On the effects of changes in group status[#]

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Abstract: Change is a very frequent sociopsychological phenomenon, that we notice when transformations from minority to majority, high to low social status, weak to strong social position and vice versa are being conducted. Causes of change are described in literature dealing with attitudes and persuasion, group dynamics, conformity and group development. But we lack information on consequences of change. This article describes three subjects related to this problem: (i) assessment and evaluation of personal change, (ii) assessment and evaluation of social change and (iii) reactions to change-related agents in a group context. The author introduces a series of experiments based on loss-gain asymmetry (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). The results implicate that assessment and evaluation of change is influenced by different agents such as the direction of comparison (comparing past to present or vice versa), desirability of stability or change of attitudes, maintaining positive views about the self or the group, and gain or loss of group status or power. The change of group status leads to change in the perception of group-self similarity and group attraction, expectancies about future group interactions and group self-evaluation. Change of group status and power is a central determinant of intergroup relations.

Key words: personal change, social change, loss-gain asymmetry, attitudes, majority-minority status, intergroup relations, effects of change

Vplivi sprememb položaja v skupini

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Povzetek: Sprememba je pogost socialnopsihološki pojav, ki ga opazimo pri transformacijah manjšine v večino, pri prehodih iz močne v šibko pozicijo, iz visokega v nizek status in obratno. Vzroki sprememb so opisani v literaturi o prepričanjih, vplivu manjšin, konformnosti in razvoju skupine. Posledice sprememb pa niso tako obširno raziskane. Pričujoči prispevek povzema s tem povezane raziskave. Govori o treh temah: (i) o ocenjevanju in vrednotenju osebnostnih sprememb, (ii) o ocenjevanju in vrednotenju socialnih sprememb in (3) o reakcijah skupine na dejavnike, povezane s spremembo. Avtorica navaja serijo eksperimentov, zasnovanih na načelu asimetričnih reakcij na dobitke in izgube (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). Izsledki raziskav kažejo, da na ocenjevanje in vrednotenje sprememb vplivajo dejavniki, kot so smer primerjave (primerjava preteklosti s sedanjostjo in obratno), zaželenost stabilnosti ali spremembe stališč, motivacija, doprinos spremembe k pozitivnemu samovrednotenju ali vrednotenju skupine ter

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pridobitvev ali izguba statusa in moči skupine. Sprememba statusa skupine vpliva na zaznano podobnost s skupino, pričakovanja o interakciji s skupino, privlačnost skupine in za skupino specifično kolektivno samovrednotenje. Moč in status skupine sta osrednji determinanti medskupinskih odnosov.

Ključne besede: osebna in socialna sprememba, načelo asimetričnih reakcij na dobitke in izgube, stališča, medskupinski odnosi, status manjšine in večine

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Although social psychologists have been studying change ever since their discipline was founded as a scientific endeavor, they have treated change almost exclusively as a dependent variable. Domains of attitudes and persuasion (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), social influence (e.g., Turner, 1991), and group dynamics (e.g., Levine & Moreland, 1998) are examples par excellence. As a result, we are much better informed about causes than consequences of change. Interestingly, this focus on causes rather than on consequences characterizes not only social but also other domains of psychology as well. In a stark contrast, other scientific disciplines, especially those focused on social and economic changes are more likely to document not only presumed causes (Feng & Zak, 1999) but also consequences of change (Kugler & Feng, 199) . This is best illustrated by sociological, demographic, and economic indicators of recent socio-political changes that are most profoundly observable in Europe but also in other parts of the world: from South Africa to East Timor to Canada, etc. As informative as these indicators are, they are mute to the issue of phenomenological experience of change. Understanding of the issue appears to be inversely proportional to its relevance, as if confirming an old cynicism that the more important a phenomenon is the less likely psychologists are to study it. In the past several years, however, cynics have been loosing ground as several researchers, including my students and myself, have been examining the phenomenon. In what follows an overview of relevant research will be presented, organized around three topics: 1) Assessment and evaluation of personal change; 2) Assessment and evaluation of social change, and 3) Reactions to change-related agents in a group context.

