

Social Influence

Chapter 7

Social Influence

- the exercise of social power by a person or group,
- to change the attitudes or behavior of others in a particular direction

Social Influence

- Conformity
 - change one's beliefs or behaviors to match others; yield to perceived group pressure
- Compliance
 - publicly performing an act at another's request (even if we prefer not to)
- Obedience to Authority
 - compliance with a legitimate authority; perform an action to a direct order/request

Social Power

- the force available to the influencer to motivate attitude or behavior change
- can originate from:
 - having access to certain resources (rewards, punishments, information)
 - social position in society

Social Power

Six bases of social power:

- **Rewards:** providing + outcomes
- **Coercion:** providing - outcomes
- **Expertise:** special knowledge
- **Information:** message content
- **Referent power:** identifying w/ others
- **Legitimate authority:** right to make requests
 - power of helplessness: due to the norm of “social responsibility”

change one's beliefs or behaviors to match others; yield to perceived group pressure

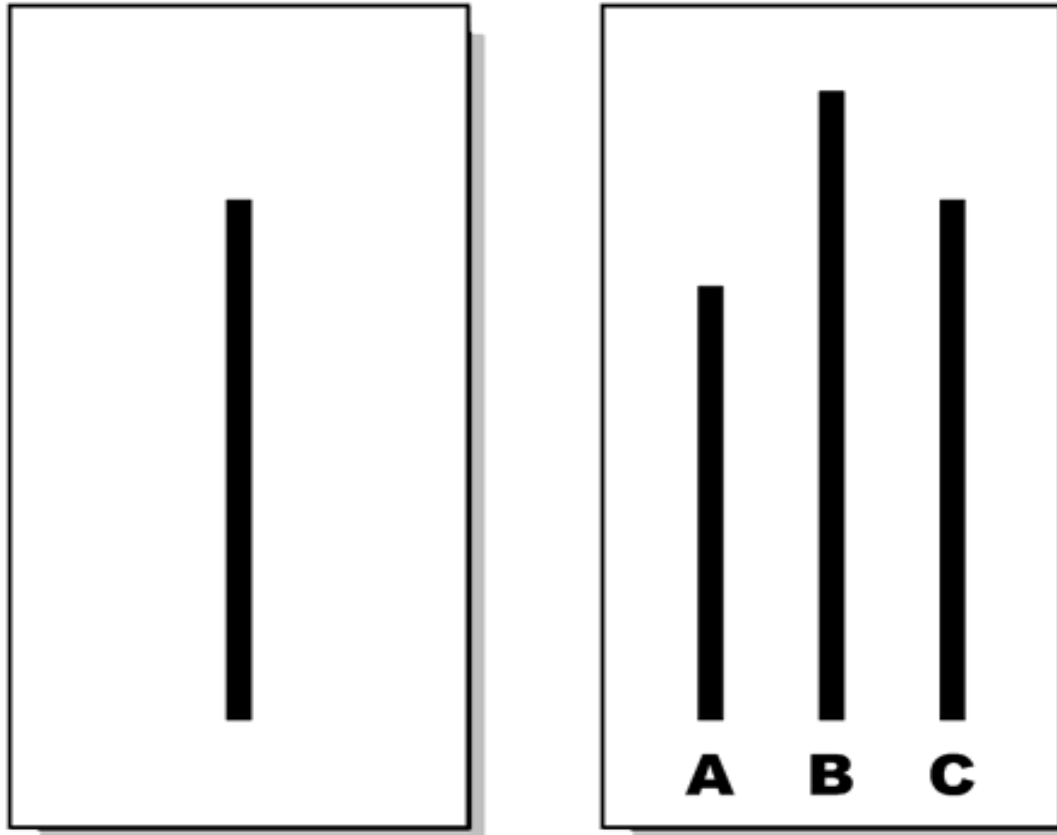
CONFORMITY

Conformity

- 1.The Sherif Studies: Ambiguous Reality
- “a visual perception experiment”
- autokinetic effect: estimate of movement
- individual first, then groups of 2-3
- emergence of social norms (and adherence afterwards)
- using ‘their’ standards in ‘their’ absence

Conformity

- social norm:
 - an expected standard of behavior and belief,
 - established and enforced by a group



Asch Line Judgment Study:

Which line on the right resembles the one on the left?

