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SUPERVISOR: MINORITY AND MINORITY FACILITATOR

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Abstract

Supervision groups often assume the role of a minority, as they provide the rest of their collectives with different views, thinking, approaches, relationships. When conducting a supervision group, a supervisor himself acquires the characteristics of a minority and encounters different ways of using social powers. In regard to group supervision it is essential, from the supervisor's point of view, to understand and be familiar with the processes which take place in groups between minorities and majorities. Only thus can he act more successfully and at the same time enable supervision groups to more systematically, purposefully and efficiently influence.

Key words: supervision group, supervisor, minority, social power, innovation.

Supervisor as a minority and a minority facilitator

A supervisor at his work encounters in different ways the meaning and significance of minorities. His work itself is concerned with the field of minorities. Supervision in the field of pedagogy in Slovenia is in most cases carried out only through the work of a collective, which in the relation with others acquires the functions of group dynamics characteristic for minorities. The aim of this paper is to present how a supervision group acquires a status of minority within a collective and to analyze the consequences of this process. A group which begins to form its own norms, values, peculiar manner of communication within a system (e.g. school), and begins to recognise its difference in relation to the rest of a system, develops a special kind of dynamics. This dynamics of the characteristic mutual influencing between a minority and a majority can produce different outcomes (in the first place because it is based on a conflict), which can be constructive and for the benefit of an entire collective, yet they can either consolidate status quo or lead to the disqualification of a minority. Besides elucidating the formation of a

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specific meaning of a supervision group in relation to the rest of collective, I intend to address the thesis that a supervisor's role, too, is to a great extent similar to that of a minority (he is not merely an expert authority, which is unfortunately too often the case in Slovenian supervision practice) when he as an individual (or in pair, which is not so common) enters the process of supervision.

The primary purpose of this paper is thus to present how important it is for a supervisor to be familiar with group dynamics from the perspective of mutual influence between a majority and a minority, to know the meaning of being different, which a supervision group experiences in the process of supervision and which provokes various responses – from stigmatisation or even marginalisation in a collective, recognition of differences (being incongruous with the norms) to perceiving a supervision group as normatively different (as the one which enables completeness by supplements and variegated innovativeness). Knowing the principle by which minorities function is for a supervisor important also from the perspective of understanding and regulating his own role in a supervision group, which should facilitate better work (here I mean more systematic and functional work in the role of a constructive minority). A supervisor should according to this thesis abandon the role of an expert authority and act as a model for his supervision group by applying the principles governing work of a functional minority – not so much by altering the patterns of those who are being supervised as by introducing changes in a collective and primarily by approaching the users (students, pupils, teachers, prisoners etc.).

Basic principles governing functioning of minorities

Two basic aspects of defining a minority are important for a supervisor: number of its members (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) and its attitude towards the norms of a majority (Martin & Hewstone, 2003a). With a minority I mean a small number of people (or even one person) in relation to a group as a whole, whose behaviour is perceived by a majority as anti-normative. Social psychology had until 1967 primarily concerned itself with the ways others influence an individual (his behaviour, thinking, perception etc.). Then the experiments carried out by Moscovici and Faucheux showed that also reverse influences take place, that a minority influences a majority when its work is consistent. Consistency is always a sign of conviction and confidence in being different. By responding differently, a minority becomes evidently different, exposed, transparent, it becomes the one bringing conflict and doubt. Through its consistency a minority acts convincingly, thus introducing uncertainty concerning established norms, this consistency at the same time appears intransigent, which means that a majority can avoid unpleasant

conflicts only by coming closer to a minority (Moscovici, Lage & Naffrechoux, 1969). The process in which a consistent minority under certain conditions change a prevailing norm is called innovation.

The process of innovation is always initiated by an individual or a minority by being different – for this it is enough that a minority lacks a certain norm. A minority triggers the process of innovation by a mere fact that a majority perceives it as such. Thus even an individual or a minority which is only in the process of integration into an existing group triggers the process of innovation by its lack of a norm (which already exists in a majority) and by being recognised by a majority as "the one who is entering". When a new member (also a supervisor) enters an existing group, possibly without an "antipode" for the existing norm of group members, this "non-existence" of a norm itself will for a majority present the source of certain conflict. This conflict will manifest in endeavours of a majority to align the "different" or the "new" with important norms of a group.

