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Our intention in this presentation is to consider the question of constructivism in social psychology, from a view point we have developed in Geneva, one for which Piaget was a famous precursor. The central notions in such an approach concern the emergence of conflicts of a social and cognitive nature, and more particularly the forms by which they are resolved or regulated. As we shall see, a number of different areas of research converge in illuminating (to simplify) two major forms of the regulation of conflict. One, which we shall define as more 'relational', only for want of knowing how else to call it, entails a simple reproduction of the social status quo in which the activity of the subject is entirely subordinate to relational aspects of the connections between social agents. The other type, which we shall identify as more 'socio-cognitive', is, unlike the first, able to allow the emergence of more constructive or creative socio-cognitive dynamics in which purely relational questions are dissociated from a cognitive consideration of the contents and objects involved in a confrontation.

Thus we will approach this question first and briefly in terms of various themes familiar in social psychology, and then in more detail in terms of inter-group relations, an area in which models seem to us to focus primarily upon relational regulations (in our terms). This comes down to a focus on the way in which conflict is managed in terms of maintaining the social status quo, according to the familiar vicious circle of discrimination and

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social logic of the status quo, breaches we have been able to discover through studies of minority influence. The inversion to be observed deals in effect with possible displacements or discontinuities between the relational and the socio-cognitive, between representations, evaluations and behaviours. As will be seen, in addition to overt discrimination against minorities or out-groups, there can also occur a socio-cognitive activity that allows the positive recognition of their existence and their distinctiveness. There is, in addition to the process of social comparison, which underpins the logic of established positions and the status quo, and which tends to monopolise the interests of social psychologists, another process, that of social 'validation', which must be ultimately considered if we are to make sense of the social constructivism by which new social cognitions and behaviours emerge from inter-group interaction.

### Socio-Cognitive Conflict and Social Constructivism

The idea that conflict serves a structuring function is certainly nothing new in our discipline. However, a positive and constructive vision of conflict seems to me to be needed more than ever, so strong is the domination of a vision of conflict as negative or 'harsh', something that must be avoided or eliminated if at all possible.

Let us begin therefore with a brief overview, which makes no pretence to be exhaustive, of the constructive status of conflict in social psychology! One of the illustrations, to cut a long and perhaps unexpected story short, given the traditionally un-developmental orientation of social psychology, is provided by the social interactionist and socio-constructivist approach to the child's cognitive development. Here again the intention is not new, if we recall Baldwin, Mead, Piaget or Vygotsky, to mention only the major contributors. However, the approach we initiated (Dolse and Mugny, 1984) went beyond a simple assertion that the development of cognitive tools is social in nature, and involved explicit study of its social-psychological development, moving away both from the epistemological individualism of a strictly Piagetian genetic psychology and from explanation in terms of social learning which would define development as a process of imitation which assures the individual appropriation of knowledge that is in some sense collective.

the point of departure of genetic social psychology (the title of a recent collection of papers, Mugny, 1985), is effectively diametrically opposed to this (even if naturally it does not exclude the possible intervention of more individual dynamics or the effects of models — cf. Enler and Glachan, 1985), and considers socio-cognitive conflict as the central mechanism of a social-psychological articulation in this area (cf. Doise, 1986). In effect, socio-cognitive conflict constitutes, from this perspective, both the mobilising and the structuring element in the child's socio-cognitive development: it is the social opposition of centrations and contrasting points of view which allows (although, as we shall see, it does not ensure) their integration in combined systems which progress beyond these centrations in the process of co-ordinating them.

There is no reason why what applies for the child's cognitive development does not also hold for socio-cognitive functioning in adults. We can illustrate this point generally by noting for example that the phenomenon of risk taking and more generally still that of collective polarisation (cf. Doise & Moscovici, 1984) largely depends on initial differences between group members; or again that socio-cognitive dynamics involving a confrontation of divergent points of view assures the development of knowledge in systems of training (Montell, 1985), this constituting a kind of socialised version of the potentially structuring function of falsification in scientific development (cf. Gorman & Gorman, 1984). Or we might mention that the loosening or agitation of an orthodox system can induce socio-cognitive activity of surprising richness and subtlety (Deconchy, 1980); or how intergroup phenomena derive from 'real' (Sherif, 1960, or more symbolic (cf. Teyfel) conflicts of interest which structure behaviours, representations and evaluations (Doise, 1978); or how threats to identity can induce a differentiation that is creative of novelty (Lemaire, 1974), or how social representations (cf. Farr & Moscovici, 1984) constitute so many original socio-cognitive elaborations enabling coping with conflict of one kind or another. Other analogies are also possible, though we will not try and consider them here; indeed the notion of conflict and the issue of its forms of resolution could with little difficulty constitute the plot of an entire manual of social psychology.

