

The first factor which emerged from the analysis, which combined 17 questions with loadings higher than 0.40, was clearly evaluative. From the analysis of variance carried out on the factor scores it can be seen that the minority which exerts the most direct influence, which happens to be the outgroup minority opposed to the outgroup majority, is the most positively evaluated (mean = +0.32; the three other conditions have mean factor scores between -0.04 and -0.14, $F = 6.027, 1, 161 \text{ df}, p < 0.02$). This effect suggests that an interpretation of direct influence in terms of social comparison (which entails above all evaluation), and especially in terms of conflict of identification is at the very least plausible.

Let us now look at the factor which produces factor scores which best reflect the effects of indirect influence. Negative scores characterized the minority as partisan and dependent, positive scores as autonomous and independent, thus permitting the

interpretation that this factor reflects the distinctiveness of the minority and its validity as an alternative position. Analysis of factor scores produced an interaction of the two manipulated variables ($F = 4.252, 1, 161 \text{ df}, p < 0.05$). It appears that the minority is perceived as more autonomous and independent in the two conditions which lead to more indirect influence, that is when as ingroup it is opposed to a majority as outgroup (mean = +0.08) or as outgroup it is opposed to the ingroup majority (mean = +0.15). It follows that in conditions which lead to less indirect influence, the minority is judged as less independent and less autonomous. This is once again the case when comparison between majority and minority is made in the same category space, that is as ingroup (mean = -0.19) or as outgroup (mean = -0.05).

These findings are suggestive and their analogy with patterns of direct and indirect influence is interesting:

- (1) The ingroup minority confronted by an ingroup majority is negatively evaluated, and its validity not recognized. Its image is wholly bad. Direct and indirect influence are minimal.
- (2) The outgroup minority confronted by an outgroup majority is positively evaluated, but its validity acknowledged very little. Direct influence occurs, but no indirect influence.
- (3) In the two other conditions, which were designed to allow a dissociation between comparison and validation, we find a somewhat negatively evaluated image together with recognition of the validity of the minority position. This ambivalence is what must have led to indirect influence in spite of discrimination at the direct influence level. We say 'must have' since at this stage in our research, findings are not yet adequate to permit a stronger statement.

CONCLUSIONS

These results both partially confirm our hypotheses and enrich our theoretical understanding of minority influence. They demonstrate that when it comes to direct influence, the more a minority is seen to oppose the position supported by a majority of the ingroup, the less influence it exerts, while opposition to a majority of an outgroup inspires less resistance. Interaction of the experimental variables emphasizes furthermore that direct influence has its strongest effect when the subject is in a sense not involved in the comparison, that is when an outgroup minority is opposed to an outgroup majority, and so identification has fewer implications for the subject.

As to indirect influence, there is again interaction of the two manipulated variables: the minority's indirect effect is more marked when an ingroup minority is opposed to an outgroup majority, and when an outgroup minority is opposed by an ingroup majority. In both situations it appeared that subjects were able to separate the ingroup comparison and the conflict of ideological viewpoints. We should also note that an outgroup minority opposed to an outgroup majority exerted the greatest amount of direct influence but also the least amount of indirect influence. As for the image of the minority, if we restrict our attention to the two conditions which produced indirect influence, we recall that the minority was evaluated negatively, but was at the same time perceived as more representative of an autonomous and independent

alternative, which permits us to suppose that a process of validation might have taken place.

Identification with the minority, which appears to control direct influence, is thus made increasingly difficult the more the subject is implicated in the social comparison. This is underlined by the fact that as soon as reference is made to an ingroup entity (whether a minority or a majority), influence is reduced, compared to the influence exerted by an outgroup minority opposed to an outgroup majority, where this double reference to an outgroup places the subject in a sense outside the field of comparison, and conceals to some extent the potential conflict created by the minority position. It is a fact that here the subject does not run the risk of being mislabelled or assigned to the wrong category and so damaging her identity by approaching the minority position, and to this extent the minority is less conflictual and in fact is the most highly evaluated.

But let us examine the relationship between social comparison and validation. The first point to note is that the process of validation (which is essential if there is to be any indirect influence) is rendered impossible when comparison is made within a one-dimensional universe, since it involves a single category referent. It appears that the intergroup comparison is even more salient when it is made within an ingroup space (let us recall Festinger, 1954). In fact the least indirect influence occurs when the minority and the majority are both members of the same social category, for the minority is not seen, nor is it able to be seen, as an autonomous alternative.

Let us take the most striking case. Absence of direct influence in the case of a minority and a majority both from the ingroup can be explained by the strength of the conflict of identification, the more marked when the comparison space of minority and majority includes the subject herself, where any ideological position would inevitably involve a mechanism of self-attribution. Almost literally squashed between minority and majority, the subject really has no choice! As to absence of indirect influence, this may be explained by the fact that in such a constrained one-dimensional space the subject would not infer the fundamental underlying principles specific to the minority positions, or at least, would come up with no other principle than that of the deviance of the minority relative to the majority position which the interdependence of the social comparison renders salient. In this case, validation is so to speak blocked, or 'contaminated' by the comparison, because the single dimension dominates the representation of the conflicting influence sources and makes the two processes interdependent.