Conformity

2. The Asch Studies: Unanimous Majority

- ambiguity or not?



Conformity

- wrong answer 37% of the time
- 76% conformed to incorrect answer at least once



CONFORMITY

WHEN PEOPLE ARE FREE TO DO AS THEY PLEASE,
THEY USUALLY IMITATE EACH OTHER.

Conformity: Why?

- Informational influence:
 - desire to be right,
 - the need to reduce uncertainty
 - following others for useful information

Conformity: Why?

- Normative influence:
 - desire to be liked,
 - need to be approved
 - following others for gaining acceptance
- Public vs. Private



Conformity: When?

- Group Size
 - up to a certain point (3-4 confederates)
- Group Cohesiveness & Topic Relevance
 - members attracted to each other
- Commitment to group
 - all + and - forces that act to keep a person in a group

Conformity: When?

- Social support / Group unanimity
 - just one person that disagrees with you is enough!
- Desire for individuation
- Desire for personal control
 - theory of personal reactance
 - independence vs. anticonformity

Conformity: When?

- Self-awareness
 - private: reduces conformity
 - public: increases conformity

Conformity

- Cultural context is also important:
- Individualistic cultures emphasize freedom and independence
 - Conformity = loss of control
- Collectivistic cultures emphasize ties to social group
 - Conformity = maturity and inner strength
- Need for approval vs. need for autonomy

