

July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Dr. John Dixon  
Department of Psychology  
Lancaster University, Fylde College  
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United Kingdom

Subject: Resubmission of a manuscript for publication

Dear Dr. Dixon,

We were very pleased with the response to our manuscript "Social change in South Africa: An historical approach to relative deprivation" (BJSP1610). We are very grateful for your comments and those of the reviewers.

To address all the comments, we have reproduced them in bold in the section named "Authors responses". A detailed description of the revisions made follows each comment. We hope that these revisions will meet your demands. We appreciate your help through the whole process and are very proud of the final outcome.

Please contact us if you see sections that need more work. Writing in a second language can be challenging

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roxane de la Sablonnière". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roxane" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name.

Roxane de la Sablonnière, Ph.D.  
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**Reviewer #1: This article now makes a clearer contribution to the social psychology literature, and it should be published. I have a few remaining concerns.**

**1. There are numerous grammatical errors that need to be fixed.**

We thank the evaluator for identifying this issue. Two different native English speaking people have proofread this new version of our manuscript. We hope that grammatical errors have been fixed.

**2. The shift to the term 'assumed' change helps but I still found this aspect of the argument under-developed. For example, on p. 3 we are told that "It would be logical to assume that the perception of a group's position would approximate the actual social changes, positive or negative experienced by a group." Asserting the logic of a statement is not the same as developing a good argument, supported by references. Moreover, are actual changes the same as experienced changes, and how are we to define a group? What, for example, are the actual changes experienced by black South Africans? For the vast majority, there has been no economic upliftment and groups like COSATU would argue that this would be expected or assumed given the adherence to free market economic policies. What I'm concerned about is the purported "objective" nature of the "assumed dramatic change" that underpins the argument in the article.**

In considering your comment, we realized that our definition of an “assumed dramatic change” was still confusing. By “assumed dramatic change” we mean the anticipated outcomes of a change. Prior to the first election in 1994, it would have been difficult to predict that black South Africans will not benefit economically from these major political changes. For example, Harris (1997) showed that following the 1994 elections, a minority of black South Africans already felt that their lives had changes for the better in terms of money and that a year later, black South Africans were more optimistic than any other groups about the economic future of their family. Whether it is experienced now as it was assumed back then may indeed differ. Now, many people and organizations would agree that the economic situation of black South Africans has not been altered dramatically since the fall of the apartheid. But, this is not what was necessarily assumed at that time.

In the section where we discuss the “assumed dramatic changes” we added a small clarification to avoid any confusion. On page 3, we wrote: “In the context of South Africa, we might anticipate that *Africans* would consider conditions in South Africa to have been decidedly negative during the apartheid period, but dramatically improved after Nelson Mandela was elected president. This perception would be consistent with the changes that *Africans* were presumably anticipating from the democratization of South Africa, and thus we might refer to these as “assumed” changes (Finchilescu & Dawes,

1998; Harris, 1997). Conversely, we might “assume” that *white South Africans* would consider that conditions in South Africa took a downturn after the fall of apartheid (Korf & Malan, 2002).”

About the “objective” nature of the “assumed dramatic change”, we realize that it complicates our arguments. We thus removed the part where we discussed the “objective nature” of the changes. On page 3, it is now written: “Previous research suggests, however, that there are often sub-groups within a group who perceive their group’s situation as remaining *stable* throughout history, despite historically “assumed” dramatic social changes (de la Sablonnière, Taylor, Perozzo, & Sadykova, 2009; Westerhof & Keyes, 2006).”

**On p. 22 the question is asked: "Why might some individuals report a stable group trajectory of relative deprivation even in the face of change as dramatic and far-reaching as the fall of apartheid?" Here's an answer: Because the fall of apartheid prompted no economic change for most people. This is certainly more parsimonious than self-concept theory.**

This is certainly a possible answer to this question. We have now addressed this possibility on page 22: “Why might some individuals report a stable group trajectory of relative deprivation even in the face of a change as dramatic and far-reaching as the fall of apartheid? This perception of stability might reflect the fact that the economic structure of South African society has not changed much since the end of apartheid (Møller, 1998). Despite *Africans’* optimism following the first democratic election in 1994 (Harris, 1997), *Africans* did not benefit from the social changes as much as they would have thought. Alternatively, *white* South Africans have been the beneficiaries of the market-oriented economic reforms in post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, this lack of change in the economic structure of the South African society may well account for the perception of stability found in the present study.”

In this section, we also removed our original explanation on the self-concept theory.

**3. The temporal divisions. I think it would be wise to admit that the periodization has an arbitrary element. Certainly, it is rather unusual to refer to 1991 as post-apartheid.**

An error was introduced in the former version of our manuscript. Participants were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with overall economic conditions in South Africa in the months following the 1994 election. On page 12, it is now written: “In the context of the present study, temporal relative deprivation was assessed at four main historical periods: 1) the time of apartheid (1948-1994), 2) the first democratic election period (1994), 3) the present time (2006), and 4) 5-years in the future.” We are deeply sorry about this confusion and thank the evaluator for his/her attention to the details.