Social

Psychology

Milgram

Reicher and Haslam







AN IDEA FOR INTRODUCING MILGRAM

TRY THIS:

Obedience to an authority figure: Milgram.

At the beginning of the lesson ask all the students to stand up - best done without too much emphasis such as you're about to take the register. Start teaching the lesson and don't let them sit down until someone asks **why** they are standing. Whingeing and whining about it gets no response.

Discussion follows about why they stood up (you're an authority figure - hopefully). Ask them if they would still stand up if an ordinary member of the public asked them to while they're in Starbucks (or wherever your students hang out) with their mates.

You could also try, on a subsequent occasion, persuading them to do something really outrageous – but within the limits of health and safety.

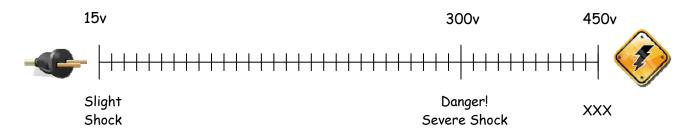
Beware, they can sometimes stand for ages - the record so far is 45 minutes. It gets very difficult to keep a straight face!



UNDERSTANDING THE MILGRAM CORE STUDY

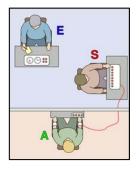
SESSION OBJECTIVES:

- To be able to define obedience
- To be able to describe Milgram's study of obedience
- To be able to identify ethical problems that can be raised against Milgram's study
- To be able to describe the study by Hofling et al (1966), as a supporting study into obedience.
- **Obedience** is doing what someone tells us to do. This is different to conformity, because no one asks or tells us to conform; it is just something that we do. We may obey orders because they seem fair or may benefit us, however, would we obey orders that are illegal, immoral or unjustified? Stanley Milgram tried to answer this question in one what turned out to be one of the most well known psychological studies.
- An outline of Milgram's (1963) study: Milgram wanted to investigate whether Germans were particularly obedient to authority figures as this was a common explanation for the extreme Nazi behaviour in World War II. Milgram selected participants by advertising for male participants to take part in a study of learning at Yale University. The procedure involved the participant being paired with another person and then drawing lots to find out who would be the 'learner' and who would be the 'teacher'. The draw was fixed so that the participant was always the teacher, and the learner was one of Milgram's confederates (pretending to be a real participant). The learner was taken into a room where, in front of the teacher, he had electrodes attached to his arms. The teacher and researcher then went into an adjacent room that contained an electric shock generator and a row of switches marked from 15 volts (Slight Shock) to 375 volts (Danger: Severe Shock) to 450 volts (XXX).



The participant did not know that all of this was false, they thought that the learner was actually a real participant, and they thought the shock generator was real, and would actually give out electric shocks – he was therefore deceived in several ways. The participant was told to read out word pairs that the learner had to remember. If they got one wrong or said nothing at all, then the participant had to give them an electric shock, and had to increase the voltage each time. At 180 volts the learner shouted that he could not stand the pain, at 300 volts he begged to be released, and after 315 volts there was silence. Milgram and other researchers had predicted before the study that 2% of people would shock to

the highest level, but most people would quit very early on. However, it was found that **all participants** (40/40) shocked up to 300 volts and 65% (26/40) of participants shocked all the way up to 450 volts.



The experimenter (E) orders the subject (S) to give what the subject believes are painful electric shocks to another subject (A), who is actually an actor. Many participants continued to give shocks despite pleas for mercy from the actor, as long as the experimenter kept on ordering them to do so.

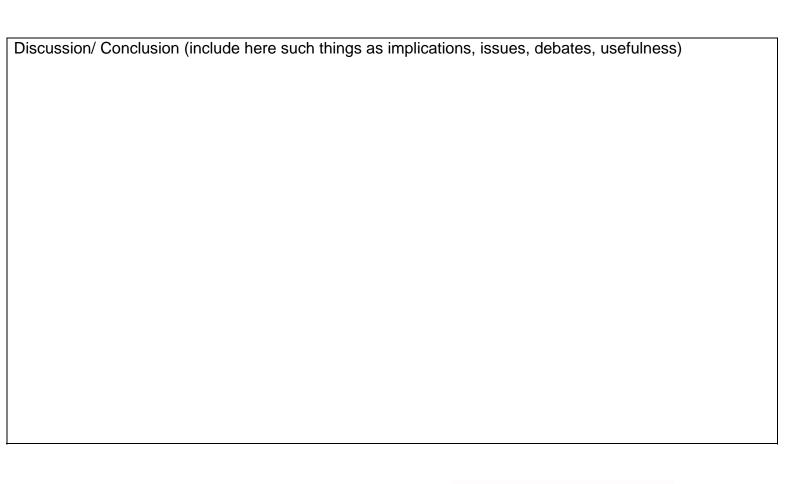
Milgram's study is one of the most vivid examples of the importance of ethics in psychological research. It is highly unlikely that you could get away with conducting a piece of research like this nowadays, as so many ethical issues were raised. However at the time of this study there were no APS or BPS ethical guidelines which researchers must now consider.

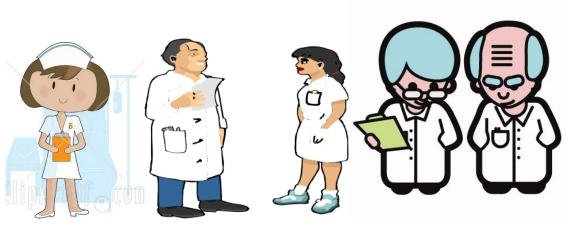
Task 1:

Working in pairs, fill in the following gaps in relation to ethical problems with Milgram's study.

