

psych/logic

**AQA A-level Psychology
Unit 1
(7182/1)**

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Syllabus Notes

SAMPLE MATERIAL

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

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- Types of conformity – internalisation, identification and compliance (lines 1-23)
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INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Social influence research analyses the way in which **individuals and groups affect each other's attitudes and behaviour**.

Conformity (or **majority influence**) involves changing our attitudes and behaviours to fit in with a larger group, and is related to our need to (i) be accepted by others in our social group or (ii) seek guidance about how we should think/behave in ambiguous (unclear) or novel (new) situations.

Obedience simply involves obeying commands from authority figures who hold social power. We are socialised to be obedient from childhood onwards (parents, teachers, police, etc.) and disobedience usually results in punishment of some sort.

Independent behaviour examines factors associated with people not giving in to pressures to **conform** or **obey** (i.e. being non-conformist or disobedient).

Minority influence has explored how individuals/small groups can **challenge** the established views and behaviours of the majority to cause **social change**: for example, Emmeline Pankhurst and the suffragettes (a **minority**) challenging mainstream (the **majority**) sexist views in the UK and eventually won the right for women to vote.

Much influential research in his field is based in **real life events** in **Nazi Germany** where **conformity** to racist beliefs and **blind obedience** to authority figures were key psychological factors leading to the scapegoating and mass killing of Jews and other groups. Similarly, during the 20th C. a great deal of **social change** occurred as a result of **independent behaviour** and **minority influence** (e.g. feminism, independence movements in ex-British colonies such as India, black civil rights in the USA, the gay rights movement, etc.)

CONFORMITY

A DEFINITION OF CONFORMITY

1 **Conformity (or majority influence)** can be defined as a **change in beliefs or behaviours** by
2 an individual or small group to fit in with a **majority** (larger) group as a result of **real or**
3 **imagined pressure** from the **majority** group.
4 Examples could be **minor** (young people conforming to the drinking/drug taking behaviour
5 of their peers) or **major** (a society conforming to racist beliefs).

TYPES OF CONFORMITY

6 **Compliance**

7 The **shallowest** type of conformity where the individual **publicly conforms** to the
8 attitudes or behaviors of the majority group whilst **privately disagreeing** with them.
9 For example, agreeing with friends that a film was good whilst secretly not enjoying
10 it. Compliance is associated with **seeking group approval** and **membership** and
11 avoiding **disapproval**. Compliance is usually temporary/impermanent.

12 **Identification**

13 A **deeper** type of conformity where an individual **publicly and privately** changes
14 their attitudes and behaviour to conform to the group but only because they want to
15 **identify with** and feel a **sense of membership** with the group. This change may be
16 **temporary** – when they leave the group they revert to their original attitudes and
17 behaviour. For example, joining the army and conforming to colleagues'
18 beliefs/behaviours but abandoning these once you leave the army.

19 **Internalisation**

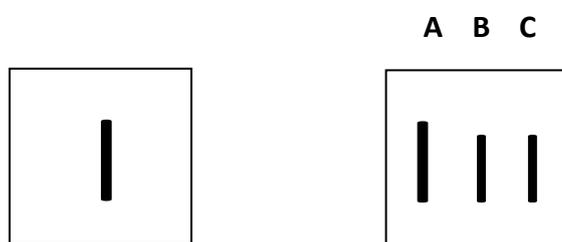
20 The **deepest** and most **permanent** type of conformity when one **publicly and**
21 **privately** changes one's attitudes and behaviour to fit in with a group because one
22 believes the group's attitudes and behaviours to be **correct** and **right**. For example,
23 becoming a life-long vegetarian after sharing a house with vegetarians at university.

RESEARCH INTO CONFORMITY

ASCH ('56)

Procedures

- Asch aimed to assess whether individuals would **conform** to the **obviously wrong response** given by a **majority** in a **perceptual-judgement task**.
- Asch asked **123 student participants** to take part in a 'vision test'. Participants sat with between 6-8 other 'participants'. In fact, the visual task was about conformity and the other participants were **confederates**. Participants were shown a line on one card and 3 lines on another card. They were then asked which of the 3 lines they thought was the same length as the line on the first card. (It was obvious what the correct answer was).



