

Conformity Quotes

That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of our time.

~ John Stuart Mill

“The conventional view serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking.”

~ J.K. Galbraith

“Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.” ~ Mark Twain

Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience

Conformity: Adapting **to social norms** from exposure to information or the **social pressure** of others

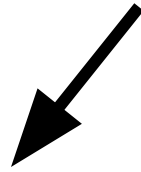
Compliance: Responding "yes" to a direct **request**

Obedience: Following a direct **order** from another person

Normalization

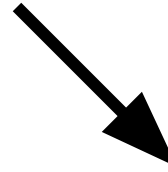
- Diversity of Opinion (Individual Differences)
- Influence of Others (Establishment of Norms)
- Influence of Deviant Opinion(s) --- Innovation

* Types of Social Influence



INFORMATIVE

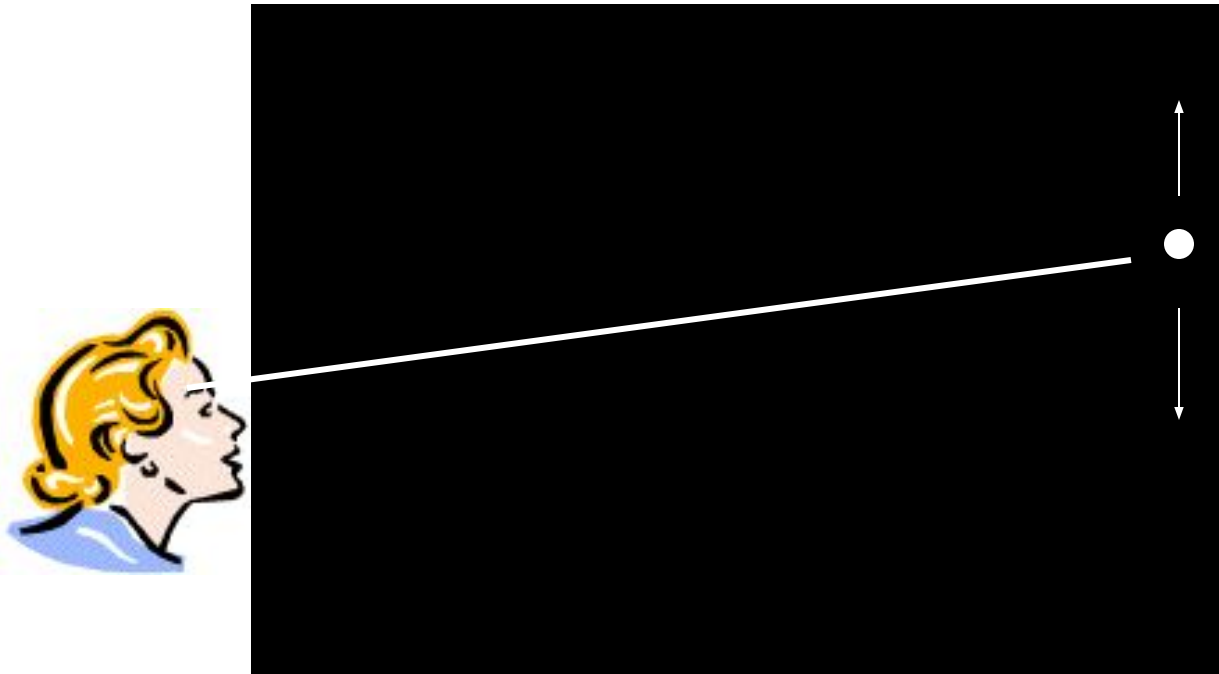
(Ambiguous stimuli or task.
Other's input is a source of
potentially valuable information.
Internalization is possible e.g.,
Sherif's Research)



