

PSy1 ~ Social Influence

- Ψ Types of conformity: internalisation, identification and compliance.
 - Internalisation
 - Identification
 - Compliance
- Ψ Explanations for conformity: informational social influence and normative social influence. Variables affecting conformity including group size, unanimity and task difficulty as investigated by Asch.
 - Informational Influence
 - Normative Influence
 - Asch (1951) – Lines study
 - Asch's Variations (group size, unanimity, task difficulty)
- Ψ Conformity to social roles as investigated by Zimbardo.
 - Haney, Banks and Zimbardo (1971) – Prison Experiment
 - Reicher and Haslam (2002/2006) – The Experiment
- Ψ Explanations for Obedience: agentic state and legitimacy of authority, and situational variables affecting obedience including proximity, location and uniform, as investigated by Milgram. Dispositional explanation for obedience: the Authoritarian Personality.
 - Milgram (1963) – electric shock study
 - Milgram's Variations
 - Hofling (1966) – nurses study
 - Agentic State
 - Legitimate Authority
 - Adorno Authoritarian personality
- Ψ Explanations of resistance to social influence, including social support and locus of control.
 - Social Support
 - Locus Of Control
- Ψ Minority influence including reference to consistency, commitment and flexibility.
 - Moscovici (1969)
- Ψ The role of social influence processes in social change.
 - Social cryptoamnesia

Glossary

Key Term	Definition
<i>Conformity</i>	
<i>Internalisation</i>	
<i>Identification</i>	
<i>Compliance</i>	
<i>Normative Social Influence</i>	
<i>Informational Social Influence</i>	
<i>Confederate</i>	
<i>Dissenter</i>	
<i>Unanimity</i>	
<i>Conformity to social roles</i>	
<i>Obedience</i>	
<i>Legitimate authority</i>	



Glossary



Key Term	Definition
<i>Agentic State</i>	
<i>Situational Variables</i>	
<i>Proximity</i>	
<i>Dispositional explanation</i>	
<i>Authoritarian Personality</i>	
<i>Resistance to social influence</i>	
<i>Social Support</i>	
<i>Locus of control</i>	
<i>Minority Influence</i>	
<i>Consistency</i>	
<i>Commitment</i>	



Glossary



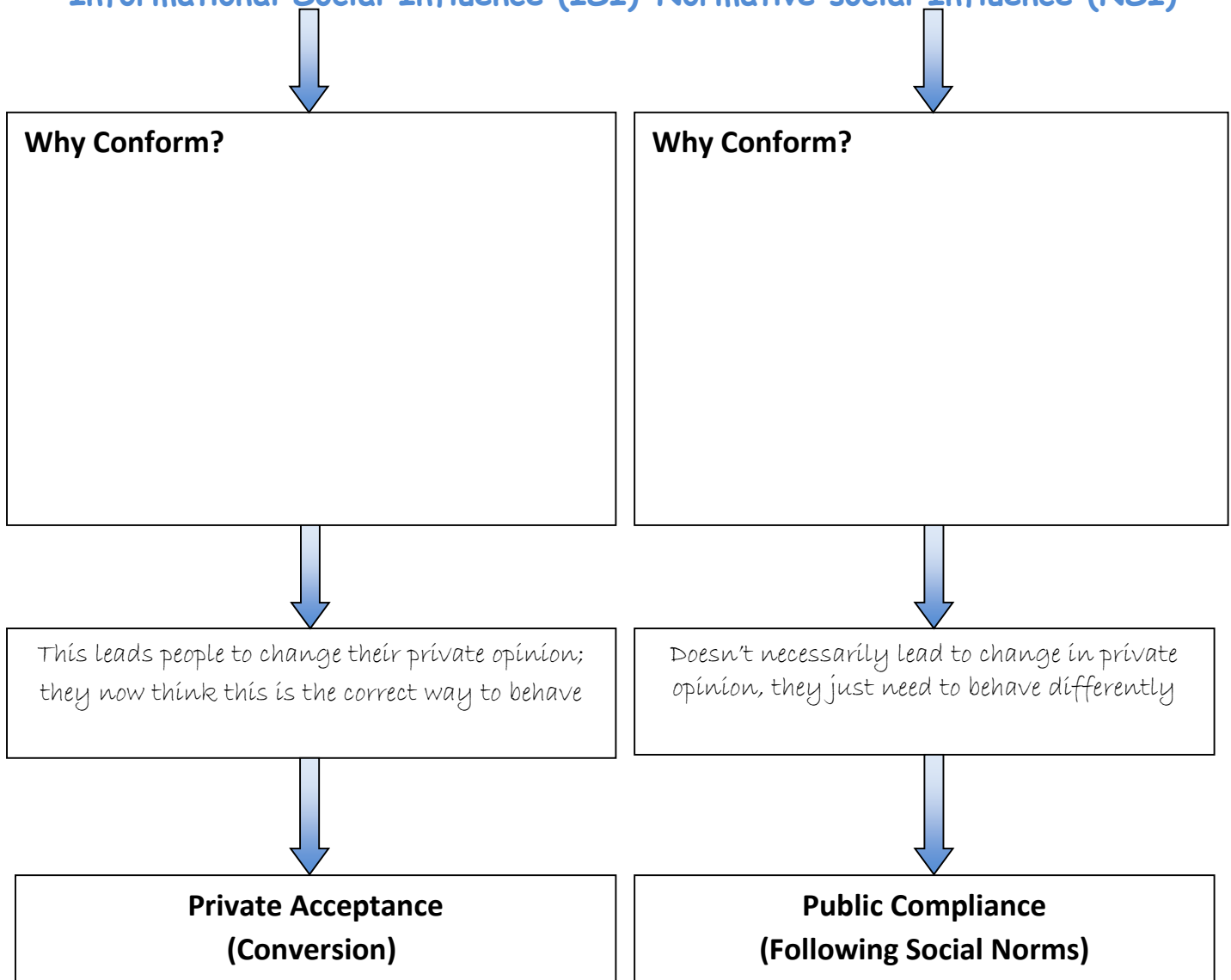
Key Term	Definition
<i>Flexibility</i>	
<i>Snowball Effect</i>	
<i>Social Cryptoamnesia</i>	