This was repeated **18 times** with different lines each time.

In **12 out of the 18 trials**, the confederates deliberately gave incorrect answers to test whether the one genuine participant conformed to their (**majority**) answer. (The real participant always answered last or 2nd to last in the group.)

Findings

- On the **12 trials** where the confederates deliberately gave the incorrect answer **36.8%** of the responses made by the (genuine) participants were incorrect: i.e. they **conformed to an obviously incorrect answer**.
- 25%** of participants did not conform at all. **5%** conformed on every trial.
- Participants showed increasing anxiety and self-consciousness as the study went on.
- After the study, Asch asked participants why they had conformed. Some said they **doubted the accuracy of their judgment** so **yielded** (gave in) to the majority view: i.e. they thought their vision/judgement was incorrect (**informational social influence**). Others said they trusted their own judgments privately but wanted to avoid disapproval and embarrassment (**normative social influence**).

EVALUATION

- The task was **insignificant** and did not have any **moral importance** – therefore, there were few **costs** attached to conforming. It was not a type of task that we confront in **everyday life**, meaning that it has **low ecological validity**. This limits the extent we can **generalise** results to conformity in everyday life. For example, in a more **ecologically valid real life task** involving **moral consequences** such as asking

57 someone to conform to stealing we may find that levels of conformity are much
58 lower.

- 59 • **Perrin and Spencer ('80)** claimed the study was a '**child of its time**' – that the climate
60 of 50's America was particularly conformist and that social change since the 50's has
61 meant that people are now far more non-conformist and independent. When they
62 repeated Asch's study in the **UK** in the 70's using **science** and **engineering** student
63 they found only **1 conformist** response out of **396 trials**.
- 64 • Asch's sample were **male American students** – hence **low population validity and**
65 **ethnocentric bias** – we cannot tell whether women or other cultures would conform
66 in a similar way.
- 67 • The study raises **ethical issues** – participants were **deceived** and might have felt
68 **humiliated (no protection of participants from psychological harm)**.
- 69 • **Lucas ('06)** conducted an experiment similar to Asch using maths problems. **High**
70 **self-efficacy participants** (those who were confident in their own abilities) were
71 **more independent** than **low self-efficacy participants**, even when the problems got
72 more difficult. This shows that **situational differences** (task difficulty) and **individual**
73 **differences** (self-efficacy) are **both important** in determining levels of conformity.

VARIABLES AFFECTING CONFORMITY

74 Asch conducted **variations** of the experiment to assess factors which **increased** or
75 **decreased** conformity.

- 76 • **Task difficulty** – making the lines in the task **more similar to each other** and
77 therefore **the answer less obvious** produced **higher** rates of conformity. **Rosander**
78 asked 1000 social media users' questions about logic and general knowledge. Half
79 the sample were provided with false answers by confederates. Conformity to false
80 answers **positively correlated** with question difficulty. This suggests that when the
81 correct way to think or behave is more **complex or less clear** we are more likely to
82 **trust others judgment** and conform.
- 83 • **Group size of the majority** – using a majority of **1 or 2 confederates** with 1 real
84 participant produced low rates of conformity – **3% with 1 confederate** and **13% with**
85 **2 confederates**. However, with a **majority of 3** conformity **rose to 33%** and
86 conformity effects rose little above this level despite the increased size of the
87 majority.
88 The effect of group size may **depend on the conformity task**, however. **Campbell**
89 found that if the task related to **personal preferences** (e.g. whether a film was good)
90 increasing group size did lead to increasing conformity, whereas if the answer was
91 **clearly right/wrong** increasing majority group size beyond 3 has little effect.
- 92 • **Unanimity** - if another confederate gave the right answer and did not conform (i.e.
93 there was not a **unanimous** majority) participants' levels of conformity dropped to
94 **5.5%**. Thus, social support from other **dissenters** strengthens individuals'
95 **independent behaviour** to go against the majority and increases their confidence

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that they are right. Asch found that even when a dissenter gave a **different but wrong answer** to the majority, participants were more likely to go against the group and show **independent behaviour**.

