

Spiral of Silence

Communications & Media

People who believe their view is losing tend to stop voicing it.

How the spiral turns.

1

Scan the climate

People estimate which opinion is dominant, largely from media.

2

Fear isolation

Holding a visibly minority view carries a social cost.

3

Minority quietens

Those who feel outnumbered speak less in public settings.

4

Silence reads as consent

Reduced expression makes the majority look larger than it is.

5

The loop tightens

The perceived gap widens, and expression falls further.

Educational reference. Support is mixed: the fear-of-isolation mechanism is contested and effects vary by issue and culture.