According to the initial research carried out by Moscovici and his colleagues, minorities have far greater influence on majorities when they create a conflict in a majority's consensus by consistently different behaviour, firm and inflexible insistence, refusal of compromise and unwillingness to negotiate, yet some subsequent research modified this notion to some extent. It has been discovered (Mucchi-Faina, Maass & Volpato, 1991, Nemeth, Swedlund & Kanki 1974) that more original and flexible minorities, which are willing to negotiate and whose starting points are closer to those of a majority, have greater possibilities to implement changes since they do not require a majority to pass the boundary of acceptable (in this case a majority devaluating a minority and declares it extreme, stupid, so peculiar it does not deserve attention etc. More active (Kerr, 2002) and internal (Clark & Maass, 1988) minorities have greater chance to influence than rigid and external ones, their influence, however, does not depend so much on whether they are categorised as external or internal, it depends on frameworks and methodology (Volpato, Maass, Mucchi-Faina & Vitti, 1990). The objective consistency of a minority's behaviour is not as important as the fact that a majority perceives a minority's behaviour as consistent, that the message of a minority (mediated by its behaviour) is perceived by a majority as coherent, different, plausible, natural, in accordance with reality and objective (Turner, 1991), and that a minority is in its entirety perceived as convinced and trustworthy (Papastamou & Mugny, 1990). The change of established norms is facilitated by consistent behaviour of a minority, but it should not be extreme in regard to its contents, lest it causes the so-called boomerang effect (Mugny, 1975). Martin and

Hewstone (2003b) concluded that the influence of a minority depends on the contents of a message, on whether a minority follows or disregards the behaviour of a majority and on whether it brings personal positive or negative outcomes. Mucchi-Faina and Cicoletti (2006) established that minorities assert their starting points more easily in less important circumstances, while in important situations they trigger disparities (polarisation). Moscovici in Perez (2007) presuppose two basically very different kinds of minorities: active minorities and minorities in the role of a victim. An active minority in relation to a majority does not accept its norms and beliefs, thus triggering explicit, outwardly perceptible conflicts. The power of a minority can on the other hand derive from the injustices perpetrated by a majority in the past.

The minority role of a supervision group

A supervision group in the field of pedagogy (schools, kindergartens, educational institutions and homes, hostels etc.) normally does not include an entire collective but only a few individuals. The reason for this is either financial or the management's decision about who within a collective needs some supervision. A combination of both is normal, and the number of participants in supervision groups is due to financial reasons limited, so the principle of volunteering prevails. Sometimes a supervision group forms as a consequence of some project in which a group of interested individuals has participated.

The role of goals and aims of supervision in the formation of a supervision group as a minority

The process of supervision enables a professional to gain insight into his own work. This insight is of course not necessarily pleasant, as it requires an individual to face his conduct and feelings which till then have not been given much thought. A person also confronts his own understandings and subjective theories which have been formed through repeated experiences. He thus critically re-examines them in a group, which means he again experiences – in a safe and understanding environment – the uncertainty and peculiarity of situations in which he has worked. Only in this way can one again make sense of them and thus find in his work new challenges and opportunities for professional development. We can learn from situations only by looking them as unique (Zorga & Vec, 2004). A supervision group helps individual with its way of problematisation and reflection on conduct and decisions (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006), as well as with continual questioning and looking at situations from different perspectives. The process of supervision in this way efficiently facilitates progress of professionals

who recognise and face the said conflict between their needs and the demands of society.

Supervision thus also enables developing a more integrated personality – the higher the level of integration of a professional, the higher the levels of work responsibility he can assume. When professional skills and knowledge are appropriately integrated with one's personal characteristics, abilities and hypersensitivities, this enables a person to respond harmoniously at work and avoid burnout (Lange-Schmidt, 1992). In this case people act in accordance with their thoughts, feelings and wishes, and at the same time follow professional doctrines and demands, as well as the factual possibilities in a concrete unique situation. This is possible when supervision enables the so-called systemic view of work (Hegeler, 1992, Muhl, 1992) and when supervision turns from the goals which are based on counselling models to social roles, phases of group development etc. (Carroll, 2006). "Supervision in the field of pedagogy is a special learning, developmental in supportive method, which enables teachers, educators and other workers in the field of pedagogy to gain new personal and professional insights through the integration of practical experiences and theoretical knowledge, thus building up professional identity and competence." (Zorga, 1995: 8)

