



AS Edexcel Psychology

UNIT 1 The Social Approach

Mega Lecture

Contents

Section A: Obedience

1.1 Obedience	3
1.2 Milgram's Study of Obedience (1963)	4
1.3 Evaluation of Milgram's Study of Obedience	6
1.4 Variations of the Milgram Experiment	8
1.5 Meeus and Raaijmakers (1986)	9
1.6 Agency Theory	12
1.7 Hofling et al. (1966)	14
Questions: Obedience	17

Section B: Prejudice

1.8 Social Identity Theory as an Explanation of Prejudice	21
1.9 Tajfel et al. (1970, 1971)	23
1.10 Sherif et al. (1954)	25
1.11 Reicher and Haslam (2006)	28
1.12 Asch (1951, 1952, 1956)	31
Questions: Prejudice	23

Unit 1 Key Issues	37
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Unit 1 Revision Notes	39
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THE SOCIAL APPROACH

OBEDIENCE

An introduction to the Social Approach and the idea of obedience

Social Approach -

the scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others

THE SOCIAL APPROACH

The **Social Approach** is the study of how our behaviour is influenced by the presence, attitudes and actions of other people. It considers how individuals interact with each other, and how behaviour may be influenced by group membership and by social situation, and includes our wider culture.

OBEDIENCE

To **obey** someone means to follow direct orders from an individual more often than not in a position of authority. There are three types of obedience in general:

1. **compliance** – following instructions without necessarily agreeing with them (an example of this might be wearing a school uniform – although you don't want to, you comply with the rules and do anyway because it causes you no harm)
2. **conformity** – adopting the attitudes and behaviours of others, even if they are against an individual's own inclinations (an example of this might be the Nazis during the Holocaust, they were instructed to do what they did, and some of them may not have wanted to do it but conformed to the rules anyway)
3. **internalising** – this is carrying out orders with agreement

The term **destructive obedience** refers to the idea of an individual following the orders which they consider to be immoral, which will cause them a lot of distress and regret. This often occurs with *conformity*.

Taking the example of the holocaust further, think of Adolf Eichmann. He was the officer probably most responsible for what happened during the Holocaust, and he always said that he only did what he did because he was carrying out orders. Whether or not it was true, this is an example of how obedience can work, and it was particularly frightening because it makes people wonder if they would do the same thing if it ever happened again and they were in his position. This thought is what has encouraged numerous psychologists to carry out studies into the nature of obedience, probably the most famous of which being **Stanley Milgram**, who was specifically curious about potential replications of the holocaust, because he wanted to test to see if the Germans in particular were different to other people, by testing obedience on other people.

1.2

MILGRAM'S STUDY OF OBEDIENCE (1963)

Aim: To investigate how far people will go in obeying an authority figure

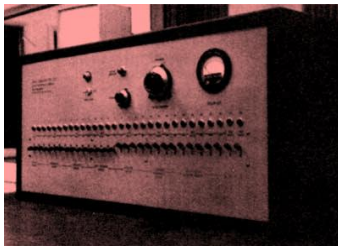
PROCEDURE

- 1 Volunteers responded to an advertisement in a paper for an experiment at Yale which investigated the effects of punishment in learning, they were paid \$4.50 for participating
- 2 Via a fixed lottery, the subjects were chosen to play the role of **teacher** (the **confederate** or **accomplice**), and an actor, posing as another volunteered participant became the **learner**
- 3 The learner was strapped into a chair and had electrodes attached to him, and the teacher was informed that the shocks would result in no permanent damage. To prove the equipment was working, the subject (teacher) received an initial 45 volt shock themselves
- 4 The teacher is taken next door to the **shock generator room** where they are told to administer a shock to the learner of increasing severity for each incorrect answer he gives using a word game based on memory, over an intercom
- 5 The actor frequently gave wrong answers and would receive a shock for each one, each time the voltage would increase by 15 volts. After each shock, a recording of a painful scream was played back to the teacher over the intercom
- 6 After 300 volts there was silence from the learner – he was either unconscious or dead
- 7 The experiment came to an end when the teacher refused to continue or they reached the full voltage (450V)
- 8 After the experiment finished, the teacher was fully debriefed about the true nature of the experiment and was reintroduced to the learner, who had come to no harm



APPARATUS

The shock generator was very realistic and consisted of 30 switches which increased the voltage by 15 volts each from 15 to 450V. They were spread in categories ranging from "Slight shock" to "Danger: sever shock" and the final 2 switches "XXX"



THE SUBJECT

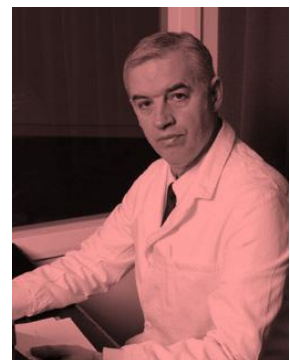
Milgram chose 40 males between the ages of 20 and 50 with a wide range of jobs from the New Haven Area. The use of males prevented interference on the basis of reluctance towards intersexual abuse

THE LEARNER

The learner was a 47-year old American-Irish actor who acted as 'Mr Wallace' – a mild-mannered and likeable accountant. He was an average person

THE EXPERIMENTER

The experimenter watched the teacher as he administered the shocks, and if the teacher hesitated because they found it uncomfortable, he would use one of his standardised prompts from "please continue" to "you must go on." He was a 31-year old dressed in a grey lab coat to give the appearance of an important, authoritative figure. He would be impassive during the experiment. The experimenter would not force the teacher to continue, but would sternly encourage them to carry on





RESULTS

LEVELS OF OBEDIENCE EXPECTED

When psychology students and professional psychologists were asked what percentage of the people participating in the experiment would go right through and administer the highest voltage of shock (450 volts – lethal), the answers ranged from 1 to 3; the mean value was 1.2

LEVELS OF OBEDIENCE OBTAINED

When the study was carried out:

-  65% of participants continued to the maximum shock level of 450 volts
-  Not one participant stopped the experiment before 300 volts

BEHAVIOURAL REACTIONS TO THE EXPERIMENT

According to Milgram himself, the degree of tension reached extremes for some subjects as some were “observed to sweat, tremble, stutter, bite their lips, groan and dig their fingers into their flesh.” What is interesting is how these quite clear signs of body language show that the study was making them uncomfortable, and even though they were under no obligation to continue (the experimenter wasn’t forcing them to continue), most subjects obeyed the experimenter throughout the entire 450 volts, simply because he appeared to be a figure of authority.

“One sign on tension was the regular occurrence of nervous laughing fits... Full-blown, uncontrollable seizures were observed for 3 subjects. On one occasion we observed a fit so violently convulsive that it was necessary to call a halt to the experiment. In post experimental interviews, subjects took pains to point out that they were not sadistic types, and that the laughter did not mean they enjoyed shocking the victim.” Milgram, 1963

EVALUATION

Generalisability refers to the idea that the findings can be applied to the target population as a whole

Reliability refers to the idea that repeating the experiment would obtain similar or identical findings

Application refers to the idea that the findings can be useful in a real-life application in society

Validity refers to the idea that results should measure what they initially were supposed to measure

Ethics refers to the idea that an experiment should be carried out whilst taking into consideration ethical grounds

In terms of generalisability, the test subjects were all males within a specific age group. So the data obtained from the experiment cannot necessarily apply to a whole plethora of people. However, Milgram purposely chose not to use all college students, but instead wanted a range of men with varied jobs to get a good range of data. His experiment was reliable, because the experiment was repeated a number of times, and different variations of the studies went out. Milgram experimented changes in gender and nationality. Other psychologists (Sheridan and King, 1972) even tried altering the species, using animals as the learners (victims).

Can the findings from Milgram’s experiment be applied to society and be useful in everyday situations? The supposed experiment which the subjects believed they were originally signing up for would have been, experimenting on the effect of punishment on learning, in terms of memory and forgetfulness. However, what uses did the findings from the data have that are implemented today?

Milgram’s study was well standardised and obedience was accurately operationalised as the amount of voltage given – so the study was **experimentally valid**. However, two psychologists, Orne and Holland (1968) said that they believed the subjects knew that they were not causing the learners any harm. Because the experiment was an artificial test, and because the test subjects were aware that they were being studied, it was argued that the study lacked “mundane realism” and was therefore **not ecologically valid**. However, one might argue that because the subjects were not actually aware of what the real study was investigating, the nature of the subjects was more natural, as they were less suspecting that it was their part being investigated, even if the environment of the university was not a natural place.

You might also say that because the test subjects were completely unaware of the true nature of the experiment, it was not an ethical study. This may also be the case because the experience the subjects went through may have a negative effect on them post-investigation when they realised how they behaved.



EVALUATION OF MILGRAM'S STUDY OF OBEDIENCE

An evaluation of how reliable and ethical Milgram's 1963 experiment was

The main measure of how reliable a psychological study is will more often than not be its **replicability**. Milgram used a standardised procedure for each participant – for example, the same script was used by the learner and experimenter; the same rooms were used during the experiment; and identical equipment was used each time. This ensured that all the participants had a similar experience, so there was no bias in the experiment. The strong controls meant that the studies could be repeated, to test whether the findings were reliable – and the experiment was, indeed, repeated by Milgram himself, among other psychologists, afterwards.

REAL WORLD APPLICATION

Milgram's work was of **practical value** because it showed that individual's have a tendency towards **destructive obedience**. He believed that, by showing this, his work had wider benefits to society as it could avoid such incidents in the future, as the one which triggered Milgram's investigations – the Holocaust.

Destructive Obedience - obeying orders which cause yourself moral distress

The study helps us to understand how historical events such as this could happen, where people obeyed orders against the moral code they normally lived by.

VALIDITY

- 1 The participants had to complete an artificial task by asking the learner to remember word pairs and then administer an electric shock whenever they didn't remember correctly. Many theories suggest that most participants felt protected from their actions because they assumed whatever happened at Yale was fine and so trusted the study. Thus, it could be argued the experiment lacked **experimental validity**

However, Milgram tried to ensure the participants thought the situation was real, for example, by giving them a 45 volt shock at the start. The obvious stress experienced by participants implies that most did believe that what was happening was real, so this would suggest that in fact there was some experimental validity in his method

- 2 The study took place in a laboratory in Yale University, a very well-respected university with an extremely popular reputation. This is an unnatural setting for most people, which suggests that normal behaviour wouldn't necessarily be usual. This means that the experiment lacked **ecological validity**
- 3 As Milgram's sample of participants consisted of adult males from a range of backgrounds, it could be said that the experiment had some **population validity**, but only for American male adults

However, Milgram later repeated the study in a large number of variations (see **1.4 Variations of the Milgram Experiment**), and many other psychologists have repeated the experiment. What was noticed is how the results tended to produce similar patterns (the number of participants who continued to the full 450V shock when it was all women in the experiment was almost the same as with the original men's experiment), and so you might say it did in fact have definite population validity

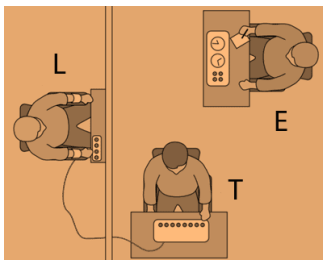
ETHICS

Ethical Grounds -

measures of how moral or ethical a study was based on the methodology and performance of the experimenter

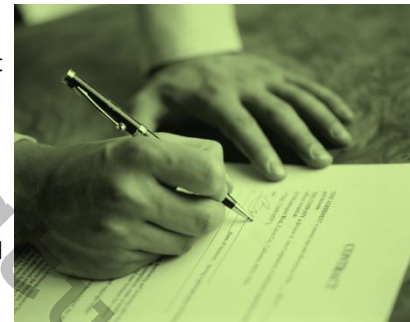
The biggest criticism of Milgram's study has always been on **ethical grounds**. There are 5 important guidelines to consider: informed consent, deceit, right to withdraw, debriefing and competence. On the following page you will see in-depth analysis of each of these guidelines.

