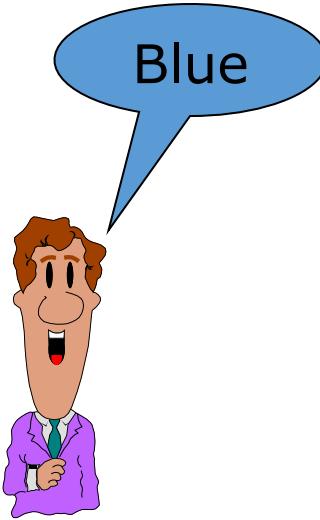


Conformity and Obedience

HUL261
Yashpal Jogdand



Overview

- **Impression Formation**
- **Social Influence**
- **Conformity**
- **Obedience**

Impression Formation

Impression formation

- How do we form judgements and impressions of people?
- Are some types of information more important than other?
- What are the approaches to the study of impression formation?



Asch's Experiment

Asch's Experiment

- Intelligent
- Skillful
- Industrious
- _____ ← Warm/cold or polite/blunt
- Determined
- Practical
- Cautious

- Participants read a list of words describing a person and reported their impression.

Asch's Experiment

- Intelligent
- Skillful
- Industrious
- _____ ← Warm/cold or polite/blunt
- Determined
- Practical
- Cautious

- Substituting the word "cold" for "warm" produced drastically different impressions of the target. One participant described the "cold" target as, "A rather snobbish person who feels that his character and intelligence set him apart from the run-of-the-mill individual. Calculating and unsympathetic."
- Asch found that some traits seemed to be more central. "warm" and "cold," for example, appear to be central traits

Impression formation

- Asch's (1946) Configural Model:
 - Central traits: Traits that have disproportionate influence on the configuration of final impressions
 - Peripheral traits: Traits that have insignificant influence on the configuration of final impressions
 - Central traits influence the meaning of other traits and the perceived relationship between traits

Implicit Personality Theories

- ***Implicit Personality Theories—beliefs about what traits or characteristics tend to go together***
 - These theories are similar to a schema (more details in next few slides)
 - Implicit theories can influence the impressions of others more than people's actual traits.
 - An example is the implicit personality theory people hold regarding the relationship between birth order and personality traits (in western societies!).

Social Influence



Social Influence—efforts by one or more individuals to change the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, or behaviors of one or more others







- Norms: Accepted ways of thinking, feeling, behaving
- Why do we follow norms?
 - Make life easier
 - Rewards for following norms
 - Internalization of norms

Leaders and Leadership

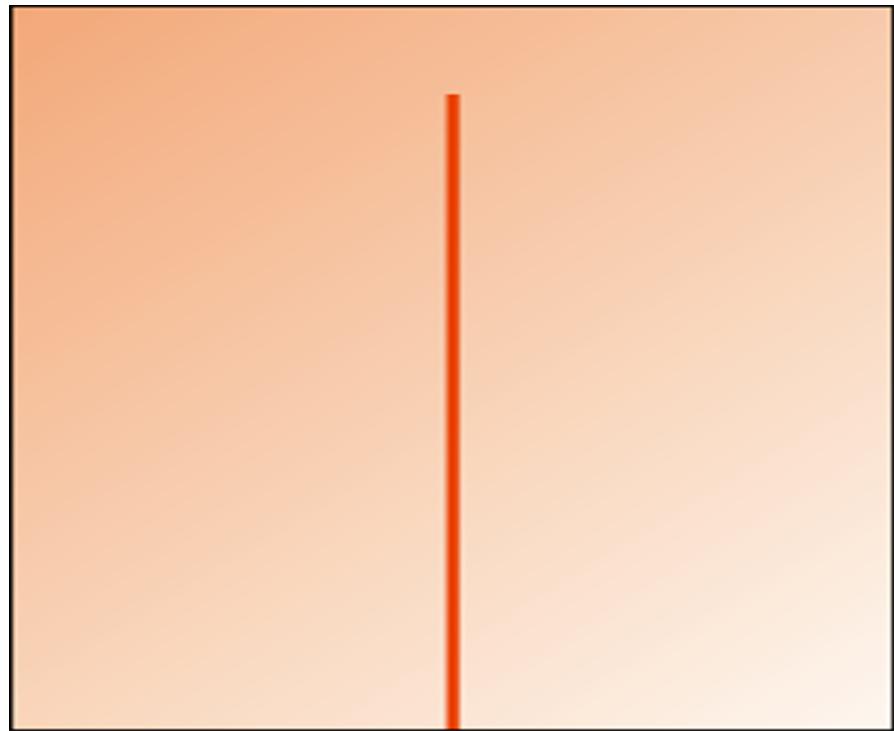
- **Leader:** The most prototypical/representative member of the group.
- **Leadership:** The process whereby one or more members of a group influence other group members in a way that motivates them to contribute to the achievement of group goals (Haslam, 2004; Smith, 1995; Rost, 2008)



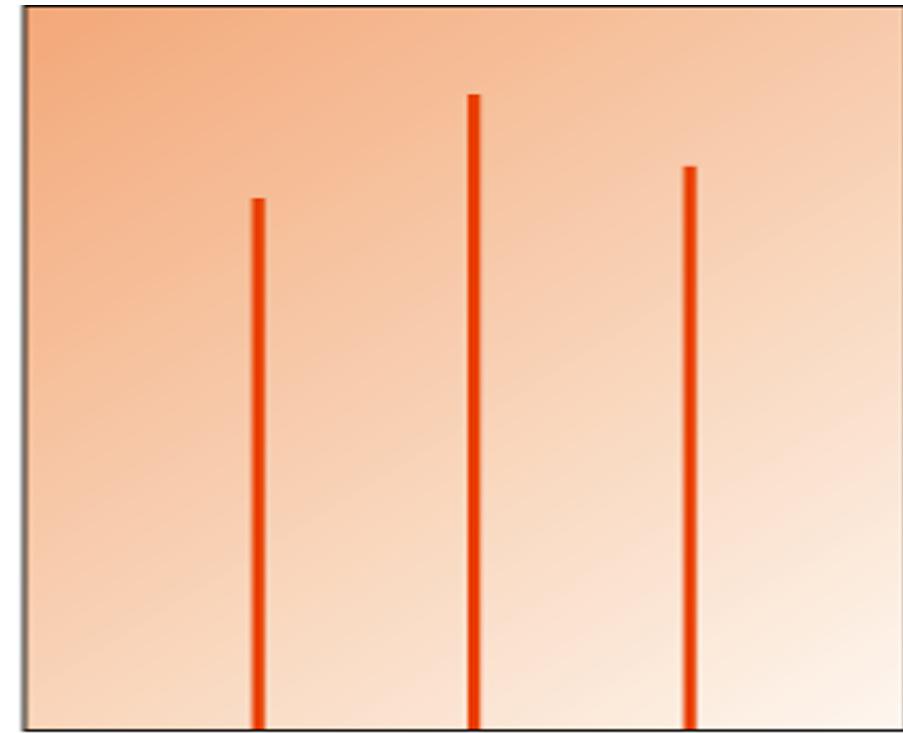
Conformity

- **Conformity**—widespread tendency to act and think like the people around us
- Conformity is a type of social influence in which individuals change their attitudes or behavior in order to adhere to social norms
- **Peer Pressure:** a direct influence on people by [peers](#), or the effect on an individual who gets encouraged to follow their peers by changing their [attitudes](#), [values](#) or [behaviors](#) to [conform](#) to those of the influencing group or individual.
(Wikipedia)





