

Chapter 7: Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience

I. Norms

A. Social Norms

- Rules for accepted and/or expected behavior
- They are generally Unstated
- Often we only see them when they are violated.
- [Examples](#)



B. Functions of Norms

1. Descriptive Function

- what most people do in a situation.

2. Injunctive Function

- what ought to be done
- (acceptable vs. unacceptable beh.)
 - E.g., Taboo Words:

3. Lubricating Social Interaction

- Simplify situations- we know what to expect
- Using the wrong norms in a situation = Problems
 - Creates arousal - humor vs. anger



C. Norm Violations

Why don't people always behave in a normative way?

- Normative Focus Theory (Cialdini et al., 1990)
 - Only salient norms (come to mind easily) will guide behavior.
 - Salience – recent use or the situation reminds us.

Killgren, Reno, & Cialdini (2000)

Manipulated Salience of Littering Norms

- used 4 anti-littering posters
- Differed in how directly they were related to littering
 - Closely: graffiti / water pollution
 - Moderately: plastic containers / noise pollution
 - Far: civic responsibility – e.g. voting
 - Unrelated: animal control (spay, neuter)

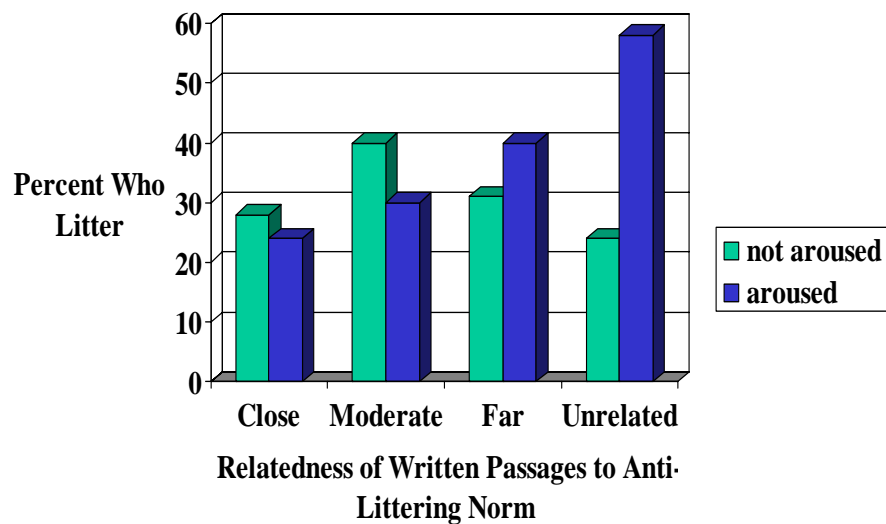
Manipulated Arousal

- High Arousal - 3 minutes of exercise.
- Low Arousal – 3 minutes of rest

Killgren, Reno, & Cialdini (2000)

- Measured heart rate; put sticky goo on the palms.
- Gave P's paper towel to wipe it off
- DV: throw away or litter when leave
- P's in low arousal condition littered less (regardless of message type)
- P's in high arousal littered less when message directly addressed littering.
- Arousal made norm less salient – need extra reminder.

Killgren, Reno, & Cialdini (2000)



D. Social Roles

- Norms associated with ones status in a specific situation
- The Stanford Prison Study demonstrated the impact that role expectations can have on behavior.
 - Guards behave brutally and prisoner behave incorrigibly because of the roles they have to play.
 - Not because of any specific personality “deficits”.

II. Conformity

- changing ones behavior to fit the current social norms (and/or perceived group pressure)
- anti-conformity = change behavior to go against social norms

A. Functions of Conformity

- In U.S./Individualist Cultures, conformity is viewed negatively and positively.
 - Live free or die (anti conformist)
 - America; Love it or Leave it (ultra conformist)
- Conformity provides order and predictability in interactions
- Too much conformity can be damaging as well (e.g., Nazi Germany, Jim Jones, Hail-Bop Cult)

B. Muzafer Sherif & the Autokinetic Effect

- 1) - Studied how norms form and are maintained.
 - P's view small light 50 ft away in a completely dark room.
 - Autokinesis occurs = Light seems to move, because of the constant movement of the eye and the lack of visual cues.