Informed Consent – In the study, the participants were not given the full details on the true nature of the experiment, so it initially sounds as though the experimenters did not gain correct informed consent, but you have to consider that had the participants been aware that the electric shocks were not real, the results gathered would not have been a clear indication of their obedience and behaviour because they would have known that the consequences of their actions were not real. Milgram therefore could not ask for informed consent but did try to be ethical so asked participants if they would like to take part in such a study and they did – this is **presumptive consent**. Another way of remaining ethical is to ask the participants before the study if they agree to take part, but inform them that sometimes deception is necessary – this is **prior consent**

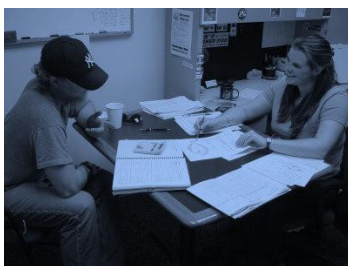


Deception – There was a severe amount of deception in Milgram's experiment, but (as before) this was all necessary for the results of the experiment to be valid. Examples of the deception used include faking the shocks, leading participants to believe they were given the teacher role by chance, telling them it was for a study on memory and forgetfulness, telling them the learner and experimenter were real and not actors, and many more

Right to Withdraw – There is a lot of controversy over ethics regarding the right to withdraw. Whilst the participants were free to leave and were not being forced to continue, they were strongly encouraged to carry on by the experimenter, and the experimenter even had a script with lines to tell the teacher such as "the experiment requires that you continue" which almost made the subject feel they had to go on. When the participants said that they wanted to stop, they were strongly urged to continue, thus it might be argued they did not have a true right to withdraw, making the study unethical



Debriefing – Because the experiment was very stressful for the participants and it involved a lot of deception, the debriefing process was essential. Additionally, the participants would have come to realise that had the fake "memory improving" experiment been real, they would have administered lethal shocks to random strangers, showing them they had the capability to commit murder. Therefore it is important for them and the experimenter to fully evaluate the experiment to ensure they are in a safe mental state before going home



Competence – Milgram knew the possible implications of the study; understood the ethical guidelines, did not feel the need to get advice from others; was suitably qualified as a scientist who had his PhD for three years; made sure that nobody would come to any immediate harm as a result of the experiment; adhered to the Data Protection Act and easily and correctly stored the data. However, the participants became distressed, making the experiment less ethical as a whole, but the fact that Milgram was competent to run the experiment and knew what he was doing means it wasn't necessarily unethical as a whole





VARIATIONS OF THE MILGRAM EXPERIMENT

Similar experiments to the 1963 Study of Obedience, conducted by Stanley Milgram

In Milgram's book, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (1974), he outlines 19 different variations of the original study of obedience, some of which were previously unreported. Each of the variations had one thing in common; they all led to a reduction in obedience. Some of the variations are listed below:

PROCEDURE	%age giving final 450V shock
Original study The subject would administer the shocks to a learner (actor) who earned the role of learner via a fixed lottery; if the teacher hesitated, the experimenter would actively encourage him to continue	65% (26/40)
Change in location The same experiment was carried out in a run-down office block, instead of the original location, which was Yale University. This was because Milgram suggested having the experiment carried out at such a well-respected University meant the subjects assumed whatever they were doing was fine	41% (19/40)
Learner's presence in the room In one variation, the learner was physically present in the room with the subject, so he had to watch the learner be shocked, and if he refused to touch the shock plate, the subject was told to hold the learner's hand down	30% (12/40)
Experimenter not present in the room In this variation, the experimenter was not in the same room as the teacher, and all communication between the teacher and experimenter was done via a telephone – however, the experimenter behaved in the same way as before	23% (9/40)
Increase the number of teachers Another experiment used three teachers, two of whom were actors, and so only one was the real subject. They would behave as though they were also being studied. The first acting teacher would drop out at 150V, the second at 210V, the third (real subject) was then free to drop out at any point	10% (4/40)
Conflicting experimenters In this variation, there were two experimenters present who would conflict with each other, this means they would argue over what was best to do next and would often give the teacher contradictory instructions	0% (0/40)

EVALUATING THE VARIATIONS

One of the strengths of the variations is its **strong controls**. This means that the studies are replicable and so reliability can be tested. Having strong controls means that there is a lack of bias, which allows you to draw more accurate conclusions about cause and effect.

Of course, the most important weakness to consider, which is similar to the original experiment, is how unethical the variations were. Again, there was a lot of deception involved in each experiment, and there is always a certain risk when dealing with subjects in such a way that could cause them distress, as finding out what the true nature of the experiment is might cause them.

Also, the **experimental validity** and **ecological validity** (and the **population validity**) are all questionable. The results can not necessarily be applied to the population as a whole, because throughout, it was essentially all people from the same categories used as subjects (20 – 40 year old men); although in one variation of the experiment all women were used instead of men. The results of that experiment were not significantly different from the original study, although women seemed to communicate higher experiences of stress than the men did.



MEEUS AND RAAIJMAKERS (1986)

Aim: To investigate destructive obedience in the everyday situation of a job interview

Wim Meeus and **Quinten Raaijmakers** wanted to replicate Milgram's original study but wanted to improve on two initial problems they saw within the study had they repeated it in exactly the same way:

- ✍ Milgram's participants were assured that there would be no permanent damage to the "learners"
- ✍ The form of punishment would have been 'old-fashioned' according to Meeus and Raaijmakers

The aim of their experiment was to assess how the participants would handle destructive obedience in the everyday situation of a job interview, specifically, to see to what extent people would obey orders to psychologically abuse a job interviewee.

PROCEDURE

- 9 There were three people involved: a university researcher, a "job applicant" (who was an actor, similar to the role of the learner in the Milgram experiment), and a participant, who would issue the abuse
- 10 The applicant was following a script, and had to pass a test of 32 oral multiple-choice questions to "get the job"
- 11 The participants were told the job required ability to handle stress, so they had to cause the applicant stress during the interview by psychologically abusing them. This was essential because it gave the study motive to get the participant involved, had they not been told this information they would have been curious as to why they were being asked to verbally abuse the interviewee
- 12 Participants were also informed that it was part of an investigation to find out the relationship between psychological stress and test success, and the applicant didn't know about the research (of course, none of this was true)
- 13 After the interview had begun, the participant would have to make a series of 15 negative comments about the interviewee's performance and personality during the test, every time they would get an answer wrong
- 14 The applicant would occasionally interrupt the interview to object about the participant's negative comments, but the participant was instructed to ignore these objections and continue with the interview
- 15 The "stress remarks" led the applicant to failing the test and so did not get the job



THE SUBJECT

Altogether, 39 participants were used, which consisted of both males and females between the ages of 18 and 55. These were split into two groups: a control group of 15 and an experimental group of 24. Each of the applicants had at least Dutch High School Education (equivalent education of GCSEs) and were recruited by a newspaper ad, offering \$13 for the 30 minute experiment

THE STRESS REMARKS

A TV monitor instructed participants when to make each stress remark about the job interviewee. The applicant had electrodes stuck on his skull to make the participant believe his stress levels were being measured. If the participant refused to continue making the comments, the experimenter had 4 prods to say to the participant. The questions for the interview were asked in four sets:

1. Set A: no stress remarks made by the participant, to provide baseline measures
2. Set B and C: five stress remarks were made for each of these sets
3. There were ten errors in the last three sets

Participants in the control group chose when to make the comments and when to stop the experiment

The remarks started at question 9 ("your answer is wrong") and went up to the end ("I think you'd be better suited for a lower function job")

The study was conducted at a university, similar to Milgram’s study, and the experimenter was a well-dressed man of about 30 years who was friendly but stern, and who was present in the room with the participant, but the applicant was in another room and had to listen to questions via a speaker.

RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT

22 of the 24 participants in the experimental group obeyed until the end, making all 15 stress remarks. Most had some discussion with the experimenter, but continued when ordered to do so. Follow-up questionnaires showed that the participants did not like the experiment and were upset by the procedure

73% of the total participants believed the experiment to be real, and only 4% thought it was a hoax, the remaining 23% were not sure

In terms of who the participants blamed for the applicant not getting the job, 45% blamed the experimenter; 33% blamed themselves, and the other 22% blamed the applicant

Within the control group, who could choose when to make comments and when to stop, none of the participants made the stress comments

As with the Milgram experiment, Meeus and Raaijmakers decided to conduct other variations of the original experiment to see how the results were affected by altering some of the variables:

Variation 1 – the experimenter ordered the participants to make the stress remarks and then left the room for the experiment (**22 participants used**)

Variation 2 – two other actor participants (confederates) present, who rebelled – the first quit after the tenth stress remark, and the second then did the same, so the experimenter ordered the real participant to continue alone (**19 participants used**)

The table below shows a comparison of the results from the three experiments:

Number of participants who...	Original Study	Variation 1	Variation 2
Made all 15 stress remarks	56% (22/39)	36% (8/22)	16% (3/19)
Believed the experiment was real	73%	81%	84%
Thought the experiment was a hoax	4%	5%	0%
Were unsure if the experiment was real	23%	14%	16%

CONCLUSIONS

These were the three main conclusions reached by Meeus and Raaijmakers which tried to explain why they achieved higher levels of obedience than Milgram did with his study:

- 1 physical violence has more of an immediate impact than psychological harm** - the participants could hear the cries of the learner in Milgram’s study, but the real impact of psychological abuse only tends to become evident later (i.e. after they became upset and did not get the job)
- 2 consent levels were different** - the participants’ consent to take part in the experiment carried more weight as they knew they were going to harm the applicant verbally and had agreed to participate; in Milgram’s study, the participants had not explicitly agreed to administer physical harm to the learners
- 3 the victim was more dependent on the outcome** - in Meeus’ and Raaijmakers’ study, the applicant had to continue with the test to get the job, even if they objected to the stress remarks, whilst the learner in Milgram’s study could refuse to answer as there was no gain from continuing

EVALUATION OF THE DUTCH STUDY OF OBEDIENCE

The main strengths of the of the Meeus and Raaijmakers experiment were:

- ✓ The study builds on Milgram's study by focusing deliberately on two areas that Meeus and Raaijmakers saw as needing attention. They used similar variations to Milgram to see if the levels of obedience fluctuated in the same way. Their study, therefore, is all the more useful because the findings can be compared with those of Milgram
- ✓ Due to the attention to detail, the study is replicable and can be tested for reliability. There are controls, which mean that the details are clear and the study can be judged carefully. A study with good controls is easier to draw cause-and-effect conclusions from

Some of the weaknesses of the study are shown below:

- ✗ The study is an experiment, and is therefore artificial. The need for controls, such as an applicant taking a test in a laboratory, means that the findings may not be valid. The situation is not very realistic and this might have affected the results
- ✗ Although the findings were compared with Milgram's findings, which is useful, there are differences between the two studies which make such comparisons difficult. One difference is that the studies were in different cultures (even though they are both western cultures); another is that the studies were twenty years apart, which could have affected obedience levels

The table below shows a comparison of the results between the main Milgram and Meeus and Raaijmakers studies to make these comparisons evident:

Type of study	Percentage of people obeying (Milgram 1963 and 1974)	Percentage of people obeying (Meeus and Raaijmakers 1986)
Main study	65%	92%
Experimenter-absent condition	23%	36%
Two peers rebel condition	10%	16%



AGENCY THEORY

The agency theory of obedience as proposed by Milgram (1973, 1974)

In Milgram's studies of obedience, participants who obeyed to the end tended to say that they were only doing what they did because they were being ordered to do so by a member of authority and would not have done it otherwise. They said that they knew what they were doing was wrong. The participants felt **moral strain**, in that they were aware that following the order was immoral, but they felt unable to disobey. Moral strain arises when people become uncomfortable with their behaviour, because they feel that it is wrong and goes against their better values.

Agentic State -

being under the control of someone else and you will obey their orders even if they cause you distress

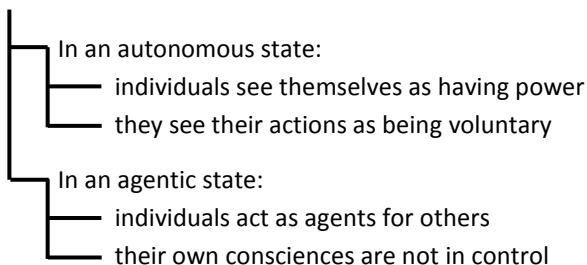
Autonomous State -

being under one's own control and having the power to make your own decisions

In the Milgram study, all the participants obeyed until the shock level reached 300 volts. It was as if, having simply agreed to take part, they were in an **agentic state**. This meant that they were the agents of the experimenter and so obeyed his orders. Being in an agentic state is the opposite of **autonomy**. Being in an **autonomous state** is being under one's own control and having the power to make one's own decisions.

Milgram used the idea of being in an agentic state to put forward his **agency theory**. This is the idea that our social system leads to obedience. If people see themselves as individuals, they will respond as individuals in an autonomous state in a situation.

For example, in a threatening situation, many people avoid aggression and turn away. This is likely to happen because avoiding aggression avoids being hurt and will lead to survival. **Evolution theory** suggests that avoiding aggression leads to survival. Early humans had a better chance of survival if they lived in social groups, with leaders and followers. A tendency to have leaders and followers may also have been passed on genetically. A hierarchical social system, such as the one Milgram's participants were used to, requires a system in which some people act as agents for those above them. According to the agency theory, the agentic state is what led to the participants to obey in Milgram's study.



Milgram suggested that not only was this system of obedience present as a survival strategy, but also because we are taught that it is the correct way from a young age. Obedience is hammered into children by their parents, and also there are very strict hierarchical systems in place in schools – it is clear who has the power, and so children learn exactly the same lessons there.

