

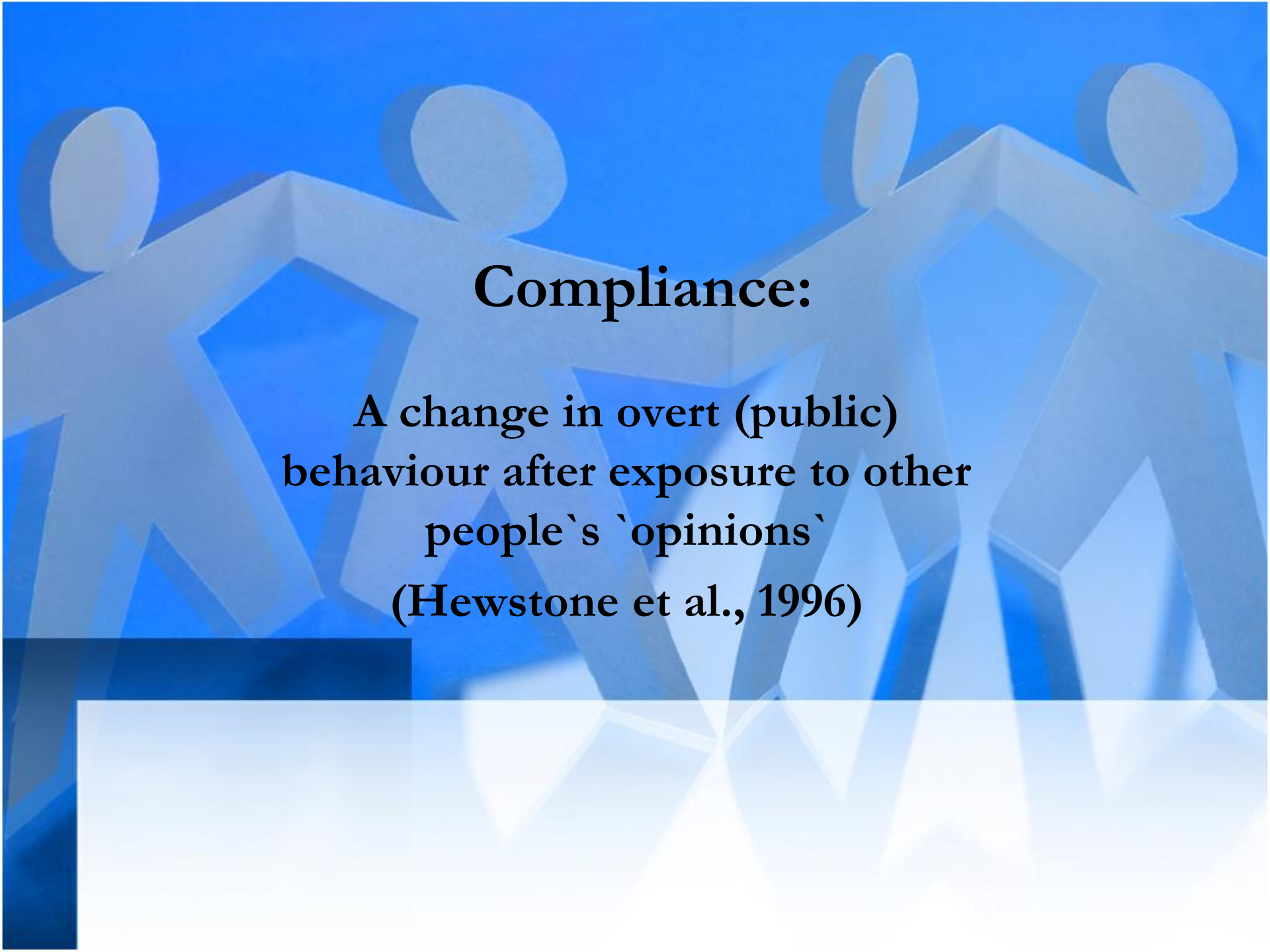


Conformity and Social Influence

Social influence 1: Conformity



- Not all conformity is the same. People conform in different ways and for a variety of reasons, depending on the situation they are in. Some different types of conformity are:
 - Compliance
 - Identification
 - Internalisation
 - Normative conformity
 - Informational conformity



