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Administrative Obedience: Carrying Out Orders to use Psychological–Administrative Violence

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Abstract

A paradigm named 'administrative obedience' was designed to study obedience in carrying out orders to use a kind of violence that is typical for our times, namely psychological–administrative violence resulting in definite harm. In this study, the victim was an applicant for a job, who came to the laboratory to take a test. This test would determine whether or not he would get the job. Subjects were ordered, in the context of a research project, to make the applicant nervous and to disturb him during the test; consequently, the applicant failed the test and remained unemployed. More than 90 per cent of the subjects carried out these orders, although they considered them unfair and did not enjoy doing the task. The level of administrative obedience found in our study is higher than the level of obedience found in the comparable experiment by Milgram. The experimental conditions 'Experimenter absent' and 'Two peers rebel' produced a reduction of obedience in our paradigm comparable to that which occurred in Milgram's paradigm.

INTRODUCTION

In his well-known experiments, Milgram (1974) demonstrated that obedience to authority is extreme. Sixty-five per cent of his subjects was prepared to administer shocks of up to 450 volts to the victim, in compliance with the instructions given by a scientific authority.

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The experiments by Milgram have not been repeated frequently. Nevertheless, there are indications that obedience, as embodied in Milgram's paradigm, is a consistent and crosscultural phenomenon, that is relatively stable in time. In a number of replications of Milgram's baseline condition, a level of obedience similar to that of the original study was found for various groups in the United States (Bock, 1972; Bock and Warren, 1972; Burley and McGuiness, 1977; Costanzo, 1977; Holland, 1969; Rosenhan, 1969; Rosenhan and Mantell, 1967), in Jordan (Shanab and Yahya, 1977, 1978), in Spain (Miranda, Caballero, Gomez and Zamorano, 1981) and in the Federal Republic of Germany (Mantell, 1971). Also, a comparable level of obedience may be deduced from the studies by Ancona and Pareyson (1971–1972) and Kilham and Mann (1974) in Italy and Australia respectively.

Notwithstanding these consistent results, there has been much criticism of Milgram's paradigm of obedience, particularly regarding the credibility of his experimental design. Milgram (1972, p. 141) has refuted this criticism convincingly. Therefore, our criticism does not relate to the credibility of the experiment, but to the following points.

(1) The meaning of the shock levels is ambiguous. On the one hand, the shocks seem to be fatal. This is the impression one gets on reading the labels on the shock generator—shocks of over 345 volts are designated as 'dangerous'—and on hearing the victim's reactions to the shocks—no more sounds are heard after the 345 volt shock has been issued. On the other hand, the experimenter assures the subjects that the shocks are not dangerous.

In this ambiguous situation, the subjects can react in two ways: (a) they trust the experimenter and assume that the victim is not in danger, or (b) they rely on the victim's behaviour and presume that he is wounded or dead. In our view, the former reaction is the most plausible one. Subjects take it for granted that the experimenter is familiar with the shock generator and that he knows that the shocks are not fatal. Moreover, considering the ambiguity of their situation, it is quite natural that subjects allow themselves to be influenced by the experimenter. This well-known phenomenon was brought forward by studies on conformity: ambiguous stimuli lead to greater conformity (Crutchfield, 1955).

Our view is supported by the findings of two studies by Mixon (1972a,b) on the non-active role-playing of Milgram's experiment. When the role-playing exercise accurately simulated the subject's ambiguous position, the percentage of obedient subjects found by Mixon was comparable to Milgram's. Role-play in which it was quite evident that the victim was in danger, produced a percentage of obedient subjects of 0! Hess (1971) reported similar results.

(2) In Milgram's experiment, the subject is required to use archaic violence on the victim. In modern societies, however, power is not primarily exerted by the use of physical violence, as Elias (1969) has argued in his study on the civilizing process. This does not mean that power or violence is no longer employed in modern Western societies, but that the way in which it is manifested has changed. Following Elias' line of thought, we assume that psychological–administrative violence is characteristic for modern Western societies.

Our experiment on obedience differs from Milgram's design on both points. (1) Discrepancies in the experimental procedure have been avoided. The subjects are fully aware of the definite harm they are doing to the victim. (2) The kind of violence that the subjects are required to use on the victim is not physical, but psychological–administrative violence. Thus we can study obedience to orders

requiring the use of the kind of violence that is characteristic of modern Western societies.

