

# Thinking About Deviance



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# Identifying Deviants and Defining Deviance

- Class examples?
- Scholars' lists?
- Definitions from class?
  - common elements
- Definitions from scholars?
  - common elements

# A simple normative definition of “deviance”

- Behavior that does not conform to group-shared norms; behavior that (in some way) does not meet the expectations of a group or a society as a whole.

# A simple definition of “norms”

- Group-shared expectations, which operate to produce behavior regularities on the part of individuals and groups;
- Rules for behavior; group-shared expectations which operate to produce behavioral regularities on the part of individuals and groups.

# Problems with thinking about “norms”

- Thinking about “the group”
  - which group?
  - how much consensus?
- Thinking about sources of variation
  - between societies
  - over time
  - across groups (within a single society)

**Table 1.3**

**The Cultural Relativity of Deviance**

<b>Types of Act</b>	<b>Percentage who think act should be prohibited by law*</b>				
	<b>India</b>	<b>Iran</b>	<b>Italy (Sardinia)</b>	<b>U.S.</b>	<b>Yugoslavia</b>
<b>Homosexuality in private between consenting adults</b>	74	90	87	18	72
<b>Public, non-violent political protest</b>	33	77	35	6	46
<b>Failure to help another person in danger</b>	45	56	80	28	77
<b>Air pollution caused by a factory</b>	99	98	96	96	92

**\*Percentages have been rounded off.**

*Source:* Adapted from Graeme Newman. *Comparative Deviance: Perception and Law in Six Cultures*. New York: Elsevier, 1976, p. 116, Table 4.

**Table 1.2**

**Most Frequent Responses to the Question “What is Deviant?”**

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<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Homosexuals</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Drug addicts</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Alcoholics</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Prostitutes</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Murderers</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Criminals</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Lesbians</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Juvenile delinquents</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Beatniks</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Mentally ill</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Perverts</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Communists</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Atheists</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Political extremists</b>	<b>10</b>

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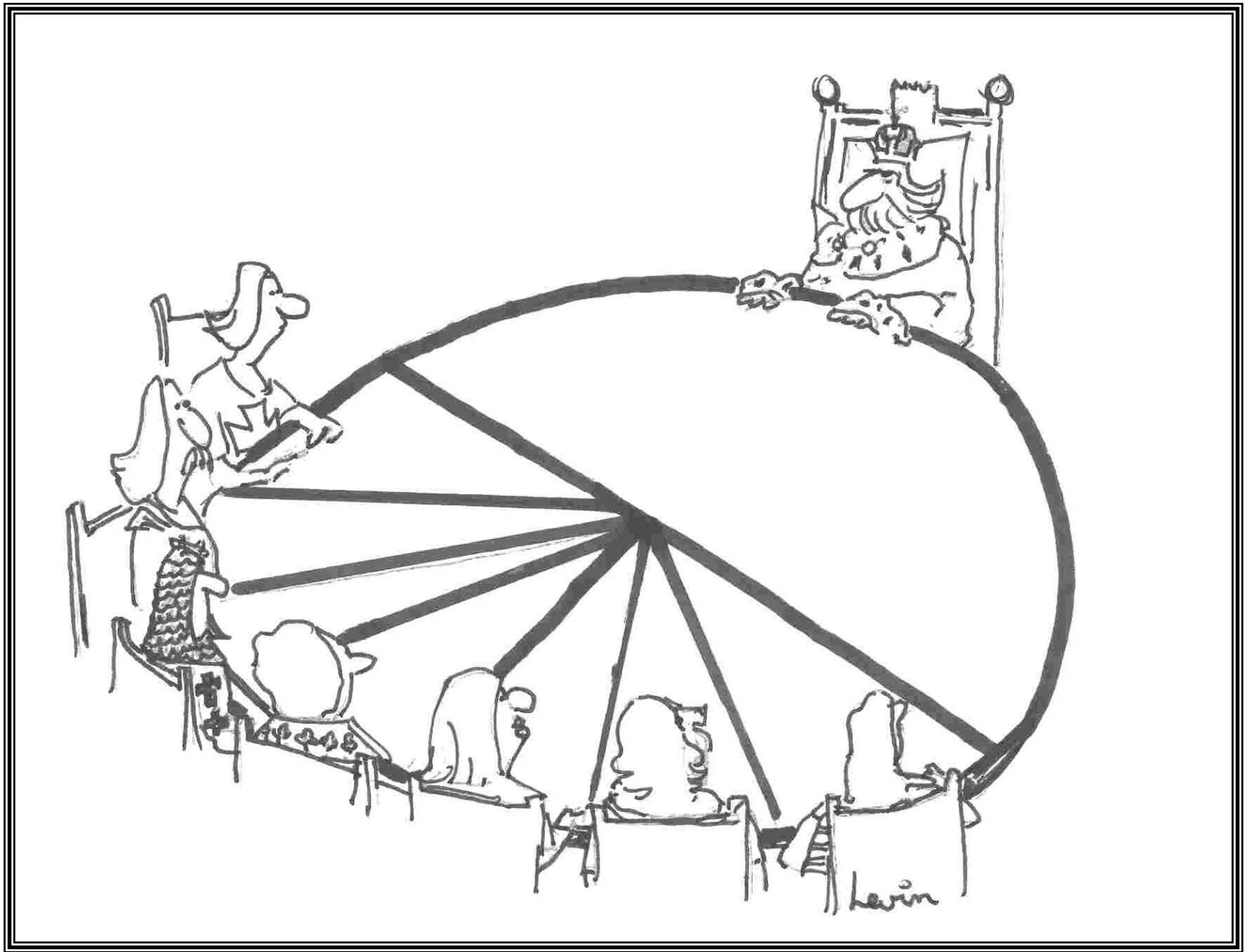
# Norms as social phenomena