Compliance:

**A change in overt (public)
behaviour after exposure to other
people's 'opinions'
(Hewstone et al., 1996)**



- Compliance gaining strategies with real life gains have been studied in abundance
- Foot in the door
- Door in the face
- Hi ball low ball

Foot in the door (Freedman & Fraser 1966)



- Homeowners asked if they would display large sign in front garden.
- Two experimental groups and control group. Control group asked without prior small request.
- Experimental group A asked to display small sign first, experimental group B asked to sign petition.
- 75% compliance for group A, 50% group B and 17% control group.

Door in the face (Cialdini et al., 1975)



- Large unreasonable request made initially.
- Smaller more reasonable request made secondly.
- The smaller request is the desired request.
- Compliance more likely for small request IF made by the same individual.
- E.g. students asked if they would be unpaid counsellors for two days each week for two years. Later they were asked would they take juvenile delinquents to the zoo; 50% said yes compared to 16.7% from a group only asked that one question alone.

Hi Ball Low Ball (Cialdini et al., 1975)



- People agree to a request/purchase.
- During payment a mistake is noticed and the real price is provided.
- Once committed, people usually go ahead and make the purchase.
- Students asked a request, 56% agreed. Only, then informed regarding the time and location, 53% still went.
- In contrast when students knew the arrangements, only 24% agreed in the first place.
- Why? Because the individual feels they have made a free choice!

That`s not all (Burger 1986)



- Two experimenters selling cupcakes and cookies at various locations, cupcakes were visible, cookies were not. Pp`s told that cupcakes were 75p each.
- Two experimenters discussed, then told pp`s that price included two cookies also!
- 73% of the pp`s in the `that`s not all` condition purchased compared to 40% in control condition who were told about the cookies immediately!
- Why? **Reciprocity**...**Anchoring**...

Identification



- When members of the same group categorise themselves as members of a particular group and expect to agree with each others opinions and views.
- Conformity occurs through reward and referent power leading to identification conformity.

Internalisation



- In uncertain situations, we refer to others regarding how to behave. We perform social comparisons and look at the expert power of others.
- This leads to internalisation conformity.

Conformity



- Conformity is different from compliance in two ways:
- It is a change in behaviour TOWARDS a group or social norm
- It is PRESSURE from a group of people and not a REQUEST from an individual

Early conformity research



- Jenness (1932) `Beans in a jar`
- Sherif (1935) & the `autokinetic effect`
- (See next slide)
- Asch(1951) & Conformity to a majority influence

Social Norms (Sherif)



- Pp`s conformed to a social standard, in this instance in the presence of others (uncertainty is usually why we look to others).
- However, this also happens when others are NOT present.
- Postmes, Spears & Lea (2002) put 72 Dutch and English students in groups of 6 (3 of each), they were introduced online followed by 2 more sessions requiring them to give opinions and discuss 3 issues: drugs, homosexuality & monarchy online for 10 mins. Then pp`s had to complete measures of attitudes to each topic and allocated to either a **depersonalised** (anonymous only identified by nationality) or **individuated** (identified by nationality, name and picture) condition.

Results:



Depersonalised

- Group attitudes **diverged**, from being very similar to much different, because they felt that they did not know much about the other people.

