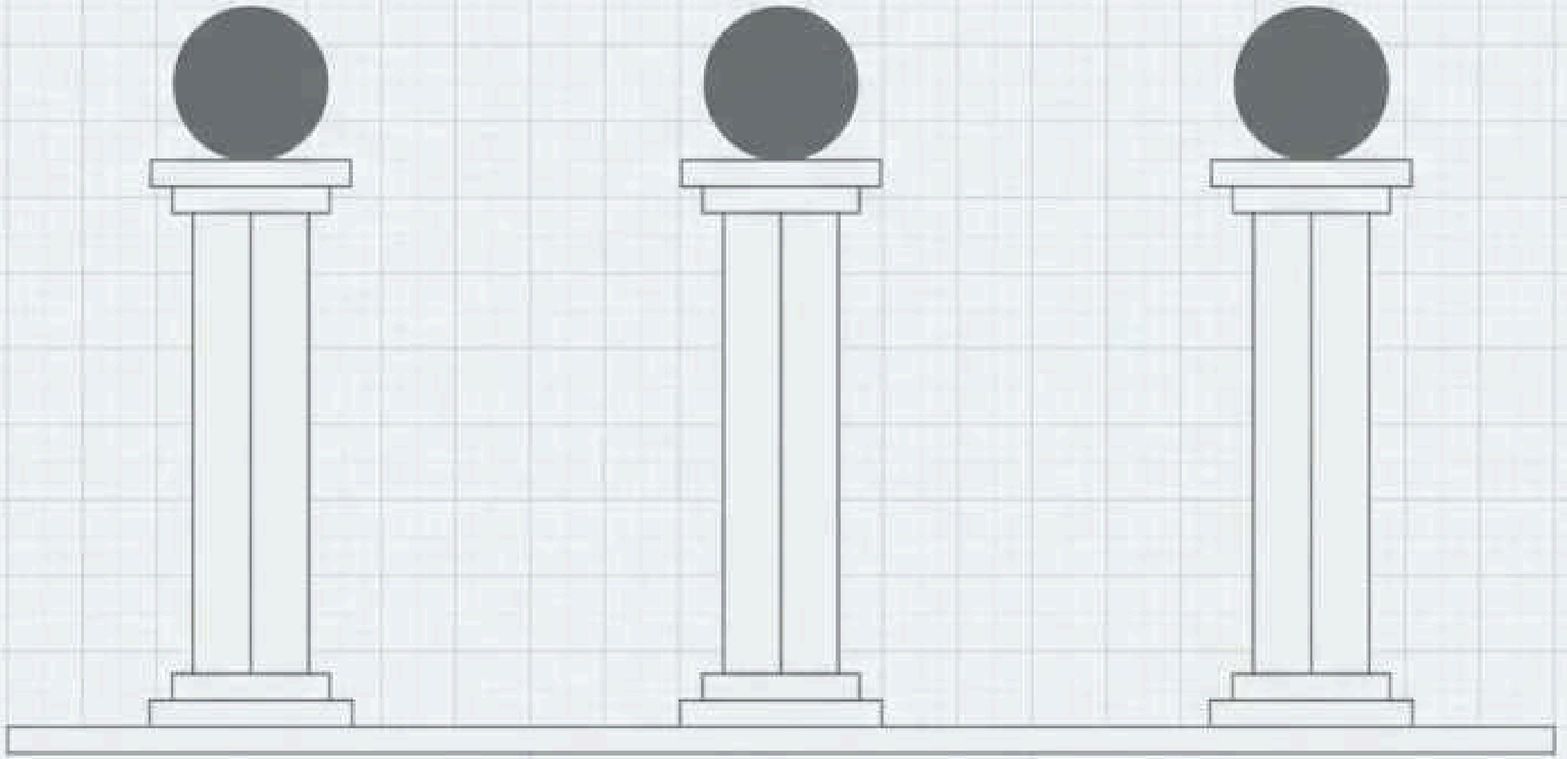
4.1



Conformity

Why do people go along with others, even when they privately disagree?

Obedience

Why do individuals obey direct orders from authority figures?

Group Dynamics

How do collective environments alter individual thought and action?

Overview of behavioral phenomena: influence, obedience, and collective action.

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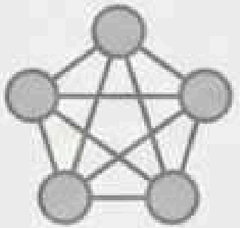
4.2

Conformity: Changing behavior or beliefs to match those of others. (Defined in 1955)



Informational Influence

Assuming others possess more accurate knowledge. Driven by the desire to be right.



Normative Influence

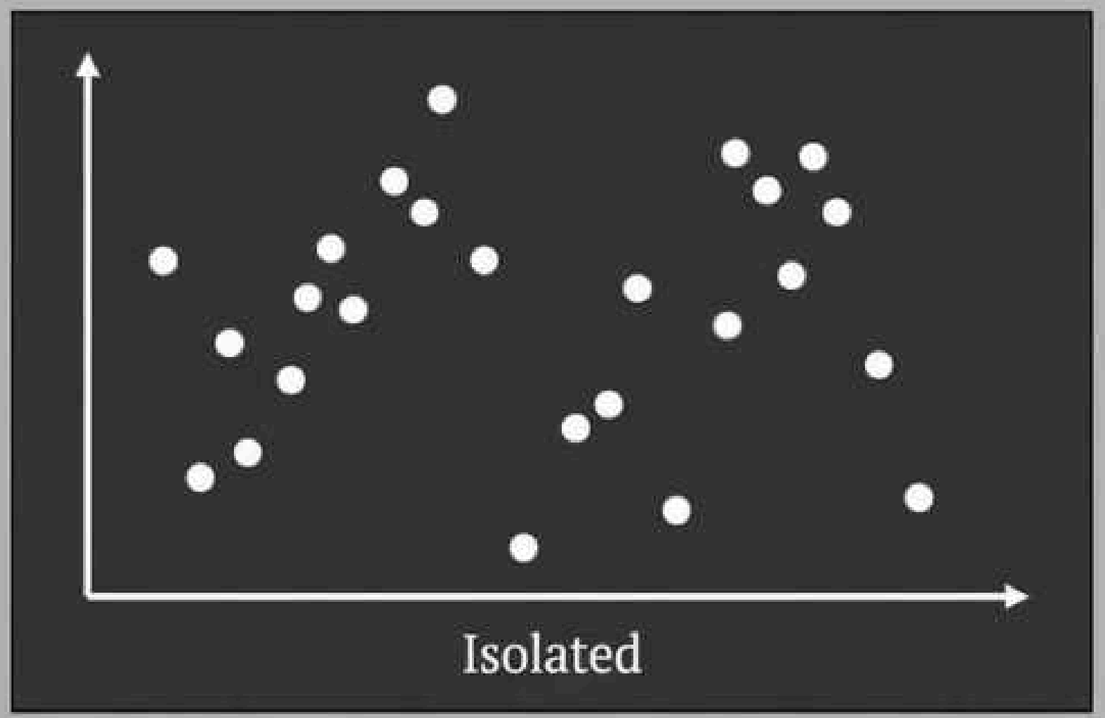
Going along to be accepted and avoid social rejection. Driven by the desire to belong.

