3 types of social influence

• Conformity
• Compliance
• Obedience
Conformity

- Conformity: Freely doing what others are doing.
• Conformity has important survival implications.
Asch’s (1955) Conformity Study

Asch’s Line Judgement Task

Subjects in turn pick A, B, or C as same length as X
Asch’s (1955) Conformity Study

Asch’s Results:
- Ss who yield to majority on at least one trial: 75%
- Ss who yielded on more than half of trials: 50%
- Ss who never conformed: 25%
- Trials on which Ss yield to majority: 37%
Sherif (1936)

How much is this point of light moving?
When alone, subjects' estimates varied widely. Participating in a group, they adjusted their estimates to conform to the emerging norm.
People conform more when:

- Situation is ambiguous.
- They are made to feel incompetent or insecure.
- Group has at least 3 people.
- Group is unanimous.
- They admire the group’s status or attractiveness.
- They have no prior commitment to any response.
- Their culture strongly encourages respect for group standards (e.g., collectivistic cultures).
Compliance

• Doing what someone (not in authority) asks you to do.

• This is what salespeople try to increase!
Foot-in-the-door
• Why are we more likely to comply with bigger requests when followed by small requests?
• We’ve already put ourselves in a position where we are helping person. It’s hard to say no once you’ve already said yes to something previously.
Door-in-the-face

• What if we make a big request first, then follow it up with a small request?

• Big request: be a Big Brother or Sister at a detention center for two hours per week for two years.

• Small request: chaperone a group of kids to the zoo.
Reciprocity

• Norm of reciprocity: Universal rule of “if you do something for me, I’ll do something for you.”
  – Very powerful
  – Applies even when first favor is uninvited
  – Can create unequal exchanges
Obedience
Stanley Milgram--Obedience

“Each individual possesses a conscience which to a greater or lesser degree serves to restrain the unimpeded flow of impulses destructive to others. But when he merges his person into an organizational structure, a new creature replaces autonomous man, unhindered by the limitations of individual morality, freed of humane inhibition, mindful only of the sanctions of authority.”

"The social psychology of this century reveals a major lesson: often it is not so much the kind of person a man is as the kind of situation in which he finds himself that determines how he will act."
Layout of Study
Milgram’s Obedience Studies

Teacher

Learner
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voltage</th>
<th>Confederate Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>grunts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>shouts in pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>says that he refuses to continue with this experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>blood-curdling screams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>refuses to answer, mumbles something about a heart condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+330</td>
<td>silence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Milgram’s Obedience Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>objection</th>
<th>milgram's response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first</td>
<td>&quot;He's fine. go on.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second</td>
<td>&quot;The experiment requires you to go on.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third</td>
<td>&quot;It is absolutely essential to go on.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fourth</td>
<td>&quot;You have no choice. You must go on.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How many went all the way?

• A panel of medical doctors were asked this by Milgram at a medical conference at Yale. Their response...

ABOUT 4% WOULD GO ALL THE WAY

----

ABOUT 96% WOULD STOP AT SOME POINT
Milgram’s Obedience Studies

Percentage of subjects who obeyed experimenter

The majority of subjects continued to obey to the end

Shock levels in volts

Slight (15–60)
Moderate (75–120)
Strong (135–180)
Very strong (195–240)
Intense (255–300)
Extreme intensity (315–360)
Danger: severe (375–420)
XXX (435–450)
“I observed a mature and initially poised businessman enter the laboratory smiling and confident. Within 20 minutes he was reduced to a twitching, stuttering wreck, who was rapidly approaching nervous collapse. He constantly pulled on his ear lobe, and twisted his hands. At one point he pushed his fist into his forehead and muttered ‘Oh God, lets stop it’. And yet he continued to respond to every word of the experimenter, and obeyed to the end.”
Milgram’s Obedience Studies

• What factors led to the highest obedience?
  – The experimenter was close to the teacher.
  – The experimenter was supported by a prestigious institution (e.g., Yale U.).
  – The learner was placed some distance (either physically or psychologically) from the teacher.
  – The teachers did not witness anyone else defying the orders to continue.

Teacher is close to learner (has to place hand on the shocker). Not good for obedience.
Milgram’s Obedience Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>% Showing Obedience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial study</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-prestige setting</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher, learner together</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher touches learner</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher, Exp apart</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professor in charge</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two confederates rebel</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why do we yield to social influence?

• To make proper and correct decisions

• To gain social approval
Making good decisions

• Reliance upon authority figures to tell us what’s the right way and what’s the wrong to act.

• “Expert Power”
  – Capacity to influence people simply because of their presumed wisdom or knowledge.
  – Doctor study
Making good decisions

• Social validation:
  – If everyone else is doing something, it must be the right thing to do...therefore I should do it too.

• Milgram’s staring study
• Singapore bank crisis
Making good decisions

• What makes people look to others to determine whether they are making good decisions?

• Uncertainty

• Consensus and similarity
Gaining social approval

• “It’s easier to get along if you go along.”

• Schacter’s group studies:
  – Newly formed discussion groups.
  – Confederate who actively disagreed with group consensus.

  – 3 things typically happened next…
Gaining social approval

• Group members bombarded dissenter with statement trying to convince him to adopt their opinion. Heated arguments.
• Group members ignored deviate, treated with disdain.
• Group members outright rejected deviate—sometimes voting to eject him from group.
• If deviate fell back into line, however, he was quickly embraced by group members and accepted as normal member of group.

“The unforgivable sin is not to be different, but to stay different.”
Reactance Theory

- Jack Brehm: When people feel that their freedom to choose an action is threatened, they experience ‘reactance’.
- Motivates them to perform the threatened behavior, thus proving that their free will has not been compromised.

  *If you want someone to do something, don’t make it sound like you’re ordering them to do it!*
Examples of reactance

- Underage drinking laws
  - 75% of students >21 drink; 15% drink heavily
  - 81% of students <21 drink; 24% drink heavily
- “War on Drugs”
  - 37% of Americans have used marijuana compared to 17% of Dutch.
  - 1.4% of American have used heroin compared to 0.4% of Dutch.
- Romeo & Juliet effect
  - Lovers with parents who more strongly disapproved of their relationships more seriously considered marriage.
- Censorship
  - Manipulated advertisement for book shown to undergrads <21: "a book for adults only, restricted to those 21 and over" produced greater desire to read book.
- Banning things
  - UNC undergrads preferred co-ed dorms after speech delivered about why coed dorms should be banned.
- Parking lot “sharks”