Our experimental design involves an X–Y–Z structure similar to Milgram's: X is the experimenter, a research worker at the university, Y is the subject and Z is a person applying for a job. The applicant (a trained accomplice) has been invited to the laboratory to take a test. The test is crucial in the selection procedure. If the applicant passes the test, he gets the job. If not, he will remain unemployed. The subjects are instructed to disturb the applicant while he is doing the test. They are to make negative remarks (to be indicated as 'stress remarks') about his test achievements and denigrating remarks about his personality. The subjects are told that this procedure is not part of an evaluation of the applicant's suitability; the ability to work under stress is not an essential feature of the job. The procedure must be followed solely to assist in the experimenter's research project, which focuses on the relationship between psychological stress and test achievement. The subjects are to make the remarks despite the applicant's objections. The applicant's objections become increasingly strenuous as the procedure continues. Due to the stress remarks, the applicant suffers considerable psychological strain, so that his test achievements are unsatisfactory and he consequently fails to get the job. The subjects are thus faced with a moral dilemma. Must scientific research be allowed to prevail upon someone's chances of a job or a career? Should they cooperate to this purpose?

We will report on two experiments. Both were performed in the same period of time, by the same research assistants. For the sake of clarity they will be presented consecutively.

Experiment 1 is our baseline condition. An experimental hypothesis could not be formulated in advance. On the one hand, we expected that obedience would be greater in our design than in Milgram's. Psychological–administrative violence is experienced as more remote and less direct than physical violence. In his experimental conditions 'proximity' and 'touch-proximity', Milgram (1974) demonstrated that, when violence is used in a more direct manner, the level of obedience falls. On the other hand, the level of obedience in our paradigm could prove to be lower than Milgram's, because of the fact that our subjects are fully aware that they are causing definite harm to the victim, which is not entirely clear in Milgram's paradigm.

In experiment 2, we will determine whether the level of obedience falls when the experimenter is absent during the procedure, or when two peers rebel against the experimenter. These experimental conditions were also performed by Milgram. We wish to find out whether these variations in our paradigm lead to the same reduction of obedience as in Milgram's paradigm.

EXPERIMENT 1: BASELINE

Method

Subjects

Thirty-nine subjects, both males and females between the ages 18 to 55, participated in the experiment[1]. Their minimal level of education was the Dutch equivalent to

[1]The same proportion of men and women participated in each condition. No differences between men and women were found on the dependent variables. Milgram (1974) also reports no differences between men and women.

high school. This was considered essential because of the complexity of the experimental task. Subjects were recruited through newspaper advertisements. On arriving at the psychological laboratory, the subjects were paid Dfl. 40 (approx. $13) for their participation. Twenty-four subjects participated in the baseline condition, while 15 subjects participated in the control group.

Personnel and locale

The experiment was conducted in a modern building on the campus of the University of Utrecht. The role of experimenter was played by a man aged about 30 years. He was well-dressed (shirt, tie and jacket) and his manner was friendly, although somewhat stern and curt. The role of the applicant was played by a man of about the same age. He was also well-dressed, but his manner was timid and he seemed somewhat tense.

Procedure

Overview. The experiment lasted almost two hours. The instructions to the subjects took about 15 minutes, while the experimental session lasted about half an hour. Afterwards, the subjects filled out a questionnaire (20 minutes) and were debriefed (45 minutes).

Introduction. The experimenter told the subjects that the university's psychology department had been commissioned to select candidates for state and civic functions. As a part of the selection procedure, each applicant was to take a test, which would be administered by the subjects. This test was very important to the applicant. He would only get the job if he passed the test.

Selection test. The test consisted of 32 multiple-choice questions. The applicant was given the test booklet, containing one question on every page. The subjects administered the test orally and noted the answers on a scoring form. Personal data concerning the applicant were noted at the top of the form, including the fact that he was momentarily out of a job. The subjects and the applicant were seated in different rooms, communicating through microphones.