In the agentic state, people do not feel responsible for their actions. They feel that they have no power so they might as well act against their own moral code, as happened in Milgram's basic study. In the variation in which the victim was nearer to the teacher, and the teacher had hold the victim's hand to the shock plate, there was less obedience. This suggests that the participants had to take greater **responsibility** for what they were doing.

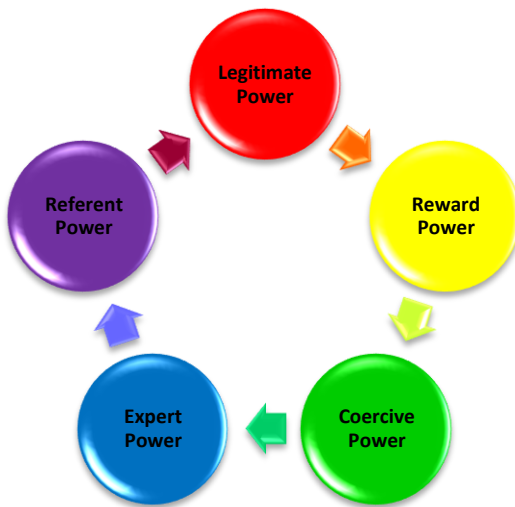
EVALUATION OF THE AGENCY THEORY OF OBEDIENCE

- ✓ The agency theory explains the different levels of obedience found in the variations to the basic study by explaining the relationship between the level of responsibility felt by the participant and the levels of obedience obtained
- ✓ The theory helps (or tries to at least) explain the issue that triggered Milgram's research into obedience, the holocaust. Probably the main officer responsible for the holocaust was Eichmann, who said he was merely obeying orders, and agency theory suggests why he, and so many others, would obey to such a degree
- ✓ The theory offers similar explanations to events such as the **My Lai massacre**

[youtube.com/c/MegaLecture/](https://www.youtube.com/c/MegaLecture/)

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aspsychology101.wordpress.com

However, one of the weaknesses of the theory is that there are other possible explanations for obedience, such as social power. **French and Raven** (1959) proposed five different kinds of power:



Legitimate power is held by those in certain roles, usually those of authority; Milgram's role would have had legitimate power

Reward power is held by those with certain resources; Milgram may have had reward power as he was paying the participants

Coercive power is held by those who can punish another; Milgram gave the participants a small shock, so he may have felt he could punish them

Expert power is held by those with knowledge; the participants would have seen Milgram as someone with knowledge

Referent power is held by those who are able to win people over; the participants would not have seen Milgram to hold this type of power

Also, one of the biggest criticisms of Milgram's agency theory is that it is *just a description* and not an explanation. Many people view the theory as more of a description of how society works than an explanation. It suggests that the participants obeyed because they were agents of authority. However, obedience is defined as obeying authority figures, so a theory explaining obedience should offer more detail into *why* it is that people follow orders against their better judgement under given situations.



HOFLING ET AL. (1966)

Aim: To investigate the levels of obedience shown by nurses to doctors in a hospital

Hofling et al. (1966) decided to investigate the reactions of nurses to orders from a person who they believed to be a doctor. They decided to test how far they would be willing to obey the doctor in unusual and unethical practices. The study took place in a hospital, and so was a **field study**.

Field Study -

an experiment which takes place in a natural setting where natural behaviour should occur

AIMS

Hofling et al. wanted to study the doctor-nurse relationship. They wanted to specifically look at health care, and many of the involved researchers were medical personnel. In particular, they were interested to see how nurses would respond to a doctor giving them orders which went against their usual professional standards, as this was an occupational issue

THE ORDERS

To make the orders contrary to the nurses professional standards, some of the doctor's requests were:

- ❖ asking the nurse to give an excessive dosage of medicine (would actually be a placebo)
- ❖ transmit the order over the phone (against hospital policy)
- ❖ use an unauthorised drug (either one not on the ward stock list or one not yet cleared for use)
- ❖ have the order given to the nurse by an unfamiliar voice

SETTING

The situation for the main study involved 12 wards in public hospitals and 10 wards in private hospitals. Questionnaires were distributed to graduate nurses at a separate hospital in order for usage as a matched control. The questions in the questionnaire asked the nurses what they would do in the situations the nurses experienced in the real study, to see what ordinary nurses *believed* they would do. The same questionnaire was also given to some student nurses to see how less-experienced nurses would respond to the same situations on paper

PROCEDURE OF THE MAIN STUDY

Pill boxes were central props in the study, each labelled "Astroten, 5mg capsules. Usual dose, 5mg. Maximum daily dose, 10mg." The boxes contained placebo capsules and were placed on the wards. The doctor would give the nurse the orders via phone, and this would follow a script. Standard responses to potential questions were prepared. The caller, a supposed doctor the nurses had not heard of before, was always courteous yet self-confident. Researchers would always monitor the phone calls to check the tone was appropriate

There was an observer on each ward, who would stop the experiment:

- if the nurse had the medication ready and moved towards the patient's bed
- the nurse refused and ended the conversation
- the nurse began to contact another professional person

The observer would then interview the nurse to obtain more information, and also offered "psychiatric first aid"

The experiment was run on medical, surgical, paediatric and psychiatric wards from 7pm to 9pm, when administration of medication does not normally happen, and doctors are not normally present, so the nurses would have to make their own decisions



THE PHONE CALL

Circumstances to end the phone call:

- participant complies
- participant refuses
- participant insists on referring to someone else
- participant becomes upset
- participant is unable to find the medication
- the call lasts longer than ten minutes

THE INTERVIEW

After the incident, a nurse-investigator would follow up within half an hour and request a follow-up interview. The interviews were unstructured (but the nurse-investigator would have had the tape recording of the call, as well as the observer's report). Information asked for was:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Unguided narrative 2 Emotions 3 Discrepancies 4 Any similar incidents 5 Retrospective view 6 Biographical data | <p>(what happened...?)
(what are your feelings...?)
(are you sure it happened that way...?)
(has this happened before...?)
(what do you feel about it now...?)
(what is your age, religion, etc...?)</p> | <p>The nurse-investigator also offered support and promised anonymity</p> |
|---|--|---|

QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were sent to graduate and student nurses. The participants were closely matched for age, sex, race, area of origin, marital status and experience at work. Twelve graduate nurses were given the questionnaires with a doctor explaining the whole imaginary scenario to them. The nurses were not only expected to answer what they would do, but also what they predicted the majority of other nurses would do in the same situation. The same questionnaires were handed out to 21-degree programme nursing students

An example of the question might have been: "You are the only nurse on the ward. Now will you please give Mr Jones a stat dose of 20mg – that's four capsules – of Astroten? I will be up within ten minutes and I will sign the order for them then. Write down what do you do?"

RESULTS OF THE MAIN STUDY AND QUESTIONNAIRE RESEARCH

Main Study	Graduate Nurses Questionnaire	Student Nurses Questionnaire
21/22 nurses were prepared to give the medication	10/12 said they would <i>not</i> give the medication	21/21 said they would <i>not</i> give the medication
11 were aware of the discrepancy between the maximum dose and the dose they were told to give but assumed it must be safe and correct if a doctor had ordered it	7 mentioned the discrepancy when explaining why they would not have given the medication	19 noticed the excessive dosage, 8 of which student nurses used as the reason for which they would not have followed the doctor's instructions
Phone calls were brief – no hostility or need for written conformation		
Most nurses said the circumstances were not unusual	7 nurses thought that most other nurses would have behaved in the same way as them	
Reactions afterwards ranged from scientific interest in the study to anger, outrage (of being observed without their knowledge) and guilt		

The researchers drew the following conclusions:

- 1 None of those asked thought that nearly all the nurses would obey in the experiment. However, the obedience showed the strength of the doctor-nurse relationship, and how a patient can suffer as a consequence. The researchers say that instead of two "intelligences" – the doctor and the nurse – working for the patient, one of them seems to be non-functioning

- 2 The nurses were affected by the study: they were upset that they had been observed without their permission and also that their specific behaviour had been noted
- 3 Nurses think that they will defend their patients and are proud of being professionals. However, the reality seems to be different (the evidence of this is the discrepancy)
- 4 The nurses appeared to trust the doctors, which may be a valuable trait. They were willing to act promptly and efficiently, again a valuable trait. However, this study suggests nurses need to be encouraged to use their own intellectual and ethical resources

The researchers behind the experiment concluded that there was definite potential for nurses to be encouraged to question and think more clearly about orders, especially in these types of circumstance, without being disloyal or discourteous to doctors.

EVALUATION

The experiment took place in a hospital, where nurses would not feel out-of-place. Also, they were unaware that they were being observed by researchers, therefore normal behaviour would have occurred. This gave the experiment **ecological validity**. Nurses were going about their usual work (psychologists soon discovered that these “stranger doctor” phone calls were not an unusual experience for the nurses) and because it wasn’t strictly unusual for something against the rules to happen, the experiment was very realistic, and certainly true to life: therefore having **experimental validity**.

The study was **replicable**, i.e. could be repeated many times to find similar or identical results. It was replicable because of such strong controls on the experiment. Examples of these controls include the phone call following the same script, the type of drug and how much to be “prescribed”, the voice and tone of the caller and the place to put the fake pill boxes – all kept the same throughout. Replicability is a good test for **reliability**, therefore the study is reliable.

However, there are numerous faults with the experiment in terms of **ethical issues**. The main issue is that the nurses were being observed and their actions were being noted without their permission. This upset the vast majority of the nurses, and even angered a few of them, as they felt themselves it was very unethical. On the other hand, the counterpoint of this argument is that this withholding of information was necessary to maintain experimental validity. Another ethical issue breached by the experiment, tying into the lack of information to the nurses, is the lack of informed consent. This also meant that they had no specific right to withdraw from the study.

Extraneous variables (those other than the ones you’re testing) could have also intervened with the data. For example, the study could have actually produced results for a different reason, i.e. as the study was done in 1966 when it was practically all male doctors and female nurses, it could have simply produced results identifying the female-obeying-male relationship, rather than the nurse-obeying-doctor relationship. The experiment could also be said to be **ethnocentric** in that it was only tested in one area, so you cannot guarantee the results would be identical if the same study was carried out elsewhere. The experiment may therefore lack **population validity (generalisability)**.

Ethnocentricity -
the idea of findings from a piece of data being confined to one location due to social or cultural influences on the piece of research



OBEDIENCE

Questions on Units 1.1 – 1.7 on Obedience

1 Milgram decided to investigate obedience by conducting several laboratory experiments.

(a) Explain the following types of obedience:

(i) compliance

.....
.....

(ii) conformity

.....
.....

(i) internalising

.....
.....

(6 marks)

(b) What triggered Milgram's interest into investigating the effects of obedience to authority?

.....
.....
.....
.....

(3 marks)

(c) State **three** ways in which participants were deceived by the experiment.

1

2

3

(3 marks)

- (d) In the original Milgram experiment, 65% of people continued giving shocks until the end of the experiment, giving a 450 volt lethal shock. State and explain **two** reasons that Milgram, or other psychologists, have offered as possible explanations for such a high level of obedience.

1

.....

.....

2

.....

.....

(6 marks)

- (e) The biggest criticism of Milgram's experiments into obedience was on ethical grounds.

Evaluate the ethics of Milgram's experiments.

.....

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(10 marks)

Total: 28 marks

2 After Milgram has evaluated the results of his experiment, he put forward his agency theory of obedience.

(a) Explain the following terms associated with the agency theory:

(i) agentic state

.....
.....
.....

(ii) autonomous state

.....
.....
.....

(4 marks)

(b) State and explain **one** criticism of Milgram's theory of obedience.

.....
.....
.....

(2 marks)

(c) Explain the link Milgram identified between his agency theory of obedience and evolution theory.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

(4 marks)

Total: 10 marks

3 Meeus and Raaijmakers conducted their own similar experiments into obedience over twenty years after the Milgram experiments had taken place.

(a) Use the figures below to complete the table:

10% 92% 36% 23%

Type of study	Percentage of people obeying (Milgram 1963 and 1974)	Percentage of people obeying (Meeus and Raaijmakers 1986)
Main study	65%	
Experimenter absent condition		
Two peers rebel condition		16%

(4 marks)

(b) What form of punishment did Meeus' and Raaijmakers' participants use on their subjects, and why was it made different to those of the shocks used in Milgram's experiment?

.....

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(3 marks)

(c) Meeus and Raaijmakers came up with some conclusions from their experiment.

Explain why each of the following conclusions drawn from the experiment explains the high levels of obedience in the experiment.

(i) physical violence has a more immediate impact on psychological harm

.....

.....

(ii) the victim is more dependent on the outcome in Meeus' and Raaijmakers' experiment

.....

.....

