

*Today's topic:*

*SMITH & HASLAM (2017)*  
*\*\*\* CHAPTER 5 \*\*\**



Before we start...

**\*\*\* Quiz \*\*\***

# Quiz

Some statements about contents from the lectures

e.g. „Stanley Milgram conducted an experiment involving electrical shocks.“

→ Raise your hand accordingly if you think the statement is true or false

→ Does not matter if your choice is wrong or right, just participate!

# Quiz

„The theory of cognitive dissonance was invented by Festinger.“

Right answer: TRUE

# Quiz

„Groupthink is an effect that helps the group come up faster with solutions and is usually something good.“

Right answer: FALSE

# Quiz

„The drive theory of social facilitation from 1965 was invented by R.B. Zajonc.“

Right answer: TRUE

# Quiz

„The three most important forms of self-identity are individual, relational and coherent self.“

Right answer: FALSE (Individual, relational and collective self)

# Quiz

„When there is danger involved, the bystander effect is much less.“

Right answer: TRUE



# Quiz

„We tend to make correspondent behavior when the shown behavior is not freely chosen.“

Right answer: FALSE

# Quiz

„The Robber’s cave study was conducted by Moscovici et al.“

Right answer: FALSE (Sherif et al.)

# Quiz

„The Ringelmann effect states that group productivity decreases as the size of the group increases.“

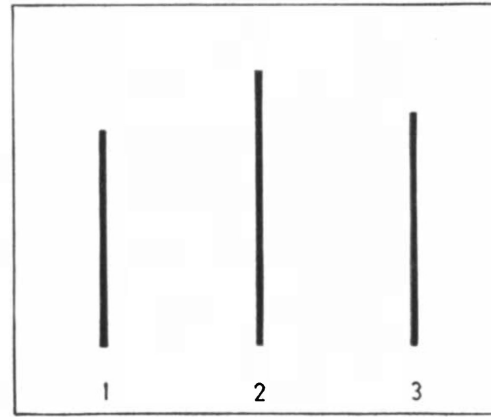
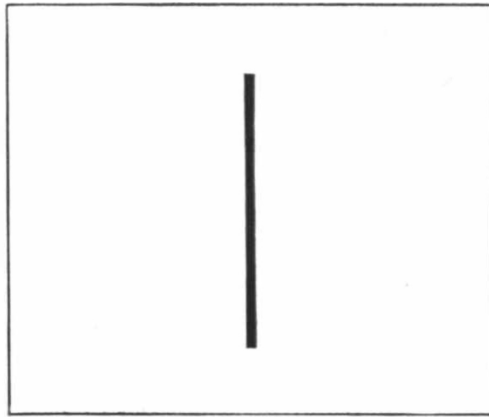
Right answer: TRUE

# Quiz

„An active minority can influence majorities.“

Right answer: TRUE

# Quiz



„The third line is the same length as the original.“

# Quiz

→ majority voted the same as Prof. van Dick: conformity!

- majority voted correctly:
- Paid attention in the lectures
  - Are not easily fooled
  - Not enough confederates

# Overview

1. About the researcher
2. Background
3. The Study
4. Follow-up Studies
5. Application
6. Impact
7. Conclusion



# Literature

- 📖 Asch, S. E. (1952). *Social Psychology*. Prentice-Hall, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10025-000>
- 📖 Asch, S. E. (1955). Opinions and Social Pressure. *Scientific American*, 193(5), 31-35.
- 📖 Baron, R. S., Vandello, J. A., & Brunsman, B. (1996). The forgotten variable in conformity research: Impact of task importance on social influence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(5), 915-927. <https://doi.org/10.1037/002-3514.71.5.915>
- 📖 Bond, R., & Smith, P. B. (1996). Culture and conformity: A meta-analysis of studies using Asch's (1952b, 1956) line judgment task. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119(1), 111-137. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.119.1.111>
- 📖 Deutsch, M., & Gerard, H. B. (1955). A study of normative and informational social influences upon individual judgment. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 51(3), 629-636. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046408>
- 📖 Jetten, J., & Hornsey, M. (2013). Deviance and Dissent in Groups. *Annual review of psychology*, 65. 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115151.
- 📖 Smith, J. R., & Haslam, S. A. (2017). *Social Psychology: Revisiting the Classic Studies*. SAGE Publications Limited.
- 📖 Walker, M. B., & Andrade, M. G. (1996). Conformity in the Asch task as a function of age. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 136(3), 367-372. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.1996.9714014>



