psych/logic

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

**Social Influence
Syllabus Notes**

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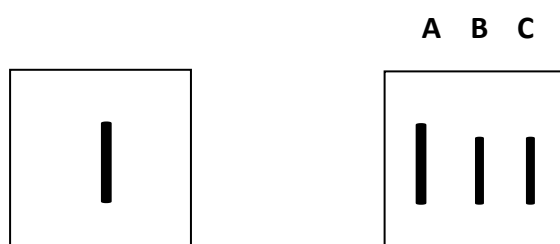
This was repeated **18 times** with different lines each time.

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.

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

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

96 that they are right. Asch found that even when a dissenter gave a **different but**
97 **wrong answer** to the majority, participants were more likely to go against the group
98 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**.

NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE

101
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**.

INFORMATIONAL SOCIAL INFLUENCE

108
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**).

NORMATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE

126
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 though
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**.

- **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)

221

Aim
222

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

225 **Procedures**

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

237 **Findings**

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

241 **Conclusions**

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

EVALUATION

247 **ETHICAL CRITICISMS**

248 • Milgram gained **consent** from participants but not **informed consent**: i.e. they knew
249 they were in a psychological study but did not know what the true nature of the study
250 was. It is likely they would not have given **consent** had they known the **true aim**.

251 • Milgram **deceived** participants about the **aim** of the study (he told them it was about
252 the effects of punishment on learning), the **identity** of Mr Wallace, and the fact that
253 the **shock-equipment** and Mr Wallace's **screams** were not real.

254 • Participants were pressurised to continue in the study even though they asked to
255 **withdraw**. Nearly all participants expressed anxiety and a desire to not shock Mr
256 Wallace. Although at the start of the study Milgram told them they could stop at any
257 point they wanted, once the study was in progress if they expressed a desire to stop
258 he responded with statements such as 'It is absolutely essential that you continue',
259 'you have no other choice, you must go on'.

260 • Participants were exposed to high levels of **psychological stress**. It could be argued
261 that the study caused long-lasting damage to **self-esteem**.

262 **METHODOLOGICAL CRITICISMS OF MILGRAM'S STUDY**
263 Orne argued

264 • The study lacked **ecological validity** – findings could not be **generalised** beyond the
265 **laboratory setting** and could not be applied to obedience in the real world. The
266 obedience task that Milgram's participants performed was **artificial** and had **no social**
267 **'context'**: for example, participants did not fear punishment if they disobeyed as
268 soldiers would. There was also no moral or political context to the obedience task
269 whereas in real-life obedience situations such as wars soldiers may feel a **duty** to obey
270 or that violence is **justified**.

271 • Participants showed **demand characteristics** – they didn't believe the shocks were real
272 and play-acted along. Although **post-experimental interviews** seem to indicate that
273 participants did take the study seriously, a research assistant of Milgram's claimed
274 that quite a number of participants believed the shocks to be fake, and it was these
275 participants who gave the highest intensity shocks.

276 **A FIELD EXPERIMENT INTO OBEDIENCE**
277 **Hofling** conducted a **field experiment** in a psychiatric hospital. Boxes of **placebos** labeled
278 '5mg Astrofen, maximum dose 10mg daily' were placed in the pharmacy. A **confederate**
279 **doctor telephoned** the nurse on duty saying he needed the nurse to give **20mg** of Astrofen to
280 a patient as he was in a hurry, and **that he'd sign the drug authorisation document later**. To
281 obey the doctor's orders the nurse would be **breaking 3 procedural rules**: (i) the dose was
282 above the daily limit, (ii) drugs should only be given after written authorisation from a doctor,

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

VARIABLES AFFECTING OBEDIENCE

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

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

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

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

THE ROLE OF BUFFERS (psychological barriers)

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

GRADUAL COMMITMENT

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

Many **Holocaust (mass killing of Jews in WW2) historians** have questioned Milgram's emphasis on the power of blind obedience to authority figures. Using obedience explanations of the holocaust in some ways **justifies or explains away** the **personal moral responsibility** criminals should and must face for their crimes by blaming their obedience on **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
403 themselves when they made a mistake on a learning task there was a **significant correlation**
404 between **RWA scores and level of shock given**.