Often act simultaneously, but trigger distinct psychological experiences.

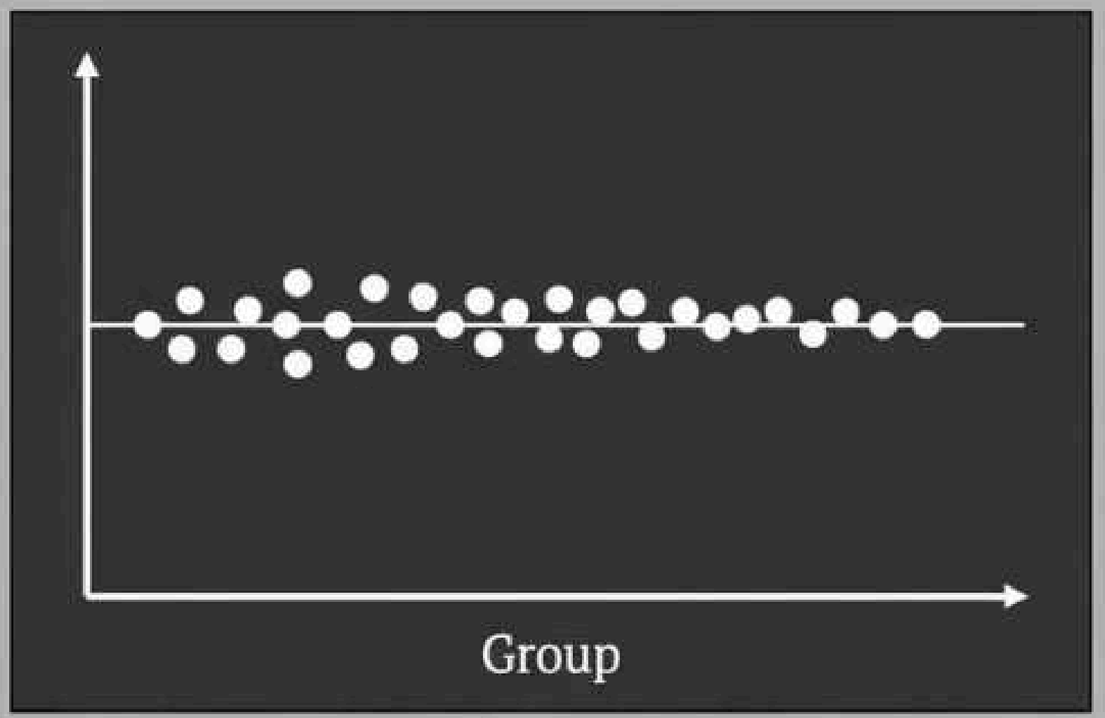
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4.3

The 1935 optical illusion study (Autokinetic Effect) – observing a stationary point of light that appears to move.



Tested Alone: High variance in individual estimates.



Tested in Groups: Estimates converge on a shared norm.

Key Finding: The established group norm persists even when individuals are tested alone later.

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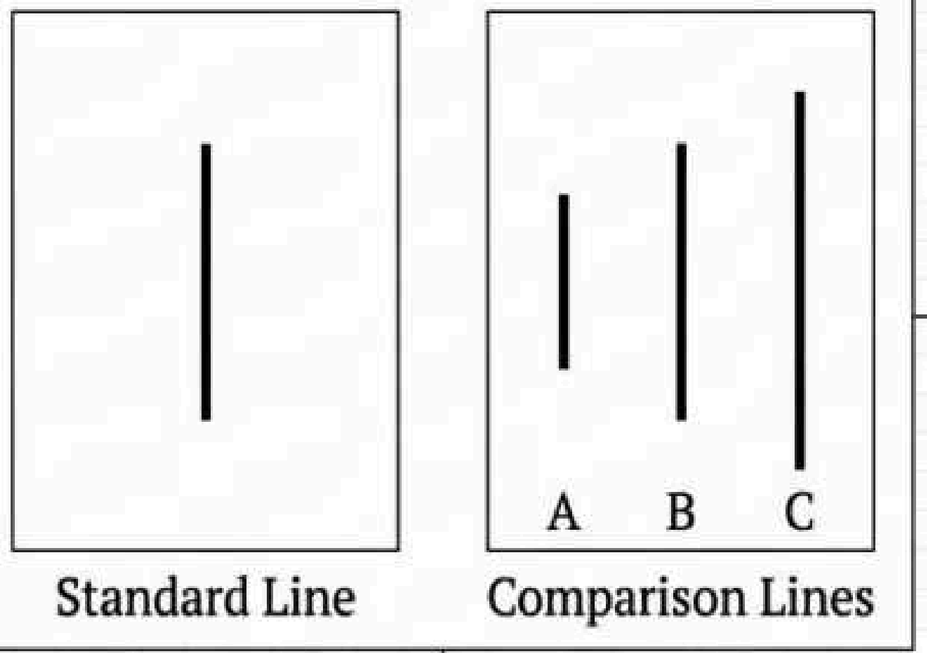
4.4

The Task

- Deliberately easy, objective visual judgment.

The Setup

- Real participant placed in a room with several confederates.



The Manipulation

- Confederates are instructed to unanimously give the wrong answer on specific critical trials.

The Placement

- The real participant is positioned to answer last or near-last, maximizing peer pressure.

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4.5

Control Condition: When tested alone, the error rate is near zero.



Overall Error Rate

Participants gave the wrong answer roughly one-third of the time on critical trials.



Conformed at Least Once

The majority yielded to group pressure at some point.