- Consent:
- Deception:
- Right to withdraw:
- Distress/stress (short term)
- Distress/stress (long term)

• Exam Hint:		
. You need to re	member the fo	llowing as you may be asked short or long questions on any aspect of the
study:		
• ALL	-	AIM
• M OBILE	-	METHOD
• PHONES	-	PROCEDURE
• RING	-	RESULTS
• C ONSTANTLY	-	CONCLUSION
• AIM – Why was	the study don	e in the first place, what was it aiming to find out?
• METHOD – Wha	at type of resea	arch method was used? Who took part (e.g. what type of participants?)
• PROCEDURE –	What did the	researchers do? What did the participants have to do?
• RESULTS – Wh	at was found?	(E.g. in terms of Milgram what percentage of people obeyed?)
• CONCLUSION -	- What conclu	sions can be drawn from the results of the research?
Task 2: Now use appropria Make notes in the s		o find out about Hofling et al's (1966) field experiment into obedience.
Aim:		
Sample:		
Method:		
Procedure:		
Results:		
ivesuits.		







MILGRAM (1963) BEHAVIOURAL STUDY OF OBEDIENCE

Thinking like a Psychologist - Evaluating the Core Study

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the method used?

The method used by Milgram was a controlled observation conducted under laboratory conditions. The main advantage that Milgram had with this method was the amount of control he had over the situation. He controlled what the participants saw (e.g. the voltage levels on the electric shock machine), heard (e.g. the recorded responses of the 'learner') and experienced (e.g. the same questions in the same order asked by the 'stern biology teacher in a grey lab coat') and was able to manipulate their behaviour through what they were exposed to. This method also allowed a clear, standardised procedure could be followed so that replication was possible. The study cannot really be considered an experiment because Milgram did not manipulate an independent variable – he only had one group of participants.

The disadvantages of this method include low ecological validity and the influence of demand characteristics on the participants and it could be argued that they were behaving in the way that they thought was expected of them rather than producing natural behaviour. Milgram has also been heavily criticised regarding the ethics of this study as the participants were deceived in several ways and many showed extreme signs of stress throughout the study.

Was the sample representative?

Milgram's sample was a self-selected sample of 40 males recruited through a newspaper article and direct mail advertising. This could be regarded as being a biased sample as they were all male American citizens. They were also volunteers and the majority of the population is unlikely to volunteer to take part in research and those who do may be atypical of the target population in some way. Hence there may be problems generalising from these results.

What type of data was collected?

Much of the data collected was quantitative in that it involved measuring participants' obedience level, numerically, in terms of how far up the voltage scale they were prepared to go – any participant who failed to go to the top of the scale (450 volts) was deemed to be disobedient. This type of data has the advantage of being easy to compare and statistically analyse. Additionally, Milgram included some qualitative data by recording participants' verbal, physical and emotional reactions throughout the study (e.g. they were observed sweating, biting their lips, groaning etc)However he did not record qualitative descriptions of why the participants obeyed or how they actually felt whilst the study was taking place.

Does this study have high or low Ecological Validity?

As with all studies conducted in controlled environments, there are problems with Milgram's study regarding its ecological validity. It involved an extremely unusual task carried out under very artificial conditions and as such, is likely to have produced very unnatural behaviour from the participants. This has implications for the extent to which findings can be generalised to real life situations. It could be argued that the study shows nothing about obedience in everyday life but simply shows how obedient these people were, in this environment, performing this task.

Was the study ethical?

Milgram's study was probably one of the most unethical pieces of psychological research ever conducted. It can be criticised in terms of almost all the BPS Ethical Guidelines including informed consent, deception, right to withdraw and protection from harm. However, in Milgram's defence, it can be argued that he did not expect the participants to obey to the extent that they did or to find the task so stressful. He also conducted a thorough debriefing and follow-up monitoring of his participants. A survey conducted one year later revealed that 84% of the participants were glad to have taken part in the study and psychiatric examinations of them showed that none had suffered long term harm. It must also remember that when this study was conducted there were no such things as 'ethical guidelines' – these were developed as a results of such studies as this!

What does this study tell us about Individual and Situational Explanations of behaviour?

The individual explanation for the behaviour of the participants would be that it was something about them as people that predisposed them to obey. However a more realistic explanation may be that the situation they were in influenced them and caused them to behave in the way that they did. Some of the aspects of the situation that may have influenced their behaviour include the formality and prestige of the location (Yale University), the fact that the participant believed the 'learner' had also volunteered and that the allocation of roles was due to chance and the fact that it was a study for which they had volunteered and been paid so they therefore felt obliged to complete the task.

How useful is this research and to what extent can it be applied to everyday life?

The stimulus for this study was the Holocaust and the behaviour of the Nazis during WW 2, and this study has contributed significantly to the discussions regarding the behaviour of the Germans at this time. In particular, it provides strong evidence against the 'Germans are different' hypothesis. It also gives a valuable insight into the power of situations and of authority. The results suggest that we have a natural tendency to obey legitimate authority figures even when we feel that what we are being asked to do is morally wrong. However, the applications are restricted by the methodological limitations such as low ecological validity, ethical concerns and an unrepresentative sample.

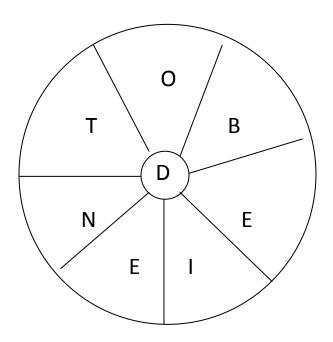
Test Yourself On MILGRAM

1 In the Milgram study on obedience, participants were observed to show a lot of tension. (a) Give **one** example of the behaviour of participants that indicated extreme tension. [2] (b) Milgram suggested that the tension was caused by the conflicts produced by the study. Outline one of these conflicts. [2] 2(a) Outline how participants were gathered for this study. [2] (b) Outline **one** advantage of gathering participants in this way. [2] 3 Milgram's study is often criticised for being unethical, though Milgram himself made a strong defence of it. Outline **two** examples of how ethics in this study can be defended. [4] 4 The level of obedience in this study surprised the researchers. Give **four** factors reported by Milgram that were thought to contribute to this high level of obedience. [4] 5 One criticism of this study is that it lacked ecological validity. [4] Suggest **two** ways in which the study lacked ecological validity. [2] 6(a) Identify **two** features of the sample used in this study. (b) Suggest one weakness of this sample. [2] 7 Milgram encouraged participants to continue with the electric shocks. [4] Outline how Milgram encouraged his participants to continue. 8(a) Describe **one** way Milgram debriefed his participants. [2] (b) Explain why debriefing participants is important. [2] 9 From this study describe **two** ways in which participants were deceived. [4] 10(a) Give an example of quantitative data gathered in this study. [2] [2] (b) Give an example of qualitative data gathered in this study.