# About the researcher

*\*\*\* Who was Solomon Asch\*\*\**

# Solomon Asch

- \* September 14th 1907, † February 20th 1996
- emigrated from Poland to the US as a child
- became interested in psychology after reading William James' works
- Columbia University: degree in anthropology
- interested in Gestalt Psychology
- Teacher at Swarthmore College, Milgram was his research assistant

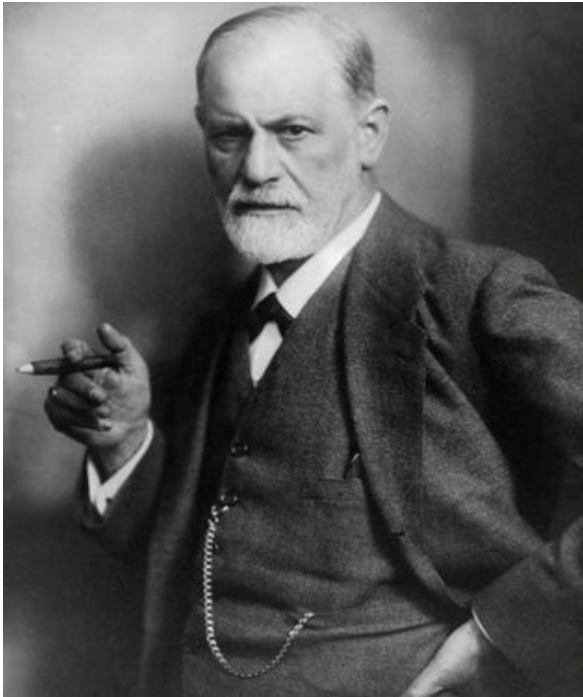


[https://i0.wp.com/www.bibliotecapleyades.net/imagenes\\_so\\_ciop02/mindcon72\\_03.jpg](https://i0.wp.com/www.bibliotecapleyades.net/imagenes_so_ciop02/mindcon72_03.jpg)

# Background

*\*\*\* What inspired Asch \*\*\**

# Hypnosis



Jean Martin Charcot,  
teacher of Sigmund Freud

→ most people can be put  
under „hypnosis“

[https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.timetoast.com/public/uploads/photos/12138251/freud\\_y\\_charcot.jpg?1527307604](https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.timetoast.com/public/uploads/photos/12138251/freud_y_charcot.jpg?1527307604)

# Hypnosis



„There is no hypnosis,  
there is only suggestion!“

<https://www.lemondejuif.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/image001.jpg>

Hippolyte Bernheim (1840-1919)

