

Running head: PERIPHERAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Predicting the Paths of Peripherals:  
The Interaction of Identification and Future Possibilities

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***PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY BULLETIN (in press)***

This research was supported by a fellowship from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences to the first author, and a NWO Visiting Professorship grant to the second author. We thank two anonymous reviewers for their comments on a previous draft of the manuscript.

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## Abstract

Two studies investigated how both degree of identification and the individual's position within the group influence aspects of group loyalty. We considered ingroup position both in terms of the individual's current position within a group and expectations concerning the likelihood that one's position might change in the future. Peripheral group members learned that their acceptance by other group members would improve in the future or that they could expect rejection by other group members. Various indices of group loyalty (ingroup homogeneity, motivation to work for the group, and evaluation of a motivated group member) showed that when group members anticipated future rejection, the lower the identification, the less loyal they were. In contrast, those who expected future acceptance were more loyal (more motivated to work for the group) the lower their identification. Current group behavior depends on both intragroup future expectations and level of identification.

## Predicting the Paths of Peripherals:

### The Interaction of Identification and Future Possibilities

Social psychologists have made important advances in understanding group behavior, particularly that of “prototypical” group members (e.g., Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Moreland, 1985; Moreland, Levine, & Cini, 1993). Prototypical group members are more likely to be group leaders (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonski, 1992; Hains, Hogg, & Duck, 1997), successful in eliciting attitude change in others (van Knippenberg, Lossie, & Wilke, 1994), evaluated more positively than other group members (Hogg & Hardie, 1991), and they are more likely to define the group's norms and act in accordance with those norms (Oakes, Haslam, & Turner, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). The present research, in contrast, focuses on group members who are not, or are not yet, perceived as prototypical of the group.

Though less often investigated, peripheral or “non-prototypical” group members are potentially more intriguing because their behaviors have proven to be more difficult to predict compared to that of prototypical members (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Peripherals who are less typical or central to the group, are often more variable in their responses than prototypicals. Peripheral status can lead people to deviate from group norms (e.g., Lewin, 1948), but it can also encourage people to attempt to satisfy the norms of the group even more strenuously (e.g., Breakwell, 1979; Noel, Wann, & Branscombe, 1995; Tajfel, 1978). Some people who do not feel accepted by a group may react in ways that damage the group (e.g., by criticizing or even betraying it), while others who are marginalized will nevertheless remain loyal to the group.

The question we address in the current research is what determines when a marginalized member of a group will continue to strive to be accepted, and when

rejection by the group will motivate them to reject that group in return? We argue that among peripheral group members, group behavior will depend on whether they see the context as offering hope (or not) for acceptance and inclusion in the future. We adopt an interactionist perspective that takes into account social reality—the possibilities provided in a given context—and person-based factors such as degree of group identification. By considering both of these factors, we should be able to predict the form and direction of reactions to peripheral status (Turner, 1999; Spears, Doosje & Ellemers, 1999).

#### *Peripheral group membership*

According to self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987), the prototypical position in a group represents the shared views of group members concerning the group as a whole. Some ingroup members are “better” examples of the ingroup than others because they more closely match the group prototype. Given that group membership can be quite important to people’s self-definitions, having a marginal position within a group can evoke insecurity in the individual (Lewin, 1948; Noel et al., 1995). Indeed, those who differ from other group members in terms of age, gender, or race experience heightened self-consciousness (Kramer, 1998), are more uncertain how to act, and are generally more anxious about acceptance in the group than prototypical group members (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Louis, 1980; Moreland, 1985; Van Maanen, 1977).

Although being peripheral in a valued group may induce negative affect, reactions may depend on expectations about one’s future prospects in that group. Recent research has revealed that even though a group member’s current position might be peripheral, the mere anticipation of a change of position in the future differentially

influences self-esteem and group behavior (Jetten, Branscombe, & Spears, 2002; Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Such work demonstrates the importance of investigating group processes from a dynamic perspective, and taking into account future expectations of group members (see also Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Levine & Moreland, 1994; Worchel, 1998).

### *Group identification*

Given that receiving feedback that one is peripheral to the group can be perceived as threatening to the self, we predicted that group identification would differentially affect how group members respond to feedback about their likely future intragroup position. Those who are strongly committed to the group often act collectively when their identity is threatened and stick to the group in difficult times. By contrast, responses of lower identifiers are more likely to reflect individual self-interests than group interests (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995; Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1997; Spears, Ellemers & Doosje, 1997). Low identifiers responses are also more likely to be sensitive to self-presentational issues concerning how they are seen by other group members (Baretto & Ellemers, 2000; Postmes, Branscombe, Spears, & Young, 1999). Although these are related (taking care of one's self image can serve individual interests) as we will argue below, it is important to separate them when assessing whether responses reflect genuine group loyalty or not.