#### The Management of Conflict

A nodal point is constituted precisely by the 'management' of these

conflicts, given that they are capable of giving rise to various forms of resolution. And among these can be distinguished two major types: we have observed, specifically with respect to socio-cognitive development on the relation with the other (generally, but not exclusively, as a result of inequalities of sociometric status between partners), and these do not lead to any genuine restructuring at the cognitive level. Compliance, unilateral dependence and juxtaposition thus constitute different kinds of purely relational regulations of socio-cognitive conflicts which children are likely to encounter in the course of their development, although they do not evidently contribute anything to it. Such regulations are 'purely' relational in the sense that any adjustment or modification of responses on the part of one or more of the partners is directed at nothing more than re-establishing non-conflictual relations. This is a surface change which seldom implies any genuine cognitive work on the opposition of responses itself.

In contrast, a socio-cognitive regulation defines the collective and/or individual elaboration of new socio-cognitive instruments consisting generally in the coordination of centrations and points of view that were initially divergent. It synthesises them in a combined system without denying their validity (as for example, in the representation of spatial relations, the perspective assumes different perceptions of the same object according to different points of view). Therefore, such a transformation assumes a cognitive activity centred on the confrontation and integration of the points of view of the self and the other, instead of a purely relational resolution of initially divergent points of view.

One notes in passing that if genetic social psychology is largely inspired by the fruits of social psychology, it is also able to reciprocate and make a contribution of its own to social psychology. In effect, this typology, even if it is something of a caricature, allows the creation of new analogies with a variety of issues in social psychology. It is also not so far removed from Bale's (1950) well-known distinction between centrations on the group and centrations on the task.

It is however, above all the relational regulations — in our sense — which have attracted the attention of social psychologists who have otherwise, as we have already emphasised, far too often conceived of

conflict as an evil to be eliminated. We could mention here the early cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), which still continues to be the subject of published work, we could add to the list psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966), the large corpus of work on persuasion and influence in which, from a functionalist perspective (cf. Moscovici's, 1976 analysis), the effects of the avoidance of conflict, and more specifically those of normalisation (Sherif, 1936), of compliance and identification with the group (Kelman, 1958), and of obedience (Milgram, 1974) have been studied more than anything else. The case of studies on conformity is in this respect exemplary (Asch, 1956), studies in which one generally anticipates nothing but an immediate and manifest influence assuring the elimination of conflict, while at the same time not anticipating any deeper cognitive consequences (even though these are possible; cf. Mugny, 1984). Such relational regulations also appear to limit the constructive effects of collective polarisation (cf. Dolse & Moscovici, 1984), and are typical in fact of the 'dangers' inherent in group thinking (Janis, 1972; Steiner, 1982). We may move on without, however, forgetting theories of social comparison and informal social communication (Festinger, 1950; 1954).

A vision of social relations predominates in these various approaches in which 'reality' or 'objects' do not in themselves constitute the stakes in interaction; all that counts finally is the question of the inter-personal or inter-group relations between social agents. These agents in their cognitions or social behaviours are above all reproducers, no matter whether they are active or passive, of the social relations imposed upon them. In effect, no consideration is given to the creative activity of a subject who by his socio-cognitive activity engenders, even during these interactions, new contents and new visions of the world which are capable of escaping a little from the logic of social reproduction. It is somewhat as if, to paraphrase Moscovici (1970), the tripartite vision (of subject-object-other) has been displaced by a new, bipartite vision (this time of subject-subject). Now, if social psychological reality is certainly not that of a 'rational' man, nor yet is it simply that of a search for conformity or indeed differentiation.

