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Temporary Versus Permanent Group Membership: How the Future Prospects of Newcomers Affect Newcomer Acceptance and Newcomer Influence

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Three studies examine how the future prospects of new group members affect newcomer acceptance and newcomer influence. In Study 1, participants anticipate accepting temporary newcomers less easily than permanent newcomers because they expect temporary newcomers to differ from the group. In Study 2, the effects of newcomer entry in three-person groups are examined. Results show that groups perceived temporary newcomers as more involved in a judgmental decisionmaking process than permanent newcomers. In Study 3, a hidden profile task confirms that temporary newcomers indeed shared more unique knowledge during discussions than permanent newcomers and that this enhanced the groups' decision quality. However, compared to permanent newcomers, temporary newcomers caused teams to experience more conflict and less group identification, illustrating the tension between innovative group performance and group cohesion. The results are discussed in light of the social identity perspective and research on minority influence.

Keywords: newcomers; future prospects; acceptance; influence

One of the most striking changes in organizations today is the growth of temporary employees who do not have the prospects, or the desire, of gaining a permanent position in the work group or organization they enter (such as consultants or interim managers). Although the use of short-term contracts fosters organizational flexibility, it remains unclear in what way temporary workers actually contribute to the performance of their groups (Gruenfeld, Martorana, & Fan, 2000). We address this question by examining the extent to which temporary (vs. permanent) newcomers are accepted by existing group members and the way they influence group decision making.

We aim to show that group members subjectively prefer situations in which newcomers represent the least disruption. Even when temporary newcomers provide unique ideas and enhance decision quality, we propose that they are evaluated negatively by existing group members, who would rather work with newcomers that anticipate a permanent position and adapt to the group. Although the prospect of gaining permanent status may seem beneficial for newcomer acceptance, this diminishes the likelihood that the newcomer will optimally contribute to group tasks. In the remainder of this introduction, we first review the literature on the effects of newcomers in task groups and then discuss previous research on temporary versus permanent newcomers to elucidate the rationale underlying our predictions.

Newcomer Effects in Work Groups

Work groups that have become relatively static over time are generally less critical toward their own output and perform less optimally compared to groups that regularly

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change in composition (e.g., Katz & Allen, 1982). It is therefore assumed that newcomers have a positive effect on group decision-making processes. For instance, newcomers who offer a dissenting minority view can elicit divergent thinking among their fellow group members, causing the group as a whole to consider a wider range of alternatives during the decision-making process (Nemeth, 1986).

Unfortunately, the innovativeness of work groups is not automatically facilitated by the inclusion of a new member (for an overview, see Choi & Thompson, 2005; De Dreu & West, 2001; Levine, Choi, & Moreland, 2003). In general, groups prefer to focus on information that all members have in common than on unique information introduced by a single member (Wittenbaum, Hollingshead, & Botero, 2004) and tend to oppose changes in the majority opinion (Prislin & Christensen, 2002). As a result, single group members with an opposing view are often only able to influence the group indirectly, as majority members do not publicly express their changed opinion in the group (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). For newcomers who are not yet fully immersed in the group it is generally even more difficult to convince other group members that their novel, diverging ideas may be of use for the attainment of common goals. This is why newcomers often keep their unique knowledge to themselves so as not to appear deviant and to enhance acceptance by the group (Levine & Moreland, 1985).

The aforementioned findings can be explained by the social identity/self-categorization perspective that proposes that people's self-concept is in large part determined by their social group memberships (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People use groups to infer how they should behave, and generally expect to be similar to fellow group members in terms of work characteristics such as skills, knowledge, and abilities (although there are some exceptions to this general pattern; see Rink & Ellemers, 2007). This helps them give meaning to a situation and motivates them to work for the group (Ellemers, De Gilder & Haslam, 2004). Thus, changes in group composition can also represent a source of conflict and reduced group cohesiveness (Prislin & Christensen, 2005). Indeed, organizations tend to focus on facilitating newcomer assimilation, teaching newcomers not to challenge existing work practices.

Although assimilation may help achieve group cohesion, it also implies that the potential for performance enhancement is not realized. Researchers have therefore acknowledged that it is important to examine the conditions under which work groups are willing to *accommodate* newcomers and attend to their unique knowledge (Levine et al., 2003). This research has focused on characteristics of the work group or of the newcomer in question. In general, group members are more open to newcomer influence when they have become accustomed to changes in their group's composition (Ziller, 1965), when they have developed norms that emphasize individuality (Postmes, Spears, & Cihangir, 2001), when they have a history of failure, or when they use a work strategy that is assigned to them rather than one that is self chosen (Choi & Levine, 2004; see also Ziller, Behringer, & Goodchilds, 1962). In addition, old-timers generally seem more receptive to input from newcomers and remain attached to their newly composed group when newcomers are also seen as similar to the group and do not pose a threat to the group's unity. This is the case when newcomers show a willingness to fit in with the group's norms (Molleman & Van der Vegt, 2007), when they share a superordinate identity with the old-timers (Kane, Argote, & Levine, 2005), or when they clearly denounce their previous identity (Hornsey, Grice, Jetten, Paulsen, & Callan, 2007).