EVALUATION

405 **Adorno's** view that obedience was largely a result of personality type declined in influence
406 for the following reasons.

407 • **Questionnaires** used to measure personality type can be criticized in that
408 participants may answer **socially sensitive questions** with **socially appropriate**
409 **answers**: i.e. respondents may feel guilty or that they might be negatively judged for
410 expressing negative views about, for example, homosexuals. Equally, their prejudice
411 may be unconscious: i.e. they don't consciously think that they are prejudiced but
412 unconsciously they think and behave in prejudiced ways. This would lead to
413 questionnaires such as the F-Scale lacking **validity**.

414 • Milgram and Zimbardo's **social-psychological** research indicated that
415 **situational/environmental factors** could produce obedience in **all types** of people,
416 not only those with particular personality types.
417 Milgram believed that **social factors** such as **proximity, location, social support**, etc.
418 were the most important factors influencing whether someone would obey but he
419 also stated that personality type may have been a deciding factor in influencing why
420 some of his participants uncritically obeyed whereas others refused to obey.
421 **Milgram** carried out interviews with his participants after they had completed the
422 experiment and found that those participants who shocked the learner to 450V were
423 much more likely to score highly on measures of **authoritarianism** and lower on
424 measures of **social responsibility** than those who refused to obey the experimenter.
425 This **supports** Adorno's dispositional explanation of obedience and indicates that
426 **social factors** can **combine** with **dispositional factors** in influencing overall levels of
427 obedience.

428 • Adorno's theory cannot account for the kind of **mass and sudden racism** witnessed
429 in events such as Nazi Germany, otherwise **all Germans** would had to have had
430 similar punishment-based childhoods, all at the same time.

431 Research has found that **education level** and **authoritarianism** are **negatively correlated**
432 (i.e. the higher the level of education, the less authoritarian an individual is). Milgram also
433 found this relationship in his study. It is possible, therefore, that it is not personality type
434 which causes obedience level but that **education level causes both authoritarianism and**
435 **obedience**.

436 **Altemeyer's RWA** scale implies that **politically conservative/right-wing** people are more
437 likely to obey authority. This suggests that **left-wing people** would be less obedience.
438 Although evidence for this has been found, it has **proven very difficult to determine** the
439 exact relationship between personality type, education level, political viewpoint and high
440 levels of obedience.

INDEPENDENT BEHAVIOUR

A DEFINITION OF INDEPENDENT BEHAVIOUR

Independent Behaviour can be defined as any individual or group who **resists** pressures to **conform** or **obey** (i.e. non-conformist or disobedient behaviour). For example, early feminists held non-conformist views (women should have the right to vote) and were disobedient (broke the law in their protests).

EXPLANATIONS OF INDEPENDENT BEHAVIOUR – RESISTING PRESSURES TO CONFORM AND OBEY

LOCUS OF CONTROL

This concept refers to how much **control** a person thinks they have over their own **behaviour** and **events in their life**.

- **High internal locus of control** - the individual believes they have a great deal of control over events in their lives so that what happens to them is primarily caused by their own **personal decisions, abilities and efforts**. They are **more likely to take personal responsibility for their own lives** and be less likely to conform and obey.
- **High external locus of control** - the individual believes that what happens to them is largely **out of their control, and caused by fate, luck, or other external circumstances**. They are, therefore, **less likely to take personal responsibility for their own lives** and be more likely to conform and obey.

RESISTING PRESSURES TO CONFORM

LOCUS OF CONTROL

- People with a **high internal** locus of control tend to **seek out information** that is useful to them so are **less likely** to **rely** on the **opinions of others** or **conform** to other attitudes and behaviours.
- **Atgis ('98)** found that **high external locus of control** and **conformity** were **correlated (+0.37)** suggesting that there are higher rates of conformity in 'externals' rather than 'internals'.
- **Anderson ('78)** found that amongst a group of college students those who possessed a **high internal locus of control** were more likely to emerge as **leaders** in their groups. It can be assumed that such people **lead rather than conform to the ideas of others**.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- People are less likely to conform if they have an **ally** – someone who also **disagrees** with the **majority.** In **Asch's** study, conformity rates **dropped** from **36.8%** to **5.5%** when there was another independent participant present. Interestingly, this other participant **does not have to agree** with this person in order for them to remain independent – Asch observed that when this ally gave a different, but incorrect, response to the majority, conformity still decreased to **9%.**

