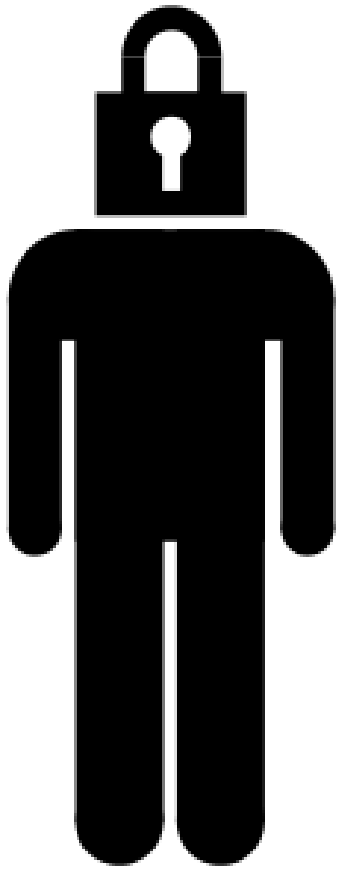
DANGER



CONFORMITY HAZARD

CONTAINS POSSIBLY NEW INFORMATION

WHICH MAY STIMULATE INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

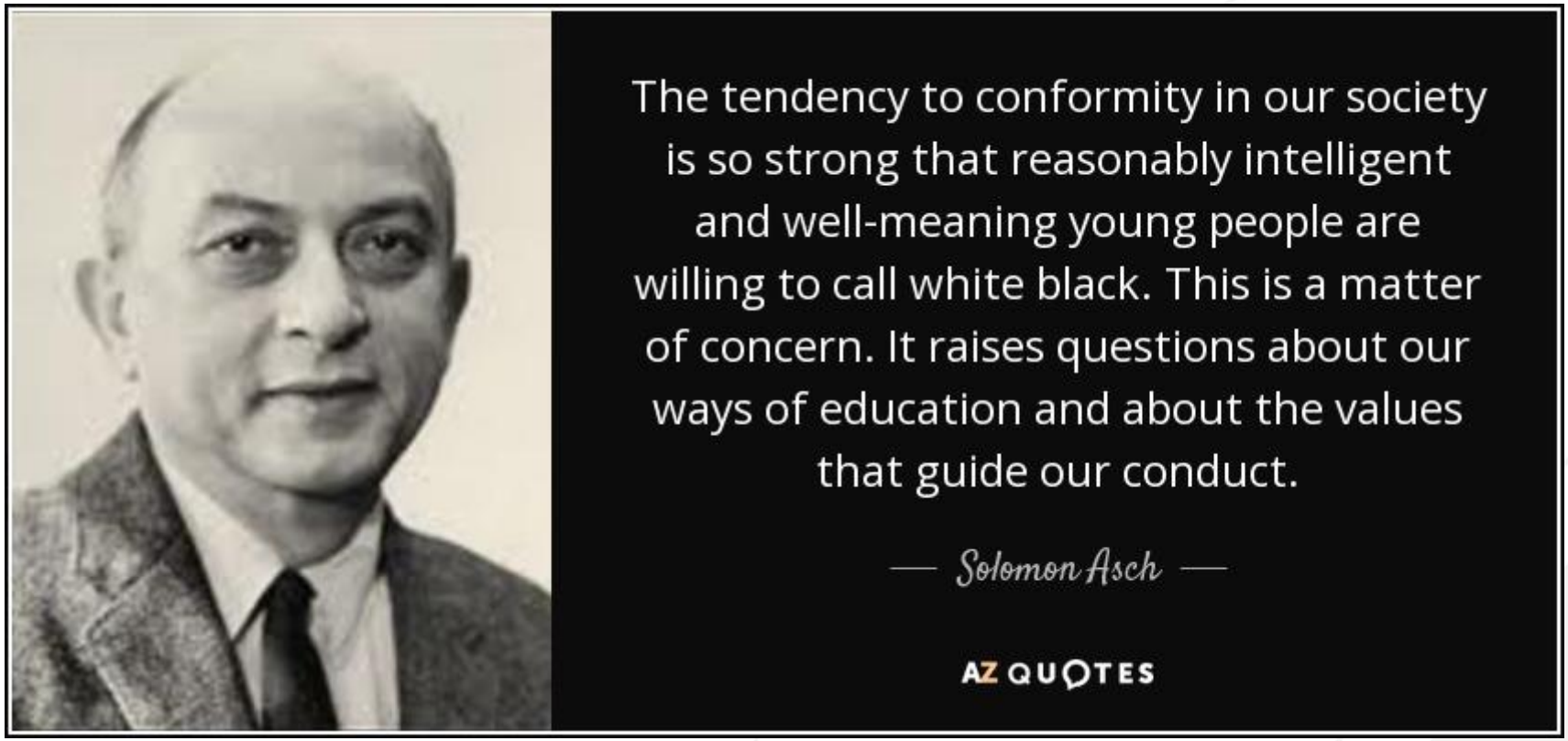
Conformity