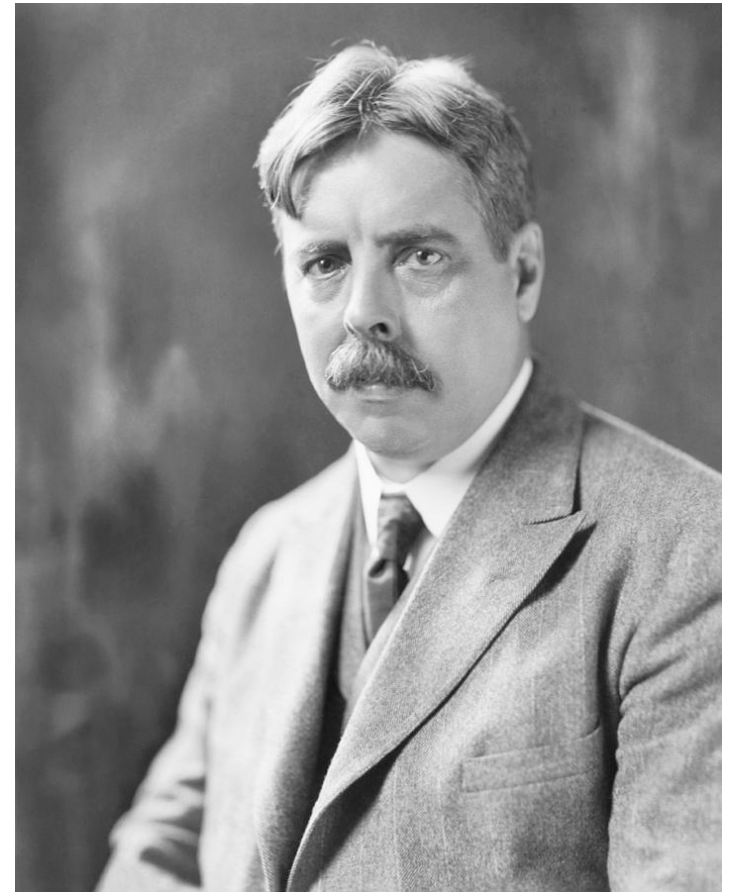
- hypnosis is nothing more than an extreme form of suggestibility  
→ used by sociologists to explain many social phenomena

# Edward Thorndike

Edward Thorndike (1874-1949)

- Studies with college students
- subjects shifted their opinion when confronted with an authority figure stating a contrary opinion without presenting any arguments to support their claim

→ do people submit uncritically and without any questioning to external manipulation?



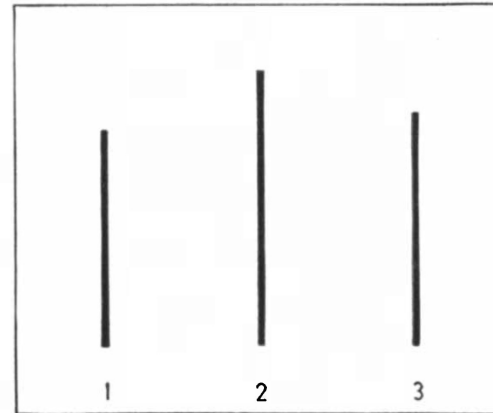
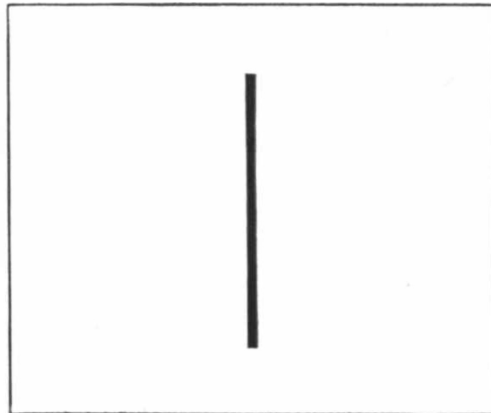
<http://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large/edward-thorndike-american-psychologist-humanities-and-social-sciences-librarynew-york-public-library.jpg>

# The Study

**\*\*\* *The Original Experiment* \*\*\***

# Setup of the Experiment

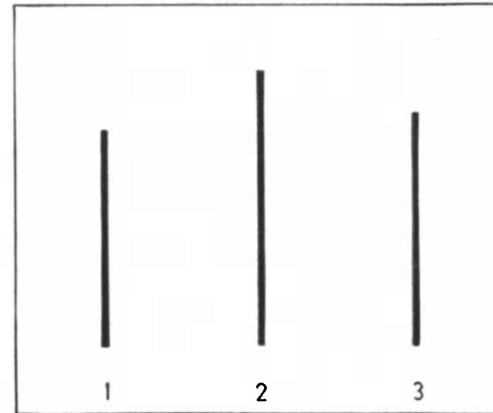
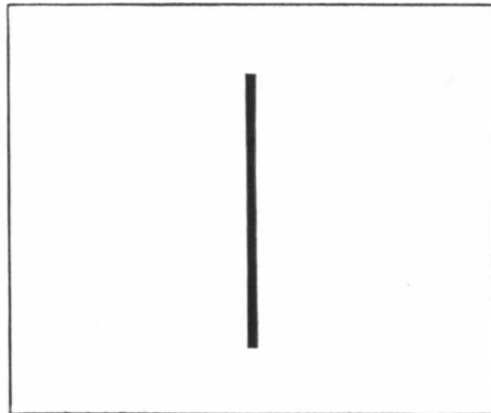
*“psychological experiment in visual judgement”*





