

Independence and Interdependence of group judgments: Xenophobia and minority influence

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Abstract

A first experiment examined the effects of two methods of dividing resources between Swiss nationals and foreign residents in a study involving 118 subjects. Subjects gave judgments involving either interdependent allocation (resources allocated to the out-group cannot be allocated to the ingroup) or independent allocation. The results indicated that the socio-cognitive functioning preferred by subjects varies as a function of their view of outsiders. Interdependence of judgments was more characteristic of the most xenophobic subjects, whereas the least xenophobic were more likely to reason in terms of independence. On the other hand, intermediate subjects (those who were clearly neither for nor against outsiders) were sensitive to these modalities of judgment: interdependence engendered an ingroup favoritism, while independence counteracted this bias. A second experiment further analysed the influence of a more or less imperative minority argument on the attitudes of 109 more xenophobic subjects. Independent as compared to interdependent judgment facilitated a latent influence by the source, especially when the source employed a more imperative rhetoric to urge a more favourable attitude to foreigners.

INTRODUCTION

Mummendey and Schreiber (1983), in an important article on the social psychology of intergroup relations, defend the idea that discrimination against an outgroup will occur primarily to the degree that this is the only means of preserving a positive social identity. This will normally be the case in the 'minimal group paradigm' (Tajfel,

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1978). In this paradigm the negative interdependence of the symbolic values assigned respectively to ingroup and outgroup on a single evaluative dimension implies that the value imputed to one of these social entities is necessarily inversely related to the value assigned to the other. In brief, in the context of a highly competitive, unidimensional comparison, carrying the risk of being defined as inferior (Lemaine, 1966-67), discrimination against the outgroup is the only means for the individual to insure an ingroup favoritism guaranteeing a positive identity (Turner, 1981). When the comparison between ingroup and outgroup is made in a less constraining context, either because the two entities are judged independently of one another, or because the comparison is worked out on different and orthogonal dimensions which can do justice to both (Rijman, 1984), the search for positivity need no longer be linked to social competition. Under these conditions it need not involve discriminating against the outgroup, even though ingroup favoritism can emerge on the more important evaluative dimension or on that dimension defining the distinctiveness of the ingroup (Mummeny and Simon, 1989).

What would happen if one considered socially established categorical differentiations (they cannot be called natural because they are not), such as are involved in relations between one's own countrymen and foreigners? Interpreting the differences in attitude towards foreigners in terms of the interdependence or independence of intergroup judgments, and assuming that one can make a distinction between more and less xenophobic subjects, we advanced the following thesis. On the one hand xenophobes will deploy a mode of socio-cognitive reasoning marked by the salience of a negative interdependence between citizens and foreigners; for them an advantage gained by the outgroup automatically entails a loss for the ingroup, via a social logic similar to that of the incompatibility of goals (Sherif, 1966). By contrast, xenophiles are more inclined to reason in terms of the independence of intergroup judgments, in effect in accord with a principle of solidarity, which can itself lead to a kind of categorical fusion (Doise, 1978). In brief, we propose a certain homology between interdependence and independence of judgments on the one hand and a more or less xenophobic view of the presence of foreigners in one's country on the other.

To test these hypotheses, in an initial experiment subjects who were more or less hostile to the presence of foreigners in the country were asked to give their judgments about the allocation of resources to an ingroup and an outgroup according to either an interdependent or an independent comparison mode. If the more xenophobic subjects discover in interdependence a mode of reasoning which is familiar to them and which 'naturally' inclines towards discriminatory behaviour, they should approve of it. The less xenophobic subjects should by comparison be more disturbed by interdependence than by independence, as the latter should be more homologous with the mode of reasoning we attribute to them.

The question to be considered is whether subjects will persist with their preferred mode of functioning when a form of distribution is imposed upon them to which it does not correspond. Thus if one offers subjects forms of intergroup comparison based on independence or interdependence, will this favour the emergence of less discriminatory judgments (in the case of independence for the xenophobes), or less egalitarian judgments (in the case of interdependence for the more xenophiles)? Let us now turn to the detail of the first of the experiments addressed to these various questions.

