

Answering an antisemitic remark: differences in attitude change by argument, tone, answerer and place in Citron's 1946 experiments

In 1946 the American Jewish Congress paid passers-by near Times Square and in downtown Newark half a dollar to watch a short play. In an employment-office waiting room, “Jones” loses his turn to “Goldstein” and says “These Jews are all alike.” Another man answers him. The answer appealed either to American values (“We don't want that kind of talk in America”) or to individual differences (“You find good and bad in every group”), and was spoken either calmly or indignantly. Audience members rated Jones and the Jews before and after the answer. Jewish audience members were excluded.



Outcome: Exp. I and II, a six-item score; Exp. III, the nine-step question “The Jews are the best citizens ... the worst citizens in the country,” asked just before and just after the answer.

Re-analysis: Ron Levi and Sol Goldberg, University of Toronto (2026). Sources: Citron, Chein & Harding (1950), Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 45: 99–126, Tables 2, 5, 7–11; Citron (1952), Experiments on Answering Anti-Minority Remarks, PhD dissertation, Columbia University, Tables 13–21. Each estimate is divided by Citron's within-group standard deviation (Cohen's d) and combined by inverse-variance weights. Answers were assigned to whole audiences; where Citron reports between-session variation for these outcomes (Exp. II; Exp. III citizenship), it is no larger than within-session variation.