Supervision as a special method therefore stimulates participants to form a unique group culture, not only through specific knowledge, but primarily through:
- intensive participation in a small group (meetings are frequent, they last a few hours, participants during meetings write down and share their reflections, everybody is active during each meeting, everybody is obliged to prepare a case for each meeting …),
- exchange of practical experiences, which are as a rule related to intensive emotional experiences (the majority of cases presented in the process of supervision is "problem-oriented", i.e. people have not solved them the way they wanted, which evokes feelings of powerlessness, fear, frustration, shame etc.),
- markedly personal participation, since it is carried out in a small group which provides intimacy, thus enabling insight into the mechanisms of personal backgrounds at professional work.

This culture of a supervision group, viewed from the perspective of social-psychological characteristics, is established also by forming distinctly specific group norms (for each group). In this way certain knowledge, the manner and the contents of communication become a

habit and thus predictable, the clear structure of a group with characteristic roles, stable interpersonal relationships and defined expectations and goals is formed. These norms are "internal pointers" of behaviour (there is a willingness to act according to a norm because one perceives it as sensible, proper, "normal", taken for granted). Members of a supervision group act in accordance with the norms both when alone (it is true, however, that some accept them more "intimately") and within a wider collective, since the norms of a supervision group usually acquire the significance of reference groups' norms.

The norms formed in a supervision group enhance reliability in deciding how to act in certain situations, especially in those which do not allow a uniform "recipe". In short – when the goal of supervision (harmonious regulation of one's thoughts, emotions and wishes, taking into account the professional doctrines, demands and factual possibilities in a concrete, unique situation) becomes normatively accepted by a group, individuals feel their opinions and beliefs are appropriate. This feeling of appropriateness when conforming to a norm will remain in those participating in a supervision group also when they are outside their supervision groups, it will manifest in their actions in a wider collective. Supervision therefore not only enables change of professional work in individuals who participate in it, but also affects the changing of an entire collective (through knowledge, convictions and the norms acquired in a supervision group). The relation of a supervision group towards those in a collective who are not included in a supervision group has – from the social-psychological point of view – all group dynamics characteristics of minorities. Apart from the fact that being different (which supervisees gradually begin to present to others in a collective) itself brings potential for conflicts, a supervision group functions also according to other principles governing work of a consistent minority (Turner, 1991). It thus follows:

1. A supervision group as a minority disturbs the established norms and causes doubt and insecurity in other members of a collective.
2. A supervision group is as a minority exposed and it draws attention to itself.
3. It shows there are also other, alternative and coherent aspects of working with people.
4. It expresses certainty, trust and commitment to those different views.
5. Is sends messages that it will not move or compromise.
6. This means the only possible solution for reinstitution of stability and cognitive coherence of a collective is that a majority comes closer to a minority.

To sum up – a supervision group brings changes to an entire collective by its consistently different conduct and ways of communication (which agrees with Moscovici's basic postulates about the functioning of minorities). When a member of a supervision group by his conduct and communication represents a minority, he will have greater influence on a majority (its norms, behaviour, communication, decisions etc.) if he is consistent in conduct and communication (on his own, over time and with other members of a group). Consistency is an important element of opinion change in a majority as it in the process manifests conviction and confidence in being different, which is advocated by a minority. A minority's consistency is perceived by a majority as firmness and intransigence, a majority is thus forced to reflect on or doubt its standpoints, norms, conduct etc. In some cases an individual in the role of a minority will have more influence if he conforms at the beginning (in accordance with a majority) and only later act in a different way. One should bear in mind that consistency enables everybody in the role of minority to influence others (members of a majority) even if they – which is often the case – do not publicly acknowledge, show or admit this.

Supervisors in the role of minorities

Viewing a supervision group as a minority – due to similar group dynamics – may be new and unusual, yet the thesis that a supervisor, too, represents the so-called active minority within a supervision group is even more radical. The simplest way to define the position of a supervisor in a supervision group in social-psychological terms is to apply the term social power. French and Raven were in 1959 the first to write (Raven, 1992) that "social power is a potential influence", which meant the ability and possibility to influence someone else, thus only a possible influence which may or may not be used. It follows from such definition that influence is the change in behaviour of a person over whom someone else exerts power (Collins & Raven, 1969).