On the basis of research showing that behavior is more strongly guided by individual self-interests among lower identifiers, we predicted that the less members identify with their group, the more their loyalty to the group should be contingent on expectations concerning their own future position within the group (Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002). Thus, we predicted that group loyalty would be shown when those

lower in identification perceive they have a future in the group, but that they would not invest in the group when they expected rejection in the future.

At first sight this suggests the somewhat counterintuitive implication that higher identifiers should be *less* responsive to the prospect that peripheral status might not improve, whereas one might expect them to be especially sensitive to such information. However, we are not claiming that higher identifiers will be any *less sensitive* to the current fact or future threats of their marginal group status (indeed this may be quite painful to them). Rather, precisely because of their commitment to the group they are more likely to put the group above their individual position within it, and, unlike lower identifiers, are likely to persevere in maintaining group loyalty in the face of individual costs. The willingness to countenance negative personal consequence in favor of group interests is the hallmark signature of the higher identifier, whereas more personally instrumental responding is characteristic of lower identifiers (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995; Ellemers et al., 1997; Spears et al., 1997; Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001). For this reason, although we expected the higher identifiers would be no less sensitive to the threatening feedback about their status in the group, we did expect them to be more resilient in the face of rejection in terms of their overt *responses*, deferring personal gain to maintain group loyalty.

In order to test these ideas, we focused on group members who had only recently joined the focal group (first year university students). Data for both studies were collected in the beginning of the academic year. Because their student identity should be quite important to these new students, the peripheral manipulation was expected to have a negative impact. All participants received information that they were not prototypical of their student group. We then varied the feedback they received about their future in

the group. Specifically, group members received feedback that they would be accepted by others in the group in the future, or they were led to believe they could expect rejection by other more prototypical group members in the future.

To assess the effects of expected future intragroup position, we first measured the emotional impact of different future expectations. In addition, we included group loyalty measures in both studies. We define group loyalty in line with Scott (1965) as: “being... a devoted member of the group, never criticizing it to outsiders, and working hard to get it ahead of other groups” (p.24; see also Hogg, 1992). As we will outline below, we considered three aspects of group loyalty based on this definition. However, a first point to note is that we avoided using an explicit measure (e.g. “I feel loyal to the group”) because we thought this could fail to capture the crucial differences between higher and lower identifiers for self-presentational reasons. Recall we predicted that future expectations would have the greatest impact among lower identifiers. Although those lower in identification should be most personally self-interested, they should also be most sensitive to strategic and self-presentational concerns (Barreto & Ellemers, 2000; Postmes et al., 1999). Therefore, an explicit measure of loyalty could be affected by self-presentational considerations as well as the perceived self-interest that concerns us here. After all, it costs nothing to claim group loyalty, and put oneself in a positive group light. Such dissimulated group interest could obscure insight into differences in the genuine feelings of group loyalty however. For this reason, we selected our main dependent variables according to two criteria: assessment of loyalty should ideally be indirect or implicit (side-stepping attempts at impression management), or have a behavioral basis that potentially incurs real costs to the individual (such that self-interest might overrule cost-free self-presentational strategies).

In Study 1 we adopted the indirect approach to measuring group loyalty by assessing the degree to which group members emphasized ingroup homogeneity. The ingroup homogeneity measure is indirect because participants would be unlikely to equate this overtly with group loyalty, and because it does not have an overt evaluative connotation attached to it. Nonetheless, numerous studies have confirmed that group homogeneity perceptions provide a clear indication of belief in, and commitment to the group, which is consistent with our definition of group loyalty (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995; Doosje, Spears & Koomen, 1995; Ellemers et al., 1997; Lee & Ottati, 1995; Pickett & Brewer, 2001; Rothgerber, 1997). Above all, research has shown that lower identifiers emphasize group heterogeneity as a way of individually distancing themselves from a negative group in their eyes (Doosje, Spears & Koomen, 1995; Ellemers, et al., 1997). In short we used ingroup homogeneity as an indirect indicator of genuine group loyalty, because it is sufficiently unobtrusive to avoid self-presentational concerns that might interfere with the predicted effects.