In our opinion this emphasis is largely characteristic of theories on inter-group relations formulated from the perspective initiated by Henri Tajfel, as we will now try to show. We turn to develop this example for it seems to me exemplary; here there is a predominant conception of socio-cognitive processes as regulating the relations between members of

different groups, and today we all recognise the social psychological importance this has assumed. (And here one could cite a large number of British social psychologists!) One might even suggest that the 'relational' logic which reinforces and perpetuates the same dynamic of opposition between groups has been researched, but without perhaps sufficiently studying the conditions which might break such a logic and allow a sort of intergroup 'coordination' rather than the reinforcement of the vicious circle of differentiation (within the limits of this presentation it is not possible to do justice to the various works which consider this question). Now, the recent studies on the connections between minority influence and inter-group relations suggest several ways in which one might envisage regulations that are more socio-cognitive, as opposed to uniquely relational, and which could also preside over the resolution of inter-group conflicts and contribute to a social 'constructivism'. This is also the occasion to propose a start to an integration of these two areas, one in which the notion of conflict takes a preponderant place and renders the social psychological model of inter-group relations a little more 'dynamic'. It will also take account of dynamics productive of 'new' social realities, rather than limiting itself only to dynamics which contribute to their reproduction.

#### The Principle of Homology in Relations Between Groups

Henri Tajfel's edited work, The Social Dimension, demonstrates this in exemplary fashion: there exists a growing tendency in social psychology, and notably European social psychology, to integrate the 'social' into one's approach and one's favourite phenomena. In Genevan terms (cf. Dolse, 1986), we would say that explanations are moving beyond the levels of the merely intra-psychic and inter-individual to integrate also intergroup dynamics and ideological aspects, and thus towards a psycho-sociological articulation. This theoretical orientation is translated by a recognition quite particular to two fundamentally complementary theories which seek to account for intergroup dynamics: the Bristol theory of social identity (Tajfel, 1978, 1982; Turner et al, 1987) and the Genevan theory of categorical differentiation (Dolse, 1978; Deschamps & Dolse, 1978).

Two key notions underlie this double conceptualisation of relations between groups: that of categorisation and that of discrimination. The first reflects an adaptive cognitive process involving an accentuation of

differences between stimuli perceived as belonging, on the basis of one criterion or another, to two distinct categories and, occasionally, a complementary accretion of similarities perceived between stimuli in the same category.

This cognitive aspect of categorisation is mirrored by a motivational aspect, the search for a positive identity. Consequently, categorisation is generally accompanied by a bias towards in-group favouritism. A social competition which is satisfying for the individual supposes that positive connotative evaluations will be assigned to attributes distinctive of the in-group, to the degree that the attributes define the social identity of the individual who appropriates them as his own by the mechanism of self-attribution. Discrimination in relation to the out-group thus appears as the dominant form of intergroup relations.

For our purposes we would like to note that in this model there predominates a 'presupposition of homology', a term by term correspondence between different intergroup aspects. Moreover, the categorical differentiation model (Doise, 1978) proposes a synthesis of this. The dynamic principle of this approach is in effect that all differentiation introduced to any level (or intergroup behaviour, representations or evaluations) generates a differentiation which is reproduced at other levels. This principle of homology leads to a conception which, from a psycho-sociological point of view, accounts for the reproduction of social relations, because social competition cannot but perpetuate itself.

Thus paradoxically 'the social dimension' of European social psychology, in integrating intergroup dimensions in order to account for collective psychological processes, does not necessarily go beyond the prejudice of the status quo which reigns supreme in the functionalist model (cf. Moscovici, 1976). Without wishing to enter here into the model which Tajfel had begun to explore in the context of notions of social mobility and social change (cf. Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and which remains very largely derivative from the model discussed here, one may note that the question of change, and therefore that of social constructivism in the relations between groups, has not yet been sufficiently considered. The theory of minority influence thus constitutes, in our sense of understanding, one of the possible openings in this psychosociological model of reproduction of social relations, because it assigns to relations between groups another essential function: that of innovation and social

### Direct Minority Influence and Intergroup Comparison

Let us therefore move on to minority influence properly so called. The application of theories of social identity (cf. Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and categorical differentiation (cf. Doise, 1978) to processes of social influence helps us to understand the general difficulty of minority influence, by addressing the following points.

