

Obedience to Authority

Socialization

- From an early age, we are taught “don’t ask why, just do as you are told”
- As a result, people often mindlessly follow orders even when they disagree with them
- The type of conformity that results is likely to be _____ (public or private?), but very powerful nonetheless

Obedience to Authority

- “Don’t Walk on the Black Squares” showed people from all walks of life following orders (the sign)
- But the person who first scientifically investigated the topic was _____
- As Solomon Asch’s student, he was astonished by the line estimation studies
- He was also Jewish, and deeply troubled by the _____ obedience to authority during WWII
- He set out to study this type of conformity in the laboratory
 - We’ll see the results today in the film, *Obedience*

Operationalization

- How to study obedience in the lab?
- To model the situation in Germany, he needed an authority figure, an underling, and a victim

Translation: The Teacher-Learner Paradigm

Fill in the middle column

	Milgram	WWII
Authority Figure		SS Officers
Underling		German Citizens
Victim		Jewish Citizens

Milgram's Teacher-Learner Paradigm

- In Milgram's research, teachers are **ordered** to administer the shocks

The dependent variable is _____ (how many shocks are delivered under orders)

Predictions about Milgram's study

- Milgram asked many experts to predict, in advance, whether people would obey an authority figure's order to deliver shocks to a victim
- Of the psychologists he asked, _____ predicted he would find obedience

In Fact

- In his baseline research, Milgram found _____ of his subjects obeyed the authority figure
- So he then decided to up the ante
- In the film we'll see today, the "learner" has a heart condition, and the teacher is told that shocks can trigger heart attacks
- Milgram hoped this would decrease obedience considerably
- Let's see if it did

Post-film

- Much to Milgram's surprise, _____ of his subjects "shocked the victim" all the way to the XXX level
- At this point, the victim has long since stopped responding, may be seriously injured or dead, yet people persisted in following orders – why?

The next slide is found in Myers

Milgram's follow-up research

- Milgram focused on discovering the factors necessary for obedience to authority
- His follow-up research identified quite a few, starting with _____
 - Maybe obedience was high b/c subjects could not hear or see the victim's suffering

Victim Depersonalization

Victim Proximity:

- When the subject and victim were in the same room, obedience dropped to _____
- When the subject had to place the victim's hand on the shock mechanism, obedience dropped to _____
- The victim is now "personalized" – emotional distance no longer possible
- In general, personalizing victims increases empathy
- Still, even personalizing the victim to the point of having them _____ the Learner resulted in 30% obedience (still high) – so what else might affect obedience?

Experimenter _____

- The experimenter also has to be near the subject
- If E was absent (e.g., tape-recorded), or giving instructions over the phone, obedience dropped to _____
- Interestingly, teachers _____ about their obedience in these conditions

Need for Monitoring

- So what type of social power (in Kelman's terms) do we have here?
- Compliance, Identification, or Internalization

Experimenter's Legitimacy

- E also has to be a legitimate authority figure – someone sanctioned by society to give orders
- Milgram first tried moving the experiment off-campus (to diminish the authority that Yale might connote) – he found a small drop in obedience (_____%)

However

- When E was replaced by a clerk, obedience dropped to _____
- In one version, the clerk tried to take over shocking the victim – many subjects tried to physically restrain him

Accountability*

- When subjects were told they were responsible for the learner, obedience was almost _____ (_____)
- Thus, the authority figure has to take the blame for the consequences (i.e., be accountable)
- Accountability is the _____ factor for obedience to authority

Summary

- Milgram found 4 factors necessary to get the _____ of subjects to obey authority
- Victim Depersonalization
- Legitimate Authority Figure
- Authority Figure must be present
- ** _____

“_____ State”

- Eliminating personal responsibility is a key factor
- Milgram said it allowed subjects to enter into an “_____ state” – a state where we are just an agency of a higher power
- Under this condition, it was easy to get subjects to become agents of destruction

Implications

- And this was in a democratic country, under laboratory conditions, where there was no cost to “teachers” for failure to obey
- Imagine how much easier it is get people to obey when they are ordered by the military or the government, and when there are costs for not obeying
- Although we would like to think that only bad people do bad things, this is an example of the _____
- With respect to WWII, this idea has come to be called “Eichmann’s fallacy”

Eichmann’s Fallacy

- Adolph Eichmann was the Nazi officer responsible for filling the death camps
 - He fled to Argentina, and wasn’t captured until 1961
- During his trial, people assumed they would discover _____
 - Instead, they found a quiet, ordinary man who insisted he was only “following orders” to please his superiors and advance his career

The “ordinariness” of evil

- Has become one of the defining themes of Nazi Germany
- Evil does _____ require bad people
- Instead, ordinary people are capable of it when the situation sets the stage
- Milgram’s studies demonstrate this phenomenon
- As does Zimbardo’s _____ study

Update on Milgram

- Research conducted in Milgram's spirit today continues to show obedience to authority
- Any time people are in a position of lower status, they are prone to mindlessly follow orders

Examples

- Nurses followed doctor's orders to the letter, even when it meant they were giving _____
- Subjects told by the "boss" to hire a White man over a better-qualified Black man did so _____
- When we are not held accountable for our actions, we are likely to "do as we are told"

Ethics

- Milgram's research (like Zimbardo's prison study) caused a public outcry
- Social psychologists were also outraged
- So much so that today, you could not conduct these experiments

As you saw in the film

- Subjects were obviously distressed
- Many of them chain-smoked, laughed uncontrollably, sweated profusely, and expressed angst during the experiment
- But Milgram reports that _____% of them were glad to have participated in it
- Months later, an independent psychologist found none of them showed any evidence of harm

Do the ends justify the means?

The answer has been _____

What do YOU think?

A note about Obedience the film:

If you miss viewing it in class, you'll just have to read about Milgram's work in your text because I won't be putting it on reserve at Kilmer Library. It's simply too valuable, and I have had films lost or stolen in the past. Because this one is irreplaceable I won't let it out of my sight.