Conformity

Definition:

Explanations for Conformity

Informational Social Influence (ISI) Normative social Influence (NSI)



Types of Conformity

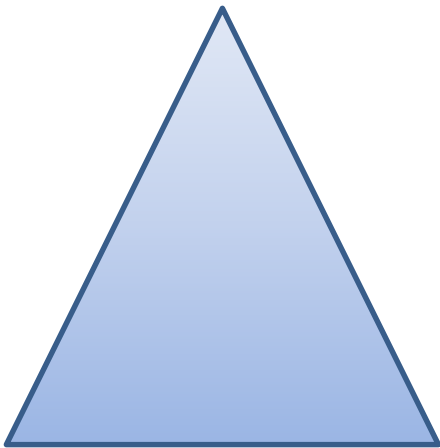
Kelman (1958)

Internalisation

Definition:

Identification

Definition:



Compliance

Definition:

Application: Conformity in Real Life

Here are some real-life examples of conformity. For each one, identify the different type(s) of conformity that are happening. You should try to explain your answers.

Sam has just started work in an office. On his second day there, his colleagues had a discussion about asylum seekers coming to the UK. His colleagues thought that they received favourable treatment from the government and that this should stop. Sam doesn't agree with this view, but when he was asked what he thought, he said that his colleagues were right.

Type of conformity:

Parvinder is a police officer. Her friends have remarked that when she is off duty, she is a relaxed and easy going person but when she is in uniform she becomes much more serious and authoritative. In fact, it's almost as if she was two different people.

Type of conformity:

Emma is a student. When she first went to university, she made friends with a group of students who were passionate about animal rights. At the time, Emma didn't have very strong opinions on animal research but over the past few months she has become very much against it. Now she has joined a campaign against animal research and has started attending public demonstrations with her friends.

Type of conformity:

It is Jim's first day of college, but he has arrived late and missed the part where a lecturer told all the new students what they should do during induction. He sees a group of students filing off towards a corridor and decides to follow them.

Type of conformity:



CONFORMITY

1. Explain what is meant by identification. Give a real-life example. **(3 marks)**
2. Samira has just started a new job at New Look. She notices that most of her new workmates tend to return a bit late from their lunch break. Samira doesn't want to get in trouble with the boss but she does want to get on with the rest of her team, so she starts coming back a few minutes late.

What type of conformity is shown by Samira? Explain your answer. **(2 marks)**

Use your knowledge of explanations of conformity to explain why Samira comes back late for work from her lunch break. **(4 marks)**

3. The following descriptions relate to conformity:

- A Looking to the group for information as to the correct behavior.
- B Going along with a group because we accept their belief system as our own.
- C Going along with a group, even though privately we do not agree with them.
- D Conforming to group norms publicly and privately, but only temporarily, as conformity is not maintained outside the presence of the group.

Complete the table writing which description, A, B, C or D, describes which type of conformity. One statement will be left over. **(3 marks)**

Type of conformity	Description
Compliance	
Internalisation	
Identification	

Exam Focus cont...

4. Pritt has recently moved to a new school and has found it hard to make new friends, but she noticed that many fellow students support the local football team, Vale City. She bought a replica shirt of the team, even though she had little knowledge of or interest in football, and on wearing the shirt to school, soon found people being friendly to her and including her in their activities.
- a) What kind of conformity is being exhibited in the above passage? **(1 mark)**
- b) Refer to features of the passage to justify your answer. **(3 marks)**

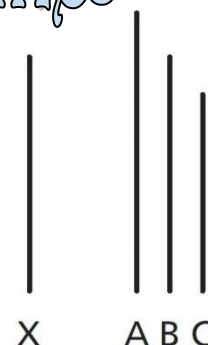
This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Research Evidence - Asch (1951) "Lines"

Aims: Asch was interested to see whether people would conform to the majority in a situation where there could be no doubt about the correct answer to a question.

Procedure:

- Fifty male college students were studied in an unambiguous test of conformity.
- He showed a pair of cards to seven people seated around a table. On one card was a single "test" line, on the other were three "comparison" lines. Participants were asked to say out loud which of the comparison lines was equal in length to the test line. The correct judgements were always obvious.
- Only one of the seven people was a true participant, the other six were confederates of Asch. The participant was seated near the end of the table and was next to last to state his judgements. The confederates were asked to give the same wrong answer on 12 out of the 18 trials. How many participants would conform to the group and give the wrong answer?



Findings:

- On 32% of the critical trials (those when the confederates had given the wrong answer) naïve participants conformed to the unanimous view of the majority, despite the fact that the correct answer was always obvious.
- 74% of the naïve participants conformed at least once.
- 26% of participants never conformed. Some of these participants were confident in their judgements but more often they experienced tension and doubt.
- A small minority claimed that they had actually perceived the line identified by the majority as the correct answer.
- Most conforming participants thought that their perception must be inaccurate and therefore they yielded to the majority view.
- Some participants yielded because they could not bear to be in a minority.

Conclusions: Asch concluded that there are conformity effects in an unambiguous situation and that group pressures to conform are much stronger than had been thought previously. In addition, people may go along with the views of others for different reasons.

Evaluation: Use the following sheet to help evaluate this study...



Evaluating Asch

Validity?

1. Does the study have ecological validity? If you did this study in the real world would you find the same results?
2. Does the study have temporal validity? If you did this study in modern times would you find the same results?
3. Does the study have population validity? If you did this study with different people would you find the same results?



Real World Applications?

1. Are there any people or is there any place where you think that the results of this research would be useful in the real world?

Ethics?

1. Does the study have any ethical guidelines to consider?
2. Did they provide full and informed consent?
3. Did they get debriefed after the study?
4. Would they have been aware of their right to withdraw?
5. Were they deceived?



Is the study a "child of it's time"

1. Is there something special about the time in which the study was conducted that meant that the results were what they were?
2. Would we not find those results now, because we are living in a different time?