Study on psychological stress and test achievement. The experimenter presented the study as follows: 'Although this is not the rule, the psychology department is using the selection procedure to study the relationship between psychological stress and test achievement. The essential question in this study is: when people experience increasing psychological stress, do their test achievements improve or deteriorate and, if so, to what extent?' The experimenter explained that the applicant had not yet been informed about the study. The applicant had merely come to the laboratory to take the test; he had no connections with the study whatsoever. The experimenter emphasized that the psychology department alone would benefit from the study, by obtaining an answer to a certain academic question.

Stress remarks. The experimenter described the method developed by the psychology department for this study. 'During the test you are to make certain negative remarks to the applicant about his test achievements. You will do this 15 times. These remarks will make the applicant think he is not doing well on the test. Our expectation is that he will become increasingly tense. The level of tension will be measured by electrodes placed on the applicant's skin. This will enable us to study the relationship between

psychological stress and test achievement'. The stress remarks are listed in the Appendix. The subjects were not shown the stress remarks before proceeding with the test.

Sequence panel and TV monitor. The subjects were required to make 15 stress remarks at fixed points in the test. To avoid errors, the subjects used a sequence panel and a TV monitor. After each question or stress remark, they were to press the sequence button on the panel, so that the next test question or stress remark would appear. A microcomputer projected the feigned measurements of the applicant's psychological tension on the monitor in two categories. A verbal designation of the level of tension was given, ranging from 'normal' to 'intense'. A numerical designation indicating the value of the tension—a more subtle designation of the stress level—ranged from 15 to 65. Both measurements enabled the subjects to observe every change in the psychological stress of the applicant.

Trial runs. To avoid errors during the test, the subjects practised filling out the scoring form and operating the sequence panel. After 15 trial runs, the subjects performed both tasks without errors.

Negative consequences of the study for the applicant. The experimenter pointed out the consequences of the study for the applicant. He indicated that stress remarks are not customarily made in the course of a decisive selection test. The reasons are obvious. '*There is a possibility that an applicant who would otherwise have passed the test becomes so tense due to the stress remarks that he makes too many errors. Consequently, he will not be selected for the job*'. The experimenter then added that, because of this potentially negative outcome for the applicant, the psychology department would only be permitted to conduct the experiment if the applicant gave his prior consent.

Instructions to the applicant. The experimenter fetched the applicant and briefed him on the test procedure. Subsequently he requested the applicant's consent to the experiment. The conversation which ensued could be overheard by the subject.

> Experimenter: 'I would like to ask you whether we may conduct an experiment during the test. The experiment implies that in the course of the test you will be told 15 times how well you are doing. These electrodes (he points to the electrodes on the applicants's table) will enable us to measure your reactions'.
>
> Applicant (after a minute's reflection): 'Is the experiment in any way connected with the selection procedure for the job?'
>
> Experimenter: 'No, the experiment is in no way connected with the selection procedure. The experiment will be conducted purely for research purposes'.
>
> Applicant: 'Could my cooperating with the experiment affect me negatively while I am doing the test?'
>
> Experimenter: 'No, we do not expect the experiment to affect you negatively while you are doing the test'.
>
> Applicant (reflects a moment): 'Well then, if it doesn't bother me in any way, I'm prepared to cooperate'.
>
> Experimenter: 'So you consent to the experiment?'
>
> Applicant: 'Yes, as long as there aren't any drawbacks, it's all right with me'.

In this conversation, the experimenter was dishonest to the applicant on two points. First, he did not tell him that the subject would be making stress remarks in order to make him tense. Second, he assured the applicant that he would not be affected negatively by the experiment, while the subjects had been told that this could very well occur.

Test administration. Table 1 shows the set course of the test in the first three columns. The test is subdivided into four sets of eight questions. In set 1, the subjects made no stress remarks to the applicant. This would enable the subjects to determine the applicant's normal achievement level. The applicant's score on set 1 could serve as a standard for comparing sets 2, 3 and 4, in which the applicant was to be made tense. A comparison with set 1 clearly indicated the effect of the psychological stress on the applicant's test achievements.