In Study 2, we adopted the second more behavioral route to assessing loyalty by measuring willingness to exert an effort on behalf of the group (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, & Doosje, 2002; Ouwerkerk, Ellemers, & De Gilder, 1999). The willingness to work for the group measure should be easily identified by group members as directly tapping group loyalty, but in this case commitment actually implies personal costs and should therefore detect genuine loyalty as opposed to mere self-presentation. In addition, in this study we also included a more indirect measure by examining evaluations of other group members who are motivated to work for the group. Participants' loyalty to the group should be revealed to the extent that they publicly approve of other group members who remain loyal to the group. However, if they

themselves are genuinely disaffected with the group (as we predict for lower identifiers with few future prospects in the group) they may be less inclined to support a loyal individual and may even show contempt for them. Because these judgments do not concern the self directly, they are likely to be less sensitive to self-presentational concerns. In short these measures were selected with the aim of side-stepping self-presentational concerns that might obscure genuine loyalty to the group.

### Study 1

Future expectations of rejection or acceptance and degree of identification with the group were expected to affect emotional responses to peripheral status. It was predicted that emotions would vary depending on whether a change in intragroup status was expected or not. Certainty that one has been rejected should be more threatening to the self and evoke less positive emotions than when one's peripheral status might improve in the future.

Group loyalty was examined by assessing how perceptions of ingroup variability were affected by future expectations and commitment to the group. We expected that differences in degree of group identification would affect perceived group variability most when group members feel they will not be accepted by more prototypical group members in the future. Specifically, when group members expect rejection, lower identification should be associated with less loyalty in terms of stressing ingroup heterogeneity relative to those higher in identification. In contrast, when group members expect future acceptance, we predicted that perceptions of ingroup homogeneity would be relatively unaffected by degree of group identification. The reasoning was that those lower in identification might be just as motivated as those higher in identification to show loyalty to the ingroup, when there is an expectation they

will be accepted by the group in the future. In general, those higher in identification were expected to be relatively unaffected by the future manipulation, even though that may involve accepting personal losses in terms of remaining at the same peripheral position in the future.

## Method

*Design and participants.* The design consisted of one manipulated variable, expected future intragroup position (expect rejection vs. expect acceptance), and one measured variable, group identification. Undergraduates (110 female; 33 male) at the University of Queensland (UQ) participated in this study. The average age of participants was 21 years, and they received partial course credit for their participation.

*Procedure.* The study consisted of two sessions, separated by one week. The Session 1 questionnaire was said to be part of a project assessing the views of students at the University of Queensland. All measures were assessed on 9-point scales ranging from "strongly disagree"(1) to "strongly agree"(9). A measure of identification with the group "University of Queensland students" was administered, along with items assessing the participant's perceived typicality as a UQ student. Degree of identification was measured with 4 items ( $\alpha = .70$ ), taken from the importance of identity subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) collective self-esteem scale. This measure consists of statements about the extent to which participants identify with, feel attached to, and value being a member of the group "UQ students." Overall identification was quite high ( $M = 6.72$ ), indicating that their student identity was an important one for our participants. To enhance the credibility of the manipulation of future intragroup position, some additional measures relating to personal beliefs were collected in the first session. For instance, participants were asked to describe in their own words what it

meant to them to be a student at UQ. Participants were told that their responses would be analyzed and interpreted by a clinical psychology student who would create a personal profile of them on the basis of their responses to these questions. It was stated that the aim of this study was to train clinical graduate students in the interpretation of test data and in the creation of personal profiles based on test information. In addition, participants were told that we wanted to examine how they fit with the group “UQ students.” Participants were informed that their personal profile would be scored and provided to them in the second session.

In Session 2, participants were told that the clinical psychology graduate student had examined all of their answers and calculated a typicality score indicating how well they fit into the group “UQ students,” and had created a personal profile for them so they could understand why they received the typicality score that they did. Participants were then presented with a graph that represented the typicality scores of 836 University of Queensland students who had participated in a similar study the year before. They were told that seeing their own score in comparison to this large sample would make it easier for them to interpret their own score. On a continuum ranging from “not at all typical” (50) to “very typical” (100), they saw a histogram of the frequency distribution of the typicality scores of the large sample. The distribution was highly negatively skewed with the large majority of the scores within the 95-100 range (65%), and a gradual decrease of scores below 95. It was explained to participants that the higher the score, the more typical the person is of the group. Similarly, the lower the score, the less the person fits in with, and the less they are typical of UQ students. There were no scores lower than 60. The participant’s own score was indicated on the histogram with an arrow, and all participants learned that their typicality score was 80.