Forms of social power and their use in the role of a supervisor

Since the most frequently cited and consequently influential is the definition of different forms of social power (French & Raven, 1959, Raven, 1992), we will look at it and try to apply it in connection with the supervisor's role in a supervision group:

a) Information power means someone possesses the information which others in a group do not, though they ascribe certain value to this information. Raven (1992) says we could distinguish:

- power of direct information, and
- power of indirect information.

Information power is the one a supervisor should renounce as it may easily push him into the role of a mentor. A mentor is supposed to instruct and inform on something participants are usually not well informed about or not familiar with at all. This of course means that a supervisor in the process of supervision does not convey data which would facilitate one's professional work. It would be prudent, however, that a supervisor in the initial phase of reaching an agreement on supervision with participants clearly rejects their expectations that he will be the one to tell them what/how/when to do, with what purpose etc. in the situations supervisees describe.

b) Reward power – an individual can grant rewards to others when they behave according to his expectations (or withdraw rewards when they fail to behave in that manner). This power was later further divided into:

impersonal rewarding (when merely granting a reward), and
personal rewarding (when rewarding is connected with some relation – either positive or negative – between the one who rewards and the one who is rewarded).

c) Coercive power – an individual can use negative conditioning and punishment in relation with others. Punishment comprises the entire spectrum from corporal and verbal punishment to subtle forms of non-verbal messages of rejection. Like rewarding, it is further divided into:

o impersonal coercion, and
o personal coercion.

A supervisor should (in view of the goals and basic assumptions of supervision) already in the process of reaching an agreement eliminate all so-called external motivations (rewards and punishments) which might stimulate participation/non-participation and contribute to the work in a supervision group. This can be much easier done if a supervisor at the beginning clearly states his attitude towards impersonal rewarding, while he cannot avoid personal rewarding (because some participants will perceive his behaviour and communication as such). The question arises whether one should try to avoid it at all, since paying directed,

systematic, focused etc. attention to the one who represents a case constitutes a peculiar reward for a participant in a supervision group. The same holds true for personal and impersonal coercion. The latter due to its clear manifestation in a group sometimes helps discontinue some dysfunctional or even inappropriate acts in practice.

d) Legitimate power or the so-called formal power – an individual can have it due to his situation, formal role, title, mandate ... It derives from internalised values of an individual (O) according to which other individual (P) has a legitimate right to influence O, and the latter has to accept him and pay regard to him (e.g. in the army) – even when P is absent. An "authority" (the one who exerts legitimate power) is sometimes equated with the generalised concept "social power". An authority is only one of the possible kinds of power. This power is further divided into:

- formal legitimacy (it refers to legitimate power derived from one's formal position),
- legitimacy of reciprocity (Raven maintains it is based on social norms which constitute obligation to perform something; e.g.: "I did this for you, so you should feel obliged to do it for me."),
- legitimacy of equity (e.g.: "I worked hard and suffered, so I have the right to demand a favour from you.")
- legitimacy of dependence or powerlessness (according to which we are "normatively obliged" to help those who are helpless and depend on us).

Legitimate power is the one a supervisor (at least in case he adheres to the so-called developmental-educational model) should openly renounce already when beginning the negotiations for supervision (in other case the process leads to a model of control, which is sometimes mistaken for supervision).

e) Professional power (expert power) – this is manifested when a person has knowledge and/or abilities which are important for other members of a group. Professional power is further divided into:

- positive professional power (when a person in fact does something a professional expects of him), and
- negative professional power (when a person does exactly the opposite of what a professional expects of him, this implies the so-called "boomerang effect").

A supervisor should primarily make an impression of a professional authority in a supervision group. Yet the opinions on whether his professional power should be based on the knowledge of supervisees' field of work are quite divided. Sound knowledge of their professional work can on one hand help him to understand and lead him to solutions, yet on the other hand the very same knowledge may tempt him to give advice (which is the role of consultants and mentors) or make him adopt a precisely defined personal style of problem-solving.