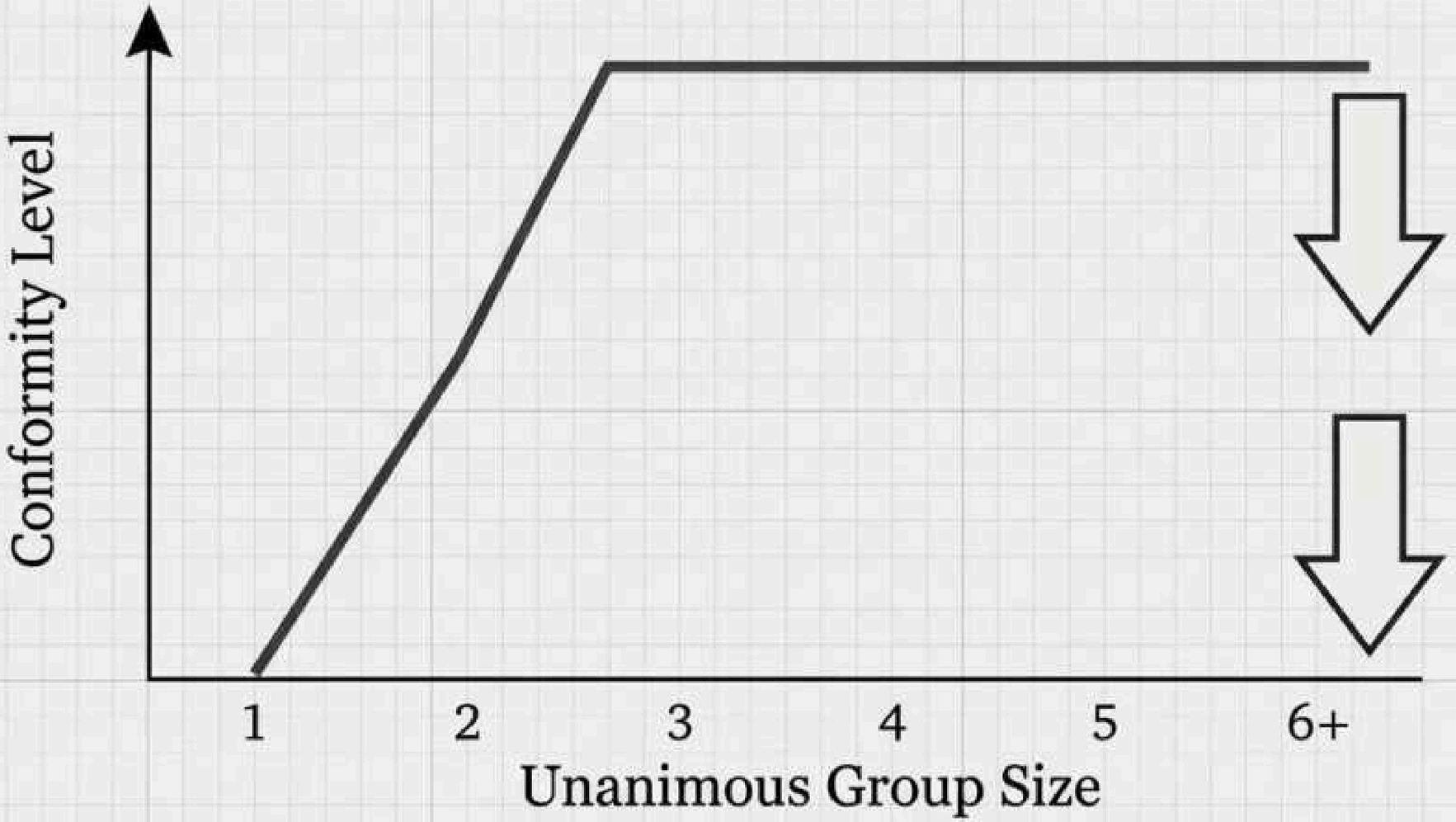


Never Conformed

A minority maintained complete independence.

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4.6



A Single Dissenter

Introducing just one person giving a different wrong answer sharply cuts conformity. The power of a single ally.

Private Answering

Removing the public audience significantly drops conformity rates.

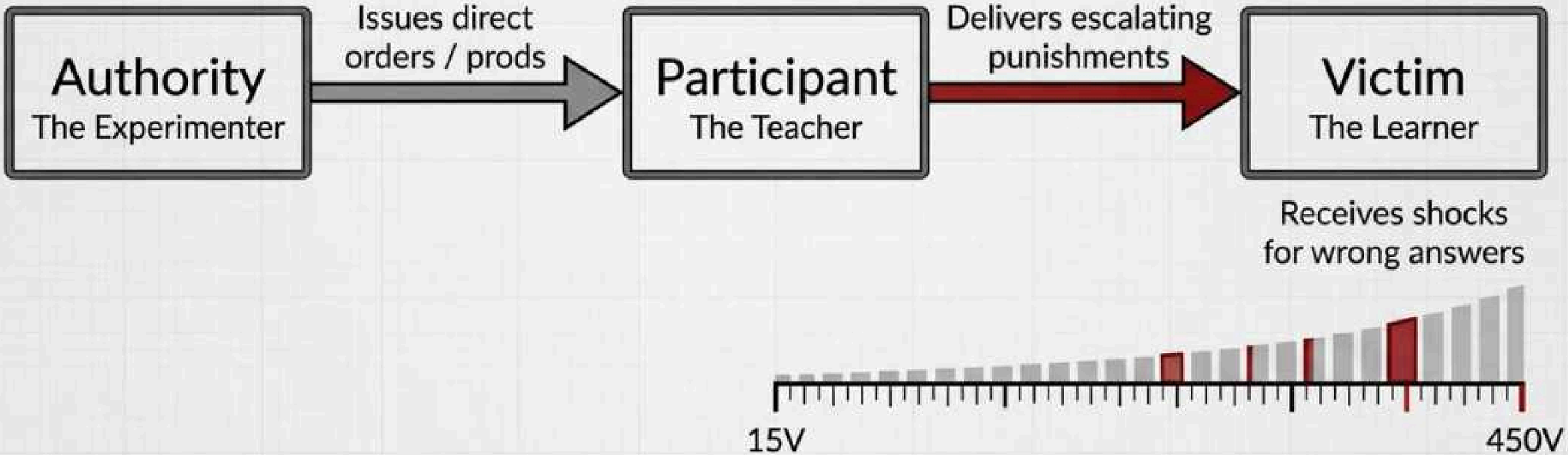
Resistance is catalyzed by one ally. Speaking up first, or backing someone who does, shatters unanimity.

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4.7

Obedience: Responding to a direct order from an authority figure.

The 1963 Setup: Presented as a study of learning.