- Group-shared expectations
- A moral quality
- Sanctions
  - Formal
  - Informal
- Guides to action/"shoulds"
- Patterns of behavioral regularity
- A function of social influence
- A source of conformity

**Table 1.1**

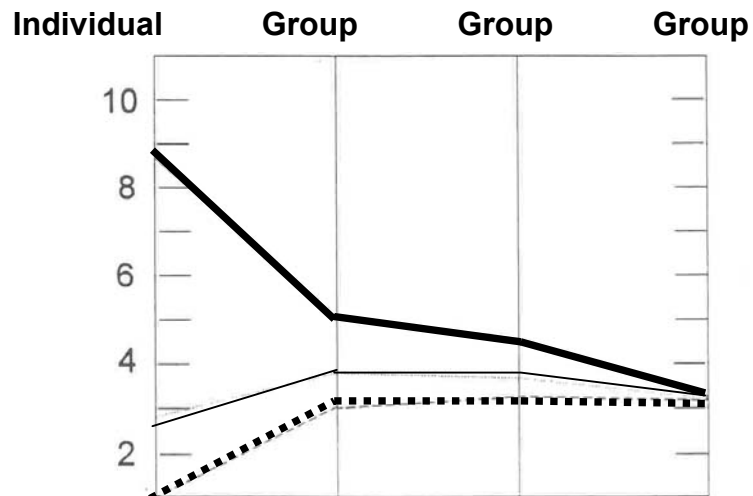
**Examples of types of sanctions**

<b>Source of Sanction</b>	<b>Content of Sanction</b>	
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Formal</b>	<b>Bonuses Medals Citations Promotions</b>	<b>Imprisonment Fines Dismissal from job Excommunication from church</b>
<b>Informal</b>	<b>Praise Encouragement Pats on the back Signs of approval</b>	<b>Criticism Ridicule Gossip Ostracism</b>



