Social Psychology

The last lecture!!!

Social Attribution Theory

• Imagine you are driving and you get cut off… what do you think of the person that just cut you off?

• Are you more likely to:
  – Give them a break and believe that they didn’t mean to
  – Figure that they are a crappy driver and should be off the road- How DARE they!

Now….

• Imagine that you are that driver that cut someone off… (you know you’ve done it)

• Why did you do it?
  – Because you didn’t realize that you had to get over that quickly…
  – Because you are a crappy driver and shouldn’t be on the road

Fundamental Attribution Error

• More likely to attribute bad behavior of others to their personality and not to the situation

• This is the opposite of what we do for ourselves
  – More likely to say that the situation caused our own bad behavior

Interesting Quote

• “Calling 9/11 senseless, mindless, insane, or the work of madmen is wrong… it fails to adopt the perspective of the perpetrators, as an act with a clearly defined purpose that we must understand in order to challenge it most effectively.”
  – Phillip Zimbardo

Social Attitudes

• Attitude: feelings, often based on our beliefs, that predispose us to respond in a particular way to objects, people, and events

• Can attitudes affect actions?
  – Of course
  – If we believe that someone is mean, we may act differently towards them
“Drive Carefully” sign experiment

- “Would you display a large ugly sign in your front yard?”
  - 17% of people asked said yes
- “How about a small 3 inch tall sign?”
  - Nearly all agreed
  - Two weeks later, 76% of those 3 inch sign homes agreed to display that large ugly sign that most wouldn’t post originally

Actions affect attitudes too

- Foot in the door phenomenon
  - Tendency for people that agree to do something small to comply later with a larger request
  - Korean war vets
    - Through small steps eventually were manipulated into believing that communism is good and capitalism is bad

Stanford Prison Study

- Phillip Zimbardo
- Began with 24 arrests made in Northern California
  - Subjects had responded to an ad in the newspaper to participate in a role playing prison experiment
  - Fingerprints were taken
  - Miranda rights were read

Population

- 24 average, middle class, healthy males
- Had over 70 applicants
  - Able to pick an “average” sample

Once in prison

- Divided into 2 groups
  - Either a prisoner or a guard
- A prison was set up in the basement of the psychology building, with the help of a consultant
  - Installed an intercom system in each room to make announcements and to monitor what the prisoners were saying about each other

Prisoners

- Taken to the prison blindfolded
- Greeted by a warden once they arrived
  - Told just how serious their offenses were
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humiliation…</th>
<th>A few more things</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Prisoners were strip searched  
• Doused with a spray to eliminate lice  
• Forced to wear a dress with no underwear  
• Shackles on feet  
  – Not typical prison attire- wanted to remind them of where they were for the sake of the experiment | • Prisoners were assigned ID numbers and forced to wear caps that would minimize their individuality  
• No rules given about enforcement techniques  
  – Guards could make their own up |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take a moment…</th>
<th>First major meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Predict what is going to happen in this situation…  
• How will the experiment end? | • The prisoners were awakened at 2:30AM by the guards for a count  
  – This happened multiple times often at night  
• Brakes the prisoner’s morale  
• Punishment in the form of pushups |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>To the extreme?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Prisoners rebelled and took their hats off, removed their numbers, barricaded themselves in their cells  
• What would the guards do?  
  – Use force against force  
  – Forced the prisoners away from the doors with fire extinguishers | • The guards broke into each cell, stripped the prisoners naked, took the beds out, forced the ringleaders of the prisoner rebellion into solitary confinement, and generally began to harass and intimidate the prisoners. |
Psychological Tactics

• Guards decided to use psychological tactics instead of physical ones
  – One of the three cells was designated as a "privilege cell." The three prisoners least involved in the rebellion were given special privileges. They got their uniforms back, got their beds back, and were allowed to wash and brush their teeth. The others were not. Privileged prisoners also got to eat special food in the presence of the other prisoners who had temporarily lost the privilege of eating. The effect was to break the solidarity among prisoners.

Messing with them

• After a few days of the privilege cell, the guards randomly switched the prisoners around, which confused them
  – Prisoners began to suspect each other of being informers (to gain special privileges)

More

• Every aspect of the prisoners' behavior fell under the total and arbitrary control of the guards. Even going to the toilet became a privilege which a guard could grant or deny at his whim. Indeed, after the nightly 10:00 P.M. lights out "lock-up," prisoners were often forced to urinate or defecate in a bucket that was left in their cell. On occasion the guards would not allow prisoners to empty these buckets, and soon the prison began to smell of urine and feces -- further adding to the degrading quality of the environment.

Zimbardo’s Words

• Less than 36 hours into the experiment, Prisoner #8612 began suffering from acute emotional disturbance, disorganized thinking, uncontrollable crying, and rage. In spite of all of this, we had already come to think so much like prison authorities that we thought he was trying to "con" us -- to fool us into releasing him.