EXPLANATIONS OF WHY PEOPLE CONFORM

99 The **dual process dependency model** identifies **2 reasons** for **conformity**: the desire to be
100 **liked** and the desire to be **right**.

101 **NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

102 Normative social influence states that people conform in order to be **liked and accepted**,
103 and to **gain and retain group membership**. Humans are a social species and have an innate,
104 fundamental need for social companionship and a fear of rejection or punishment by the
105 social group. Although they may **personally and privately disagree with the group** they
106 **outwardly conform (compliance)** or **temporarily conform to retain group membership**
107 **(identification)**. Thus, this type of conformity is relatively **shallow** and usually **short-term**.

108 **INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

109 Informational social influence suggests that people conform to others beliefs and
110 behaviours in order to be **'right'**. In **ambiguous** (unclear) **or novel** (new) situations people
111 are often unsure how to behave, so they conform to others beliefs and behaviours, partly
112 out of a desire to avoid **embarrassment**, partly because they believe that others are more
113 **knowledgeable** about the correct way to act and behave. This sort of social influence is
114 most likely when:

- 115 • The situation is **ambiguous** and the right way to act/respond is unclear
- 116 • The situation is a **crisis and we are required to respond quickly**.
- 117 • We believe others are **'experts'** and thus **trust their judgement**

118 This type of conformity tends to have more **permanent** effects on behaviour and often
119 results, therefore, in **internalisation**.

EVALUATION

120 **Asch's** study provides evidence for this model.

- 121 • Some said they **doubted the accuracy of their judgment** so yielded to the majority
122 view: i.e. they thought their vision/judgement was incorrect (**informational social**
123 **influence**).
- 124 • Others said they trusted their own judgments privately but wanted to avoid
125 **disapproval** and **embarrassment (normative social influence)**.

126 **NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

127 Further evidence to support normative influence comes from research studies.

128 **Schultz ('08)** analysed data from 794 rooms in 132 hotels where doors displayed a sign
129 informing guests either that (i) reusing their towels was environmentally friendly, or (ii) 75%
130 of guests choose to reuse their towels. Those guests who saw the 2nd sign were significantly
131 more likely to re-use their towels. The **normative social influence** caused by the 2nd sign

132 reduced hotel replacement of towels by 25%: i.e. guests thought this was what others were
133 doing so wanted to fit in with the group and **avoid disapproval/embarrassment**.

134 **Marketing campaigns** about what is **normative** (normal/usual) for young people have
135 successfully reduced **alcohol abuse** and **smoking** in teenagers. In a campaign aimed at 12-17
136 year olds in the US only 10% of participants took up smoking after exposure to a campaign
137 saying that **most** children in their age range did not smoke. Control groups who did not
138 receive this message were significantly more likely to take up smoking. This change can be
139 **attributed** (blamed on or caused by) **to normative social influence**.

140 Therefore, psychological research into normative social influence has **real-life applications**
141 in that advertisers and governments can **manipulate** or **persuade** the public into conforming
142 to certain attitudes or behaviours: for example, anti-smoking campaigns, etc.

143 **INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

144 Further evidence to support informational influence comes from research studies.

145 **Fein ('07)**. Participants watched presidential candidates in debates and were then asked for
146 their judgment on how they had performed. They were then exposed to other people's
147 opinions on screen. When questioned later about the candidates, many participants
148 **showed large shifts away** from their original opinions. This **supports informational social**
149 **influence** – they had altered their original opinions to fit in with the majority as they
150 believed the majority was more 'correct' in their opinions than they were.

151 **CRITICISMS – the role of group membership**

152 **Critics of the dual-dependency model** argue that it does not recognize the importance of
153 individuals' sense of **group belonging**. **Hogg ('87)** carried out experiments similar to Asch's
154 but used either **friends** or **strangers** as **confederates**. Participants were in booths so that
155 they could hear but not see confederates' responses. He found that conformity to obviously
156 wrong answers only occurred when confederates were **friends**. This **underlines** the
157 importance of **group belonging, loyalty and identity** in the process of conformity, and that
158 we are much more likely to conform to those whom we define as our '**in-group**'.