A supervisor should nonetheless definitely posses professional power in his particular line of work so as to be able to lead the process of supervision. Here I mean not only familiarity with supervision but also (especially when supervision is carried out in a group) familiarity with group dynamics, as well as with the principles governing the functioning of minorities. Here we should take into account:

- When we do not act and communicate like a majority, we expose ourselves, become distinct, recognisable. A supervisor is thus recognisable as "special" or "different" not only because he comes into a collective or a group from elsewhere, but also because he in most cases introduces different approaches and considerations (e.g. about feeling of responsibility for the results of work, work goals, competences etc.).

- Altering what has been firmly established (by a majority) always creates conflict. If a supervisor is aware of that, he can perceive conflicts as something "normal", an integral part of the process of change (within a supervision group and in a wider collective), thus as something positive, and he can present it to the participants in a supervision group as such.

- Altering what has been firmly established can have different consequences. These are sometimes desired (coming closer), while at other times they lead to refusal or (sometimes only temporary) polarisation (when a majority more forcibly defends its firmly established opinions or standpoints). It is important for a supervisor to be familiar with both – the situations which create or intensify refusal and polarisation, and efficient ways to introduce constructive changes.

- The most important element of change is consistency which a supervisor derives not only from his beliefs (which may be more or less realistic, professional, feasible), but also from his awareness of his own competences, roles, abilities, possibilities, responsibilities, limits … This can be attained only through years of experiences in direct practice and

in work with groups, continual self-supervision, reflective and critical judgment of one's own work and communication.

f) Referent power – this power can be possessed by those towards whom others are favourably disposed (imitation and identification are usually the case here), e.g.: parents, educators ... Referent power, like professional power, was later on divided into:
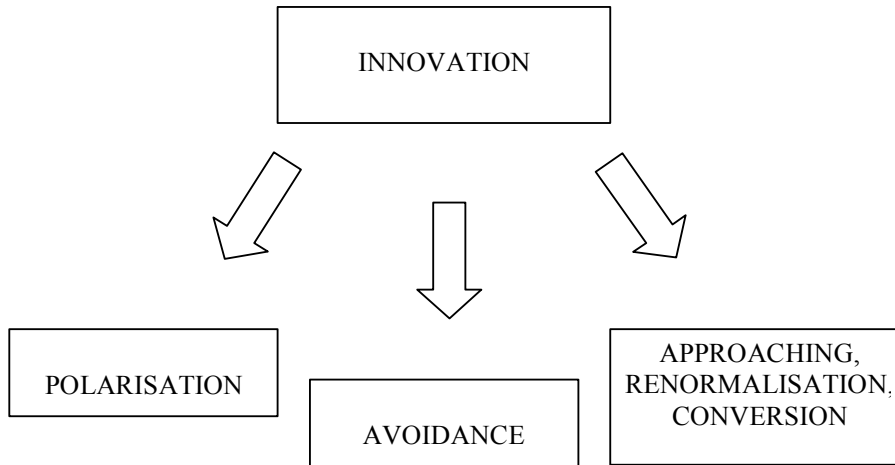
- Positive referent power, and
- negative referent power.

A supervisor usually gains positive referent power already with his humane and benevolent disposition (which makes participants feel respected, intimate and accepted), yet he gains it also with an appropriate way of communication (frank, clear, direct …), particularly during conflicts. A supervisor with his work serves as a model of how to form referent power in a group and how to work in this capacity. He should at the same time help supervisees to form their own inner supervisor. This means that each participant re-evaluates his own procedures, forms his own system for critical reviewing of these procedures, establishes his own mechanisms which enables him to more systematically and truly accept, monitor and maintain his own and common goals, limits of competences and other important factors which are relevant for professional work.

Implications of a supervision group's work and/or a supervisor's work as a minority

Already Moscovici and Faucheux (1972) speak of three possible resolutions of the conflict which a minority provoked with its being different: a majority coming closer to a minority, polarisation, and avoidance of a minority, which is manifested by distrust. Polarisation and avoidance were later sometimes referred to as the process of divergence, while approaching was termed validation, e.g. Mucchi-Faina and Cicoletti (2006).

Figure 1: Possible implications of the process of innovation.