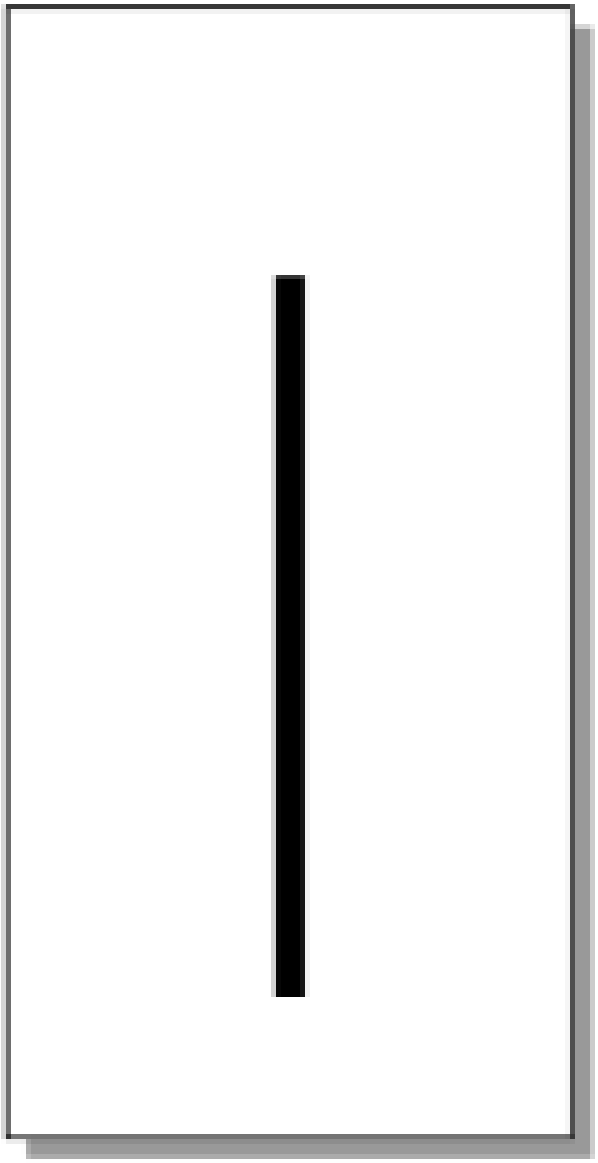
- is the **degree** to which members of a group will **change their views, attitudes and/or behavior to fit the views of the group**
- the group can influence members via unconscious processes or via social pressure on individuals.