Importantly, previous research has not addressed the structural role of the newcomer in the group. We examine how old-timers' responses depend on whether the newcomer is expected to have a temporary versus permanent status in the group. Temporary newcomers are not expected to become fully integrated group members, and this may affect how old-timers respond to the unique knowledge and work strategies introduced by these newcomers. In this way we can enhance our understanding of the extent to which temporary newcomers are beneficial or harmful for work group effectiveness. Moreover, examining the extent to which a newcomer's position in the group-rather than his or her individual characteristics-affects newcomer acceptance and influence yields information that can help regulate the introduction of newcomers to work groups.

Research has studied newcomer behavior and the perceptions of newcomers in isolation. It remains relatively unclear whether newcomers can show innovative behavior without disrupting a collective sense of belonging in the groups they enter or whether there is some inherent tradeoff between these two aspects. Thus, we examine the extent to which temporary versus permanent newcomers are accepted by the group as well as their influence on group decision making. The presentation of data on newcomer behavior, in addition to assessing old-timers' perceptions, enables us to examine whether old-timer responses originate relatively independently of newcomer responses, or whether they reflect the same intersubjective reality.

Old-Timer Responses to Temporary Versus Permanent Newcomers

Research comparing the responses of old-timers to temporary versus permanent newcomers is scarce. However, we do know that people automatically and rather effortlessly tend to develop specific expectations about others (Berger, Ridgeway, Fisek, & Norman, 1998). During the initial phases of socialization, the future prospects of newcomers can serve as a diffuse cue on the basis of which old-timers develop such expectations about their behavior in the group (Chen & Klimoski, 2003). Based on this notion, it is generally assumed that old-timers will not expect temporary newcomers to be similar to the group or to behave in accordance with existing practices whereas they do hold this expectation about permanent newcomers (Kraimer, Wayne, Liden, & Sparrowe, 2005). That is, when it is clear that a newcomer is intended to obtain a long-term, core position in the group, he or she is expected to fit in with the group's culture and to act in the interest of the collective (Feldman, Doerpinghaus, & Turnley, 1994).

We further argue that initial differential expectancies about temporary versus permanent newcomers should affect further perceptual and affective responses of oldtimers to them. It is well documented that self-generated expectations can shape the formation of a more general first impression about these others (Rosenthal, 1994). People are more likely to process and attend to behaviors of others that are consistent with their immediate expectations, especially when these expectancies contain a value judgment (Miller, Visser, & Staub, 2005). We therefore argue that old-timers will probably accept temporary newcomers less easily than permanent newcomers as full group members and will consequently identify less with their group when it has been joined by a temporary newcomer than when it has been joined by a permanent newcomer (Prislin & Christensen, 2005; see also Gruenfeld et al., 2000).

The question remains whether old-timers are receptive to the suggestions proposed by temporary or permanent newcomers during group decision making. Initial studies suggest that because old-timers are less concerned for their interpersonal relationships with temporary newcomers, they tend to adopt a task orientation, thinking of ways these newcomers can be beneficial for the group in the short term (i.e., for the task at hand; Kraimer et al., 2005). Thus, we argue that old-timers should be more open to the new knowledge that temporary newcomers propose than to the unique input of permanent newcomers. Indeed, as old-timers expect permanent newcomers to become fully integrated group members, they tend to be primarily focused on optimizing the socialization process so that these newcomers can be fully immersed in the group (Feldman et al., 1994).

The Behavior of Temporary Versus Permanent Newcomers

Even though there quite some literature on the *attitudes* and *feelings* of temporary versus permanent newcomers, relatively little research addresses their *actual behavior* or *influence* in work groups. This is unfortunate as newcomers are not passive agents and often are well aware of their own actions in the group (Hornsey et al., 2007; Moreland & Levine, 2008). Moreover, as indicated previously, initial expectations may work as self-fulfilling prophecies, as people tend to display the behavior that is expected of them by others (Rosenthal, 1994). Thus, the willingness of old-timers to eventually attend to and accept temporary versus permanent newcomers may be contingent on the way these newcomers behave during initial interactions.

The temporary newcomers we focus on in this study join a group only for a limited period. This short-term status implies that newcomers have more freedom to express their own opinion, as they are primarily concerned with meeting specific task demands (Kalleberg, Reynolds, & Marsden, 2003). We therefore argue that (compared to permanent newcomers) temporary newcomers are less focused on developing positive interpersonal relations—just like the old-timers in this case—and less inclined to behave in ways that confirm old-timers' expectations, but they are more actively involved in the group decision-making process (Veenstra, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2004; see also Gruenfeld et al., 2000).

Conversely, as permanent newcomers have their longterm group membership in mind, they are more interested in gaining acceptance and investing in relationships with other group members (Thomas-Hunt & Gruenfeld, 1998). We therefore argue that permanent newcomers are less likely to display deviant behavior. They would rather concentrate on familiarizing themselves with their assumed role in the group and adjusting to group expectations (Veenstra et al., 2004). As a result, their evaluations of the collaboration are also likely to coincide with the perceptions the old-timers have about them. To conclude, we expect temporary as well as permanent newcomers to hold similar perceptions of the collaboration with the group as the old-timers have about them, and to behave in accordance with what their group expects from them. For this reason, we propose that temporary newcomers will be less focused on assimilation and will try to exert more influence on work groups than will permanent newcomers.