NORMATIVE

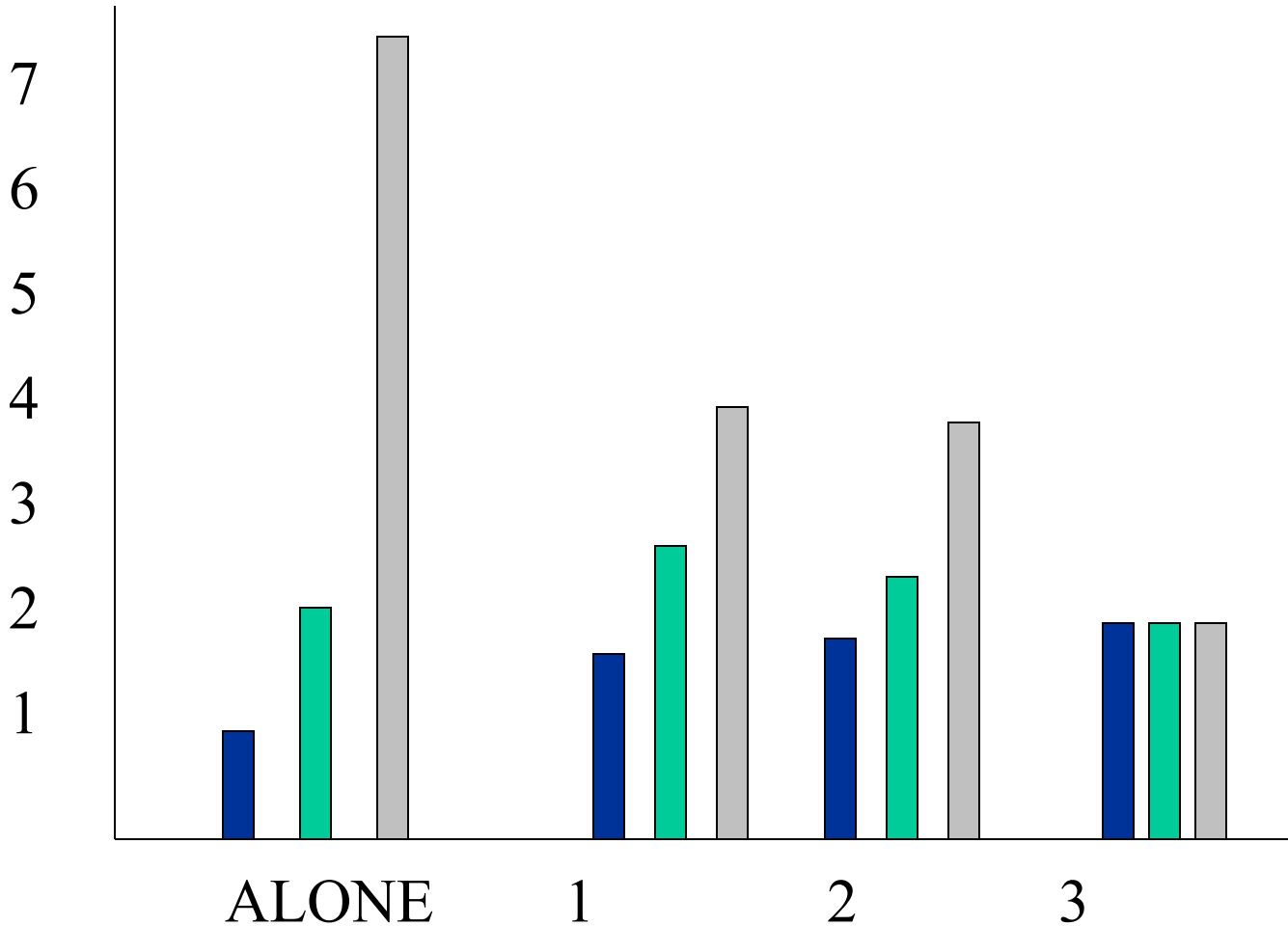
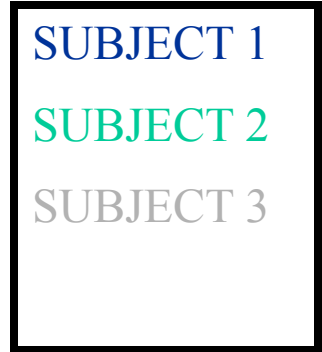
(Clear, straightforward task, correct answer
is apparent. Conform to majority to fit in or
not stand out, influenced by peer pressure.
Public acceptance, not internalization of
beliefs e.g., Asch's Research)

Autokinetic Effect: A perceptual phenomenon where a rather small and stationary dot of light in a dark environment (or one that lacks distinctive feature) appears to move. It is believed to happen because the perception of movement is made relative to a point of reference. In the dark, no point of reference is present. Consequently, the motion of a small point of light is not definable.