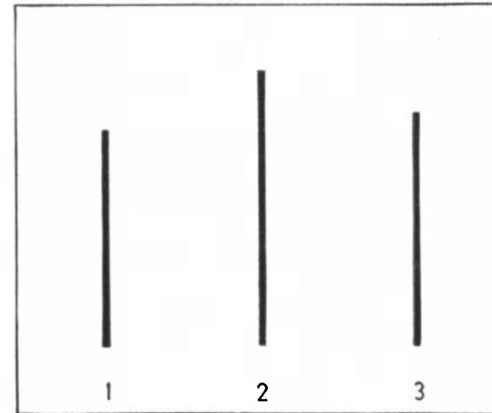
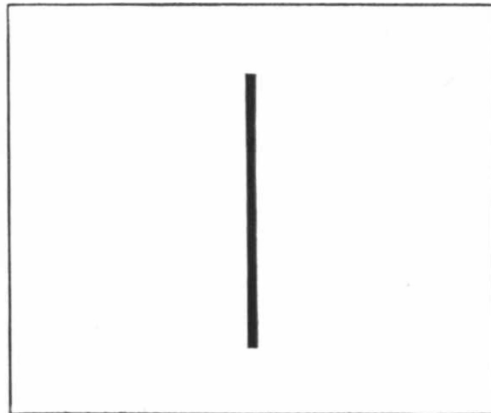
# Setup of the Experiment

~~“psychological experiment in visual judgement”~~



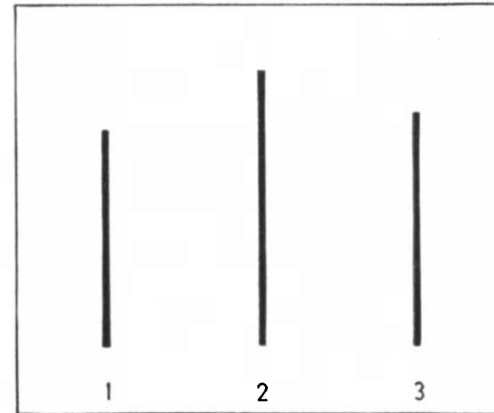
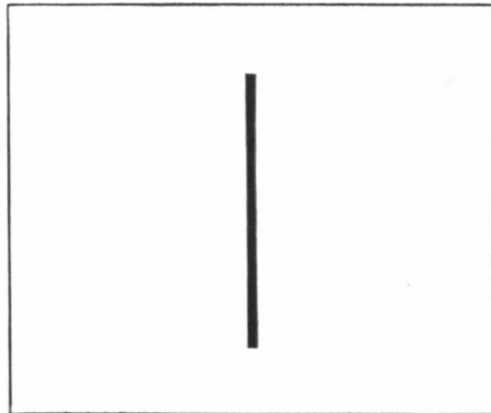
# Setup of the Experiment

~~“psychological experiment in visual judgement”~~



# Setup of the Experiment

- N = 123 real participants from three institutions of higher learning
- Task: matching the length of the single line to one of the three lines



# Setup of the Experiment

- 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and four other trials => confederates gave the correct answer
- In the 12 other trials => confederates gave a wrong answer

*What is the reaction of the real participant that finds himself in a minority with his opinion?*

# The Experiment



# The Experiment

PARTICIPANT

```
graph TD; A[PARTICIPANT] --> B["trusting their own senses  
=> act independently"]; A --> C["trusting the unanimous opinion of the majority  
=> go along with the opinion of the majority"];
```

trusting their own  
senses  
=> act independently

trusting the unanimous  
opinion of the majority  
=> go along with the opinion  
of the majority