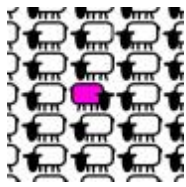
Does the study show conformity?

1. Looking carefully at results does it actually show conformity?



Is the study culturally biased?

1. Where was the study conducted?
2. Is there something different about the country in particular?
3. Is the task something that is only found in one culture, or time?



Variables affecting conformity

This activity will help you to...

- Understand and recall factors that make conformity to a majority more or less likely.
- Consider the psychological processes that govern whether people conform.

Variations on the Asch (1951) study

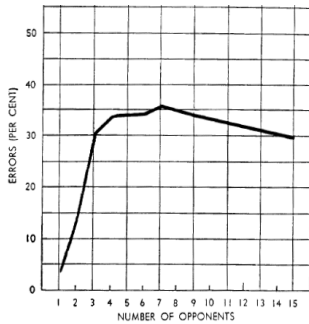
Since the original Asch (1951) research, a number of similar studies have been carried out to find out the circumstances under which people will or will not conform to a majority. Some of the variations are outlined below. For each study, suggest whether the rate of conformity would be higher or lower than the 32% found by Asch. You should also write a brief explanation of *why* you think the rate of conformity would change.

<i>Variation</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Why do you think this is?</i>
The size of the majority was increased to sixteen confederates against one participant.		
The group of confederates contained one dissenter who agreed with the participant and disagreed with the majority.		
The task was made more difficult by using lines that were much closer in length to each other and the comparison line.		
Participants give their answers privately rather than calling them out in front of the group (Deutsch & Gerard. 1955)		

Variables affecting conformity

Variations in the Asch study

❖ Group size

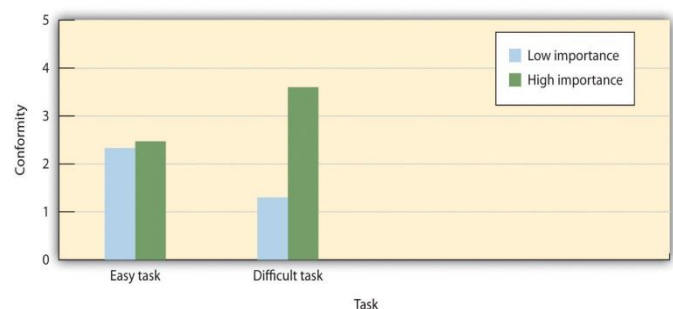


SIZE OF MAJORITY which opposed them had an effect on the subjects. With a single opponent the subject erred only 3.6 per cent of the time; with two opponents he erred 13.6 per cent; three, 31.8 per cent; four, 35.1 per cent; six, 35.2 per cent; seven, 37.1 per cent; nine, 35.1 per cent; 15, 31.2 per cent.

❖ Unanimity



❖ Task Difficulty



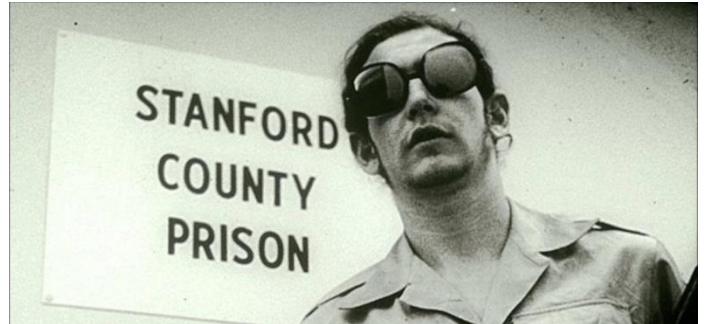
Conformity to social roles

Haney, Banks and Zimbardo
(1971) – Mock Prison Experiment

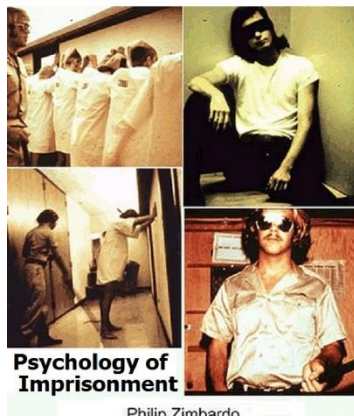
<http://www.prisonexp.org/>

Reicher (2002) BBC experiment

<http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/>



Stanford Prison Experiment

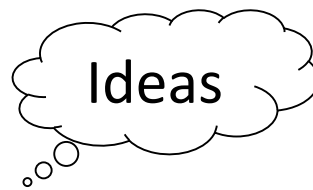


Exam Focus – Conformity to Social Roles

1. Discuss conformity to social roles. **(12 marks)**
2. (a) Outline the aims and findings of one study of conformity to social roles. **(4 marks)**
(b) Describe one ethical issue associated with this study. **(2 marks)**
3. Zimbardo's prison simulation study uses a participant observation study method. Give one strength and one weakness of this type of study. **(2 + 2 marks)**

Definition:

How is this different to conformity?



Key Study ~ Milgram (1963-74) "Electrocution"

Aims: Milgram aimed to test the hypothesis "Germans are different" which was based on the atrocities committed during WWII. He set out to investigate how the situational context could lead to ordinary people inflicting harm on others.

Procedure:

- 40 male participants aged between twenty and fifty, were recruited by a deceptive newspaper advertisement which asked for volunteers to take part in a study on "the role of punishment in learning". Each was paid \$4.50 for volunteering.
- The experiment took place in a laboratory at Yale University. Each participant was told they would either play the role of "teacher", or the role of "learner". In fact, the naïve participant was always assigned to the role of teacher and a confederate played the role of learner. The learner-confederate was a mild-mannered 47-year-old who mentioned that he had a heart complaint. The teacher's role was to administer an electric shock to the learner each time they made a mistake on a simple learning task.
- The learner was strapped into an "electric chair" in a room next door to where the teacher sat in front of a generator. The teacher was instructed by a scientist in a white lab coat to ask the

confederate about word pairs. Each time the learner made a mistake, the teacher was told to administer an electric shock, increasing the voltage by 15 volts for each incorrect answer. The generator had a row of switches which indicated shocks from 15 volts up to 450 volts (labelled "Danger- severe shock XXX").