Total marks available: 40

WORD WHEEL BASED ON THE MILGRAM CORE STUDY

You have 10 minutes to find as many words as possible, of 3 letters or more, using the letters in the wheel below. Each word must use the hub letter and letters can only be used once.



15 = FAIR

25 = GOOD

35 = EXCELLENT

AN IDEA FOR INTRODUCING PILIAVIN

TRY THIS:

Using scenarios to consider whether or not to demonstrate helping/altruistic behavior.

Introduce Piliavin by giving each student a scenario where the decision is to help or not. The idea is that students have to not only decide if they are going to help or not but more importantly *WHY*. They then find other people in the class with the same scenario and discuss their answers. This activity creates a lot of discussion and serves as a good introduction into the cost-reward matrix. Ideas can be written on the board under 'costs and rewards/benefits' to further develop the idea.

Possible scenarios:

You are a 25 year-old man driving down a country lane just as it is beginning to get dark. You see a teenage girl at the side of the road trying to hitch a lift.

Do you stop and pick her up?

List as many reasons as you can think of why you might and why you might not offer her a lift. You are hurrying down the high street as you are late for a job interview. Just in front of you, an old lady's plastic shopping bag splits, spilling all her purchases onto the floor.

Do you stop and help her gather all her shopping together?

List as many reasons as you can think of why you might and why you might not stop to help her.

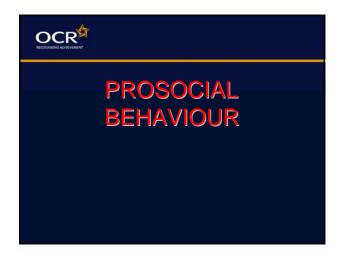
You are in a queue of traffic in a busy urban street. A child runs into the road and into the path of the car in front of you which is unable to stop in time to avoid hitting the child.

Do you stop to help or drive on?

List as many reasons as you can think of why you might and why you might not stop to help You see a group of your friends physically bullying a younger boy in the school playground.

Do you go over and try to stop the incident or, because they are your friends, do you pretend you have seen nothing and walk away?

List as many reasons as you can think of why you might and why you might not go and try to help the young boy.





WHAT IS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?

• Prosocial behaviour is behaviour that benefits others or has positive social consequences.



THE TWO FORMS OF PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

• 1. HELPING

This is a general term which describes giving assistance to another person. It is "behaviour that intentionally helps or benefits another person."



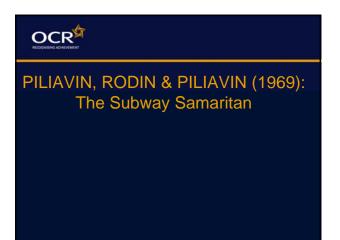
•2. ALTRUISM

This is "helping another person for no reward and even at some cost to oneself," or, "helping behaviour that is voluntary, costly to the altruist and motivated by something other than the expectation of material or social reward." (PILIAVIN)

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY FOR THE PILIAVIN CORE STUDY

In small groups, use appropriate resources to explain/describe the following:

Diffusion of responsibility:
Bystander effect/bystander apathy:
Why this study can be called a field experiment:
Two key differences between the investigation conducted by Piliavin et al and
Latané and Darley:
Altruism:
Helping behaviour:





What was the aim of the study?

To investigate, under real life conditions, the effect on speed and frequency of helping, and the race of the helper in relation to:

- The type of victim (drunk or lame)
- The race of the victim (black or white)
- The presence or absence of helping models
- The size of the witnessing group.



Which research design was used?

This was a FIELD EXPERIMENT



Where did the study take place?

- On the New York subway express trains.
- Experiments took place on weekdays between 11am and 3pm during the period 15 April to 26 June 1968.



Who conducted the study?

- •16 Columbia General Studies students aged 24-35.
- They divided themselves into 4 teams of 2 males and 2 females.
- The males took on the roles of victim and model.
- The females recorded data.



Who were the participants?

- The 4.450 passengers who travelled on the train during the investigation period.
- 45% black people
- 55% white people
- About 8 people were in the critical area each time the emergency took place.



What was the emergency?

- The victim standing at the pole in the middle of the carriage collapsed.
- He would lie there until he got help, if no-one helped the model would help him up.
- 6-8 trials per day took place.

OCR

What were the different conditions of the experiment(IV's)?

- The type of victim: lame with a cane, or drunk.
- The race of the victim: black or white.
- The presence or absence of a model.
- The position and speed of response of the model.



What did the observers record?

- The gender, race and location of everyone in the critical area.
- Time taken for 1st passenger to offer help.
- Total number of people who helped.
- Time taken for 1st person to offer help after the model had assisted.
- Movement of any passenger out of the critical area.
- · Spontaneous comments made by passengers.



What were the results?

- The cane victim received spontaneous help 95% of the time.
 The drunk victim received spontaneous help 50% of the time.
- 90% of the spontaneous1st helpers were male, even though only 60% of the people in the critical area were male. For all conditions, on 60% of the trials the victim received help from more than one helper.
- During the 103 trials, 34 people left the critical area but mainly in the drunk condition.
- More spontaneous comments were made in the drunk situation. There was NO evidence to support the diffusion of responsibility
- The response time were faster when there were 7 or more people present compared to when there were 3 or less.



What conclusions can be drawn from this study?