More

• At this point in the study, I invited a Catholic priest who had been a prison chaplain to evaluate how realistic our prison situation was, and the result was truly Kafkaesque. The chaplain interviewed each prisoner individually, and I watched in amazement as half the prisoners introduced themselves by number rather than name. After some small talk, he popped the key question: "Son, what are you doing to get out of here?" When the prisoners responded with puzzlement, he explained that the only way to get out of prison was with the help of a lawyer. He then volunteered to contact their parents to get legal aid if they wanted him to, and some of the prisoners accepted his offer.
  • The priest's visit further blurred the line between role-playing and reality. In daily life this man was a real priest, but he had learned to play a stereotyped, programmed role so well -- talking in a certain way, folding his hands in a prescribed manner -- that he seemed more like a movie version of a priest than a real priest, thereby adding to the uncertainty we were all feeling about where our roles ended and our personal identities began.

#819

• The only prisoner who did not want to speak to the priest was Prisoner #819, who was feeling sick, had refused to eat, and wanted to see a doctor rather than a priest. Eventually he was persuaded to come out of his cell and talk to the priest and superintendent so we could see what kind of a doctor he needed. While talking to us, he broke down and began to cry hysterically, just as had the other two boys we released earlier. I took the chain off his foot, the cap off his head, and told him to go and rest in a room that was adjacent to the prison yard. I said that I would get him some food and then take him to see a doctor. While I was doing this, one of the guards lined up the other prisoners and had them chant aloud: "Prisoner #819 is a bad prisoner. Because of what Prisoner #819 did, my cell is a mess, Mr. Correctional Officer." They shouted this statement in unison a dozen times.
#819: more

- As soon as I realized that #819 could hear the chanting, I raced back to the room where I had left him, and what I found was a boy sobbing uncontrollably while in the background his fellow prisoners were yelling that he was a bad prisoner. No longer was the chanting disorganized and full of fun, as it had been on the first day. Now it was marked by utter conformity and compliance, as if a single voice was saying, "#819 is bad." I suggested we leave, but he refused. Through his tears, he said he could not leave because the others had labeled him a bad prisoner. Even though he was feeling sick, he wanted to go back and prove he was not a bad prisoner.
- At that point I said, "Listen, you are not #819. You are [his name], and my name is Dr. Zimbardo. I am a psychologist, not a prison superintendent, and this is not a real prison. This is just an experiment, and those are students, not prisoners, just like you. Let's go."
- He stopped crying suddenly, looked up at me like a small child awakened from a nightmare, and replied, "Okay, let's go."

The end

- The study was planned to last 2 weeks
- It lasted 6 days
- Couldn't justify keeping it going
  - Parents were shocked and the emotional toll was obvious

How do we explain this behavior?

- Cognitive Dissonance Theory
  - People change their beliefs about something when they experience conflicts within
  - Guards must have been conflicted - change their beliefs to thinking they were right
  - Example: Iraq war was justified by...WMD
    - At the beginning of the war - 38% of Americans believed that the war would still be justified if no WMDs were found
    - Well, no WMDs were found; this causes dissonance because people still want to support the troops and no feel anti-American
    - So, they change their viewpoints
      - Within a year, 58% of Americans said they supported the war, even if no WMDs were found

How do we explain this behavior?

- Cognitive Dissonance Theory
  - People change their beliefs about something when they experience conflicts within
  - Guards must have been conflicted - change their beliefs to thinking they were right
  - Example: Iraq war was justified by...WMD
    - At the beginning of the war - 38% of Americans believed that the war would still be justified if no WMDs were found
    - Well, no WMDs were found; this causes dissonance because people still want to support the troops and no feel anti-American
    - So, they change their viewpoints
      - Within a year, 58% of Americans said they supported the war, even if no WMDs were found

Conformity

- Adjusting one's behavior or thinking to coincide with a group standard
- Asch's conformity experiments
  - Subjects were asked "Which of the 3 lines is equal in length to a 4th line?"

Asch Continued

- When the five people before you all give the same wrong answer, will you be the one that disagrees with them and give the right answer?
  - 30-60% of the time, people go with the group's wrong answer
Obedience

- Stanley Milgram
- 40 subjects
- Supposed to “teach” another subject
- 1 person labeled the teacher, 1 student
  - In reality, the subject was ALWAYS the teacher (an experimenter was a fake student)

The experiment

- A shock generator was used
- 15 volts to 450 volts
  - Marked from “slight shock” to “Danger: severe shock” to “XXX”
- As the student gets answers wrong, the voltage is supposed to increase

What were they told?

- “But actually, we know very little about the effect of punishment on learning, because almost no truly scientific studies have been made of it in human beings. For instance, we don’t know how much punishment is best for learning- and we don’t know how much difference it makes as to who is giving the punishment, whether an adult learns best from a younger or an older person than himself- or many things of that sort. So in this study we are bringing together a number of adults of different occupations and ages. And we’re asking some of them to be teachers and some of them to be learners. We want to find out just what effect different people have on each other as teachers or learners, and also what effect punishment will have on learning in this situation. Therefore, I’m going to ask one of you to be the teacher and the other one to be the learner. Does either of you have a preference?”