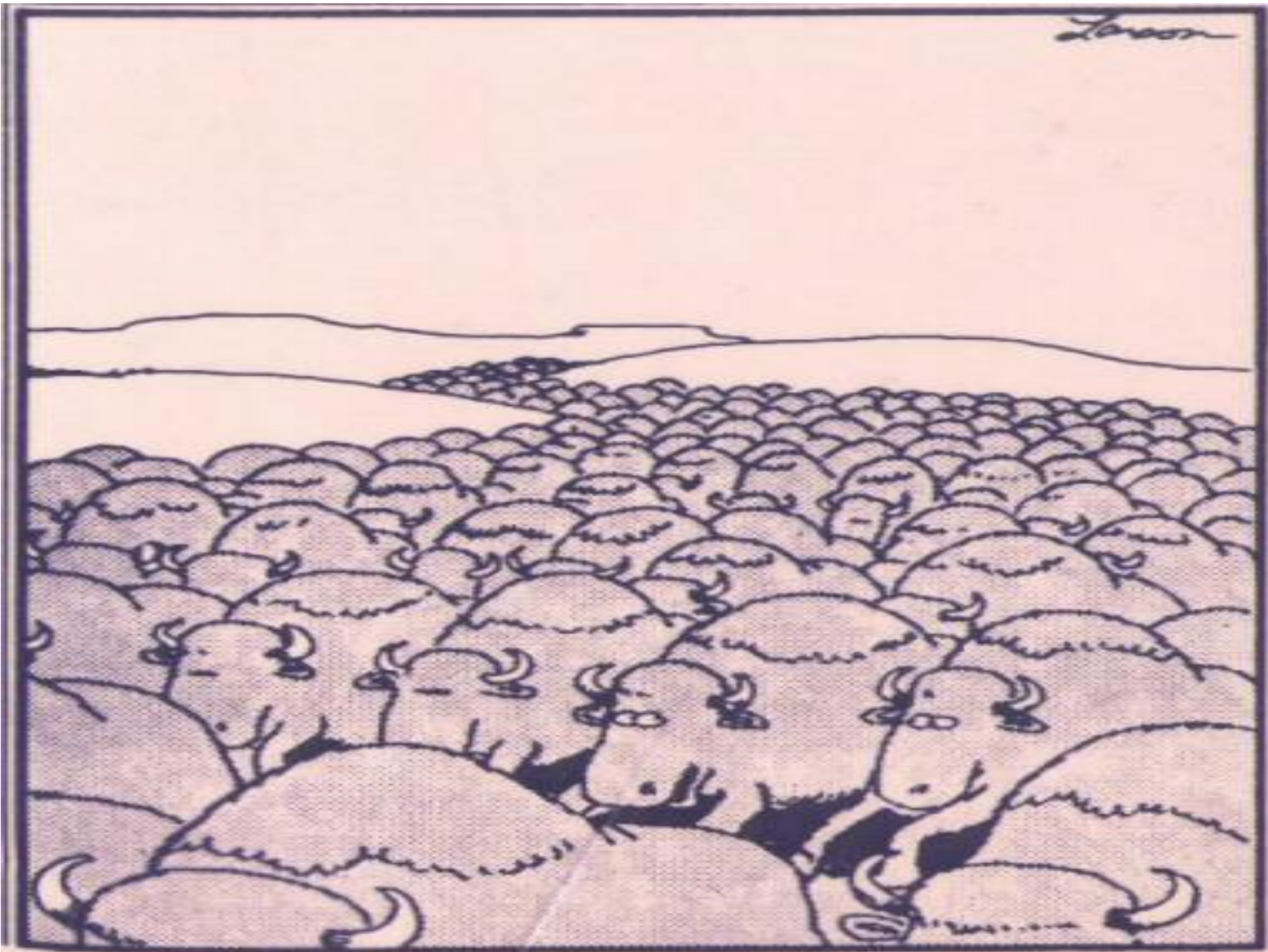


* Sherif's Conformity Studies Using the Autokinetic Effect

Movement in inches

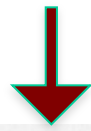


Larson






















"As if we all knew where we're going."

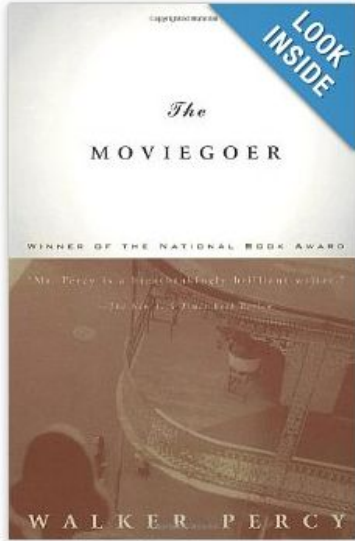
Effect of Numbers



Songs

	Name	Artist	Album	Time	Popularity	Price
1	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	Bob Dylan	Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits, Vol. 2	6:48	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
	 A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall	Bob Dylan	The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan	6:52	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
3	 A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall	Jason Mraz	Listen to Bob Dylan: A Tribute	8:12	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
4	 A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall (Live)	Bob Dylan	The Concert for Bangladesh	5:44	██████████	\$1.29 ▾
5	 A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall (2010 Mono Version)	Bob Dylan	The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan (2010 Mono Version)	6:50	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
6	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	Bob Dylan	The Bootleg Series, Vol. 9: The Witmark Demos: 1962-1964	6:48	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
7	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	Ann Wilson, Rufus Wainwright & Shawn Colvin	Hope & Glory	6:14	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
8	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	The Kennedys	Songs of the Open Road	5:23	██████████	\$0.99 ▾
9	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (Live)	Bob Dylan	The Bootleg Series, Vol. 5: Live 1975 - The Rolling Thunder Revue	5:16	███	\$0.99 ▾
10	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (Live)	Bob Dylan	The Bootleg Series, Vol. 6: Live 1964 - Concert At Philharmonic Hall	7:44	███	\$0.99 ▾
11	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (Live)	Bob Dylan	The Bootleg Series, Vol. 7: No Direction Home: The Soundtrack (A Martin Scorsese...	7:46	███	\$0.99 ▾
12	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	Bob Dylan	Dylan	6:49	███	\$0.99 ▾
13	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall	Bob Dylan	The Complete Album Collection: The 60's	6:50	███	\$0.99 ▾
14	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (Live)	Pete Seeger	We Shall Overcome - The Complete Carnegie Hall Concert (Live)	6:07	███	\$0.99 ▾
15	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (Live)	Bob Weir & RatDog	Live In San Diego 09/04/09	8:45	███	\$0.99 ▾
16	 A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall (feat. Lucinda Williams) [Bonus Track]	Tom Russell	Mesabi	8:52	███	\$0.99 ▾
17	 A Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall	Bob Dylan	Rhythms del Mundo Revival	6:57	███	\$0.99 ▾
18	 A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall	Bill Frisell	East/West	11:47	██████████	Album Only ▾

