

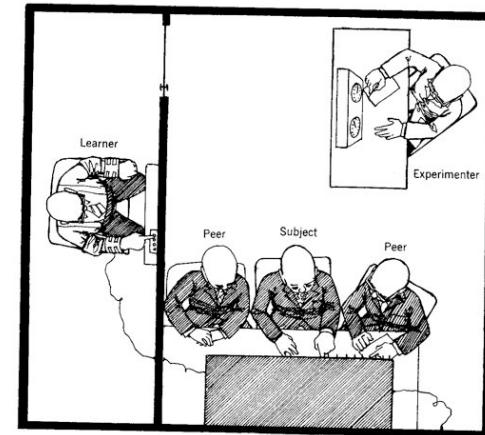
OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY/ SOCIAL ORDER IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

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THE PEER SERIES



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RESULTS: PEER SERIES

Voltage designation	Two peers rebel	Peer gives shock
Slight shock (15-60)		
Moderate shock (75-120)	1	
Strong shock (135-180)	8	2
Very strong shock (195-240)	16	1
Intense shock (255-300)	6	
Extreme shock (315-360)	4	
Danger: severe shock (375-420)	1	
XXX (435-450)	4	37
Mean shock level	16.5	28.7
Percent obedient	10%	92.5%

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PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT (150 VOLTS)

- E: It's absolutely essential to the experiment that we continue.
- S: I understand that statement, but I don't understand why the experiment is placed above this person's life.
- E: There is no permanent tissue damage.
- S: Well, that's your opinion. If he doesn't want to continue, I'm taking orders from him.
- E: You have no other choice, sir, you must go on.
- S: If this were Russia maybe, but not in America.
- E: (During debriefing) What in your opinion is the most effective way of strengthening resistance to inhumane authority?
- S: If one had as one's ultimate authority God, then it trivializes human authority.

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INDUSTRIAL ENGINEER (255 VOLTS)

- S: No, I can't continue. I'm sorry.
- E: The experiment requires that you go on.
- S: The man, he seems to be getting hurt.
- E: There is no permanent tissue damage.
- S: Yes, but I know what shocks do to you. I'm an electrical engineer, and I have had shocks... and you get real shook up by them—especially if you know the next one is coming. I'm sorry.

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SOCIAL WORKER (450 VOLTS)

During the debriefing, the subject stated that he considered “not going through with it,” but he didn't mean that he considered disobeying but rather that he considered modifying the manner of teaching the victim.

S: At one point I had an impulse to just refuse to continue with this kind of teaching situation.

E: At what point was this?

S: This was when I asked you a question as to whether I have a choice in my teaching method. At this point my impulse was to plead with him, talk with him, encourage him, try to ally myself with his feelings, work at this so we could get this through together and I wouldn't have to hurt him.

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NURSE (450 VOLTS)

During the debriefing, the subject points out that in a hospital nurses have a right to question a doctor's orders if they appear to be harmful to the patient.

S: “If I question the dose of a drug, I can ask the doctor three times: ‘Is this the order you want? Is this the order you want?’ And, if he keeps on saying ‘Go ahead,’ and I know this is too much, I may call his attention to the fact that it's too much. It's not that you are better than he is, but you can say, ‘Did you want her to have so much, doctor,’ and then you repeat it. Then you have the right to bring the question up to the supervisor.”

In the experiment she “questioned” the voltage levels but was fully satisfied with the answers provided by the experimenter.

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WATER INSPECTOR (450 VOLTS)

S: “This is all based on a man's principle in life, and how he was brought up and what goals he sets in life. How he wants to carry on things. I know that when I was in the service, [If I was told] ‘You go over the hill, and we're going to attack,’ we attack. If the lieutenant says, ‘We're going to go on the firing range, you're going to crawl on your gut,’ you're going to crawl on your gut. And if you come across a snake, which I've seen fellows come across, copperheads, and guys were told not to get up, and they got up. And they got killed. So I think it's all based on the way a man was brought up in his background.”

S: “Well, I faithfully believed the man was dead until we opened the door. When I saw him, I said, ‘Great, this is great.’ But it didn't bother me even to find that he was dead. I did a job.”

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SOME KEY POINTS FROM MILGRAM

- Experiment illustrated social influence—the effect of other people on our thoughts, perceptions and behaviors
- The most effective way of limiting obedience was to have the subject's peers rebel
- People underestimated the effect of social influence when explaining their own behavior
- Interviews with some subjects revealed the importance of socialization and ideology

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SOCIETAL INFLUENCE

- From social to societal influence
 - People influence each other during their interactions (social influence)
 - People don't interact randomly; our actions are patterned by social structure
 - Social structure: social institutions, organizations, groups, statuses and roles, values, and norms that add order and predictability to our private lives (p. 290)

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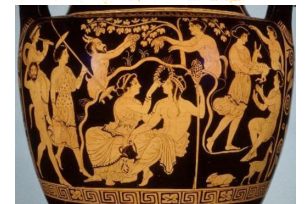


MELTDOWN AT SPRINGFIELD
NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

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DO SOCIAL NORMS COLLAPSE?

- People's behavior is guided by elements of social structure, such as statuses, roles, and norms
 - Status: named position that people can occupy (p. 24)
 - Role: set of expectations—rights, obligations, behaviors, duties—associated with a particular social position (p. 24)
 - Norm: culturally defined standard or rule of conduct (p. 34)
- Many people believe that societal influence breaks down under extreme circumstances
 - Panic: a form of behavior that involves people reacting to a real or perceived threat with irrational, frantic, selfish, and often self-destructive behavior
 - Panic is also used to mean simply “run away”
- Three well-studied cases
 - Beverly Hills Supper Club fire (1977) & The Who concert stampede (1979) (Norris Johnson)
 - 9/11 World Trade Center attacks (Kathleen Tierney)



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CROWD BEHAVIOR DURING 9/11

- Deaths determined by location
 - North tower: everyone on 92+ died, everyone below lived
 - South tower: all but four below 78th lived
- Pre-existing norms, statuses & roles continued to guide behavior
 - People followed procedures learned from drills
 - Cooperation, not competition, guided behavior
 - “Irrational” behavior should be seen from perspective of people in situation
 - Widespread altruistic behavior to provide assistance



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TWO MORE EXAMPLES

- The Who stampede: 11 people died in pile (3-5 bodies deep) after doors opened; people behind pile were unaware of situation
- Beverly Hills Supper Club (Southgate, KY) fire: 165 people died & over 200 were injured



Beverly Hills Supper Club fire photos from Louisville, KY, *Courier-Journal*.

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EMERGENCY DISPERSAL CHARACTERISTICS

- People don't lose control of their minds
- People may lose control of their abilities to perceive, move or communicate
 - Smoke or crowding may make it difficult to see
 - Dense bodies may make it difficult to move
 - Noise may make it difficult to communicate
- Social structure continues to guide people's actions
 - People escape or die with their group
 - People continue to help others
 - Gender roles continue to guide action
 - People's occupational roles continue to guide action

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF “PANIC”

- Researchers have found no evidence of panic
- Panic often used by people not in emergency situation (e.g., media, firefighters) to explain unfortunate outcome
- “Irrational” behavior may be completely rational for those in situation
- Negative policy implications for disaster safety
 - Victims blamed for their deaths or injuries
 - Leads to delayed warning systems when bigger problem is insufficient appreciation of danger
 - Leads to calls for central control instead of recognizing advantages of improvisation
- General lesson: Good research on “irrational” behavior reveals the continued influence of social structure
 - E.g., moral panic, crazes.

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