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                    │     INNOVATION      │
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POLARISATION	AVOIDANCE	APPROACHING, RENORMALISATION, CONVERSION

a) Polarisation

Polarisation is manifested by a complete refusal of a proposed new norm and the reinforcement of existing standpoints, opinions, norms, standards. Most of the initial studies showed that the desired influence of a minority on a majority will not occur if differences between a minority and a majority are too great. Moscovici and his colleagues carried out a series of experiments in the filed of polarisation – they found out that group discussion leads to polarisation in the field of social judgments, it is related to cognitive simplifications and is essentially normative in nature (Moscovici & Néve, 1971), that it is related to group interaction in the field of personal perception (Moscovici, Zavalloni & Weinberger, 1972), that only complex judgments trigger polarisation (Moscovici, Zavalloni & Louis-Guerin, 1972) etc. These studies of polarisation in fact also confirmed the statement by Moscovici and Faucheux (1972) that a minority's influence always occur, the only difference is that it occurs in the reverse direction from the expected and desired (though in some situations polarisation can be a goal, too, as it enables better starting points for negotiating). Polarisation can be thus also considered a result of influences.

As has been already mentioned, every perceived difference can lead to polarisation. A supervisor in his work often applies alternative, different, innovative, unusual approaches to professional work, while members of a supervision group are usually a kind of initiators of innovative views

and approaches in their collective. Being different itself stimulates others (a majority) to seek solutions in a more creative manner, Nemeth and Wachtler (1983) considered this as one of more important implications of a minority's influence. For this reason polarisation should not be regarded as something extraordinary and "abnormal". More important than the phenomenon of polarisation should for a supervisor be the question of how to proceed from that point on – regardless of whether it occurs in a supervision group (due to a supervisor's work) or in a collective (due to the work of a supervision group's members). When a supervisor experience polarisation as something unusual, unnecessary or even personal (taking it personally), there will be danger that he will deal with it in an inappropriate manner.

b) Avoidance

Avoidance as a result of the influence occurs when a majority can find the cause of differences between itself and a minority in a minority's peculiarities. If a supervision group is thus in the eyes of a collective so special, different, "weird", deviant, that a majority can perceive it as inappropriate or incompetent, then it "can" also neglect <u>all</u> its ideas, thoughts, judgments …, since everything it expresses is unimportant for a majority. If a supervisor in his work repeatedly encounters avoidance by the members of a supervision group, he should primarily reflect on his own conduct (not alone but through consultation, supervision or therapy). He simply cannot carry out supervision if participants do not perceive him as a competent leader. Yet when avoidance occurs in the relation between a supervision group and the rest of a collective, it can become a subject of supervision itself (whose goal would be adopting new ways of a minority's work, which will be discussed later).

Avoidance is the consequence of innovation which is, unlike polarisation, less desirable phenomenon in the relation between a collective and the members of a supervision group. It proves that a majority has begun to perceive a professional as deviant and incompetent, consequently ignoring all his professional work. Avoidance means high probability that the one who experiences it has taken the position of an anti-conformist in a group. And if a supervisor is in a certain period perceived as such by the members of a supervision group, they can be further motivated to seek different, less usual solutions for their cases. A greater problem arises, however, when a majority (in a collective or in a supervision group) begins to perceive someone as a habitual opposer, the one who always opposes and is motivated by opposing itself – when he is perceived as the one who will oppose (every proposal, standpoint, conduct, procedure etc.) without sufficient professional arguments and because of some reasons of his own (because he is inexperienced, too