STUDY 1: IN(TER)DEPENDENT JUDGMENTS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGNERS

Subjects

A total of 118 Swiss nationals of both sexes and all professions, with a median age of 22, participated in this first experiment. Following a pre-test, they had to divide resources between Swiss nationals and foreign residents, either in an interdependent manner or an independent manner. The meanings assigned to these manipulations were then evaluated with an ad hoc questionnaire.

Pre-test

After providing various pieces of personal information (age, sex, occupation or area of study, etc.) the subjects were told, as a kind of anchor point, the actual percentage of foreigners in Switzerland (15%), described as the anchoring point, and then indicated what percentage of foreigners in their country they believed to be desirable, on a scale from 8% to 22%.

Independence and interdependence of judgments

This variable was manipulated (both here and in an identical manner in study 2) by means of two methods of dividing resources between the ingroup (Swiss nationals) and the outgroup (foreign residents). We formulated five proposals concerning respectively social security, minimum wage, training assistance, rights of the unemployed without loss of salary, and priority access to low cost accommodation. For each of these, the subjects indicated in what measure they approved, the beneficiaries being on the one hand Swiss nationals and on the other foreign residents.

In the *interdependent judgment* condition, subjects distributed a total of 100 points, 'neither more nor less', to be divided between beneficiaries who were either Swiss nationals or foreigners. Thus the points accorded to one group were necessarily subtracted from those which could be given to the other.

In the *independent judgment* condition, subjects distributed to Swiss nationals and, independently, to foreigners, a number of points which in each case could be as high as 100. In this way, the points allocated to one group were not necessarily dependent on those accorded to the other.

The principal dependent measure in this experiment was ingroup favoritism, assessed in terms of the difference between the number of points given to Swiss nationals and the number given to foreigners. The index derived was based on the mean ingroup favoritism over the five claims (Cronbach alpha: 0.85).

Evaluation of in(ter)dependence

Following a reminder of the basis on which each subject had divided the points between Swiss nationals and foreigners (one of the questions was reproduced for the purpose of this reminder), subjects completed a series of seven-point scales assessing the degree to which they had found this form of response (a) was awkward, (b) was similar to their own way of thinking, (c) was a poor way of representing

the problem, (d) had prevented them from concealing their xenophobia, (e) had forced them into an anti-foreigner position, (f) facilitated thinking, (g) was typical of xenophobes, and (h) constituted a demagogic way of presenting things.

RESULTS

For the analysis of results, subjects were divided into three sub-groups. All subjects who indicated that the percentage of foreigners resident in Switzerland should be below 15% ($n=41$) were regarded as 'anti-foreigners' holding a 'xenophobic' position ($M=15$). Subjects who indicated a preference for exactly 15% ($n=43$) were classified as 'intermediates', and those who put the limit above this percentage ($n=34$) were placed in the 'pro-foreigners' or 'xenophile' category ($M=20.41$).

It should be noted that subjects' social origins had a substantial effect on these responses. Those from working class backgrounds (apprentices, manual workers, and employees) had a lower mean ($M=13.70$) than the middle class ($M=15.61$) and upper middle class subjects (professional classes and students; $M=18.04$), $F(2/115)=10.899$, $p<0.001$ (all levels of significance are for one-tailed tests).

Ingroup favoritism

The results (see Table 1) for the 'anti-foreigners' subjects indicate a clear ingroup favoritism both in the interdependent ($M=+30.17$) and the independent ($M=+32.70$) conditions with no difference between them. Neither was there any difference between conditions for the 'pro-foreigners' (interdependence: $M=+2.52$; independence: $M=+0.01$), but among these subjects there was no bias in favour of the ingroup. By comparison, for the 'intermediate' subjects ingroup favoritism was more marked in the interdependent condition ($M=+15.05$) than in the independent condition ($M=+4.59$), $t(112)=1.640$, $p<0.06$.

While the condition in which judgments were interdependent produced more discrimination among the intermediate subjects than among the pro-foreigners, $t(112)=1.888$, $p<0.04$, independent judgments encouraged the former to be more equitable than interdependent judgments; they corrected their discriminatory attitudes, adopting a strategy as egalitarian as that of the most xenophile subjects, $t(112)<1$, n.s. On the other hand the condition in which choices were independent had no effect on the anti-foreigners who maintained a high level of discrimination, far beyond that of both the intermediates, $t(112)=4.169$, $p<0.001$, and the xenophiles, $t(112)=4.992$, $p<0.001$. In the second study we focused on this more 'resistant' kind of subjects.

