

Stanley milgram



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Stanley Milgram Social environment plays a very important role in our actions, decisions and generally in our life. We are greatly influenced by it, and often our susceptibility to social influence reflects our personal inclinations and features which are shown in different situations but in usual life cannot be seen because of general social moral standards. Psychologists and sociologists explore the problem of our susceptibility to social influence, and some results of their explorations often cause to deeply analyze human nature. One of such scientists was Stanley Milgram who had held an experiment. The aim of the experiment was to explore susceptibility to social influence in a particular situation which could show the features of our behaviour in this area. The respondents (" teachers") should switch on electric shocks of different voltage if " learners" (persons recruited by Milgram) made mistakes in their responses. The experiment showed that " 65% of his subjects, ordinary residents of New Haven, were willing to give apparently harmful electric shocks-up to 450 volts-to a pitifully protesting victim, simply because a scientific authority commanded them to" (Milgram Basics). So, there is a question: is it possible that an ordinary person (e. g. the teacher) will obey authority so blindly that they will harm another (e. g. the learner) As the experiment shows, it is rather possible, and this possibility is determined by our attitude to authority and the features of human nature. In the experiment the respondents were said that the experimenter was responsible for the punishment results, and " teachers" decided to punish the " learners" having taken into account this fact. But in addition to that, the " teachers" were less willing to punish in the following cases: when the experimenter communicated with them via telephone, and when the " teachers" should held the " learner's" hand on the shock plate.

And in spite of these facts it is possible to say that " The theory that only the most severe monsters on the sadistic fringe of society would submit to such cruelty is disclaimed" (The Milgram Experiment). In my opinion, such people are not really cruel, they are people who just live in certain circumstances which make them to obey authority, and people are inclined to follow different instructions and directions of authority participants: " Findings show that, 'two-thirds of this studies participants fall into the category of 'obedient' subjects, and that they represent ordinary people drawn from the working, managerial, and professional classes (Obedience to Authority)'" (The Milgram Experiment). So, the experiment shows that society and authority influences very much our activity and behaviour. But how has social influence been strong enough in the past to make people conform to falsehoods or capitulate to cruelty There are multiple examples of such influence in the past: Nazi dictatorship in Germany, the Soviet Union under the rule of Stalin, Cuba and North Korea today, and many others. The social and political propaganda in such countries was an essential part of ordinary life, and authority punished people for any display of disobedience. Authority's influence was felt in every part of social activity. So, obedience to authority became usual part of life, and people were ready to conform to falsehoods or capitulate to cruelty.

Sources

Milgram Basics. Dr. Thomas Blass Presents. Stanley Milgram. com.

(<http://www.stanleymilgram.com/milgram.php>)

The Milgram Experiment. A lesson in depravity, peer pressure, and the power of authority. (<http://www.new-life.net/milgram.htm>)

<https://assignbuster.com/stanley-milgram/>

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