Standard line

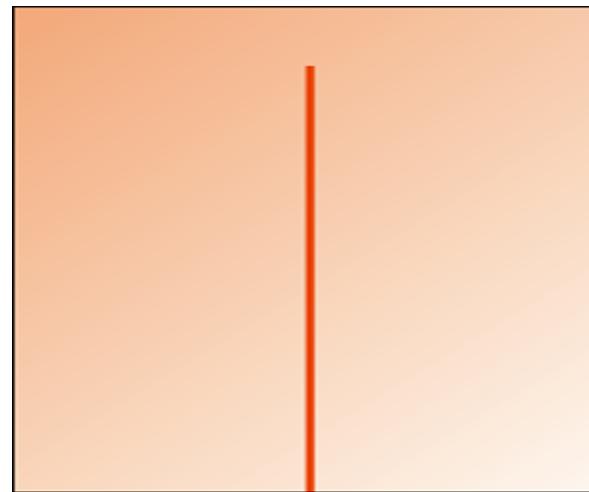


Comparison lines

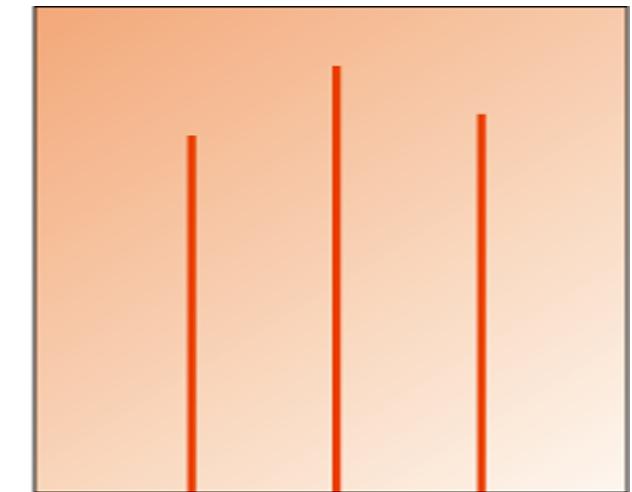
The Asch Line Judgment Studies



Solomon Asch (1951, 1956) had participants guess which line in the right box is the same length as the line on the left. Almost everyone easily gets this right – when alone.