Individuated

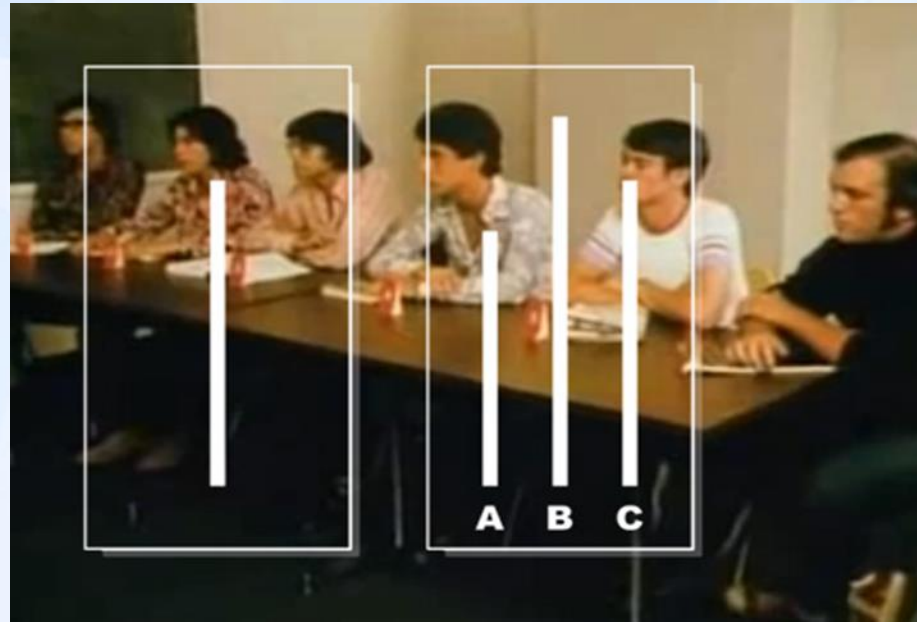
- Attitudes **converged** (just as you would expect)
- They went from being different to the same because they felt they knew something about each other.

Why? Because these findings mirror Sherif's findings that norm convergence occurs, but this time online without the need for the presence of others, based on perceived knowledge about another, and when nationality was the only information individuals held, then attitudes actually diverged! (Using heuristics?)

Asch- The Line Study (1951-1956)



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sno1TpCLj6A>



Asch- criticisms



- Friend et al., (1990) in the original study two thirds of pp`s resisted conformity, yet the emphasis was on the third that did!
- In a review of 100 tests between 1953-85, the emphasis was on those who conformed. Why?
- The Asch paradigm is costly and requires good actors, leading Crutchfield to devise an alternative test (1955). Conformity in this research was lower.
- Comparing Asch and Crutchfield led Kelman (1958) to suggest different processes were operating: public compliance and private acceptance.



- Public compliance is operating under **NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE**
- Private acceptance is operating under **INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE**
- The more **AMBIGUOUS** a situation is, the more likely it is that the latter will operate.
- Factors affecting conformity: non unanimous majority, group attractiveness, individual self esteem, skill/competence and culture

Explanations for conformity



- * **Normative social influence**: arises when there is a need for approval and a need for a positive self image.
- * **Informational social influence**: occurs when the views of others are considered valid and reliable.
- * Both involve social comparison (Abrams 1990) and the desire to belong to particular group. This is referred to as **referent social influence**.

Responses to Asch...



- Deception- was it ethically right to deceive pp`s?
- Artificial environment- does this represent real life?
- Mundane realism, ecological validity, demand characteristics.
- Child of its time?
- Cultural phenomenon?

More recent studies



- * Holzhausen & Glyn (2001)
- * 321 students given answers to math problems and informed they were the majority views. They were asked publically and privately if they agreed.
- * Findings showed if answers were easy/credible then students thought they good and both complied and internalised them, but if they were poor in credibility compliance occurred but no internalisation.
- * Finally, if the problems were difficult, regardless of the credibility of the answers internalisation occurred, lending support to the argument that ambiguity leads to internalisation.



- * Griskvicius et al (2006) investigated fundamental motives and their influence on conformity.
- * 113 male and 124 females students primed to think either about protecting themselves, or about attracting a member of a target sex.
- * Priming occurred by reading 850 words on either a house break-in or falling in love on holiday. This was followed by a visit to a chat room where they had to evaluate paintings alone and in groups of 4.
- * A non priming control condition also took place.
- * Conformity to the group was as follows:
 - * Self protect condition- men and women conformed to the group more than in the control group
 - * Mate attraction condition- women conformed more than control, men less.