Next

- Of course it was rigged so that the subject would always be the teacher, and the other “subject (really an experimenter) was the learner

The experiment

- The learner was giving a predetermined set of responses: three wrong answers for every one right answer
  - If the subjects stopped shocking they were told:
    - Please continue
    - The experiment requires that you continue
    - It is absolutely essential that you continue
    - You have no other choice, you must go on
      - Said in order- if the subject still refused, then the experiment was stopped

What did they hear from the learner?

- The learner was shocked in a different room
- No vocal response or anything was heard until 300 V was reached
  - At that point the learner would pound on the wall and scream
- From this point on, the learner would not answer the questions
  - The teachers were told that no response should be considered a wrong response and punished
What are your expectations here?

- How far will people go before refusing to continue?
  - 300 volts? 100 volts? 450 volts? Never stop?
- Fourteen Yale seniors were asked to predict the behavior of 100 hypothetical subjects
  - Most agreed: only 1-2 subjects would go all the way (the class mean was 1.2% of people would go all the way)

Reality: Results

- No one stopped before 255 Volts:
  - How many stopped at:
    - 270 V? 0
    - 285 V? 0
    - 300 V? 5

New Label: Extremely Intense Shock

- 315 V? 4
- 330 V? 2
- 345 V? 1
- 360 V? 1
- 375 V? 0

What about: Danger Severe Shock?

- 390 V? 1
- 405 V? 0
- 420 V? 0

Finally: XXX

- 435 V? 0
- 450 V? 26
- 26 went the entire way!!!

Effects on the Participants

- Many subjects
  - Looked nervous
  - “reached a degree of tension rarely seen in sociopsychological laboratory studies”
  - Sweat, tremble, bite their lips, groan, dig their fingernails into their flesh
  - Nervous laughter
- Most subjects did these- not just a few
Extreme Effects

- 3 Subjects: full-blown uncontrollable seizures
  - 1 subject was so violently convulsing, they had to stop the experiment

What did this show?

- The power of obedience
- Authority figures

Next Ideas: The Story of Kitty Genovese

- A woman was stabbed and beaten by a man and in an obvious fight in an alley
- At least 12 and maybe up to 38 people were aware that there were problems occurring
- How many phone calls to the police were made? Did anyone intervene?

Did anyone help?

- One neighbor shouted: “leave her alone”
  - The attacker left
- 10 minutes later he returned
  - Sexually assaulted her
  - Stole $49 from her
  - Stabbed her more times

What about a police call?

- Reports of early calls to police were vague and unclear
- No police came, because it was reported that it was not urgent
- A final call was made after the final attack and Kitty Genovese died on the way to the hospital in an ambulance

Why did this happen?

- Who accepts responsibility for things?
- Where is the accountability here?
Social and Individual Behavior

- Do you work harder when placed in a group or do you work less?
- What about when someone is watching you do something by yourself... do you do better or worse?

Social Facilitation

- Stronger responses on *simple or well learned tasks* in the presence of others
- Drivers are faster to go the first 100 yards after the light has turned green if there is someone behind them (15% faster)
- This doesn’t work when the task gets hard- people do worse then

Social Loafing

- In groups: people do less work than when doing something by themselves
- A tug-of-war team pulls less than if you added up the force of all of their individual pulls
- No feeling of accountability

Social Facilitation

- Stronger responses on *simple or well learned tasks* in the presence of others
- Drivers are faster to go the first 100 yards after the light has turned green if there is someone behind them (15% faster)
- This doesn’t work when the task gets hard- people do worse then

How can we explain riots?

- What about Altamont?
  - Free concert - 1969
    - Rolling Stones, Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead
    - 300,000 fans showed
    - Last minute change in venue and time left facilities unprepared
    - Security: the Hell’s Angels
  - 4 killed, major riots

Deindividuation

- The loss of self-awareness and self-restraint occurring in group situations that foster arousal and anonymity
  - Mob mentality
    - People rioting do things that they would never otherwise do
    - More aroused due to social facilitation and less sense of responsibility due to social loafing

Riot Situations

- People act in ways they would not normally act
  - Woodstock 1999, Rodney King Riots, Hurricane Katrina Riots
- What causes this?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Polarization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • When placed in a group of politically liberal people to talk, will a liberal person become more liberal, more conservative, or not change? | • The enhancement of a group’s prevailing inclinations through discussion within the group  
• A group of liberals discussing will become more liberal |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prejudice</th>
<th>Possible natural roots of prejudice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • An unjustifiable (usually negative) attitude toward a group and its members  
  – Stereotypes  
  – Negative feelings  
  – Predisposition to discriminate | • People prefer more feminine traits  
• Which do you think women believe would be nicer? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Us and Them</th>
<th>Some final thoughts…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Ingroup bias  
  – Favoring one’s own group  
  • Usually linked by a common identity  
• Scapegoat theory  
  – The need for someone to blame  
  – Students made to feel insecure about themselves are more likely to lash out at someone else to restore their own self-esteem | • People exposed to more violence (TV or not) perceive the world as more violent and become tolerant of it  
• People exposed to more pornography perceive the world as more sexual and become more accepting of:  
  – Extramarital sex  
  – Women submitting to men  
  – A man seducing a 12 year old girl |