Standard line



Comparison lines

Conformity

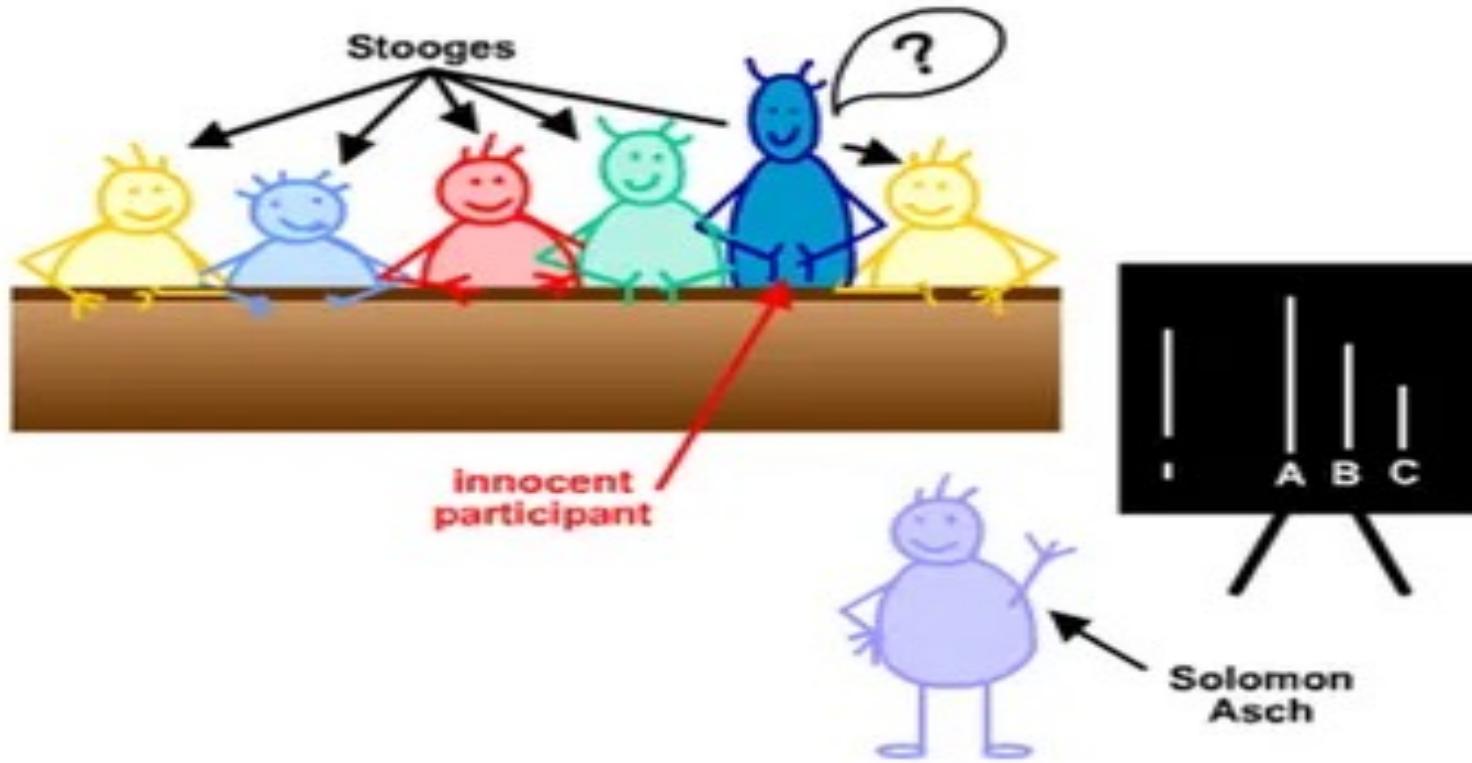


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyDDyT1IDhA>

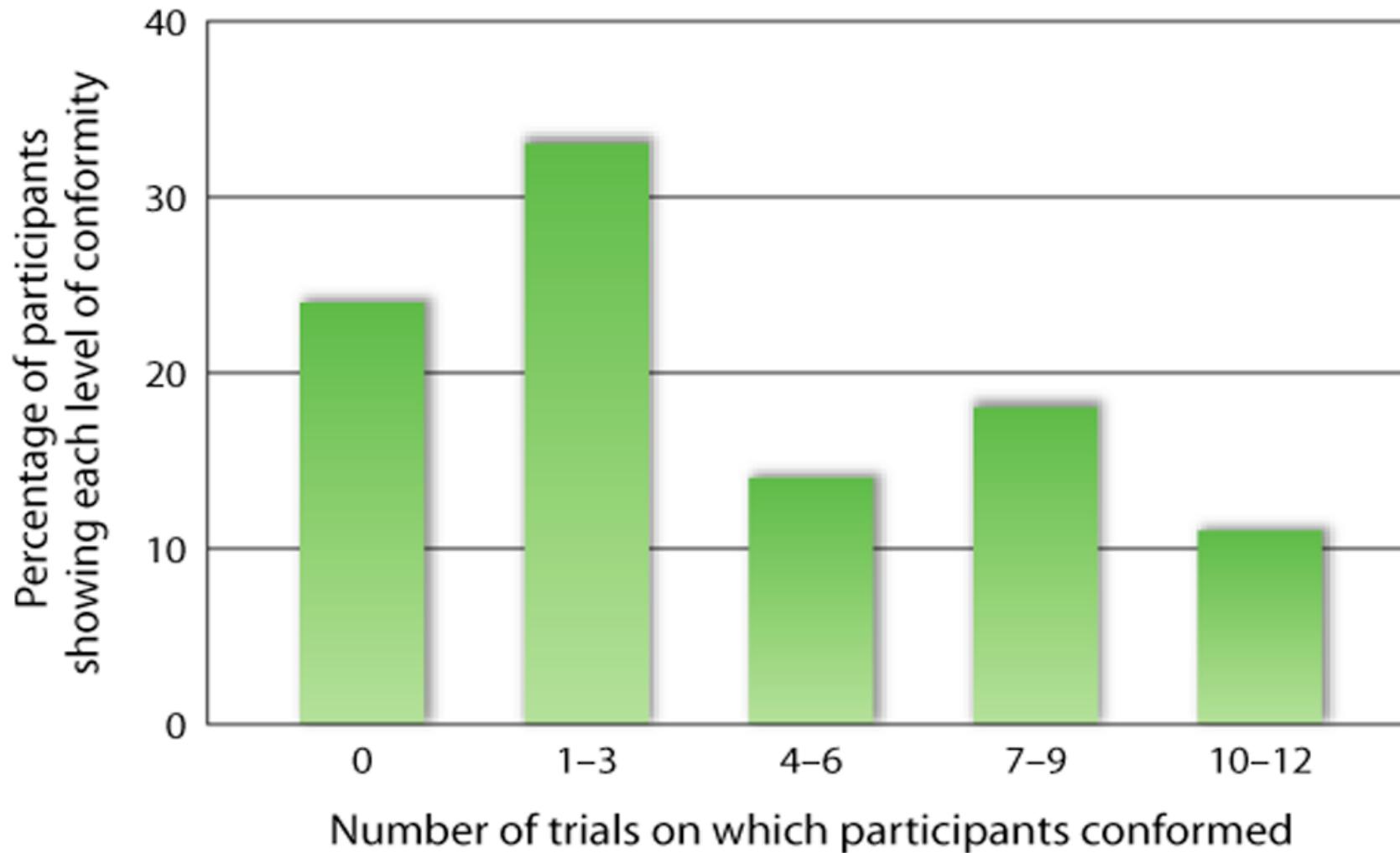
Would You Fall For That?







- 37 of the 50 subjects conformed to ‘obviously erroneous’ answers at least once
- 14 conformed on more than 6 of the ‘staged’ trials
- On average, subjects conformed on 4 of the ‘staged’ trials.



76% of the participants conformed on at least one trial.

Why do people conform?

Informational Social Influence: The Need to Know What's "Right"

Informational Social Influence

The influence of other people that leads us to conform because we see them as a source of information to guide our behavior.

We conform because we believe that others' interpretation of an ambiguous situation is more correct than ours and will help us choose an appropriate course of action.

Normative Social Influence: The Need to Be Accepted

Given this fundamental human need for social companionship, it is not surprising that we often conform in order to be accepted by others.

Normative Social Influence

The influence of other people that leads us to conform in order to be liked and accepted by them.

This type of conformity results in public compliance with the group's beliefs and behaviors but not necessarily private acceptance of those beliefs and behaviors.

Conformity and Social Approval:

The Asch Line Judgment Studies

- In a variation of his study, Asch (1957) demonstrated the power of social disapproval in shaping a person's behavior.
- The confederates gave the wrong answer 12 out of 18 times, as before, but this time the participants wrote their answers on a piece of paper instead of saying them out loud.
- Now people did not have to worry about what the group thought of them because the group would never find out what their answers were.
- Conformity dropped dramatically, occurring on an average of only 1.5 of the twelve trials.

Factors that Affect Conformity

- Factors that Affect Conformity:
 - **Cohesiveness**—*the degree of attraction felt by an individual toward an influencing group*
 - As cohesiveness increases, conformity increases
 - **Group size**
 - As group size increases, conformity increases
 - **Descriptive Norms (what most people do in a given situation) and Injunctive Norms (specify what ought to be done)**
 - Both can increase conformity
 - **Normative Focus Theory** predicts that people are more likely to conform to injunctive norms when they are salient to them.

Q & A

OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

Definitions

- Obedience: compliance with an order, request, or law or submission to another's authority (google dictionary)
- Authority: the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience. (google dictionary)



OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

- Obedience is a social norm that is valued in every culture.
- You simply can't have people doing whatever they want all the time—it would result in chaos.
- Consequently, we are socialized, beginning as children, to obey authority figures whom we perceive as legitimate.

Obedience

Doing the right thing



OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

- We internalize the social norm of obedience such that we usually obey rules and laws even when the authority figure isn't present—you stop at red lights even if the cops aren't parked at the corner.
- However, obedience can have extremely serious and even tragic consequences.
- People will obey the orders of an authority figure to hurt or even kill other human beings.

Obedience

Doing the right thing



OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

- How can we be sure that the Holocaust, and other mass atrocities were not caused solely by evil, psychopathic people but by powerful social forces operating on people of all types?
- Stanley Milgram (1963, 1974, 1976) decided to find out, in what has become the most famous series of studies in social psychology.



© IPN



Hannah Arendt

German-born American political scientist and philosopher known for her critical writing on Jewish affairs and her study of totalitarianism.