Because of the highly skewed distribution, approximately 20% of the sample appeared to be even more peripheral than the participant, and 80% of the sample seemed to be more prototypical than the participant. Participants were asked to take some time to consider their score and to complete the perceived prototypicality manipulation check.

*Manipulation of future intragroup position.* After receiving the frequency distribution, participants were presented with the written clinical report explaining how their responses in the previous session were interpreted.

In the *expect rejection* condition, participants were told: “We have found in the past that people with a similar profile to yours often have a hard time being accepted by the UQ student group because of the lack of fit between their profile and that typical of UQ students. In short, because of the difference between yourself and the group ‘UQ students’ you appear to be the sort of person who will have difficulty being accepted by other more typical students at the University of Queensland in the future (which is not to say you won't be accepted by other groups).” Participants in the *expect acceptance* condition were told: “We have found in the past that people with a similar profile to yours are likely to be generally accepted by the group ‘UQ students.’ In short, despite the current differences between yourself and the group ‘UQ students’ you appear to be the sort of person who will have little difficulty being accepted by other more typical UQ students in the future.” The report was signed by the bogus clinical psychology student and supervisor.

*Manipulation check and dependent measures.* The success of the peripheral manipulation was assessed by asking participants in both sessions to indicate their agreement with the statements: “I have a lot in common with other UQ students”, “I am a good example of a UQ student”, and “I am a typical UQ student” (Jetten et al., 1997).

The reliability of these three items was satisfactory at both time periods ( $\alpha = .85$  and  $.90$ , respectively).

Emotional reactions following the future intragroup manipulation were tapped with four positive (hopeful, happy, satisfied, self-confident) and four negative items (disappointed, rejected, frustrated, angry). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which each of these described how they felt at that moment on a 9-point scale ranging from “feel not at all” (1) to “feel very much” (9). Negative emotions were recoded and combined with the positive emotions into a scale ( $\alpha = .89$ ). In addition, an open-ended item immediately following the expected future acceptance feedback assessed emotional reactions to this manipulation: “We would like to know what your reaction is to this typicality feedback. Please describe in a few words how you feel at this moment.” Responses to this question were coded as negative (-1), neutral (0) or positive (+1) by two independent coders (Cohen’s kappa =  $.70$ ), where discrepancies were resolved by discussion.

Perceived ingroup homogeneity was measured by four questions asking the extent to which students at UQ can be seen as different from each other, similar to one another, whether they form a coherent group, and whether they form a well-defined group (Jetten, Spears, Hogg, & Manstead, 2000). These items (the first item being reverse-scored) formed a satisfactory scale ( $\alpha = .56$ ).

### *Results*

*Manipulation checks.* All variables were analysed using multiple regression procedures. For these analyses, group identification scores were centred and the manipulation of expected future intragroup position was dummy coded. The interaction

term was calculated by multiplying group identification by the expected future intragroup position code, as specified by Aiken and West (1991).

In line with the manipulation, overall perceived prototypicality decreased for all participants from Session 1 ( $M = 5.80$ ) to Session 2 ( $M = 5.41$ ),  $t(142) = 2.86, p < .01$ . Two regressions were conducted to check whether the reduction in self-perceived prototypicality over time was affected differentially by prior identification. Analyses of the self-perceived prototypicality measure in Session 1 revealed only a main effect for identification,  $F(1, 141) = 54.76, p < .001$ , indicating that the more participants identified with the group the more they felt prototypical. Analyses of the self-perceived prototypicality measure in Session 2, with Session 1 prototypicality entered at step 1, revealed only a significant effect for Session 1 prototypicality,  $F(1, 141) = 17.22, p < .001$ , ruling out the possibility that prior identification affected the reduction in perceived self-prototypicality over time.

*Emotions.* The emotion index was regressed on identification, expected future intragroup position and their interaction. Only a significant main effect for expected future intragroup position was obtained,  $F(1, 140) = 4.96, p < .001$ . Those who were peripheral and expected future rejection experienced less positive emotions ( $M = 6.07$ ), compared to those who received feedback that they were peripheral but could expect to be accepted by the group in the future ( $M = 7.22$ ).