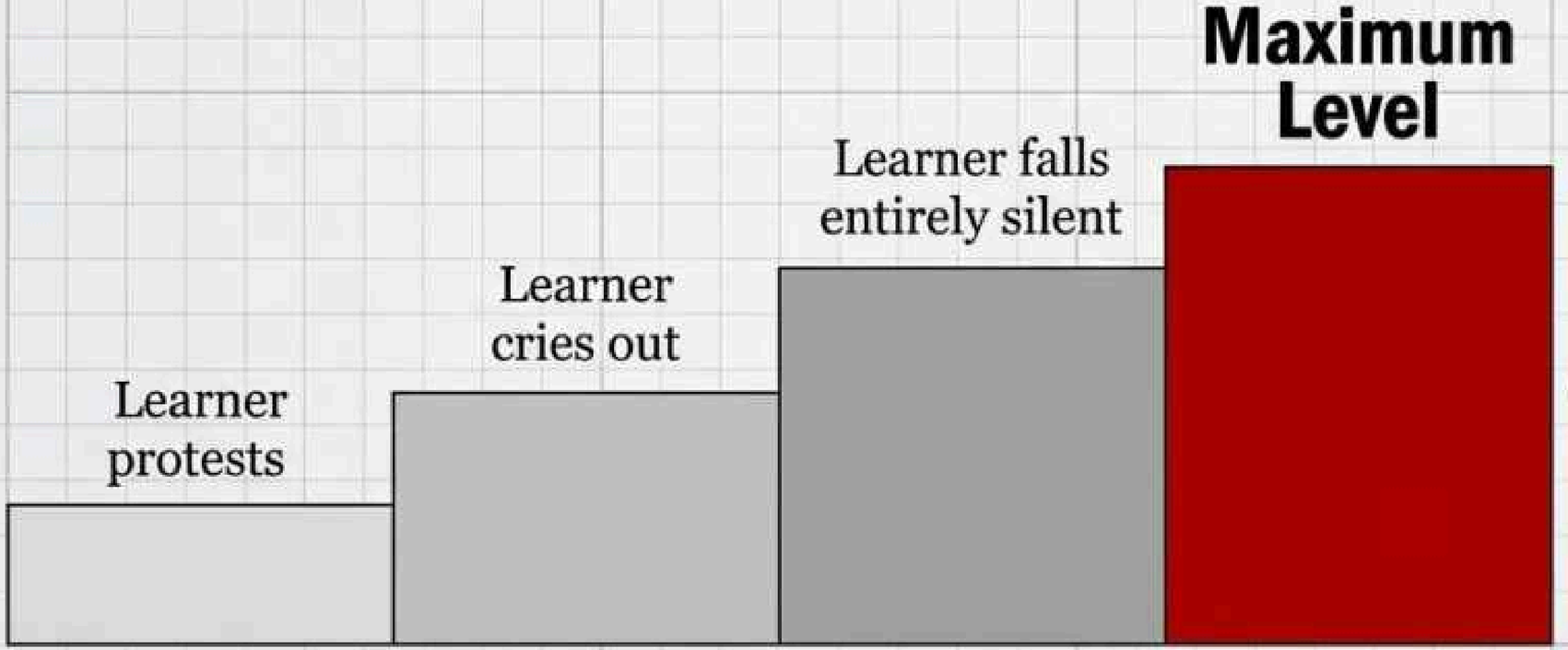


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4.8

Reality Check
No shocks were delivered.
The learner was an actor.

The Prods
"The experiment requires that you continue."

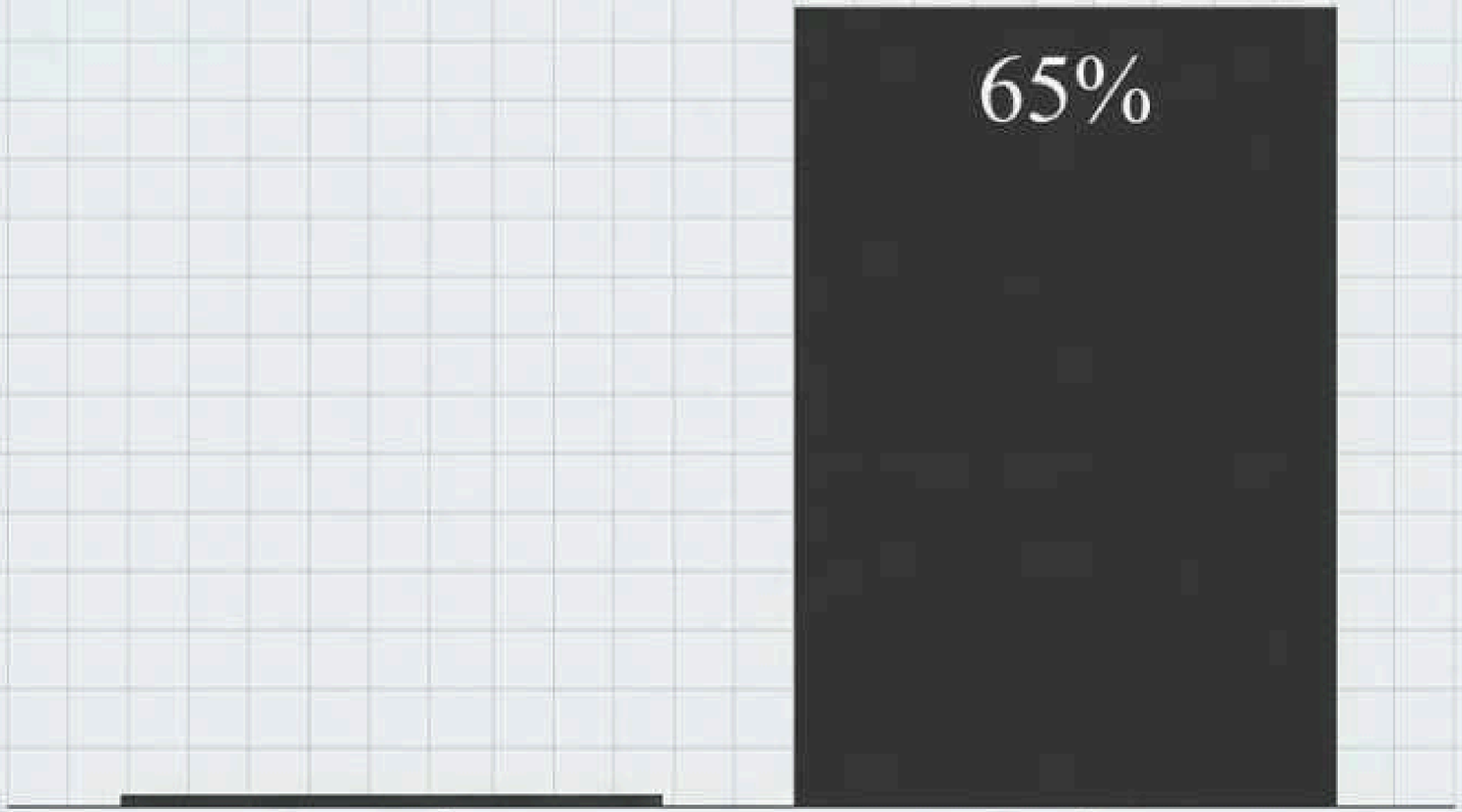


65%

(26 out of 40 participants) proceeded to the 450V maximum level

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4.9



Expectation

Predicted maximum compliance.