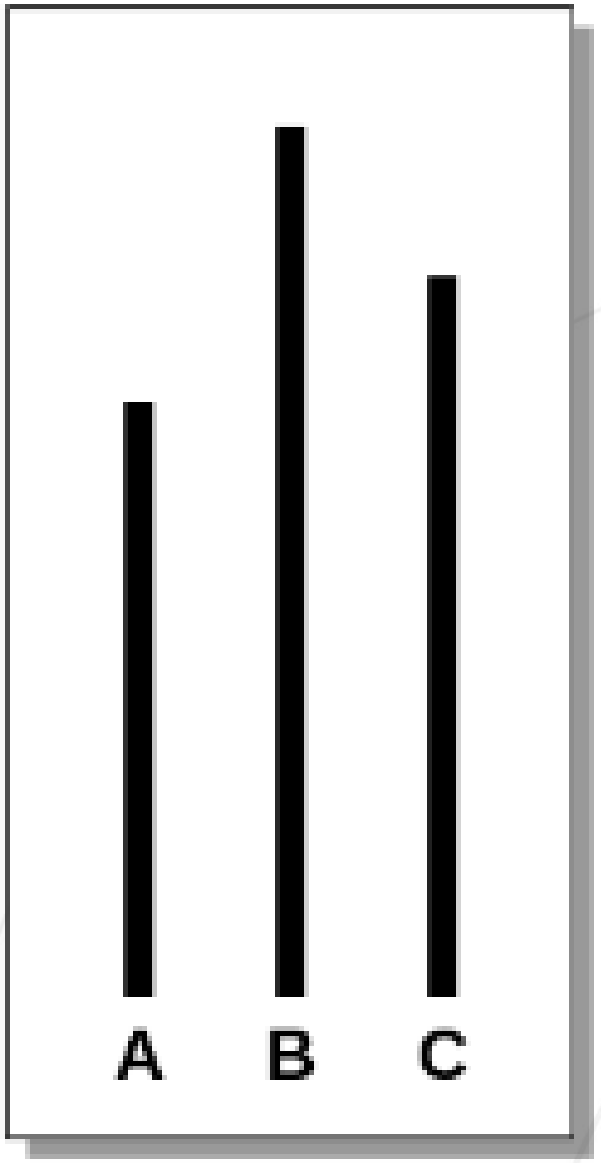


Solomon Eliot Asch

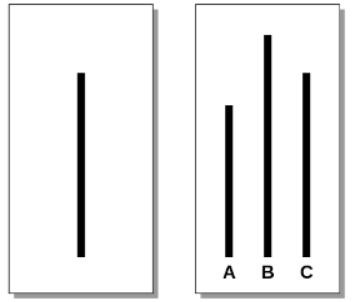
- Solomon Eliot Asch was a polish psychologist.
- He was majoring in social psychology.
- He made several studies in order to how social pressure affects the persons' conformity.
- *Elevator Experiment (video)*






A
B
C

Experiment design



- Purpose of the study:
  - **Analyzing how the social pressure affects the conformity of a person.**

- Asch showed bars like those in the Figure to college students in groups of 8 to 10. He told them he was studying visual perception and that their task was to decide which of the bars on the right was the same length as the one on the left. As you can see, the task is simple, and the **correct answer is obvious**.

- Asch asked the students to give their answers aloud. He repeated the procedure with 18 sets of bars. Only one student in each group was a real subject. All the others were confederates who had been instructed to give incorrect answers on 12 of the 18 trials.

- Asch arranged for the real subject to be the next-to-the-last person in each group to announce his answer so that he would hear most of the confederates incorrect responses before giving his own. Would he go along with the crowd?

- Video

Results

- **37 of the 50 subjects conformed to the majority at least once**

- Asch was disturbed by these results:
  - *„The tendency to conformity in our society is so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call white black. This is a matter of concern. It raises questions about our ways of education and about the values that guide our conduct.“*

- **Asch tested 123 different young men from three different institutions of higher learning (Asch, 1955).**
- Alone participants and no pressure group made mistakes less than 1 % .
- Group situation participants made errors 36.8 %.
- 25 % of the sample consistently defied majority opinion.
- Group revealed that one-third of all responses were incorrect.
- The incorrect responses often matched the incorrect response of the majority group.

People conform for two main reasons

- because they believe the group is better informed than they are
  - INFORMATIONAL INFLUENCE

- because they want to be liked by the group
  - NORMATIVE INFLUENCE

„People frequently followed the majority judgment, even when the majority was wrong.“

Factors Affecting Conformity

Group size

Asch found that group size influenced whether subjects conformed. The bigger the majority group the more people conformed.

Difficulty of tasks

When we are uncertain, it seems we look to others for confirmation. The more difficult the task the greater the conformity.

Factors Affecting Conformity

Answer in Private

This is because there is less groups pressure and normative influence is not as powerful, as there is no fear of rejection from the group.

Factors Affecting Conformity

Lack of Group Unanimity

The absence of group unanimity lowers overall conformity as participant feel less need for social approval of the group.

Suggestions after this experience

- **Always listen to yourself before listening to others, even if you're wrong, so you can learn from your mistakes.**

- **Be confident of your opinion, and stick to your knowledge.**

- **Never compare your answers and opinions to others when you know it's right.**

Conformity and Obedience: How far are you willing to obey?

- A friend
- A teacher
- A policeman
- A man in a lab coat
- The headmaster
- A stranger
- A man in an army uniform
- A sports coach

- Miss lessons
- Hit a stranger
- Hand over money
- Lie on the pavement
- Steal something
- Stand on one leg
- Kill a stranger

Obedience

- A type of social influence
  - To act in response to a direct order from a figure with perceived authority.