We should note that this problem of minorities faced with a one-dimensional ingroup universe has been confirmed by the demonstration (Mugny *et al.*, 1986) that a high social cost for getting closer to a minority position (and recalling the majority position constitutes a high one) can effectively block all influence when the subject is made, by careful experimental manipulation, psychologically 'closer' to the minority.

This blocking of the inferential process which can lead to indirect influence occurs also when the one-dimensional comparison (ingroup) relates instead to sources with an outgroup identity. In this situation, however, there is strong direct influence, precisely because the explicit ideological positions do not entail, or entail to a lesser degree attributing to one's self the various other characteristics of the minority, since the subject is psychologically outside the intergroup comparison and it does not in fact relate directly to her own identity.

Now for the other conditions. When the minority and the majority can be distinguished not only by their ideological differences but by memberships of different social categories as well, there is no increase in discrimination or rejection of the minority. On the contrary. But this manipulation leads to two separate reasoning processes which operate in two different areas.

In the first place, accentuating the difference between majority and minority by claiming they belong to opposing groups makes the minority even more distinct and emphasizes its specialness. When subjects are asked to report their image of the minority, as we have seen, it appears to be perceived as more autonomous and independent.

Furthermore, and this is perhaps the most important point, the subject is led to make a cognitive dissociation¹ between the social comparison and judgment of the minority's alternative position as such. First she makes the comparison at the level of social category: we can see this by the fact that when it comes to direct influence, it is the identity of the majority which dominates, since, as we have seen, the ingroup majority leads to a stronger resistance than the outgroup majority. Then, once the question of comparison has been dealt with, to the detriment of the minority of course, the subject focuses her attention on the ideological content of the minority position without needing any longer to think about the question of identification. Then she will react to the underlying organizing principles in the minority position, more especially as they can be evaluated highly for the independence of judgment that they imply, and for their distinctiveness.

Social influence, and that of minorities in particular, is located therefore at the heart of the processes by which a group, or a society, both reproduces itself and is transformed. Of the two processes identified, that of social comparison would account more for uniformity and for resistance to change, and that of validation for diversity and change. It is not simply in terms of the conflict of these processes that we should be thinking, but rather in terms of their interaction and their articulation if we are to understand minority influence.

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¹An important note, though the point may be obvious: this process of dissociation does not imply that the source is forgotten, in contrast to the functionalist studies of the *steep effect* (Cook and Flay, 1978); in fact, quite the contrary, as has been shown by additional evidence from a number of different experiments (Moscovici, Mugny and Papastamou, 1981; Moscovici, Mugny and Pérez, 1984-85).

plaidoyer favorable à l'avortement d'une minorité soit intragroupe (même sexe) soit hors-groupe (autre sexe) explicitement opposée à l'opinion de la majorité soit de l'intragroupe, soit du hors-groupe. Les résultats montrent que l'influence directe est moindre lorsqu'une majorité intragroupe s'oppose à la minorité, et qu'elle est supérieure lorsqu'elle engage moins un mécanisme d'identification. Quant à l'influence indirecte, elle apparaît en contexte intergroupe, lorsqu'aux divergences idéologiques entre majorité et minorité est surimposée une catégorisation différente de celles-ci, qui a pour effet, au-delà de la discrimination apparente au niveau direct, de permettre la reconnaissance de la distinctivité de la minorité. Les résultats sont interprétés en proposant une articulation entre processus de comparaison sociale et processus de validation susceptible de rendre compte de la diversité des phénomènes d'influence minoritaire.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In einem 2 x 2 Plan äußerten 165 weibliche Studenten ihre Meinung über Abtreibung (direkter Einfluß) und über Empfangsverhütung (indirekter Einfluß), nachdem sie eine die Abtreibung befürwortende Stellungnahme gelesen hatten. Diese war von einer Minorität entweder der eigenen Gruppe (gleichgeschlechtlich) oder der Fremdgruppe (ungleichgeschlechtlich) geschrieben und der Meinung der Majorität von entweder der eigenen oder der Fremdgruppe ausdrücklich entgegengesetzt. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, daß weniger direkter Einfluß vorkommt, wenn die Majorität der eigenen Gruppe einer Minorität entgegengesetzt ist und mehr direkter Einfluß auftritt, wenn der Prozeß der Identifikation geringer ausgeprägt ist. Indirekter Einfluß ist in einem Intergruppen-Kontext vorhanden, wenn die Kategorisierung in Majorität und Minorität als verschiedene Gruppen von ideologischem Meinungsunterschied überlagert ist, der die Spezifität und Validität der Minorität zu erkennen gestattet, über die Unterscheidung hinaus, die auf dem Niveau des direkten Einflusses auftritt. In der Diskussion der Ergebnisse wird eine Integration von sozialen Vergleichsprozessen und Validierungsprozessen als ein Schritt zur Erklärung der Verschiedenartigkeit von Phänomenen des Minoritätseinflusses vorgeschlagen.

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans un plan factoriel 2 x 2, 165 collégiennes ont exprimé leur opinion à propos de l'avortement (dimension directe) et de la contraception (dimension indirecte) après avoir pris connaissance du