Next, the responses to the open-ended item assessing emotional reactions to the future intragroup position manipulation were categorized. 18.9% were classified into the positive emotion category (e.g., "I am fairly pleased with this feedback") and 15.4% in the negative emotions category (e.g., "I feel pretty disappointed that I will not fit in very easily"). The majority of the responses (65.7%) were categorized in the neutral

category and consisted of statements that people felt unaffected by the feedback (e.g., “I am not too worried about this information”), and those where no particular emotions were mentioned. The coded responses were analyzed in a regression and only a significant main effect for expected future intragroup position was obtained,  $F(1, 141) = 29.70, p < .001$ . In line with the Likert scale findings, those who anticipated rejection expressed more negative emotions ( $M = -0.21$ ), while those who expected acceptance expressed more positive emotions ( $M = 0.29$ ).

*Ingroup homogeneity.* Analysis of the ingroup homogeneity ratings revealed only an interaction between identification and expected future intragroup position,  $F(1, 141) = 5.62, p < .02$ . The interaction is displayed in Figure 1 with endpoints representing one standard deviation above and below the mean centred identification score. Analysis of the slopes revealed, in line with predictions, that when participants expected rejection, the less participants identified with their group, the less they perceived the ingroup as homogeneous,  $\beta = .36, p < .01$ . In contrast, perceived ingroup homogeneity was unaffected by level of identification when participants expected acceptance in the future,  $\beta = .01, ns$ .

### *Discussion*

Expectations about future intragroup position affected how current peripheral status was emotionally experienced. Expecting rejection led to less positive emotions compared to feedback that future acceptance was likely. The open-ended response measure revealed a similar pattern of results: Peripherals who expected rejection experienced more negative emotions whereas those who anticipated being accepted in the future reported more positive emotions. Only main effects for expected future intragroup position were found on this measure, suggesting that independent of group

commitment, both higher and lower identifiers were (equally) emotionally affected by the expected rejection versus acceptance manipulation. The fact that identification did not have an effect is consistent with the notion that all group members perceived these futures as threatening and rewarding respectively.

Perceptions of ingroup homogeneity, however, provide an indirect indicator of the extent to which group members are loyal to the group in the face of peripherality threat. In line with predictions, when group members expected rejection, they were more likely to stress the group's diversity and heterogeneity the less they identified with the group (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995). Those lower in identification who expect rejection seem to cope with it in an individualistic way by believing that having a peripheral position is not meaningful because the group itself is highly heterogeneous. This serves the function of distancing the individual from the group, while undermining the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the group itself (Doosje, Spears & Koomen, 1995). In contrast, this often observed difference between lower and higher identifiers in perceived group homogeneity was not apparent when peripheral group members expected acceptance in the future. Those whose identification was lower and who anticipated acceptance by the group in the future perceived the group as equally homogeneous as those higher in identification. Stressing homogeneity may be one means by which group members can emphasize their group affiliation, and group solidarity in general, in order to safeguard their future. Regardless of their future expectancies, higher identifiers stressed the ingroup's homogeneity. It may be that those higher in identification do not stress heterogeneity because emphasizing the diversity of the ingroup would undermine the social category itself (Doosje, Ellemers & Spears, 1995). This finding is also consistent with recent research showing that high identifiers

are concerned with the group's welfare, even at the expense of personal interests (Branscombe et al., 2002; Zdaniuk, & Levine, 2002).

### Study 2

To further test our hypothesis regarding differential behavior by lower versus higher identifiers as a function of future expectancies among peripheral group members, we assessed more direct indicators of group loyalty. Specifically, we measured the extent to which group members were willing to exert themselves on behalf of the group. In addition, we measured another less direct indicator of group loyalty: evaluation of another ingroup member who is highly motivated to work for the group.

In this study we also included a control condition where participants were told that they were peripheral, but no information was given about future expectations. Inclusion of this condition allows us to determine more precisely whether responses by those lower in identification are due to the presence of future rejection as opposed to the absence of future acceptance.

In addition, responses were made in a more public context than in the prior study, with participants being informed that their responses would be known to other group members. Among low identifiers in the future rejection condition, we expected the more self-interested stance of lower identifiers to result in less loyalty on group effort and ratings of the motivated group member. More public conditions have been shown to influence the behavior of peripheral group members who hope to gain acceptance (Noel et al., 1995), but because this behavior is largely strategic it should primarily occur in public conditions. We expected such strategic responses among lower identifiers rather than higher identifiers. By contrast the loyalty of higher identifiers is less conditional and is not contingent on (public vs. private) context. To

the extent that loyalty is greater in a more public context, then, we might expect this to be more true of lower identifiers than higher identifiers. That is low identifiers are likely to commit more to the group if offered the prospect of acceptance in the public context, in order to ingratiate themselves to the group (i.e., a strategic effect reflecting individual interests).