CONFORMITY TO SOCIAL ROLES – ZIMBARDO'S RESEARCH

159 **Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (71)** investigated **identification** with and
160 **conformity to social roles** of **guard** and **prisoner** in prisons, and the process of
161 **deindividuation** (where an individual's identity is stripped away, in this case through
162 uniforms and identification with a prisoner or guard role) and **increased aggression**.

- 163 • **24 psychologically normal volunteer male students** were **randomly divided** to take
164 on the role of either **guard** or **prisoner** in a '**mock**' prison. After a fake 'arrest'
165 prisoners were taken to the prison, had personal possessions removed, were
166 dressed as prisoners and assigned ID numbers. Guards were told to keep the
167 prisoners under control but **use no violence**. Guards referred to the prisoners only
168 by their number and were given uniforms, clubs and reflective sunglasses (to prevent
169 eye contact). Zimbardo played the role of the prison superintendent.
- 170 • Within a few days the guards became **psychologically and physically abusive** to the
171 prisoners. The prisoners '**rebelled**' against the guards' authority by taking off their ID
172 badges. The guards locked the prisoners in their cells. Rapidly, the guards seem to
173 begin to enjoy **sadistically** (taking pleasure in others suffering) **exercising power** over
174 the prisoners, making them perform humiliating tasks, depriving them of sleep and
175 force-feeding those who went on hunger strike. Increasingly, participants behaved as
176 if the situation they were in was real. Over the course of a few days prisoners
177 became **passive, depressed and stressed** – 5 prisoners had to be released early due
178 to crying, rage, extreme anxiety, etc. The study was planned to run for **2 weeks** but
179 was **called off after 6 days** due to the guards' brutal behaviour and the prisoners'
180 reactions.

EVALUATION

- 181 • **Ethics.** Zimbardo's study has become well-known as an example of an **ethically**
182 **questionable** psychological study. Although participants gave **informed consent** they
183 were not told they would be arrested at home. They were not **deceived** and were
184 given the **right to withdraw**, but they were subjected to fairly severe **physical and**
185 **psychological harm**, and it is argued that Zimbardo had a **moral responsibility** to
186 stop the study as soon as the guards showed any signs of brutality. It has also been
187 argued that Zimbardo might have **anticipated** the distress which the prisoners were
188 subjected to, and that participants could not give **fully informed consent** as the
189 outcome of the study was **unpredictable**: i.e. no-one expected the guards to behave
190 so abusively.
191 Zimbardo answered critics by stating that he **counselled** (advised and helped)
192 participants afterwards to cope with their experiences and that the study illustrated
193 such an important aspect of human behaviour that the temporary suffering
194 experienced by some participants was **justified**.

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- **Ecological Validity.** Clearly, the prison was not real and the participants (guards and prisoners) were engaged in a **role play** rather than a **real-life situation**, knew they could **leave** the experiment when they wished, and were only confined for a **short period of time**. To what extent we can **generalise** findings to real institutions and real abuse of power by guards against prisoners is, therefore, debatable. Even though the study lacked **ecological validity**, the social roles given to the guard and prisoner of **powerful** and **powerless** do seem associated in the real world with sadistic violence.
 - Zimbardo's **interpretation** of his participants' behaviour was that when put in a **social role with absolute power** even psychologically normal individuals are at increased likelihood of **behaving abusively to those with no social power**. The **deindividuating** effect of the prison and the uniforms seemed to encourage **brutality and violence**.
 - **Demand Characteristics.** Critics argue that Zimbardo **encouraged** the guards' brutality and that the guards simply acted up to the stereotypical role they were being asked to play, therefore, they were not really behaving as themselves.
 - The behaviour of the guards in the study has been witnessed countless times in **total institutions** (e.g. prisons, concentration camps, mental institutions and the army): e.g. **Abu Graib** prison in Iraq where a number of American soldiers were found to have sadistically abused Iraqi prisoners.

OBEDIENCE

A DEFINITION OF OBEDIENCE

215 **Obedience** can be defined as **following the commands of authority figures** who hold **social**
216 **power/status**: e.g. parents, teachers, police, bosses, etc. Some form of punishment (ranging
217 from mild disapproval through to physical violence) usually results from **disobedience**.
218 **Milgram** was interested in the phenomena of German officers and soldiers being **blindly**
219 **obedient** to the commands of superiors who ordered them to kill innocent people during
220 World War 2.