- To begin with the confederate answered correctly, but then he began to make mistakes. As the level of shock administered increased, the confederate was heard to protest until at 180 volts he shouted that he could bear the pain no longer. At 300 volts he screamed and complained that his heart was troubling him. At 315 volts he refused to continue and from then on he made no responses to the teacher's request that he answer. The measure of obedience was the strength of the electric shock administered by the participant. Unbeknownst to the participant, the shocks were not real.
- Most participants protested and wanted to stop. Many showed signs of extreme anxiety. However, the experimenter gave standardised prods to encourage them to continue ranging from "please continue" to "you have no other choice, you must go on". The experiment continued until the teacher refused to continue or until 450 volts was reached

Findings: All participants continued to give shocks up to the 300 volt level, and 65% of participants continued to highest level 450 volts. This contradicted the predicted results that only 3% or less would reach 450 volts. Because of this 'shocking' result (how I laughed) Milgram conducted a series of variations on his original experiment to investigate the causes of the obedience he found.

Variations on Milgram's basic procedure:

Variations – situational variables:	Obedience rate (450 volts) %
Venue moved to seedy offices (Location)	
Teacher and learner in same room (Proximity)	
Teacher had to force learners hand onto shock panel (lack of responsibility)	
Teacher given support from two teachers who refuse (dissenters)	

Teacher paired with an assistant who administered shocks (responsibility)	
Experimenter instructs teacher from other room (Proximity)	

Conclusions: The research demonstrated that obedience was due more to situational factors (the experimental setting, the status of the experimenter, and the pressure exerted on the participant to continue) than to “deviant “ personality, which contradicts the “Germans are different” hypothesis. Implications include the relevance of this research to the real-life atrocities of the Second World War.

Evaluating Milgram's Work

- Ethics**

Informed consent	When participants' agreement to take part on a study is not obtained, or when participants are not informed about the nature of what they will be asked to do before they agree to participate.	It could be considered insulting or demeaning to people to use them in a study without their permission. If they are not fully informed about the purposes or methods of a study, then they may agree to participate then later change their minds but find it difficult to withdraw because they have agreed.
Deception	When participants are deliberately misled about the aims of research or the nature of some aspect of the study in which they are taking part.	Again, it could be considered demeaning to participants to lie to them for the purposes of research. Additionally, deception may result in stress and other types of damage to the participants (see below). The use of deception could have a bearing on whether pps have given informed consent (see above).

How have psychologists dealt with ethical issues?

Informed Consent

- ✓ Being informed about the purpose of the research.
- ✓ Being informed about what will be required.
- ✓ Being informed about your rights as a participant e.g. the right to withdraw.



In many situations it is not possible to obtain informed consent prior to the study commencing. Therefore other methods of obtaining consent have been proposed:

- **Presumptive consent** involves asking members of the population, who are similar to the participants, whether they would consider the research to be acceptable.
- **Prior general consent** involves asking people who volunteer to take part in research general questions before they are chosen e.g. "Would you mind taking part in a study that may cause you some stress?"
- **Retrospective consent**- Some psychologists suggest that by fully debriefing participants and giving them the opportunity to withdraw their data, the participants have provided informed consent.

Cost-benefit analysis

Ethics are determined by a balance between ends and means. If the ultimate end is for the good of humankind then psychological researchers may feel that an undesirable behaviour, such as causing stress to participants or deceiving them as to the nature of the study, is acceptable.

Deception	Cost-benefit analysis. Deception may be justifiable if the research is of potentially great benefit and the results cannot be obtained without the use of deception.	How do we decide what the costs/benefits of research are before we've done the study?
<p>COSTS</p> <p>☹ Participants may feel that they have been tricked or lied to.</p> <p>☹ Participants are not given the opportunity to give informed consent.</p> <p>☹ Participants may be distressed at finding out something about themselves they would have preferred not to know.</p> <p>☹ Participants may have lowered self-esteem as a result of taking part in the study.</p> <p>☹ May bring the psychological profession into disrepute.</p>		<p>BENEFITS</p> <p>☺ The results may raise awareness of important issues</p> <p>☺ Milgram's study may result in people not blindly obeying orders.</p> <p>☺ Asch's research may make us stand up to our own beliefs, and the rights of others.</p> <p>☺ Zimbardo's research may help us understand how being given power can change people in a negative way.</p> <p>☺ Research can also benefit the participants by giving them insight into their own behaviour.</p>

Explanations for Obedience

Explanation	Description
Legitimate Authority	
Agentic State	

Milgram explained the behaviour of his participants by suggesting that people actually have two states of behaviour when they are in a social situation:

- ⦿ The **autonomous** state – people direct their own actions, and they take responsibility for the results of those actions.
- ⦿ The **agentic** state – people allow others to direct their actions, and they pass off the responsibility for the consequences to the person giving the orders. In other words, they act as agents for another person's will.

Milgram suggested that two things must be in place in order for a person to enter the agentic state:

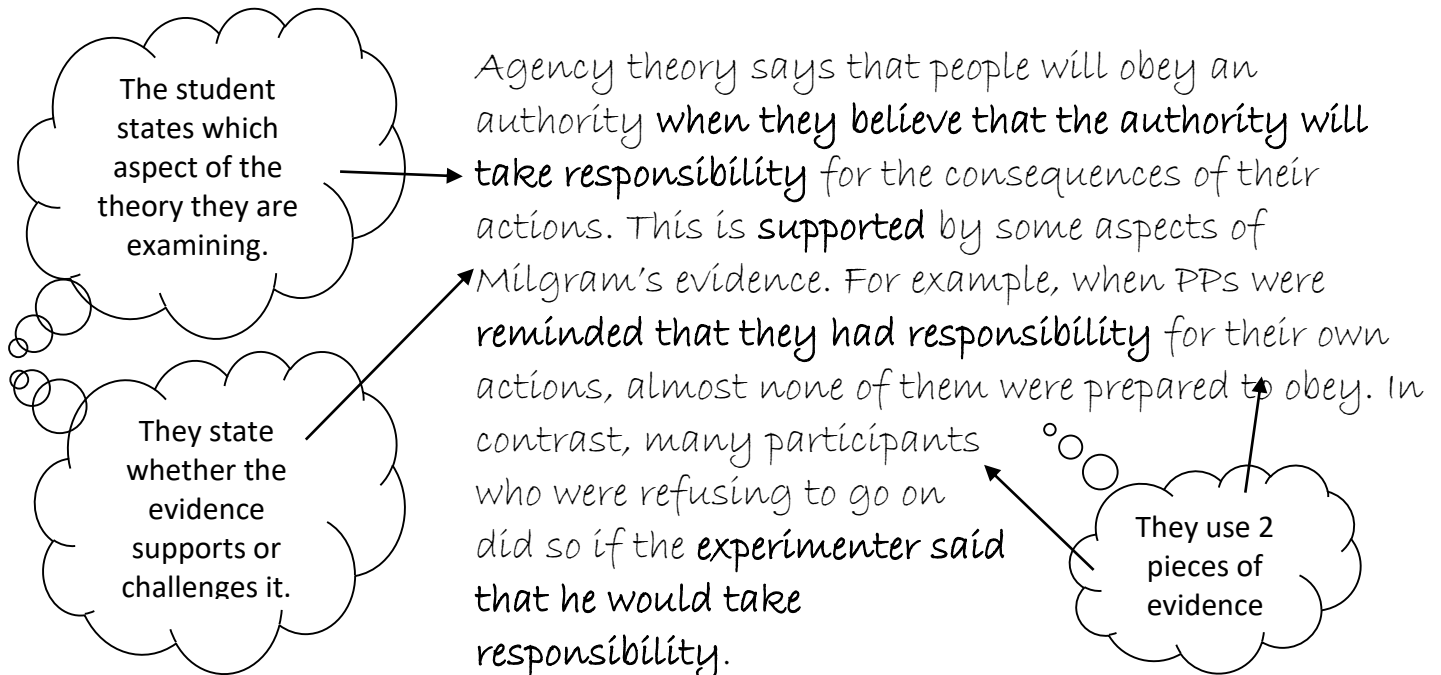
- ⦿ The person giving the orders is perceived as being qualified to direct other people's behaviour. That is, they are seen as legitimate.
- ⦿ The person being ordered about is able to believe that the authority will accept responsibility for what happens.

The point about **perceiving the authority as legitimate** is that this is usually an assumption that people make, based on evidence that may or may not be relevant. For example, people in uniforms are often

perceived to be legitimate authorities, as are people that claim to have a particular status. We may even assume that a person is authorized to order us about simply because they give us orders.

Using Evidence to Discuss a Theory

An important AO2 skill you need to develop is using evidence from research studies to assess whether a theory is correct or incorrect. This means you have to highlight aspects of the evidence that either support (fit in with) or challenge (go against) the things the theory says about why people behave in certain ways. Here is an example of a student doing this:



What You Need To Do...

Use some evidence to discuss other aspects of Agency Theory. The first example requires you to use other evidence from Milgram's research studies. The next two require you to use some additional evidence from other studies.

Evidence of Obedience in the real world:

Hofling et al (1966) conducted a study of obedience in a natural setting. Their participants were 22 nurses who were unaware that a study was taking place. The nurses received a phone call whilst they were working from a 'Dr Smith', who instructed them to give 20mg of a drug to a patient on the ward. This was twice the maximum dose stated on the bottle, and could have been very harmful to the patient. However, 21 out of the 22 nurses attempted to give the medication. When 22 other nurses were asked what they would do, 21 of them said they would not give the medication if it was them.

Extension:

- Bickman (1974) – uniform/legitimate authority
- The My Lai Massacre – a real life example of the agentic shift

Bickman carried out a field experiment in New York in which he asked passers-by to carry out unusual orders – picking up rubbish, standing on the other side of a bus stop or lending money to a stranger for a parking meter. Half the time the experimenter wore a security guards uniform and the other half in street clothes. He found that 92% obeyed the request to lend money when he wore the uniform, compared with 49% when he wore street clothes.

Source: American Experience - Vietnam Online (PBS).

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/trenches/mylai.html>

On March 16, 1968 the angry and frustrated men of Charlie Company, 11th Brigade, American Division entered the Vietnamese village of My Lai. "This is what you've been waiting for -- search and destroy -- and you've got it," said their superior officers. A short time later the killing began. As the "search and destroy" mission unfolded, it soon degenerated into the massacre of over 300 apparently unarmed civilians including women, children, and the elderly. Calley ordered his men to enter the village firing, though there had been no report of opposing fire. According to eyewitness reports offered after the event, several old men were bayoneted, praying women and children were shot in the back of the head, and at least one girl was raped and then killed. For his part, Calley was said to have rounded up a group of the villagers, ordered them into a ditch, and mowed them down in a fury of machine gun fire.

Dispositional explanation for Obedience: The Authoritarian Personality

What is an authoritarian personality?

The F Scale



THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

The F scale

The identification of a specific personality type – the **Authoritarian Personality** – provided a possible explanation for why some individuals require very little pressure in order to obey. The California **F scale** (the 'F' stood for 'Fascist') was used by Adorno *et al.* (1950) to measure the different components that made up the Authoritarian Personality. The F scale contained statements such as '*Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn*' and '*Rules are there for people to follow, not change*'. Agreeing with such items was indicative of an Authoritarian Personality. Individuals with this type of personality were rigid thinkers who obeyed authority, saw the world as black and white, and enforced strict adherence to social rules and hierarchies.

Adorno *et al.* also found that people who scored high on the F scale tended to have been raised by parents who used an authoritarian parenting style (including the use of physical punishment). Growing up within a particular social system means that people assume that this system is the expected norm. Therefore, if children happen to grow up in a particularly authoritarian family, with a strong emphasis on obedience, then they acquire these same authoritarian attitudes through a process of learning and imitation.