OTHER FACTORS & RESISTING PRESSURES TO CONFORM

People are less likely to conform if agreeing with the majority would have an **effect on their integrity** (moral belief system)**.**

- **Hornsey** found that a person was less likely to go along with a group who were **in favour of cheating** (i.e. something immoral) than something with no **moral consequences.**

There are also **personality variables** that help people resist pressures to conform.

- **Lucas ('06)** conducted an experiment similar to Asch using math's problems**. High self-efficacy participants** (confident in their own abilities) were **more independent** than **low self-efficacy participants** even when the problems got more difficult.
- The **non-conformist personality** – some individuals have certain personality traits that make conformity less likely for them.
    - Unconcerned with social norms
    - Not aware of what the social norm is
    - Anti-conformist – they actively oppose group norms

RESISTING PRESSURES TO OBEY

LOCUS OF CONTROL

- People with a **high internal** locus of control tend to **seek out information** that is useful to them so are **less likely** to **rely** on the **opinions of others** or **obey**.
- Research has suggested that **high internals** tend to be more **achievement-orientated** and become **leaders**, so are better able to **resist pressure from others**, and thus are less likely to obey.
- **Anderson ('78)** found that amongst a group of college students those who possessed a **high internal locus of control** were more likely to emerge as **leaders** in their groups. It can be assumed that such people **give orders rather than obey**.

SOCIAL SUPPORT & RESISTING PRESSURES TO OBEY

- **Disobedience due to social support**. In variations of Milgram's study, when 2 other confederates were present who refused to continue with shocks, participants' obedience dropped to 10%. Thus, others who are disobedient may act as role models on whom we base our own behaviour and provide a sense of social support, strength and group opposition to the authority figure.

- Obedience rates decline when individuals are in a **familiar situation** and have some **social support**. Although **Hofling** observed that 21 out of 22 nurses would give an overdose to a patient on the instruction of a doctor, when the situation was made more familiar (using a drug they knew), and they had some support (they could discuss with other nurses), obedience fell to only 2 out of 18.

- A **real-life illustration of social support** occurred in World War 2 where German women with Jewish husbands or sons stood against German soldiers who had imprisoned 2000 Jewish men. Despite being threatened with being shot if they did not disperse, the German women eventually won the release of the men. **Social support** provides **strength, courage and solidarity** (standing together). Equally, people being disobedient may feel the **chances of being punished are reduced** if they stand together as the person giving the commands may find it more difficult or costly to punish a large number of people rather than an individual.

IMPLICATIONS FROM MILGRAM'S RESEARCH

- **Proximity**: disobedience is more likely if the authority figure is not in close proximity, and more likely if we are ordered to harm someone in close proximity to us.
  - When the experimenter gave instructions by **telephone**, obedience dropped with only **20% going to full 450V**. Participants felt **less pressure** to obey the experimenter when they were **distanced** from him.
  - When the teacher was in **the same room** as the learner increased **empathy** resulted in obedience rates falling, and the same effect was found when the teacher was instructed to force the learner's hand onto the shock plate.

- **Uniform**: disobedience is more likely if someone is not perceived as a legitimate authority figure, though, for example, a uniform.
  - Milgram's **lab coat** conveyed that he was an authority figure (e.g. professor). Later research by **Bickman** confirmed the effect of **uniforms** on obedience. In a **field experiment**, members of the public were instructed to either pick up a piece of litter or lend money to a stranger. When the researcher was dressed as a **security guard 92%** of participants obeyed compared to only **58%** when he was dressed in **normal clothing**.