We expected that when group members are asked to express publicly their liking of a motivated group member, their responses would again be affected by the extent to which they perceive themselves as having a future in the group. Thus, we predicted a similar pattern of results for the evaluation of motivated group members as was predicted for the motivation to work for the group measure. Specifically, those lower in identification and who expect rejection are predicted to be harsher in their evaluation of a motivated group member. This relation should not hold for those who expect to be ultimately accepted by the group, however. Because this measure is less explicit than the effort measure, and does not directly implicate the self and its perceived inputs, strategic ingratiation **among lower identifiers** may be less marked here than for the effort measure.

To recap, we predicted that when group members anticipated future rejection, the lower the identification, the less loyal peripheral group members should be on measures assessing motivation to work for the group and evaluation of a motivated group member. In contrast, those who expected future acceptance were expected to be more loyal to the group the lower their identification on the motivation to work for the group measure in particular (strategic self-presentation). The control condition, in which peripheral group members received no feedback about future acceptance, was predicted to fall in between the expect rejection and expect rejection condition.

*Method*

*Design and participants.* The design consisted of one manipulated variable, expected future intragroup position (control, expect rejection, expect acceptance), and group identification, which was measured. Undergraduates (44 females; 36 males) at the University of Kansas participated in partial fulfillment of course requirements. Their average age was 20 years.

*Procedure.* In this study, participants were told that we were investigating how well they fit into the group 'University of Kansas students' (KU). All items were measured on 9-point scales ranging from "strongly disagree"(1) to "strongly agree"(9). Social identification was again measured in Session 1 with the importance to identity subscale of Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) collective self-esteem scale ( $\alpha = .75$ ). Overall identification as a university student was again quite high ( $M = 6.41$ ).

As in Study 1, participants were given a profile in Session 2 that was ostensibly written by a clinical psychology student on the basis of their responses in Session 1. This allowed for the manipulation of future expectancies (expect rejection vs. expect acceptance). In the control condition, in which participants received the histogram with the information about their own score indicating that they were peripheral, no written profile about future expectancies was provided. In order to introduce a new measure to assess willingness to work for the group, participants were informed in Session 2 that in the last part of the study we were going to split them into subgroups of 4 to 5 persons. They were told that we would be asking them, as a group, to raise some problems that they perceive the university to be facing, discuss them with the other group members, and to come up with some solutions to these problems. Participants then completed the

dependent measures, after which they were informed that the group discussion task would not take place.

*Manipulation check and dependent measures.* The manipulation of peripherality was checked both in Session 1 and Session 2 with the same three items as were used in Study 1 ( $\alpha = .89$  and  $.95$ , respectively).

Before the group discussion was to begin, we asked participants how much effort they wanted to put into the group task. The time participants were willing to spend working on the group task was ostensibly going to be taken into account before starting the actual task. Two questions were presented, regarding the minimum and the maximum amount of time (in minutes) they were willing to spend discussing issues about their group (KU) with other students (between 5 and 30 minutes). Responses to these two questions were averaged as a measure of motivation to work for the group.

Participants were asked to rate a group member who was willing to work on the group task for 30 minutes (the maximum) on a scale ranging from very negative (1) to very positive (9).

### *Results*

*Manipulation checks.* Consistent with the feedback given indicating that participants were peripheral group members, the overall level of perceived prototypicality decreased in Session 2 ( $M = 5.63$ ) compared to Session 1 ( $M = 6.08$ ),  $t(79) = 2.08, p < .05$ . As in Study 1, two regressions were conducted to check whether the reduction in self-perceived prototypicality over time was affected differently by prior identification. Analysis of Session 1 perceived self-prototypicality scores revealed only a main effect for group identification,  $F(1, 74) = 82.28, p < .001$ . The more participants identified with the group the more they felt prototypical. Analyses of the

self-perceived prototypicality measure of Session 2, with Session 1 prototypicality entered at step 1, revealed only a significant effect for Session 1 prototypicality,  $F(1, 74) = 11.63, p < .001$ , ruling out the possibility that prior identification affected the reduction in perceived self-prototypicality over time.

*Motivation to work for the group.* Analyses were conducted using hierarchical multiple regression in which the manipulation of expected future intragroup position was coded into two dummy variables, with the control condition assigned a value of 0 in both (see Aiken & West, 1991). The first dummy variable compares the expect rejection condition to the control condition (labelled the “rejection interaction”) and the second dummy variable compares the expect acceptance condition to the control condition (labelled the “acceptance interaction”). Two interaction terms were calculated by multiplying the centred group identification score with the two dummy coded variables. Main effects were entered at the first step and the two interaction terms were entered at step 2.