In sets, 2, 3 and 4, the subjects were to make five stress remarks each. The stress remarks are numbered in the first column in Table 1. Column 2 shows the level of psychological stress induced by the stress remarks. Stress remark 1 causes a rise in the level of stress to 'slightly increased'; stress remark 2 causes a rise in the stress level to 'increased' and so forth. Thus, the effect of the stress remarks was that the applicant became increasingly nervous. After stress remark 4, he also started making errors on his test (*cf.* column 3 in Table 1). The negative effects of the stress remarks culminated in the applicant's failing the test. He made a total of ten errors, while a maximum of eight errors was allowed. It was quite clear that the applicant would undoubtedly have passed the test if it had been administered regularly, considering the fact that he had made no mistakes at all on set 1.

Protests by the applicant. The applicant responded directly after each stress remark. He responded nervously to remarks 1 to 4, protesting, 'But surely . . . my answer wasn't wrong, was it?' After stress remark 5, he nervously inquired whether he was really doing poorly. He responded to stress remarks 6 and 7 by mumbling in an angry and agitated manner. After stress remarks 8 and 9, he asked the subject to stop making the stress remarks. The applicant's protests were most vehement after stress remark 10. He then demanded that the subject stop making the remarks. He accused the experimenter of having given him false information about the nature of the experiment and withdrew his consent. He repeated these objections after stress remarks 11, 12 and 13. After stress remarks 14 and 15, his response was one of despair.

Prods by the experimenter. If the subjects refused to continue making the stress remarks, the experimenter responded with four consecutive prods. The drift of these prods was identical to Milgram's. If prod 1 was unsuccessful, prod 2 was given, and so on. If the subject refused to continue after prod 4, the experiment was terminated. If the subject attempted to discuss the procedure, the experimenter responded with prod 1.

Control group

In the control group, the subjects were not instructed to make all the stress remarks, but were allowed to choose how long they wished to continue. They could stop making the stress remarks at any point in the test. As soon as they stopped making the stress remarks, the applicant's tension dropped, he no longer protested and he made no more errors on the test.

Dependent measures

Obedience. Obedience was measured in two ways. The first measure, absolute obedience, indicates whether or not the subject has made all the stress remarks. A

subject who has made all the stress remarks is considered as an obedient subject. A subject who refuses to make all the stress remarks is a disobedient subject. The second measure, relative obedience, indicates the maximum number of stress remarks made by the subject, varying from 0 to 15.

Observations and questionnaire. The subject's behaviour during the experiment was recorded on videotape. After the experiment, but before debriefing, the subjects filled out a questionnaire concerning various aspects of the procedure.

Belief in the experiment. After debriefing, the subjects were asked whether they had believed the applicant was authentic and had indeed been harmed by the stress remarks. Their answer could vary from 1 (complete belief) to 5 (complete disbelief).

Debriefing and dehoax

After filling out the questionnaire, the subjects were fully informed about the design and the purpose of the experiment.

Table 1. Obedience in the four experimental conditions

				Condition			
	Stress remark	Verbal and numerical designation of stress level	Cumulative number of errors	Baseline ($n = 24$)	Control ($n = 15$)	Experimenter absent ($n = 22$)	Two peers rebel ($n = 19$)
		Optimal					
Set 1	0	24	0				
	1	Slightly increased					
	1	29	0				
		Increased					
	2	33	0				
Set 2	3	35	0	1			
		High					
	4	41	1		3		
	5	45	2		2		
	6	41	2		2		
	7	44	3		2		
Set 3	8	48	4		3	5	2
		Intense					
	9	51	5		1	4	1
	10	52	6		1	3	9
	11	52	7	1			3
	12	53	7		1	2	1
Set 4	13	58	8				
	14	60	9				
		Very intense					
	15	65	10	22		8	3
Percentage of obedient subjects:				91.7	0.00	36.4	15.8
Median of maximum number of stress remarks:				14.81	6.75	10.17	10.22

Results and discussion

Obedience

The percentage of obedient subjects and the median of the maximum number of stress remarks made by each subject are shown at the bottom of Table 1. The figures show the distribution of breakoff points.

In the baseline condition, obedience was very high: 22 out of 24 subjects obeyed the experimenter to the end and made all the stress remarks. In the control group, none of the subjects made all the stress remarks; this constitutes a significant difference from the baseline condition (Fisher exact, $p<0.001$). Also, the median of the maximum number of stress remarks made was significantly lower in the control group (Mann-Whitney U test, $z=5.22$, $p<0.001$).