First, the target is led by a mechanism of categorisation to define the minority (and also himself) as belonging to one or more groups or categories rendered psychologically salient. Thus it has been possible to generalise the postulate of intergroup bias (cf. Tajfel, 1978) to studies on influence. Applied to the case of minorities, it leads to the expectation that categorisation of the minority as an outgroup is likely to diminish its influence and that conversely influence issues largely from the feeling (on the part of the target) of common category membership with the source (Mugny & Papastamou, 1982). Often, in fact, the minority is discriminated, in the manner of an outgroup, with a veritable anti-minority bias.

Next, by a mechanism of 'indexation' the target of influence knows for elaborates as a function of the situation) the attributes which it considers as characteristic and definitional of the minority and of other entities distinguished in the influence situation. Using the same logic it has thus also been possible to show that influence is less likely when the attributes of the minority rendered psychologically salient and liable to be the object of self-attribution, do not assure a psycho-social identification compatible with a positive personal identity. Conversely, attributes with a positive connotation favour more minority influence (at least at the direct level) than do attributes with a negative connotation. Various normative filters are in effect used by targets to interpret the actions and positions of the minority. Thus influence is inhibited when the context renders the deviance of the minority salient rather than the specifics of the original norm which it advocates (cf. Mugny, 1982). Often, in fact, it is the negative attributes connoted in contexts unfavourable to minorities which restrict overt minority influence.

the context of minority influence is in direct even with resistances to innovation, orientated either more to the discredit of the source (as in psychological) cf. Papastamou, 1983), or more to denial of the normative content of the minority alternative itself (cf. Perez, Mugny & Moscovici, 1986), denial which operates principally at the level of overt influence: it is above all the direct influence which is most diminished when a resistance most explicitly involves a social comparison.

At this stage, our work was thus largely and directly derivative from models of intergroup relations, notably in the direct connection with Henri Tajfel, whose model in this respect again demonstrates its predictive power (cf. Mugny & Perez, 1986); and we particularly wish to emphasise this. Our conception was (and still is!) that in a situation of influence the response socially manifested by the subject does not simply derive from the degree of agreement or disagreement that exists with respect to the position defended by the source of influence, but expresses the degree to which the subject is ready to assume a social identification with the source, defined by self-attribution not only of the response it explicitly expresses but also the stereotypical characteristics of the source's category memberships that are rendered salient.

Moreover, it was in this period that we interpreted (Mugny, 1982), in a perspective directly inspired by Henri Tajfel, the effects of the source's negotiating style, proposing that a rigid style of negotiation on the one hand induces a feeling of less commonality of membership with the minority, and on the other hand renders salient more negative attributes, leading to less influence (at least at the direct level) than a more flexible style.

#### The Limits of Discrimination

The minority, initially perceived negatively and almost necessarily located as an outgroup in the categorical order, and thus in perpetual breach with the dominant norms and values, is nonetheless not without any capacity for influence. Various elements of an answer became apparent at this stage of our research. They converged on the idea that, at the very least in the field of social influence, neither intergroup favouritism nor discrimination against the outgroup are inevitable.

First of all, a minority does not have influence simply because it is

categorised as an in-group rather than an out-group. Its impact also depends on the styles of behaviour it deploys, its identity simply defining the degrees of freedom it has as regards the intensity of the conflict it is able to introduce (cf. Mugny & Perez, 1986). If categorised as an in-group the minority can deploy an intransigent style and increase the conflict. As an out-group, it has the advantage of being more flexible and reducing the conflict.

Next, social influence does not derive uniquely from the evaluative connotations of minority characteristics, but also from the socio-cognitive conflicts which can emerge between categorizations and attributes, as when the intra-group source is revealed to endorse negative connotations (the conflict of identification is here particularly strong), or an out-group source has positive connotations (Perez & Mugny, 1986a). Minorities moreover will have the effect of introducing new attributes not perceived initially and contradicting the initial categorisation or evaluation, notably as a function of their consistency over time.

Finally, categorisation of the minority as in-group or out-group can also have, at a latent level, effects which are the reverse of those accorded to it by the theory of intergroup relations: even (and indeed above all) when categorised as an outgroup and subjected to discrimination at the level of overt influence, a minority is nonetheless capable of introducing a 'hidden impact' (Naess & Clark, 1984).