Pre-study estimates assumed nearly zero individuals would go to the maximum.

Reality

Actual maximum compliance.

The Power of the Situation

The results defy personal disposition expectations.

Observation Note

Participants were not sociopathic or unfeeling; they exhibited extreme psychological distress, sweating, trembling, and protesting—yet still continued the mechanism.

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4.10

Distance to Authority	Orders given by telephone	↓	**Obedience drops.**
Proximity to Victim	Learner placed in the same room as the teacher	↓	**Obedience drops.**
Peer Resistance	Two other "teachers" (confederates) refuse to continue	↓	**Obedience drops sharply.**
Institutional Prestige	Setting moved from a prestigious university to a plain office building	↓	**Obedience drops.**

Synthesis Bottom Line: Compliance is dictated by the proximity of authority, the distance from the victim, and the behavioral example of peers.

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4.11



Ethical Concerns

- Focuses on severe participant deception.
- Intense psychological distress induced during the procedure.

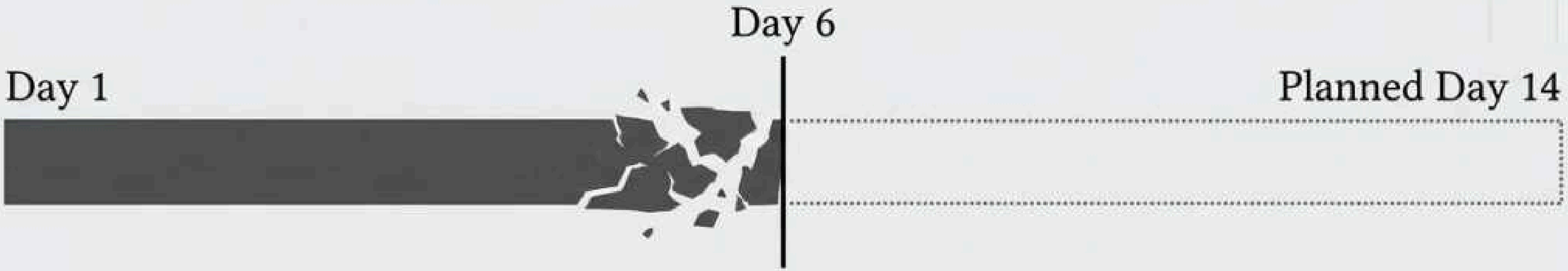
Scientific & Methodological Concerns

- Later reanalyses (e.g., in 2012) question the consistency of how the procedure and prods were executed.
- Alternative Interpretation: Participants may have obeyed not out of blind submission, but because they identified with the scientific cause—believing they were serving the greater good of research.

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4.12

The Setup: A 1971 study assigning students to “guard” or “prisoner” roles in a mock facility.



The Outcome: The experiment was aborted at Day 6 due to guards exhibiting harsh behavior and prisoners experiencing severe distress.