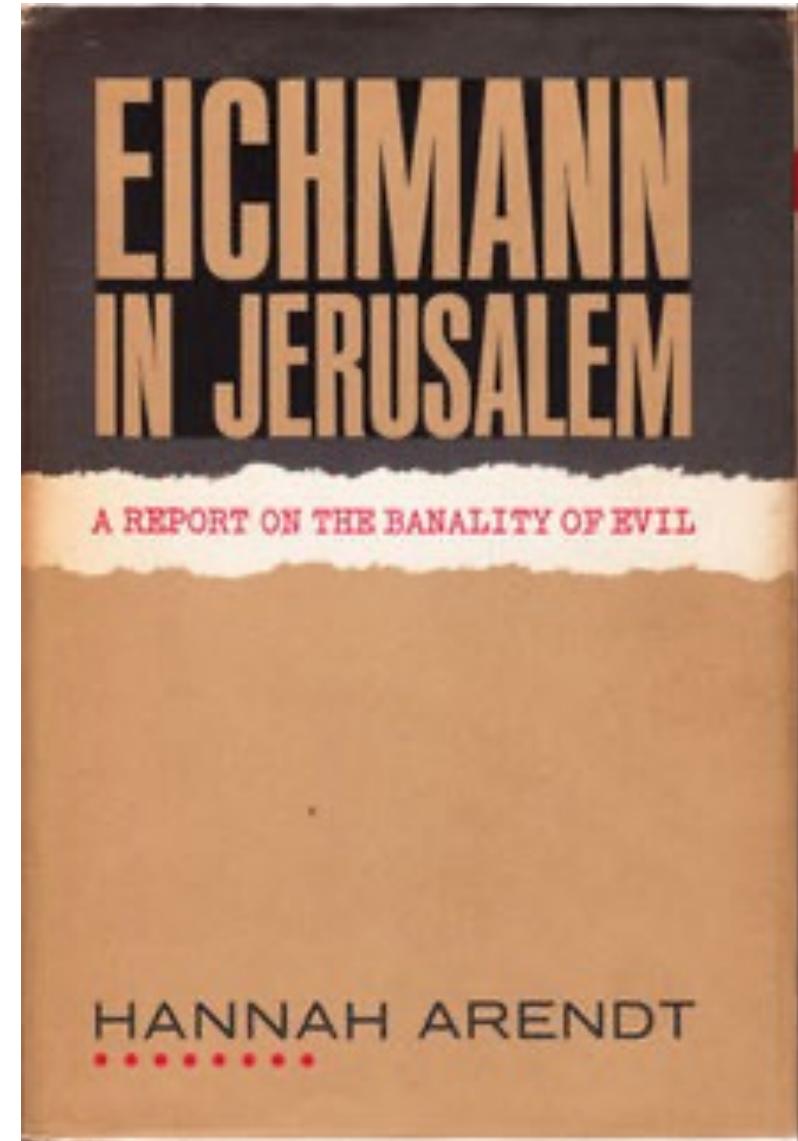
Eichmann was an “uninspired bureaucrat who sat at his desk and did his job”. He was not “a dangerous and perverted personality” but “terrifyingly normal”

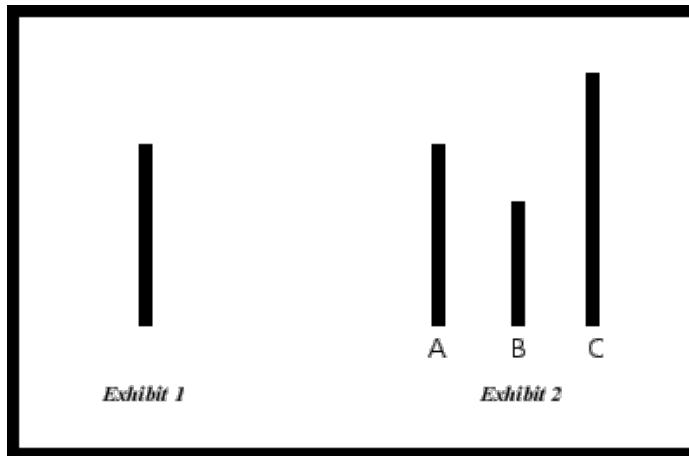


Adolf Eichmann,
the Nazi SS officer who organized Adolf Hitler’s “final solution of the Jewish question”

Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil is a 1963 book by political theorist [Hannah Arendt](#). Arendt, a [Jew](#) who fled Germany during [Adolf Hitler's rise to power](#), reported on [Adolf Eichmann's trial](#) for [The New Yorker](#).

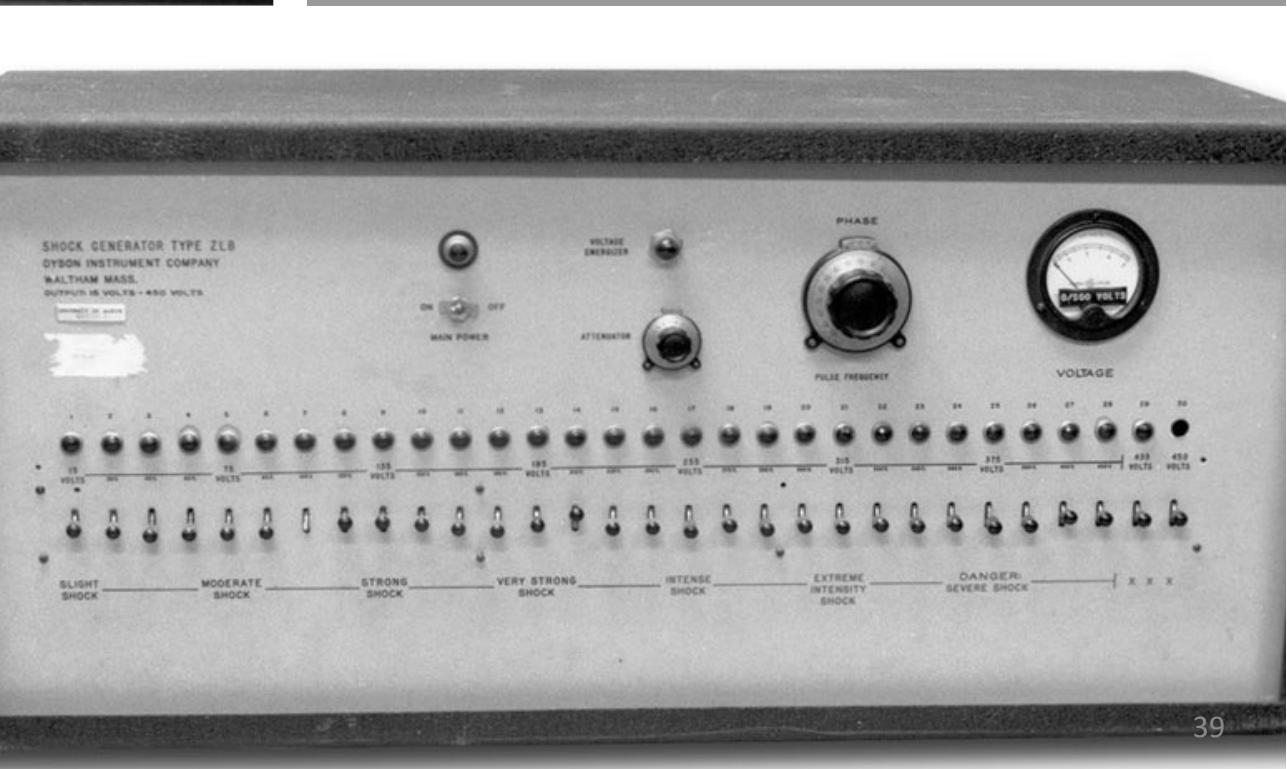
Arendt's subtitle famously introduced the phrase "the banality of evil". In part the phrase refers to Eichmann's deportment at the trial as the man displayed neither guilt for his actions nor hatred for those trying him, claiming he bore no responsibility because he was simply "[doing his job](#)" ("He did his 'duty'...; he not only obeyed 'orders', he also obeyed the 'law'."p. 135).