# SHERIF'S AUTOKINETIC EFFECT

Amount of  
perceived  
movement  
in inches



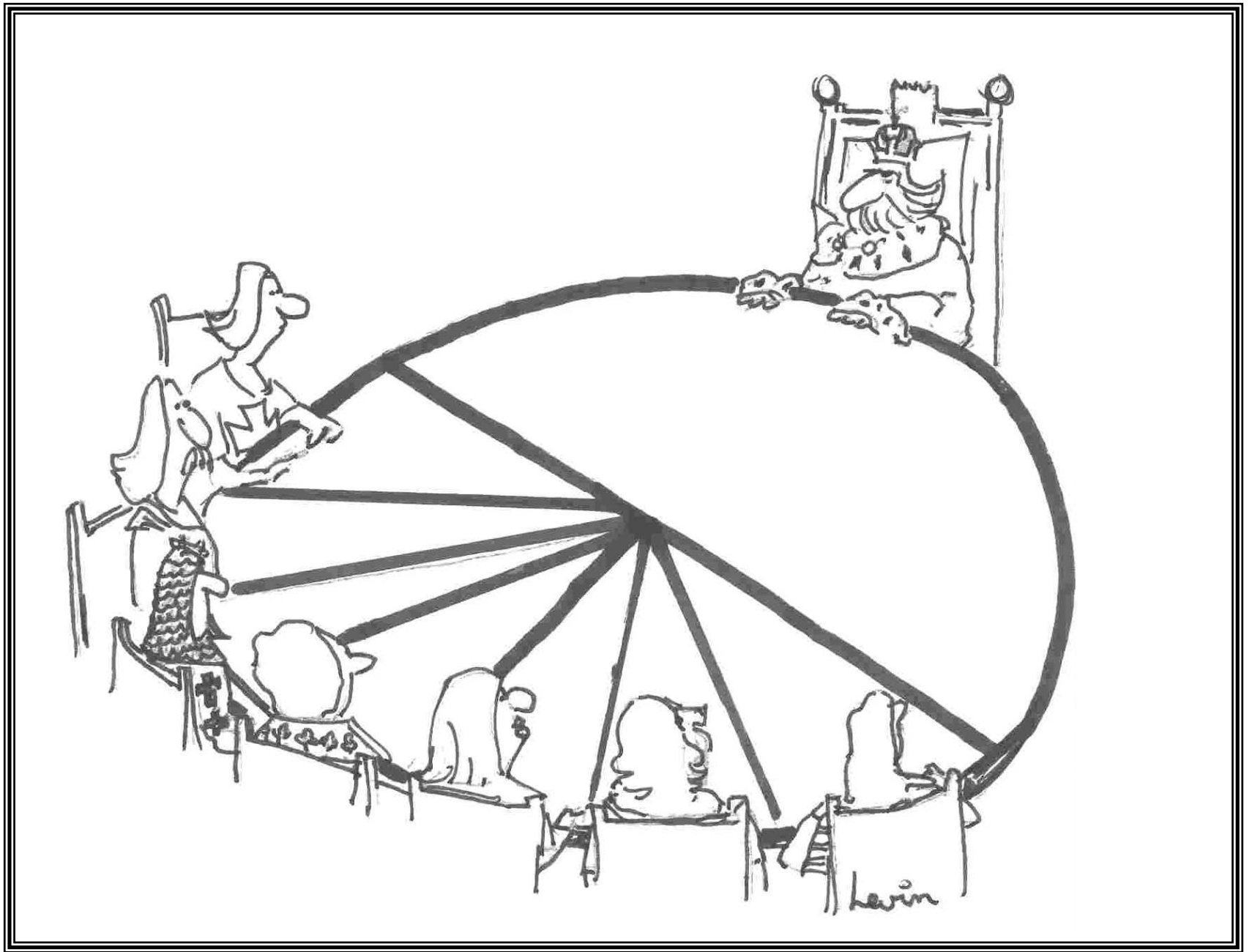
Medians in groups of three subjects

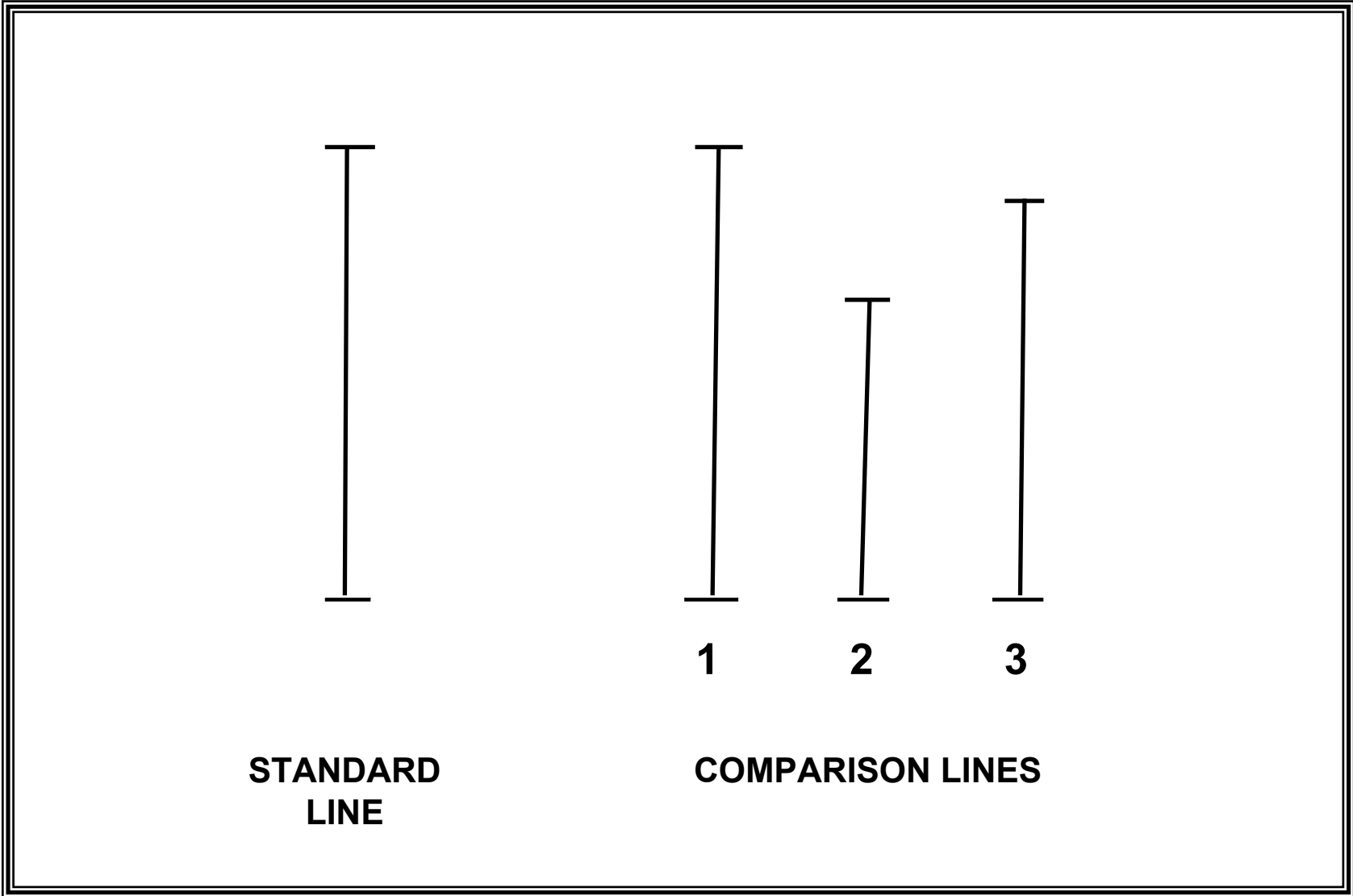
# Key findings from Sherif's work

- Individuals are inclined to depend on one another for clues or suggestions about the course of action to take;
- Group consensus has an effect that carries over to behavior outside the context of the group;
- These processes usually go on without our being aware of it.

## Key concept from Sherif's work

- Conformity through informational social influence is our tendency to employ other persons as a source of information. That is, we conform because we use others' actions as guides to understanding reality and the world around us.







## Key concept from Asch's work

- Conformity through *normative influence* is our tendency to conform to the expectations of others; we conform because we wish to behave as others expect us to behave.