- * Crandall et al (2002) investigated **normative** social influence and found an almost perfect correlation between prejudice and how appropriate they believe the prejudice to be.
- * Eyssel et al (2006) investigated **informational** social influence and men's conformity to rape myths and likelihood of committing rape.
- * 117 men rated their acceptance of rape myths followed by fictitious responses from fellow pp's showing high or low rape myth acceptance.
- * They then rated again their rape likelihood and conformity to the high rate myth group acceptance was found.



- * Perrin & Spencer (1980) criticised Asch as being a child of its time and repeated the procedure in the late 1970`s. they found conformity in only 1 of 396 trials.
- * Doms & Avermaet (1981) argued that the Asch paradigm was better than Perrin & Spencer as they used science students who would be more confident and less conformist. When Perrin and Spencer used youths on probation conformity increased.
- * Neto (1995) are women more conformist? They are more concerned with social relationships and have different short term goals so this makes appear more conformist in the experimental situation than they really are.
- * Smith & Bond (1988) summarised that collectivist cultures are more conformist.
- * However, Lalancette & Standing (1990) found no conformity even on an ambiguous task...

Can your friends make you fat?



- We are certainly motivated to conform to acceptance from our friendship groups.
- Christakis & Fowler (2007) followed pp`s from 1971-2003. they kept track of their weight, friends, family and neighbours.
- Having obese friends increased their chances of becoming overweight by 57%.
- Why?...

Conformity, decision making, juries & EWT.



EWT

- Alper et al (1976)
- Staged a theft in front of student audience, then firstly asked them individually for their recollection, and secondly in groups to come to a general agreement.
- Although more information was remembered in groups, they also made far more errors in their recollections

JURIES

- Heuer & Penrod (1994)
- The more difficult the case, the less confidence in own verdict so more likely to conform to the majority.

Minority Influence (Moscovici 1969)



Critics argued that the research on conformity was focused on the majority at the expense of the minority. Therefore, Moscovici conducted an ingenious study into minority influence.

The blue-green study:

- * The participants were first given eye tests to ensure they were not colour-blind.

They were then placed in a group consisting of four participants and two confederates. They were shown 36 slides which were clearly different shades of blue and asked to state the colour of each slide out loud.

- * In the first part of the experiment the two confederates answered green for each of the 36 slides. They were totally consistent in their responses.



- In the second part of the experiment they answered green 24 times and blue 12 times. In this case they were inconsistent in their answers. Would the responses of the two confederates influence those of the four participants? In other words, would there be minority influence?
- ***Results:** In condition one it was found that the consistent minority had an affect on the majority (8.42%) compared to an inconsistent minority (only 1.25% said green). A third (32%) of all participants judged the slide to be green at least once. A third (32%) of al participants judged the slide to be green at least once.

Why minority influence?



- * **Conclusion:** Minorities can influence a majority, but not all the time and only when they behave in certain ways (e.g. consistent behaviour style).
- * Based on the dynamics of active minorities and their need to be understood
- * The success of minorities depends on their behavioural style and their thinking style:
- * Consistency- firm systematic and autonomous
- * Autonomy- they need to be the focus of attention, for example sitting at the head of the table
- * Rigidity/flexibility- the need to appear as flexible but stable and not dogmatic

In the real world...



- * Minority influence?

- * Majority influence?

- * Both?