“Just how far *would* a person go under the experimenter’s orders?





Stanley Milgram and his famous shock machine

Public Announcement

WE WILL PAY YOU \$4.00 FOR ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME

Persons Needed for a Study of Memory

*We will pay five hundred New Haven men to help us complete a scientific study of memory and learning. The study is being done at Yale University.

*Each person who participates will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) for approximately 1 hour's time. We need you for only one hour: there are no further obligations. You may choose the time you would like to come (evenings, weekdays, or weekends).

*No special training, education, or experience is needed. We want:

Factory workers	Businessmen	Construction workers
City employees	Clerks	Salespeople
Laborers	Professional people	White-collar workers
Barbers	Telephone workers	Others

All persons must be between the ages of 20 and 50. High school and college students cannot be used.

*If you meet these qualifications, fill out the coupon below and mail it now to Professor Stanley Milgram, Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven. You will be notified later of the specific time and place of the study. We reserve the right to decline any application.

*You will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) as soon as you arrive at the laboratory.

TO:

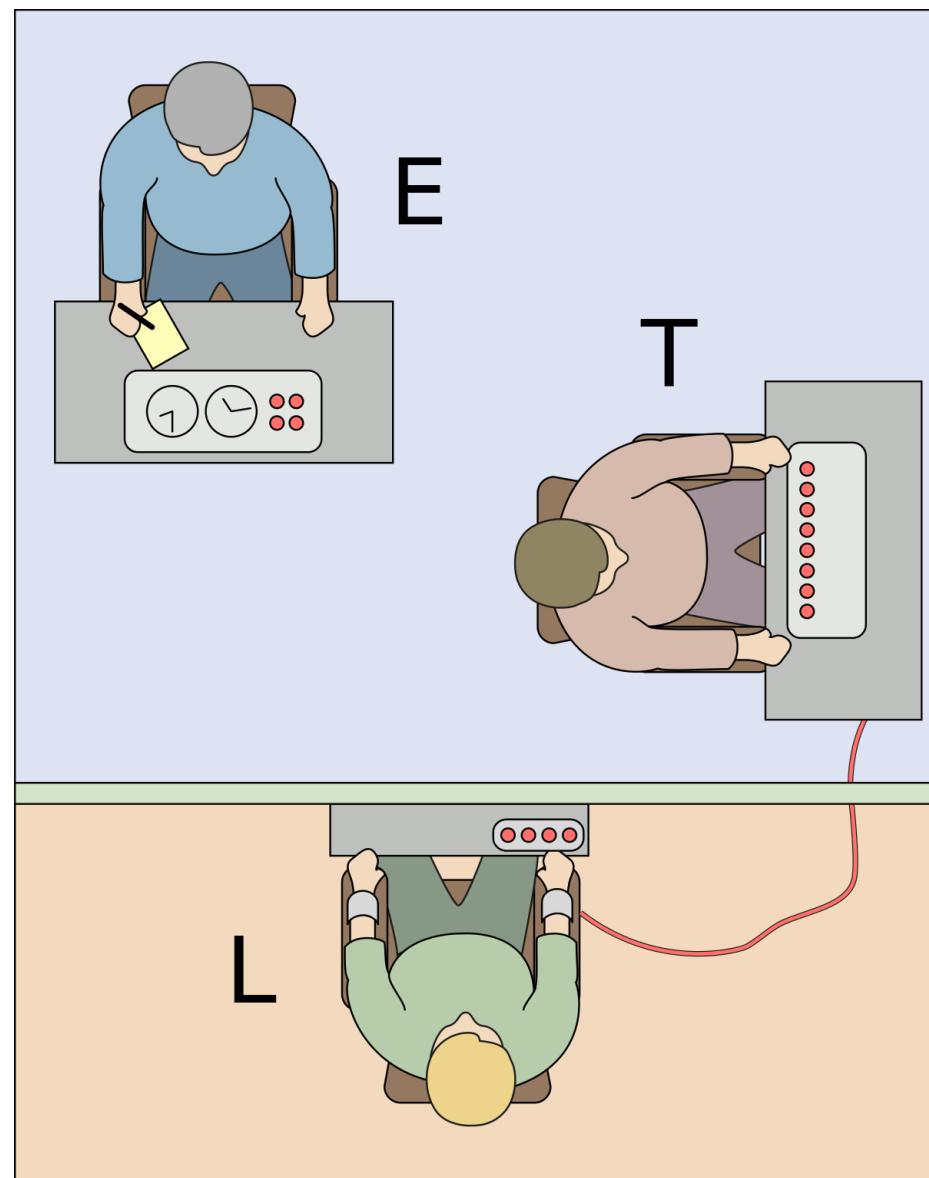
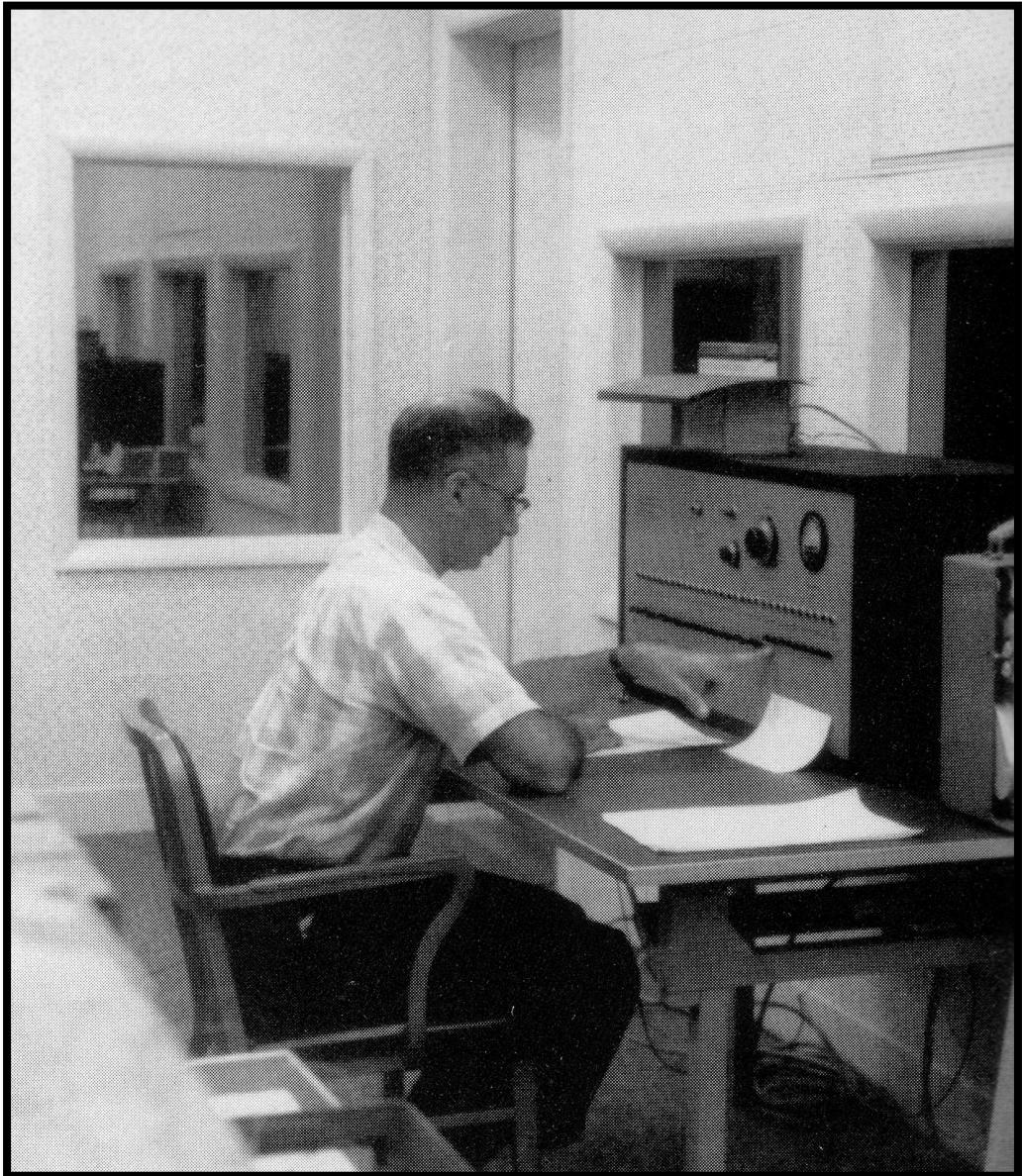
PROF. STANLEY MILGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY,
YALE UNIVERSITY, NEW HAVEN, CONN. I want to take part in
this study of memory and learning. I am between the ages of 20 and
50. I will be paid \$4.00 (plus 50c carfare) if I participate.

