

以下の英文を題目も含めて全訳せよ (ただし、図を訳す必要はない)。

Conformity to a Majority

When we are in a group, we may find ourselves in the minority on some issue. This is a fact of life to which most of us have become accustomed. If we decide that the majority is a more valid source of information than our own experience, we may change our minds and conform to the majority opinion. But imagine yourself in a situation in which you are sure that your own opinion is correct and that the group is wrong. Would you yield to social pressure under those circumstances? This is the kind of conformity that social psychologist Asch decided to investigate in a series of classic studies (Asch, 1952; 1955; 1958).

In Asch's standard procedure, a single participant was seated at a table with a group of seven to nine others (all confederates of the experimenter). The group was shown a display of three vertical lines of different lengths, and members of the group were asked to judge which line was the same length as a standard drawn in another display (see Figure 1). Each individual announced his or her decision in turn, and the participant sat in the next to the last seat. The correct judgements were obvious, and on most trials everyone gave the same response. But on several predetermined critical trials, the confederates had been instructed to give the wrong answer. Asch then observed the amount of conformity this procedure would elicit from his participants.

The results were striking. Even though the correct answer was always obvious, the average participant conformed to the group consensus on 32 percent of the critical trials; 74 percent of the participants conformed at least once. Moreover, the group did not have to be large to obtain such conformity. When Asch varied the size of the group from 2 to 16, he found that a group of 3 or 4 confederates was just as effective at producing conformity as were larger groups (Asch, 1958).

Why didn't the obviousness of the correct answer provide support for the individual's independence from the majority? Why isn't a person's confidence in his or her ability to make simple sensory judgements a strong force against conformity?

According to one line of argument, it is precisely that the obviousness of the correct answer in the Asch experiment produces the strong forces toward conformity (Ross et al., 1976). Disagreements in real life typically involve difficult or subjective judgements such as which economic policy will best reduce inflation or which of two paintings is more aesthetically pleasing. In these cases, we expect to disagree with others occasionally; we even know that being a minority of one in an otherwise unanimous group is a plausible, if uncomfortable, possibility.

The Asch situation is much more extreme. Here the individual is confronted with unanimous disagreement about a simple physical fact, a bizarre and unprecedented occurrence that appears to have no rational explanation. Participants are clearly puzzled and tense. They rub their eyes in disbelief and jump up to look more closely at the lines. They squirm, mumble, giggle in embarrassment, and look searchingly at others in the group for some clue to the mystery. After the experiment, they offer halfhearted hypotheses about optical illusions or suggest that perhaps the first person occasionally made a mistake, and each successive person followed suit because of conformity pressures (Asch, 1952).

Consider what it means to dissent from the majority under these circumstances. Just as the judgements of the group seem incomprehensible to the participant, so the participant believes that his or her dissent will be incomprehensible to the group. Group members will surely judge him or her to be incompetent, even out of touch with reality. Similarly, if the participant dissents repeatedly, this will seem to constitute a direct challenge to the group's competence, a challenge that requires enormous courage when one's own perceptual abilities are suddenly and inexplicably called into question. Such a challenge violates a strong social norm against insulting others. This fear of "What will they think of me?" and "What will they think I think of them?" inhibits dissent and generates the strong pressures to conform on the Asch situation.

Conformity pressures are far less strong when the group is not unanimous. If even one confederate breaks with the majority, the amount of conformity drops from 32 percent of the trials to about 6 percent. In fact, a group of eight containing only one dissenter produces less conformity than a unanimous majority of three (Asch, 1958). Surprisingly, the dissenter does not even have to give the correct answer. Even when the dissenter's answers are more incorrect than the majority's, their influence is broken and participants are more inclined to give their own, correct, judgements (Asch, 1955; Allen & Levine, 1969). Nor does it matter who the dissenter is. An African-American dissenter reduces the conformity rate among racially prejudiced white participants just as

effectively as a white dissenter (Malof & Lott, 1962). In a variation that approaches the absurd, conformity was significantly reduced even though the participants thought the dissenter was so visually handicapped that he could not see the stimuli (Allen & Levine, 1971). It seems clear that the presence of but one other deviant to share the potential disapproval or ridicule of the group permits the participant to dissent without feeling totally isolated.

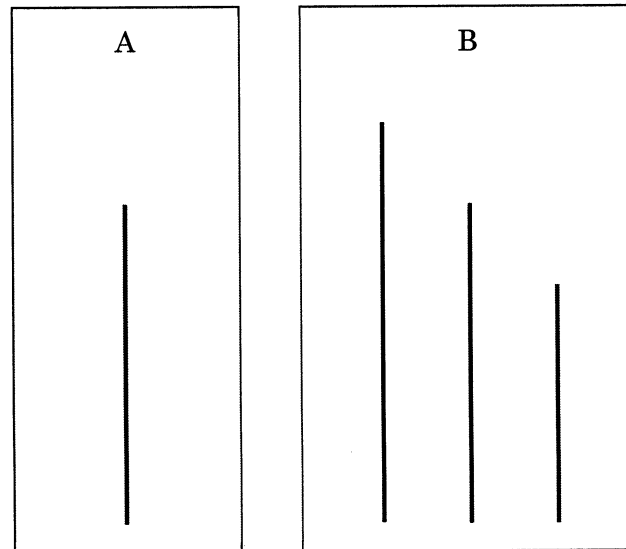


Figure 1. Representative Stimulus in Asch's Study

After viewing display A, the participants were told to pick the matching line from display B. The displays shown here are typical in that the correct decision is obvious.