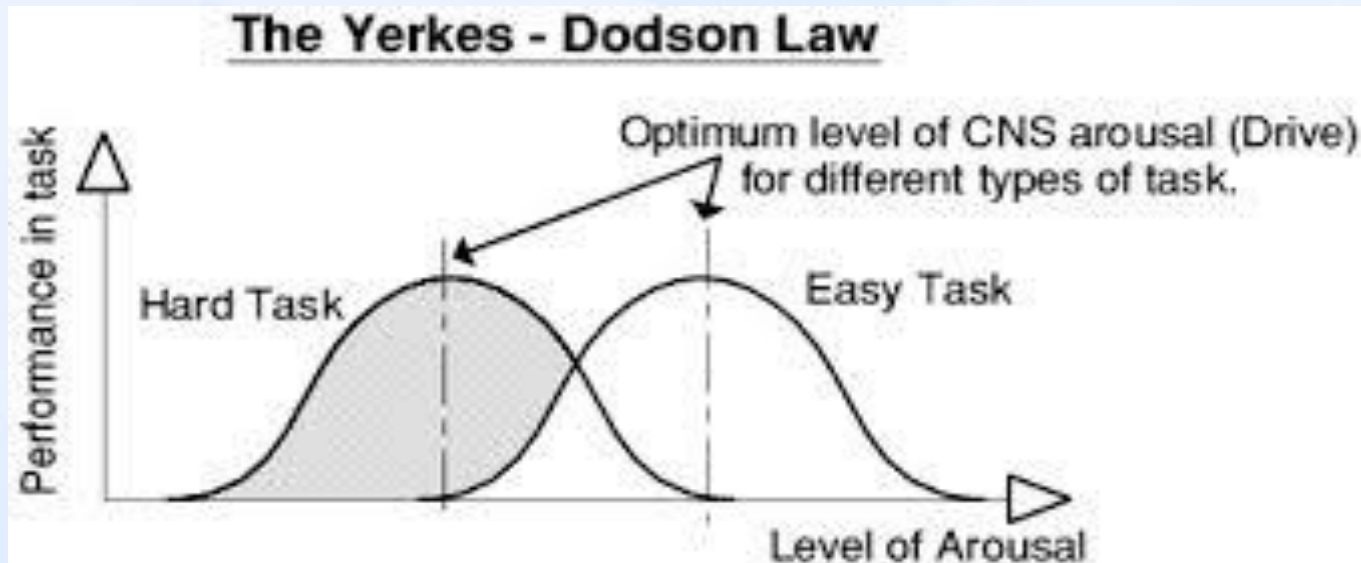
- * Or something else?

- * <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7IxGGfpSWk>

Unintentional social influence



- Social Facilitation (Triplet 1898) the mere presence of another person.
- This led to **audience effects** and **coaction effects**.
- Zajonc (1965) arousal effects are inborn:



- Cottrell (1972) no, learned evaluation apprehension

What about distraction?



- Zajonc = automatic response, Cottrell = learned apprehension evaluation, Baron (1986) = distraction conflict theory:
- Arousal is a result of attentional conflict from distraction of one's own performance by that of another. (information overload).
- Alternatively, there is **impression management**, the need to create a good impression and the errors you make which may cause you embarrassment.

Social loafing



- A decrease in individual effort when working as part of a group. (Ringelmann 1913)
- Can be cognitive as well as physical!
- E.g. Weldon & Gargano (1988): pp`s given hard judgement task and when in group paid less attention to difficulty when not held accountable compared to those working alone. **Why?** You don't know how much effort the other person is investing.
- If individual contributions are measured, this does not occur!

However, when it comes to people you like,



- Kohler motivation gain effect (2011):
- People of a less capable group perform better together than when alone.
- Why?
- Indispensability of one's efforts (Kerr et al 2007)
- Upward social comparison (Kerr & Hertel 2011)

Finally, `Group think`: extreme group polarisation and cohesion



- This high level of group conformity and polarisation is caused by:
 - 1. high group cohesiveness.
 - 2. threatening social situations.
 - 3. excessive desire for consensus.

This has led to several tragedies such as the challenger shuttle disaster:

Within 73 seconds following lift off, all 7 crew members had died because of a joint not being sealed correctly. the joint had gone unnoticed prior to lift off, the decision making process was seriously flawed:



- The engineers were worried that the seals had not been tested to withstand such cold temperatures, however NASA were sceptical: which led to the engineers changing their minds.
- This demonstrates `group think`;
- High group cohesion, all working towards a common goal
- High stress situation as they were already behind schedule
- Strong desire to consensus as keen to maintain public faith