#### Indirect Minority Influence and Validation

These 'perverse' effects of categorisation connect with those discovered throughout recent studies on minority influence (cf. Doms & Moscovici, 1984; Moscovici & Mugny, 1987; Moscovici, Mugny & Van Avermaet, 1985; Mugny & Perez, 1986) which show systematically that this influence tends to be expressed in the form of a conversion (Moscovici, 1980). One can thus demonstrate a more marked minority influence:

1. when responses are given privately rather than when they are collected publicly (see Martin, 1987);
2. on contents which are not touched upon directly in the minority message (indirect influence);
3. and in a preferential fashion after a certain temporal delay, in other

words, in the form of a sleeper effect.

Here there are effects upon which a degree of consensus (albeit imperfect...) exists between researchers with an interest in this area of study (cf. Moscovici & Mugny, 1987). What has been termed the model of validation (Moscovici, 1985; Mugny & Perez, 1986) is intended to provide an explanation process (cf. also Nemeth, 1986) on the part of targets.

The fact that the influence allowed to minorities is of an indirect nature and occurs particularly with respect to contents which are not directly linked to a minority position, has considerable significance for theories of influence and attitude change. Most centrally we should notice that it excludes the hypothesis that imitation or social learning could intervene as the principle mechanism. Its indirect character naturally presupposes a social constructivism, that is to say a complex cognitive activity (defined here as validation) by which the targets of influence are led to reflect on, and to take a position, not only in relation to the specific content of the minority influence attempt but also in relation to a much larger set of contents and positions which the minority renders salient. The constructive activity involved in such influence can be observed in various ways.

First of all, the targets confronted with a minority can be led, in circumstances which will be spelled out shortly, to infer organising principles from the content of the minority position, principles which therefore go well beyond the overt positions explicitly raised by the minority. These principles can be reactivated on subsequent occasions (delayed influence) and it is worth stressing, most particularly in relation to behaviours, attitudes or contents different from those involved in the exercise of influence properly so called (indirect influence). And this will be true even though the targets do not adhere explicitly to the positions advanced in the minority appeal.

Thus, in several experiments concerned with abortion, we have been able to exploit the fact that a single normative principle (in this case, tolerance) is recognised as underpinning attitudes relating to abortion (direct measure), but also to contraception (indirect measure) and to yet other attitudes. We have thus been able to show that even if the minority has no direct influence it nonetheless achieves some influence on measures which are indirect but founded on the same organising principle as the

discourse elaborated by the minority. Conversely, we have also shown that such indirect influence is nullified when the cognitive activity is orientated to a principle which is not specifically organising of positions expressed by the minority (cf. Perez & Mugny, 1986b).

For a process of validation to arouse indirect influence, the minority position must be considered as an alternative, recognised as having in itself a certain validity, even if it is initially disapproved: it has to be acknowledged, even if this shocks our prejudices, that to change is not necessarily to approve! For this, to happen, the specific contents underpinned by the organising principle of the displayed minority positions must challenge the targets by introducing a point of view that is conflictual and in opposition to those predominant in the field. This structuring function of conflict is located at the very heart of the notion of consistency, from which minority action effectively proceeds via the intermediary of conflict (Moscovici, 1976).

Another dimension of social constructivism instigated by minority intervention resides in what the targets are able to bring to an active elaboration of new meanings, and particularly to a discovery or imagination of new attributes defining or redefining the initial image of the minority source, as with other entities distinguished in a social field now newly redefined. These attributes play an essential role to the degree that they define the specificity of the source itself, which is to say those respects in which it is differentiated from other entities in the field of positions and in which it constitutes a counter-normative alternative. In brief, conversion is produced when the minority is recognised as such as an autonomous and independent entity, and is mentally reconstructed in its specificity and its distinctiveness, and this despite the discrimination to which it is otherwise subject.

Social constructivism can equally well serve as an opening at the level of categorisations of the social field themselves. Thus the innovative character of the minority position can lead the targets of influence to a cognitive (re)construction of new categorisations of the social field which will not necessarily correspond to the initial categorisations that may have existed prior to the minority's intervention. The effect would be to redefine the field of possibilities and consequently to produce a redefinition of the categories previously distinguished.