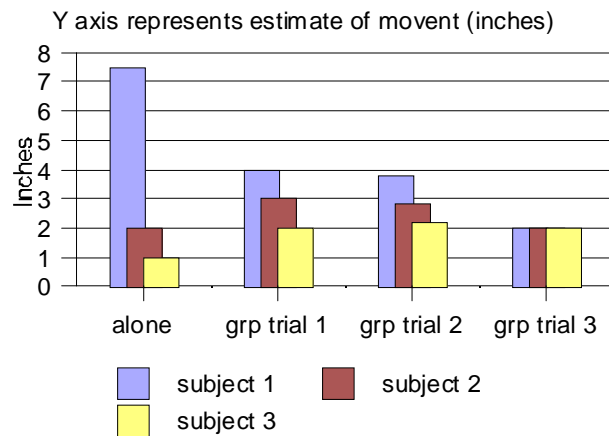
B. Sherif Cont.

2) P's view light alone and estimate how far the light moves.

3) P's view light in groups and publicly state their estimates once every 2 minutes.

- P's start out with very different estimates
- Over time they reach consensus. All report similar estimates.

Sherif Autokinetic Study

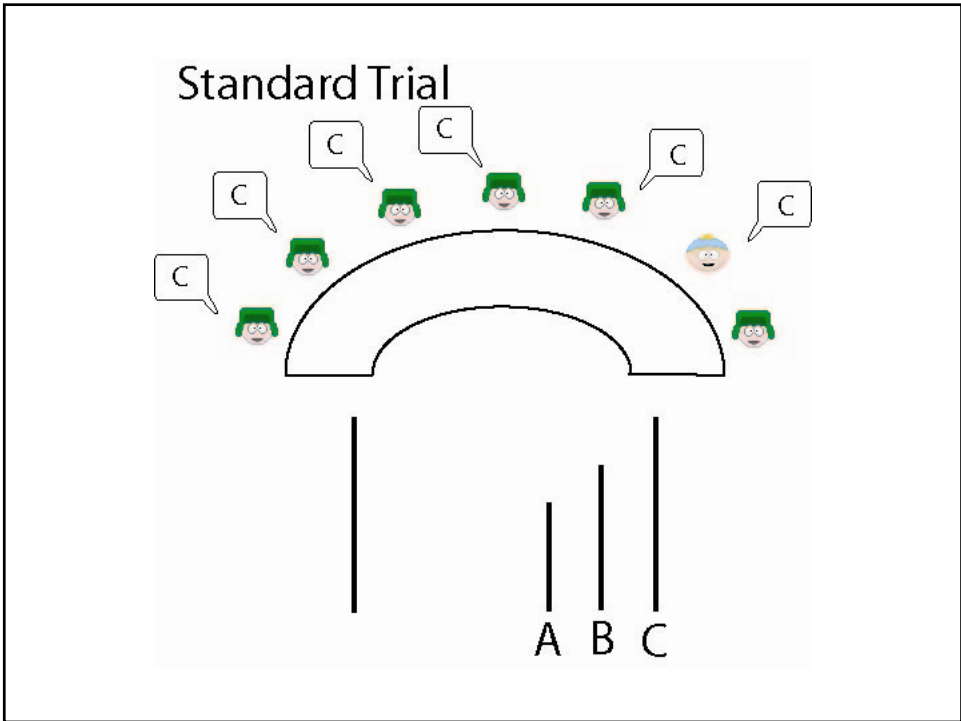
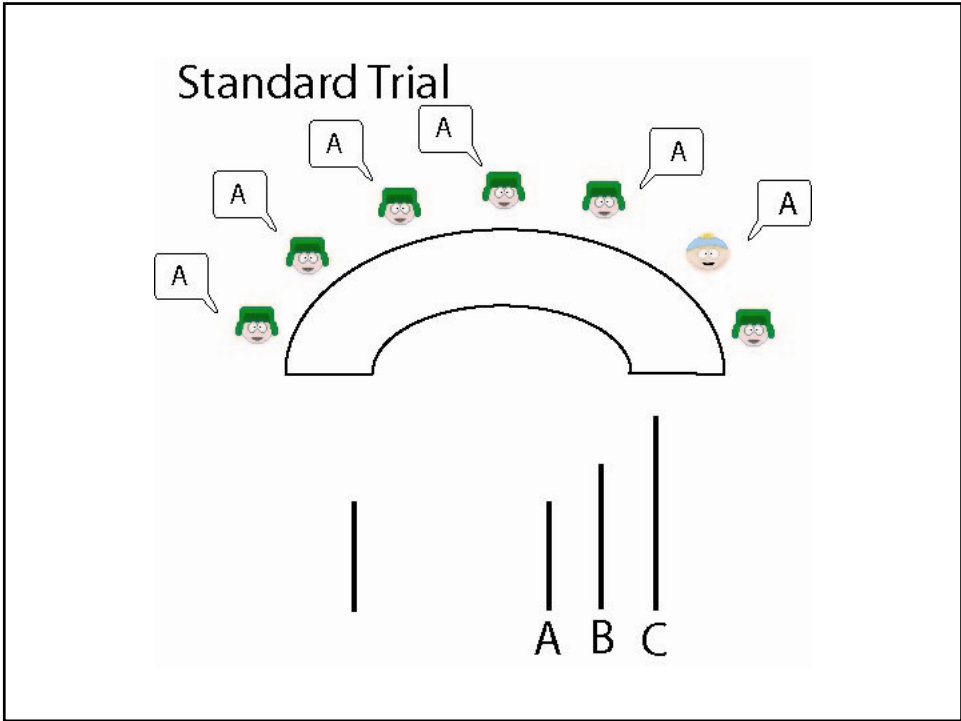