Overview of Studies

In three experiments we assess the extent to which a newcomer's future prospects influence newcomer acceptance and newcomer influence. Study 1 examines whether people in fact hold different expectations of temporary versus permanent newcomers, and if so, how this affects their interpersonal evaluation of both types of newcomers. In the next two studies we observe three-person groups (consisting of two old-timers and a newcomer) while working on a decision-making task to examine subjective perceptions (Study 2) and objective indicators (Study 3) of newcomer influence (i.e., the amount of unique knowledge shared, newcomers' impact on the group's final decision). In Study 3, we also assess the extent to which temporary versus permanent newcomers are accepted by the group, as indicated by the levels of conflict experienced and group identification reported by both the old-timers and newcomers after completion of the group task.

STUDY 1

The central prediction for Study 1 is:

Hypothesis 1: People expect temporary newcomers to differ more from the group than permanent newcomers. Because of this expectation, they believe it will be more difficult to accept and get along with temporary newcomers than with permanent newcomers.

Method

We tested our prediction in a between-subjects scenario study that focused on how people perceive and accept temporary versus permanent newcomers. Individuals were asked to think of themselves as a longterm member of a work team in which either a temporary or a permanent newcomer had just entered. Forty undergraduate students (12 men and 28 women) of a Dutch university participated in this study for course credit (n = 20 in each condition). Participants received all relevant materials on paper and were instructed to read the following script:

Imagine that you are a member of a team that works for the TV show *Survivor*... Your team consists of four team members, including yourself. As a team, you are responsible for evaluating and improving this show for future recordings. You and your fellow team members have been working together for quite some time now and have grown attached to each other. Your team has therefore become very important to you.

At this point, we manipulated the entry of a permanent versus temporary newcomer. In the permanent condition, they instead received the following information:

In order to be fully prepared for an upcoming show, management has decided to add a new member to your team. This new person gained considerable knowledge and experience while working for other TV shows. Importantly, the newcomer will get a permanent position. This means that this person will become a long-term member of your team, working with you on all future shows.

In the temporary condition, participants received this same information except for the last two sentences. Instead, received the following information: "Importantly, the newcomer will get a temporary position. This means that this person will only join your team for a short time and will just work with you on the upcoming show."

We checked our manipulation with the following statement: "The newcomer will join my team on a permanent basis" (1 = *I totally disagree*, 7 = *I totally agree*). A one-way ANOVA with the newcomers' future prospects as between-subject variable showed that participants tended to agree with this statement in the permanent condition (M = 6.85, SD = .37) but disagreed in the temporary condition (M = 1.10, SD = .31), F(1, 39) =2888.22, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .99$.

Participants' expectations about the extent to which temporary versus permanent newcomers differ from the team (i.e., their diversity expectations) were measured with two items: "I expect the newcomer to have little in common with us" and "I expect the newcomer to clearly differ from us" ($\alpha = .61$; adapted from Rink & Ellemers, 2007). Initial newcomer acceptance was measured with four items developed for this study; (a) "I think it will be difficult to get along with the newcomer" (reverse coded); (b) "I think I will feel comfortable with the newcomer"; (c) "I think I will personally like the newcomer"; and (d) "I think I can easily accept the newcomer as a member of our team" ($\alpha = .77$). All questions were answered on 7-point scales (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). A principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation confirmed that newcomer expectations and newcomer acceptance were represented as two separate factors (eigenvalues ≥ 1), together explaining 66% of variance.

Results and Discussion

As predicted, participants expected a temporary newcomer to be more different from the team (M = 5.33, SD = .82) than a permanent newcomer (M = 4.43, SD = 1.08), F(1, 39) = 8.85, p = .005, $\eta^2 = .19$. In addition, we found that participants considered it significantly more difficult to accept a temporary newcomer (M =4.31, SD = .81) than a permanent newcomer (M = 4.86, SD = .91), F(1, 39) = 4.08, p = .05, $\eta^2 = .10$.

Based on these two findings, we conducted the third and fourth steps described by Baron and Kenny (1986) to test our contention that diversity expectations mediate newcomer acceptance. A series of hierarchical regression path analyses confirmed that diversity expectancies indeed emerge as a strong predictor of newcomer acceptance, $\beta = -.43$, p = .002, $R^2 = .23$. Furthermore, when the newcomers' future prospects and diversity expectations are simultaneously entered into the regression equation, diversity expectancies emerge as the sole predictor of newcomer acceptance, $\beta = -.38$, p = .012, $\Delta\beta = -.05$, $R^2 = .24$ (future prospects: $\beta = -.11$, *ns*, $\Delta\beta = .17$). A Sobel test confirmed full mediation, z = 2.10, p = .04. These findings suggest that temporary newcomers are generally less accepted than permanent newcomers *because* they are expected to differ more from the group.¹

STUDY 2

The results of Study 1 illustrate that immediate expectations play an important role in the interpersonal evaluation of temporary versus permanent newcomers. In Study 2, we examine perceived newcomer *involvement* in three-person decision-making groups. This time, we obtain the perceptions from both old-timers and newcomers and propose that their perceptions of the collaboration will converge (e.g., see Rosenthal, 1994). We further predict that it is more likely that temporary newcomers, who generally feel less pressure to assimilate to the group, will more actively try to get involved in the decision-making process than permanent newcomers. Our central hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: After the collaboration, both old-timers and newcomers will hold similar perceptions of the decision making process and indicate that the temporary newcomers were more involved in the task than the permanent newcomers.

Method, Results, and Discussion

Design and participants. We used a two-group experimental design (temporary vs. permanent newcomers). Participants were 90 female undergraduate students at a Dutch university who participated in the experiment for extra course credits (15 three-person groups per condition). Within each group, participants were randomly assigned to be one of the two old-timers or the newcomer.