KEY STUDY: ELMS AND MILGRAM (1966)

One of the major debates surrounding Milgram's study of obedience was whether participants' behaviour emerged only under specific situational conditions or whether it was dispositional, i.e. the result of a particular personality pattern. Research on obedience measures *actual* submission to authority, not just what a person says he or she is likely to do, and therefore allows researchers to study whether participants high in authoritarianism are more likely to obey an authority figure.

Procedure

Elms and Milgram carried out a follow-up study using participants who had previously taken part in one of Milgram's experiments two months before. They selected 20 'obedient' participants (those who had continued to the final shock level) and 20 'defiant' participants (those who had refused to continue at some point in the experiment). Each participant completed the MMPI scale (measuring a range of personality variables) and the California F scale to specifically measure their levels of authoritarianism. Participants were also asked a series of open-ended questions, including questions about their relationship with their parents during childhood and their attitude to the 'experimenter' (the authority figure) and the 'learner' during their participation in Milgram's original study.

Findings

The researchers found little difference between obedient and defiant participants on MMPI variables. However, they did find higher levels of authoritarianism among those participants classified as obedient, compared with those classified as defiant. They also found significant differences between obedient and defiant participants that were consistent with the idea of the Authoritarian Personality. For example, obedient participants reported being less close to their fathers during childhood, and were more likely to describe them in distinctly more negative terms. Obedient participants saw the authority figure in Milgram's study as clearly more admirable, and the learner as much less so. This was not the case among the defiant participants. These findings suggested to Elms and Milgram that the obedient group was higher on the trait of 'authoritarianism'.

EVALUATION**Research evidence for the authoritarianism/obedience link**

Several studies have reported that more authoritarian participants are more obedient (e.g. Elms and Milgram, 1966; Altemeyer, 1981) in Milgram-type obedience situations. Yet these studies tend to suffer from a good deal of suspicion concerning whether the shocks they were giving were real or fake. Dambrun and Vatiné (2010) overcame this problem by using an 'immersive virtual environment', where an actor taking the role of the learner was filmed, recorded and displayed on a computer screen. Participants were informed that the experiment was a simulation and that the shocks and the victim's reactions were not real, but simulated. Despite this, participants still tended to respond as if the situation was real, and there was a clear and significant correlation between participants' RWA scores (assessed before the experiment) and the maximum voltage shock administered to the victim. In other words, participants who displayed higher levels of RWA were the ones who obeyed the most.

The social context is more important

Although Milgram accepted that there *might* be a dispositional basis to obedience and disobedience, he did not believe the evidence for this was particularly strong. Milgram showed that variations in the social context of the study (e.g. proximity of the victim, location, presence of disobedient peers) were the primary cause of differences in participants' levels of obedience, not variations in personality. He believed that the specific social situation participants found themselves in caused them to obey or resist regardless of their personalities. Relying on an explanation of obedience based purely on authoritarianism lacks the flexibility to account for these variations (Milgram, 1974).

Differences between authoritarian and obedient participants

Elms and Milgram's research also presented some important differences in the characteristics of the Authoritarian Personality and the characteristics of obedient participants. For example, when Elms and Milgram asked participants about their upbringing, many of the fully obedient participants reported having a very good relationship with their parents, rather than having grown up in the overly strict family environment associated with the Authoritarian Personality. It also seems implausible that, given the large number of participants who were fully obedient in Milgram's study, the vast majority would have grown up in such a harsh environment with a punitive father.

Exam Focus

What is meant by the Authoritarian personality? (2 marks)

Explain the dispositional explanation for obedience (4 marks)

Outline and evaluate one research study relating to the Authoritarian personality explanation of obedience. (6 marks)

Exam Focus - Obedience

1. Which of the following terms best matches the descriptions below? Choose one term that matches each description and write either A, B, C, D or E in the box next to it. Use each letter once only. One term will be left over.

A Agentic state

B Situational variables

C The authoritarian personality

D Proximity

E Legitimacy of authority

(i) The degree to which individuals are seen as justified in having power over others **(1 mark)**

(ii) An individual with a belief in absolute obedience, submission to authority and domination of minorities **(1 mark)**

(iii) Acting as a representative of another person who is therefore seen as responsible for the behaviour demonstrated **(1 mark)**

(iv) Features of an environment that can affect individuals' level of compliance to authority figures **(1 mark)**

2. Discuss two explanations for obedience. **(16 marks)**

3. Outline and evaluate situational variables affecting obedience. **(12 marks)**

4. Outline and evaluate the findings and conclusions of one study of obedience. **(6 marks)**

5. Explain how proximity and location can affect obedience. **(2 + 2 marks)**

6. Yolanda dropped a crisp packet in the shopping center and when told to pick it up by a fellow shopper she did nothing, but when told to do so by a security guard she immediately complied. With reference to the passage above explain why Yolanda obeyed the security guard, but not the fellow shopper. **(3 marks)**

Explanations of resistance to social influence

It is easy to conclude from the study of social influence that human beings are a pretty awful lot and, in fairness, the evidence we have seen does support that view to some extent. We have seen how people will defy the evidence of their own senses in order to fit in with the group (e.g. Asch, 1951), endanger those with whose care they have been professionally entrusted (e.g. Hofling et al, 1966) and deliberately hurt, possibly kill an innocent stranger on the say-so of a man whose credentials amount to little more than a lab coat and an office in a University (Milgram, 1974). However, to focus only on those who conformed and those who obeyed does an injustice to those people – in experiments and, more importantly, in many real-life situations – who did not bow to group pressure, those who refused to obey. Psychological research has been able to shed some light on various reasons for independence and disobedience. It is tempting to take the dispositional approach and thereby assume that the people who resist authority have some personal quality that allows them to stand up to the pressure to obey. Whilst this may play some part it is important to understand that many of the factors that help people to disobey authority are, in fact, situational.