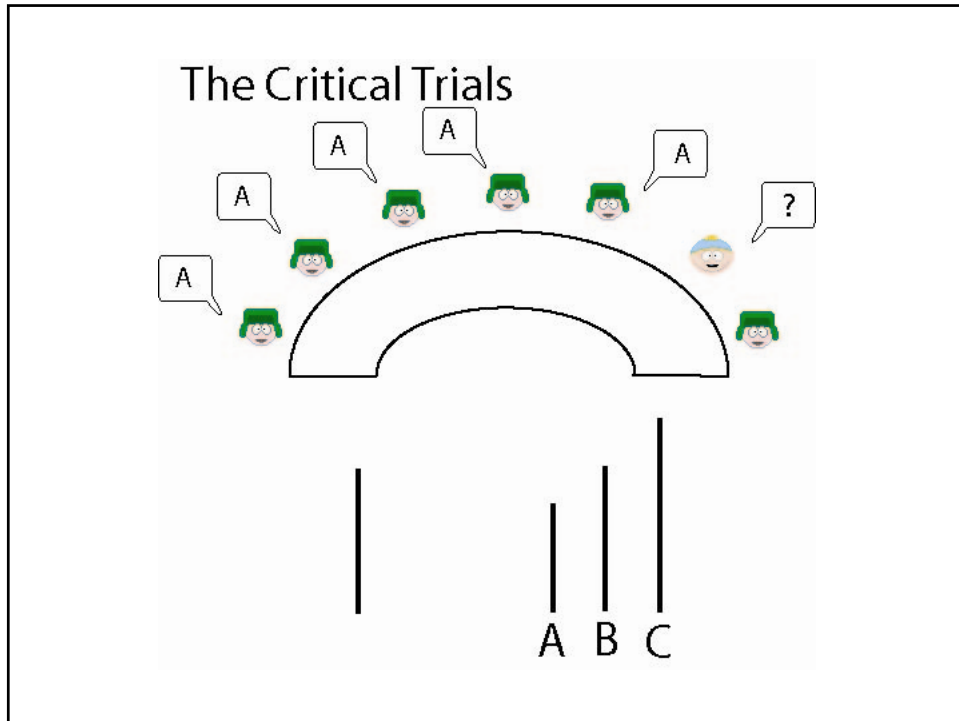
B. Sherif Cont.