Procedure and tasks. Upon arrival in the lab, participants were placed in separate cubicles and individually received all task and procedure information via computers. They could not see or communicate with each other. All participants learned that they had to perform four tasks that were designed to improve the television show *Survivor*. In this show, candidates are dropped at a deserted island and are tested for their survival skills. Participants learned that they had to: (a) set out the minimum standards for a suitable deserted island, (b) practice selecting the best candidate for a future show,

(c) develop a survival test for the candidates, and (d) think of three possible prizes for the final winner. Participants who were assigned to an old-timer role learned that they had to perform these series of tasks together with a partner. The newcomers were told that they had to start working on these same tasks individually.

First task. The sole purpose of the first task was to create a common bond between the old-timers to form a cohesive dyad (see Postmes et al., 2001). The old-timers were introduced and received 15 min to complete the task. They were then guided back to their cubicles and individually completed a brief questionnaire to measure their initial level of dyadic identification: (a) "My partner and I fit well together"; (b) "I feel comfortable with my partner"; (c) "I like working with my partner"; and (d) "My partner is similar to me" (Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; $\alpha = .78$; 1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

We examined the average interrater agreement coefficient (rwg(i); James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1984) to test whether the responses of old-timers within the same dyad were more similar to one another than the ratings from old-timers in other dyads. This value refers to the level of agreement *within* the groups. We additionally conducted one-way ANOVAs to test the level of differentiation *between* groups, and based on these results, we checked the intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs; Bliese, 2000). Both ICC values indicate intermember reliability. ICC(1) reflects the proportion of variance in the individual-level responses that can be explained by group membership. ICC(2) indicates the reliability of the group mean score that is created when individual scores are aggregated (see also Klein & Kozlowski, 2001). The rwg value for identification was .85, indicating high agreement between old-timers within dyads. A one-way ANOVA revealed that the responses of oldtimers also varied significantly less within dyads than between dyads, p < .001. The ICC(1) and ICC(2) values were also reliable, .63 and .72, respectively. These analyses support the aggregation of individual data to the dyadic level.

As intended, across conditions, all dyads reported relatively high levels of identification (M = 5.48, SD = .77), F < 1, *ns*. Thus, we were successful in creating a sense of attachment between the old-timers before newcomer entry.

Entry of temporary versus permanent newcomer. After Task 1, all participants were informed that the composition of the groups would change to simulate turnover in natural groups. Then, the newcomer was introduced and participants had to perform the second task as a three-person group. In the temporary condition, the oldtimers and the newcomer were informed that they would only work together on Task 2. It was emphasized that the newcomer only had a temporary position in the group and was going to join the old-timers on a shortterm basis. The old-timers would perform Tasks 3 and 4 together again as a dyad, and the newcomers would perform these tasks individually again, just like in Task 1. In the *permanent* condition, the old-timers and the newcomer were informed that they would work together on all three remaining tasks. It was emphasized that the newcomer had gained permanent group membership and was joining the old-timers on a longterm basis. Importantly, we only introduced four tasks to manipulate the future prospects of newcomers. In reality, the experiment ended after the groups had performed Task 2.

To check our manipulation, we presented old-timers with the following statement: "The new student will join my group on a permanent basis" (1 = *I totally disagree*, 7 = *I totally agree*). In the temporary condition, old-timers agreed significantly less with this statement (M = 1.83, SD = 1.53) than in the permanent condition (M = 6.07, SD = 1.26), F(1, 59) = 136.73, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .70$.

Newcomers answered an adapted version of the same check: "I will be joining a group on a permanent basis." The newcomers also agreed significantly more with this statement in the permanent condition (M = 1.33, SD = .62) than in the temporary condition (M = 6.53, SD = .83), F(1, 29) = 376.89, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .93$. Thus, as intended, both the old-timers and newcomers believed our manipulation of the newcomers' future prospects to be temporary or permanent.

Second task. Task 2 consisted of a judgmental task in which groups had to select one of out three hypothetical candidates as the winner of a Survivor show. The task resembles decision-making processes in real-world teams and enables us to measure perceived newcomer involvement. Groups had to make a joint decision on the basis of collective judgment and mutual agreement (Larson, Foster-Fishman, & Keys, 1994). The three candidate profiles were equally attractive and represented four areas relevant to survive on a deserted island: (a) knowledge of tropical foods, (b) physical skills, (c) social skills, and (d) mental attitude. A pilot study (n = 30) confirmed that there were no significant differences between the profiles in attractiveness or information content (all p values were above .11). Participants received 15 min to individually read the candidate profiles on the computer.

Perceived newcomer involvement. The experimenter then introduced the newcomer to the old-timers and brought them to the discussion room as a group. Here, they had another 20 min to reach consensus and select a winner. After the collaboration, the old-timers and the newcomer returned to their separate cubicles and filled out a postdiscussion questionnaire to measure newcomer involvement: (a) "The newcomer/I was actively involved in the discussion"; (b) "The newcomer/I tried to offer an unique contribution to the team"; (c) "The newcomer/I made an effort to reach a solution"; and (d) "The newcomer/I clearly expressed her opinion during the discussion" (1 = not at all, 7 = very much).