RESEARCH INTO OBEDIENCE - MILGRAM'S OBEDIENCE STUDY ('63)

Aim

- 222 • Milgram's experiment assessed to what extent ordinary men will **blindly obey** an
223 **authority figure's commands to harm an innocent man**.

Procedures

- 225 • Participants met the experimenter and were introduced to **'Mr Wallace'** (a
226 confederate) who would be the participant's partner in the study. Mr Wallace was
227 strapped into a chair designed to give electric shocks. In an adjacent room where he
228 could hear but not see Mr Wallace, participants read out word-pairs which Mr Wallace
229 was later required to remember. Each time Mr Wallace failed the task (which he
230 deliberately did), Milgram instructed the participant to deliver **increasingly large**
231 **electric shocks**. As the study progressed Mr Wallace pretended to be in increasing
232 amounts of pain. At 270 V he began screaming and from 330 V + there was silence (he
233 was presumably unconscious/dead). Participants showed great signs of stress and
234 repeatedly said that they wouldn't continue. However, Milgram insisted they continue
235 and **commanded them to obey**.

Findings

- 237 • **26 out of the 40 participants (65%)** gave shocks up to the maximum value of **450V**. **All**
238 participants delivered shocks up to **300V**. **In between 300-450 V** 35% of participants
239 **defied** Milgram at some point and **refused to obey**.

Conclusions

- 241 • Milgram's study **implies** that an average American male will be willing to inflict
242 potentially fatal harm on an innocent individual simply because they have been
243 ordered to do so – that the **social power of obedience and authority** is greater than
244 one's own **moral conscience**. Milgram's findings have relevance for understanding the
245 murder of innocent civilians by soldiers under command of their officers.
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EVALUATION

ETHICAL CRITICISMS

- Milgram gained **consent** from participants but not **informed consent**: i.e. they knew they were in a psychological study but did not know what the true nature of the study was. It is likely they would not have given **consent** had they known the **true aim**.
- Milgram **deceived** participants about the **aim** of the study (he told them it was about the effects of punishment on learning), the **identity** of Mr Wallace, and the fact that the **shock-equipment** and Mr Wallace's **screams** were not real.
- Participants were pressurised to continue in the study even though they asked to **withdraw**. Nearly all participants expressed anxiety and a desire to not shock Mr Wallace. Although at the start of the study Milgram told them they could stop at any point they wanted, once the study was in progress if they expressed a desire to stop he responded with statements such as 'It is absolutely essential that you continue', 'you have no other choice, you must go on'.
- Participants were exposed to high levels of **psychological stress**. It could be argued that the study caused long-lasting damage to **self-esteem**.

METHODOLOGICAL CRITICISMS OF MILGRAM'S STUDY

Orne argued

- The study lacked **ecological validity** – findings could not be **generalised** beyond the **laboratory setting** and could not be applied to obedience in the real world. The obedience task that Milgram's participants performed was **artificial** and had **no social 'context'**: for example, participants did not fear punishment if they disobeyed as soldiers would. There was also no moral or political context to the obedience task whereas in real-life obedience situations such as wars soldiers may feel a **duty** to obey or that violence is **justified**.
- Participants showed **demand characteristics** – they didn't believe the shocks were real and play-acted along. Although **post-experimental interviews** seem to indicate that participants did take the study seriously, a research assistant of Milgram's claimed that quite a number of participants believed the shocks to be fake, and it was these participants who gave the highest intensity shocks.

A FIELD EXPERIMENT INTO OBEDIENCE

Hofling conducted a **field experiment** in a psychiatric hospital. Boxes of **placebos** labeled '5mg Astrofen, maximum dose 10mg daily' were placed in the pharmacy. A **confederate doctor telephoned** the nurse on duty saying he needed the nurse to give **20mg** of Astrofen to a patient as he was in a hurry, and **that he'd sign the drug authorisation document later**. To obey the doctor's orders the nurse would be **breaking 3 procedural rules**: (i) the dose was above the daily limit, (ii) drugs should only be given after written authorisation from a doctor,

283 (iii) the nurse must be sure the doctor is genuine. Despite these important rules **21 out of 22**
284 nurses immediately obeyed. Thus, this more **ecologically valid** study **supports Milgram's**
285 **original findings**.