young, weird, deviant, corrupt, excessively theoretical, unprofessional, because he in this way tries to solve his own problems etc.). Social perception can become social reality, which means that he will be treated in this way (he will be avoided) already if he is perceived as an anti-conformist and regardless of his real behaviour. A supervisor should for this reason plan a strategy for influencing the way he is perceived by the members of a supervision group also when in reality he does not act as an anti-conformist.
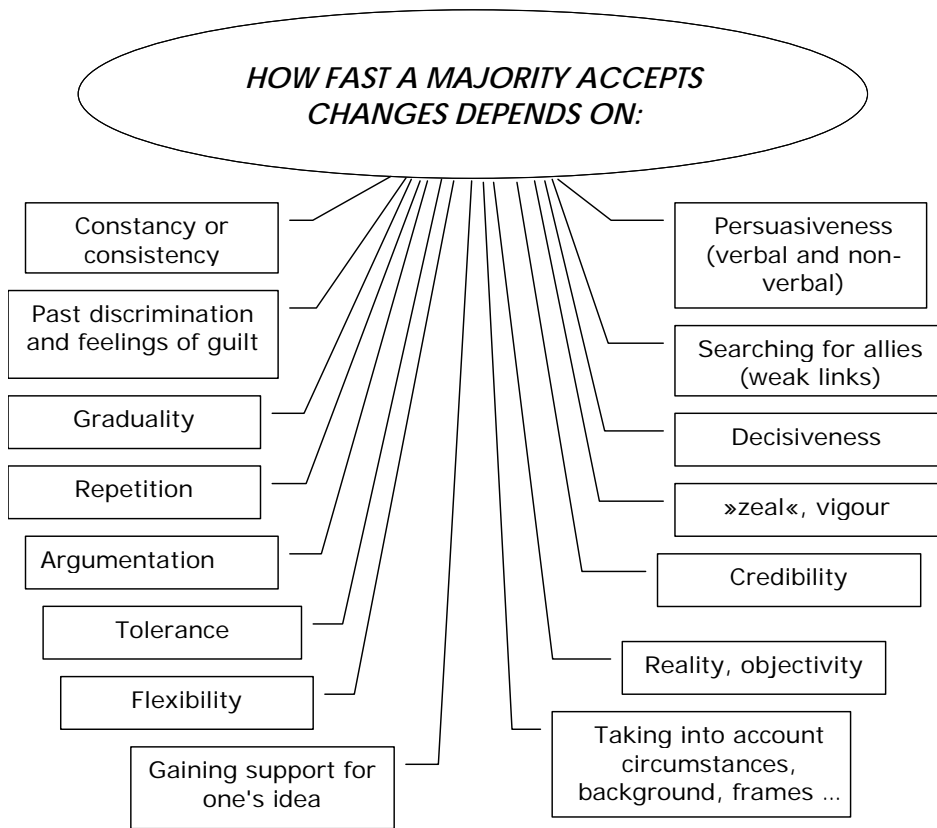
c) Coming closer – integration of basic principles governing constructive work of a supervision group and of a supervisor as a minority

A minority can also trigger the process of coming closer (Moscovici and Faucheux, 1972) – the introduction of a new norm which has been considerably transformed by a minority. Moscovici elaborated this process in his theory of conversion (1980), according to which we should distinguish not only two types of relations which constitute social pressure (pressure of power and power of influence) but also two different processes: influence of a majority over a minority and vice versa. From this Moscovici assumes the existence of two forms of social behaviour: lenience (change in behaviour of a minority) and conversion (change in attitude of a majority). Laurens and Moscovici, (2005) talk also of the so-called self-conversion – a process in which an individual persuades himself of something while attempting to influence others. Coming closer and conversion are both recognised as two important goals of supervision.

What has been said is depicted in the "net" of possibilities for constructive actions, which takes into account the findings of different studies explaining when a minority can be successful (not only influential!) in its endeavours to make a majority adopt its standpoints, opinions, convictions and conduct or to make a majority again normalise its norms or to attain conversion in a majority (in its conduct, thinking, standpoints etc.).

Figure 2: Presentation of basic factors of a minority's influence

HOW FAST A MAJORITY ACCEPTS CHANGES DEPENDS ON:

- Constancy or consistency
- Past discrimination and feelings of guilt
- Graduality
- Repetition
- Argumentation
- Tolerance
- Flexibility
- Gaining support for one's idea
- Persuasiveness (verbal and non-verbal)
- Searching for allies (weak links)
- Decisiveness
- »zeal«, vigour
- Credibility
- Reality, objectivity
- Taking into account circumstances, background, frames …

A supervisor, who in the role of an "external" minority enters a supervision group, and the members of a s supervision groups, who want to spread the "difference" in the wider collective, have many constructive[2] possibilities and procedures which increase the probability that a different view will become the view of a wider group:

o Permanency or consistency of conduct and communication is undoubtedly the basic factor (which was discussed already by Moscovici) – the more consistent is a supervision group, the greater influence it has on the rest of a collective. A minority's consistency of behaviour is itself not so important as the fact that it is recognised as

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[2] Here I point out constructive possibilities, as there are also a series of non-constructive actions which sometimes even sooner cause (temporary) changes, yet in the long term they can be – due to the manner in which they are performed – dysfunctional or even harmful, both for the representatives of a minority and those of a majority (e.g. manipulation, distortion, doctoring of data, threats, pressures, bribes etc.).