NAME (Please Print).

ADDRESS



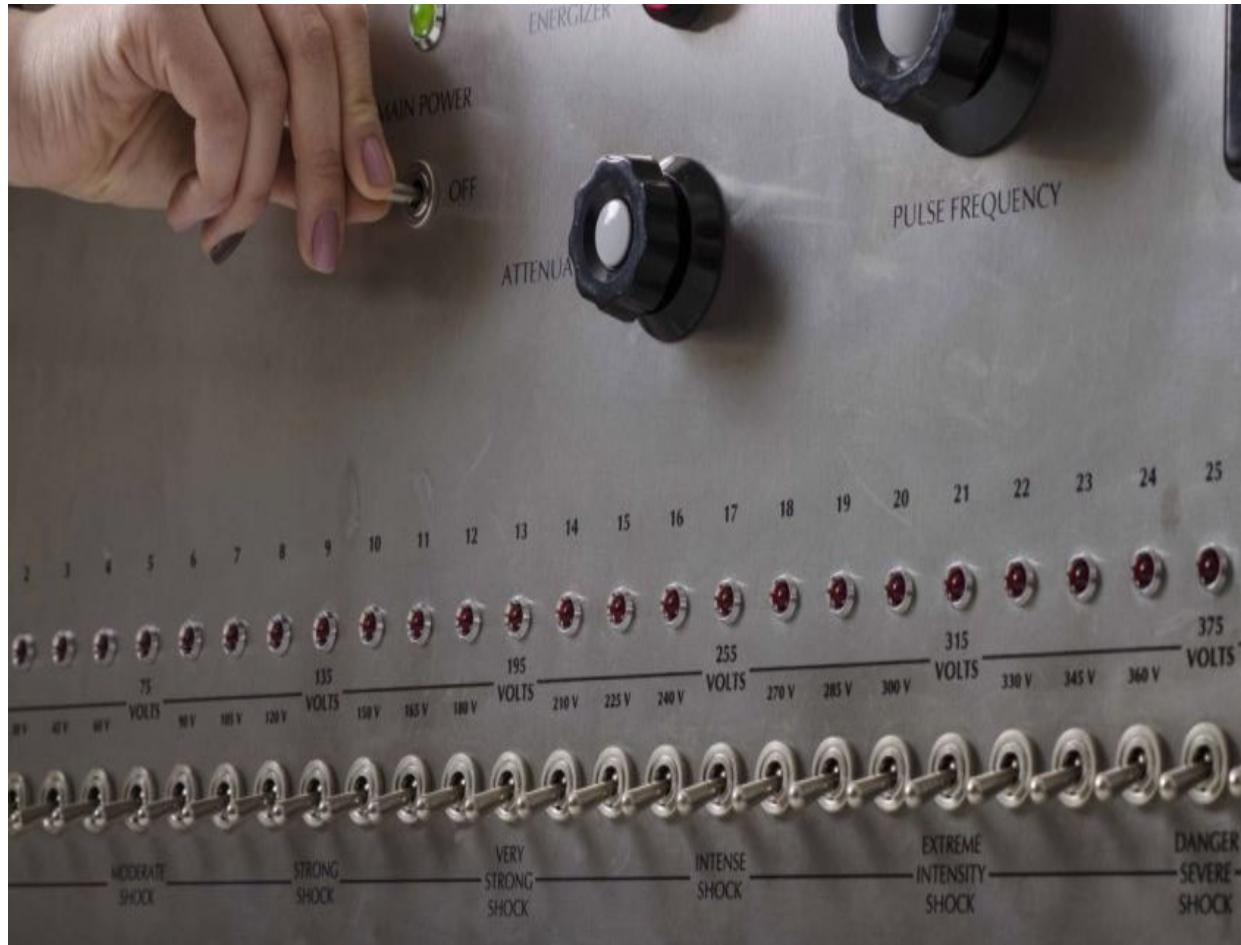
- When you arrive at the laboratory, you meet another participant, a 47-year-old, somewhat overweight, pleasant-looking fellow.
- The experimenter, wearing a white lab coat, explains that one of you will play the role of a teacher and the other a learner. You draw a slip of paper out of a hat and discover that you will be the teacher.
- Your job is to teach the other participant a list of word pairs (e.g., *blue–box*, *nice–day*) and then test him on the list.
- The experimenter instructs you to deliver an electric shock to the learner whenever he makes a mistake because the purpose of the study is to examine the effects of punishment on learning.



- The learner makes many mistakes.
- The experimenter instructs you to keep shocking the learner increasing the level by flicking the next switch.

If you hesitate –

The experimenter instructs you to go on



Learner's Protests

75 volts: Ugh!

90 volts: Ugh!

105 volts: Ugh! (louder)

120 volts: Ugh! Hey this really hurts.

135 volts: Ugh!!

150 volts: Ugh!!! Experimenter! That's all. Get me out of here. I told you I had heart trouble. My heart's starting to bother me now. Get me out of here, please. My heart's starting to bother me. I refuse to go on. Let me out.

