After reading Milgram’s 1963 study, one gains more knowledge on the topic of obedience, however, there are still some explanations missing from the discussion. One question one can be left with is “what makes a man able to shock another person at the level of 450 volts, a deadly level”? Burger et al. proposes several answers to this question, one of which is diffusion of responsibility (2011). Based on the results of Burger’s 2009 replication of the Milgram study, he found that those who felt personally responsible for what happened to the learner would more often leave the study before they reached 150 volts. On the other hand, those who did not feel any personal responsibility often followed the experiment through to the end. This is one explanation which should have been brought to light by Milgram in his studies, but that luckily Burger and his colleagues paid some attention to it.

Another answer can be the foot-in-the-door effect. Which in this case meant that pressing the first button made it easier to press the second, then the third, then the fourth, etc. Some researchers believe this effect is due to changes in our self-perception (i.e. Burger, 1999; Burger and Caldwell, 2003). What this means, is that after pressing the first button, the participant may view themselves as the kind of person who will take “orders” from the experimenter, and therefore continue the process (Burger et al. 2011).

A third, and final, answer this essay will look at is the four prods, or “orders”, which was used in both the original Milgram experiment from 1963 and Burgers replication from 2009. Burger et al. (2011) argues that the four prods which was used during the experiments were, in fact, not orders at all. This is based on the fact that none of the four prods used any words related to obedience. The four prods was used as an explanation for both the foot-in-the-door effect and the reactance effect. What Burger and his colleagues found, was that people who resisted one prod was more likely to resist the following three prods. This, according to burger et al, means that the use of subtle prods were more effective than the use of direct orders.

Two arguments, which counter the argument that Burger’s work does add much to our knowledge and understanding that we gained from Milgram’s study, are the fact that Burger only went to 150v whereas Milgram went all the way to 450 volts. The second is that participants in Burger’s 2009 study may, to some extent, have had previous knowledge of Milgram’s studies. Burger’s 2009 study only went from 15 to 150 volts, rather than the full 450 volts from Milgram’s original studies. This could mean that though the results were close to the same as Milgram’s from 1963, the findings are not applicable today, as they did not test up to the 450 voltage level of ethical reasons. As for the second counter argument, having