Analysis of the average amount of time that participants were willing to spend discussing problems facing KU with other students revealed a main effect for the second dummy coded variable of expected future intragroup position,  $F(3, 73) = 2.60, p < .01$ . Participants were willing to spend longer on the task in the expect acceptance ( $M = 20.42$  minutes) than in the control condition ( $M = 15.54$  minutes). A significant amount of additional variance was explained by entering the two interaction terms at the second step,  $R^2_{\text{change}} = .13, F_{\text{change}}(2, 71) = 5.77, p < .01$ . Both the rejection interaction and the acceptance interaction were significant,  $F(2, 71) = 8.01, p < .01$ , and  $F(2, 71) = 9.24, p < .01$ , respectively. Motivation to work for the group as a function of identification and expected future intragroup position is displayed in Figure 2

(endpoints representing one standard deviation above and below the mean centred identification score). In line with predictions, simple slope analyses revealed that those who expected future rejection were (marginally) less willing to spend time on the group task the lower their identification with the group,  $\beta = .38, p = .058$ . In contrast, those who expected future acceptance were *more* willing to spend time on the group task the lower their identification with the group,  $\beta = -.53, p < .01$ . Group motivation was not affected by level of identification for those in the control condition,  $\beta = -.01, ns$ .

*Evaluation of motivated group member.* Analyses of the evaluation of the motivated group member who was willing to work on the task for the 30 minute maximum revealed a main effect for the second dummy coded variable of expected future intragroup position,  $F(3, 73) = 5.71, p < .05$ . The evaluation of a motivated group member was more positive in the expect acceptance condition ( $M = 8.00$ ) than in the control condition ( $M = 6.85$ ). A significant amount of additional variance was explained by entering the two interaction terms at the second step,  $R^2_{\text{change}} = .08, F_{\text{change}}(2, 71) = 3.79, p < .05$ . However, only the rejection interaction term was significant,  $F(2, 71) = 7.62, p < .01$ . The evaluation of a motivated group member as a function of group identification and expected future intragroup position is displayed in Figure 3. Simple slope analyses revealed that those who expected future rejection evaluated a motivated group members less positively the lower their identification with the group,  $\beta = .49, p < .01$ . The evaluation of a motivated group member was not affected by level of identification for those in the control condition,  $\beta = -.02, ns$ , nor those in the expect acceptance condition,  $\beta = .14, ns$ .

### *Discussion*

Consistent with the results of our first study, the effects of future intragroup position on loyalty differed depending on initial level of group identification. The expected future intragroup position manipulation had a greater impact on group loyalty the lower the identification. When group members expected future rejection, they were less willing to work for the group the lower their identification with the group. We also found that when group members expected acceptance, they were more motivated to work for the group the lower their identification (see also Noel et al., 1995). Apparently, the more public procedure in Study 2 compared to Study 1 did amplify the strategic responding of those lower in identification, creating greater differences between lower and higher identifiers than were observed previously when group members expected acceptance. In line with predictions, identification did not affect motivation to work for the group in the control group.

Support for the predictions concerning the effects of future rejection was also found on the evaluation of a motivated group member. It was found that the lower the identification, the harsher group members were in their judgment of a motivated group member when they expected rejection. Presumably, the lower the identification, the less one can appreciate loyalty by other group members when one expects to be rejected by that group in the future, and the less one feels obliged to value a good member of a group one does not feel committed to. It is interesting to note that there was no evidence of a strategic ingratiation on the evaluation of a motivated group member among lower identifiers in the acceptance condition. This measure is less explicit than the effort measure and less reflective of self-interest, providing less scope to demonstrate (or dissimulate) explicit group loyalty.

*General Discussion*

The results of both studies demonstrate that even though all participants were currently peripheral group members, their behavior was differentially affected by their expected future intragroup position depending on their level of identification. This finding buttresses our argument that group members often have their past and future with the group in mind when evaluating their current group membership. It also supports our contention that anticipated temporal changes in intragroup positioning can exert important effects on group processes.