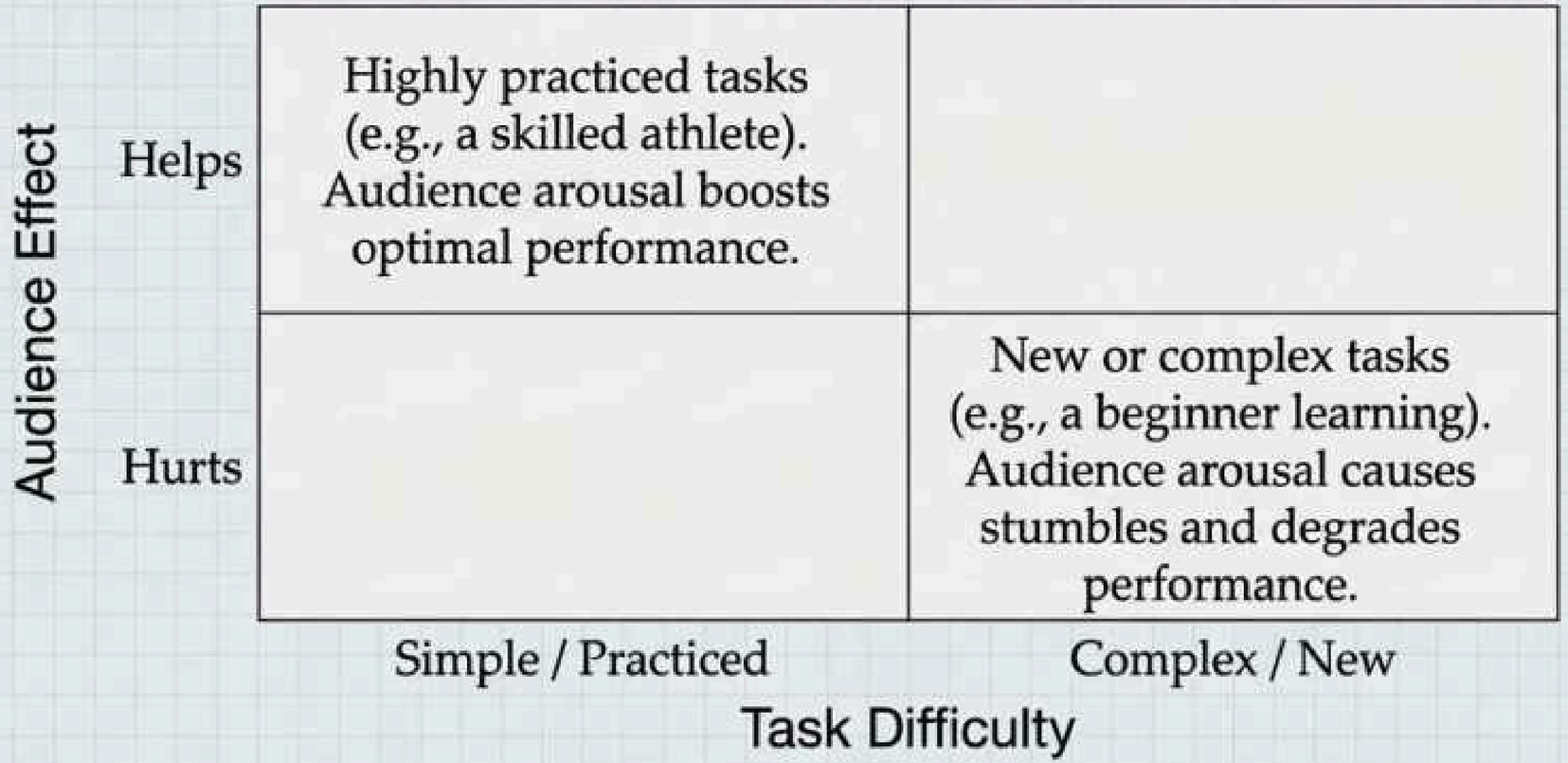
Critical Caveats

- Guards received explicit instructions beforehand.
- Demand Characteristics: Participants likely played the roles they believed researchers expected of them.
- A major 2002 replication failed to produce this same pattern of hostility.

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4.13

Core Theory: Social Facilitation (1965): The presence of others raises physiological arousal, which subsequently strengthens the dominant response.

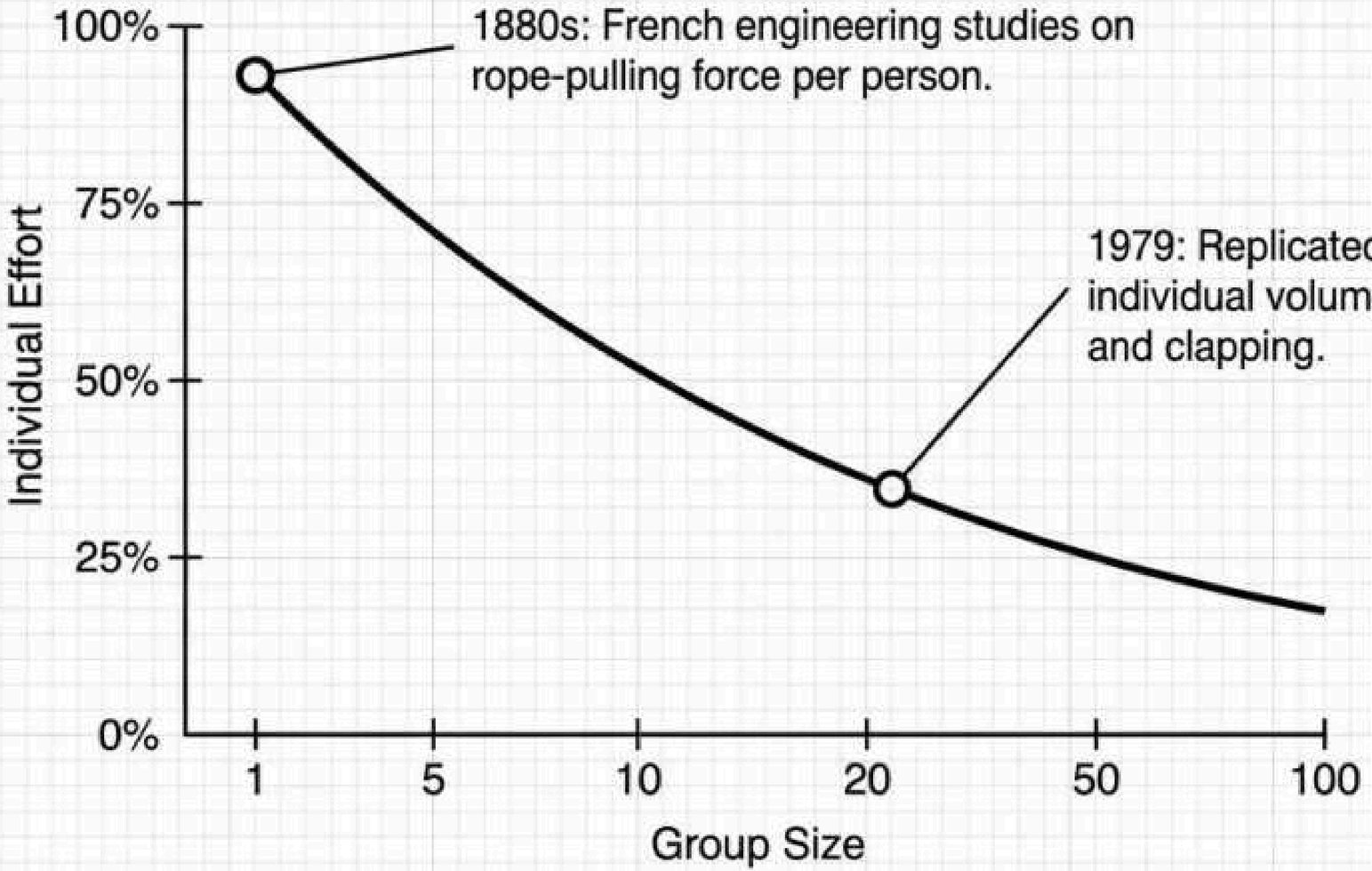


Conclusion: An audience does not universally improve or degrade performance; it amplifies the baseline capability.

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4.14

Social Loafing: The tendency to exert less effort in a group when individual contributions are invisible.