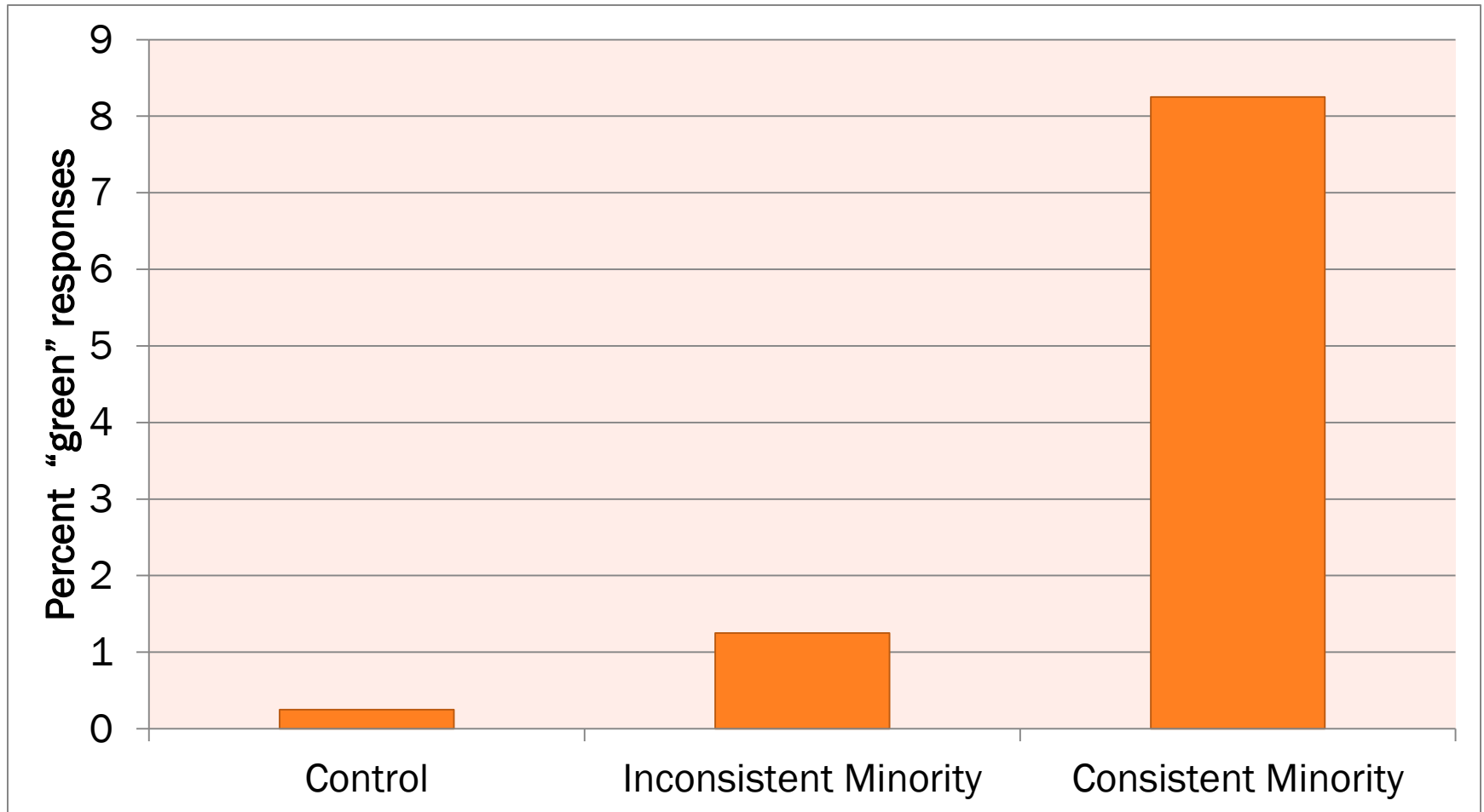
Conformity

- Minority influence: dissenters produce change within a group
- conforming to majority:
 - truth in numbers (informational)
 - concern for being accepted (normative)
- minority opinions viewed more negatively
- hence, subject to more critical analysis

Conformity

- majority versus minority influence: dual process theories
- need to be consistent and confident
- Moscovici, 1985: blue or green?

Conformity



Conformity

- overt responses as well as private beliefs
- need to be flexible and open-minded
- single vs. double minorities
- usually named ‘innovation’
- better if in line with emerging norms

publicly performing an act at another's request (even if we prefer not to)

COMPLIANCE

Compliance: 3 factors

- 1. More likely to comply if in a positive mood
 - more active, more likely to grant requests
 - pleasant thoughts and memories; feel + towards requesters
 - less likely to critically analyze events

Compliance: 3 factors

- 2. Reciprocity: the expectation that you need to return a favor
 - commonly used for sales (e.g., free samples)
 - feel obliged to comply with request
- 3. Giving reasons:
 - habit to explain others' behavior
 - believe it's worthy of exception

Compliance

- Mindless compliance:
 - a placebo reason almost as effective as a real one in gaining compliance
 - “Can I use the copier because I have to make copies?”
 - “...because I’ m in a rush”

Compliance Techniques

- Foot-in-the-door: First small, then a large request
 - e.g., sign a petition, then money
- Door-in-the-face: First an unreasonably large request, then a smaller one
 - e.g., weekend trip w/ friends, then party

Compliance Techniques

- Low-ball: First make a reasonable request; then reveal further costs
 - e.g., get “OK”, then give the time
- That’ s-not-all: First make a large request, then offer a bonus or discount
 - e.g., buy one, get one free
- Pique: Make an unusual request to disrupt target’ s mindless refusal script

Compliance

- Reactance theory:
 - Maintain freedom of action
 - Influence attempts that threaten perceived freedom may backfire
 - e.g., strongly versus moderately worded anti-drinking message

Obedience

- based on the belief: “authorities have the right to make requests”
- Crimes of obedience:
 - when demands of authorities immoral or illegal
 - e.g., Eichmann defense

Obedience

- The Milgram experiments (1963):
- Study on learning pairs of words
- Participants assigned as “teachers” to administer electric shock to “learners”
- Administer shocks when incorrect
- Shock levels increment from 15 to 450 v

compliance with a legitimate authority; perform an action to a direct order/request