- 4) If add a confederate who holds firm, all estimates move toward confederate's estimate.
- 5) If add new P's they gravitate toward group norm.
- 6) Jacobs & Campbell (1961)– A group norm (established by a confederate) will persist for five generations.
 - This demonstrates effects of history and cohort on group norms

C. Solomon Asch & The Line Judgement Studies

- 1) Investigated conformity to a group that is clearly wrong.
- 2) Participants have to match one of 3 lines of different lengths with a target line.
- 3) Alone, participants were correct 99% of the time.
- 4) Group Condition :
 - 6 confederates and 1 participant
 - Group seated in $\frac{1}{2}$ circle facing stimulus chart
 - P's seated in 6th position (so five confederates report judgments before Ps' turn)



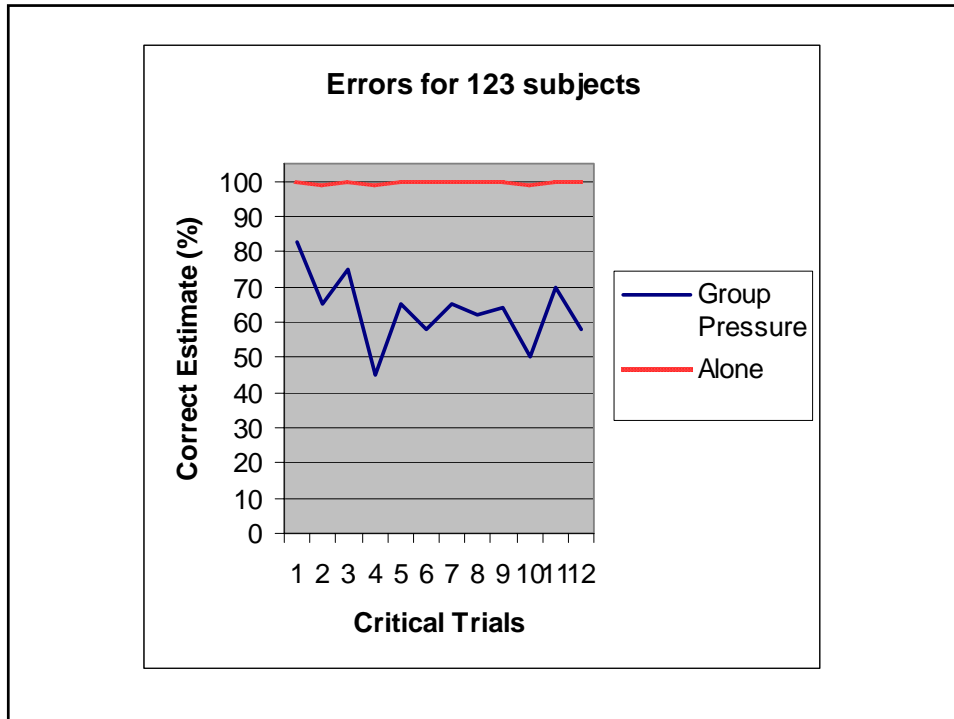


C. Solomon Asch Cont

5) On most trials Confederates made correct matches. On 12 critical trials, Confederates made the same incorrect match.

6) Results

- on critical trails 37% went along with the group every time.
- 76% of P's went along once.
- 5 % of P's made errors on non-critical trials



7) Potential Limitations

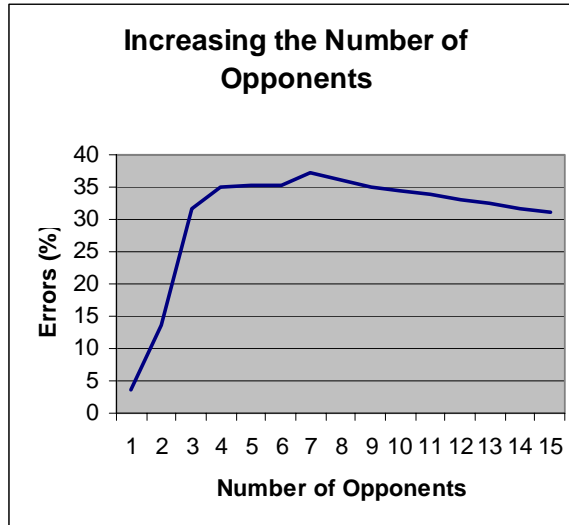
a. Will you conform if the judgement is important?