# The Experiment

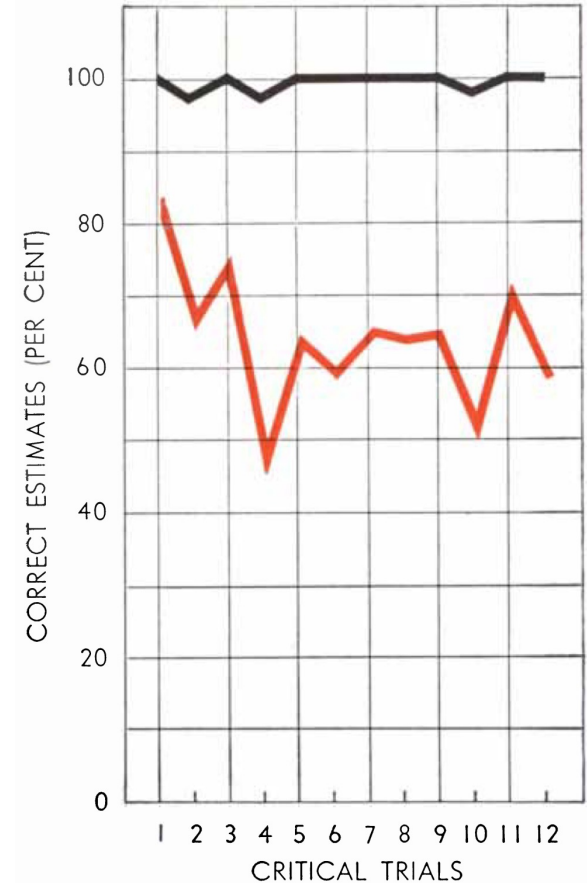
How do you think you would react as the participant in the experiment?

What are reasons to conform or answer independently?

# Results

Errors in line judging	< 1%
Participants went along with the majority	36.8%
Completely independent participants	~ 25%
Participants that conformed at least one time	76%

Performances of individuals are highly consistent!



**ERROR** of 123 subjects, each of whom compared lines in the presence of six to eight opponents, is plotted in the colored curve. The accuracy of judgments not under pressure is indicated in black.



# Results

## Yielding Participants

- Concluded that they are wrong
- Didn't want to ruin the results of the experiment
- Assumed that the majority were 'sheep' following the first responder
- Saw a deficiency in themselves, that they wanted to hide
- Underestimated the frequency in which they conformed

## Independent Participants

- Had confidence in their own judgement
- Had capacities to recover from doubt and to reestablish their equilibrium
- Felt the obligation to say what they saw