(4 marks)

Total: 11 marks



SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AS AN EXPLANATION OF PREJUDICE

How Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1970) tries to explain causes of prejudice and discrimination

PREJUDICE

The word **prejudice** derives from 'pre' meaning 'before' and 'judice' meaning 'justice'. The idea of prejudice refers to the judgements made by other people based on their membership to a particular group, rather than their individual nature. **Discrimination** refers to treating others differently according to their group membership due to prejudice.

Prejudice consists of three elements:

1

- The **cognitive element** involved the beliefs held about a certain group
- These beliefs come in the form of **stereotypes**, common but over-simple views of what a particular group of people are like
- Such views may come from something heard or read, rather than first-hand experience

2

- The **affective element** involves the feelings experienced in response to another group
- Stereotyping leads us to develop a **prejudice** (a particular attitude towards the group)
- If we are prejudiced against a group, we may experience anger, fear, hate or disgust when we encounter a member belonging to that group

3

- The **behavioural element** consists of our actions towards the object of prejudice
- Behaving differently towards people based on their membership to a group is **discrimination**
- Our actions towards members of a group against which we hold prejudice can range from avoidance and verbal criticism to mass extermination

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Social identity theory is one of a number of theories that suggest prejudice can be explained by our tendency to see ourselves as part of a group. We therefore view others as either part or not part of the same group as us. Thus people are judged as being "us" and "them". It is seen as part of human nature to view oneself as part of one or more groups, there are our **in-groups** – this leads us to discriminate against **out-groups** for no logical reason, i.e. there does not have to be any conflict or competition for ill feelings to develop.

Tajfel et al. (1970, 1971) conducted a series of lab experiments called the **minimal group studies** which led **Tajfel and Turner** (1979) to propose that there are three cognitive processes in deciding whether someone is part of the in-group or out-group, leading to the development of prejudice:

- ❖ **Social categorisation** – the process of deciding which group you belong to: you see yourself as part of that group, where any group will do and you see no need for conflict between yours and other groups
- ❖ **Social identification** – identifying yourself with the in-group more overtly, this is when you begin to take on the norms and attitudes of other group members within of the group
- ❖ **Social comparison** – one's self-concept becomes wrapped up with the in-group that self-esteem is enhanced by the perception that the in-group is better than the out-group

For more information on Tajfel's minimal group studies, see [1.9 Tajfel et al. \(1970, 1971\)](#)

According to social identity theory, there are three variables contributing to in-group favouritism:

- 1 the extent to which individuals identify with the in-group
- 2 the extent to which there are grounds for making comparison with the out-group
- 3 the relevance of the comparison group in relation to the in-group

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The ideas of in-group favouritism and out-group prejudices have been confirmed in a number of studies...

- **Tajfel et al. (1970, 1971)** conducted the minimal group studies in which boys of the ages of 14 and 15 were split into groups and had the chance to reward each other by giving them money, or punish them by taking money away from them, even though they didn't win or lose anything themselves in making the decision, in-group favouritism soon became apparent as the boys gave more to their own group members and punished others
- **Lalonde (1992)** studied a hockey team with poor performance and asked them about it, and the players claimed that it was down to other teams using "dirtier" tactics – however, Lalonde observed several of the team's matches and concluded that the opponents' teams were not using "dirtier" tactics, and so he had come across in-group bias from the poor team
- **Reicher and Haslam (2006)** conducted their own variation and improvement on the famous Stanford prison experiment in which the prisoners had a chance to be promoted to guards, and guards were the superior figures in the study – the guards showed a lot more closeness and definitely had in-group favouritism

EVALUATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AS AN EXPLANATION OF PREJUDICE

Strengths

A range of studies have shown support of the idea that people are willing to see their group as better in some way than other groups (as shown in the above examples). Tajfel, for example, replicated his experiment with a variation to prove that his findings were reliable. There is also a practical application, in that the theory helps to explain a wide range of social phenomena.

Weaknesses

Social identity theory doesn't take into account other factors which might be influencing behaviour, for example Dobbs and Crano (2001) have shown that under some circumstances there is much less in-group favouritism than suggested by Tajfel. The theory also doesn't explain why there are individual differences in the level of prejudices shown. There are also other possible explanations of prejudice which might offer a fuller account of prejudice, for example the **realistic conflict theory** which sees social identity theory as only part of the explanation. It suggests that it is not just the creation of two groups that leads to prejudice, but that they need to have a goal in sight for conflict/prejudice to develop.



TAJFEL ET AL. (1970, 1971)

Aim: To test the idea that prejudice and discrimination can occur even without group history

Social Identity Theory -

the idea of an individual's perception on self-concept, including adopting the norms and attitudes of those within your in-group

Tajfel carried out a number of studies to develop and test **social identity theory**. Tajfel et al. wanted to test the idea that prejudice and discrimination can occur between groups even if there is no history between them, and no competition. Having found prejudice between such **minimal groups**, Tajfel et al. wanted to investigate further into the possible causes.

Minimal Groups -

groups which have no history and no competition

EXPERIMENT 1: ESTIMATING NUMBERS OF DOTS

For the first of two experiments, 64 boys aged 14 and 15 were used. They were all from a comprehensive school in Bristol. They all knew each other very well and were split up into eight groups of eight boys each. The experiment was run in a laboratory. The experiment was designed to establish **in-group categorisation** (formation of the groups) and to assess the effect on behaviour of the group formations. To form the two groups, the boys were taken into a lecture room where forty clusters of varying numbers of dots were flashed onto a screen. They were asked to write down how many dots they thought there were each time on a score sheet. After they had estimated the number of dots:

- ❖ in condition 1, they were told that people constantly overestimate or underestimate the number
- ❖ in condition 2, they were told that some people are more accurate than others

Their judgements were then scored by one of the experimenters, and they were then randomly split into groups. They were told, in condition 1, that one group was the overestimators, and the other the underestimators; and in condition 2, they were told that one group was the better group at making judgements, and the other group worse.

The boys were told that the task used *real money* for rewards and punishments. They would know the code number of each boy and which group they were in, and would have to decide whether or not to allocate money to the other boys. They had to choose how much to reward or punish another boy in either their own group or the other group.

-14	-12	-10	-8	-6	-4	-2	-1	3	7	11	15	19	23
23	19	15	11	7	3	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8	-10	-12	-14

The experimenters showed the boys the type of matrix they would be using (similar to the above example), each one with 2 rows of 14 numbers. Those which were positive figures would represent amounts potentially rewarded to the boys; the negative numbers would be the amounts to be taken away from them. The boys could *not* allocate money to themselves, and had to work through a booklet of matrices.

The experimenter would call out "These are the rewards and punishments for member XX of your group" or "These are the rewards and punishments for member XX of the other group". They had to decide which pair of numbers to allocate to the boys, because one number from each pair would affect one boy and the other affecting another.

The boys had to make decisions about the rewards and punishments they would impose. They had three types of decision: 'in-group/in-group', 'in-group/out-group' or 'out-group/out-group'. If the boys allocated as much as possible to one boy, they were given a score of 14 (because there were 14 decisions for each row on each matrix). If they allocated as little as possible, the score was 1. For each decision they were allocating to two boys. Therefore, a fair score would be 7 because this would mean that they had allocated rewards (or punishments) equally.

Results




When decisions involved two boys, one from each group (an in-group/out-group decision), the average score was 9 out of 14. When boys were making in-group/in-group or out-group/out-group decisions, the average score was 7.5

It seemed that decisions about boys in the same groups were fairer than decisions when one boy was in the same group as the boy making the judgements and one boy was in the other group. A large majority gave more money to their own groups and showed **in-group favouritism**. This was found in all trials of this study.

EXPERIMENT 2: KLEE AND KANDINSKY PREFERENCES

This second experiment involved three new groups of 16 boys per group. The boys were shown twelve slides, showing paintings by foreign artists **Klee** and **Kandinsky**, six of each artist. The boys had to express a preference for one of the painters. The paintings were not signed, so that, in actual fact, the boys could be randomly assigned the groups, as again they had nothing to do with their choices, even though they were led to believe this was not the case.

The first experiment showed that forming groups led to in-group favouritism. The experimenters wanted to investigate this further by examining the factors leading to the boys making their decisions. They chose to investigate:

-  **maximum joint profit** – what was the most the two boys represented by each matrix would ‘receive’ from the boys?
-  **maximum in-group profit** – what was the most the boys would give to their in-group members?
-  **maximum difference** – what was the most difference between an in-group and out-group member benefiting the in-group members?

As in the first experiment, there were the same three conditions when making the choices. There were matrices as before, and again a choice was made of one pair of ‘rewards and punishments’. The experimenters could see if the boy had chosen the highest possible for his own group member, the lowest possible for a member of the other group, or a decision that was the lowest for both (or other similar patterns).

Results

Maximum joint profit did not seem to guide the boys’ choices. Maximum in-group profit and maximum difference in favour of the in-group worked against maximum joint profit. If the boys had a choice between maximum joint profit for all and maximum profit for their in-group, they acted on behalf of their own group. Even if giving more to the other group did not mean giving less to their own group, they still gave more to their own.

CONCLUSIONS

- Out-group discrimination was found and is easily triggered
- There is no need for groups to be in intense competition, this goes against the realistic conflict theory
- In the two experiments, all the boys needed was to see themselves as in an in-group and out-group situation, and discrimination ensued
- People acted according to the social norms that they had learnt, such as favouring the in-group
- The boys responded to the social norms of “groupness” and fairness and in general kept a balance between the two
- In real life “groupness” may override fairness, for example, if the group is more important than counting dots, or choosing a preference between Klee and Kandinsky
- Given the side effects of discrimination that were found in these experiments, teams in schools may not be a good idea



SHERIF ET AL. (1954)

Aim: To study the origin of prejudice arising from the formation of social groups

Sherif carried out research into groups, leadership and the effect groups had on attitudes and behaviour. The **Robbers Cave Study** built upon his previous work. He thought that social behaviour could not be studied properly by looking at individuals in isolation. He recognised how social organisation differs between cultures and affects group practices, so he claimed that groups have to be understood as part of a social structure. The Robbers Cave Study used two groups of young boys to find: how the groups developed; if and how conflict between the groups arose; and how to reduce any such friction. Three terms defined according to Sherif are:

small group individuals share a common goal that fosters interaction; individuals are affected differently by being in a group; an in-group develops with its own hierarchy and a set of norms is standardised

norm a product of group interaction that regulates member behaviour in terms of expected or ideal behaviour
group a social unit with a number of individuals who are interdependent and have a set of norms and values for self regulation; individuals have roles within the unit

PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

22 young boys, aged 11, who did not know each other prior to the study. All from Protestant Oklahoma families to eliminate family problems and match the kids as much as possible. They were also matched based on a rating, including their IQ, from their teachers and were finally reassessed and matched, including issues such as sporting ability, before the experiment began. A nominal fee was charged for the children to attend the camp and they were not informed that they were being used for a piece of research in order to obtain "true" results

THE CAMP

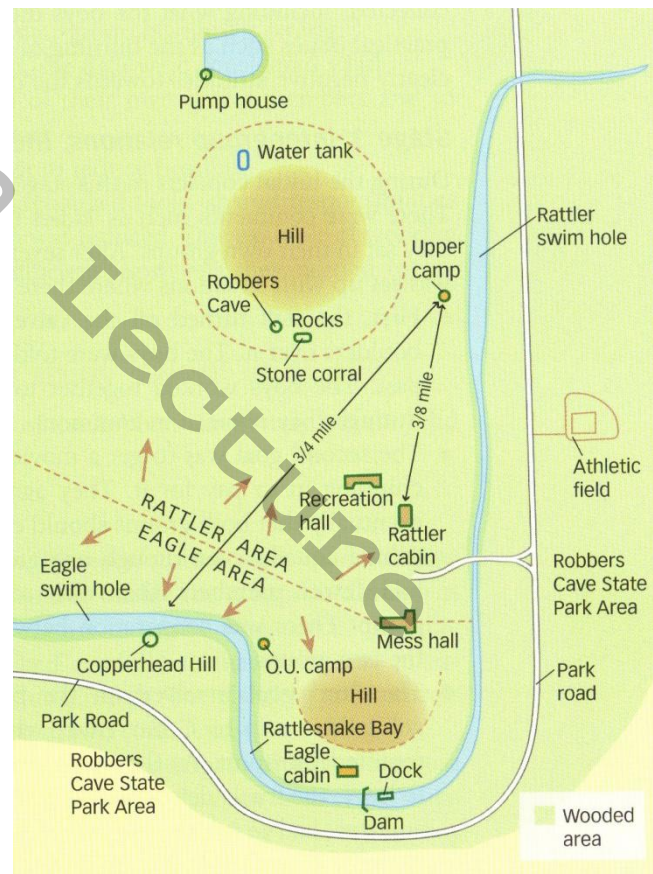
The experiment is called the Robbers Cave Study because it took place in a camp at Robbers Cave State Park, Oklahoma. The location was a 200-acre Boy Scouts of America camp completely surrounded by the State Park. The site was isolated and keeping the two groups apart (at first) was easy because of the layout of the site, as shown in the diagram

DATA COLLECTION

There was a wide range of data collection methods:

- **observer** – participant observer allocated to each group for 12 hours a day
- **sociometric analysis** – issues such as friendship patterns were noted and studied
- **experiment** – boys had to collect beans and estimate how many each boy had collected
- **tape recordings** – words and phrases used to describe their own group were studied

The observers were trained not to influence the boys' decisions but to help them once a decision was reached



THREE STAGE EXPERIMENT

- 1 The two groups were formed and set up norms and hierarchies (to see how they became in-groups)
- 2 The two groups were introduced and competition was set up, as a tournament (to test for friction, name-calling and hostility to the out-group)
- 3 The two groups were set goals that they needed each other to achieve

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Stage 1: in-group formation

The two groups were kept apart for one week to help the formation of group norms and relations. They had to work as a group to achieve common goals that required cooperation. Data was gathered by observation, including rating of emerging relationships, sociometric measures and experimental judgements. Status positions and roles in the groups were studied. There is much detail about how hierarchies within each group developed. The measurements were thought to be both valid and reliable because different data collection methods produced similar results. For example, in the bean-collecting task, the boys tended to overestimate the number of beans their own group members had collected and underestimate the number collected by the other group (the number of beans was actually the same).