- Kretch et al. (1962). Berkley students conformed to group pressure to agree with this counter attitudinal statement. “Free speech is a privilege. It is proper for a society to suspend free speech when it feels threatened.”

7) Potential Limitations Cont.

b. Does group size Matter?

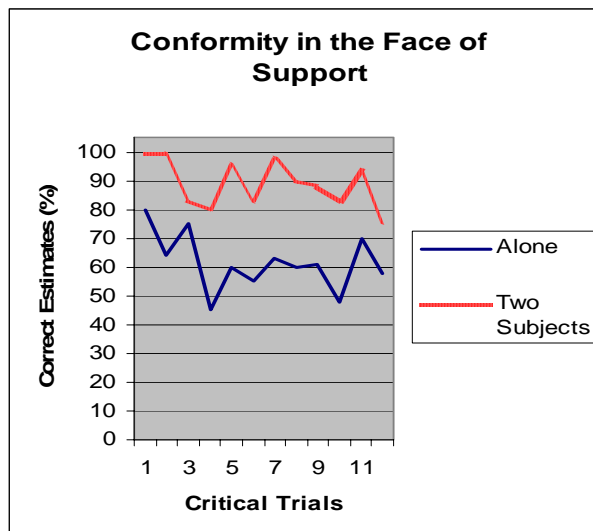
- Larger groups elicit greater conformity.
- Groups larger than 5 do not significantly increase conformity.



7) Potential Limitations Cont.

c. Does unanimity matter?

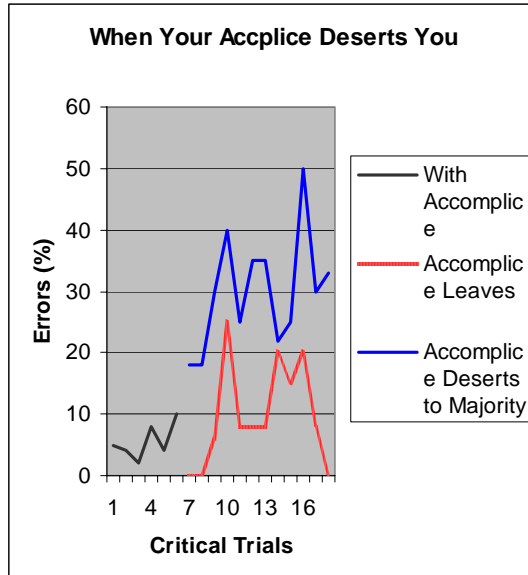
- Two against the Crowd
- If one other person dissents, then conformity is reduced.



7) Potential Limitations Cont.

c. Unanimity Cont

- Carry on the fight
 - Partner called to Dean's office
- Can't Beat 'em Join 'em
 - Partner starts conforming to majority



D. Public Compliance vs. Private Acceptance

- Sherif and Asch's studies show different kinds of conformity.
- Asch = Public Compliance = Normative Social Influence
 - **Normative Social Influence** = conform to avoid group rejection/punishment.
 - Group is clearly wrong
 - People who conform do not really believe what they say.

D. Public Compliance vs. Private Acceptance

- Sherif = Private Acceptance = Informational Social Influence + Normative Social Influence
 - **Information Social Influence** - look to group for information to clarify situation (forming a norm).
 - The stimulus is ambiguous
 - People actually believe what they say.
 - Once norm is formed, there is pressure to maintain it

F. Strength of the Social Influence

- Increase situational ambiguity; increase Informational SI.
- Increases in group Power (ability to distribute rewards and punishments); increase Normative SI
- Increases group attractiveness/prestige; increase NSI.