Assessment and Evaluation of Personal Change

"Has your attitude toward death penalty changed in the past ten years?" "Has your political ideology changed during the same period?" How individuals answer these questions has been examined within the social cognition framework (Devine, Hamilton, & Ostrom, 1994; Fiske & Taylor, 1991) that emphasizes cognitive structures and processes responsible for arriving to specific answers (Prislin & Ouellette, 1996). As

important as they are, cognitive structures, however, are not the sole determining factors. In addition, motivational forces impinge on these structures to determine processes by which they operate (Prislin & Pool, 1996; Prislin, Wood, & Pool, 1998). Thus, answering questions about personal change involves more than an attempt to recollect one's past and then comparing it to the present. Assessment of change at a personal level is an active, constructive process, guided as much by motivational forces and information-processing schemas as by the objective state of affairs. This assumption is the crux of Michael Ross' model of the assessment of personal change. According to Ross, when assessing whether their attitudes (opinions, beliefs, party affiliations, etc.) have changed, individuals undergo a multi-stage process (Ross, 1989). The process commences with the assessment of current attitudes. Next step, however, does not involve the assessment of past attitudes. Rather, there is an intermediary side-step whereby an implicit theory of change is invoked. This theory, in turn, determines how attitudes held in the past compare to those currently espoused. The function of an implicit theory, therefore, is to organize memories into a coherent pattern of information supportive of the theory. The organizational function is regulated by motivational forces in that memories are organized to support conclusions about stability or change depending on whether the former or the latter yields favorable self-evaluation and/or social evaluation.

In the domain of attitudes and other socially debatable dimensions, stability appears to be preferred over change. Compared to those who tend to move along the attitudinal continuum, individuals who have stable attitudes over time are evaluated more positively by others and tend to think more highly of themselves. Because of this functionality of attitude stability for winning social rewards and maintaining positive views about the self, people tend to exaggerate stability of their attitudes (Niemi, Katz, & Newman, 1980). Even when their attitudes change over time, individuals maintain an illusion of stability by revising their past. Accordingly, their recollections of their past standings on social issues appear to be more heavily influenced by their contemporary attitudes than by their past attitudes. Indeed, in a longitudinal study of attitudes toward various social issues, Markus (1986) found that recollection of past attitudes correlated more strongly with measures of current attitudes that with measures of attitudes obtained in the past.

As mentioned earlier, Ross' model postulates that implicit theories may emphasize stability as well as change. Which one is emphasized depends on the resultant implications for the self. Thus when change rather than stability yields positive implications for the self, recollection of the past may be distorted in the service of maintaining an illusion of change. That is, when change appears functional for achieving favorable self- or social evaluation, individuals will detect change even when none has actually occurred. They will typically do so by recollecting their personal past as worse than the present, or, if feasible, by distorting their personal present as better than the past. Empirical support for the former was obtained in a study in which

participants were assigned in either a study-skill improvement program or a control group (Conway & Ross, 1985). The program turned out to be less efficient than participants had been led to expect, resulting in a virtually no improvement in their study-skills. Yet, participants in the treatment condition, who were highly motivated to believe that their skills would change for the better maintained their illusion of change by recollecting their initial skills as being substantially worse than they had actually reported at the onset of the study. Indeed, participants in this study exhibited reactions typical of many among us. For example, many of us are prone to believe that we were fatter in the past – it makes us look thinner now even if we have not lost a gram, that we teach better today than we did years ago even if nothing has changed in our teaching efficiency, that we are better parents to our second child than to our firstborn even if none of parenting skills has improved or worse yet, even if we have we lost much of our initial patience as parents.

Overall, biases reflecting implied (desired) consistency appear more pervasive than biases reflecting implied (desired) change. Yet a word of caution is in order. Although understanding biases in recall is important for understanding how individuals assess change, it is equally important not to exaggerate the extent of the bias. Bias occurs only when individuals' implicit theories of stability and change contradict reality. To the extent that these theories are accurate, individuals' assessment of change is accurate. Moreover, even when their implicit theories of change are inaccurate, individuals are not completely at liberty to reconstruct their past or to reinterpret their present (Kunda, 1989; Lundgren & Prislin, 1998). To the extent that external indicants of stability (change) are salient, they will correct theory-driven biases. These external indicants may reflect an "objective" reality or shared social interpretations, which may be so powerful as to correct not only an individual's illusion of change but also her or his actual personal change (Nadler, 1993).