Stage 2: inter-group relations, the friction phase

After the first week, the two groups were told about one another and a tournament was set up with competitive activities. Points could be earned for the group and there were rewards. As soon as they heard about each other, the two groups became hostile. They wanted to play each other at baseball, so they effectively set up their own tournament, which was what the researchers wanted.

The aim of the experiment was to make one group frustrated because of the other group, to see if negative attitudes developed. Adjectives and phrases were recorded to see if they were derogatory and behaviour was observed as previously. The researchers introduced the collecting the beans experiment: the boys had to collect beans and then judge how many each boy had collected. This was to see if the boys overestimated the abilities of the in-group members and minimised the abilities of the out-group members. As was mentioned before, this was the case.

Stage 3: inter-group relations, the integration

The researchers wanted to achieve harmony between the two groups, which they did by introducing **superordinate goals**. This meant that the groups would have to work together to achieve the goals. At first, they introduced tasks that simply brought the two groups together so that they could communicate. They then introduced the superordinate goals, which included:

- ✓ fixing the water tank and pump when the water supply was threatened
- ✓ a truck that would not start, so they had to pull together to try and start it
- ✓ pooling resources so that they could afford a film that they all wanted to watch

The researchers measured the use of derogatory terms and used observation and rating of stereotyping.

Superordinate Goal -

a goal which the resources and energies of a single group are not adequate to attain, to achieve the goal, the groups must work together

RESULTS

Stage 1: in-group formation

By the end of the first Stage, the boys had given themselves names: the **Rattlers** and the **Eagles**. The groups developed similarly, but this was expected due to how carefully they had been matched. Any differences present were most likely due to the different decisions they had to make based on their cabins being located in different areas. For both groups, status positions were settled over days five and six of the first week, and a clear group leader was in place.

The Rattlers often discussed the situation of the Eagles, saying things such as "They had better not be swimming in our swimming hole". Although the Eagles did not refer to the Rattlers so often, they wanted to play a competition game with them. It seems that even only knowing another group existed was enough reason for hostility to develop, even though neither group had been introduced yet.

Stage 2: inter-group relations, the friction phase

As soon as the groups found out about each other, they wanted to play baseball in a group competition: and so both groups had naturally moved onto Stage 2. The Rattlers were excited, and discussed such issues such as protecting their flag. The Eagles weren't as excited, but made such comments as "we will beat them". The Eagle selected as baseball captain for the baseball competition became the group leader of the Eagles for all of Stage 2, even though he was not the group leader at the end of Stage 1.

When the two groups first met, there was a lot of name calling. There is evidence collected, including what the boys said, who they were friends with and practical issues (such as the burning of a flag). It was found that there were clearly negative attitudes towards the out-group members.

Stage 3: inter-group relations, the integration







During the initial contacts of this Stage, the hostility remained. There were comments such as “ladies first” and when they watched a group movie together, they sat separated in their individual groups. After seven contact activities, there were superordinate goals set up:

- 1 The staff turned off the valve to the water pump and placed two large boulders over it. The children were informed that vandals had damaged it in the past. They worked together to fix the damage and rejoiced in common when they were successful
- 2 The second goal was to watch a movie together, but both groups had to chip in to pay for it. They eventually agreed to go halves even though one group had fewer members than the others. However, this agreement showed that the two groups cooperated to arrive at one final decision which they both were happy with
- 3 The boys all went on an organised trip to Cedar Lake, where the truck suddenly ‘developed’ a problem meaning the boys had to use the tug-of-war rope to try and pull it out and get it started

It was noticeable how friendships differed between Stage 2 and 3. More out-group members were chosen as friends by the end of Stage 3, which is evidence that friction was reduced by the superordinate goals outlined.




CONCLUSIONS

Most of the hypotheses put forward by the researchers at the beginning of the study were confirmed. Some of the conclusions drawn from the experiment include:



-  The groups developed social hierarchies and group norms, even though they were not stable throughout the study
-  Each group had a clear leadership structure by the end of the first week
-  When the two groups meet for competition, in-group solidarity and cooperation increases and inter-group hostility is strong
-  People tend to overestimate the abilities of their own group members and to minimise the abilities of out-group members
-  Contact between two groups is not enough to reduce hostility
-  When groups needed to work together, exchanged tools, shared responsibilities and agreed how to solve problems, friction was reduced – working towards a superordinate goal once was not sufficient, there needed to be numerous cooperation tasks to achieve this

EVALUATION

Strengths

-  There were controls, such as the careful sampling and the briefing observers so they all followed the same procedures, this meant that cause-and-effect conclusions could be drawn more justifiably than when observing naturally-occurring groups
-  There were several data collection methods and the findings agreed, so validity was claimed – for example, derogatory behaviour and recordings found derogatory remarks against the out-group
-  The group conflict could be seen as prejudice; reduction of friction would be reducing the prejudice, therefore the study has a practical application

Weaknesses

-  It was unethical in the sense that there was no informed consent obtained, there was no right to withdraw for the participants (also, the boys’ parents were not allowed to visit – to prevent them feeling homesick – but this meant they could not check on their children’s welfare)
-  It was hard to generalise to other situations because the sample was restricted to boys with a specific background



REICHER AND HASLAM (2006)

Aim: To investigate tyranny at a group level

In 1973, **Zimbardo** carried out the famous **Stanford Prison experiment** where one group of people acted as guards and others as prisoners, all of which were participants. The study looked at the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner or a prison guard. The experiment was conducted at Stanford University, where 24 undergraduates were selected to play the roles in a mock prison in the basement of the Stanford Psychological Building. Those chosen were chosen due to their lack of psychological issues, crime history, and medical disabilities, in order to obtain a representative sample.

Roles were assigned based on a coin toss. Prisoners and guards rapidly adapted to their roles, stepping beyond the boundaries of what had been predicted, and leading to dangerous and psychologically-damaging situations. One third of the guards were judged to have genuine sadistic tendencies, while many of the prisoners were emotionally traumatised and two had to be removed early on. The study was meant to last for two weeks, but after Zimbardo's girlfriend pointed out that he was allowing unethical acts to happen directly under his supervision, he concluded that both prisoners and guards had become too engrossed in their roles and terminated the experiment after only six days for their safety.

THE BBC PRISON STUDY

Reicher and Haslam (2002, 2006) wanted to test the idea of social identification and to see how many people come to condone tyranny or become tyrannical themselves, following on from the events of World War II. The study builds on the work of Milgram, Tajfel and Zimbardo. It builds upon the Stanford Prison experiment, but is not an exact replica as Zimbardo's work was unethical.

Reicher and Haslam called it an **experimental case study**, as they set up a one-off situation and then studied it to collect in-depth, detailed data using observational studying, video and tape recording, analysis of conversations and psychological and physiological assessments.

The study was discussed with colleagues, a university ethics committee and the **British Psychological Society** (BPS). Safeguards used within the experiment included:

- thorough screening of the participants
- a signed, detailed consent form which told participants that they could be at risk of stress and confinement
- independent monitoring of the study by two clinical psychologists and an ethics committee
- security guards, able to intervene if the behaviour ever became dangerous

The **BBC** recorded the study and organised it into four programmes. They were broadcast in May 2002. The participants knew they would be appearing on national television. A detailed explanation of the study is provided by Reicher and Haslam, in conjunction with the BBC, at www.bbcprisonstudy.org

AIMS

In general, the authors aimed to:

- i provide detailed data on the developing interactions between two groups of unequal power and privilege
- ii develop practical and ethical procedures for conducting important large-scale studies in social psychological research
- iii analyse the conditions under which people will:
 - define themselves in terms of, and act on, group identities
 - accept of challenge group inequalities

In particular, the following predictions were based on the Social Identity approach:

- dominant group members (the guards) will identify with their group from the start and impose their power
- subordinate group members will only identify and challenge inequality if relations are seen as impermeable and insecure

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INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

- 4 Amount of power (guard vs prisoner)
- 5 Group **permeability** (before vs after being told it was no longer possible for prisoners to become guards on day three)
- 6 Legitimacy (before vs after being told there were in fact no psychological differences depending on whether the participants became prisoners or guards) – this variable was not tested
- 7 **Cognitive alternatives** – this means that someone sees there is a different way of thinking about a situation, this was measured by looking at the introduction of a new prisoner, who had been a trade union official, as the researchers thought he would provide ideas on how to improve conditions for the prisoners and negotiate more effectively

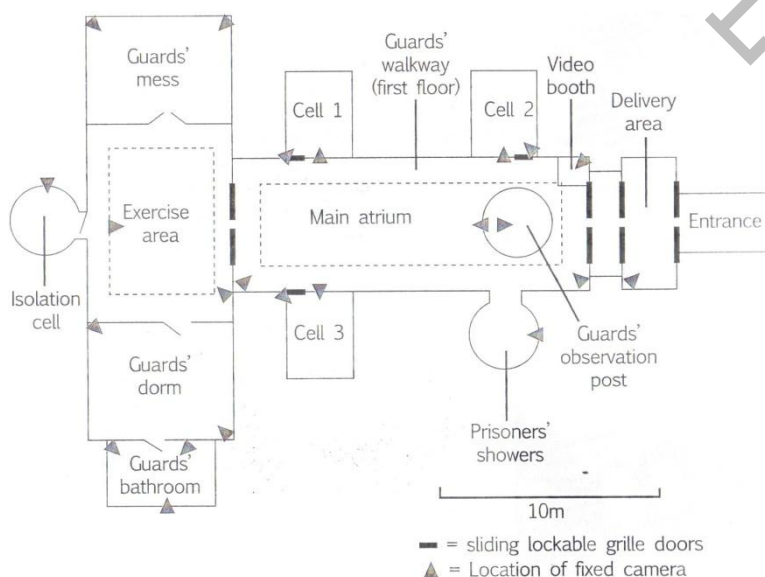
DEPENDENT VARIABLES RECORDED

- 1 Social variables: social identification, awareness of cognitive alternatives, right-wing authoritarianism
- 2 Organisational variables: compliance with rules
- 3 Clinical variables: self-efficacy, depression

PARTICIPANTS

15 men, randomly divided into two groups of 5 guards and 10 prisoners, selected as being pro-social and well-adjusted (by psychometric testing, independent clinical assessment and character references), of a variety of ages and backgrounds, from 332 applications recruited from a national press advertisement

Participants spent eight days under constant video surveillance in a purpose-built, controlled institutional environment resembling a prison that aimed to create “inequalities between groups that were real to the participants.” Prisoners had their heads shaved and had basic uniforms (T-shirts with a 3-digit number, loose trousers and sandals), and basic food and living conditions in lockable 3-person cells. Guards had better uniforms, food and accommodation. They also had control over the keys and resources to use as rewards or punishments. They were shown the prison timetable/chores and had complete freedom in how they implemented their responsibility for the smooth-running of the prison (with the exception of physical violence). On day 5, another prisoner was added. He was a trade union official who the researchers hoped would provide ideas on how to improve the prisoners’ conditions.



Prisoners were told that one of them would be promoted on day 3 to become a guard. This created a condition of high group permeability and high fairness. However, on day 3 after the promotion, prisoners were told there would be no more promotion, creating a condition of low permeability. Three days later, they were told that there was in fact no difference in the characters of the prisoners and guards. This created a condition of low fairness. Each morning all participants rated their identification with their own group (prisoner or guard) and with the other group.