THE ROLE OF MINORITY INFLUENCE IN SOCIAL CHANGE

A DEFINITION OF MINORITY INFLUENCE

533 **Minority Influence** can be defined as a **change in beliefs or behaviours** by a larger group to
534 fit in with a minority or individual's views and behaviours.
535 For example, Emmeline Pankhurst and the suffragettes (a **minority**) challenging mainstream
536 (the **majority**) sexist views in the UK and eventually won the right for women to vote. Thus
537 minority influence can lead to **social change**.

MINORITY INFLUENCE

538 **Social influence research** has suggested that **minorities** and **independent behaviour** can
539 bring about **social change**: i.e. a **minority can challenge the beliefs and values of the**
540 **majority** causing them to **re-think/re-evaluate their beliefs**. Conformity, on the other
541 hands, maintains the *status quo* (the way things are).

542 **Single individuals** can bring about considerable social change: e.g. Emmeline Pankhurst,
543 Gandhi, Martin Luther King, etc. It is difficult to assess to what extent the **individual**
544 **personality characteristics** of minority leaders are responsible for creating social change.
545 Often leaders simply **highlight** and act as a **focus point** for **wider social and political events**.

546 Whereas **majority influence** involves smaller groups or individuals changing their beliefs and
547 behaviour to fit in with the majority, **minority influence** involves a process whereby the
548 majority **scrutinize** (closely examine) the majority position in an attempt to understand **why**
549 the minority think the way they do. Thus, when **conversion** to the minority position occurs
550 the change in beliefs shown by the majority tends to be **deeper and longer-lasting**.

551 **CONSISTENCY** (stating the same message again and again)
552 **Moscovici ('69)** conducted a study where 4 genuine participants **(the majority)** were put
553 into a group with 2 confederates **(the minority)**. The group were shown a series of 36 slides
554 of different shades of blue and asked to state the colour of each slide.
555 • In condition 1, the 2 confederates always (**consistently**) responded that the slides
556   were green (rather than blue).
557 • In condition 2, the confederates responded that the slides were green 24 out of 36
558   times (**inconsistent**).
559 The number of genuine participants who agreed with the minority was **8% in condition 1**
560 and **1.25% in condition 2**. This suggests that a **consistent minority** can change a majority's
561 viewpoint even when asked to agree to an **obviously wrong answer**.

562 This shows that **minorities need to be consistent** if they are to have any real effect: i.e. to
563 **insist on and repeat the same message** time and time again. Such consistency can be seen
564 in successful social change movements such as the **suffragettes** who **consistently** fought for
565 equal voting rights for women.
566 It can, of course, be argued that Moscovici's study was highly artificial and thus lacked
567 **ecological validity** and that is contained no **moral context** as real life minority influence
568 situations do.

569 **FLEXIBILITY**
570 **Mugny** suggested that **flexibility** in the minorities argument is essential as the minority is
571 **relatively powerless** compared to the majority and need, therefore, to **negotiate** their
572 position rather than try to **enforce** it.
573 A minority who appear **too rigid and inflexible** in their beliefs can cause majorities to reject
574 their message. However, if minorities are **too flexible** they may be viewed as **inconsistent**
575 and this, again, may cause the majority to ignore the minority's message.
576 A study by **Nemeth (87)** provides evidence for the importance of this. In a simulated jury
577 situation, participants were asked to discuss how much compensation should be paid to
578 someone injured in a ski-life accident. A confederate who put forward an alternative point
579 of view and **inflexibly** stuck to his view caused **no influence** on the majority group, but a
580 confederate who **compromised** and showed some **flexibility** did. This was most effective if
581 flexible compromise was shown **later** in negotiations rather than earlier (where he was
582 perceived as having **given into** the majority).

583 **COMMITMENT**
584 Other research into social influence has suggested that minorities must show **commitment**
585 and make **sacrifices** in order to maintain their position if they are to persuade others. This
586 can be seen with the **suffragettes** who were persistently arrested, imprisoned, went on
587 hunger strikes, etc. Suffragettes were acting from **moral principles** (e.g. equality) rather
588 than **self-interest**. Majorities are much more likely to be persuaded by minorities if the
589 minority view is seen to arise from **commitment** to a **higher moral principal**: e.g. equal
590 rights and fairness.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE PROCESSES IN SOCIAL CHANGE

591 History repeatedly illustrates that minority attitudes and behaviour can slowly or quickly
592 result in **majorities adopting the minority position**. Thus, minority influence can create
593 **social change**.