Assessment and Evaluation of Social Change

"Have things changed for you?" "If they have, has the change been for the better or for the worse?" "How satisfied are you with the present that was brought about by change of the past?" Answering these and similar questions requires that individuals infer whether they live in a different social reality from those in which they lived in the past and if so, whether the current social reality is better or worse than it used to be.

Just as the assessment and evaluation of personal change are shaped by motivational forces and information-processing schemas (Silka, 1988), so are the assessment and evaluation of social change (e.g., Chiu & Hong, 1999; Wieczorkowska & Burnstein, 1999) This postulate implies that (social) psychology cannot rely on "objective" indicators of social change to infer how the change will be experienced

phenomenologically. Indeed, to a surprise of many, initial enthusiastic reactions to recent profound political and socio-economic changes have subsided both in Europe (Boehnke, Hagan, Hefler, 1998; Breakwell & Lyons, 1996; Haeyrynen, 1999; Macek, Flanagan, Gallay, Kostron, Botcheva, & Czapo, 1998; Sloutsky & Searle-White, 1993), and South Africa (Duckitt & Mphuthing, 1998; Finchilescu & Dawes, 1998).

To explain evaluations of social change, Norbert Schwartz and his colleagues (Schwartz, Wänke, & Bless, 1994) developed the feature matching model that emphasizes the interpretative nature of remembrance and perceptions as two key determining factors. Developed within the social cognition framework, the model postulates that the assessment of social change starts with the construal of mental representations of the past and the present, which are then compared. The comparison process, however, does not follow the rules of formal logic. Departure from formal logic is reflected in the fact that the outcome of the comparison depends not only on the features of the past and the present but also on the direction of comparison. Thus, present social reality will be evaluated differently depending on whether the assessment involves comparison of the present to the past or the reversed comparison of the past to the present.

The relevance of the direction of comparison stems from the fact that it determines whichof the many features of the present and the past will be involved in the comparison (Tversky, 1977). As an illustration, consider a case of an individual who in the past had a secure job paying $1000 per month. In addition, the job benefits included a guaranteed pension after a certain age. The individual's representation of the past likely would include the following features: A) being employed, B) making $1000 per month, C) having job securing, and D) having guaranteed pension. Let's further assume that as a result of a social change, the individual has lost job security and the guaranteed pension but has gained E) the voice within his or her organization, F) prospects for professional development, G) performance-based criteria for promotion, and I) lower tax on the same monthly salary. If the individual assesses the change by comparing the past to the present, he or she will examine whether features A to D also are part of the present. The individual is unlikely to consider features E to I, which are part of the present but not of the past. As a result, the individual will conclude that the social change resulted in a loss of job security and pension and likely will evaluate the change negatively. In contrast, if the individual assesses the change by comparing the present to the past, he or she will examine whether features E to I also were part of the past while largely neglecting features A to D. Because features E to I are largely positive and were not present in the past, the individual likely will evaluate the change positively.

In contrast to this illustrative example where the past and the present are represented by the same number of features, our typical representation of the present is richer in that includes more unique features than our representation of the past, whose many features are usually forgotten (Dunning & Madey, 1995). As a consequence, the comparison of the present to the past should make salient more unique

features than would be the case when comparing the past to the present. Thus, the answer to the question "How much has social reality changed?" is likely to be "A lot" when we compare the present to the past, and "A little" when we compare the past to the present. Generally, more change is inferred from the present-to-the past comparison than from the past-to-the present comparison.

The direction of comparison influences not only inferences about amount of change but also evaluations of the inferred change. To predict whether people will evaluate social change as positive or negative, we need to know which features they use in representing the present and the past and which direction of comparison they will chose. Although theoretically, we are free to use either direction, in most cases our spontaneous assessments of social change is triggered by some current problem. This further implies that in assessing and evaluation change, we are likely to concentrate on the present as the subject of comparison and on the past as the object of comparison. If indeed, a current problem is in the focus of our attention, it probably is so because it is novel and was not part of the past. Thus, when comparing the present to the past, the current problem will stand out as a distinctive feature of the present. On the other hand, problems that we had in the past likely will escape our attention because of the psycho-logic (rather than logic) nature of the comparison process (see above). In the end, the resultant evaluation of the present likely is to be negative while the past likely is to be looked at as the time of the "good old days."