165 volts: Ugh! Let me out! (shouting)

180 volts: Ugh! I can't stand the pain. Let me out of here! (shouting)

195 volts: Ugh! Let me out of here. Let me out of here. My heart's bothering me Let me out of here! You have no right to keep me here! Let me out! Let me out of here! Let me out! Let me out of here! My heart's bothering me Let me out! Let me out!

210 volts: Ugh! Experimenter! Get me out of here. I've had enough. I won't be in the experiment any more.

225 volts: Ugh!

240 volts: Ugh!

255 volts: Ugh! Get me out of here.

270 volts: Ugh! (Agonized scream) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Do you hear? Let me out.

285 volts: Ugh! (Agonized scream)

300 volts: Ugh! (Agonized scream) I absolutely refuse to answer any more. Get me out of here. You can't hold me here. Get me out. Get me out of here.

315 volts: Ugh! (Intensely agonized scream) I told you I refuse to answer. I'm no longer part of this experiment.

330 volts: Ugh! (Intense and prolonged agonized scream) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. My heart's bothering me. Let me out, I tell you.

(Hysterically) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. You have no right to hold me here. Let me out! Let me out of here! Let me out!

Instructions used by the Experimenter to Achieve Obedience

Prod 1: Please continue or Please go on.

Prod 2: The experiment requires that you continue.

Prod 3: It is absolutely essential that you continue.

Prod 4: You have no other choice; you must go on.

The prods were always made in sequence: Only if prod1 were found unsuccessful could prod2 be used. If the subject refused to obey the experiment after prod4, the experiment was terminated. The experimenter's tone of voice was at all times firm but not impolite. The sequence was begun anew on each occasion that the subject balked or showed reluctance to follow orders.

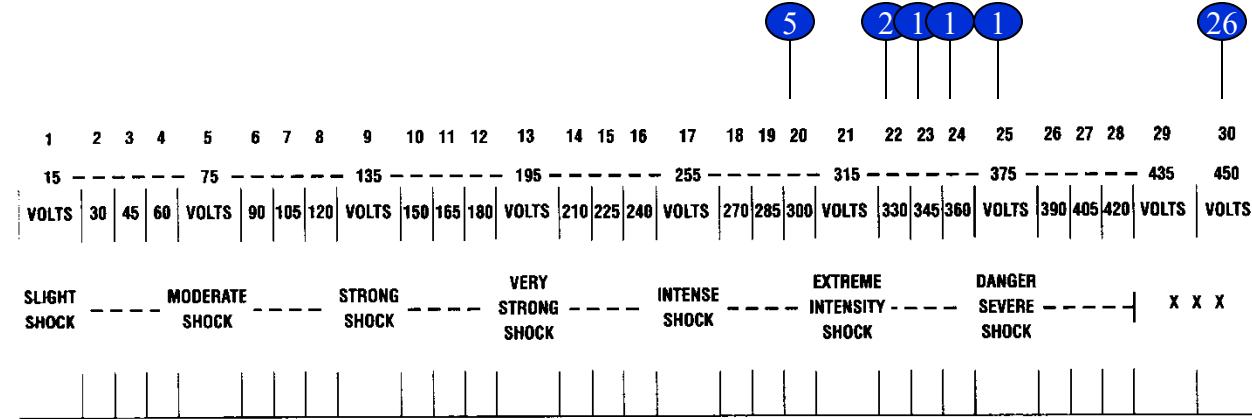
Special prods. If the subject asked whether the learner was likely to suffer permanent physical injury the experimenter said:

Although the shocks may be painful, there is no permanent tissue damage, so please go on. [Followed by prods 2, 3, and 4, if necessary.]

If the subject said that the learner did not want to go on, the experimenter replied: Whether the learner likes it or not, you must go on until he has learned all the word pairs correctly. So please go on. [Followed by prods 2, 3, and 4, if necessary.]

OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY

- What would you do?
- Psychology majors at Yale University estimated that only about 1% of the population would go to this extreme.
- A sample of middle-class adults and a panel of psychiatrists made similar predictions.
- And how many people do you think would continue to obey the experimenter and increase the levels of shock until they had delivered the maximum amount, 450 volts?

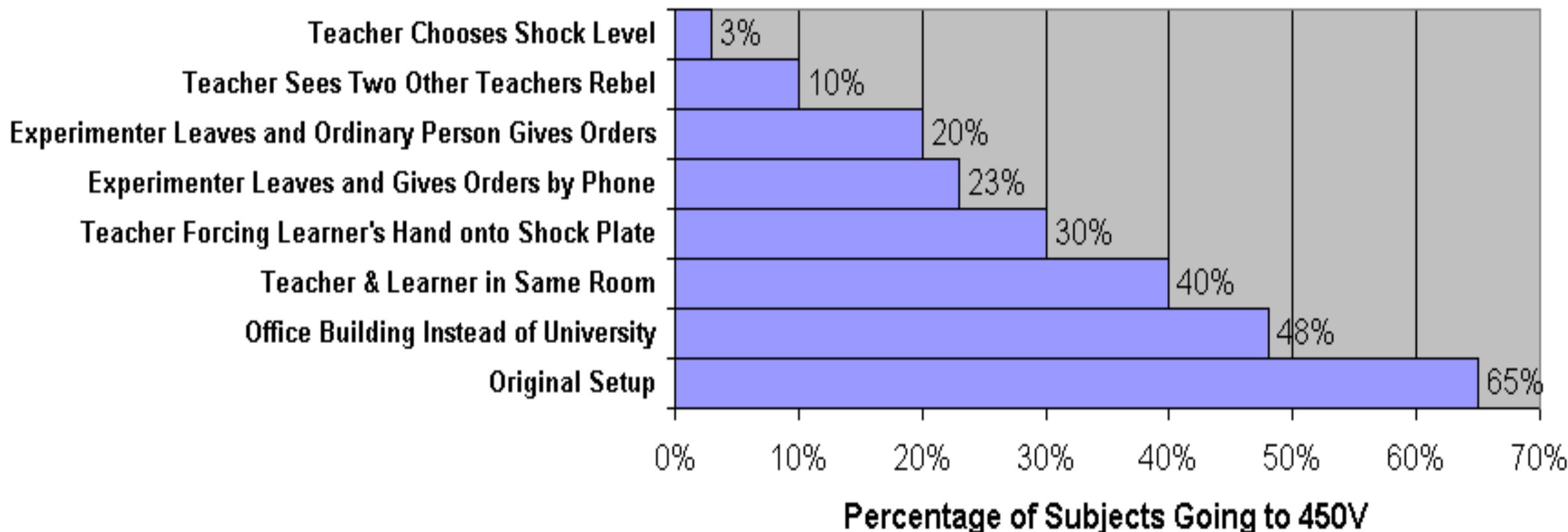


Ordinary people and 'experts' predict that virtually no-one will go all the way to 450v. In the 'baseline condition' 26 out of 40 people (65%) go all the way

A full 80 percent of the participants continued giving the shocks even after the learner cried out seemingly in pain, saying his heart was bothering him.

Note: No learners were harmed in the making of Milgram's experiments. The learner was a confederate working with Milgram, only pretending to get shocked.

