

Social Context

Intro Psychology
Georgia Tech
Instructor: Dr. Bruce Walker

Today

- Self-Knowledge
- Social Context
- Obedience

Recall...

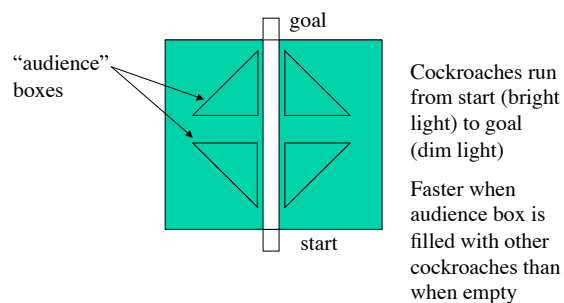
- Beliefs and attitudes can change (sometimes retrospectively or retroactively)
- We have less self knowledge than we think
- So who is really in control of our actions, and our beliefs?

Social facilitation

- Common view that the mere presence of other people might influence your performance...
- Does the complexity of the task matter?
- How much thought does this depend on?

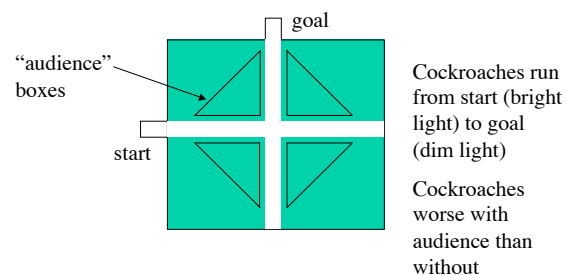
Social facilitation

- Zajonc, Heingartner, & Herman (1969), I



Social facilitation

- Zajonc, Heingartner, & Herman (1969), II



Social facilitation

- Zajonc's explanation
 - Presence of "others" causes physiological arousal
 - Simple dominant responses become easier, faster with increased levels of arousal
 - Difficult nondominant (nonobvious) responses, arousal is distracting rather than energizing.
 - Predicts that experts and novices should differ in audience effects.

Social facilitation

- Michaels et al (1982)
 - Expert and novice pool players made shots either with observers or without

Social facilitation

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	novice	expert	
Not observed	35	71	Percentage of shots made
Observed	23	89	

Social facilitation

- Note that the results of Zajonc's studies suggests that facilitation may not be very "intellectual"
- We don't typically think that cockroaches are worried about what other roaches might think of it...

Social loafing

- Under what circumstances does the presence of others decrease our own efforts?

Social loafing

- Jackson & Williams (1985)
 - Subjects (humans) solved either easy or difficult mazes
 - Subjects always worked on mazes with another subject at another computer in the same room.
 - Half of the subjects told that their performance would be evaluated individually, half that their performance would be averaged.

Social loafing

- Jackson & Williams (1985)

	Individual	Averaged
Easy	14 s	10 s
Difficult	50 s	68 s

Social loafing

- Reduced effort generally comes when performance is not evaluated (and perhaps identified) individually

Social Facilitation versus Loafing

- Facilitation
 - Observers of individual performance
 - Increased arousal, better performance on simple tasks, worse on complex (compared to no observers)
- Loafing
 - Individual performance within group
 - Little attention to individual performance
 - Increases as task difficulty/complexity increases

Broader implications of social loafing?

Bystander Intervention

- Kitty Genovese
 - Woman attacked on the way to her car
 - Genovese screamed and attacker withdrew, came back, withdrew, came back, each time stabbing her
 - Murder took 45 minutes
 - Police identified at least 38 people who had heard the entire attack and never called the police, or investigated.

Bystander Intervention

- Latané & Darley (1970)
 - Not just stresses of urban living (initial explanations)
 - Most interesting aspect was how many people heard cries for help

Bystander Intervention

- Latané & Darley (1970)
 - People sat in individual cubicles, participating in discussion of college life with students in other cubicles
 - One student would suddenly have a seizure (cry for help, choking sounds, etc)
 - Only one real participant, others were working for experimenters

Bystander Intervention

- Latané & Darley (1970)
 - Dependent variable was helping within 2 minutes.
 - Alone: 80%
 - 2 other people: 60%
 - 4 other people: 40%

Latané & Darley's 5 step model of intervention

- Must go through all 5 steps to help:
 - Notice the event
 - Interpret the event as an emergency
 - Decide that you have personal responsibility to help
 - Decide what you should do to help
 - Decide how to do it.

Diffusion of responsibility

- Bystander's individual sense of responsibility decreases as the number of other bystanders increase.
- "If I don't help, surely someone else will."

Is it possible to increase helping?

- Beaman et al (1970)
 - Assigned people to two groups
 - Listen to a lecture on Latané & Darley's studies of bystander intervention
 - Listen to an unrelated lecture
 - Two weeks later, participated in what they thought was an unrelated sociology study where they encountered a student lying on the floor.
 - Accomplice of Beaman acted unconcerned.
 - 25% of those who heard unrelated lecture helped
 - 45% of those who heard the Latané & Darley lecture helped

Conformity and Compliance

- Remember Asche's studies
- Individual behavior is subject to substantial influences of others
- What specifically makes us subject to this influence?