FINDINGS

For the first three days the prisoners were dissatisfied with their living conditions but focused on being promoted to guard rather than working together to improve their conditions. For the first two days while group permeability was high the guards identified more strongly with their group than the prisoners did. However, once the prisoner was promoted on day 3 and the group permeability dropped, the group identity scores of prisoners outstripped those of the guards, remaining higher for the rest of the study. On day 4 three prisoners defied three guards, demanding better food. The guards could not agree how to respond, so came off worse in the confrontation. The prisoners’ confidence

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increased steadily and on day 6 they broke out of their cells and occupied the guards' quarters. Prisoners and guards then decided to form a commune and govern together. This initially worked well, however four participants became dissatisfied and proposed a new and very harsh regime. The study was halted at this point to avoid the possibility of violence.

WHAT SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY WOULD SAY ABOUT THE EXPERIMENT

The dominant group (the guards) quickly showed high levels of group identification. The subordinate group (the prisoners) had low levels of identification as long as group permeability was high, but this increased sharply as group permeability was reduced. Collective action followed quickly on day 4. By day 6 this was successful and the inequalities between groups were scrapped. However, the new equal regime soon broke down. These findings are as predicted by social identity theory.

EVALUATION

Strengths

Ethics: there was competence, in the way that the experiment had the approval of the BPS, among other sources; the participants knew what the study involved and about the TV cameras, so were not being deceived, and also had informed consent relating to the study; all participants were given the full right to withdraw at any time, and there were other officials there to withdraw them if it became necessary; and all participants were fully debriefed following the experiment. This study was much more ethical than Zimbardo's original study, and was just ethical in general.

Triangulation of results was possible: if data agrees the findings are likely to be reliable and the behaviour being measured was more likely to be real.

Weaknesses

It was not possible to draw cause-and-effect conclusions from the experiment, as behaviour was being observed over a period of time, reactions to individual tasks and events weren't being monitored in this study. Also, the presence of the television cameras may have affected their behaviour, making it an unrealistic situation, and making the results possibly less valid.



Asch (1951, 1952, 1956)

Aim: To study the social influences on conformity

Crutchfield (1962) described **conformity** as “yielding to group pressure”. According to Aronson (1976) the pressure can be real (involving the physical presence of others) or imagined (involving the pressure of social norms and expectations). Klemm (1958) suggested it can take several forms, including **compliance, conformity, internalisation** and **identification**.

STUDIES OF CONFORMITY

Jenness (1932)

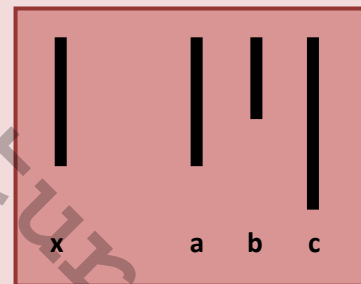
Asked subjects to estimate the number of beans in a bottle, first individually and then as a group. When asked individually again, the subjects showed a shift towards the group's estimation rather than their own. This was, however, a simple experiment

Sherif (1935)

Asked subjects to estimate how far a spot of light in a completely dark room moved. Sherif kept the point of light stable, but due to the autokinetic effect illusion (caused by eye movements) each individual reported consistent estimates which differed from other subjects'. However, when subjects were put in groups, their estimates converged towards a central mean, despite not being told to arrive at a group estimate and despite denying that they had been influenced by others in the post-experimental interview

Asch (1951, 1952, 1956)

Asch wanted to test conformity under non-ambiguous conditions and, therefore, devised a very simple perceptual task of matching the length of a line to one of three other comparison lines. The test was so easy that all control subjects got it right almost all the time. When done in groups, there were eight people present other than the experimenter, but seven of them were confederates of the experimenter, making only one real test subject. The confederates were instructed to give the same wrong answers on 12 of the 18 tests (such as the test card shown to the right), to see if the subject would match their wrong answer



The average rate of conformity in Asch's original experiment was 32% meaning that this amount of people actually went with what they knew was the wrong answer, because the seven confederates of the experimenter were saying it was one of the wrong answers. 74% conformed at least once over the experiment, so only 26% never conformed.

Asch ran several variations on the experiment to test the conditions influencing group conformity:

- ❖ increasing the group size – Asch found little increase above 3 or 4, but other studies have indicated that conformity does increase with group size, but at a decreasing rate
- ❖ providing support for the subject – Asch provided an ally in this variation, where one of the confederates agreed with the subject's answers, and group conformity dropped to 5.5% - this shows that unanimity of the group is important; if the ally changed to the group's estimates, the subject would follow
- ❖ increasing the difficulty of the task – when the comparison lines were made closer in length, the group conformity increased
- ❖ written answers – in this variation, the subject wrote down their answers to the test on a piece of paper, which caused the rate of conformity to drop



PREJUDICE

Questions on Units 1.8 – 1.12 on Prejudice

1 Social identity theory proposes an explanation to prejudice

(a) Describe the three elements to prejudices:

(i) the cognitive element

.....
.....
.....

(ii) the affective element

.....
.....
.....

(i) the behavioural element

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.....
.....

(6 marks)

(b) Explain the difference between the “in-group” and the “out-group”

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.....

(2 marks)

(c) Tajfel and Turner proposed that there are three cognitive processes in deciding whether or not a person is in the in-group or not. Explain the processes of social grouping by explaining each of these terms shown below:

social categorisation

social identification

social comparison

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(6 marks)

Total: 14 marks

Mega Lecture

2 Tajfel et al. (1970, 1971) ran a series of experiments called the minimal group studies.

The first experiment involved a group of children using a rewards and punishments system to “reward” and “punish” other children by “giving” them money, or “taking” money away from them.

(a) Tajfel found that when the boys were in two groups, the boys tended to reward their own in-group more often and punish the other group.

(i) What is the term used to describe this idea?

.....
 (1 mark)

(ii) The study was replicated a number of times and similar results were produced.

What does this say about the study?

.....

 (3 marks)

The second experiment split the boys up using paintings by the artists Klee and Kandinsky.

Tajfel chose to investigate:

- maximum joint profit (maximum amount received by a pair of boys within the matrix pairing)
- maximum in-group profit (maximum amount boys gave to their own in-group members)
- maximum difference (biggest difference between the in-group and out-group amounts)

(b) Use the following table to show the results of the experiment in terms of the above topics

Area of investigation	Findings
Maximum joint profit	
Maximum in-group profit	
Maximum difference	

(3 marks)

Total: 7 marks

3 Philip Zimbardo conducted the Stanford Prison experiment in 1973, where one group of participants became guards, and the other group prisoners, in a mock prison.

(a) Outline the aim/aims of Zimbardo's study

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.....
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.....

(2 marks)

(b) Zimbardo's study had to be ended by the sixth day, rather than allowing it to run the two weeks it was initially meant to.

(i) Why was the experiment ended early?

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(2 marks)

(ii) Evaluate the ethics of his experiment

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(7 marks)

(c) Reicher and Haslam conducted their own study which built on the work of Zimbardo, among other psychologists, including Milgram. They ran the BBC Prison Study.

(i) Use the list of events below and match them to the correct days each of them happened

- | | |
|----------|--|
| A | one prisoner was promoted to the role of a guard |
| B | a new prisoner, a trade union official, was added to the experiment |
| C | prisoners informed of a promotion which would happen |
| D | the experiment was ended to avoid outbreak of physical violence |
| E | prisoners broke out of their cells and occupied the guards' quarters |
| F | prisoners and guards agreed to govern the prison equally |

One has been done for you.

Day 1

Day 3

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

(5 marks)

(ii) Explain why the experiment was finally ended on the eighth day

.....

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.....

.....

(3 marks)

Total: 19 marks



KEY ISSUES

You have to study at least one key issue for each approach to psychology

BLIND OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY IN A PRISON SETTING

One key implication to the power of obedience in real life is that in a prison setting. This may be a prison guard following orders, or a soldier acting as a guard. The example studied here is the torture of Iraqi detainees by US soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison in April 2004

There have been many occasions where guards and soldiers have acted their roles to an extent beyond what many people would consider imaginable. When someone breaks what most consider to be the **moral code**, questions are asked to find out how it could have happened. This sort of obedience is called **blind obedience**, because it ignores the person's own code of conduct and appears "blind" to moral rules

Abu Ghraib prison was built in Iraq by the British and used as a torture prison by Saddam Hussein, but he released all detainees by 2002 when he was under pressure from the US. In 2004, US Army personnel photographed their soldiers torturing Iraqi detainees so brutally it was generally considered to be beyond normal practice. A lot of people think the soldiers involved should be punished because they were not just following orders, they were committing crimes

Application of concepts and ideas:

- Zimbardo's prison study where the experiment was halted earlier than it should have to avoid serious damage
- Milgram's "normal" participants going to the extreme (and lethal) 450 volt shock
- Milgram suggested agency theory as an explanation

CONFLICT OBEDIENCE RESULTING IN HARM OF OTHERS

There have been incidents where soldiers have been obeying orders which results in the harm of ordinary civilians, which their training would not have left them to do. An example occurred at My Lai during the Vietnam War. On March 16 1968, US Army forces murdered over 350 unarmed Vietnamese civilians, mostly women and children

Some of the victims were tortured before being killed, and many of the bodies were mutilated even after death. As with Eichmann of the Nazis, the culprits explained they were just following orders. Milgram asked when conducting his studies, "Why would anyone in the situation have obeyed?"

Application of concepts and ideas:

- Agency theory states that people carry out orders because they are agents of their society
- When people are under orders to do something they would not do as an individual, they are likely to obey
- Milgram's 1963 study involved ordinary people "shocking" their victims, even whilst under moral strain

FOOTBALL VIOLENCE

Football fans can be very loyal to their teams, often to the point where their rivalry will escalate into violence. Two different teams playing in a game wear different colours, and their supporters wear matching colours: therefore, the two groups of fans are easily identifiable

There are often cases of football hooliganism abroad when English supporters travel to support their team. Examples include in Charleroi in 2000 and Stuttgart in 2006

Application of concepts and ideas:

- Two easily-identifiable groups means there will be a stronger in-group, making stronger out-group prejudice
- Social identity theory explains the in-group see the out-group as inferior
- Tajfel et al. discovered that even minimal groups discriminate against "inferior" out-groups

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RACE RIOTS

Race riots are civil disorder with race as the key factor, so usually it means rioting between two or more races. There can be destruction of property and a crowd that becomes a mob over which there is no control. The destruction is often in an area where there is tension

One racial group may feel that another racial group has some unfair advantage and that advantage is targeted. A race riot may turn against the police or any other people who try to enforce calm

In 2001, there were race riots in Bradford, UK. Two people were stabbed and many were injured when white and Asian gangs started fighting. Crowds at an Anti-Nazi League meeting discovered National Front sympathisers gathering in a nearby pub. When police reinforcements arrived, they were set upon. The police arrested 18 people, 11 white and seven Asian. Around the same time there were also riots in Oldham and Burnley

Application of concepts and ideas:

- Social identity theory explains that people categorise themselves as a particular group, they will view themselves as superior and discriminate against another group, which becomes the out-group
- Realistic conflict theory suggests that it is the competition for resources which leads to prejudice: race riots can often be focused on issues such as economic success
- There is in-group favouritism, which enhances the self-esteem of the in-group leading them to believe they are better than the out-group – thus, prejudice and discriminate leading to violence can occur

CULT BEHAVIOUR

Members of cults are dependent on the leader — and to a lesser extent on the others in the group — for both spiritual and material needs. Some people who study cults say that their leaders use brainwashing to ensure that their followers obey them. There are several processes at work and it is suggested that the methods cult leaders use might involve psychological knowledge. The claim is that as more is learned, for example, about behaviour modification, then cult leaders and others can use this knowledge to control their members

Application of concepts and ideas:

- Social identity theory suggests that all people are members of at least one group and see themselves as part of an in-group - everyone else, not part of the group, becomes the out-group, and the in-group members are prejudiced against the out-group members
- On a simple level, it could be said that cult members are the out-group for those who are not members, therefore, people are prejudiced against them, just because they form a group
- However, the social approach does not help to explain the fascination that people have with cults. The psychodynamic approach might suggest that people have unconscious wishes to be dominated, as they were dominated by their parents. These unconscious wishes lead to an interest in cults where, in some cases, domination is great enough for people to obey an order to kill themselves



THE SOCIAL APPROACH

1.1 Obedience

The **Social Approach** is the study of how our behaviour is influenced by the presence, attitudes and actions of others, whether it be actual, implied or imagined. The approach also looks at how behaviour may be affected by group membership and by social situation, and includes our wider culture

Obedience refers to following direct orders from an individual in a position of authority:

- **compliance** – following instructions without necessarily agreeing with them
- **conformity** – adopting the attitudes and behaviours of others, even if against one's own inclinations
- **internalising** – carrying out orders with agreement