Although a current problem is most likely to trigger the present-past comparison, it is not always so. Theoretically, at least, a positive feature of the present may start the comparison process. When that happens, that is, when some positive feature of the present triggers the comparison process, will the outcome be different? Shall we in this case conclude that the past was "gloom and doom," and that we live in a better world? Not necessarily. According to prospect theory (Tversky & Kahneman, 1991), when the comparison process leads to the conclusion that the positive feature of the present did not exist in the past and therefore represents a gain due to social change, this still does not guarantee positive evaluation of the change. If the comparison process also leads to conclusion that the change resulted in some losses, that is, it caused a loss of some positive aspects of the past, then the principle of loss-gain asymmetry applies. Losses loom larger than gains. For example, losing $100 (as in a $100 tax increase) is felt more intensively than gaining $100 (as in a $100 salary increase).

Another important implication is that gains and loses of an equal magnitude do not result in "zero net change." Rather, changes with negative outcomes have greater impacts than changes with positive outcomes (Tversky, 1994; Tversky & Kahneman, 1991). Thus, a change is unlikely to be evaluated as positive unless the resultant gains exceed the resultant losses. Moreover, because of salience of losses, even a small loss may outweight a relatively large gain. Thus, if a positive feature of the present is to lead to the conclusion that the present is better than the past, the feature must far outweigh both negative features of the present and positive features of the past.

Comparing the present to the past (or vice versa) is not the only way of evaluating social change. Alternatively, evaluation may be based on how one's present situation compares to that of others (Festinger, 1954). This implies that even when social change brings about considerable improvements, it is not necessarily positively evaluated if it simultaneously increases relative deprivation or the feeling that one compares unfavorably to others (Williams, 1975). In support of this proposition, it was found that even a substantial increase in personal income is not accompanied with the correspondent increase in subjective well-being. For example, although the real value of personal income in the United States has more than doubled between 1960 and 1990, the percentage of people considering themselves as very happy has remained unchanged at 30 percent (Myers, 1993). Similar conclusion was reached in a study that examined material wealth and subjective well-being among more than 170,000 individuals in sixteen nations (Inglehart, 1990). This, of course, does not imply a total lack of relationship between material and psychological well-being; rather, it indicates that the relationship is tenuous at best (Campbell, 1981; Inglehart, 1990)

If both, comparisons over time and social comparisons operate to influence evaluation of social change, then they may operate in tandem, leading to the same conclusion but also, they may lead to contradictory conclusions. For example, unfavorable outcomes of social comparisons may potentially override favorable outcomes of the comparison of change over time. This may explain, for example, a widespread dissatisfaction of East Germans, for whom unification changed standards of comparison, which may be stronger determinants of their evaluation of change than any possible improvement over time. Similar process may be responsible for the observed lack of long-term increase in happiness following enormous lottery winnings (Inglehart, 1990).

There are some important practical lessons to be learned from social cognitive research on the assessment and evaluation of change. All processes discussed so far suggest that the assessment and evaluation of a social change can be significantly influenced by, among other things, a) individuals' motivation in evaluating change, b) their focus of attention, and c) their comparison standards. Interestingly, politicians wishing to convince their electorate that things have changed appear to have been aware of this as evident by their many strategies used to this goal. For example, they work hard to motivate people to believe in change (improvement). Motivating people to believe in improvement may not be as difficult as it may seem, even if there are few objective indicators than any change, much less positive, has occurred. Majority of those who voted for politicians arguing that there has been some social improvement, are typically motivated to justify their (voting) behavior. Their dissonance reduction typically results in their believing in social improvements. Of course, this strategy would work to a certain extent. If, however, elected officials' claims about social improvement are supported by media and claims from other social sources, they may combine to validate the picture of reality as significantly improved. To contradict such a shared vision may be psychologically difficult, as Achs (1955) taught

us long time ago. It even may be unwise if those who do not do not see a (positive) change are socially stigmatized (Crocker, Major, & Steel, 1998). When these forces combine, they may cause a person to see a change where none has occurred.

If controlling motivation proves to be too demanding, it may be easier to guide temporal comparisons that people make. For example, to the extent that the electorate makes comparisons in the "right" direction and on the "right" features, social reality may seem substantially improved. For example, nothing makes the present social reality look better than negative features of the past social reality. This likely is a reason for the incumbent politicians trying to focus their electorates' attention to the negative aspects of the past and away from the negative aspects of the present. In contrast to this strategy typically used by incumbents, challengers try to focus the electorate's attention to the negative aspects of the present. Both often attempt to boost this "social improvement" program by guiding social comparison toward downward, which results in a positive evaluation of change.