Table 1. Ingroup favoritism means by experimental condition and subject classification

Subjects	Interdependence	Independence
Anti-foreigners	+30.17	+32.70
Intermediates	+15.05	+4.59
Pro-foreigners	+2.53	+0.01

Evaluation of interdependence

If, overall, subjects agreed that independence of judgments is more typical of pro-foreigners ($M=4.52$; typical=7) than interdependence ($M=4.05$), $F(1/112)=4.123$, $p<0.05$, their judgments were also related to their initial positions. Thus the xenophobes regarded interdependence as a more honest way of presenting things ($M=5.10$; demagogic=1, honest=7), than independence ($M=4.15$), $t(112)=1.750$, $p<0.05$, significantly more so than did both the intermediates ($M=4.15$), $t(112)=1.856$, $p<0.04$, and the xenophiles ($M=3.80$), $t(112)=2.215$, $p<0.02$. On the other hand, subjects seemed more disturbed by the experimental inductions when they were more favourably disposed to foreigners, $F(2,112)=3.494$, $p<0.04$; the xenophobes were the least disturbed ($M=4.85$; not bothered=7), the intermediates more so ($M=3.88$) and the xenophiles most of all ($M=3.53$). Across conditions, that is whether opposition or simple comparison between citizens and foreigners was involved, the procedure corresponded better to the way of thinking of the xenophobic subjects ($M=4.29$; Does not correspond=7) than to that of the intermediates ($M=4.88$) or especially the xenophiles ($M=6.03$). $F(2/112)=10.817$, $p<0.001$.

Finally, interdependence was perceived as interfering with thinking more by both xenophiles ($M=5.40$; Interferes with thought=7) and intermediates ($M=5.04$) than the independent condition (xenophiles: $M=4.42$, $t(112)=1.750$, $p<0.05$; intermediates: $M=4.29$, $t(112)=1.474$, $p<0.08$). For the xenophobes, the difference although not significant was reversed; they found independence more disruptive of thought ($M=4.20$) than interdependence ($M=3.76$).

CONCLUSION

It was confirmed that interdependence is closer to the mode of socio-cognitive functioning of more xenophobic subjects; they judged it more positively and considered it to correspond more closely to their own manner of thinking. Independence appeared to be closer to the habitual mode of reasoning of the least xenophobic subjects, and it disturbed them less than did interdependence.

As regards effects on ingroup favoritism, the 'intermediate' subjects showed themselves to be sensitive to manipulation of the mode of judgment. Among these subjects independence of judgments counteracted, as anticipated, the ingroup favoritism encouraged by interdependence. In contrast, the more extreme subjects remained true to their respective principles, equality between foreigners and citizens for the xenophiles, ingroup favoritism for the xenophobes, whatever form of judgment was involved.

Socially anchored divisions will thus be particularly resistant to change, particularly among the most xenophobic subjects, more so perhaps than the more abstract division of the minimal group paradigm. This observation led us to conduct a second experiment, examining the degree to which a minority putting forward a xenophile argument can modify discriminatory attitudes towards outsiders. Use of this type of paradigm is all the more legitimate given that an overtly xenophile position represents a point of view that is normatively minority for the present sample; in the Swiss socio-political context of the last decade several initiatives of solidarity with immigrant workers have only attracted a tiny minority of votes. In accord with the general hypothesis of a homology between interdependent versus independent judgments

and xenophobic versus non-xenophobic attitudes, we expected that minority influence, if it occurs at all, will do so most markedly in conditions involving independent intergroup judgments.

The success of such a procedure is likely to be modest, however. We know from previous work that minority influence often takes the form of conversion (Moscovici, 1980), being translated into a latent rather than an overt social impact (Moscovici and Mugny, 1987; Mugny and Pérez, 1991). This is even more likely if ingroup identity is highly salient (Pérez and Mugny, 1987, 1990a), as is the case with xenophobes. Nonetheless, intergroup relations should not be regarded immutable and their transformation may in particular be related to social influence processes (cf. Mugny, Kaiser, Papastamou and Pérez, 1984). But let us look now at the experiment conducted on this question.