In Study 1, independent of identification, all group members experienced more negative emotions when they expected future rejection and more positive emotions when they anticipated acceptance in the future. However, as expected, loyalty to the group did vary according to degree of group identification and future expectations. The more group members identified with the group, the more maintaining ingroup homogeneity appeared to be a sufficiently strong goal that it occurred regardless of expectations about the self's future position in the group (Doosje & Ellemers, 1997; Spears et al., 1999). In contrast, the lower the commitment to the group, the more expected future intragroup position had an impact. Those lower in identification stressed ingroup homogeneity to the same extent as those higher in identification when they expected future acceptance (cf. Doosje et al., 2002). In other words, the often observed difference in perceived ingroup homogeneity between those lower and higher in identification was not replicated when future acceptance was seen as likely. When peripheral group members expected future rejection, those lower in identification stressed the heterogeneity of the group. Stressing heterogeneity represents an attempt to undermine the validity of the feedback that one is peripheral for lower identifiers ("we

are all different") in contrast to the more loyal higher identifiers who maintain the integrity of the group (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1995).

In Study 2 we obtained additional evidence for our hypothesis that those lower in identification will be guided more by self-interested and strategic motives, and are more alert to what the group can offer them in the future compared to higher identifiers. Specifically, by emphasizing the public nature of the context we were able to find evidence among lower identifiers of responses reflecting strategic self-presentation (when there was hope of acceptance), as well as individual self-interest (when rejection was expected and there was nothing to lose). Moreover, the fact that these two characteristic response patterns of low identifiers occurred in these two different sets of conditions (hopeful vs. hopeless) further supports our analytic distinction between self-interested and strategic responding associated with these respective conditions. Of course this is not to deny that strategic responding is also self-interested; the point is that it is sensitive to the audience (Barreto & Ellemers, 2000; Noel et al., 1995; Postmes et al. 1999), and only likely when there is something to gain from the situation. Lower identifiers invested in the group and behaved as 'good' group members only when something could be gained in the future and when such ingratiating behavior might be expected to pay off in terms of bringing greater acceptance (Noel et al., 1995; Vonk, 1998).

While the effects on the different indices of group loyalty (ingroup homogeneity perceptions, group motivation and evaluation of a loyal group member) were quite similar when participants expected rejection, the pattern of results was more variable when group members expected future acceptance. No differences were found between those lower and higher in identification when group members expected future

acceptance on indirect indices of group motivation (perceived ingroup variability; Study 1, and evaluation of another group member; Study 2), but lower identification led to increased loyalty on the more direct measure of willingness to work for the group (Study 2). It was probably clearer for group members what a 'good group member's response' was on the direct compared to indirect measures, as well as being clearer to others in the more public context of the second study. Responses that are assumed to be driven by strategic considerations may only emerge on direct measures in public contexts where people perceive their effects, and recognize their (meta) perceptions by others as reflecting on their own conduct. By contrast the more implicit and indirect measures we used in this research may be more suited to tapping straightforward self-interest effects, uncontaminated by self-presentational concerns.

#### *Final remarks*

In theoretical terms, the present studies show that in understanding the reactions of peripheral group members, and specifically predicting whether they will strive to achieve acceptance by the group or give up on it, we have to take into account both aspects of the context (the future possibilities contained in the situation), and features of the person (their initial degree of commitment to the group). Social identity theorists have argued that an interactionist perspective that takes into account aspects of both context and commitment is necessary for understanding the diverse psychological and behavioral outcomes that can occur in group contexts (Spears et al., 1999; Turner, 1999). The commitment of higher identifiers appears to inoculate them against potential rejection by their group and they give unconditional loyalty to the group. However, those with lower commitment to the group are prepared to work for the group only when the reality of the situation affords them some hope and some scope to do so. Such

an interactionist approach helps us to understand the diverse and sometimes opposite paths taken by peripheral group members. It helps to explain why some people give up on, or even turn against, groups in which they are marginalized, whereas others in this same position continue to give their undivided loyalty. In other words, to understand the behavior of deviant, marginal, stigmatized, or otherwise peripheral members of groups we cannot assume they will all behave similarly. Rather, we need to understand the peripheral group member's relation to the group and group's relation to them.

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## Figure Captions

*Figure 1.* Study 1: Ingroup homogeneity as a function of group identification and expected future intragroup position. Scale ranging from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating greater perceived ingroup homogeneity.

*Figure 2.* Study 2: Motivation to work for the group as a function of group identification and expected future intragroup position. Scores on the Y-axis represent the minutes willing to work for the group (scale ranging from 5 to 30 minutes).

*Figure 3.* Study 2: Evaluation of a motivated group member as a function of group identification and expected future intragroup position. Scale ranging from 1 to 9, with higher scores indicating a more positive evaluation.