Reactions to Change-Related Agents in a Group Context

Assessment and evaluation of change, accurate or biased, is only part of the story. An important aspect of understanding change is understanding reactions to change-related agents, especially in a group context. In a program of research that my students and I have been following for the past several years, we are trying to understand how people react to others when their own position within a group changes (Prislin, Limbert, & Bauer, 1999). More specifically, we've been studying reactions to others following changes in majority/minority status within a group and following changes in power in inter-group context.

To understand individuals' reactions to changes in their status within a group, we developed the gain-loss asymmetry model of changes in majority and minority status. The basic premise of the model is change away from majority status is experienced as loss, whereas changes toward majority status is experienced as gain. Supporting evidence for this premise is abundant. With an exception of elite minorities (Moscovici & Faucheux, 1972), all other minorities "they have been pigeonholed, pathologized, deprecated, stigmatized, and dismissed in a countless way" (Moscovici, 1994, p. 239). In contrast, majorities enjoy many benefits, both tangible (Sidanius, 1999) and intangible (Festinger, 1950; Moscovici, 1976; Simon, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It therefore appears to be more advantageous to be in majority than in minority, except in highly circumscribed conditions that ensure elitist status to minorities. This imbalance in advantages likely is a primary reason for most minorities' attempts to become majorities.

Social psychological literature has documented the strategies that minorities use in their attempts to become majorities (e.g., Wood, Lundgren, Ouellette, Busceme, & Blackstone, 1994) as well as the strategies that majorities use to maintain their

positions (e.g., Cialdini & Trost, 1998). In a sharp contrast, social psychological litera-ture is almost mute to the question about consequences of change; that is, about intra-group and inter-group dynamics following a successful attempt of minorities to be-come majorities. Our model assumes that when minority becomes majority, com-parative advantages of majority status result in the change being experienced as a gain and change from majority to minority being experienced as a loss. This further implies a substantial change in intra-group dynamics. Because losses loom larger than gains, negative reactions to losing majority status should be stronger than posi-tive reactions to gaining majority status. An important implication is that immediately following changes in majority/minority positions, the group will be especially fragile with dividing (centrifugal) forces being stronger than unifying (centripetal) forces.

In first of a series of studies that tested these assumption, we examined the effects of initial position within a group (majority or minority) and subsequent change (no change, partial, complete) on members liking for the group, their perception of similarity between themselves and the group, and strength of attitudes (Prislin, 1996) toward the issue that defined majority/minority positions within the group. In four-member groups, initial position was created by having two out of the three confeder-ates support the participant's opinion on a socially relevant issue (majority position). Conversely, to create a minority position, all the three confederates opposed the par-ticipant's opinion. In the course of group interaction, either all 3 confederates main-tained their positions thereby creating no change in participant's position, or one con-federate changed her opinion thereby creating partial change in participant's position or 2 confederates changed their minds, thereby creating a complete change in the participant's position. Thus, in the complete change condition, the participant's posi-tion was changed from majority to minority or vice versa, in the partial change, the members were left evenly divided, and in the change groups, the participant's position remained constant.

Initial position and subsequent change interacted to significantly affect partici-pants' perception of similarity between the group and themselves. Specifically, there was a dramatic decrease in perception of similarity in participants who lost their majority status. In contrast, no significant difference was found among participants who gained majority status. Virtually identical results were obtained for evaluative reactions to the group (i.e., group attraction. This pattern of results painted a clear picture: "New" minorities (majorities who lost their initial position within the group) reacted very much like "old/consistent" minorities (minorities who were in that posi-tion from the beginning to the end of group interaction). In a sharp contract, new majorities (minorities whose initial position improved) did not react like "old/consist-ent" majorities (majorities who were in that position from the beginning to the end of group interaction. To the contrary, new majorities' reactions were much alike those of "old/consistent" minorities.

Although gaining majority position did not improve former minorities' reactions toward the group, it did significantly strengthen their attitudes. New majorities be-

came less tolerant of opposing views then they had been, and at the same time, they came to believe that the attitudinal issue was more important. Taken together, these findings suggest that new majorities may less than amicable, if not hostile toward new minorities due to their increased intolerance for opposing opinions and lack of attachment for the group as a whole.