Effect of Authority and/or Experts (Higher status leads to more conformity)



Winner of the 1961 National Book Award



Best Costume Design: Mark Bridges, "The Artist"
Best Original Score: Ludovic Bource, "The Artist"
Best Director: Michel Hazanavicius, "The Artist"
Best Actor: Jean Dujardin, "The Artist"
Best Picture: "The Artist"

Some Incorrect Predictions

- **“When the Paris Exhibition closes, electric light will close with it and no more be heard of.”**
--- **Erasmus Wilson, professor at Oxford University, 1878.**
- “Well-informed people know it is impossible to transmit the voice over wires and that were it possible to do so, the thing would be of no practical value.” --- Editorial in the Boston Post, 1865.
- **"Television won't be able to hold onto any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."** --- **Darryl F. Zanuck, 1946.**
- “Heavier than air flying machines are impossible.”
--- Lord Kelvin, British mathematician and physicist, circa 1895.
- **“I think there is a world market for maybe five computers.”** -- **Thomas Watson, Chairman, IBM,**
- **"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." – Ken Olson, president, chairman of Digital Equipment Corporation, maker of business mainframe computers, arguing against the PC in 1977.**
- "The horse is here to stay, but the automobile is only a novelty."
--- President of Michigan Savings Bank, 1903, advising Henry Ford's lawyer not to invest in the Ford Motor Co..
- **"With over fifteen types of foreign cars already on sale here, the Japanese auto industry isn't likely to carve out a big share of the market for itself."** -- ***Business Week*, August 2, 1968**
- "The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value. Who would pay for a message sent to no one in particular?" – Associates of David Sarnoff on his request for investment in radio (1921)

Some Incorrect Predictions (cont.)

- "There is not the slightest indication that nuclear energy will ever be obtainable. It would mean that the atom would have to be shattered at will." – Albert Einstein, 1932.
- "There is practically no chance communications space satellites will be used to provide better telephone, telegraph, television, or radio service inside the United States." – T. Craven, FCC Commissioner (USA, 1961).
The first commercial communications satellite went into service in 1965.
- **"The phonograph has no commercial value at all."** – **Thomas Edison, 1880s.**
- "The abolishment of pain in surgery is a chimera. It is absurd to go on seeking it...knife and pain are two words in surgery that must forever be associated in the consciousness of the patient." --- Dr. Alfred Velpeau, French surgeon, 1839.
- "The invention of aircraft will make war impossible in the future." – George Gissing, 1903
- "Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy." --- Associates of Edwin L. Drake refusing his suggestion to drill for oil in 1859.
- "It will be gone by June." – *Variety*, passing judgment on Rock 'n Roll in 1955
- "By the year 1982 the graduated income tax will have practically abolished major differences in wealth."
--- Irwin Edman, Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1932.

Some Incorrect Predictions (cont.)

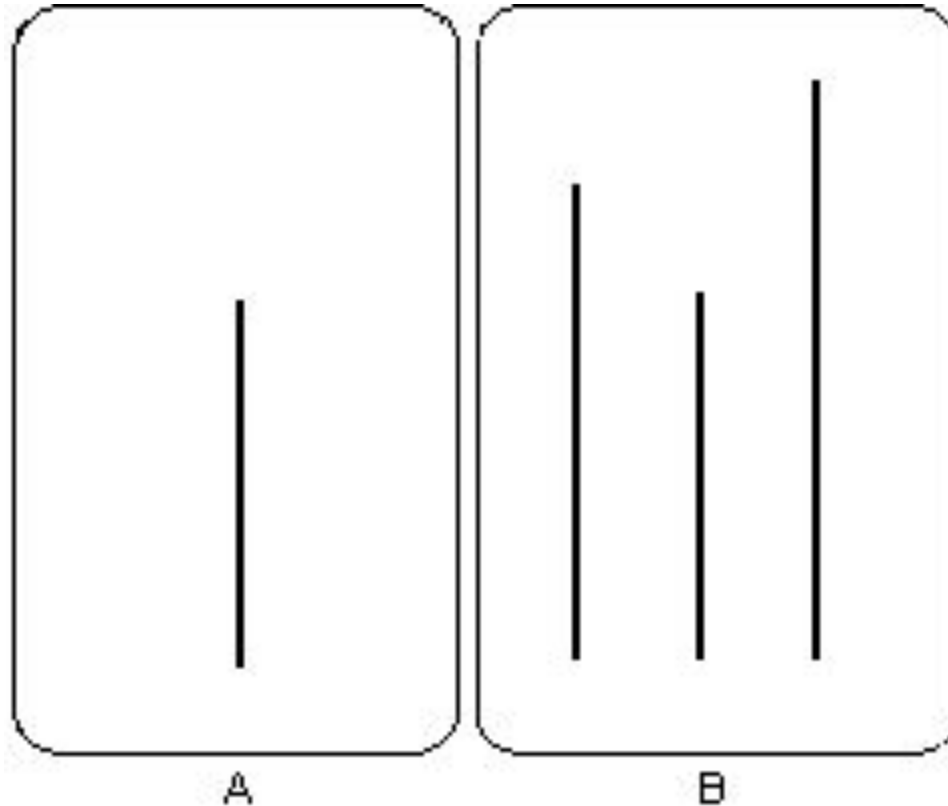
- **"The concept is interesting and well-formed, but in order to earn better than a 'C', the idea must be feasible." --- Yale University management professor in responding to a college paper by Fred Smith proposing a reliable overnight delivery service, in 1966. Smith would later go on to found Federal Express.**