- When in an enclosed area people are likely to offer spontaneous help to a victim.
- Men are more likely than women to help in an
- Whether people help a victim or not depends on the type (condition) and race of the victim.
- When in an enclosed area people tend not to diffuse their responsibility for helping others.



What issues can be raised in relation to this study?

- Ethics consent, deception, stress, right to withdraw, debriefing.
- Methodology in a field experiment extraneous variables cannot be controlled e.g. some p's may have seen the experiment more than once so responded to demand characteristics the second time around.
- Generalisability of findings the study was done in an urban subway in USA.



How useful is this study/does the study have any applications in everyday life?

- The results show us under what conditions people are likely to help a person in need. They therefore help explain why we often see victims not being helped when they have collapsed in open areas. - potential helpers can 'escape'.
- The results also show that people's helping behaviour is influenced by the type or condition of the victim. They therefore help explain why lame people are more likely to receive help than drunk people.
- The results can be used to educate people about helping behaviour and subsequently train them to cope and help in emergency situations.



Suggest ONE change you could make to this study and say how you think it might affect the outcome

PILIAVIN ET AL. "THE SUBWAY SAMARITAN STUDY"

Use the Power Point presentation to complete the following overview of the study.

Where did the study take place?	Who conducted the study?
Who were the participants?	What was the emergency?
What were the different conditions of the experiment? (the IV's)	What did the observers record?
What were t	the results?

<u>PILIAVIN, RODIN AND PILIAVIN (1969) GOOD SAMARITANISM: AN UNDERGROUND PHENOMENON?</u>

Thinking like a Psychologist - Evaluating the Core Study

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the method used?

The method used by Piliavin was the field experiment with data being gathered through observation. The main strength of this method is that it has high ecological validity (e.g. the study took place on real trains using the New York subway), and demand characteristics are unlikely to influence the participants (participants were unaware that they were participating in a study so behaved in a natural way). The weaknesses include the lack of control over the environment (e.g. a genuinely drunk person could have already boarded the train) and the possibility of bias from extraneous variables (some participants may have witnessed the experiment more than once making them respond with demand characteristics after their first experience). The lack of control also makes accurate replication difficult. The field experiment can also have specific ethical problems (e.g. lack of consent, deception etc).

Was a representative sample used?

The sample consisted of the 4450 American passengers using that particular train, 45% of which were black and 55% white. This is a good-sized sample that is likely to be fairly representative of the American public at that time in history. However the sample is restricted to the people who were using that train at that time and so are not therefore totally generalisable.

What type of data was collected?

The data gathered was both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data included the number and type of passengers who helped each type of victim as well as the time taken to offer assistance. The qualitative data came from the spontaneous comments made by the passengers. Both types of data are valuable in building up a full picture of what happened and why. The quantitative data allowed for comparisons (e.g. between males and females) and statistical analysis and the qualitative data provided some of the thoughts and feelings of the people involved (e.g. explanations for why some women did not help: 'I wish I could help him – I'm not strong enough').

Does the study have high or low ecological validity?

As the study took place in a real life environment and the participants were unaware that they were part of a study, the ecological validity is very high. Hence, the behaviour displayed by the participants is likely to be their natural behaviour and the way in which they would behave in other similar situations.

Was the study ethical?

Ethical issues raised by this study include the fact that the participants' consent was not gained because they were unaware that they were taking part in a study and that they were deceived regarding the staged collapse and the identities of the other researchers – the models and the observers - on the train. There is also a problem regarding invasion of privacy in that the

participants were unaware that they were being observed and that data was being recorded about their behaviour.

What does the study tell us about reliability?

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure and one aspect of reliability relevant to studies involving observations is how consistent different observers are when recording information on the same event i.e. inter-rater reliability. The reliability of this study was increased by the fact that there were two independent researchers observing and recording data. Hence they were able to measure inter-rater reliability. As there were also 103 trials which produced consistent results (e.g. spontaneous help was offered before the model had chance to intervene in 93% of the trials) the results can be considered reliable.

How useful is this research and to what extent can it be applied to everyday life?

This study is a good example of where psychological research can be used to explain behaviour in everyday life. The fact that it is a field experiment with high ecological validity using a large sample makes the results highly applicable to other similar situations and environments, and useful in terms of explaining and predicting how people are likely to behave when faced with an emergency situation in everyday life. The study also provides strong evidence against the Diffusion of Responsibility Theory, which was supported by previous laboratory-based research.

Test Yourself On PILIAVIN

1 According to Piliavin et al, diffusion of responsibility has been demonstrated in laboratory studies on helping behaviour.	J
(a) What is meant by the term diffusion of responsibility?	[2]
(b) Suggest why this did not occur in this study.	[2]
2 Outline two practical difficulties the researchers experienced when conducting this study.	[4]
3 Outline two ethical issues raised by this study.	[4]
4(a) Describe the sample used in this study.	[2]
(b) Suggest one limitation of this sample.	[2]
5 In this study, some of the researchers acted as victims and some as models.	
(a) Describe one of the model conditions.	[2]
(b) Outline one conclusion that was drawn from the model conditions.	[2]
6 In this study, all the victims were dressed alike.	
(a) Describe how the victims were dressed.	[2]
(b) Suggest why the victims were dressed alike.	[2]
7 This study was a field experiment.	
(a) Describe one advantage of a field experiment as used in this study.	[2]
(b) Describe one disadvantage of a field experiment as used in this study.	[2]
8 In this study, Piliavin et al proposed an arousal/cost-reward model.	
Describe this model in relation to this study.	[4]
December the model in relation to this study.	נידן
9 Describe two findings from this study.	[4]
10 (a) Give one example of quantitative data gathered in this study.	[2]
(b) Give one example of qualitative data gathered in this study.	[2]