The obtained asymmetry in reactions to gaining and losing majority status, whereas supportive of our model, might be perceived as somewhat artificial because participants did not have much control over their position in the group nor did they depend on other group members' for anything but validation of their opinions. To address these concerns, an additional study was conducted. It was a conceptual replication of the first study except that the participants were led to believe that they had control over change in their positions. Specifically, they were told that the study was about political campaigns and that they, as political candidates, should do their best to win support of 3 confederates, who posed as voters. In addition, to make their position within the group more consequential, participants were promised an extra reward for achieving majority status, that is, for being elected.

Results replicated previous findings in that losing majority position significantly decreased perception of group-self similarity and group attraction whereas gaining majority positions did not cause any increase in these reactions to the group. Additional measures revealed that participants initially in majority developed clear expectations that the group would be supportive, both actively by offering its help, and passively by refraining from hostility. These positive expectations, however, changed dramatically as participants' position in the group changed so that at the end, those who lost majority position to become new minorities reacted very much like minorities whose position never changed. In contrast to these substantial changes in expectancies due to losing majority position, there virtually were no changes in expectancies due to gaining majority position: Those becoming a majority still held expectations about the group as unhelpful though not actively hostile. Interestingly, expectancies about the group's likely behavior toward them were largely reciprocated in participants' expectancies about their likely behavior toward the group.

The robustness of our findings about asymmetry in reactions to gaining and losing majority position suggests that the asymmetry may be functional. Whereas it is important for all those whose positions within a group change to accurately assess and adequately evaluate the change, this task may be more pressing for those whose position within the group deteriorates than for those whose position within the group improves. The former face the task of self-protection, which arguably is more urgent than the task of bearing the fruits of newly gained position, faced by the latter. Indeed, it appears that the asymmetry in reactions to social changes is widespread as indicated by minorities less enthusiastic reactions to apparently improved social conditions (Finschilescy & Dawes, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp; 1999).

Cautiousness observed in minorities' reactions to improvements in their status, however, does not imply insensitivity to changes. Their reactions may, however, de-

pend on the mode of change. Indeed, in a recently completed study, our participants' majority or minority status was changed either by other group members' changing their opinions (as in previous studies) or by new members supporting minority within the group (and opposing majority within the group) joining the group. The latter, "demographic" mode of change moderated initial minorities' reactions to change. Minorities who gained majority status by virtue of new, like-minded members joining the group reacted significantly more positively to the change than minorities who gained majority status by virtue of existing members changing their opposition into support. On the other hand, majorities losing their status reacted equally intensively and negatively to the loss, irrespective of whether their loss was due to new, opposing members joining the group or to old members withdrawing their support. It appears that reactions to losing majority status are invariably negative irrespective of how the loss occurs whereas reactions to gaining majority status vary from extremely cautious to positive, depending on how the gain occurs.

There are some important implications of these findings. If indeed gaining majority status by virtue of new members joining a group triggers more positive reactions than gaining majority status via old members changing their positions, then an important question is whether the former mode of change is preferred to the latter. If given a choice, how would people pursue their goal of gaining majority status? Would they prefer evolution that involves trying to change existing members' opinions, or "revolution," that involves either recruiting new supportive members (as in our study) or trying to get rid of existing opposing members? These are important questions for the future research.

Changes in majority/minority position are rarely, if ever, just numerical changes. As indicated previously, among the benefits of majority status is power or the ability to control one's own and others' fates (Jones, 1972). Changes in power are especially important for intergroup relations because groups in power control outcomes for the powerless groups. Existing theories of intergroup relations (e.g., elite theory, Prewit & Stone, 1973; 5-stage model of intergroup relation, Taylor & McKirnan, 1987) posit that intergroup relations are cyclical. Than is, when powerless groups arise to power, they treat others in the same, usually discriminatory way they were treated, motivating others to seek change and thereby initiate a new cycle.