STUDY 2: ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOREIGNERS AND MINORITY INFLUENCE

The aim of this second experiment was to discover whether a minority influence could release responses more favourable toward foreigners among the kind of xenophobic subjects who in the first experiment did not 'benefit' from the opportunity offered by independent judgment to reduce their discriminatory stance. Would they therefore moderate this attitude if confronted with a normatively minority anti-xenophobic argument? To answer this question the procedure of the preceding experiment was repeated with the addition of a minority appeal together with appropriate measures. Following the pretest but before distributing the resources between Swiss nationals and foreign residents, either in terms of *interdependent* or of *independent* judgments, subjects familiarised themselves with a xenophile appeal formulated either in *imperative* or *optative* terms, that is to say in a more confrontational tone versus a less hectoring tone. This provided a 2(mode of judgment) × 2(tone of argument) design. Subjects then completed a questionnaire on the image of the argument's source, and an opinion questionnaire assessing the direct and indirect impact of the minority.

Subjects

A total of 160 Swiss nationals were questioned initially, and from among these 109 (23 young women and 86 young men) were retained for analysis of experimental effects on the basis of their hostile attitude to the presence of foreigners in the country. All of these 'xenophobic' had proposed a reduction in the percentage of foreigners in the country on the pretest ($M=10.20$). Consistent with the correlation between attitude and occupational background observed in the first experiment, most of these subjects (82%) were apprentices.

Minority appeal and imperative versus optative tone

The appeal argued directly in favour of equality between Swiss citizens and foreign residents and defined five proposals to benefit foreigners in Switzerland. These corresponded to the issues used to examine intergroup distribution of resources in the

first experiment; they were: right to social security, to a minimum wage, to training support, to no loss of salary when unemployed, and to low cost accommodation. In order to highlight the minority character of the appeal, it was indicated that the majority of the Swiss opposed the proposals defended in the text which were presented as originating from a minority group fighting for foreigners' rights.

In defining these proposals on the basis of humanitarian, social and political principles, the source assumed either an imperative or an optative tone. This was manipulated by means of the way each proposal was prefaced or introduced. For the *imperative* condition, the introduction was 'it is absolutely essential that ...', for the *optative* condition, 'it would be desirable if ...'.

Agreement with the source

Immediately after reading the appeal, subjects indicated, on a seven-point scale (7=agree) their degree of agreement or disagreement with the text they had just read. They then carried out the points distribution task either under conditions of interdependent judgment or of independent judgment. For each of the proposals advanced in the minority appeal, subjects indicated the extent to which they approved, the beneficiaries being on the one hand Swiss nationals and on the other foreign residents. As in the first experiment, they distributed a total of 100 points between Swiss nationals and foreigners (*interdependent* condition) or amounts up to 100 points to each group (*independent* condition).

Opinion questionnaire

After having described the source on several bipolar scales (here we will only note that on a seven-point scale on which 1 signified minority and 7 majority), the text was described as clearly minority, $M=2.71$, subjects responded to a measure of influence. This consisted of ten propositions with which subjects expressed their degree of agreement or disagreement on seven-point scales (7 = 'I agree'). The first five propositions corresponded to the proposals advanced in the minority appeal and these constituted a measure of *direct influence*, made more salient given that the proposition also reflected the objects of the judgment task. The other five propositions concerned the integration of immigrants and their fundamental rights: reuniting of families; opposition to expulsion of immigrants, even in the event of unemployment; automatic dual nationality for children born to foreign workers in Switzerland; the right of individuals to become citizens of the country in which they live; the right to vote. To the extent that these ideas were not present in the minority appeal, responses to these questions constituted a measure of *indirect influence*.

RESULTS

On the pretest question concerning the percentage of foreigners in Switzerland regarded as desirable, 26 of the 160, all of whom were themselves Swiss citizens, indicated 15%. Thus, 16.25% of the sample chose the status quo. A further 25 chose a higher percentage and this group, 15.63% of the sample, were classified as 'xeno-

philes'. A percentage lower than 15 was indicated by 109 subjects (63.13%; $M = 10.20$); so this group explicitly desired a reduction in the number of foreigners and was retained for the analysis according to a 2 (independent versus interdependent judgment) \times 2 (optative versus imperative message tone) design. Table 2 gives, for the four experimental conditions, the means of the different indices. For the purposes of certain comparisons the mean responses across conditions of the 26 status quo subjects were also computed.