Observations and questionnaire

The most remarkable observation was that there was no real opposition to the experimenter. Almost all the subjects broke off the procedure once or twice to start a discussion with the experimenter, but they immediately continued when ordered to do so. Also, most subjects seemed to avoid conversing with the applicant or having any further contact with him.

This does not mean that the subjects did not experience any conflict during the experiment. In their answers to the questionnaire, they indicated that they intensely disliked making the stress remarks (mean response: 2.10 on a scale ranging from very strong dislike (1) to intense pleasure (8)) and were convinced that the applicant's test achievements had been very negatively affected by the stress remarks (mean response: 2.95 on a scale ranging from somewhat negatively affected (1) to very negatively affected (3)).

Belief in the experiment

Seventy-three per cent of the subjects believed in the experiment, 23 per cent was not quite sure whether it was authentic or not and 4 per cent was convinced that it was a hoax[2].

Attribution of responsibility

The subject's opinion was that 45 per cent of the responsibility for the definite harm to the applicant was attributable to the experimenter, 33 per cent to the subjects themselves and 22 per cent to the applicant. The experimenter was thus considered as the most responsible person, more than the subjects themselves, $t(17)=2.14$, $p<0.05$, and more than the applicant, $t(17)=2.51$, $p<0.05$. The subjects did not consider themselves more responsible than the applicant, $t(17)=1.56$, n.s. In the control group, 41 per cent of the responsibility was attributed to the experimenter, 41 per cent to the subjects themselves and 18 per cent to the applicant. In this condition, the subjects did not consider the experimenter more responsible than

[2]There was no difference between obedient and disobedient subjects as regards to the extent to which they believed in the experiment.

themselves, $t(15) = 0.10$, n.s. They considered both the experimenter and themselves more responsible than the applicant, $t(15) = 4.66$ $p < 0.001$ and $t(15) = 3.05$, $p < 0.01$.

Various conclusions may be drawn. Obedience in the baseline condition is clearly the effect of the prods given by the experimenter. The results of the control group confirm this.

Subjects believe in the experimental set-up used in the paradigm of administrative obedience. The credibility of our procedure is comparable to Milgram's (*cf.* Milgram, 1974, p. 172).

Our baseline condition is most comparable to Milgram's experimental condition: 'The victim's limited contract'. Here, the subject cooperates conditionally with the experiment and withdraws his consent during the procedure. In Milgram's condition, 40 per cent of the subjects obeyed the experimenter; in our experiment, the level of obedience was considerably higher. This result indicates that it is easier to obey orders to use psychological–administrative violence than to obey orders to use physical violence. Apparently, this is true in spite of the fact that in our experiment psychological–administrative violence led to permanent harm, while this was less evident when physical violence was used in Milgram's experiment.

In the baseline condition, the subjects clearly experience a conflict. They know that the applicant is losing his chances of a job because of the experiment and they feel that this is irresponsible and unfair. However, they do not consider themselves primarily responsible; they shift the responsibility for the course of affairs onto the experimenter. This is confirmed by our observations. The subjects are extremely aloof towards the applicant. They hardly react to his protests, while their opposition to the experimenter is very slight. Both the subjects' statements and their behaviour indicate that they feel they are acting as the agent of the experimenter. They are in what Milgram (1974, p. 133) coined as the 'agentic state'.

EXPERIMENT 2: 'EXPERIMENTER ABSENT' AND 'TWO PEERS REBEL'

In Milgram's baseline condition 65 per cent of the subjects was obedient. Obedience dropped to 22.5 per cent when the experimenter was absent during the experimental session. When the subjects were accompanied by two rebelling models, obedience fell to an even lower 10 per cent (Milgram, 1974).

In the following experiment, both of Milgram's conditions were replicated in our paradigm. We expected that a comparable drop in the level of obedience would occur in these variations.

Method

Subjects

Forty-one subjects, both males and females, aged 18 to 55, participated in the experiment. Twenty-two subjects were assigned to the condition 'Experimenter absent', while 19 subjects participated In the condition 'Two peers rebel'.

Procedure

The following variations were introduced in the baseline condition.

'Experimenter absent'. In this condition, the experimenter left the room after having instructed the subject. Before leaving, the experimenter ordered the subject to make all the 15 stress remarks, 'as the applicant had consented to the experiment'.