The fact that Milgram was able to cause wide variations in the overall level of obedience in his participants illustrates the importance of situational factors in disobedience. One of the principal variables was the salience of the victim's suffering. Although the sound of the victim's screaming and begging had relatively little impact on the rate of obedience (62.5% compared to a 'baseline' of 65%), the effect of the participant being able to see (40%) or having to touch the victim (30%) was more dramatic. At least two reasons for this drop suggest themselves. One the one hand it may be that, confronted with the victim's suffering, the participant felt greater personal responsibility for their actions and this forced them from an agentic to an autonomous state. On the other hand it might be that the shift was brought about by the feelings of empathy the victim's visible suffering provoked in the participant. Either way, the increased disobedience in these variations on the study was brought about by a situational change, not dispositional factors within the participants.

Another situational factor that facilitates disobedience is exposure to disobedient models. The effect that these can have is clearly illustrated by the Milgram study in which two confederates paired with the real participant left the study early on, declaring that they would go no further. Under these conditions only 10% of participants gave the maximum 450 volt shock (still a disturbingly large proportion, but substantially lower than the 65% in the first study). Milgram (1965) identified at least three reasons why this study produced such high rates of disobedience. First, the establishment of a group norm of disobedience may have put the participants under pressure to conform (to the behaviour of the confederates) that was stronger than the pressure they felt to obey the experimenter. Second, the behaviour of the confederates may have demonstrated the possibility of defying the experimenter, which simply might not have occurred to the participant before (one said afterwards, 'I didn't realise I could [refuse to obey]'; Milgram, in Gross, 1996). Third, the withdrawal of the two confederates may have sharpened the participant's sense of personal responsibility as the only person left to give the shocks. It may also be that the presence of another disobedient person operates in an analogous way to a dissenting confederate in the Asch studies: by breaking the unanimity of the group they make it easier for the participant to act independently, even if the participant doesn't actually agree with the dissenter.

Besides these two important situational variables, a number of other factors influence participants' readiness to disobey authority in Milgram-type situations. As we have already seen, factors that alter the participant's sense of personal responsibility for their actions have an influence on obedience. In a famous film clip from the original studies, a participant argues strenuously with the experimenter that the well-

being of the victim should be checked and the experiment terminated. He even gets out of his chair, declaring 'I'm not gonna kill that man!' only to return and recommence shocking the victim once he has established that the experimenter will take responsibility for what happens. Conversely, when people are made to feel personally responsible for their actions, destructive obedience is reduced (Hamilton, 1978). Additionally, disobedience becomes more likely when the legitimacy of the authority figure is undermined by encouraging people to question their motives, expertise or judgement (Taylor et al, 1997).

Beyond some rather dubious evidence relating to the authoritarian personality, attempts to identify dispositional influences on disobedience have been unsuccessful (Taylor et al, 1997). However, whilst evidence for 'disobedient' personality traits is lacking, there is some suggestion that ability to empathise with the suffering of others may facilitate resistance to malevolent or destructive orders. The most convincing evidence for this comes from the work of Samuel Oliner, who as a child escaped from the Bobowa Ghetto in Poland and was sheltered by a non-Jewish woman who helped him to survive the holocaust in which his family was murdered. As an adult, Oliner conducted a study of the 'rescuers' who had sheltered escaped Jews in Nazi Europe in defiance of the regime. Compared to a sample of 126 non-rescuers who had also lived through the war, the 406 rescuers tended to report an upbringing that emphasised social norms of helping others, often linked to the ethics of a family, community or religious group (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). Most rescuers emphasised their empathic responses to the suffering of the Jews they helped shelter. In the words of one woman:

"How could one not have helped such a man? He was shivering, poor soul, and I was shivering too, with emotion." (Oliner & Oliner, 1988; p189).

Such findings may shed light on why some participants in the Milgram studies disobeyed. Some appear to have done so because of empathic responses borne out of their own experiences (one cited her own experiences in Nazi Europe as a reason for disobeying). It also seems likely that the effect of making the victim's suffering more salient (e.g. by seating them opposite the participant) reduces obedience, at least in part, because of the empathic response it elicits from the participant.

An interesting reanalysis of Milgram's data carried out by Rochat & Modigliani (1995) throws light on a further variable that can predict disobedience although it is not obvious whether it should be characterised as situational or dispositional. They found that those participants in the Milgram studies that protested early on in the procedure were those who were most likely ultimately to disobey. Immediate resistance to authority seems to decrease the likelihood of later obedience in a range of contexts (Van Avermaet, 2001). Rochat & Modigliani (1995) illustrate this through an analysis of events in the French village of Le Chambon during the Nazi occupation. The citizens of Le Chambon collectively defied the Nazis' attempts to have them persecute war refugees, and played an active part in saving the lives of many thousands, despite the threat this posed to their own lives. In Rochat & Modigliani's analysis, the key to this sustained, collective act of defiance was that it was started very early, at the behest of the village's religious leaders, before a pattern of obedience to authority could emerge.

Explanations of resistance to social influence

Social Support

Resisting Pressures to Conform	Resisting Pressures to Obey
<p>Insight From Asch</p> <p>The role of an ally (social support)</p>	<p>Insight from Milgram</p> <p>Disobedient Models (social support)</p>

Resistance to Social Influence

Locus of Control

Locus of control:



Internal locus of control:

High internality:

External locus of control:

High externality:

Research support:

Research support:

Exam Focus – Resistance to social Influence

1. Copy and complete the table below by writing which description, A, B, C or D, describes which term. One statement will be left over. **(3 marks)**

- A** Rebellious anger produce by attempts to restrict freedom of choice
- B** An individual's beliefs about the causes of successes and failures
- C** The ways in which individuals attempt to withstand perceived attempts to threaten freedom of choice
- D** The perception of assistance and solidarity available from others

Term	Description
Social support	
Resistance	
Locus of control	

2. Outline and evaluate two explanations of resistance to social influence. **(16 marks)**
3. Discuss social support as an explanation of resistance to social influence. **(12 marks)**
4. Explain how locus of control can affect resistance to social influence. **(3 marks)**

Jasper likes to wear his hat, but when getting on the bus home he noticed everyone else wearing a hat took theirs off, so he did too. The next day he was wearing his hat again and again all the other hat wearers took their off when getting on the bus, all except one boy in front of him, so Jasper kept his hat on too.