Agreement with the source

The measure of agreement taken immediately after subjects had read the text indicated no effect of the source's style of argument (Optative: $M = 2.92$; Imperative: $M = 3.02$, $F < 1$). Neither was there any effect of the second variable, not yet introduced at this stage in the experiment. Tone of argument thus had no impact on agreement with the minority's ideas, all the experimental subjects expressing their disagreement with the context of the appeal. By way of comparison, the status quo subjects had a mean score for agreement of 4.54.

Ingroup favoritism

The allocation of points to Swiss nationals (ingroup points) and foreign residents (outgroup points) with respect to each of the five propositions were combined and analyses performed on the mean number of points allocated to each group, and on the difference between these allocations which provided an index of ingroup favoritism. There was an increase in approval for the propositions in the independent judgment condition as compared to the interdependent condition, with respect to foreign residents (respectively $M_s = 49.49$ and 31.51), $F(1/105) = 17.875$, $p < 0.001$, as well as with respect to Swiss nationals (respectively $M_s = 81.85$ and 68.48), $F(1/105) = 20.828$, $p < 0.001$. Nonetheless there was still an overall ingroup favoritism, with subjects across conditions allocating more points ($M = +34.50$) to the Swiss ($M = 75.35$) than to the foreigners ($M = 40.85$). This ingroup favoritism did not vary significantly, neither as a function of interdependence ($M = 36.97$) versus independence ($M = +32.17$) of judgments, nor as a function of optative ($M = +32.48$) versus

imperative ($M = +36.42$) style of argument. Hence the experimental manipulations produced no significant effects on the distribution of points, except for the absolute amount of points which is higher in the independent conditions.

It should be noted, however, that the manipulation intended to induce a mode of cognitive functioning implying either the independence or interdependence of intergroup judgments was effective. If the correlation between points attributed respectively to ingroup and outgroup in the interdependent condition is logically almost -1 (-0.97), the same correlation for subjects in the independent condition was not only non-significant but actually changed sign (+0.12).

Influence on opinions

No difference was found between experimental conditions in opinions on the five items directly related to the argument presented. However, effects did appear at the level of indirect influence. We will comment on these later but note first that the average approval expressed in the indirect measures over all conditions was less than that shown for the direct measures, respectively $M_s = 2.93$ and 3.70 , $t(108) = 5.85$, $p < 0.001$. The correlation between the indirect and direct indices was, nonetheless, positive, $r = +0.52$, $p < 0.001$, suggesting the existence of a common underlying factor. To explain the differences between conditions, it cannot therefore be argued that these occur because indirect influence bears on attitudes or positions that are less polarised and less conflictual.

Thus, as regards indirect influence it was found that the independent condition induced a less unfavourable attitude toward foreign residents ($M = 3.25$) than did the interdependent condition ($M = 2.58$), $F(1/105) = 5.676$, $p < 0.02$. Examining this effect more closely it emerges that the independent/interdependent contrast was most marked when the minority employed an imperative tone. This produced the most favourable attitude toward foreigners in the independent condition ($M = 3.45$) but the most unfavourable attitude, in the interdependent condition ($M = 2.48$), $t(105) = 2.510$, $p < 0.02$. In contrast, the difference between these two conditions was not significant when the minority argument had been expressed in the 'optative' tone, although the difference remains in the same direction (independent: $M = 3.06$; interdependent: $M = 2.72$; $t(105) = 0.861$). Thus, as we have been able to show elsewhere (Pérez, Mugny, Roux and Butera, 1991; Pérez and Mugny, 1990b), when the minority uses a more heckling tone the effect of independence versus interdependence of judgments on minority influence is more clearly marked.