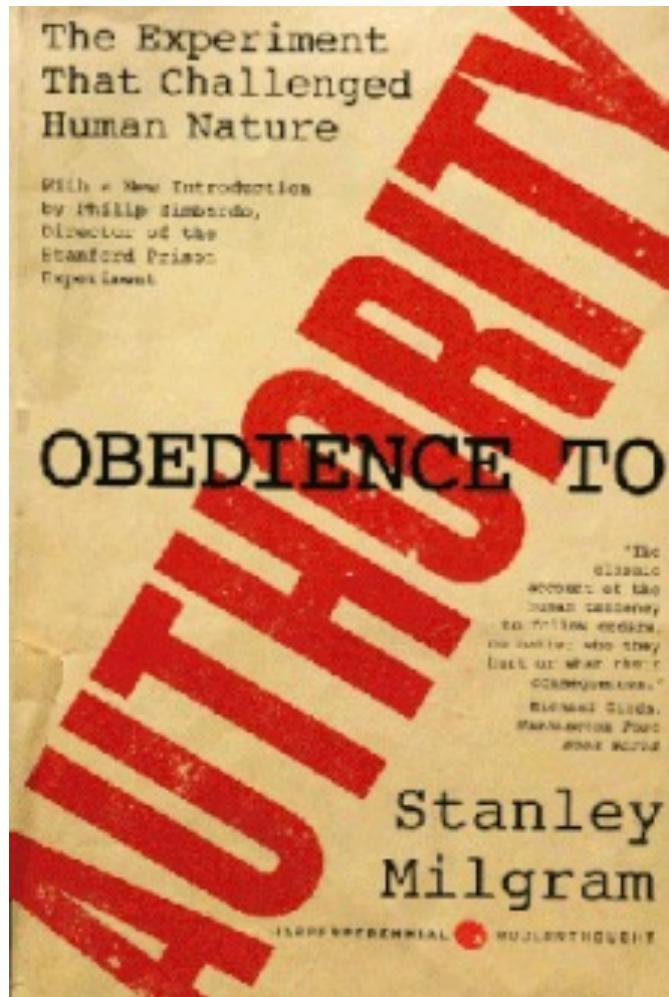
Variations on Milgram's Experiment





*Dr. Thomas Blass
Professor of Social Psychology
(Milgram's Biographer)*

Obedience to Authority



- Why does destructive obedience occur?

Milgram's Agentic state theory – people allow others to direct their actions and then pass off the responsibility for the consequences to the person giving the orders. In other words, they act as agents for another person's will.

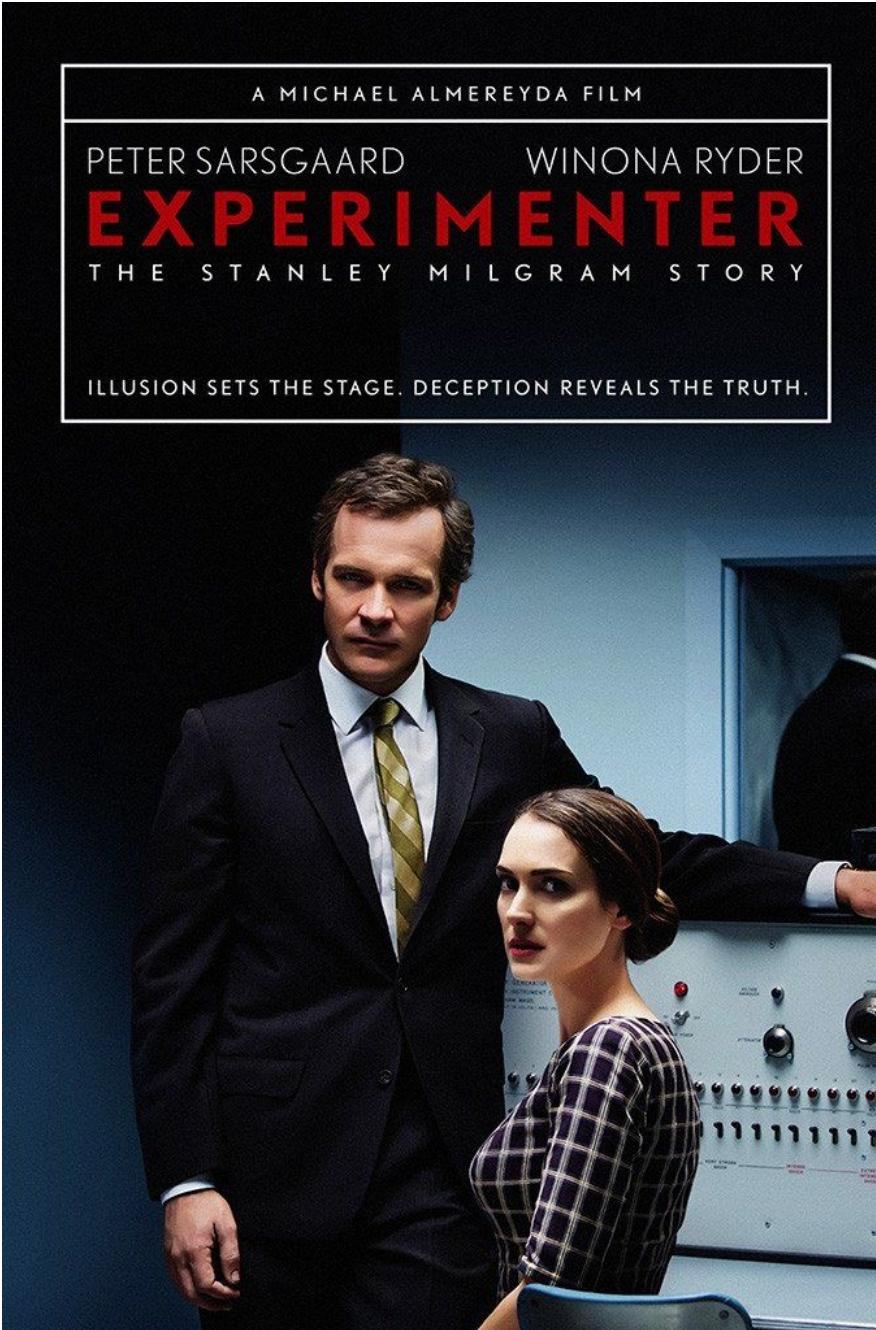


Eichmann was characterized by “sheer thoughtlessness”

“the lesson of the fearsome, word and thought defying ***banality of evil***”



“The ordinary person who shocked the victim did so out of a sense of obligation - a conception of his duties as a subject - and not from any peculiarly aggressive tendencies”



Discussion

- Each person is unique, and ultimately each of us makes choices about how we will and will not act.
- But decades of research on conformity and obedience make it clear that we live in a social world and that—for better or worse—much of what we do is a reflection of the people we encounter.

Further Reading

- Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., Millard, K., & Birney, M. (2014). Just obeying orders? New Scientist, No. 2986 (September 13), 28-31.
<http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/includes/site/files/files/2014%20NS%20Milgram.pdf>
- More resources and interesting material available here:
<http://www.bbcprisonstudy.org/resources.php?p=138>

End