Total marks available: 40

WORDSEARCH BASED ON THE PILIAVIN CORE STUDY

Е	М	Α	L	Α	Т	Α	D	Е	V		Т	Α	Т		Т	N	Α	U	Q
G	S	T	Α	Ν	D	Α	R	D	С	0	Ш	L	Α	Ρ	S	Е	D	כ	U
N	Α	G	Υ	G	М	J	R	Υ	0	G	Ν		Р	L	Е	Τ	Α	Е	N
I	Ν	В	V	Α	Е		Α	R	С	K	Ш	0	Τ	0	O	Ш	Α	В	0
L	Е	L	Ν	В	Е	Z	Т	O	Α	Z	D	U	Ш	S		Υ	Ш	Υ	I
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М	Υ	O	R	Α	0	Ш	Α	R		Z	Ш	G	Α	0	Ρ	F	Т	Т	U
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Т	С	L	U	Χ	Т	Α	Е	S	Е	D	S	T	-	Е	0	Е	L	Е	D
I	-	R	L	Т	W	G	T	D	Е	Т	R	R	U	R	Α	L	S	R	S
Ν	Т	Α	L	В	Υ	Ν	Α	C	R		Е	Α	W	D	J	Α	Q	Α	E
U	Υ	ш	U	Т	Е	Т	Α	Α	Ζ	Ρ	R	G	V	R		М	כ	Ρ	G
Т	L	S	Т	D	Α	R		Z	Χ	Υ	М	0	D	ш	Ш	Ш	Ш	Α	Α
R	Α		U		Е	Ν	S	Е	D	L	Е	I	F	Ρ	R	F	S	Т	I
0	K	Τ	G	М	С	0	Ν	D		Т		0	Ν	S	Т	Т	L	Н	R
Р	S	W	Α	V	Α	Т	Ν	Е	М	Т	R	Α	Р	М	0	C	S	Υ	R
Р	Α	S	S	Е	N	G	Е	R	S	Q	U	В	L		N	D	K	0	Α
0	Т	М	Α	L	Е	S	D	Α	Е	R	Α	L	Α	С	I	Т	I	R	С

Find which of the words listed below is not in the above wordsearch

CONDITIONS

ADJACENT AREA

ALCOHOL	COST REWARD MODEL	HELPING	QUALITATIVE DATA
BLACK	CRITICAL AREA	KITTY GENOVESE	QUANTITATIVE DATA
BLIND	DIFFUSION	LAME	SAME RACE
BOTTLE	EARLY	LATE	STANDARD COLLAPSE
BROWN BAG	EMERGENCY	MALES	STUDENTS
BYSTANDER APATHY	EXPERIMENT	MODEL	SUBWAY
CANE	EXPRESS TRAIN	NEW YORK CITY	TRIALS
CARRIAGE	FEMALES	OBSERVERS	VICTIM
COMPARTMENT	FIELD	OPPORTUNITY SAMPLING	WHITE

GENERAL STUDIES

PASSENGERS

WORDSEARCH BASED ON THE PILIAVIN CORE STUDY (ANSWERS)

Е	М	Α	L	Α	Т	Α	D	Е	V	ı	Т	Α	Т	ı	Т	N	Α	U	Q
G	S	Т	Α	Ν	D	Α	R	Δ	С	0	L	L	Α	Ρ	S	Е		U	
Ν	Α			G	М	٦		Υ		O	Ν	-	Р	L	Е	Н	Α		Ν
I	N	В			Е	-	Α		С		L	0	H	0	С	L	Α	В	0
L	Е	L	N			N	Т	С		Ν			Е		-		Е	Υ	I
Р	W	Α		W	L		Е	С	Е		Е	S		Т		Χ		S	S
M	Υ	С		Α	0	Е		R	ı	Ν	Е	G	Α		Р		Т	Т	U
Α	0	K	Т			R	D		Α	V	Т	Т	R	R		N	R	Α	F
S	R	Ε	V	R	Е	S	В	0	0	L	ı	Α	Ε	Е	Е			N	F
Υ	K	Υ				0	Υ	N	М	V	S	S	R	М	М	S	Α	D	I
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Find which of the words listed below is not in the above wordsearch

CONDITIONS

FEMALES

FIELD

ADJACENT AREA

CARRIAGE

COMPARTMENT

ALCOHOL	COST REWARD MODEL	HELPING	QUALITATIVE DATA
BLACK	CRITICAL AREA	KITTY GENOVESE	QUANTITATIVE DATA
BLIND	DIFFUSION	LAME	SAME RACE
BOTTLE	EARLY	LATE	STANDARD COLLAPSE
BROWN BAG	EMERGENCY	MALES	STUDENTS
BYSTANDER APATHY	EXPERIMENT	MODEL	SUBWAY
CANE	EXPRESS TRAIN	NEW YORK CITY	TRIALS

OBSERVERS

OPPORTUNITY SAMPLING WHITE

GENERAL STUDIES

PASSENGERS

VICTIM



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny: The BBC prison study

- tyranny the arbitrary and/or oppressive exercise of power
- Question: How do we come to condone the tyranny of others and/or act tyrannically ourselves?



Introduction / background

Previous explanations suggest that group psychology always moves in the direction of extreme anti-social behaviour

When in a group individuals lose their self identity (deindividuation) and become capable of barbaric acts



The Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) Haney, Banks & Zimbardo

- · Built a mock prison in university basement
- Recruited 21 healthy and well adjusted students as volunteers
- Randomly allocated them to the role of prisoner or guard
- Found that interpersonal relationships deteriorated, became negative/hostile/humiliating/dehumanising

OCR

The Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) Haney, Banks & Zimbardo

- Guards became increasingly aggressive prisoners became passive and depressed
- 4 prisoners developed rashes, crying, trembling and acute anxiety by 2nd day
- The most hostile guards became leaders and role models for the 'other' guards
- SPE terminated on 6th day as the behaviour of the guards became even more tyrannical



The Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) Haney, Banks & Zimbardo

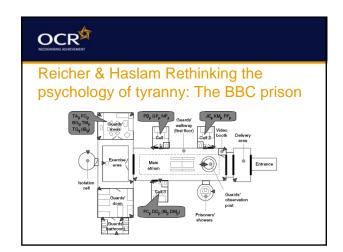
Zimbardo concluded:

- the illusion of 'power' had become real
- both Ps and Gs identified with & conformed to their allocated social role
- the situation that people are in determines how they behave
- this implies that people have no free will, that people cannot choose <u>not</u> to act in accordance with their assigned social role



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

- Zimbardo's guards given clear guidance on how to cause powerlessness in prisoners
- Because of ethical concerns, SPE has never been replicated & lacks quantitative data
- Research Question: what are the conditions under which people <u>do</u> or <u>do not</u> assume (conform to) allocated social roles?





Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

- Reicher & Haslam & the BBC, created the environment, filmed and broadcast
- Original science filmed, not reality TV
- Aim: to create an institution 'like' a prison to investigate the behaviour of groups that are unequal in resources, power and status



Reicher & Haslam questions:

- Do participants accept roles uncritically?
- Do those given power exercise it with no restraint?
- Do those given no power accept their situation without complaint?



Reicher & Haslam: Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Specific research aims:

- Collect data on the development of social interactions between groups of unequal power
- 2. Analyse the conditions under which people
 - 1. define themselves in terms of group memberships
 - 2. accept or challenge group inequalities
- 3. Analyse the relationships between social organisation & clinical factors in group behaviour
- Develop an ethical framework for examining social psychological issues



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Ethics

- Submitted for scrutiny by BPS ethics committee
- Participants clinical, medical & background screened and all gave <u>informed</u> consent
- Monitored by clinical psychologists throughout
- Paramedic on duty throughout
- Security guards present to intervene if needed
- Monitored by 5 person ethics committee who were able to terminate the study at any time



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Participants

- Recruited by adverts in national press
- Screened, e.g. well adjusted and pro-social
- Fully assessed over a weekend
- provided medical and character references
- 332 applicants reduced to 27 men



Participants

- 15 chosen to represent diversity in age, class and ethnicity
- Matched on personality variables into 5 groups of 3
- 1 from each group allocated as guard, and other 2 as prisoners thus
- 5 guards and 10 prisoners



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

A scene from the study





Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

What was measured? Data sources (DVs)

- Video & audio recording of behaviour
- Daily psychometric testing for
- social variables e.g. social identification
- organisational variables e.g. compliance with rules
- clinical variables e.g. depression & self-efficacy
- · Cortisol levels (saliva) as indicator of stress

OCR *

Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Guard initiation

- The evening prior to study the 5 guards were told they had been selected as Gs
- Shown prison timetables, informed about duties, roll calls and their responsibility to 'ensure institution runs smoothly'
- Asked to draw up the rules and to suggest punishments
- Told no physical violence allowed
- Taken to prison in van with blacked out windows



Guard situation

- superior accommodation
- good quality uniform
- superior meals
- keys to all doors & punishment cell
- access to guard station with surveillance system which could view all cells
- resources sweets & cigarettes to give rewards



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Prisoner situation

- 3 man cells
- · Hair shaved on arrival
- Uniform of T shirt having 3 digit number, loose trousers & sandals
- · Arrived one at a time
- Told nothing but **no violence** allowed
- List of rules & 'prisoner rights' posted on cell wall



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Manipulated Variables

Permeability of roles:

 Prisoners & guards were told guards were selected on basis on reliability, trustworthiness, initiative <u>but</u> that test not perfect and that guards would watch out for prisoners who showed 'guard like' qualities - that promotion was possible on day 3. Thus all believed movement between groups was possible



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Manipulated Variables

Legitimacy of roles:

 It was planned that on day 3 prisoners would be told that there were really no differences between prisoners & guards, but that it was impractical to reassign roles so the groups would stay the same. This would lead to the perception that group differences were not legitimate



Manipulated Variables:

Cognitive alternatives

 On the 5th day, a new prisoner, chosen because of his background as a Trade Union official, was introduced. It was expected that he would provide the skills required to organise 'collective action'



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Results - Phase 1:

- The guards did not develop group identity / coherencethey did not internalise power role and could not agree norms & priorities
- Until day 3 when 1 prisoner was promoted to guard each prisoner tried to show the qualities that might lead to promotion (individual self interest predominated in prisoners)



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Results - Phase 1:

 After one P was promoted, when roles were fixed (impermeable) the prisoners <u>did</u> develop group identity and as a group challenged the guards, this led to a shift in power & a collapse of the prisoner / guard system

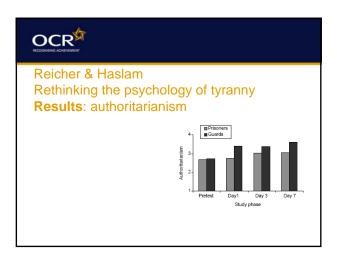


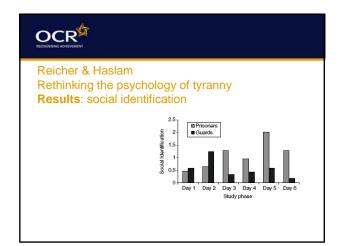
Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

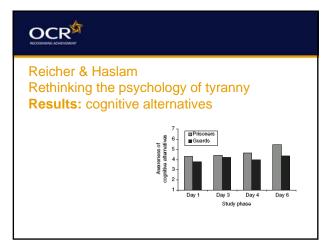
Results - Phase 2:

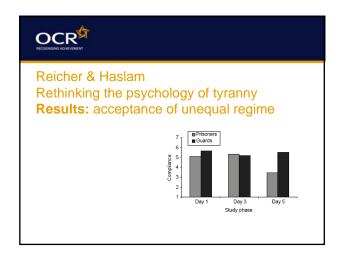
- On day 6 Ps break out of cell and occupy Gs quarters, the regime of the Gs has now ended
- The Ps and Gs decided to continue as a self governing 'commune' but prisoners who had led the challenges did not co-operate
- By the end of the study a more draconian system of inequality was being proposed by some