# Results

## Non-Verbal Behavior



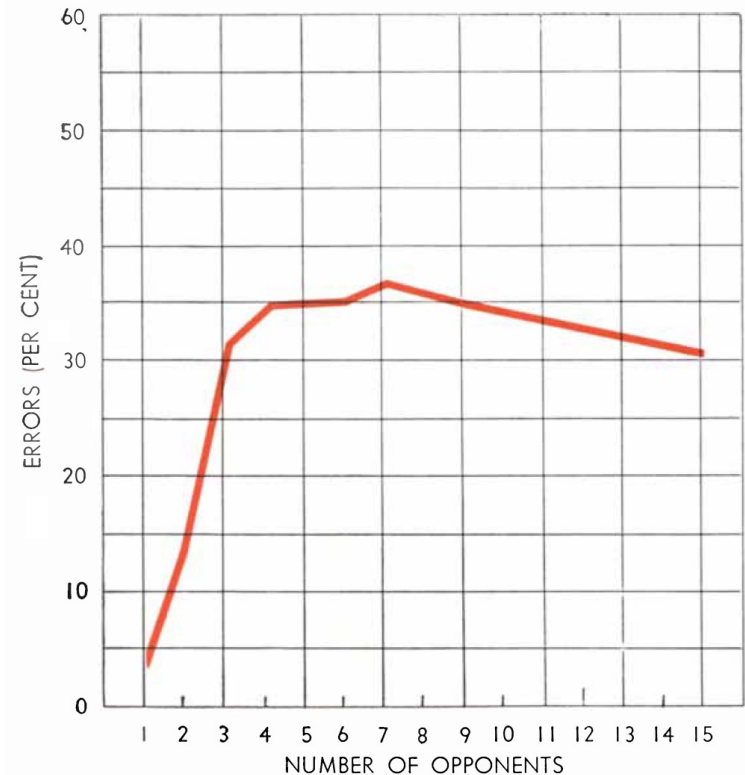
# Follow-up Studies

*\*\*\* by Asch \*\*\**

# Follow-up Studies

## Varying the size of the majority

⇒ *The size of the majority is only important up to a certain point!*



SIZE OF MAJORITY which opposed them had an effect on the subjects. With a single opponent the subject erred only 3.6 per cent of the time; with two opponents he erred 13.6 per cent; three, 31.8 per cent; four, 35.1 per cent; six, 35.2 per cent; seven, 37.1 per cent; nine, 35.1 per cent; 15, 31.2 per cent.

# Follow-up Studies

## Disturbing the majorities unanimity

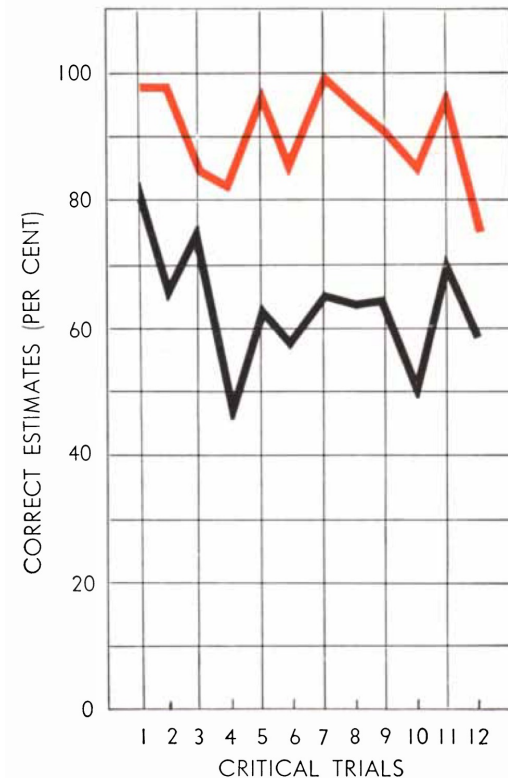
Support of a truthful partner, that answers correctly

- Participant conformed only 1/4 as often as alone

Support of a person that dissent with the majority and the participant

- Moderate dissenter: conformity decreased  $\sim 1/3$  and extremes of yielding disappeared
- Extremist dissenter: error of the participants: 9%

⇒ *Dissent per se increases independence!*



TWO SUBJECTS supporting each other against a majority made fewer errors (colored curve) than one subject did against a majority (black curve).