After newcomer entry, the data on newcomer involvement differed only marginally significantly between the groups, p = .06. However, the rwg(j) score and the two ICC indices remained satisfactory, rwg = .90, ICC(1) = .12, ICC(2) = .46, indicating that within each threeperson group, the old-timers and the newcomer responded similarly to this measure (see Klein & Kozlowski, 2001). We therefore aggregated the measure of newcomer involvement to the group level, $\alpha = .65$. As predicted, a one-way ANOVA confirmed that temporary newcomers were seen by themselves and by others as being more involved in the decision-making process (M = 5.98,SD = .47) than permanent newcomers (M = 5.25, SD =.55), F(1, 29) = 15.26, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .35$. These findings confirm our hypothesis that old-timers and newcomers hold similar perceptions of the decision-making process. Both reported higher levels of newcomer involvement in the temporary condition than in the permanent condition, as predicted.

STUDY 3

The goal of Study 3 is to replicate and extend the findings of Studies 1 and 2. This time, we simultaneously examine newcomer acceptance and newcomer influence in three-person decision-making groups. Newcomer acceptance is measured by changes in the level of conflict experienced and by comparison of group identification before versus after newcomer entry. Importantly, Study 3 examines actual newcomer influence using a hidden profile task instead of the judgmental task of Study 2. We observe the amount of unique information newcomers mention during the discussion and document the number of times groups are willing to accommodate the newcomers' decision preference. Based on the notion that innovative newcomer behavior is often considered disruptive and can be seen as a threat to the unity within groups, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3a: Temporary newcomers are less accepted than permanent newcomers, as indicated by the levels of conflict experienced and group identification reported by both the old-timers and the newcomers in this situation.

Hypothesis 3b: Temporary newcomers exert more influence on groups than permanent newcomers; they mention more unique information during the decision-making process and have a larger impact on the group's performance.

Method

Experimental design and procedure. The design and procedure of this study are similar to Study 2. Participants were female undergraduate students at a Dutch university who participated in the experiment for money or course credits. In total, 65 three-person groups participated in our experiment (n = 195 participants). We eventually retained 63 groups for the final analyses (31 in the permanent condition and 32 in the temporary condition). In two groups, the newcomer indicated a task outcome preference that did not reflect the information received (see the task description later). These two groups were removed from the data.

We further counterbalanced the educational background of the newcomer (which was similar to the background of the old-timers in 33 groups and different in 30 groups) and checked whether old-timers were familiar with the newcomer. This was the case for 12 groups. In 51 groups, the old-timers did not know the newcomer before the experiment. We first checked whether these two composition variables moderated our results (see, e.g., Gruenfeld, Mannix, Williams, & Neale, 1996). This turned out not to be the case. The effects of the future prospects of newcomers on our dependent measures emerged independently of educational background or familiarity, as anticipated.²

This time, the old-timers had to perform two tasks together before newcomer entry (instead of one). The newcomer had to perform these first two tasks individually. This was done to further enhance a sense of belonging between the two old-timers as a preexisting dyad and to further strengthen our newcomer entry manipulation. Thus, the experiment finished after Task 3, when all participants were debriefed and thanked for their cooperation.

First two tasks. We used the same Survivor tasks that were introduced in Study 2. After old-timers had finished two tasks, they went back to their separate cubicles to complete a questionnaire³ assessing their initial level of dyadic identification with the same four items as in Study 2, $\alpha = .77$. We also obtained their initial level of conflict experienced (Jehn, 1997): (a) "There were differences of opinions about task-related issues"; (b) "We disagreed about task-related information"; (c) "We sometimes disagreed about the process to get the task done"; and (d) We agreed about the way to do things (reverse coded; $\alpha = .70$; 1 = not at all, 7 = very much).⁴ A PCA confirmed that identification and conflict were separate constructs, together accounting for 61% of variance in the individual items (eigenvalues \geq 1).

As in Study 2, we aggregated the data of the oldtimers at the dyadic level: identification, rwg(j) = .85, ICC(1) = .30, ICC(2) = .46, and conflict experienced, rwg(j) = .82, ICC(1) = .14, ICC(2) = .33; p values < .06. As intended, across the two conditions, old-timer dyads reported similar, and relatively high, levels of identification (M = 5.35, SD = .60) and relatively low levels of conflict (M = 2.67, SD = .72), in all cases, F < 1, *ns*. This excludes the possibility that initial differences in levels of team identification or conflict experienced drive the effects of the temporary versus permanent newcomer status.

Entry of permanent versus temporary newcomers. Newcomers' future prospects were manipulated as in Study 2, except that this time we introduced the newcomer in Task 3. The same check as in Study 2 confirmed that in the permanent condition, old-timers were significantly more inclined to think that the newcomer would join their dyad on a long-term basis (M = 5.84, SD = 1.41) than in the temporary condition (M = 1.38, SD = .65), F(1, 125) = 246.34, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .81$. Similar results were obtained for the newcomers in the permanent condition (M = 5.91, SD = 1.35) and in the temporary condition (M = 3.10, SD = 2.23), F(1, 62) =34.92, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .37$.

Third task. The main difference from Study 2 is that we transformed our judgmental decision-making task into a problem-solving task with a hidden profile (Stasser & Titus, 1985). Groups again had to select one out of three hypothetical candidates as the winner of a *Survivor* show. This time, we designed the task in such a way that Candidate A represented the objectively best option. This was confirmed in a pilot study (n = 20), showing that Candidate A was perceived to be significantly more suitable than Candidate B or Candidate C, t(19) = 20.89, p < .001. Candidates B and C did not differ significantly from each other in perceived suitability, t(19) = -1.38, *ns*.