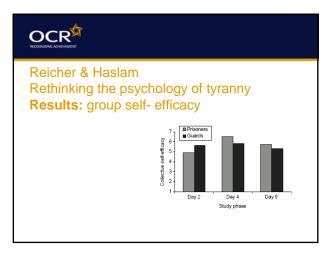


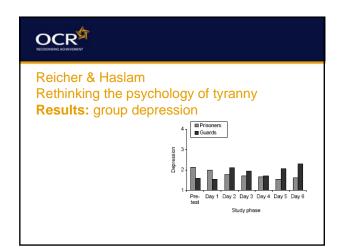












Reicher & Haslam
Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Conclusions

• the way in which members of a group behave depends on the norms & values of the group social identity and may be pro or anti social

• failing groups create problems for their own members and for others because when people cannot create a

social system they will accept extreme solutions

proposed by others



Conclusions

- The breakdown of groups, and powerlessness, create the conditions for tyranny
- It is possible to design and run powerful social psychological research studies that are also ethical



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

Conclusions

- The role of G was positively valued in the prison but the Gs were concerned with possible negative evaluation by future audiences & this made them reluctant to identify with their role
- Thus, rather than present situation 'only' determining behaviour, past and future context may also have an affect
- Discuss: How might the knowledge that this was to be a TV programme have affected behaviour?



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny

- Discussion points:
- Differences between SPE & BBC study
- Validity of self report measurements (DVs)
- Reliability can the study be replicated?
- Sample size does this matter?
- Ecological validity (level of realism)
- Usefulness how can the findings be applied



Reicher & Haslam Rethinking the psychology of tyranny





Photographs 2 and 3. Day 4: The prisoners start to challenge the guards' regime.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND RESEARCH FOR THE REICHER AND HASLAM CORE STUDY

Use the OCR Power Point relating to this study (available via the OCR website) to complete this background resource sheet.

1. What is tyranny?
2. What has previous research suggested happens when individuals are in a group?
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3. Who conducted the famous study 'The Stanford Prison Experiment' (SPE) on which Reicher
and Haslam based their study?
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5. Briefly describe the participants in the SPE study.
6. Outline what happened in the SPE
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8. What was the main conclusion drawn by the researchers from the SPE?
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11. Identify the three questions Reicher and Haslam wanted to answer.
(i)
(ii)
(iii)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND RESEARCH FOR THE REICHER AND HASLAM CORE STUDY

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1. What is tyranny?

The arbitrary and/or oppressive exercise of power.

2. What has previous research suggested happens when individuals are in a group?

When in a group, individuals lose their self-identity (deinviduation), and are capable of barbaric acts.

3. Who conducted the famous study 'The Stanford Prison Experiment' (SPE) on which Reicher and Haslam based their study?

Haney, Banks and Zimbardo.

4. Where was the SPE conducted?

In the basement of Stanford University in USA (the Psychology Department basement).

- 5. Briefly describe the participants in the SPE study.
- 21 healthy and well-adjusted students volunteered to take part and were then randomly allocated to the role of prisoner or guard.
- 6. Outline what happened in the SPE.

Interpersonal relationships deteriorated, becoming dehumanising. The guards became increasingly aggressive (developing a Pathology of Power) and the most hostile guards became role models for the other guards. This led to the prisoners developing Pathological Prisoner Syndrome characterised by a sense of helplessness and lack of power.

7. Why was the SPE stopped after only 6 days when it was designed to last two weeks?

It was terminated on the 6th day because the prisoners could not cope with the increasingly tyrannical behaviour of the guards.

8. What was the main conclusion drawn by the researchers from the SPE?

Zimbardo concluded that the illusion of power had become real, that both prisoners and guards identified with, and conformed to, their allocated social role and that the situation people are in, rather than individual characteristics, determines behaviour.

9. Why has the SPE never been replicated?

Because of ethical concerns – the prisoners were seen to suffer undue stress and psychological harm.

10. Outline the aim of Reicher and Haslam's BBC prison study.

The aim was to create an institution 'like' a prison in which to investigate the behaviour of groups that are unequal in resources, power and status, and the conditions under which people do or do not assume (conform to) allocated social roles.

- 11. Identify the three questions Reicher and Haslam wanted to answer.
- (i) Do participants accept roles uncritically?
- (ii) Do those given power exercise it with no restraint?
- (iii) Do those given no power accept their situation without complaint?

REICHER & HASLAM (2006) RETHINKING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TYRANNY: THE BBC PRISON STUDY

Thinking like a Psychologist - Evaluating the Core Study

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the method used?

As the study was conducted in a simulated prison created at Elstree Studios in London where deliberate interventions were introduced at specific points in the study to observe their effects, it can be considered a laboratory experiment. Additionally, as only one small group of individuals (15 in total) was involved, it can also be seen as a case study.

A strength of this study as a laboratory experiment is that Reicher and Haslam were able to manipulate three specific independent variables (permeability of roles, legitimacy of roles and cognitive alternatives) at predetermined points during the course of the study. This allowed them to infer cause and effect in respect of factors that may lead to tyrannical behaviour. A weakness of a laboratory experiment is that it automatically infers low ecological validity. Although a simulated prison environment was created, participants knew they were taking part in a study that was being filmed by the BBC. Such factors may have influenced them to behave in unnatural ways.

A strength of this study as a case study is that as only 15 individuals were involved a tremendous amount of both quantitative (psychometric and physiological tests) and qualitative (observations) data was gathered on each participants. A weakness of this however is that it is hard to generalise the behaviour of 15 men to whole prison populations where individual characteristics, group dynamics etc may be very different.

Was the sample representative?