# Follow-up Studies

## Effects of losing or gaining a partner

Partner joins the majority after the 6<sup>th</sup> trial

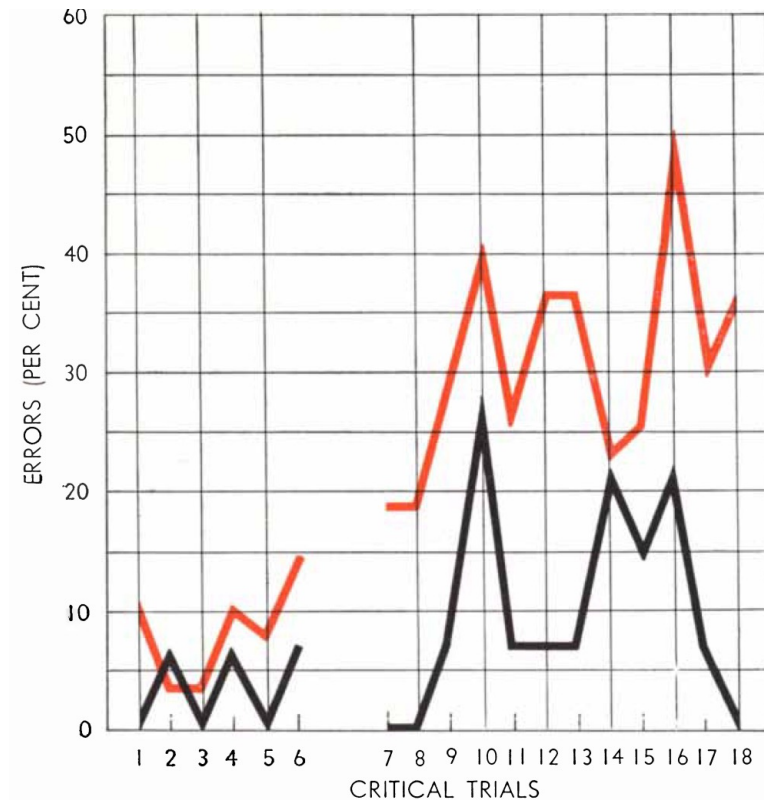
- No effect after the partner left

Partner leaves the room after the 6<sup>th</sup> trial

- Effect of the partner remains after he left

Majority gradually builds

- Tendency to conform rose abruptly once the participant was alone

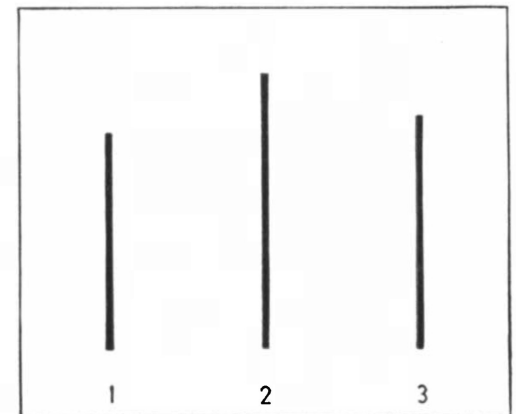
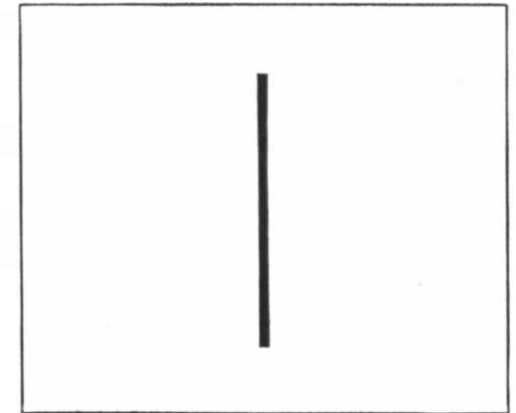


PARTNER LEFT SUBJECT after six trials in a single experiment. The colored curve shows the error of the subject when the partner "deserted" to the majority. Black curve shows error when partner merely left the room.

# Follow-up Studies

Increasing the difference in length

⇒ *Even with a difference in length of 7 inches (~18cm) some participants conformed!*



# Follow-up Studies

## Conformity in different ages

- Comparing the level of conformity of younger children (7-10 years) with older children (over 10 years)

⇒ *The younger children conformed more than the older children!*



# Follow-up Studies

*\*\*\* by Walker & Andrade \*\*\*  
(1996)*

# Follow-up Studies

## Conformity in different ages

3-5 years old	85% conformed
6-8 years old	42% conformed
9-11 years old	38% conformed
12-14 years old	9% conformed
15-17 years old	0% conformed

# Follow-up Studies

*\*\*\* by Deutsch & Gerard \*\*\*  
(1955)*

# Follow-up Studies

## Conformity in public vs in private

Participants were allowed to record their response privately

- Level of conformity went down, but didn't reduce to zero

⇒ *This study provides evidence for normative and also informational conformity!*

# Follow-up Studies

*\*\*\* by Bond & Smith \*\*\*  
(1996)*

# Follow-up Studies

Conformity in individualism promoting vs collectivist oriented countries

- Conformity is higher in collectivist oriented countries

Conformity of women vs men

- Women are more likely to conform than men

Conformity over the decades

- Conformity levels dropped significantly over the decades
- People are more prepared to use their minority voice now!