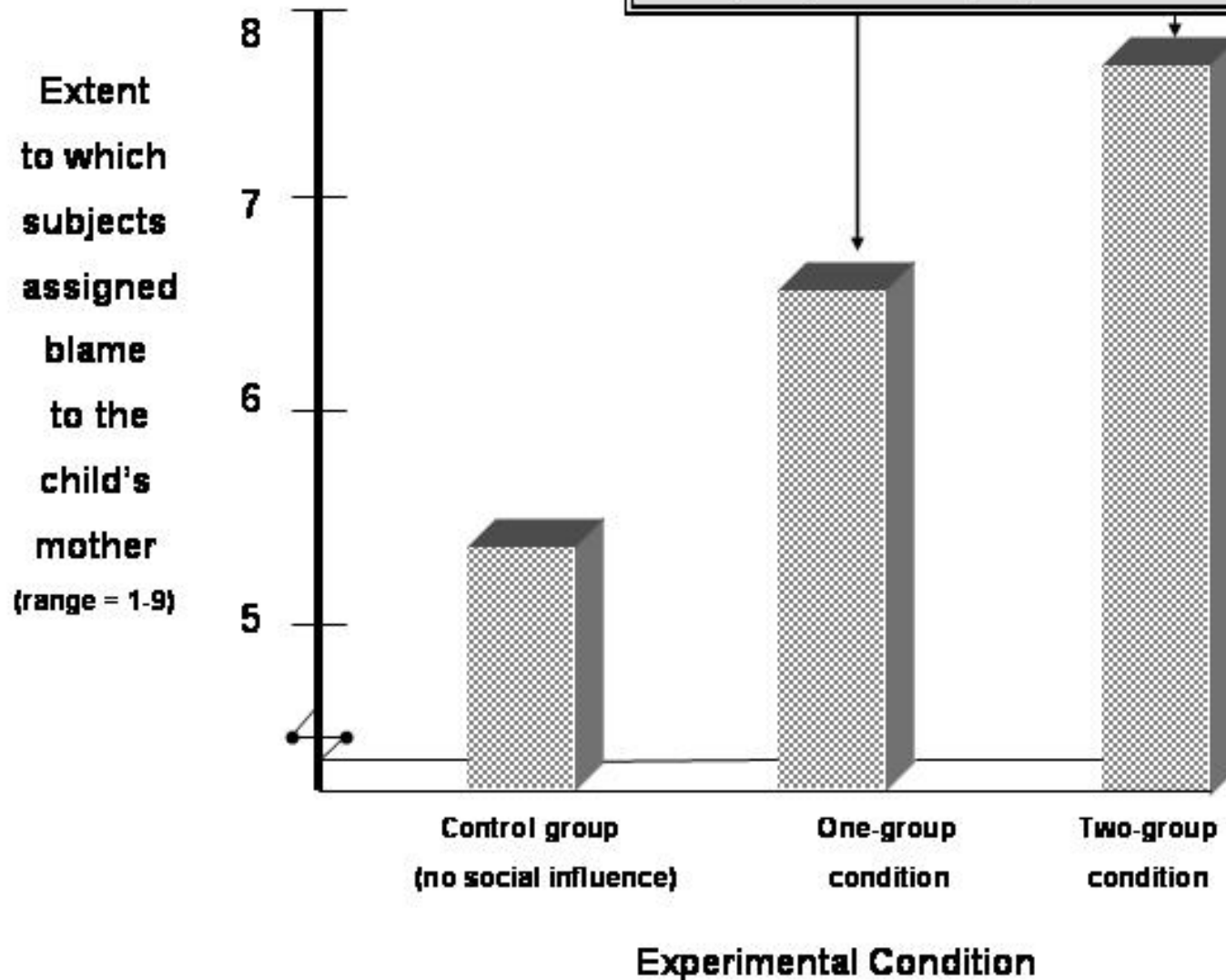
# Newton and Mann's Study of "Crowd Size as a Factor in the Persuasion Process: A Study of Religious Crusade Meetings"

- Salvation \*
- Assurance
- Rededication
- Others

# Groups in Wilder's Study

- Group #1: simply rated the accident.
- Group #2: listened to a taped discussion of a single-group of four persons before offering a rating.
- Group #3: listened to two separate tapes presenting a discussion between two individuals before offering a rating.

**Subjects are influenced more by social pressure from two groups of two people than by social pressure from one group of four people.**



## Key finding from Wilder's work

- Our tendency to conform increases as the number of the persons in the group increases; however, it is *the number of independent sources of influence*—not simply the number of persons involved—that is crucial.

# Denzin's Typology of Norms

- Civil-Legal Order: rules that are formalized into laws and enforced by specialized bodies, such as the police;
- Ceremonial Rules/Standards of Etiquette: conduct rules that govern face-to-face interaction among people in public and private settings; largely unarticulated, but usually understood;
- rules of relationships: standards of conduct that are extremely commonplace since they consist of all those behavioral standards that evolve within specific, relatively enduring interactional relationships, such as between members of a family.