286 **VARIABLES AFFECTING OBEDIENCE**

287 In **variations** of the original study Milgram identified features which **raised** or **lowered**
288 obedience levels.

- 289 • **Proximity** (how close participants were to the Mr Wallace, and how close they were
290 to the experimenter)
 - 291 ○ When the experimenter gave instructions by **telephone**, obedience dropped
292 with only **20% going to full 450V**. The participant felt **less pressure** to obey
293 the experimenter when they were **distanced** from him.
 - 294 ○ When the teacher was in **the same room** as the learner increased **empathy**
295 resulted in obedience rates falling, and the same effect was found when the
296 teacher was instructed to force the learner's hand onto the shock plate.
297 However, even in this last condition where one might expect **empathy and**
298 **direct responsibility** to lower obedience rates, 30% of participants still
299 continued to 450V.
- 300 • **Uniform**
 - 301 ○ Milgram's **lab coat** may also have conveyed that he was an authority figure
302 (e.g. professor). Later research by **Bickman** confirmed the effect of **uniforms**
303 on obedience. In a **field experiment**, members of the public were instructed
304 to either pick up a piece of litter or lend money to a stranger. When the
305 researcher was dressed as a **security guard 92%** of participants obeyed
306 compared to only **58%** when he was dressed in **normal clothing**. Thus,
307 uniforms can act as **powerful symbols** which we are **socialised** to recognise
308 as indicators of **legitimate** authority figures who we **should and must obey**.
- 309 • **Location**
 - 310 ○ Milgram believed that the **prestigious** (high status) location of **Yale**
311 **University** gave an air of authority which influenced participants' obedience.
312 When the location of the study was moved to a **run-down office block**
313 obedience rates dropped to **48%**.

EXPLANATIONS OF WHY PEOPLE OBEY

314 Milgram's research highlights how **situational factors** caused by the presence of a powerful
315 authority figure may cause people/groups to act against their **personal moral conscience**.
316 Milgram proposed various factors which might explain why **blind obedience** occurs.

317 LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY

- 318 • **Milgram** argued that in many situations people hold a **shared belief** that there will
319 be a **socially controlling figure**. It is the **perception** of this figure as holding
320 **legitimate authority** that makes us think it is **appropriate** to obey. For example, in
321 the Milgram study, participants held an **expectation** that Milgram was a legitimate
322 authority figure, that his authority should not be questioned and that it was
323 appropriate to obey him.
- 324 • **Early childhood socialisation** in the **family** and in **school normalises** obeying
325 **legitimate** (those we see as legal or lawful) **authority figures**: e.g. parents, teachers,
326 police, etc. We are more likely to obey if the authority figure giving instructions has
327 more **social power**.
328 We may also obey because we **trust** the authority figure or because they have the
329 **power to punish us** if we don't obey.
- 330 • Obedience to requests to cause harm are more likely to be followed if they occur
331 within a **legitimate institution** (e.g. the military or a university). However, Milgram
332 still found high levels of obedience when the location of the study was moved from
333 **Yale** (prestigious) to a **run-down office block**. It may be that the situation being
334 presented as a **scientific study** (highly legitimate) outweighed the importance of its
335 **location**.
- 336 • A study by **Bickman** revealed how participants were more likely to obey the
337 demands of a uniformed guard than a milkman, suggesting that **uniforms** give their
338 wearers an **aura** (an air or atmosphere) of **legitimate authority**. Similarly, the nurses
339 in **Hofling's** field experiment were willing to obey someone who called himself
340 **'doctor'**.

