

Social Psychology – Minority Influence

What is minority influence?

Minority influence is a form of social influence where people reject the established norm of the majority of group members and move to the position of the minority.

How can it be explained?

Minority influence theorists say that minority influence works in a different way to majority influence. Minority influence works through informational influence: the minority persuade people to change their opinion. Majority influence works through normative influence. Conformity is as a result of a dual process.

Maass (1982) says minority influence uses both normative and informational influence: Moscovici's view that informational influence explains minority influence is challenged by Maass who suggests that there is normative influence at work, because to be effective the minority has to be part of the same "in group" as the majority.

Snowball Effect (Social Cryptoamnesia)

"Spirit of the Times" – Zeitgeist

In real life, minority influence does not "snowball" without a change in the Zeitgeist. For example, at the start of the Suffragette movement, only a few militant women campaigned for voting legislation change. One was killed and this prompted several to chain themselves to 10 Downing Street. Only several years later did popular opinion change.

Social change is the will of the majority.

Is Minority Influence More Powerful than Majority Influence?

- Has been shown to be able to change society – Hitler;
- However, it can only happen if changes are occurring in the Zeitgeist.