- "Fooling around with alternating current is just a waste of time. Nobody will use it, ever." – Thomas Edison, 1889 (Edison often ridiculed the arguments of competitor George Westinghouse for AC power)

- "Who the hell wants to hear actors talk?" – H. M. Warner, co-founder of Warner Brothers, 1927.
- "We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." – Decca Records, rejecting The Beatles, 1962
- "The singer (Mick Jagger) will have to go; the BBC won't like him." – First Rolling Stones manager Eric Easton to his partner after watching them perform
- "The case is a loser." – Johnnie Cochran, on soon-to-be client O.J.'s chances of winning, 1994



* Example of Stimuli Used in Asch's Study



Groups of 7 to 9 college students. A total of 18 trials used (12 out of 18, wrong answer given by group). On average, participants conformed to majority on **approximately 1/3** of the trials.

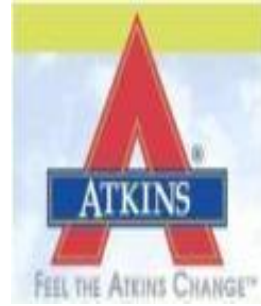
About 25% remained independent

“That we have found the tendency to conform in our society so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call white black is a matter of concern. It raises questions about our ways of education and about the values that guide our conduct.”

--- Asch, 1955, p. 34

“Confidence comes not from always being right, but from not fearing to be wrong.” -- Peter McIntyre

~ Fads ~



~ Conformity In Action ~

Fashion



Architecture



Conformity and Choice of Names

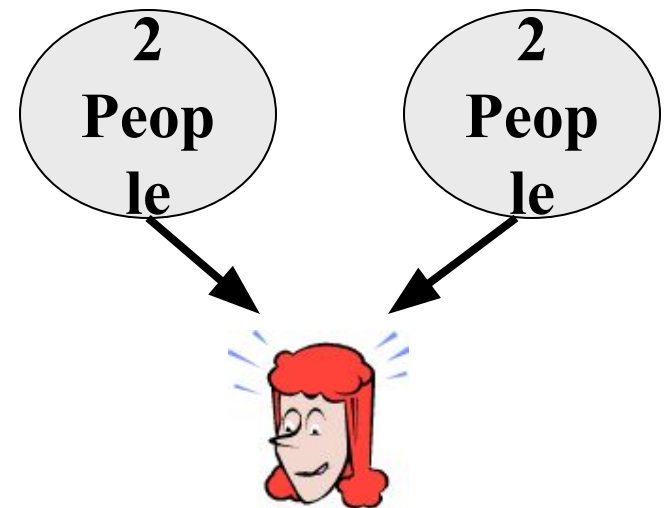
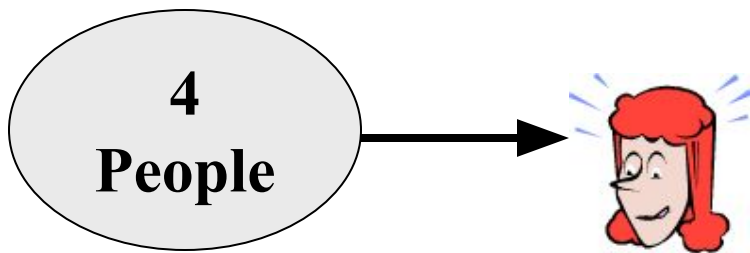
Popularity in 1994

Rank	Male name	Female name
1	Michael	Jessica
2	Christopher	Ashley
3	Matthew	Emily
4	Joshua	Samantha
5	Tyler	Sarah
6	Brandon	Taylor
7	Jacob	Brittany
8	Daniel	Amanda
9	Nicholas	Elizabeth
10	Andrew	Megan

