**Social Influence: Implications of social influence research on social change.**

There are 2 ways of looking at this:

1. How **MIGHT** we use the findings from social influence research to help us bring about positive social change?
2. What psychological research is there about the types of social influence that have **REALLY** brought about social change?

**Topic 1.**

You **must** be able to identify factors form research that might bring about positive social change.

You **should** outline and evaluate the effectiveness using research and real life examples.

You **could** draw a conclusion to state whether obedience and conformity research are effective in bringing about social change.

**A01**

The findings from Milgram’s obedience study and the variations suggest to us that ANYone can be persuaded to blindly obey an unjust order - if the situational factors are ‘right’.

* **A.** People will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, so we need to ensure that the person in charge isn’t evil, because people will blindly obey him/her and end up doing bad things. One way to do this is to ensure we have a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (not a dictatorship).
* **B.** When \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were removed, obedience levels \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, suggesting that we should make criminals aware of the harm and pain they have caused their victims so \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**C.** We could use the findings from social influence research to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (perhaps with programmes in schools that teach students about the research findings, or programmes based on Zimbardo’s 10 steps) - if they are aware that the situation might influence them to do bad things (because they’re obeying an unjust order or conforming to a badly behaved majority), then maybe this will \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the pressure. This is the ‘enlightenment effect’ - if people know why they’re behaving badly, they will be able to stop behaving badly.

**A02**

Milgram’s variations show this to be true - when the situation changed, so too did the obedience levels.

There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_examples of this e.g., the holocaust, so-called ‘\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the Bosnian War in the 1990s. The German people and the Serbs couldn’t all have been wicked people - it’s likely they were ‘\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (because the orders were given by someone with legitimate authority, or because they were acting agentically).

It is well known that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rates are very high in convicted criminals, which suggests that maybe evil deeds are the result of disposition (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) rather than situation after all.

R\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ replications of Milgram’s obedience study show that obedience levels are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - suggesting that the ‘\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ has not happened - i.e., even though we know about the findings of the original study, we haven’t learned the lessons from it.

And - Blass (2000) found \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between the time of obedience studies (and the publication of findings) and obedience levels - also suggesting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What psychological research\* is there about the types of social influence that have **REALLY** brought about social change?

\* remember!! – ‘research’ means theory and/or studies

**Topic 2.**

You **must** be able to identify that minority influence leads to social change.

You **should** be able to explain theories and evaluate using research and real life examples.

You **could** draw a conclusion to state whether social influence has brought about social change.

**A01**

THEORY - it stands to reason that majority influence (the way the majority is behaving) WON’T ever bring about social change because if we just go along with what the majority is doing, nothing will ever change.

Another type of social influence, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ INFLUENCE, is far more likely to bring about social change - because when one person (or a small minority) starts to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the majority, it makes some of the majority start to THINK about what they’re doing and how it might be wrong. Once people start to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ whether their current behaviour is ‘right’, then they are open to changing it and slowly they start to change their behaviour:

**Research: 12 Angry Men**

1. THE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* The majority is doing X because they have always done X; one person (the minority) starts to do Y; the majority start to question whether Y might be better than X; one or two of the majority change their behaviour to Y (having decided that it’s better than X); a few more of the majority see the first few change to Y, and follow suit; slowly, the rest of the majority change to Y; eventually everyone is doing Y - which equates to SOCIAL CHANGE.

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The majority is doing X because they have always done X; one person (the minority) starts to do Y; a few of the majority hear about Y and start to talk about and consider whether it’s a better option than X; they decide to do Y - but no one remembers where the idea for doing Y came from; slowly the rest of the majority change to Y; eventually everyone is doing Y - which equates to SOCIAL CHANGE.

**A02**

There are plenty of examples in history of a minority that has behaved in a very different way to the majority, eventually resulting in social change:

e.g.,

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - she sat on a bus in a seat designated for a white person (Y) when the majority believed that this was wrong because of the practice of segregation (X). This is a well documented part of the process of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - suggesting that it was Rosa’s ATYPICAL behaviour that made the majority start to question whether their current behaviour was ‘right’.

But \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ minorities are effective in bringing about social change. Moscovici found that two crucial factors in an effective minority are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (sticking to their convictions and reiterating the same message) see Moscovici’s ‘blue/green slide’ study and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (not arrogant and inflexible).

This is supported in real life examples by historical figures such as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - both of whom instigated social change, and both of whom campaigned for long periods of time, with the same underlying message (consistency) and who were both known for their modesty and willingness to listen to alternative viewpoints (not dogmatic).

Conclusion:

**Eye on the exam**

**Past Paper Questions**

**Jan ‘09**

What are the implications for social change of research into social influence? (6 marks)

**Jan ’10.**

Describe how social influence research has contributed to our understanding of social change.

(6 marks)

**June ’10 Question8**

For many years, smoking in public places such as trains, pubs and restaurants was quite acceptable. People could smoke wherever they wanted and non-smokers had to put up with smoky atmospheres. However, in 2007, the Government finally introduced a law banning smoking in public places and those who smoke are limited in where they can smoke.

Using your knowledge of the psychology of social change, explain how this social change has occurred. (4 marks)

**June’11. Question 8**

Mike and his grandfather were having a conversation about recycling. Mike explained that he always puts empty cans and plastic bottles in one box and newspapers and cardboard in another box and that his mum takes these to be recycled once a week.

His grandfather said that when he was Mike’s age, people did not recycle. Mike said that everyone in his street recycled and that they have a big box at school especially for recycling.

Using your knowledge of the psychology of social change, explain why recycling is now behaviour carried out by a majority of people in this country. (6 marks)