Social roles
The ‘parts’ of people play as members of various social groups. Everyday eg’s = parent, child, teacher. These are accompanied by expectations we and others have of what is appropriate in each role.

Procedure
- Mock prison in Stanford uni
- Advertised for volunteers and selected the most ‘emotionally stable’ after psychological testing
- Randomly assigned role of prisoner/guard
- Had 16 rules to follow which were enforced by guards in uniform
- Guards told they had complete power over the prisoners

Findings
- Increased passivity of the prisoners in the face of increased brutality from the guards
- Study = abandoned after 6 days
- One prisoner released on 1st day due to symptoms of pathological disturbance
- Two more released on 4th day
- One prisoner went on hunger strike where guards attempted to force feed him
- The guards identified with more closely with their role.
- Their behaviour became more brutal and aggressive with some appearing to enjoy the power they had over the prisoners

Conclusion
Simulation revealed the power of the situation to influence people’s behaviour.
Research Support for consistency

- Moscovici et al.’s research showed that a consistent minority opinion had a greater effect than an inconsistent opinion.
- Wood et al.’s meta-analysis of 97 studies found that those who were perceived as consistent were particularly influential.

Artificial tasks

- The tasks were as artificial as Asch’s Lines study. Some involved identifying the colour of a slide.
- Research carried out if different from how it would be carried out in real life where it could result in a life changing decision (e.g. Jury or campaigns).
- Suggests minority message had been more deeply processed and had a more enduring effect.
= Supports the central argument surrounding minority influence.

Research Support for depth of analysis

- Martin et al. gave participants a message supporting a particular viewpoint and measured their support.
- One group heard a minority group agree.
- Other group heard a majority group agree.
- All then heard conflicting views and attitudes were measured again.
- Findings - People were less willing to change their opinions if they had listened to the minority.

Limited real-world application.
Majorities normally have more power than minorities, so can influence more people (e.g. political parties).
Research Support for Normative Influences

- **Nolat et al.** investigated if social influence processes could lead to a reduction in energy consumption in a community.
- Hung messages on doors in San Diego every week for a month.
- Group 1 - reduce energy usage.
- Group 2 (control) save energy.
- **Findings** - Decrease in energy consumption in group 1.
  = Conformity can lead to social change via NSI.

Minority Influence is only indirectly effective

- **Nemeth** – affects of minority influence are likely to be indirect and delayed.
- The majority are influenced by matters at hand not the central issue. They are delayed as the effects might not be seen for some time.
  = It’s effects are fragile and its role in social influence is limited.

Role of deeper processing

- **Mackie** – disagrees with Moscovici’s conversion explanation, she gives evidence that majority influence creates deeper processing when views differ.
- We like to think other people share the same views as us. When we find the majority disagrees without views we tend to think more about their arguments.
  = This questions the validity of Moscovici’s theory.