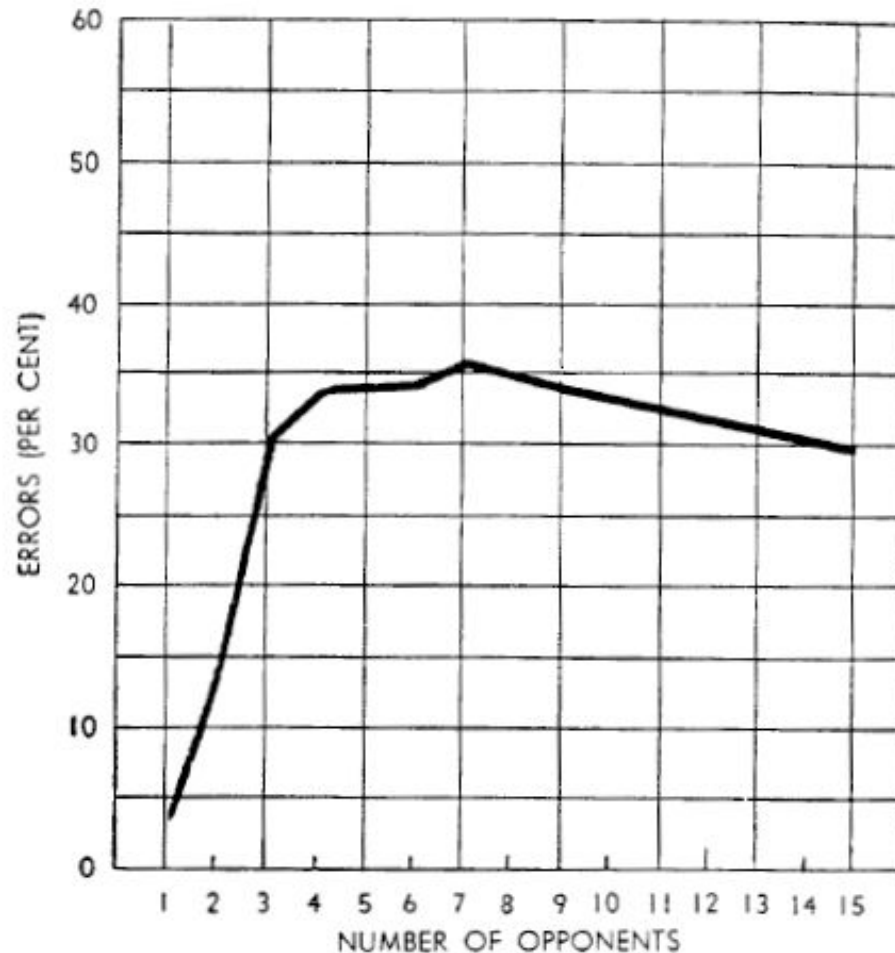
Source: <http://www.ssa.gov/cgi-bin/popularnames.cgi>

* ~ Some Factors Affecting Conformity ~

- Personality (e.g., Self-esteem, Authoritarian)
- Gender (Role of the type of task)
- One 4-Person Group vs. Two 2-Person Groups



* What is effect of the **size of the majority** on conformity rates?



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.

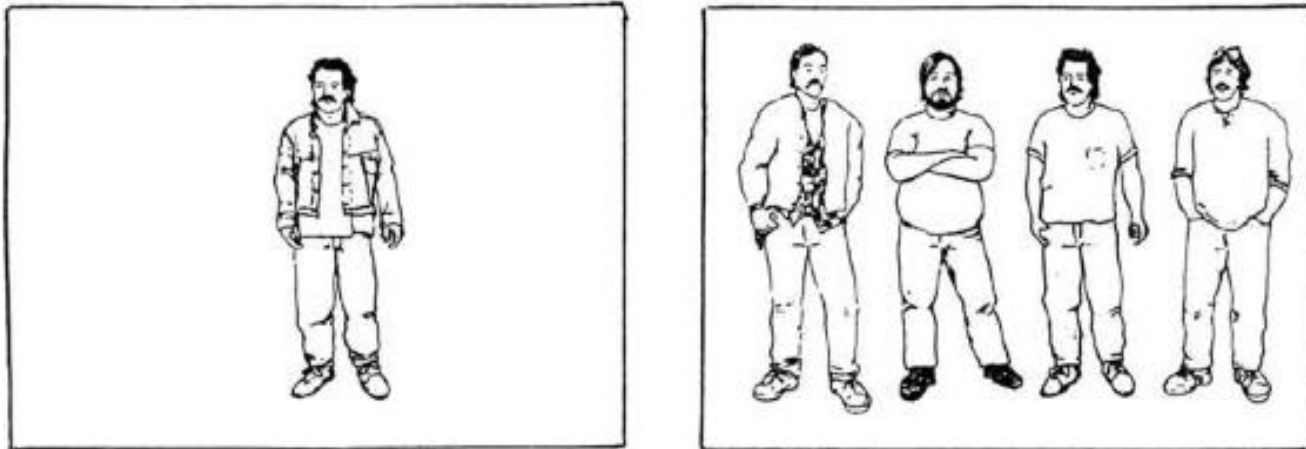
When number of majority reaches 4, not much more increase in conformity