A hidden profile exists when "the superiority of one decision alternative over others is masked because each member is aware of only one part of its supporting information, but the group, by pooling its information, can reveal to all the superior option" (Stasser, 1992, p. 49). The information about the three candidates consisted of different positive, negative, and neutral information units. This information was distributed in such a way that at the onset of the collaboration, the new-comer receives a different set of information from the two old-timers. The part of information that the

old-timers receive is not sufficient to optimally solve the problem; in fact, it leads them both to prefer the same suboptimal decision alternative (counterbalanced to favor either Candidate B or Candidate C; see Brodbeck, Kerschreiter, Mojzisch, Frey, & Schulz-Hardt, 2002). By contrast, the information that the newcomers receive does contain some crucial cues leading them to prefer the optimum solution (Candidate A). As a result, the decision quality of the groups depends on the extent to which the newcomers share their unique information. Thus, this task enables us to observe actual newcomer influence and group innovative behavior.

As the manipulation of informational differences is subtle, we alerted all participants to the possibility that their candidate profiles could vary (see, e.g., Larson et al., 1994). They had to answer the following check: "The candidate profiles of the new student may somewhat differ from ours/My candidate profiles may somewhat differ from the existing group members" (1 = I *fully disagree*, 7 = I *fully agree*). Two ANOVAs showed that across the experimental conditions, both the old-timers (M = 6.60, SD = .58) and the newcomers (M = 6.33, SD = 1.39) generally agreed with this statement; in both cases, F < 1, *ns*.

After reading the profiles and before the group collaboration, participants had to indicate their initial candidate preferences using the computer. The newcomer was then introduced to the old-timers and the group received 20 min to come up with the correct solution. Group discussions were videotaped for content coding of the information exchange. When the collaboration was finished, participants were brought back to their separate cubicles and completed the postdiscussion questionnaire.

Objective measures. Two observers who were blind to experimental conditions scored which of the unique and shared items from the three candidate profiles the newcomer had mentioned during discussion. A speaking turn could contain a single information item or multiple information items. The coding of a random selection of 20 groups indicated that the interrater reliability was sufficient for unique information items (k = .63) and for shared information items (k = .71; Landis & Koch, 1977). Any coding discrepancies were settled by discussion. In each condition, group decision quality was measured by calculating the number of groups that had selected the correct solution (Candidate A).

Self-report measures. Both old-timers and newcomers completed the same items that were used to assess dyadic identification and conflict among old-timers after Task 2. Within each three-person group, there was again sufficient agreement between the old-timers and the newcomer, and their responses were adequately interdependent to warrant aggregation to the group level. We therefore constructed group-level measures of identification, $\alpha = .80$, rwg(j) = .80, ICC(1) = .26, ICC(2) = .51, and conflict experience, $\alpha = .71$, rwg(j) = .71, ICC(1) = .25, ICC(2) = .49; both *p* values < .001. PCA confirmed that these items represented two separate constructs as intended, together accounting for 62% of the variance in the individual items (eigenvalues ≥ 1).

Results and Discussion

Observational measures. In both conditions, newcomers mentioned an equal amount of shared information during the group discussions (M = 10.20, SD =3.58), F < 1, *ns*. However, as predicted, temporary newcomers mentioned significantly more unique information (M = 15.97, SD = 5.63) than permanent newcomers (M = 7.16, SD = 2.27), F(1, 62) = 72.89, p < .001, $\eta^2 =$.55. As for decision quality, a chi square analysis revealed the predicted effect between the two conditions, $\chi^2(1, N = 63) = 4.09$, p = .04. Of the groups with temporary newcomers, 47% selected the correct solution (n = 15), but only 23% of the groups with permanent newcomers selected the correct solution (n = 7).

These findings meet the first two criteria required for testing our mediation model (Baron & Kenny, 1986). To perform the last two steps, we conducted two binary logistical regressions (see also MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). As expected, the relation between newcomers' future prospects and group decision quality, B = -1.11, Wald = 3.95, p = .047, was substantially reduced when adding the unique information mentioned by newcomers to the equation, B = .10, Wald = .018, *ns*. The amount of unique information mentioned now emerged as the only significant predictor, B = -1.47, Wald = 5.46, p = .019. A Sobel test showed that the reduction of the effect of future prospects on decision quality was marginally significant, z = -1.85, p = .06,⁵ indicating that the decision quality of the groups is at least partly explained by the unique information mentioned by newcomers. Thus, as anticipated, the greater inclination of temporary compared to permanent newcomers to mention unique information during the group discussion contributes to the performance of the group.