The term **destructive obedience** refers to the idea of an individual following the orders which they consider to be immoral, which will cause them a lot of distress and regret (often occurs with conformity)

1.2 Milgram's Study of Obedience (1963)

KEY STUDY

Aim: To investigate how far people will go in obeying an authority figure

PROCEDURE

Participants responded to a newspaper advert and were paid \$4.50 to take part in an experiment. A participant is brought into the room where they meet another "participant" (actually an actor). Via a fixed lottery, the participant chooses the role of **teacher** and the actor the role of **learner**. The learner is strapped to a chair and had electrodes attached to them, whilst the teacher is taken into another room where a **shock generator** is present. The teacher asks the learner a number of questions based on word pairs, and for each incorrect answer the learner gives, he receives an electric shock, starting from 15V and going up to 450V in stages of 15 volts. The experiment was measuring how many shocks the participants would be willing to give the learner, even though the 450V switch read "lethal"

PARTICIPANTS and CONFEDERATES

Milgram chose 40 males between the age of 20 and 50 with a variety of jobs to be the participants

The learner (actor) was a 47 year old acting as *Mr Wallace* a well-mannered and likeable accountant

The experimenter watched the teacher as he gave the shocks; he was dressed in a grey lab coat to give the appearance of an important authoritative figure

FINDINGS and CONCLUSIONS

All 40 of the participants continued to the stage of 300 volt shock, and 26 of them (65%) continued until the end – 450 volts

Milgram concluded from the results that social influence is strong and people obey orders even when this causes distress. It was not predicted that this level of obedience would occur. Milgram asked psychology students and professional psychologists before the study what they thought the level of obedience would be, answers ranged from 1 to 3 out of 40

Milgram said some of the factors which may have led to this high level of obedience were:

- Yale University is a prestigious university which would be unlikely to allow anything unethical to occur
- The victim was not unwilling and had agreed to take part
- The participant may have thought the learner would only do the same in their place
- The participant had been paid to take part, feeling obliged to do the experiment

According to Milgram himself, the degree of tension within the participants reached extremes for some where they were observed to "sweat, tremble, stutter, bite their lips, groan and dig their fingers into their flesh". And yet still, they continued: simply because the experimenter was a figure of authority. "One sign of tension was the regular occurrence of laughing fits... Full blown, uncontrollable seizures were observed for 3 subjects. On one occasion we observed a fit so violently convulsive that

1.3 Evaluation of Milgram's Study of Obedience

The experiment's results at the time were not generalisable for a number of reasons. First of all, the study only used men of a certain age, which did not show anything of women or those from other ages. Also, the experiments were only conducted in America, so the findings may have been **ethnocentric** (confined to one country) as they had not been supported elsewhere

The main measure of a study's reliability is how *replicable* it is: because of the strong controls in this experiment, it is replicable and replicating it is a good measure of its reliability. The experiment was repeated by Milgram, himself, among other psychologists, and it was shown that the results were reliable

Milgram's work had practical value because it showed that individuals have a tendency towards **destructive obedience** (obeying orders which cause yourself moral distress). This helped to explain obeying behaviour, such as that of the Nazis

The study has *low* **ecological validity** (the task took place in a laboratory where normal behaviour was not observed)

The study has *high* **experimental validity** (there were strong controls making it experimentally correct)

But the biggest criticism of Milgram's study is on **ethical grounds**. Participants were deceived, as they were not informed as to the true nature of the experiment: they were told it was a study on memory, it was actually on obedience. Whilst technically they had the right to withdraw, the experimenters used verbal prompts to pressurise them into staying. Also, many of the participants came to much distress during the experiment, as described in the box above

1.4 Variations of the Milgram Experiment

Some of the main variations of the Milgram experiment are listed below:

	%age giving final 450V shock
Original study The subject would administer the shocks to a learner (actor) who earned the role of learner via a fixed lottery	65% (26/40)
Change in location The same experiment was carried out in a run-down office block, instead of the original location, which was Yale University	41% (19/40)
Learner's presence in the room In one variation, the learner was physically present in the room with the subject, so he had to watch the learner be shocked, and if he refused to touch the shock plate, the subject was told to hold the learner's hand down	30% (12/40)
Experimenter not present in the room In this variation, the experimenter was not in the same room as the teacher, and all communication between the teacher and experimenter was done via a telephone	23% (9/40)
Increase the number of teachers Another experiment used three teachers, two of whom were actors, and so only one was the real subject. They would behave as though they were also being studied. The first acting teacher would drop out at 150V, the second at 210V, the third (real subject) was then free to drop out at any point	10% (4/40)
Conflicting experimenters In this variation, there were two experimenters present who would conflict with each other, this means they would argue over what was best to do next and would often give the teacher contradictory instructions	0% (0/40)

1.5 Meeus and Raaijmakers (1986)

KEY STUDY

Aim: To investigate destructive obedience in the everyday situation of a job interview

Wim Meeus and **Quinten Raaijmakers** wanted to replicate Milgram's experiment but wished to improve on two issues they found with his original study:

- Milgram's participants were assured there would be no permanent damage to the "learners"
- The form of punishment would have been old-fashioned according to Meeus and Raaijmakers

PROCEDURE

The aim was to assess how the participants would handle destructive obedience in the everyday situation of a job interview and to what extent they would obey orders to psychologically abuse a job applicant

- i There were three people involved: a university researcher, a “job applicant” (an actor), and the participant
- ii The applicant was to follow a script, answering 32 oral multiple-choice questions to get the job
- iii The participant was told the job required the ability to handle stress, so they had to issue psychological abuse for each incorrect answer the applicant gave: there were 15 negative comments (**stress remarks**) to be made in total, ranging from “your answer is wrong” to “I think you’d be better suited for a lower-function job”
- iv The stress remarks would eventually lead to the interviewee failing and not getting the job

There were 39 participants taking part in this study, and these were separated into two groups. Those in the **experimental group** (24 participants) were told when to make the stress remarks by the experimenter. Those in the **control group** (15 participants) could choose when and even whether or not to make the remarks at all

Also, there were variations of the experiment:

Variation 1 – the experimenter was not present in the room during the interview (22 participants used)

Variation 2 – two other “participants” (also actors) were present, who quit after the tenth remark (19 participants used)

FINDINGS and CONCLUSIONS

Number of participants who...	Original Study	Variation 1	Variation 2
Made all 15 stress remarks	92% (22/24)*	36% (8/22)	16% (3/19)
Believed the experiment was real	73%	81%	84%
Thought the experiment was a hoax	4%	5%	0%
Were unsure if the experiment was real	23%	14%	16%

*All 22 of these participants were from the experimental group (none of the control group went through to the end)

Meeus and Raaijmakers drew three main conclusions from the experiment to explain the higher levels of obedience:

- physical violence has more of an immediate impact than psychological harm
- consent levels were different (i.e. the participants knew they were going to be doing what they did, Milgram’s participants did not explicitly know they would be administering physical harm to the learner)
- the victim was more dependent on the outcome (they had to continue going to get the job)

EVALUATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The study builds on Milgram’s by focusing on two areas which Meeus and Raaijmakers saw needing attention ✓ Due to the strong controls, the experiment is replicable so reliability can be tested and cause-and-effect conclusions could be drawn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ The study is a lab experiment and the task is artificial, therefore lacking validity ✗ Although the findings were usefully compared with Milgram’s, there are other factors which could have affected the data, such as different cultures, or different times (they were 20 years apart) |
|---|--|

1.6 Agency Theory

The participants of Milgram’s experiments felt **moral strain** as they gave the shocks to the learners. They were aware that what they were doing is immoral, but felt obliged to continue because a person of authority was telling them to do so

Milgram put forward a theory, **agency theory** to try and explain the different states people can be in when blindly obeying those people in a position of authority. He noticed that all of his participants in the original study went to 300 volts, which showed that it was as if just by following the orders of the experimenter, they were in a state of agency. This meant they were the y his orders, even if it caused them distress

The opposite of agency is autonomy. Being in an **autonomous state** is being under your own control and having the power to make your own decisions

- In an autonomous state:
 - individuals see themselves as having power
 - they see their actions as being voluntary
- In an agentic state:
 - individuals act as agents for others
 - their own consciences are not in control

It is suggested that agency theory explains obedience in society. **Evolution theory** suggests that avoiding aggression will lead to survival, which is why earlier Neanderthals had a better chance of survival when they went in groups, with defined followers and leaders

Milgram suggested another reason (but survival) for this was that we are taught to obey from a young age

A limitation of agency theory is that it is *just a description*, not an explanation of behaviour shown in obedience. A further limitation is that there are other possible explanations for obedience, such as **social power** (consisting of five powers):

- **Legitimate power** is held by those in certain roles, usually those in authority (e.g. Milgram's experimenter)
- **Reward power** is held by those with certain resources (e.g. Milgram, as he was paying the participants)
- **Coercive power** is held by those who can punish another (e.g. Milgram gave participants a small shock of their own)
- **Expert power** is held by those with knowledge (e.g. the participants would have seen Milgram as someone with knowledge)
- **Referent power** is held by those who are able to win people over by persuasion

1.7 Hofling et al. (1966)

KEY STUDY

Aim: To investigate the level of obedience shown by nurses to an unknown doctor in a hospital

Hofling et al. wanted to study the doctor-nurse relationship and so they looked at how nurses would respond if an unfamiliar doctor ordered them to carry out unethical hospital practice over the phone. A "doctor" would ask the nurses to:

- ❖ give an excessive dosage of medicine (this would be a placebo)
- ❖ transmit the order over the phone (against hospital policy – has to be done in person)
- ❖ use an unauthorised drug (either one not on the ward stock list or one not yet cleared for use)

12 wards were used in public hospitals, and 10 wards in private. The nurses were unaware that they were being studied

PROCEDURE

Pill boxes labelled 'Astroten 5mg capsules. Usual dose, 5mg. Maximum daily dose, 10mg.' were central to the experiment. They contained placebo capsules and were placed on the ward. A doctor (really an actor) then telephones a nurse to give them orders, which would follow a script, standard answers to potential questions had been prepared. The doctor on the other end of the phone would be unfamiliar to the nurses, but was courteous and self-confident voiced

The phone call would be ended if the nurse agreed to comply, strictly refused to comply, insisted on referring to another doctor, became upset or if the call went on for more than ten minutes. The experiment would be stopped by an observer from the ward if the nurse had the medication ready (had complied) and moved towards the patient's bed to administer

After the experiment had ended, there was an interview with the nurses, where they were asked about the experience. The interview was unstructured. They were asked what happened, how they felt about their actions, if the same thing had happened before, etc

Also, **questionnaires** were sent out to both student nurses and graduate nurses from different hospitals asking them what they would have done in the situation. An example of a question they could have been asked would be:

"You are the only nurse on the ward. Now will you please give Mr Jones a stat dose of 20mg – that's four capsules – of Astroten? I will be up within ten minutes and sign the order for them then." What do you do?

FINDINGS and CONCLUSIONS

The main findings from the main study, interviews with the nurses, and responses from the questionnaires are summarised in the table on the following page

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Main Study	Graduate Nurses Questionnaire	Student Nurses Questionnaire
21/22 nurses were prepared to give the medication	10/12 said they would <i>not</i> give the medication	21/21 said they would <i>not</i> give the medication
11 were aware of the discrepancy between the maximum dose and the dose they were told to give but assumed it must be safe and correct if a doctor had ordered it	7 mentioned the discrepancy when explaining why they would not have given the medication	19 noticed the excessive dosage, 8 of which student nurses used as the reason for which they would not have followed the doctor's instructions
Most nurses said the circumstances were not unusual	7 nurses thought that most other nurses would have behaved in the same way as them	
Reactions afterwards ranged from scientific interest in the study to anger, outrage (of being observed without their knowledge) and guilt		

The researchers drew the following conclusions:







- None of those asked predicted nearly all the nurses would obey, but the high levels of obedience show the strength of the doctor-nurse relationship, and how the patient can suffer as a consequence of it
- Nurses think that they will defend their patients, but in reality things seem to be different
- The findings showed that nurses trust the doctors a great amount: this could be a valuable trait, but at the same time could allow bad things to happen

EVALUATION

- ✓ The experiment took place in a natural setting for the nurses, so normal behaviour would have occurred (the experiment had ecological validity)
- ✓ The experiment had an everyday real-life situation which had practical application
- ✓ The tasks were not artificial – they could happen, so the experiment has experimental validity
- ✓ The study is replicable to test for reliability
- ✗ Nurses were observed *without* their permission, so there was no informed consent or right to withdraw
- ✗ Many of the nurses were upset, ashamed or outraged at the fact they were being studied, and the findings distressed many of them
- ✗ As far as we can tell, the findings apply only to the USA and so may be **ethnocentric**

1.8 Social Identity Theory as an Explanation of Prejudice

The term **prejudice** refers to pre-judging someone. It consists of three elements:

- 1  The **cognitive element** involved the beliefs held about a certain group
 These beliefs come in the form of **stereotypes**, common views of what a particular group of people are like
- 2  The **affective element** involves the feelings experienced in response to another group
 Stereotyping leads us to develop a **prejudice** (a particular attitude towards the group)
- 3  The **behavioural element** consists of our actions towards the object of prejudice
 Behaving differently towards people based on their membership to a group is **discrimination**

Social identity theory is a theory which suggests that prejudice can be explained by our tendency to see ourselves as part of a group. The **in-group** consists of the group you consider yourself to belong to, and all others are the **out-group**. Tajfel and Turner proposed three processes in deciding whether someone is part of the in-group leading to the development of prejudice:

- ❖ **Social categorisation** – the process of deciding which group you belong to
- ❖ **Social identification** – identifying yourself with the in-group more overtly, this is when you begin to take on the norms and attitudes of other group members within of the group

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It becomes wrapped up with the in-group that self-esteem is enhanced by the than the out-group.