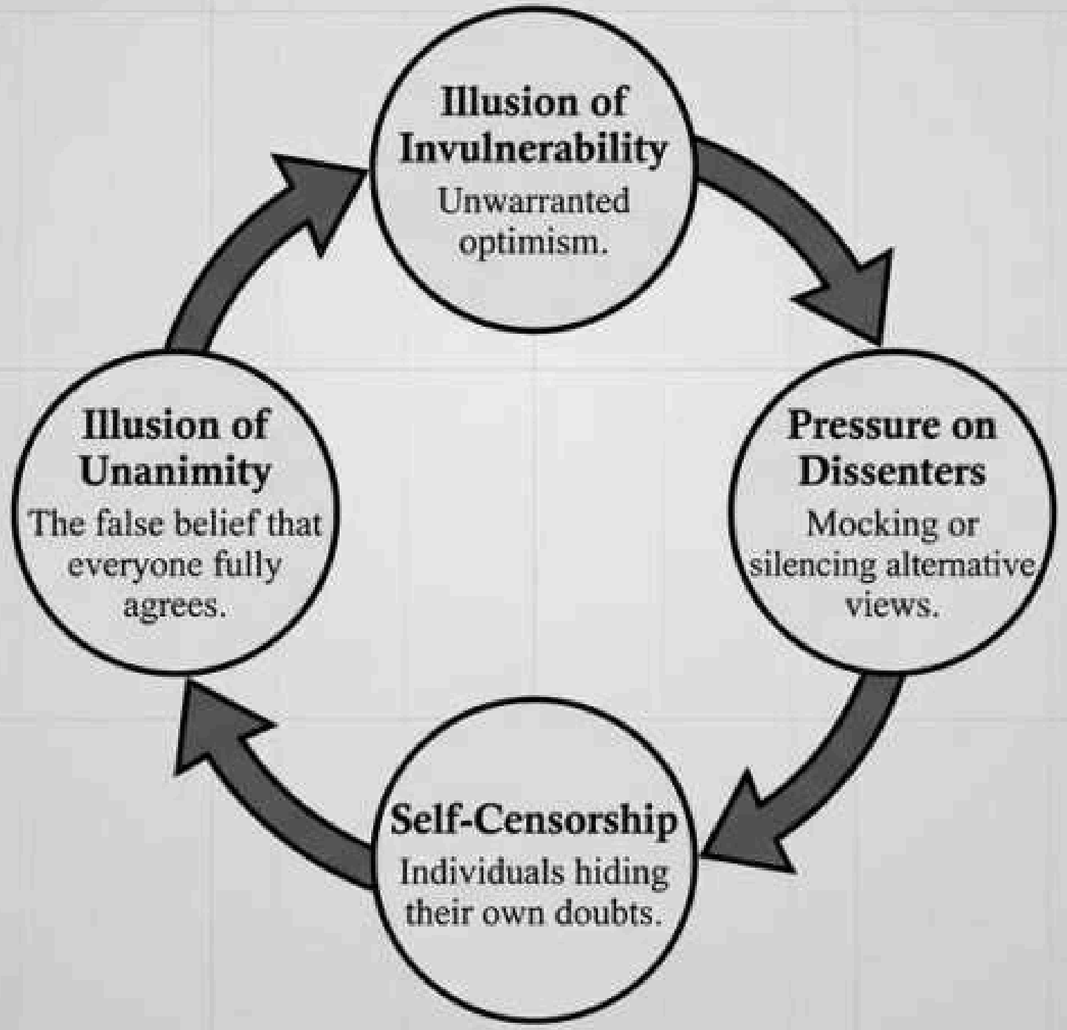


Mitigation: Slacking is significantly reduced when individual contributions are made identifiable and the task is framed as meaningful.

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4.15

Groupthink (1972): When highly cohesive groups prioritize internal agreement and consensus over accuracy and critical evaluation. (e.g., The 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion).

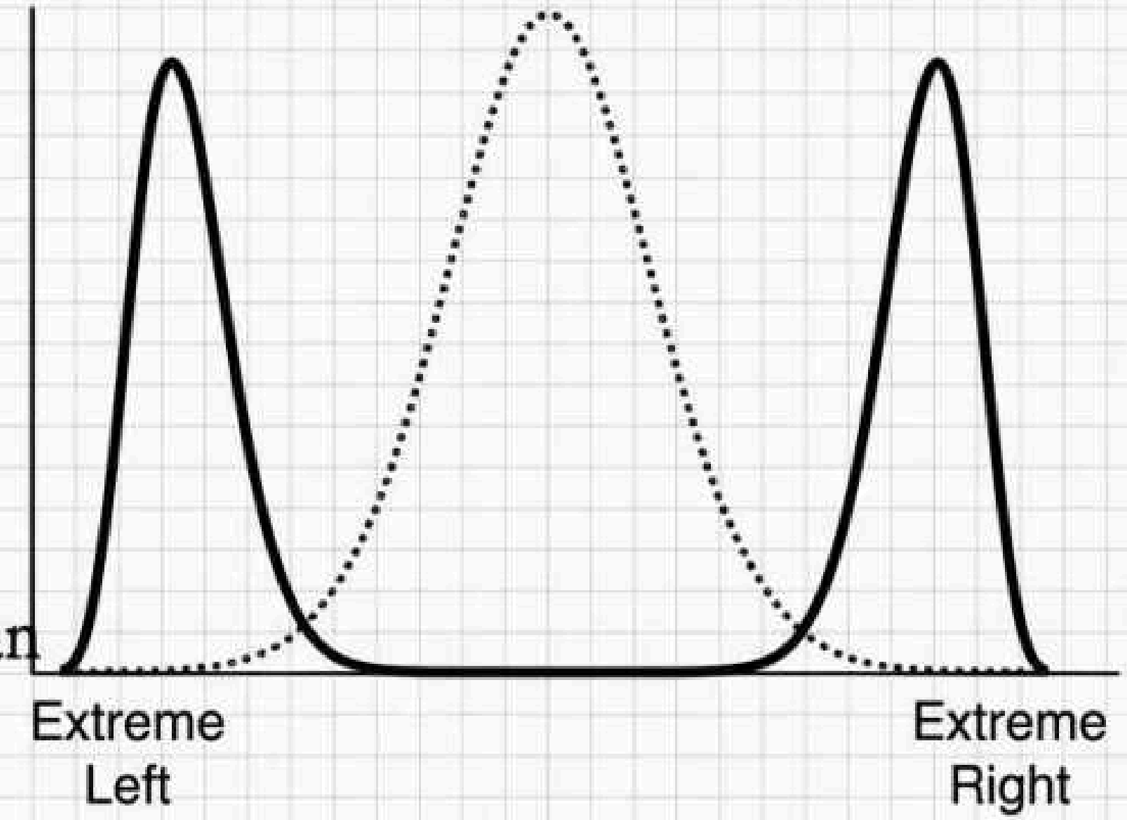


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4.16
Concept (Demonstrated in 1969): Group Polarization.

Mechanism: Discussion strengthens the average initial leaning of the group's members.

The Echo Chamber Effect: Like-minded individuals discussing an issue leave with more extreme views than they arrived with.



Why it happens: Participants are exposed to a concentrated pooling of arguments exclusively favoring their initial side, reinforcing the bias.

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4.17

1964

The Catalyst

A 1964 NYC murder case.