Self-report measures. As predicted, groups with a temporary newcomer reported lower levels of identification (M = 5.20, SD = .64) than groups with a permanent newcomer (M = 5.80, SD = .50), F(1, 59) = 25.10, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .30$. These groups also reported more conflict (M = 3.04, SD = .68) than groups with a permanent newcomer (M = 2.40, SD = .61), F(1, 59) = 16.41,

Variable	М	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Unique information	11.63	6.66	1	1			
 Shared information Level of identification 	5.48	5.58 0.65	.11 59**	.07	1		
 Conflict experience Decision quality 	2.72	0.72	.56** .40*	08 21	69** .28*	1 21	1

TABLE 1: Means and Zero-Order Correlations Between Dependent Measures in Study 3

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

TABLE 2: Means Scores on Identification and Conflict Experience as a Function of Future Prospects and Time (Study 3)

	Future Prospects					
	Perma	nent	Temporary			
Time	М	SD	М	SD		
Identification						
Before newcomer entry	5.35	.11	5.35	.09		
After newcomer entry	5.82 _b	.09	5.15	.10		
Conflict	5					
Before newcomer entry	2.68	.14	2.66	.13		
After newcomer entry	2.39 _a	.11	3.05 _b	.11		

NOTE: Means with different subscripts differ significantly from each other, p < .05.

p = .003, $\eta^2 = .22.^6$ Table 1 shows the overall means and correlations between all dependent measures.

We additionally examined whether the levels of identification and conflict experienced after newcomer entry differ significantly from group members' identification and conflict scores before newcomer entry. This comparison over time can tell us whether temporary newcomers affect levels of identification and conflict of the old-timers relative to the baseline measure (i.e., as assessed before newcomer entry at Time 1). We performed two repeated measures analyses on identification and conflict experienced, with time as a within-subject factor (1 = *prior to newcomer entry*, 2 = *after newcomer entry*), and the future prospects of the newcomers as the between-subjects factor.

We found significant interaction effects between future prospects and time on identification, F(1, 59) =13.21, p < .001, $\eta^2 = .18$, and conflict, F(1, 59) = 8.75, p = .004, $\eta^2 = .13$, experienced. Simple main effects showed that group identification only increased significantly after newcomer entry in the permanent condition $(M_{\text{difference}} = .47, SE = .13), F(1, 59) = 13.35, p < .001,$ $\eta^2 = .19$, but not when a temporary newcomer had entered the group $(M_{\text{difference}} = -.20, SE = .13), ns$. By contrast, the level of conflict experienced by groups only increased significantly after the entry of a temporary newcomer $(M_{\text{difference}} = .39, SE = .16), F(1, 59) =$ $6.31, p = .015, \eta^2 = .10$. This level was in fact marginally reduced when permanent newcomers entered the groups ($M_{\text{difference}} = -.29$, SE = .16), p = .08, $\eta^2 = .05$ (see Table 2 for mean cell scores).

These results demonstrate that it is not simply the case that temporary newcomers are evaluated more negatively relative to permanent newcomers. After the entry of a temporary newcomer, the level of identification in fact drops below its original baseline whereas the level of conflict is raised relative to its baseline. By contrast, the entry of permanent newcomers causes the level of identification of old-timers to rise above its baseline level whereas the level of conflict remains the same. In sum, the findings of Study 3 are consistent with Studies 1 and 2 and in line with predictions. Temporary newcomers actually exert more influence than permanent newcomers, resulting in improved group performance, but groups generally evaluate the decision-making process relatively more negatively under these conditions.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The focal issue addressed in this article is whether the future prospects of newcomers influence the extent to which groups are willing to accept newcomers and attend to their unique knowledge. Even though temporary workers are becoming more and more common in contemporary organizations, there is still a lot to learn about the way they function in work groups. We conducted a series of experiments to examine the influence and acceptance of temporary versus permanent newcomers under controlled circumstances and to investigate whether our hypothesized effects emerge not only in subjective evaluations but also in the *objective* exchange of unique information as well as in actual group performance.

The findings of our first study confirmed that temporary newcomers are generally expected to differ more from the group than permanent newcomers and are consequently less easily accepted by the old-timers. In our next two studies, we examined interactive threeperson work groups. Whereas temporary newcomers are generally less accepted than permanent newcomers (evident from the higher levels of conflict and reduced levels of group identification reported by both the oldtimers and the newcomers), the lack of acceptance they experience also releases them from the pressure to assimilate when expressing their ideas and opinions to the group. As a result, they share more unique information, enabling them to enhance the group's performance. Permanent newcomers, on the other hand, elicit less conflict as they keep their unique knowledge to themselves. Thus, although permanent newcomers help preserve group cohesion, they also have less influence on the group decision process, causing the group to perform less well.

This research is the first to show that the conditions that foster acceptance of newcomers to the team (and make them feel valued by existing team members) indeed differ from those that give rise to the consideration of novel insights that are crucial for innovative decision making and optimal performance in work groups. Our results further illustrate that old-timers and newcomers hold similar perceptions of the decisionmaking process, illustrating that their behaviors mutually influence each other and jointly determine newcomer acceptance and influence. This is in line with predictions and extends previous research showing that expectations about newcomers and their likely contribution to the team can originate from diffuse structural factors, such as the newcomers' future prospects and role in the group (Berger et al., 1998), in that we have shown this to affect the mutual acceptance of newcomers and oldtimers as well as actual task behavior and task performance at the group level.