# Application

**\*\*\* *In Search of Conformity* \*\*\***

# Application

## Historic Examples

- Conformity on a large scale
- e.g. Nazi Germany
- ...



<https://www.gettyimages.de/detail/nachrichtenfoto/german-soldiers-in-warsaw-1939-after-the-invasion-of-nachrichtenfoto/1265645769?adppopup=true>



# Application

## Everyday Life

- Conformity on a small scale
- Examples:
  - in class
  - eating disorders
  - ...



<https://www.gettyimages.de/detail/foto/back-view-of-elementary-students-raising-their-arms-lizenzfreies-bild/1000887536>

# Impact

*\*\*\* The other half of Asch's findings \*\*\**

# Impact

- iconic study
- led to many follow-up studies

The screenshot shows a Google Scholar search interface. At the top, the Google Scholar logo is on the left, and a search bar contains the word "conformity" with a magnifying glass icon on the right. Below the search bar, it says "Articles" and "About 101.000 results (0,03 sec)". On the left side, there is a filter menu with options: "Any time", "Since 2023", "Since 2022", "Since 2019", and "Custom range...". The "Custom range..." option is selected, and a date range selector is shown with "2020" and "2023" in input boxes, separated by a minus sign. A "Search" button is below the date range. The main content area displays two search results. The first result is titled "[HTML] Conformity in scientific networks" by JO Weatherall and C O'Connor, published in Synthese in 2021. The snippet reads: "... But as our case studies indicate, **conformity** is ... which **conformity** improves epistemic outcomes is not supported by the results we describe here. To the contrary, on the whole, **conformity** ...". Below the snippet are links for "Save", "Cite", "Cited by 32", "Related articles", and "All 20 versions". The second result is titled "What does it mean to be susceptible to influence? A brief primer on peer conformity and developmental changes that affect it" by B Laursen and S Faur, published in the International journal of behavioral ... in 2022. The snippet reads: "... We argue that **conformity** has two distinct sources. In some instances, **conformity** is a product".

# Impact

## *New developments*

### **Image 3:**

**Instructions:** Identify the number of Zebras in the image.



On the next page you will be given more information regarding the image, and will submit your answer.



Liel, Y., & Zalmanson, L. (2020). What If an AI Told You That  $2 + 2$  Is 5? Conformity to Algorithmic Recommendations. *ICIS 2020 Proceedings*, 17.

### **Algorithmic Aid:**

An image recognition algorithm analyzed the image.

The algorithm estimated: 4.



Choose the label that corresponds with the number of Zebras in the image.

Select an option:

1

2

3

4

5

# Impact

## *Asch's findings*

- normative influence
  - “spoil the study results” (Asch, 1955, p. 33)
  - some thought that the first confederate was visually impaired
  - optical illusion
  - the majority is actually correct (conversion)
- ➔ Conforming maintains harmony in a group

# Impact

## *Alternative Route*

- Resistance against conformity is often overlooked
- in Asch's (1955) experiment around 25% never agreed
- and only 11% conformed on every trial
- dissent is just as important
- we sympathize with people that don't follow the majority
- conformity focuses on uniformity
- dissent = difference
- Jetten and Hornsey (2013)

# Impact

## *Alternative Route*

*“[Current thinking] has taken slavish submission to group forces as the general fact and has neglected or implicitly denied the capacity for men for independence, for rising under certain conditions above group passion and prejudice.”*

(Asch, 1952, p. 451)

# Conclusion

*\*\*\* And now? \*\*\**



# Conclusion

*Conformity is great!*

- it's everywhere
- helps us in understanding and explaining

*Limitations*

- task dependency (Baron et al., 1996)
  - difficulty vs. importance
- in the field conformity is very complex

Thank you for your attention!



Any Questions?



*The End*