Social modelling



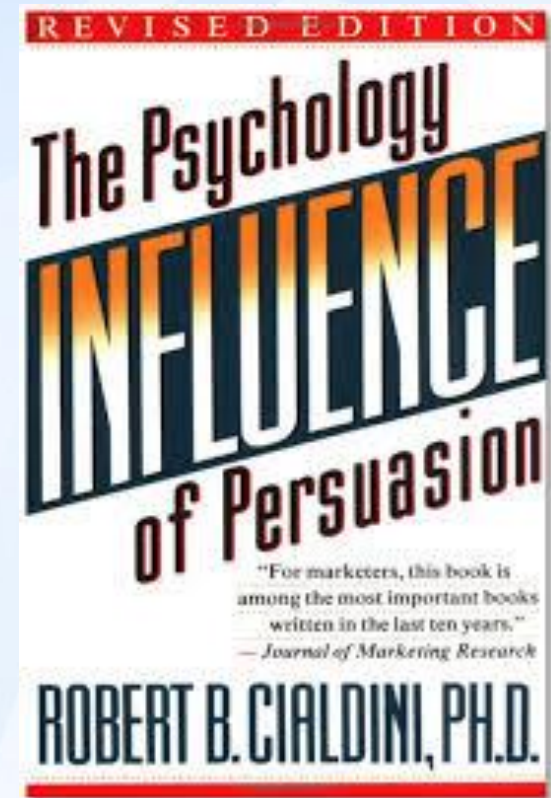
- Social learning theory (motivated to act) Bandura (1977) and observational learning.
- Modelling can have inhibiting or disinhibiting effects on behaviours that have already been acquired.
- Modelling is direct influence, but we or others may be unaware that it is occurring.

Mirror neurons



- Neuroscience and unintentional social influence:
- We often automatically and unintentionally imitate the behaviours and movements of others around us. Heyes (2011) proposes that this is initiated by our mirror neurons as they fire when we observe someone performing that activity.
- Quite exactly why is subject to debate...

Social Influence 2: Obedience and Persuasion.





- In everyday life, most obedience is benign and constructive and necessary to maintain social order in society. Blind obedience however is often destructive, and it is this which motivated Milgram in the 1960`s.



- Prior to conducting his research Milgram asked psychiatrists and students how far up the shock scale people would go. Their estimates were:
- Psychiatrists predicted no one would go higher than `very strong shock`, students predicted that no one would go higher than `strong shock`.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr5cjyokVUs>



A more recent replication by the BBC:



- [part 1](#)
- [part 2](#)
- [part 3](#)





Variations of Milgram's original experiments.

- **Legitimacy of authority:**
 - seedy building- 47.5%, ordinary man- 20%
- **Proximity of the learner:**
 - in the same room- 40%, hand on the metal plate- 30%
- **Proximity of the experimenter:**
 - experimenter leaves the room- 20.5%
- **Conflicting commands from 2 experimenters-0%**
- **Female volunteers- 65%**

Why do we obey?



- Milgram proposed Agency theory to explain obedient behaviour.
- It enables a stable society.
- It provides the means to stick to societal rules.
- It leads to two social states: autonomy and agency.
- An autonomous state allows us to act as we want, whereas an agentic state enables us to surrender our free will to serve the interests of the group.
- We are socialised in childhood that sometimes we need to put aside our individual needs.



Responses to Milgram:

- Orne & Holland (1968) the procedure lacks experimental validity and ecological validity.
- Baumrind (1964) unacceptable ethical concerns that could not be justified.
- Smith & Bond (1998) review of 8 countries, Cultural differences existed, obedience levels of 92% in Holland!

Further Obedience research:



- Sheridan & King (1972)
 - Sheridan and King told their participants that the puppy was being trained to distinguish between a flickering and a steady light. It had to stand either to the right or the left depending on the cue from the light. If the animal failed to stand in the correct place, the subjects had to press a switch to shock it.
 - As in the Milgram experiment, the shock level increased 15 volts for every wrong answer. But unlike Milgram, the puppy really was getting zapped. As the voltage increased, the puppy barked, then jumped up and down, howling with pain.
 - The volunteers were horrified. They paced back and forth, hyperventilated, and gestured with their hands to show the puppy where to stand. Many openly wept. Yet the majority of them, twenty out of twenty-six, kept pushing the shock button to the maximum voltage.
 - The six students who refused to go on were all men. All thirteen women who participated in the experiment obeyed right up until the end.