* Commitment To One's Own Opinion

Variation by Asch: Stating one's opinion verbally versus writing down answer on piece of paper (anonymously)

Compliance with paper answer = about 1.5% of the trials

* Decision Importance (Eyewitness Testimony Example)



- Difficult (.5 seconds per slide) versus easy task (5 seconds per slide and slides shown twice – 97% correct when done alone)
- Task importance: Low (didn't matter) or high (very important to identify correct person)

Low Importance: 33% conformity
High Importance: 16% conformity

- * • **Group Attractiveness** (Greater attractiveness, more conformity)
- **Knowledge** (more knowledge, less conformity on average)
- **Group Cohesiveness** (Greater cohesiveness, more conformity)
- **Social Support** (below)



Group member supports your choice (an ally/partner)

Only about 5.5% conformity with support of another

Most common Supreme Court decision? 9-0

Least common? 8-1

What happens when the person supporting your position:

- has to leave the group temporarily (e.g., go to a meeting) = less severe initial increase in conformity; partner's support outlasts his presence
- changes their mind and begins to agree with the group again (a "deserter") = immediate increase of conformity – about as frequent as when faced with a unanimous majority

* Other Conformity Issues

A) Public compliance (Asch) versus private internalization (Sherif)

A) Conformity, anti-conformity, & independence

Group: **Y N Y Y N**

Anti-Conformity: N Y N N Y

Independent: N N Y N Y

“Everything popular is wrong”

-- Oscar Wilde

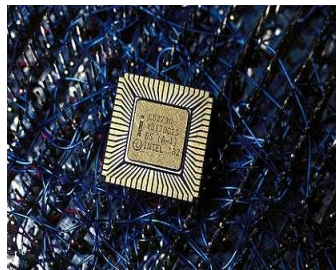
C) Influence of a deviate (key is **consistency** of opinion & **avoidance** of being viewed as **rigid**)

“Stubbornness does have its helpful features. You always know what you are going to be thinking tomorrow.”
--- Glen Beaman

“You have enemies? Good. That means you've stood up for something, sometime in your life.” ~ Winston Churchill

“Our wretched species is so made that those who walk on the well-trodden path always throw stones at those who are showing a new road.” ~Voltaire

Some Innovation, Innovators

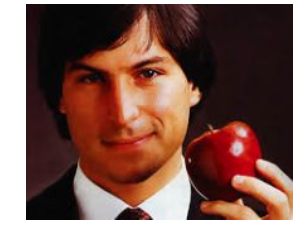
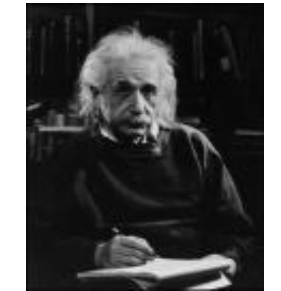


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* IF (X) 1,2,3 branches
* opening near label 1 also x = 0.
* opening near label 2 also x = 0
* opening near label 3 also x = 0

  IF (IS)10,10,20
20 IF (I2-I20)12,21,12
21 IF (I3-I30)12,22,12
22 IF (I4-I40)12,23,12
23 CALL PUBLIC(AM,MM20,INC)
   GO TO 73
19 IF (I22)13,50,13
13 IF (I22-MT)12,12,50
18 IF (IY2)11,50,11
11 IF (IY2-MT)12,12,50
12 IF (IIND(IK2,IY2,1))   GO TO 73
   IF (CV-AM(IK2,IY2))206,206,5
206 IF (IDX**2+IDY**2-1)213,6,213
213 DCP=(AM(IK, IY)+AM(IK2, IY)+
+ AM(IK, IY2)+AM(IK2, IY2))/4.0
   IF (DCP-CV)5,217,217
217 IF (INX(I5-1))214,215,214
214 IX=IX+IDX
C .....