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The table below offers an evaluation of the theory as an explanation of prejudice:

- ✓ A range of studies have shown support for the idea that people are willing to see their group as better in some way than the out-group
- ✓ There is a practical application of the theory, in that it helps to explain a wide range of social phenomena
- ✗ The theory does not take into account other factors which may be affecting behaviour
- ✗ It also fails to explain why there are different individual levels of prejudice found within an in-group
- ✗ There are alternative theories which offer a fuller account for prejudice, such as **realistic conflict theory**

1.9 Tajfel et al. (1970, 1971)

KEY STUDY

Tajfel carried out a number of studies to test social identity theory. Tajfel et al. looked at how discrimination might occur between groups who have had no history and no reason for competition (these are called **minimal groups**)

EXPERIMENT 1: PROCEDURE

Estimating Numbers of Dots

64 boys aged 14-15 were used. The experiment aimed to establish in-group categorisation and assess the behaviour of group formation. The boys were taken into a lecture room and forty series of dots were flashed on a screen. They were asked to write down how many they thought appeared each time. After estimating:

- ❖ in condition 1 they were told that people constantly overestimated or underestimated
- ❖ in condition 2 they were told that some people are more accurate than others

The groups in each condition were split into underestimators/overestimators and good/bad at estimating.

The boys were told that the task used **real money** for rewards and punishments. They were given code numbers for every other boy and had to choose how much to reward or punish them by in pairs. The system was run using **matrices** like the one shown below. The boys had to make decisions either as "in-group/in-group", "in-group/out-group" or "out-group/out-group"

Positive numbers represent rewarding money, negative deducting money from the other boys. The experimenter would call out "These are the rewards and punishments for member XX of your group and XX of the other group"

-14	-12	-10	-8	-6	-4	-2	-1	3	7	11	15	19	23
23	19	15	11	7	3	-1	-2	-4	-6	-8	-10	-12	-14

EXPERIMENT 2: PROCEDURE

Klee and Kandinsky Preference

This second experiment involved three new groups of 16 boys each. The boys are shown 12 slides, showing paintings by both Klee and Kandinsky. The boys had to decide which artist they preferred. They were then randomly assigned groups, but the boys were led to believe they were based on their preferences of artist

The experimenters wanted to investigate in-group favouritism further by examining the factors leading to the boys making their decisions from the matrices. They chose to investigate:

- **maximum joint profit** (the most the two boys represented by each matrix would receive)
- **maximum in-group profit** (the most the boys would give to their in-group members)
- **maximum difference** (biggest difference between an in-group and out-group member benefitting the in-group)

As in the first experiment, there were the same three conditions when making the choices. There were matrices as before, and again a choice was made of one pair of "rewards and punishments". The experimenters could see if the boy had chosen the highest possible for his own group member, the lowest possible for a member of the other group, or a decision that was similar for both

EXPERIMENT 1: FINDINGS

When decisions involved two boys, one from each group (an in-group/out-group decision), the average score given was 9 out of 14. When boys were making in-group/in-group or out-group/out-group decisions, the average reward was 7.5

It seemed that decisions about boys in the same group were fairer than decisions when one boy was in the same group as the boy making the judgements, and one boy was in the other group: showing **in-group favouritism**

EXPERIMENT 2: FINDINGS

Maximum joint profit did not seem to guide the boys' choices. Maximum in-group profit and maximum difference in favour of the in-group worked against maximum joint profit. If the boys had a choice between maximum joint profit for all and maximum profit for their in-group, they acted on behalf of their own group. Even if giving more to the other group did not mean giving less to their own group, they still gave more to their own

CONCLUSIONS

- Out-group discrimination was found and is easily triggered
- There is no need for groups to be in intense competition (which goes against realistic conflict theory)
- All the boys needed was to see themselves as part of a group and discrimination ensued
- People acted according to the social norms that they had learned, such as in-group favouritism

1.10 Sherif et al. (1954)

KEY STUDY

Aim: To investigate the origin of prejudice arising from the formation of social groups

Sherif et al. conducted the **Robbers Cave Study** to build upon his previous work. It used two groups of young boys to find: how the groups developed; if and how conflict between the groups arose; and how to reduce any such friction. Three terms defined according to Sherif are:

small group – individuals sharing a common goal that fosters interaction

norm – a product of group interaction that regulates member behaviour in terms of expected or ideal behaviour

group – a social unit with a number of individuals who are interdependent and have a set of norms and values

PROCEDURE

22 young boys aged 11, who did not know each other prior to the study, matched based on IQ tests and information from their teachers, were put into a camp at Robbers Cave State Park, Oklahoma. A fee was charged to stay at the camp and they were unaware they were being observed

The study was spread over three main stages:

- i the two groups were formed and set up norms and hierarchies (to see how they became in-groups)
- ii the two groups would be introduced and competition was set up (to test for hostility to the out-group)
- iii the two groups were set goals where they needed to work together to achieve them

Stage 1: In-group formation

The two groups were kept apart for one week to help the formation of group norms and relations. They had to work as a group to achieve common goals that required cooperation

Stage 2: Inter-group relations (the friction phase)

After the first week, the two groups were told about one another and a tournament was set up with competitive activities. Points could be earned for the group and there were rewards. As soon as they heard about each other, the two groups became hostile. They wanted to play each other at baseball, so they effectively set up their own tournament, which was what the researchers wanted.

Stage 3: Inter-group relations (the integration)

The researchers wanted to achieve harmony between the two groups, which they did by introducing **superordinate goals**. This meant that the groups would have to work together to achieve the goals. At first, they introduced tasks that simply brought the two groups together so that they could communicate. They then introduced the superordinate goals, which included:

- ✓ fixing the water tank and pump when the water supply was threatened
- ✓ a truck that would not start, so they had to pull together to try and start it
- ✓ pooling resources so that they could afford a film that they all wanted to watch

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regulatory terms and used observation and rating of stereotyping.

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RESULTS

Stage 1: In-group formation

By the end of the first Stage, the boys had given themselves names: the *Rattlers* and the *Eagles*. The groups developed similarly, but this was expected due to how carefully they had been matched. For both groups, status positions were settled over days five and six of the first week, and a clear group leader was in place. The Rattlers often discussed the situation of the Eagles, saying things such as “They had better not be swimming in our swimming hole”

Stage 2: Inter-group relations (the friction phase)

As soon as the groups found out about each other, they wanted to play baseball in a group competition: and so both groups had naturally moved onto Stage 2. The Rattlers were excited, and discussed such issues such as protecting their flag. The Eagles weren't as excited, but made such comments as “we will beat them”




When the two groups first met, there was a lot of name calling. There is evidence collected, including what the boys said, who they were friends with and practical issues (such as the burning of a flag). It was found that there were clearly negative attitudes towards the out-group members

Stage 3: Inter-group relations (the integration)

During the initial contacts of this Stage, the hostility remained. There were comments such as “ladies first” and when they watched a group movie together, they sat separated in their individual groups. After seven contact activities, there were superordinate goals set up:

- 1 The staff turned off the valve to the water pump and placed two large boulders over it. The children were informed that vandals had damaged it in the past. They worked together to fix the damage and rejoiced in common when they were successful
- 2 The second goal was to watch a movie together, but both groups had to chip in to pay for it. They eventually agreed to go halves even though one group had fewer members than the others. However, this agreement showed that the two groups cooperated to arrive at one final decision which they both were happy with
- 3 The boys all went on an organised trip to Cedar Lake, where the truck suddenly ‘developed’ a problem meaning the boys had to use the tug-of-war rope to try and pull it out and get it started

CONCLUSIONS

-  The groups developed social hierarchies and group norms, even though they were not stable throughout the study
-  When the two groups meet for competition, in-group solidarity increases and inter-group hostility is strong
-  When groups needed to work together, exchanged tools, shared responsibilities and agreed how to solve problems, friction was reduced – working towards a superordinate goal once was not sufficient, there needed to be numerous cooperation tasks to achieve this

EVALUATION

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ There were controls, such as the careful sampling, so they all followed the same procedures, this meant cause-and-effect conclusions could be drawn | ✗ It was unethical in that there was no informed consent obtained from their parents, and there was no right to withdraw (also, a criteria was that parents of the children were not allowed to visit) |
| ✓ There was several data collection methods used, so validity was claimed | ✗ It was hard to generalise to other situations because the sample was restricted to young boys of a specific background |
| ✓ The group conflict is prejudice, and the reduction of the friction would be removing the prejudice, therefore the study has practical application | |

1.11 Reicher and Haslam (2006)

KEY STUDY

Aim: To investigate tyranny at a group level in the BBC Prison Study

Background

In 1973, **Zimbardo** carried out the famous Stanford Prison experiment where one group of people acted as guards and others

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parts. More can be found by reading the full [1.11 Reicher and Haslam \(2006\)](#)

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PROCEDURE

Group Permeability –

The level of opportunity to move from one group to another

Participants spent eight days under constant video surveillance in a purpose-built prison environment that aimed to create “inequalities between groups that were real to the participants”. Prisoners had their heads shaved, had basic uniforms (T-shirts with a 3-digit number, loose trousers and sandals) and basic living conditions in 3-person lockable cells. The food, uniforms and accommodation of the guards was a lot better, and they had control over keys and resources to be used as rewards or punishments. The entire study was filmed and shown as part of a TV series on the BBC

FINDINGS

Day 1: The experiment begins and the prisoners are informed that one prisoner will be promoted to guard on Day 3. This created a condition of **high group permeability** (would readily change groups)

Day 3: One prisoner is promoted to the role of a guard, and group permeability is reduced after they are told there will be no more promotions. The prisoners felt more of a tight group because of this

Day 4: Three prisoners defied three guards, demanding better food. The guards could not agree how to respond, and so came off worse in the confrontation. The prisoners’ confidence began to increase

Day 5: Another prisoner was added to the experiment. He was a trade union official who the researchers hoped would provide ideas on how to improve the living conditions of the prisoners

Day 6: The prisoners broke out of their cells and occupied the guards’ quarters

Day 7: The guards and the prisoners decided to form a commune and govern together

Day 8: This regime initially worked, but four participants became dissatisfied with it and introduced a new very harsh regime: the experiment was ended at this point to avoid an outbreak of violence

What social identity theory would say about the experiment

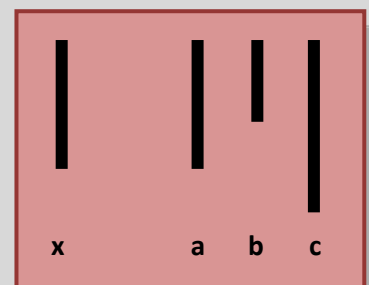
The dominant group (guards) quickly showed high levels of group identification. The subordinate group (prisoners) showed low levels of group identification when group permeability was high: but this increased as group permeability decreased

EVALUATION

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ethically, there was a high level of competence, as the experiment had the approval of the BPS✓ Participants were not deceived, they knew the purpose of the study and that TV cameras were constantly filming them✓ Triangulation of results was possible, if data agrees the findings are likely to be reliable and the behaviour being measured was more likely to be real | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ It was not possible to draw cause-and-effect conclusions as behaviour was being observed over a period of time, so reactions to individual events weren’t being monitored✗ The presence of TV cameras may have affected the participant’ behaviours, making the findings less valid |
|--|--|

1.12 Asch (1951, 1952, 1956)

Asch decided to conduct studies into social influences affecting group conformity. The test was so easy that all *control* subjects got it right 100% of the time: they had to state which line matched the length of another, like as shown in the card to the right. In the *experimental groups*, there were nine people present: the experimenter, the participant and eight confederates of the experimenter pretending to be fellow participants. They would give the wrong answer on twelve of the eighteen questions, and the study would see how these wrong answers affected conformity. The average rate of conformity in this study was 32%, although 74% conformed at least once in the experiment



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