such by the majority of a group and the fact that minority is then attributed self-confidence, autonomy etc. by a majority. For a majority to recognise consistency in the behaviour of a minority, a minority must behave in a transparent way, show its autonomy, show it is different and draw the attention of others to itself.

o The influence of a minority sometimes increases the feeling that some injustice was done in the past.

o Graduality (the principle of small steps, taking into account the stages which have to be consolidated first in order to carry on with novelties) is a principle which does not only ensure good functioning of a minority but also facilitates any change and development. In regard to graduality we should also highlight the fact that once a majority consents to the first (no matter how small) change, it becomes more improbable that it will resist further changes. And with each subsequent change it accepts it becomes harder for it to abandon the process of change (this effect is well known also among sales representatives, who know that the deal is almost closed the moment a buyer let them in).

o By repetition a minority makes sure that a majority cannot ignore it (in fact or only seemingly). It is unobtrusive repetition that draws attention and "forces" a majority to take an interest in a minority in the first place (if for no other reason than because "it must be something to it, otherwise one would not keep on repeating one and the same thing").

o Argumentation; knowing reasons, causes, consequences, intentions etc. gives changes logicality and rationality which are difficult to reject – providing the arguments of a minority are real! Stating unreal arguments (also those in which a minority "merely" exaggerates) is in the long term harmful for a minority (as they later provide an excuse for a majority to disregard also valid, "real" arguments).

o Verbal and non-verbal persuasiveness confirms that those in the role of a minority are in fact convinced that their ideas are correct – when they are in such situation, they act congruently.

o Determination and assertiveness are also manners of conduct which reflect stability and importance of a minority's convictions, and this more readily triggers conversion in a majority than hesitation, vagueness, "indifference".

o The influence of its actions is increased when a minority displays the above factors vigorously and "zealously", therefore in a way which reassures that a minority will not lack will and energy to carry on with possible initiated changes also in the future. A majority tend to avoid change when it gets the impression that a minority will only trigger change, while a majority will have to deal with inconveniences stemming from its long-term implementation.

o Tolerance (concerning contents and manner of action) often enables a minority to prevent polarisation (the boomerang effect) and avoidance (a majority devaluating a minority and declaring it extreme, stupid or so special that one need not take it seriously). If a supervisor and a minority are tolerant, then the majority a staff room will not perceive it as extreme to a degree which makes all its ideas infeasible.

o Flexibility of a minority (which should not convey indecisiveness) facilitates the introduction of novelties in a majority – especially when a minority includes into its ideas some elements of the ideas advocated by a majority. In such cases the members of a majority tend to feel that changes have been to some extent their own decision and consequently feel less decrease in status if they publicly and openly accept the ideas of a minority.

o Each newly acquired supporter of an idea talks about the increased power of a minority. A supervisor or a minority can here use two different tactics with a majority: (1) he/it tries to detect "weak links", influence them and make them his/its allies (such acquisition of supporters is not difficult, though it can take more time, a minority's power grows gradually); (2) he/it focuses on persuading "the strongest link", the leader of a majority (if he/it is successful with him, then most of others will follow suit quickly and to a larger extent) – the problem with the second tactic is that if a minority fails to gain a leader's support for its idea, then the ideas of a majority will be at the end of this process even more firm and any change more difficult.

o A minority will more readily introduce changes in the fields where it is recognised by a majority as credible and competent. Here we should bear in mind that the use of non-constructive methods while introducing changes in the past affects the perception of a minority as either credible or not. Thus even if a minority manages to influence a majority, for example by manipulation, it may lose credibility in potential innovations in the future.

o Reality and objectivity in a minority's approach reduce the possibility that a majority will perceive it as deviant in general and have an excuse to ignore its ideas (also when they are realistic and objective). If a minority tries to introduce unrealistic ideas and proposals, it will appear untrustworthy and incompetent, and vice versa – if a majority does not attribute the introduction of changes to the different nature of a minority but to objective circumstances, it will more easily agree on changes.

o Taking into account circumstances is in fact flexibility in its own reality, since a minority has to adjust the introduction of change to present and (possibly) changed circumstances (objective, social, cultural, developmental, those pertaining to thinking and values etc.).

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