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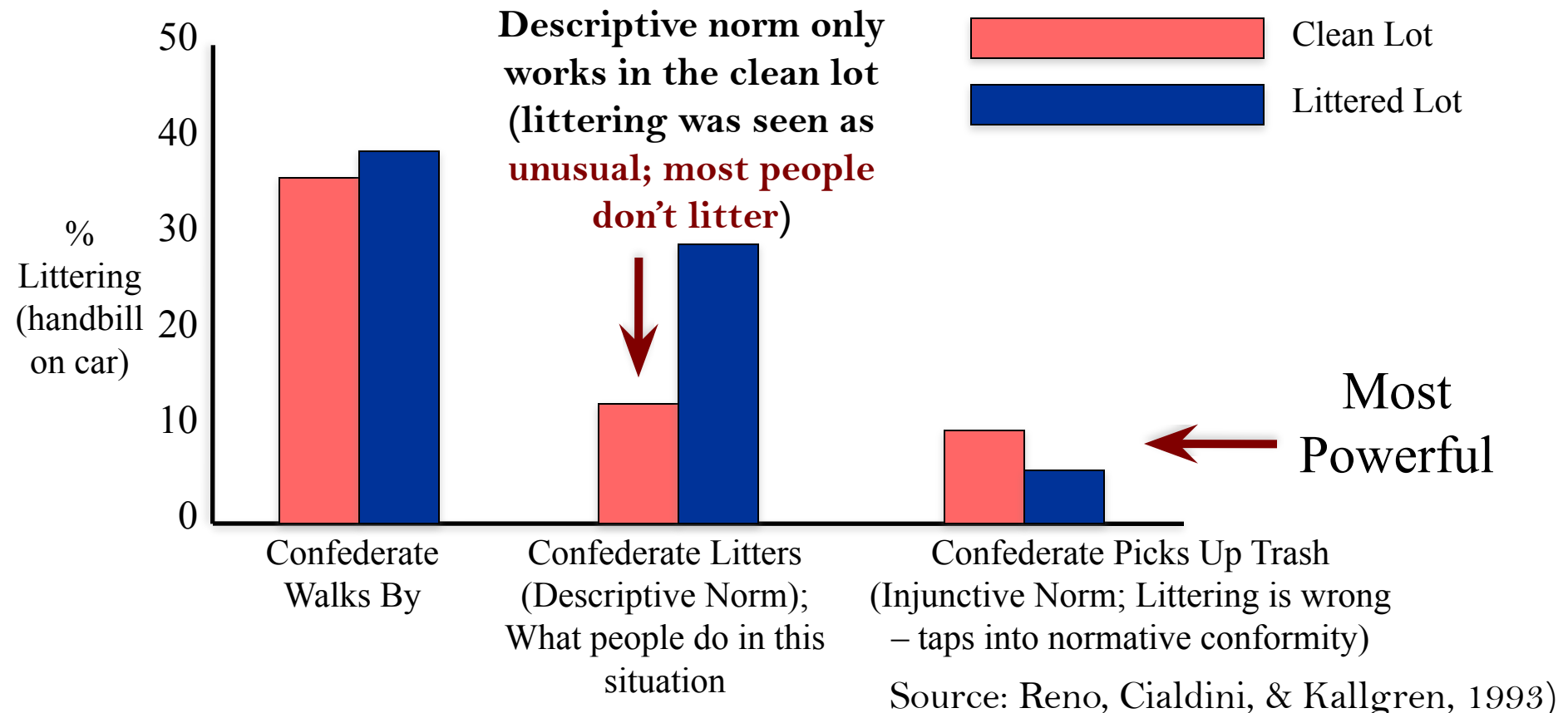
“Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary.”

~Albert Einstein

* Types of Normative Information

Injunctive Norms: Indication of what is culturally **approved** or **disapproved**

Descriptive Norms: Information regarding what people do



* ~ The Boomerang Effect ~

Type of Norms Used (Random Assignment)

		Descriptive Norm (e.g., actual energy use; average energy use in their neighborhood)	Descriptive Norm (neighborhood actual energy use) & Injunctive Norm (smiley or sad face)
Current Actual Household Energy Use	Below Average	Boomerang Effect (increased energy usage) ↑	Same usage (kept using less energy) 😊
	Above Average	Used less energy ↓	Decreased energy use ↓ 😞

* Campus drinking rate example

Culture and Conformity

Study	Subjects	% errors
<i>'Individualistic' Countries</i>		
The original Ash studies (1951, 1956)	Students	37
Eight later US studies averaged)	Students	25
Four British studies (averaged)	Students	17
Vlaander and van Rooijen (1985)	Dutch students	24
Perrin and Spencer (1981)	British probation clients	22
Perrin and Spencer (1981)	British unemployed blacks	39
Hatcher (1982)	Belgian students	24
Doms (1983)	Belgian students	14
<i>'Collectivist' countries</i>		
Whittaker and Meade (1967)	Brazilian students	34
Whittaker and Meade (1967)	Hong Kong students	32
Whittaker and Meade (1967)	Lebanese students	31
Whittaker and Meade (1967)	Zimbabwean Bantu students	51
Claeys (1967)	Zairean students	36
Frager (1970)	Japanese students	25
Chandra (1973)	Fijian teachers	36
Chandra (1973)	Indian teachers in Fiji	58
Rodrigues (1982)	Brazilians	35
Amir (1984)	Kuwaiti students	29
Williams and Sogon (1984)	Japanese sports club members	51
Williams and Sogon (1984)	Japanese students not known to each other	27

Note: American studies which were averaged: Deutch and Gerard (1955); Whittaker *et al.* (1957); Levy (1960); Gerard *et al.* (1968); Larsen (1974); Larsen *et al.* (1979); Lamb and Alsifaki (1980); Nicholson *et al.* (1985). British studies: Seaborn (1962); Perrin and Spencer (1981); Nicholson *et al.* (1985); Abrams *et al.* (1980).

On average, people from collectivist cultures conform more often