- Who in our society has **perceived authority** (i.e. who's orders would you follow without question?)



Milgram (1963)

- Is obedience bad?

"Obedience is as basic an element in the structure of social life as one can point to. Some system of authority is a requirement of all communal living."

"…from 1933-1945 millions of innocent persons were systematically slaughtered on command…These inhumane policies may have originated in the mind of a single person, but they could only be carried out on a massive scale if a very large number of people obeyed orders.



Stanley Milgram

Context

- Milgram was interested in **destructive obedience** where orders are obeyed even though the individual understands the negative consequences.

- Concentration camps



Context

- Adolf Eichmann
  - Oversaw the deaths of 6 million Jews
  - He had only been “following orders.”
  - Many other Nazi’s who stood trial also gave the same defence.



Context



- Political theorist **Hannah Arendt** observed Eichmann's trial
  - *"It would have been comforting indeed to believe that Eichmann was a monster…The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were and still are terribly and terrifyingly normal."*

Context

- The “Germans are Different” hypothesis
- Germans have an **authoritarian personality**
  - Hostile to people of a lower status
  - Being servile to those of a higher status
  - Uphold the norms of society and are intolerant of anything different



Aims

- Milgram wanted to test the “Germans are different” hypothesis.
  - He believed obedience could be explained by dispositional, rather than situational factors.

- By creating a controlled environment, he could assess obedience. He could then alter variables to see what effect they had on obedience.

Findings

- Beforehand, Milgram discussed his experiment with both a group of psychology majors, and a number of colleagues. He asked them to estimate how many participants would administer the full 450 Volts.

They estimated ___ to __ %.

VIDEO

Quantitative data

- The minimum shock given was 300 V.
  - This was when the learner started to protest.
  - 5 participants (12.5 %) went no further.
  - 26 participants (65 %) gave the full 450 V.

Conclusions

- What is the main conclusion?
  - Ordinary people are shockingly obedient to destructive orders.
  - In certain situations, people would kill a stranger.
  - The situation caused people do be highly obedient.

- Study variations:
  - 18 variations on the original study
    - *Experimenter absent:* the experimenter left the room, giving instructions over the phone. Obedience dropped to 21 %.
    - *Presence of allies:* two other 'teachers' in the room (actually confederates of the study) who disobeyed the experimenter. Obedience dropped to 10 %.
    - *Proximity:* The learner was in the same room as the teacher. Obedience dropped to 40 %

Replications

Study	Country	Participants	Percentage Obedient
Milgram (1963)	USA	Male general population Female general population	65 65
Rosenhan (in Milgram, 1974)	USA	Students	85
Ancona and Pareyson (1968)	Italy	Students	85
Mantell (1971)	Germany	Male general population	85
Kilham and Mann (1974)	Australia	Male students Female students	40 16
Burley and McGuiness (1977)	UK	Male students	50
Shanab and Yahya (1978)	Jordan	Students	62
Miranda, Caballero, Gomez, and Zamorano (1981)	Spain	Students	over 90
Schurz (1985)	Austria	General population	80
Meeus and Raaijmakers (1986)	Holland	General population	92

Nurse-physician Relationship Experiment

- Hofling et al (1966): An experimental study in the nurse-physician relationship
  - Real life study of obedience.
  - A staff nurse on night duty would be telephoned by somebody claiming to be a doctor responsible for a particular patient.
  - The nurse was asked to administer a dose of a drug which was twice the maximum allowed.
  - The label stated very clearly that this was dangerous.
  - **Ninety-five per cent** of the nurses measured out the medication and were about to administer it to the patient when a hidden observer stopped them.

Stanford Prison Experiment

- Zimbardo et al (1973)
  - Zimbardo decided to investigate what was going on in prisons in the USA.
  - There were reports of brutality, bullying and killings by the prison guards.
  - With these allegations, he wanted to **find out whether it was the situation which caused such behaviours**, **or** whether it was the guards' **personalities**.
  - It is probably true to say that the subjects obeyed rather than conformed.
  - **Shows how easy it is to change the way we act when placed in a new situation and role.**
  - The norms showed what actions were appropriate for the roles (normative social influence).

Philip Zimbardo

- **Psychology of Evil**
  - http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/cs/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil.html