An alternative cannot be distinguished in the socio-cognitive domain until

group clothed in particular attributes. We need to recognise that it is the very fact of it being placed in an intergroup context which allowed the minority's discourse to be validated. It is not in spite of but indeed because of the categorisation of itself as an outgroup which the minority stimulates that makes it the source of conversion. Here one finds an aspect of complementarity in the mechanism of categorisation which intergroup research has not yet sufficiently considered (cf. Billig, 1985), and which research on minorities demands that we do consider.

Finally, constructivism operates also at the level of other cognitive functions activated by the intervention of a minority (cf. Maass, 1987). Thus, targets of influence, confronted with a majority, show a tendency to comply with majority responses and to converge in their thinking. When faced with a minority point, however, targets, which nevertheless are most likely to refuse to adopt responses explicitly advocated by the minority, do elaborate more novel, more original and even more correct responses (cf. Nemeth, 1986). These constructivist effects derive from the activation of a mode of thought in which socio-cognitive functioning is more intense, richer in terms of the information handled, more differentiated in terms of the organising dimensions considered, in short a divergent form of thought.

It is the set of these complex socio-cognitive activities which constitute the validation process and which make it difficult to provide a single precise definition. This process not often takes place, as we have said, in a context which the minority strongly conflictualises the field, something which brings us to the paradox of resistance: as we have been able to show quite consistently, the more one resists at the level of overt influence, the more one is liable to change at a latent and indirect level. We have studied this issue quite directly in a set of studies on denial in which we asked subjects to deny the credibility of arguments defended by a minority. Again and again one finds that this resistance, centred on the content of the minority alternative, has a clear tendency to cancel out influence, particularly immediate influence. When one takes either indirect or delayed measures of influence, however, one finds a very clear change in the direction of the organising principle underpinning the minority message (cf. Perez et al, 1986). This effect illustrates that despite the resistances to the changes urged by minorities, the latter may in the end be realised. This is also what Hovland and Weiss (1951) observed experimentally and what Collier (1944) found in field studies of changes in

committed to discrediting Nazi propaganda.

### Comparison and Validation

In any collective consideration of the effects observed in dozens of experiments, one has to recognise that various patterns of change are possible following an influence attempt, particularly by a minority. Thus, depending on circumstances, minorities can either achieve purely a direct influence or purely an indirect influence, or both or neither of these. We have seen that the conflictual climate generally associated with minority influence attempts makes some sense of the fact that conversion will be 'ecologically' the most common outcome. To understand the various influence patterns that minorities are able to induce, we need to forge a link between the two processes considered up to this point, namely that of social comparison (considered in terms of conflicts of identification) and that of validation (socio-cognitive constructivism activity). In order to accomplish this integration, we have advanced the following four basic hypotheses (cf. Perez & Mugny, 1987):

1. If an influence situation induces too strong a conflict of identification and prevents the occurrence of a validation process, one will observe no form of influence, or else a negative influence)
2. If an influence situation induces a moderate conflict of identification and prevents the occurrence of a process of validation, one will only observe direct influence (in the manner of the conformity of the Asch, 1956, paradigm)
3. If an influence situation induces a strong conflict of identification while permitting the occurrence of a process of validation, one will observe the normal conversion effect (indirect influence without direct influence);
4. If an influence situation induces a moderate conflict of identification and allows a validation process to occur, one is as likely to observe direct as indirect influence (in the manner of internalisation) cf. Kelman, 1958).

All the patterns of influence presuppose that a process of comparison



occurs which entails a more or less marked conflict of identification, while the activity of validation may either intervene or not intervene. But what are the relevant conditions? Our idea has been that the latter activity occurs if the subject can cognitively dissociate his social comparison activity from his validation activity, and if he carries out a two-fold cognitive activity in a differentiated fashion: setting aside the inevitable comparison between himself and the source, he then undertakes an activity of validating the minority's alternative position as such, focusing his consideration on the content of minority positions and reacting to their organising principles. It is in some sense as if, once he has settled the question of comparison (of little importance whether or not it works to the detriment of the minority), the subject focuses his attention on the contents of minority positions (cf. Personnaz & Guillon 1985) without further concerning himself with the question of identification, so internalising the organising principle in minority positions.