Never trust a nurse!

Hofling (1966)- nurses study

- Involved both public and private hospital wards.
- In Hospital 1: 21 student nurses and 12 graduate nurses were asked to complete a questionnaire asking them what they would do if confronted by the experimental situation. This was a control group to make comparisons. In the other hospitals 22 nurses took part in the field experiment which was covert.
- While alone on the night shift the nurses received a phone call from a unknown doctor asking them to administer a drug to a patient - astrotten. The amount of drug nurses were asked to give would have been an overdose. The drug was also not authorized for the ward the nurses were working on and nurses should not carry out orders given over the phone.





- The phone call ended when the nurse complied; the nurse refused; the nurse referred them to someone else; if they became upset; if they could not find the medication or if the call lasted longer than 10 mins. An observer on the ward stopped the study when the nurse got the medication and was approaching the patient; the nurse began to contact another professional or it had been over 10 mins since the call.
- **21 out of 22 Nurses obeyed!**
- Rank & Jacobson (1977) repeated Hofling et al's (1966) experiment, but this time they increased the realism of the situation by using valium (a drug the nurses were familiar with) at three times the recommended dose. When the research pretending to be a doctor telephoned, he introduced himself as a doctor the nurses would have heard of, and the nurses were in a position of being able to discuss the order with other nurses before carrying it out.
- **Only 2 out of 18 obeyed, why?**

Bickman (1974) - uniforms create obedience



- The power a uniform has to make people more likely to obey orders was shown by Bickman (1974) in New York.
- Bickman used three male actors dressed in normal clothes, as a milkman, or as a security guard. The actors asked passersby to do things like pick up a paper bag that had been thrown in the street, or to give them a coin for a parking meter.
- Passers by were most likely to obey the actor dressed as a security guard and least likely to obey the actor in normal clothes.
- Up to 80% obedience.



Meeus & Raaijmakers (1986)



- 1. There were three people: 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.
- 2. The applicant was following a script, and had to pass a test of 32 oral MCQ to get the job.
- 3. The participants were told the job required the ability to handle stress, so they had to cause the applicant stress during the interview by psychologically abusing them.
- 4. Participants were also informed that it was part of an investigation to find out psychological stress and test success.



- 5. 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.
- 6. 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.
- 7. The "stress remarks" led the applicant to failing the test and so did not get the job.
- 8. 22 out of the 24 pp's continued to the end, making all 15 remarks, even when they obviously did feel offensive, they continued to the end.

Burger (2009)- replicated Milgram's study, but only allowed pp's to go up to 150v.



- How did they participants compare? 70% were willing to continue past the 150-volt mark, prompting the experimenter to halt the study. This result was statistically indistinguishable from Milgram's.
- But maybe they continued so long only because there was no social pressure to quit.
- Thirty of Burger's participants did a slightly different task, this time with two actors. The same actor played the Student, but the second actor played the role of Teacher 1.
- Teacher 1 was told to administer the shocks, and Teacher 2 (the only real participant) was told to watch Teacher 1 and await further instructions. Teacher 1 administered the shocks up to 90 volts, at which point he refused to continue. The experimenter then told Teacher 2, the real participant, to continue.
- In this version of the task, 63 percent of participants still continued all the way past 150 volts, when the experiment was stopped. Again, this was indistinguishable from Milgram's results or Burger's other participants.

Social Roles, the power of the situation:



Zimbardo.

- Following on from the work of Milgram, Phillip Zimbardo and colleagues were interested in the power of the situation and social roles.
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_LKzEqIPto
- This led to over 30 years of research into the power of the situation, the study of evil and the 'Lucifer effect'.

http://www.ted.com/talks/philip_zimbardo_on_the_psychology_of_evil

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