The Narrative vs. Reality

Initial press reports claimed thirty-eight witnesses watched and did nothing. Later historical research proved this account was heavily exaggerated.

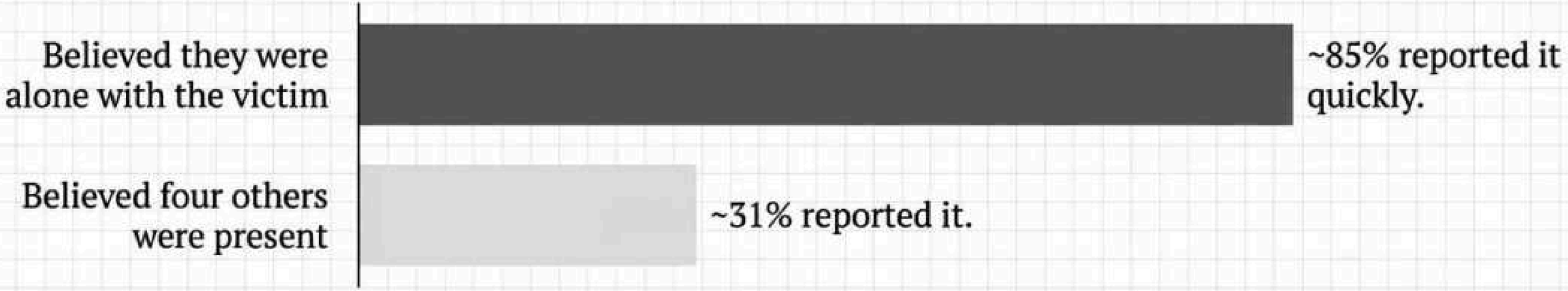
The Scientific Legacy

Despite the exaggerated reporting, the public shock of the event catalyzed rigorous behavioral research into a real phenomenon: why people in groups so frequently fail to intervene during emergencies.

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4.18

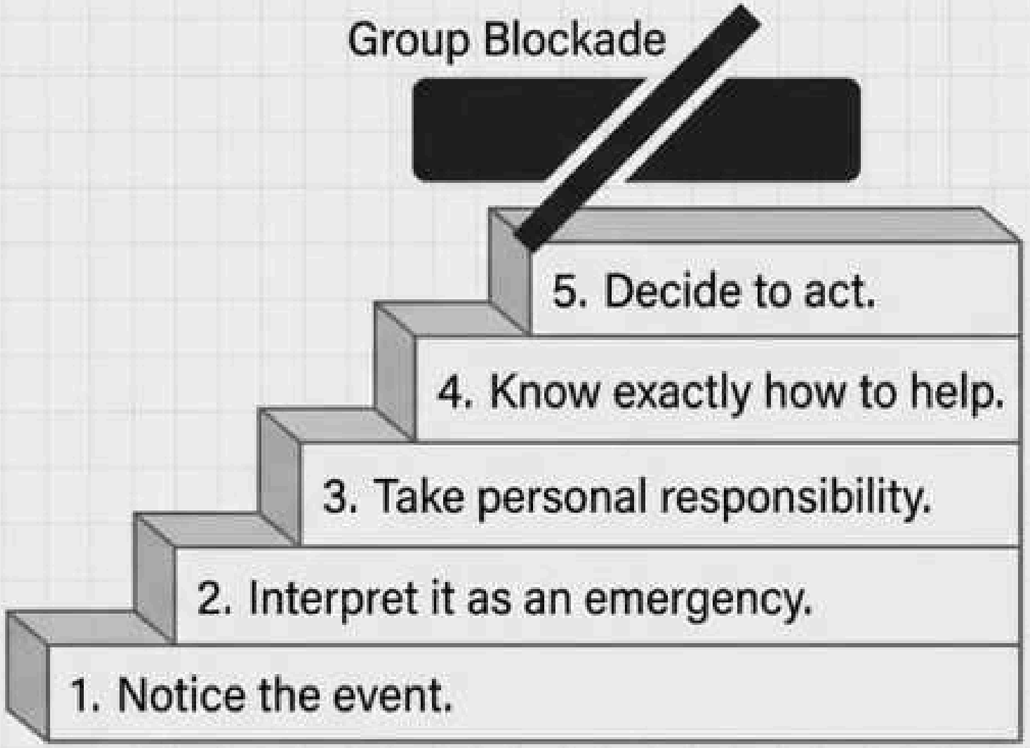
The 1968 Intercom Seizure Study: Participants heard a person seemingly having a medical emergency over an audio system.



Core Mechanisms	
Diffusion of Responsibility	**Pluralistic Ignorance**
The assumption that someone else will handle it.	Reading the physical calm of others as a definitive sign that there is no actual emergency.

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4.19



The Threat: The presence of a group can block the psychological progression at any of these five steps (especially steps 2 and 3).

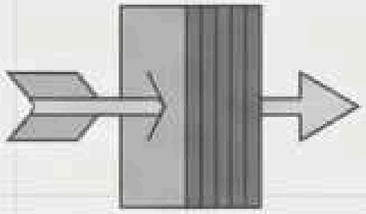
The Tactical Solution

Bypass the diffusion. Point to one specific person and assign a specific task (e.g., “You in the red jacket, call an ambulance”).

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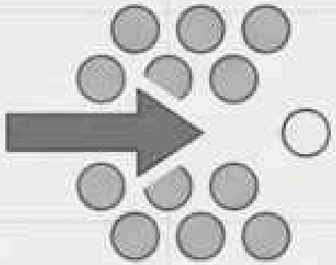
4.20

Mechanisms for Resisting Unwanted Pressure



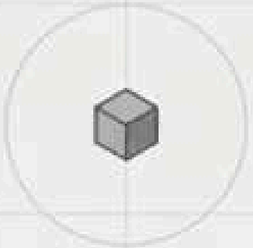
Break Pluralistic Ignorance.

Ask the questions that others may be privately thinking but are too afraid to verbalize.



Shatter Unanimity.

Find just one ally. The data confirms that a single dissenter drastically reduces conformity.



The Isolation Check.

Perform a mental baseline reset: “Would I be doing this if I were completely alone?”

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4.21

Reflection

Recall a specific instance of yielding to to a group despite private doubts.

Diagnostic query: Was it Informational (seeking the right answer) or Normative (seeking belonging)?

What specific variable would have made resistance viable?

Looking Ahead to Lecture 5

Transitioning from internal group dynamics to inter-group conflict.

Focus areas:

- In-group/out-group division
- The mechanics of stereotyping
- The systemic genesis of prejudice.

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