In this research, we focused on newcomers who were either ensured of a permanent position or were well aware of the fact that their position was temporary. However, in real life this difference may not always be so clear. Even workers who are hired for a fixed amount of time often have the opportunity to become a permanent employee after an initial trial period. This may cause even temporary newcomers to be less motivated to exert influence on existing work practices as they are concerned about earning a long-term position. As a result, they may tend to behave in ways that characterize *permanent* newcomers rather than temporary newcomers (e.g., Felfe, Schmook, Schyns, & Six, 2008). In a similar vein, changes in the corporate strategy of an organization (e.g., downsizes, mergers) can threaten the extent to which permanent employees feel secure about their position, which can cause them to become less committed and more inclined to display nonprototypical behavior (e.g., Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Veenstra et al., 2004). Permanent team members might then behave more like members who are in a *temporary* position. Although this demonstrates that the distinction between temporary and permanent newcomers is not always as clear cut as in the situations examined here, it also shows that future prospects about the (dis-) continuation of current employment (rather than current employment status) are crucial in shaping people's interpersonal relations with their coworkers as well as their task behavior. To further investigate such mechanisms, one could examine how exactly feelings of security about one's current position in a work group (which may apply to old-timers as well as newcomers) affect the interpersonal acceptance of newcomers and the willingness to learn from and engage in innovative behavior (see also Kraimer et al., 2005).

Furthermore, previous research has suggested that the tension between group cohesion and commitment, on one hand, and the expression of unique ideas by newcomers, on the other, may be necessary for work groups to perform optimally (e.g., Anderson, De Dreu, & Nijstad, 2004; Jehn, 1997). Relatively high levels of conflict more or less force members to engage in constructive criticism and therefore stimulate cognitive processing and group discussions (De Dreu & West, 2001; Nemeth 1986); our current results seem to suggest this. Nevertheless, we argue that there is also a down side to this state of affairs. When optimizing group performance at the expense of group cohesion, over time group members tend to become less motivated to exert effort on behalf of their team and are less willing to continue performing group tasks together (for a review, see De Dreu & Weingart, 2003). At first sight, this may not seem problematic when groups are working with temporary newcomers who only join groups for a short period. Nevertheless, it remains to be examined whether temporary newcomers can have a long*lasting* positive impact on the way work groups function. Our research suggests that for groups to actually internalize the unique input of both types of newcomers in the long run, it is crucial that old-timers perceive temporary newcomers to be trustworthy and concerned for the group, and *permanent* newcomers should be challenged to influence groups in a more visible way or their value for the collaboration will remain unnoticed. Future research should therefore examine the conditions under which this is most likely to occur. For instance, organizations can install and test the effectiveness of different interventions for temporary versus permanent newcomers on how to have a long-lasting impact on the work groups that they join. Temporary newcomers might learn to use influence strategies that explicitly demonstrate their loyalty to the group's identity (Hornsey et al., 2007; Kane et al., 2005), whereas permanent newcomers could be trained to emphasize the importance of their unique contribution for the group's success (Sherman & Kim, 2005).

The primary goal of this research was to examine the consequences of newcomers' future prospects for acceptance and influence in work groups. We show that newcomers have the most positive influence on group decision making when there is less pressure to assimilate to the group's norms and when their position justifies their deviation from set practices or collective opinions, that is, when they have a temporary status in the group. The knowledge that the temporary presence of expertise is more favorable for the performance of work groups than a more permanent addition of new team members makes it easier for organizations to develop specific practices that will improve the effectiveness of personnel mobilization.

NOTES

1. Because the mediator and the outcome variable are assessed at the same time, we wanted to rule out the possibility of a reverse causal process; therefore, we checked whether a low level of newcomer acceptance might also affect diversity expectations. Importantly, the influence of temporary versus permanent newcomers on diversity expectations remained significant after entering newcomer acceptance as an additional predictor in the regression equation, $\beta = .31$, p = .033, $R^2 = .28$. This offers statistical evidence that newcomer acceptance does not mediate the effect of newcomer status on diversity expectations in this case.

2. Importantly, the educational background of the newcomers did not affect our core outcome measure (decision quality). However, it did yield separate main effects on unique information sharing (M = 11.70, SD = 7.12 in the different background condition vs. M = 8.85, SD = 4.81in the similar background condition), F(1, 59) = 39.89, p = .001, $\eta^2 = .40$; identification (M = 5.18, SD = .59 in the different background condition vs. M = 5.75, SD = .59 in the similar background condition), F(1, 59) =22.09, p = .001, $\eta^2 = .27$; and conflict (M = 2.97, SD = .69 for groups with a different newcomer vs. M = 2.50, SD = .66 for groups with a similar newcomer), F(1, 29) = 9.79, p = .003, $\eta^2 = .14$. As indicated, these effects occurred independently of the effects of the temporary versus permanent newcomer status, which are the focus of the present research. Familiarity did not affect any of our dependent measures.

3. We controlled for differences between the dyads in outcome satisfaction, as past research has shown that this can affect the willingness of old-timers to accommodate to newcomers (Choi & Levine, 2004). Old-timers had to answer the following statement: "I am satisfied about the decisions that we made in the first two tasks." However, we found that all dyads were equally satisfied with their joint decision outcomes on the first two tasks (M = 5.92, SD = .69).

4. Although Jehn (1997) distinguished between different types of conflict, in this study initial analyses revealed parallel effects on the

process and task conflict items, and all items loaded on the same factor. Therefore, these questions were combined into a single conflict construct.

5. To ensure independence of the parameters, we used *a* from ordinary regression, .67, $S_a = .07$, and *b* from logistic regression, -1.11, $S_b = .58$ (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007).

6. These data pertain to the two old-timers at Time 1 and the three-person groups at Time 2. We additionally performed two repeated measures analyses with only the two old-timers at Time 2 (without the newcomer scores). We found similar results as at the group level, further corroborating our notion that the old-timers and the newcomer have similar perceptions of their collaboration.

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