594 Until 1967 **homosexuality** was **illegal**. Until 1973 homosexuality was listed as a **mental**
595 **disorder**. In 1983, a social attitudes survey found that 60% of non-religious adults in the UK
596 disapproved of same-sex relationships and regarded them as 'wrong'. In **contemporary**
597 (modern) **society** homosexuality is largely accepted. Clearly the minority belief that
598 homosexuality is acceptable has largely been accepted by the majority of society.

599 **MINORITY INFLUENCE**
600 Linking this to minority influence research, homosexuals **consistently** presented their
601 message that homosexuality was simply an alternative to heterosexuality, showed
602 **commitment** to their beliefs through demonstrations, campaigns to fight discrimination,
603 etc. and were **flexible** in their arguments.

604 Social change through minority influence can be thought of as a **stage process.**
605 **1. Drawing attention to an issue**. For example, suffragettes used educational, political and
606 demonstration tactics to **draw attention** to their cause.
607 **2. Cognitive** (mental) **conflict**. Presented with information on the majority's position, the
608 majority may experience a state of **cognitive conflict** whereby they need to decide whether
609 they will adopt the new minority view or stick with the traditional majority view. This
610 process is aided if minority arguments are **persuasive**. Martin Luther King was well known
611 for his inspiring speeches which presented **rational, logical and convincing** arguments for
612 equality.
613 **3. Consistency**. Repeating the same message time and time again. Such consistency can be
614 seen in successful social change movements such as the **suffragettes** who **consistently**
615 fought for equal voting rights for women.
616 **4. The augmentation principle**. If a minority appears to suffer for their views they are seen
617 as **more committed** (e.g. the suffragettes) and taken **more seriously** by the majority.
618 **5. The snowball effect**. Once a few members of the majority start to move towards the
619 minority position, the influence of the minority begins to **gather momentum** as more
620 people pay attention. Recent research suggests that this is about 10%.

621 Research has also suggested that **minorities need to be similar to majorities** in terms of
622 **social class, age, ethnicity and gender** if they are to be successful. Some of the earliest

623 protests by gay men and women involved silent placard carrying whilst wearing smart
624 clothes. This helped overcome stigmatisation of homosexuals as 'abnormal', 'different', etc.

625 **Single individuals** can bring about considerable social change: e.g. Emmeline Pankhurst,
626 Gandhi, Martin Luther King, etc. It is difficult to assess to what extent the **individual**
627 **personality characteristics** of minority leaders are responsible for creating social change.
628 Often leaders simply **highlight** and act as a **focal point** for **wider social and political events**.

629 **CONFORMITY**
630 Governments can cause or accelerate social change through **advertising** what is **normative**
631 (normal/usual). Such campaigns have successfully reduced **alcohol abuse** and **smoking** in
632 teenagers. In a campaign aimed at 12-17 year olds in the US only 10% of participants took
633 up smoking after exposure to a campaign saying that **most** children in their age range did
634 not smoke. Control groups who did not receive this message were significantly more likely
635 to take up smoking.
636 This is a simple and effective way to create social change but may result in individuals or
637 groups **resisting** pressures to conform. For example, **DeJong ('09)** found that across 14
638 different US universities, after 3 years, campaigns based on reducing alcohol intake among
639 students which appealed to normative behaviour, had failed to have any impact on either
640 their **perception** of appropriate drinking or their drinking **behaviour**.

641 **OBEDIENCE**
642 Government can pass laws which **require** people to be **obedient** and **punish disobedience**
643 with fines, prison, etc. This is a simple and effective way to create social change but may
644 result in individuals or groups **resisting pressures to obey**.
645 We are more likely to obey if figures commanding us are perceived as **legitimate** and
646 **trusted**: for example, smoking used to be a **majority** behaviour in the 1950's but is now a
647 **minority** one. One of the factors responsible for this is that **trusted**, **expert authority figures**
648 (the medical community) have warned of its dangers.