341 AGENTIC SHIFT

342 Milgram distinguished between **2 psychological states**.

- 343 • In the **autonomous state** we see ourselves as **acting according to our own decision-**
344 **making** and are, therefore, **morally responsible for our actions**.
- 345 • In the **agentic state** we see ourselves as an **agent** carrying out **another person's**
346 **wishes/commands**, therefore, moral responsibility is **passed onto to the authority**
347 **figure** and we **lessen our own moral responsibility for our acts**.
- 348 • In Milgram's study participants underwent an **agentic shift**: when they refused to
349 continue and the experimenter said that he would be responsible for any harm

350 caused, participants **handed over** moral responsibility to the experimenter and
351 nearly always continued shocking the participant.

- 352 • In **post-experimental interviews**, Milgram's participants frequently stated that they
353 wouldn't have shocked Mr Wallace by themselves but that they were 'just doing
354 what they were told'. This suggests that individuals feel a sense of responsibility to
355 the authority figure commanding them but **not** for the actions they carry out as a
356 result of these commands – responsibility for these actions has been **handed over** to
357 the figure commanding them.

358 **THE ROLE OF BUFFERS (psychological barriers)**

- 359 • **Physical and psychological barriers** may **lessen the impact of committing immoral**
360 **acts** and individuals **considering the moral consequences of their actions**.
- 361 • In **variations** of the original Milgram study, when participants **could not hear** Mr
362 Wallace's screams levels of obedience **rose**; when participants **could see as well as**
363 **hear** Mr Wallace levels of obedience **fell**.

364 **GRADUAL COMMITMENT**

- 365 • Having agreed to give low level, non-harmful shocks **progression to the 'next small**
366 **step up'** of higher shocks is psychologically less difficult. Having committed to giving
367 shocks in the first place it becomes more difficult for participants to subsequently
368 change their mind. This is the **'foot-in-the-door'** method of persuasion as people
369 become locked into obedience in **small stages**.

370 Many **Holocaust (mass killing of Jews in WW2) historians** have questioned Milgram's
371 emphasis on the power of blind obedience to authority figures. Using obedience
372 explanations of the holocaust in some ways **justifies or explains away** the **personal moral**
373 **responsibility** criminals should and must face for their crimes by blaming their obedience on
374 **environmental/social/psychological** factors.

DISPOSITIONAL EXPLANATION FOR OBEDIENCE – THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

375 **Adorno** argued that certain **personality types (dispositions)** were prone to high levels of
376 **obedience** as a result of **negative early childhood experiences**.

377 This '**authoritarian personality**' is characterised by

- 378 • High levels of **obedience** and **respect for authority**
- 379 • Support for **corporal** (bodily) and **capital** (death penalty) **punishment**
- 380 • **Racial/outgroup** (those we perceive as different to ourselves) **prejudice**

381 In the 50's, Adorno **interviewed** over **2000 US students** about their **political beliefs and**
382 **early childhood experiences** and used **projective tests** (a way of analysing unconscious
383 thoughts) to assess whether they were **racially prejudiced**. Adorno found that **strict parents**
384 who used **harsh physical punishment** tended to produce children with **high levels of**
385 **obedience and respect for authority**. Adorno drew on **Freud's** view that a harsh upbringing
386 leads to feelings of **hostility** and **anger** to parents which is then **displaced** (diverted) onto
387 weaker, **minority groups**: i.e. the minority becomes an **outlet** for the individual's **repressed**
388 **unconscious hostility**.

389 Adorno developed a number of **questionnaires/scales** which measured

- 390 • **Fascism** (Nazi political beliefs). **The F scale questionnaire** asked questions such as
391 'obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should
392 learn', and 'rules are there for people to follow, not change'.
- 393 • **Ethnocentrism** (the preference for one's own ethnic group)
- 394 • **Anti-Semitism** (anti-Jewish)

395 In the 80's **Altemeyer** refined the concept of the Authoritarian Personality by identifying a
396 group of **3 personality variables** he referred to as **right-wing** (politically conservative)
397 **authoritarianism (RWA)** characterised by

- 398 • **Conventionalism** – believing in traditional/conservative norms and values
- 399 • **Authoritarian aggression** – aggressive urges towards people who go against
400 traditional norms and values (e.g. homosexuals)
- 401 • **Authoritarian submission** – uncritical obedience to traditional authorities

402 When conducting a research study similar to Milgram's which involved participants shocking

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