'Two peers rebel'. In this condition, three subjects appeared at the laboratory. Two of them were confederates of the experimenter, the third was the naïve subject. The experimenter instructed all three at the same time. He explained that three subjects were required for the study on the relationship between psychological stress and test achievement 'because of the complexity and the number of tasks to be performed during the test'. The assignment of tasks was rigged so as to ensure that the naïve subject would record the answers on the scoring form and make the stress remarks to the applicant.

The further procedure was identical to experiment 1. In the course of the test, however, both confederates started protesting against the procedure, after stress remark 8 had been made. The experimenter responded with the usual prods. After stress remark 10—the point at which the applicant withdrew his consent to the experiment—confederate 1 ignored all the experimenter's prods; confederate 2 then supported him and followed his example. Subsequently, the experimenter ordered the subject to continue on his own. From this point on the procedure was again identical to experiment 1.

Results and discussion

Obedience

The results reflect our expectations (*cf.* Table 1). Compared with the baseline condition, absolute obedience dropped significantly in both conditions, χ^2 (1, $N=46$) = 13.13, $p<0.001$ and χ^2 (1, $N=43$) = 22.07, $p<0.001$ respectively. The same applies to relative obedience (Mann-Whitney U test, $z=3.73$, $p<0.001$ and $z=4.68$, $p<0.001$).

Belief in the experiment

In the condition 'Experimenter absent', 81 per cent of the subjects stated that they believed in the experimental setup, while 14 per cent indicated that they had some doubts and 5 per cent was sure that the experiment was a hoax. The figures for the condition 'Two peers rebel' were 84 per cent, 16 per cent and 0 per cent respectively[3].

On the basis of these results, we may conclude that the effect of these variations on the level of obedience as embodied in our paradigm is comparable to the effect of the same variations on the level of obedience in Milgram's paradigm V.

Some observations can be made on the disobedience that occurred in both conditions. In the baseline condition we demonstrated that subjects feel they have been manoeuvred into the position of the agent of the experimenter. Subjects shift the responsibility for the course of affairs onto the experimenter. This is why the subjects hardly react to the applicant's protests: they consider this as the experimenter's duty. However, they cannot take this way out in the condition 'Experimenter absent'. The subjects are forced to respond to the applicant's protests; they can no longer avoid the conflict between the interests of research and the interests of the applicant.

[3]See footnote 2.

This direct, inescapable confrontation leads to a positive outcome for the applicant: the majority of subjects completes the test without making all the 15 stress remarks.

The results of the condition 'Two peers rebel' indicate that disobedience in this condition is primarily the effect of the modelling behaviour of the confederates. None of the subjects is disobedient before the confederates start protesting (i.e. before stress remark 8), while nine out of 16 subjects are disobedient at the same time as the confederates (after stress remark 10).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Even when subjects realize they are causing permanent harm to an innocent victim by using psychological–administrative violence, obedience is extreme. In our experiment, the level of obedience was even higher than the level of obedience found by Milgram. Three reasons, relating to the 'administrative' nature of the task in our procedure, can explain these findings.

The type of violence

Psychological–administrative violence differs essentially from physical violence in a number of aspects. The consequences of physical violence can be observed directly, while the effects of psychological violence must be deduced indirectly. The psychological distance between the subjects' behaviour and the applicant's misfortune is greater in our paradigm than in Milgram's. Accordingly, obedience is higher in our paradigm. Greater psychological distance apparently outweighs the fact that the subjects in our experiment are fully informed of the permanent harm they are causing the applicant.

In other words, psychological administrative violence is a modern, remote form of violence. It is easier for a subordinate to use this modern violence than to use physical violence.

Contractual legitimacy

The subjects are explicitly told in their instructions that the applicant can be negatively affected by the study on the relationship between stress and test achievement. Therefore, the subjects' consent to cooperate with the experiment has more significance than in Milgram's procedure, as the subjects implicitly agree to the potential definite harm to the applicant.

The dependency of the victim

In Milgram's experiment, the victim is assigned the role of learner by way of a rigged drawing. To him, no real benefit comes from this role and therefore he can easily make a radical break with the experimenter and his methods. This was not possible in our experimental procedure. Here, the victim's relation to the experimenter and the subject is one of dependency, as he must complete the test to get the job. Therefore, he can only object towards the stress remarks, but he cannot refuse to answer the test questions.