Reicher and Haslam's sample was initially a volunteer sample of 332 males who were recruited through advertisements in the national press and leaflets. This was automatically a biased sample as it consisted of males only. Furthermore, it has been suggested that individuals with particular personality traits volunteer for such activities inferring other types of people are therefore not included. The initial pool was then reduced to 27 through screening which involved (a) psychometric test that measured both social variables and clinical variables, (b) a full weekend assessment by clinical psychologists, (c) obtaining medical and character references and conducting police checks. The results of these screening processes allowed Reicher and Haslam to ensure their final 15 participants showed diversity of age, social class and ethnic background. How representative of the general population and/or a prison population would this final 'selected' sample have been?

What type of data was collected?

Reicher and Haslam gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data included daily psychometric tests to measure social variables, organisational variables and clinical variables. Additionally, a physiological test for stress levels was administered daily by taking saliva swabs from each participant. Qualitative data was gathered through the BBC's filming process which was set up so participants could be both video- and audio-recorded wherever they were. Reicher and Haslam were also able to observe the behaviour of both guards and prisoners from a specially designed observation room. These measures allowed a tremendous amount of rich detailed data to be gathered about the behaviour, psychological state and physiological condition of all participants.

Does this study have high or low Ecological Validity?

As the study was not only conducted in a specially created prison environment at Elstree Studios, but also filmed throughout by the BBC with the aim of producing 4 x 1 hour programmes, the study lacked ecological validity. Furthermore, as all participants were volunteers who were eventually randomly allocated to their roles, they were neither genuine guards nor prisoners so the study again lacked ecological validity. However, because participants' behaviour changed so dramatically each time an independent variable was manipulated, Reicher and Haslam believed participants were really 'living the situation'. Additionally, the presence of the cameras may not have been such a great influence on behaviour as British people are now used to being watched by surveillance cameras.

Was the study ethical?

The proposed study was passed by both the University of Exeter's ethics panel and the BPS Ethics Committee. In addition other safeguards were built into the study (e.g. participants signed a comprehensive consent form; a paramedic was on constant standby in case of injury or illness). Even so some participants showed signs of distress during the study (e.g. the prisoner not selected to be a guard, the guards who were uncomfortable with their authoritarian role).

What does this study tell us about Dispositional and Situational Explanations of behaviour?

The dispositional explanation for the behaviour of both guards and prisoners would be that it was something in their make-up/personality that predisposed them to behave the way they did. However, as Reicher and Haslam initially divided the 15 participants into 5 groups of 3 matched on personality variables (racism, authoritarianism and social dominance) who were then randomly allocated to the role of guard (1 participant from each group) or prisoner (2 participants from each group), and then deliberately manipulated certain features of the situation, it may be concluded that the situation the participants were in significantly influenced their behaviour.

How useful is this research and to what extent can it be applied to everyday life?

This study was designed to examine the factors that determine how people respond when a system of inequality is imposed on them by others – do they accept it or do they resist it? Reicher and Haslam claimed that their findings in relation to inequality cannot be fully explained through an individual's natural tendency (disposition) to assume roles and assert power. Rather, they suggest that the existing forms of social identity and self-categorisation theories provide the basis for such an understanding. If group boundaries are impermeable, individuals can join together to take collective action. If this action fails, those involved identify less with their group and succumb to more authoritarian regimes which may promote either pro- or anti-social behaviours. Reicher and Haslam's findings show that because the guards failed to identify as an authoritarian and legitimate group, and that once the group boundaries became impermeable, the prisoners began to work together to improve their conditions by re-organising and dominating the prison environment. Factors identified in this study by Reicher and Haslam could have led to tyranny and this knowledge makes the study useful for those organising and controlling unequal, hierarchical social systems.

Test Yourself On REICHER & HASLAM

1(a) From the study by Reicher and Haslam, what is meant by the term tyranny?	[2]
(b) Outline how the social identity approach could have led to tyranny in this study.	[2]
2 Describe two of the independent variables manipulated in this study.	[4]
3(a) Explain why this study can be considered a laboratory experiment.	[2]
(b) Explain why this study can also be considered a case study.	[2]
4(a) Outline how participants were gathered for this study.	[2]
(b) Suggest one limitation of the sample used in this study.	[2]
5(a) The initial pool of participants was reduced from 332 to 27 through screening processes.	
Identify two of these processes.	[2]
(b) Outline how the pool of 27 participants was further reduced to the final sample of 15.	[2]
6 Outline what the guards were told in their briefing the night before the study began.	[4]
7(a) Suggest one way in which this study had high ecological validity.	[2]
(b) Suggest one way in which this study was low in ecological validity.	[2]
8(a) Identify the two ways in which social identity was measured in this study.	[2]
(b) Outline the findings of the social identification measures in relation to the prisoners.	[2]
9 Outline two pieces of evidence that suggest some participants experienced stress during this study.	[4]
10 Psychologists sometimes distinguish between situational and dispositional explanations for behaviour. From this study:	
(a) Describe a situational explanation for the behaviour of the prisoners.	[2]
(b) Describe a dispositional explanation for the behaviour of the guards.	[2]

Total marks available: 40

WORDSEARCH BASED ON THE REICHER AND HASLAM CORE STUDY

Find the following words in the wordsearch below:

BBC INTERVENTIONS RANDOM ALLOCATION

BETTER FOOD LEGITIMACY REWARDS

BREAD LONDON ROLES

CASE STUDY MALES SALIVA

CELLS NEGOTIATION SCREENING

CENTRAL ATRIUM OBSERVATION SELF RATING SCALES

CIGARETTES PERMEABILITY TRADE UNION OFFICIAL

COGNITIONS PHYSICAL VIOLENCE TYRANNY

ELSTREE PRISON SIMULATION UNIFORM

ETHICS COMMITTEE PRISONER VARIABLES

EXPERIMENT PSYCHOMETRIC TESTS VOLUNTEERS

GUARDS PUNISHMENTS WATER

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WORDSEARCH BASED ON THE REICHER AND HASLAM CORE STUDY (ANSWERS)

Find the following words in the wordsearch below:

BBC INTERVENTIONS RANDOM ALLOCATION

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