III. Compliance

- Changing behavior as a result of direct requests from others.
- Research focuses on helping/volunteerism and purchasing behaviors.

A. Low Ball

- Offer a low cost option, then say option is no longer available (or was never available) and offer a more costly option.
- Once committed, you are more likely to stay committed.
 - consistency seekers – backing out now would be dissonant with your previous commitment
 - cognitive inertia – start saying yes, yes becomes default response (telemarketers do this, by asking you lots of question that should be responded to with “yes”)

B. Foot in the door

- People are more likely to agree to a large request, if they agree to a small request first.

Freeman & Frazier (1966)

Small request = answer some questions about the soaps used

Large request = 2 hour home inspection of household products

4 conditions

1. Agree and Perform: T1: perform small request
T2: large request is made.
2. Agree Only: T1: agree to small request, but don't perform it
T2: large request
3. Familiarization: T1 make no request
T2 large request
4. One-contact: T1 make large request

Freeman & Frazier (1966)

Results

Condition	% Agreeing to Large Request
Agree & Perform	52.8
Agree Only	33.3
Familiarization	27.8*
One Contact	22.2**

* $p < .07$, ** $p < .02$; Significantly different from Agree & Perform Condition

B. Foot in the door

- Self-Perception Theory (D. Bem) - after agreeing to a small request, one attributes their agreement to a desire to be helpful (internal attribution).
 - The pressure to comply is invisible.
 - There is a lack of evidence for an external attribution.

C. Door in the Face

- People will be more likely to agree to a small request, after refusing to agree with a large request.
- Cognitive Dissonance - refusal to comply creates dissonance (refusal is dissonant with people's view of themselves as agreeable and helpful). Dissonance is reduced by agreeing to comply to the less extreme request.

D. That's not all

- People are more likely to buy a product if they think they get something for free.
Jerry Burger (1986).
- S's were more likely to buy a cupcake for \$.75 if they thought they were going to get 2 cookies for free (73% bought it).
- Customers told that the cookie and the cupcake were sold together for \$.75 were less likely to buy it (44% bought it).

IV. Obedience

A. The Milgram Obedience Studies

A. The Milgram Obedience Study

- The Back ground
 - Hanna Arendt's Articles: *A Report on the Banality of Evil*
- Interviews with Adolph Eichman During his Trial (1961)

1. The Milgram Article

- 65% (26 of 40 males) went to XXX (450 volt level)
- subsequent studies find same % for females
- 100% of subjects went all the way to the 300 volt level.
 - point where Learner pounds on wall and stops responding
- Only 5 subjects refuse to go beyond this point.

2. The Video

- Teachers can hear the learner throughout the study.
 - 75 - 105 volts learner grunts
 - 120 -255 volts learner cries OUCH
 - 270 volts learner screams in agony, requests to be let out.
 - 315 - Learner refuses to answer any more.
 - 330 - Learner is silent
- 50 % Obedience to XXX (450 volts)

B. Manipulating Obedience

1. Unanimity of the Experimenters

- at 125 volt level Learner screams, E1 says continue, while E2 says stop.

- 100 of S's Stop

2. - Groups - (analogous to Asch's study)

- Groups of 3, 1 Subject and 2 confederates

- C1 rebels at 150 volts, C2 rebels at 210

- Only 10% of S's went to 450

B. Manipulating Obedience Cont

3. Proximity (psychological & physical) of the Victim

- Increased proximity = decreased obedience.

- In same room obedience = 40%

- Hold Learners Hand = 30%

4. Proximity of the Experimenter

- in room

- over phone

- on tape recorder

B. Manipulating Obedience Cont

5. Legitimacy of the Researcher

- No Lab coat, average Joe, less formal demeanor = 19% obedience

6. Legitimacy of the Setting

- Run down office building in Bridgeport
- 48% compliance (not a significant decrease)

B. Manipulating Obedience Cont

7. Other Variables

- Gradual escalation of requests
- Little time for reflection
- Experimenter takes full responsibility

Question?

- Ethics - Do you have a problem with this type of research?
- Would we get the same effect today?