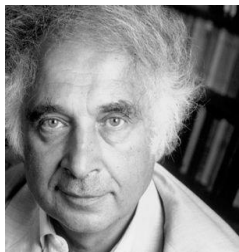
5. With reference to the passage above, use resistance to social influence to explain why Jasper took his hat off on the first day, but kept it on the following day. **(4 marks)**

Minority Influence

Definition:

Occurs when a minority 'rejects the established norm of the majority and induces the majority to move to the position of the minority' (Turner, 1991).

Real life examples:



Moscovici (1969) "Green/Blue Slides"

Moscovici (1969) argues that majority influence tends to be based on **public compliance** but that minority influence tends to be based on **private acceptance** or **conversion**.

Aims: To determine whether a minority can influence a majority of naive participants and thus reverse the usual direction of social influence. Moscovici et al. aimed to determine the conditions necessary for this to occur, in particular, the importance of **consistency** to the influence of the minority.

Procedure:

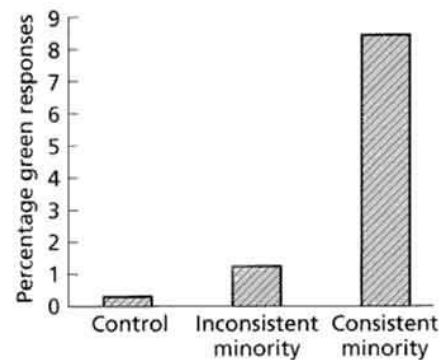
- A laboratory experiment was carried out in which participants were asked to estimate the colour of 36 slides. All the slides were blue but of varying brightness.
- Participants were tested to check for colour blindness and then randomly allocated to either a consistent, inconsistent, or control condition. Each condition consisted of six participants; four naive participants (the majority), and two confederates (the

minority).

- In the consistent condition the two confederates described all 36 slides as green. In the inconsistent condition the two confederates described 24 of the 36 slides as green and the remaining 12 slides as blue. In the control condition there were no confederates.
- Minority influence was measured by the percentage of naive participants who yielded to the confederates by calling the blue slides green.

Findings: In the consistent condition 8.4% of the participants' answers were green and 32% conformed at least once. In the inconsistent condition 1.3% of the participants' answers were green. In the control condition only 0.25% of the participants' answers were green. Therefore the consistent condition showed the greatest yielding to minority influence.

Conclusions: The minority does have influence over the majority and this influence is more effective when the minority is **consistent**. This shows that minorities are more persuasive when they are consistent, which has implications for people in leadership positions who are hoping to influence the majority.



are people

Criticisms:

- ⊗ The research **lacked experimental realism**, which means that the experimental set-up was simply not believable. The slide test was artificial and may have yielded demand characteristics because it was not believable. The research can be argued to **lack internal validity**, as the conversion was not a genuine effect.
- ⊗ The research **lacked mundane realism**; that is, the research set-up had no relevance to real-life as it took place in a controlled environment with an artificial task that is not representative of minority influence in real-life social situations. Identifying the colour of a slide is trivial compared to real-life instances of minority influence such as the views of political leaders or decision-making by juries. Consequently, the findings have **low ecological validity** as they cannot be generalised to real-life settings.

Minority Influence

How does the minority influence the majority?



Consistent minority challenges beliefs leading to reappraisal

Result: conversion rather than compliance



Consistency, Commitment and Flexibility

Nemeth et al (1987) studied the role of **flexibility** in a simulated jury situation where group members discussed the amount of compensation to be paid to someone involved in a ski-lift accident. When a confederate, acting as a consistent minority, argued for a low amount and refused to change his position, he had no effect on other group members. A confederate who compromised, offering slightly more money, and therefore showed some degree of shift towards the majority did exert an influence on the rest of the group. This shows how minorities need to be flexible to be persuasive.

Other Research:

The role of social influence processes in social change

Definitions: Social change refers to the change in nature in social institutions, social behaviour or social relationships in a society or community. It is the term given to the range of strategies used by groups (usually minority) to improve their social status. The change is usually gradual (e.g. women's rights) but can be dramatic (e.g. armed revolutions).

Moscovici's Conversion Theory

A distinct and consistent minority position is put forward by a minority group (e.g. suffragette movement and women's right to vote).



Majority group members examine the arguments. If there are negative consequences of adopting the arguments publically (e.g. stigmatization, labeling as a feminist) attitude change is private and tends to be gradual.



Over time, there is public acceptance of the minority position as most members of the majority come to agree with the stance taken – women should have the right to vote.

Social Cryptoamnesia:

The role of Social Influence processes in social change

	Theory/explanation	Example:	Example:
What sort of person/group initiates social change?			
What makes them rebel/initiate change?			
What processes are involved? How do they exert their influence?			

Exam Focus – Minority Influence and Social Change

1. Which of the following terms best matches the descriptions below relating to minority influence? Choose one term that matches each description and write either A, B, C or D in box next to it. Use each letter once only.

- A** Flexibility
- B** Compliance
- C** Consistency
- D** Commitment
- E** Legitimacy of authority

- (i) Minorities who demonstrate an ability to be moderate, co-operative and reasonable ☐
(1 mark)
- (ii) Minorities who demonstrate resistance of social pressures and abuses against their viewpoint (1 mark) ☐
- (iii) Minorities who are unchanging in their opinions and behaviour. ☐

2. Discuss the role of social influence processes in social change. (16 mark)

3. Outline and evaluate minority influence. (12 marks)

4. With reference to minority influence, explain each of the following:

- (i) consistency (2 marks)
- (ii) flexibility (2 marks)
- (iii) commitment (2 marks)

Ise and her partner have very strong views on the safety of children and they have always argued for and sent their children to school wearing high-visibility clothing. At first, their views and behaviour were ridiculed, but they stuck to it, though they compromised a bit by getting their children to just wear fluorescent jackets. Slowly, more and more parents started sending their children to school wearing high-visibility jackets, until the majority were doing so and it has even now become official school policy.

5. With reference to the above passage, explain how social influence processes influence social change. (6 marks)

6. Explain three ethical issues psychologists must consider when researching into minority influence. (6 marks)