In this respect, it is not uninteresting to compare, albeit with appropriate caution, the means obtained for the indirect items in each of the four conditions with that obtained from the 26 'status quo' subjects. For the latter, $M = 3.74$. They differ significantly from the xenophobic subjects in both interdependent conditions (optative: $M = 2.72$, $p < 0.02$; imperative: $M = 2.48$, $p < 0.001$). The same is not true with respect to those xenophobic subjects in the independent conditions. In the optative condition the difference is still there but attenuated ($M = 3.06$, $p < 0.10$) but in the imperative condition it disappears, ($M = 3.45$, $p < 0.46$). In this last condition the conjunction of a particularly hectoring minority appeal with the opportunity offered to subjects to reason in independent terms has modified their attitudes to the point at which, on issues indirectly linked to the minority position, they have become indistinguishable from those of subjects who had to some degree already broken with xenophobia.

Table 2. Ingroup favoritism and mean agreement with the minority text and with direct and indirect influence items ($7 =$ agree) as a function of experimental condition

Comparison: Style	Interdependence		Independence	
	optative 24	imperative 29	optative 29	imperative 27
Ingroup points	68.14	68.76	83.10	80.51
Outgroup points	31.82	31.25	53.80	45.27
Ingroup favoritism	+36.32	+37.51	+29.30	+35.24
Agreement	3.08	3.03	2.79	3.00
Direct influence	3.49	3.70	3.81	3.77
Indirect influence	2.72	2.48	3.06	3.45

CONCLUSIONS

Two general conclusions can be drawn. First, as regards more or less xenophobic behaviour, study 1 shows that a certain homology exists between a more interdependent or more independent mode of comparison on the one hand and a more or less unfavourable attitude towards foreigners on the other. This was demonstrated by the fact that the most anti-foreigner subjects identified more positively with a way of making judgments which was interdependent and unidimensional whereas the pro-foreigner subjects identified more with the independent procedure. It was also seen that the intermediate subjects, adrift between a pro- and an anti-foreigner attitude, were sensitive to the differences between these modes of comparison. Their socio-cognitive functioning was in effect dependent on the type of intergroup comparison involved; independent judgments counteracted the ingroup favoritism which interdependent judgments allowed them to express. In contrast the inclinations of both 'xenophiles' and 'xenophobes' were unaffected by the type of comparison involved. The former remained faithful to the principle of equity between foreigners and nationals while the latter showed no inclination to be deflected from discrimination.

The second conclusion concerns minority influence. In study 2, we subjected all participants in the experiment with a xenophobic tendency to an appeal that is normatively minority, and which they saw as such. The intention was to allow the independent mode of judgment to moderate the discriminatory strategies associated with interdependent intergroup judgment. It emerged that manifest influence was unaffected by the experimental manipulations; subjects remained consistently opposed to the minority proposals, by indicating explicit disagreement with the minority appeal, by demonstrating ingroup favoritism in the comparison task, and finally by expressing attitudes unfavourable to the propositions directly raised in the text of the minority appeal. Parenthetically, this reminds of certain principles in the theory of commitment (Kiesler, 1971). In brief, the minority source had no direct impact. It is true that previous studies on conversion have largely habituated us to this kind of open 'resistance', and the present research only confirms this tendency. Even when backed up by a minority appeal, independent judgment is not sufficient to discourage the discriminatory functioning of xenophobic subjects.

However, independent judgment did have the effect of undermining the xenophobic attitudes of subjects on an indirect dimension, the effect being particularly marked when the rhetoric of the minority was more confrontational by virtue of its imperative tone. The combination of these two effects thus produced a latent influence typical of the conversion effect. Hence, this experiment also indicates that indirect influence is more likely when subjects are placed in a situation involving independent comparisons, which in our view allows us to distinguish processes of social comparison from processes of social validation (Pérez and Mugny, 1987, 1990a). The fact that a more hectoring style induces a greater indirect influence in the independent condition additionally confirms that this dissociative mode will be at work particularly when the minority induces still more conflict, as we have already shown in influence experiments on the themes of abortion and contraception (Pérez and Mugny, 1989, 1990b).

Further research will however be necessary to determine under what conditions indirect or latent changes are transformed into manifest or overt changes, thereby

modifying the principle according to which resources are distributed between groups in the direction of a less discriminatory standard. It is this question concerning the final phase of conversion to innovation (Moscovici, 1985), which continues to bedevil researchers in the area of minority influence and which remains to receive a satisfactory theoretical and empirical answer.

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