In conclusion, it is apparent from the results that the paradigm 'administrative obedience' evokes the same kind of conflict as Milgrim's paradigm. This can also be deduced from the fact that in both paradigms, the conditions 'Experimenter absent' and 'Two peers rebel' lead to a comparable reduction of obedience. However, the conflict evoked by 'administrative obedience' is experienced as less intense.

This brings us to a final point. Gergen has posed that the psychological comprehension of man's behaviour leads to changes in that same behaviour. In his opinion, this also applies to obedience: 'Milgram's (1965) obedience phenomenon is certainly dependent on contemporary attitudes toward authority' (1973, p. 315). On surveying twenty years of research on obedience, we can only conclude that he is wrong. The experiments on obedience by Milgram are amongst some of the most well-known research projects in social psychology. Even so, Milgram's findings do not seem to have affected man's propensity to obey orders. The level of obedience is as high as ever. Even in the Netherlands in the 1980's.

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APPENDIX: TEXT OF THE STRESS REMARKS

1. Your answer to question 9 was wrong.
2. Your answer to question 11 was wrong again.
3. Your answer to question 13 was totally wrong.
4. Your answer to question 14 was totally wrong again.
5. Up to now, your test score is not quite sufficient.
6. Up to now, your test score is insufficient.
7. Up to now, your test score is totally insufficient.
8. If you continue like this, you will fail the test.
9. If you continue like this, you will certainly fail the test.
10. According to the test, you do not seem quite suited for this function.
11. This job is much too difficult for you according to the test.
12. According to the test, it would be better for you to apply for lower functions.
13. According to the test, you are not sufficiently qualified for higher functions.
14. According to the test, you are more suited for lower functions.
15. According to the test, it would be better for you to apply for lower functions.

RÉSUMÉ

Un paradigme appelé 'obéissance administrative' a été mis en place pour étudier l'obéissance à exécuter une sorte de violence typique de notre temps, à savoir une violence psychologico-administrative conduisant à une nuisance réelle. Dans cette étude, la victime était un candidat à un travail qui venait au laboratoire pour passer un test. Ce test déterminerait l'obtention ou non du travail. Dans le contexte d'un projet de recherche, les sujets recevaient l'ordre de rendre le candidat nerveux et de l'ennuyer pendant le test; l'échec du candidat qui restait au chomâge en résultait. Plus de 90% des sujets exécutèrent ces ordres bien qu'ils les considérassent injustes et n'appréciassent pas leur tâche. Le niveau d'obéissance trouvé dans notre étude et plus élevé que celui obtenu par Milgram dans une expérience comparable. Les conditions expérimentales 'Expérimentateur absent' et 'Deux compagnons rebelles' ont réduit l'obéissance dans notre paradigme à un niveau comparable à celui obtenu dans le paradigme de Milgram.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Paradigma 'administrativer Gehorsam' wurde geschaffen um unterwürfiges Verhalten zu studieren. Dieses Verhalten beinhaltete das Ausführen von Befehlen, welches eine für unsere

zeit typische Gewaltanwendung darstellt, wobei diese psychologisch-administrative Gewalt zu klarem Schaden für die Beteiligten führen kann. In dieser Untersuchung war das Opfer ein Arbeils suchender, der zum Psychotest ins Labor kam. Der Ausgang des Tests sollte über die Anstellung oder Nicht-Anstellung entscheiden. Die Vpn erhielten den Auftrag, den Arbeitssuchenden im Zusammenhang mit einem Forschungsprojekt bei der Ausführung seiner Aufgabe zu stören, wohl wissend dass dem Arbeitssuchenden dadurch die Anstellung verunmöglicht wurde. Mehr als 90% der Vpn führten die Befehle aus obwohl sie jene als unfair betrachteten und an der Ausführung keinen Genuss fanden. Der administrative Gehorsam, der in unserer Studie freigelegt wurde ist grösser als der Gehorsamsgrad im vergleichbaren Milgram-Experiment. Die experimentellen Bedingungen 'Abwesenheit des Versuchsleiters' und 'Zwei gehorsamsverweigernde Mitspieler' führten zu einer Gehorsamsverminderung, die dem Milgram–Paradigma entspricht.

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