REACHING A VERDICT

Stages & Influences on Decision Making

- Majority Influence
- Minority Influence
Reaching a Verdict

• Jury decision-making difficult to research as takes place behind closed doors & jury is sworn to secrecy
• What do you think influences decision making?
  - psychological (cognitive) processes
  - size of jury
  - leadership factors
  - gender / ethnicity
  - individual differences
• Hastie et al (1983) examine stages of jury deliberation
STAGES IN JURY DECISION MAKING

- Pennington & Hastie (1988): Three stages in decision-making:
  1. Narrative story organisation (gained from info. from trial, schemas, expectations)
  2. Learning Verdict definitions (end of trial categories)
  3. Making a decision (matching story with verdict category)
  4. Argue a case to achieve a verdict (jury deliberation)
STAGES IN DECISION MAKING

• Hastie et al (1983): Stages & influences on decision-making

• Orientation Period:
  - Relaxed & open discussion
  - Agenda set
  - Questions raised & explored

• Open Confrontation:
  - Fierce debate
  - Explore different interpretations
  - Pressure on minority to conform / group decision

• Reconciliation:
  - Attempts to smooth over conflict
  - Tension released through humour
Reaching a Verdict: Majority influence

- **Key Study**: Asch (1955): The Power of Majority Influence & Conformity
- **Aim**: To investigate the effects of conformity to a majority when the task is unambiguous
- **Method**: Laboratory experiment
- **Participants**: P sat with group of other ‘participants’ (stooges) & shown picture of lines. P asked to give answer to question to which stooges already clearly given wrong answer.
- ‘Which of 3 lines (A, B, or C) matches X?’
Key Study: Asch (1955): The Power of Majority Influence & Conformity

• **Results:**
  - Ps conformed in a approx 33% of trials
  - If one stooge disrupts conformity then falls to 5%
  - Majorities bigger than 3 make little difference to effect

[Image of a group of people]

• **Conclusions:** Strong tendencies to conform to group (belonging, being ‘right’)
  - Jury task more complex but research shows clear majority influence (esp. if expressed early)
Reaching a Verdict: Minority Influence

- What factors may cause others to conform to a minority view?

- **Moscovici (1985):** consistency of minority view very persuasive

- Other factors: **autonomy, locus of control**

- **Key Study:** Nemeth & Wachtler: Influence of perceived autonomy on minority influence

- **Aim:** To investigate influence of autonomy & consistency

- Method: Laboratory experiment (mock trial)

- Participants: Adult students (groups of five)
Nemeth & Wachtler: Influence of perceived autonomy on minority influence

• **Procedure**: Ps put in groups of 5 (including one stooge/confederate) to deliberate on amount of compensation due to victim of injury.

• Ps make individual verdict then go to another room with rectangular table

• Half group - Ps choose seat (stooge at head)

• Half group - Experimenter chooses seats

• Deliberation: stooge consistently adopts deviant position
Nemeth & Wachtler: Influence of perceived autonomy on minority influence

- **Results:**
  - Stooge influences decision when he is consistent & when perceived as autonomous (chosen own seat)
  - Little influence when seated by experimenter
  - Sitting at head of table: more consistent & confident
- **Conclusion:**
  - Minority influence is possible
  - Repercussions for jury room where seated around long table