This account of intergroup relations that emphasizes reciprocity (of typically discriminatory behavior) may be too simplistic. My students and I argue that the use of newly gained power is determined not only by past relations between groups but also achievements of a newly powerful group. Past relations, certainly, are important in establishing motivational basis for the use of power. There are, however, other motives guiding groups' behavior that are presumably general and impinge on behavior of all groups. One such a motive is positive social identity postulated by highly influential social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982). To establish their raison d'etre groups strive to be different from other groups and to be different in a positively evaluated direction. They strive to establish and maintain positively distinct social identity. This mo-

tive presumably is responsible for discrimination against out-groups so frequently observed in many studies but especially in studies using minimal group paradigm. It appears that power is used to create new or to exaggerate existing positively valued differences between in-group and relevant out-groups (see Brewer, 1979; Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

What happens when this motive for positively distinct social identity is paired with the motive for reciprocity that is triggered once a powerless group arises to power? My research team reasoned that use of power would be different depending on whether or not newly powerful groups have already satisfied their needs for positive social identity. That is, groups that are successful in their line of activity (high status groups) have already satisfied their (presumably primary) motive for positive social identity. Thus, they should act on their secondary motive – the motive for reciprocity. When they gain power, they should treat out-groups the way those outgroups treated them in the past. If however, groups have not satisfied their motive for positive social identity, that is, if they are unsuccessful in their line of activity and therefore have low status, they should use power to satisfy their unsatisfied motive. Thus, they should use power to discriminate against outgroups irrespective of how those outgroups treated them in the past. By discriminating against outgroups, newly powerful groups should establish differences between themselves in a positively valued direction. In short, we hypothesized that upon rising to power, high status groups would use the power to reciprocate past intergroup behavior and low status groups would abuse the power to indiscriminately discriminate against others.

This hypothesis was tested in a study in which two 4-member groups were told that the goal was to examine how organizational groups work under conditions created by supervisors and how supervisors make decisions about work conditions for their subordinates (Rothgerber & Prislin, 1999). Each group was ostensibly randomly chosen to be supervised (powerless) and therefore believed that the other groups was assigned the role of supervisors. After a waiting period during which the supervisor group ostensibly made its decision, each group was required to work on a task under either unfavorable, fair, or favorable conditions, presumably set for them by the supervisor group. Following a completion of the task, half of the groups were told that their performed excellently, thereby enjoying high status. For another half, the low status condition was created by informing them that they performed very poorly.

When it was their turn to act as supervisors (powerful group), former powerless groups that had achieved high status reciprocated the treatments they had received: They set up better than average conditions for groups that had treated them favorably, worse than average conditions for those who had discriminated against them, and about average conditions for those who had treated them fairly. In contrast, low status groups did not base their responses to their former supervisors on how those supervisors than treated them. These groups used power in an undiscriminating discriminatory way in that they uniformly set less than optimal conditions.

Our findings support the social identity theory contention about power and status differential as central determinants of intergroup relations. Moreover, they clarify the theory by specifying conditions under which power is used to harm and benefit others. Whereas standard formulations of the theory clearly predict that power is used to harm hostile out-groups in defense of social identity, standard formulations are not sufficiently specified to allow predictions about reactions to benevolent groups. This research further develops the theory by specifying that beneficent treatment is reciprocated when primary motive postulated by the theory, positive social identity is satisfied.

In closing, this program of research on the effects of change in group status indicate that past matters. Majority of natural groups have a history of prior relations; moreover, these relations are dynamic and they tend to change: majorities become minorities, powerful become powerless and vice versa. Failure to take these dynamic aspects of intergroup behavior into account necessarily leads to poor understanding of the etiology of intergroup phenomena. As this review suggests, my own and several other programs of research take change as an important socio-psychological variable. We have just started answering important questions. Among numerous others waiting to be addressed are questions about potential moderating effects of the ways in which changes are brought about. We've seen that groups react differently depending on how they achieve majority position. We suspect that modes of rising to power matter (arbitrary vs. merit-based), too. Moreover, change and its effects on intergroup behavior may well depend on the scarcity of resources groups are competing for: Is power used differently in "good" and "bad" times? Also, changes that are experienced at a group level are likely to be publicly debated. If so, then we may expect that groups (societies) develop shared theories about the changes they are undergoing and that there should be a high level of agreement in the reconstructions of the past among members of the same group (society). This agreement should be functionally important as it provides apparent validation for the reconstruction of the past. An important implication of this line of reasoning is that collective theories of change may be potentially more powerful than individual (implicit) theories of change. This issue of "collective" memories, along with those previously mentioned, provides an exciting research agenda for the future.

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