

REACHING A VERDICT

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- Stages & Influences on Decision Making
 - Majority Influence
 - Minority Influence



Reaching a Verdict

- Jury decision-making difficult to research as takes place behind closed doors & jury is sworn to secrecy
- What do you think influences decision making?
 - psychological (cognitive) processes
 - size of jury
 - leadership factors
 - gender / ethnicity
 - individual differences
- **Hastie et al (1983)** examine stages of jury deliberation



STAGES IN JURY DECISION MAKING

- **Pennington & Hastie (1988):** Three stages in decision-making:
 1. **Narrative story organisation** (gained from info. from trial, schemas, expectations)
 2. **Learning Verdict definitions** (end of trial categories)
 3. **Making a decision** (matching story with verdict category)
 4. **Argue a case to achieve a verdict** (jury deliberation)

STAGES IN DECISION MAKING

- **Hastie et al (1983): Stages & influences on decision-making**
- **Orientation Period:**
 - Relaxed & open discussion
 - Agenda set
 - Questions raised & explored
- **Open Confrontation:**
 - Fierce debate
 - Explore different interpretations
 - Pressure on minority to conform / group decision
- **Reconciliation:**
 - Attempts to smooth over conflict
 - Tension released through humour



Reaching a Verdict: Majority influence

- **Key Study:** **Asch (1955): The Power of Majority Influence & Conformity**
- **Aim:** To investigate the effects of conformity to a majority when the task is unambiguous
- **Method:** Laboratory experiment
- **Participants:**
- **Procedure:** P sat with group of other 'participants' (stooges) & shown picture of lines. P asked to give answer to question to which stooges already clearly given wrong answer.



- 'Which of 3 lines (A, B, or C) matches X?'

Key Study: **Asch (1955): The Power of Majority Influence & Conformity**

- **Results:**

- Ps conformed in a approx 33% of trials
- If one stooge disrupts conformity then falls to 5%
- Majorities bigger than 3 make little difference to effect



- **Conclusions:** Strong tendencies to conform to group (belonging, being 'right')
- Jury task more complex but research shows clear majority influence (esp. if expressed early)

Reaching a Verdict: Minority Influence

- What factors may cause others to conform to a minority view?
- **Moscovici (1985):** consistency of minority view very persuasive
- Other factors: autonomy, locus of control
- **Key Study: Nemeth & Wachtler: Influence of perceived autonomy on minority influence**
- **Aim:** To investigate influence of autonomy & consistency
- **Method:** Laboratory experiment (mock trial)
- **Participants:** Adult students (groups of five)

Nemeth & Wachtler: Influence of perceived autonomy on minority influence

- **Procedure:** Ps put in groups of 5 (including one stooge/confederate) to deliberate on amount of compensation due to victim of injury.
- Ps make individual verdict then go to another room with rectangular table
- Half group - Ps choose seat (stooge at head)
- Half group - Experimenter chooses seats
- Deliberation: stooge consistently adopts deviant position



Nemeth & Wachtler: Influence of perceived autonomy on minority influence

- **Results:**
- Stooage influences decision when he is consistent & when percieved as **automonous** (chosen own seat)
- Little influence when when seated by experimenter
- Sitting at head of table: more consistent & confident
- **Conclusion:**
- Minority influence is possible
- Repercussions for jury room where seated around long table