Conversely, if the influence relation is too conflictual, no influence occurs, whether direct or indirect, precisely to the degree that the activities of comparison and validation cannot be dissociated. Here cognitive activity is mobilised exclusively to achieve differentiation with respect to a source representing a high social cost in the case of identification. In effect we have hypothesised (Perez & Mugny, 1987) that validation is not activated when the comparison occurs in a unidimensional universe in which the interdependence of intergroup judgements (cf. Mummendy & Schreiber, 1984) implies that the evaluation of one position is necessarily tied in complimentary fashion to that of the other. Thus the image of the minority, complimentary to the positive image of the majority, cannot but be negative and so make the deviant character of the minority salient. Hence the minority is prevented from being mentally constructed as an alternative (with its own organising principle). This is particularly the case when targets must choose between moving towards a majority or a minority when both belong to a salient in-group (cf. Perez & Mugny, 1987). Furthermore, it is particularly in such a context that the conflict of identification in relation to a minority is strongest.

In corollary fashion, the validation process is activated when comparison takes place in a multidimensional universe and is made upon an independent form; then the attributes specific to the minority can be recognised. Thus, even if unfavourably judged on an evaluation dimension, the

minority's particular can be recognised for what it is, and the organising principle inferred as underlying particular those reflecting the organising principle inferred as underlying the content of these positions. In such a context of independence of judgments, the specifics of each entity distinguished in the categorical order can be recognised without arousing prejudice, and can contribute to a redefinition of the arena of positions and the attributes associated with them. It is to these conditions that, in addition to discrimination and social resistance to innovation, minorities allow. In the final analysis a clear and undeniable social impact.

### Conclusion

Thus, discriminative action can be accompanied by the actions of influence to which they are opposed. To understand these divergent effects, we have need of several complementary theories. Under the circumstances, and in the area specific to minority influence, we have resorted to a theoretical analysis of overt influence as under-pinned by a process of intergroup comparison, to account ultimately for those differentiations between groups in which minorities come out generally as the losers. To explain the effects of conversion, which nonetheless follow upon discrimination, we have proposed an analysis of processes of validation, assuming a constructive activity on the part of individual targets of minority influence, at the level of categorisations, indexations, the recognition of organising principles, and other cognitive functions relevant to a divergent form of thought. To go any further, we need a theory which integrates overt discrimination and the conversion effect. The notion of dissociation has allowed us to make this social-psychological articulation. One can discriminate, reinforce the status quo, and then still change. The conditions for this have been explained: the intergroup conflict must be constructed in terms of a two-fold cognitive activity which involves, in addition to the inevitable social comparison, a validation activity.

At the end of this presentation, in which we have only examined some of the salient and recurrent features of research on the social impact of minorities, it is evident that inter-group phenomena involving minorities do not simply involve social identity and categorical differentiation models, at least in their present forms. It appears to us that these models, which largely account for the intergroup social comparisons underlying direct influence, must be tied in with the study of the indirect influence typical

of minorities, and this requires an integration of the functions of innovation and social change in inter-group studies. Just as a logical-mathematical structure never contains the conditions of its own contradiction, in the same way intergroup relations can never be loosened and altered except through the intervention of the 'exogenous' factors which are active minorities (and which Moscovici has defined as a 'socialised Gödel's theorem'). But, given the inertia of social systems themselves, this process of innovation is gradual, and then proceeds via various successive stages (cf. Moscovici, 1985), the social impact of minorities taking root over time and in the end through the reflective and creative activity of the targets of influence among whom influence is not readily or directly observable.

To conclude, we will note that the effects of categorisation in the influence of minorities paradoxically revives and demands a reformulation of the conceptualisation of intergroup processes, in which the notion of conflict and consequently that of social constructivism will have a place, providing above all a contribution to the dynamics of these processes. Summing everything up, if a society seems to be characterised by a tendency to inertia, this can also conceal subterranean processes of influence which, although less visible, are no less fundamental than those which conspire to reproduce society. And the perennial fascination which social psychologists have for these processes of reproduction, still expressed in so many studies which do little more than gild the lily of majority influence (it would be futile to cite them all), this fascination deserves in our view to be counter-balanced by another, just as legitimate, fascination with the processes of change. And we should remember that in so many of his writings Henri Tajfel showed himself to be as fascinated with the latter as with the former.

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