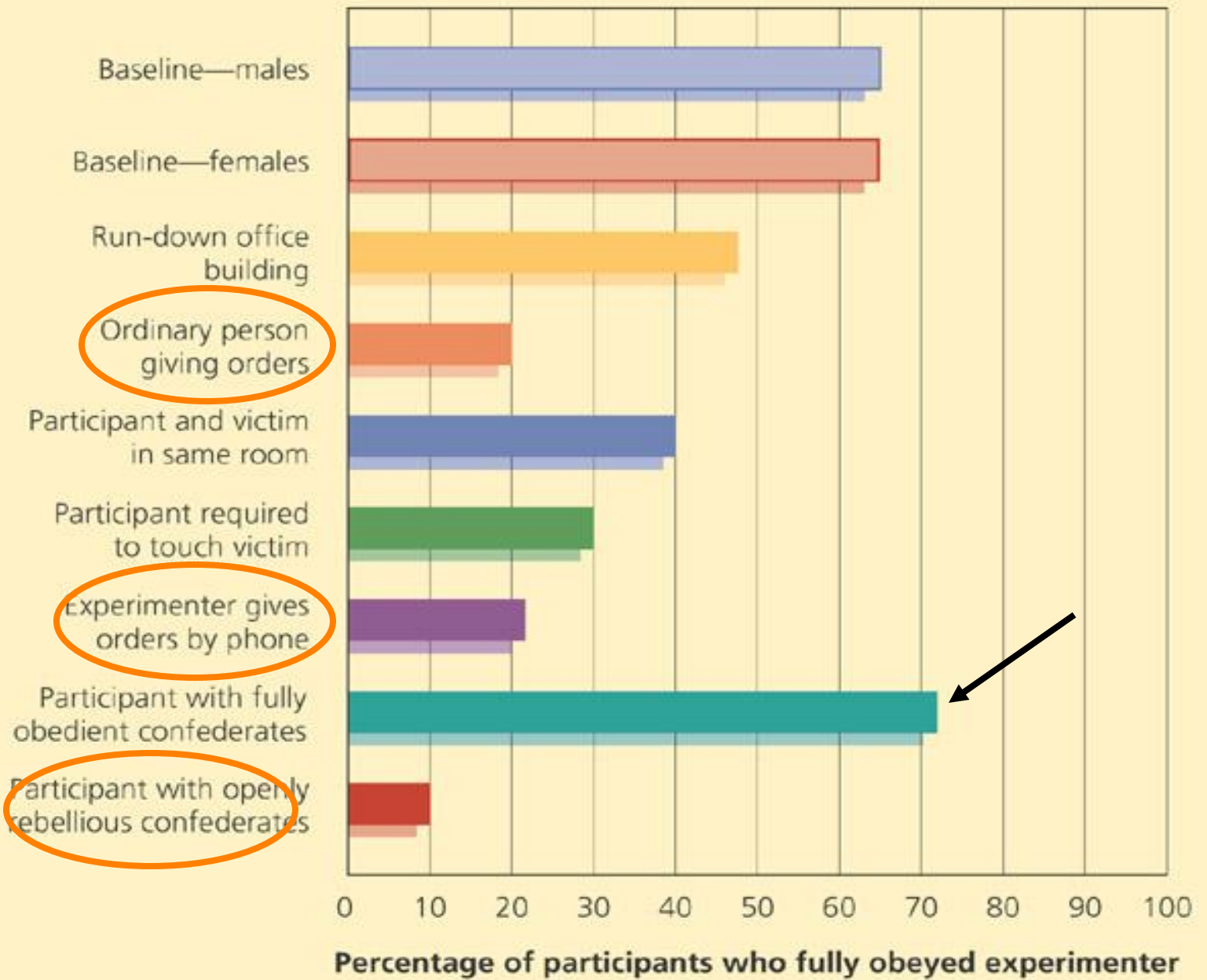
OBEDIENCE

Obedience

- Learner begs the teacher to stop
- Experimenter orders participant to continue regardless
- When do people disobey authority?

Obedience

<u>Shock Level (mv)</u>	<u>% obeying</u>
0-240 (slight to very strong)	100
255-300 (intense)	88
315-360 (extreme intensity)	68
375-420 (Danger: severe shock)	65
435-450 (“XXX”)	65



Obedience

- IMPORTANCE:
- “normality” or “banality” of evil and the power of the social situation