Mindless conformity

- General expectation for certain rules, “autopilot”
 - “Imitation” parking attendants in SF
 - Obey internalized social norms automatically

Sequential Techniques

- “Door in the face” technique
 - Make a large request sure to be rejected, then follow it with a smaller acceptable one
 - Increased compliance for second request
 - contrast
 - reciprocity norm - decline one request, then feeling of increased obligation for second more reasonable request.
 - Short lived - may only work once

Sequential Techniques

- “Door in the face” technique
 - Make a large request sure to be rejected, then follow it with a smaller acceptable one
 - Increased compliance for second request
 - Cialdini et al (1975) - Volunteering
 - Moderate request only: 17%
 - Large request, then moderate: 50%

Sequential Techniques

- “Foot in the door” technique
 - Make a small, hard to refuse request, then ask for a larger more intrusive favor
 - Freedman & Fraser (1966) - driving carefully
 - Initial request for small sign followed 2 weeks later by request for large intrusive sign
 - Initial request for large sign: 17%
 - Small sign, then large sign: 55%

Sequential Techniques

- “Foot in the door” technique
 - Effective for long term compliance
 - Appears to depend on people viewing themselves as “helpful” based on initial request
 - Second request increases compliance because of “helpful” image from first.

Compliance with Rules

- Cheating: Diener & Wallborn (1976)
 - Gave people a list of anagrams to solve, with answers on the back
 - Reward for solving many of them
 - 71% cheat when alone
 - Place people in a room with a mirror so that they can see themselves, and only 7% cheat !

Tip of the Iceberg?

- Many of the causes of our behavior occur below the surface of awareness
- We assume that it is “I” who is in the driver’s seat
- Many many examples suggest that “I” may actually be in the passenger seat...

Obedience to authority

- Stanley Milgram
 - Otherwise normal and seemingly moral individuals do horrible things when put in the right situation.
 - Is there something wrong with these individuals?

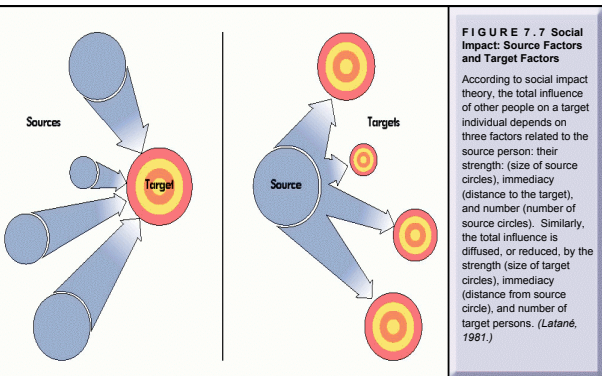
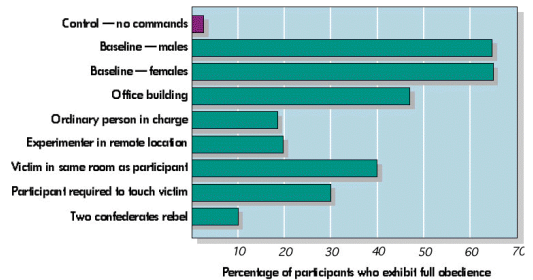
TABLE 7.4 Milgram's Baseline Results

In Milgram's original experiment, participants showed a troubling inclination to obey blindly. This table shows the number and percentage of male participants who delivered shocks of varying maximum intensity in response to the experimenter's commands. (Milgram, 1974.)

Shock Level (Volts)	Participants Who Stopped at This Level	
	Number	Percent
300	5	12.5
315	4	10.0
330	2	5.0
345	1	2.5
360	1	2.5
375	1	2.5
450	26	65.0

FIGURE 7.6 Factors That Influence Obedience

Milgram varied many factors in his research program. Without commands from an experimenter, fewer than 3 percent of the participants exhibited full obedience. Yet in the standard baseline condition, 65 percent of male and female participants followed orders. To identify factors that might reduce this level, Milgram varied the location of the experiment, the status of the authority, the participant's proximity to the victim, and the presence of confederates who rebel. The effects of these variations are illustrated here. (Milgram, 1974.)



Obedience to authority

- Preceding examples show tendency to acquiesce to requests depending on subtle influences
- Authority is often anything but subtle... and people follow orders to a surprising extent.

Obedience to authority

- My Lai
 - 150 US soldiers in Charlie Company (11th Infantry Brigade), on orders from 1st Platoon leader Lt. William Calley killed approximately 500 villagers, not a single one was male of military age.



Charlie Company met no resistance; there were no Viet Cong soldiers at My Lai. Calley then ordered the slaughter of the civilians. People were rounded up into ditches and machine-gunned. They lay five feet deep in the ditches; any survivors trying to escape were immediately shot. When Calley spotted a baby crawling away from a ditch, he grabbed her, threw her back into the ditch, and opened fire. Some of the dead were mutilated by having "C Company" carved into their chests; some were disemboweled. One GI would later say, "You didn't have to look for people to kill, they were just there. I cut their throats, cut off their hands, cut out their tongues, scalped them. I did it. A lot of people were doing it and I just followed. I just lost all sense of direction."
<http://www.thenausea.com/elements/documents/my%20lai/my%20lai.html>

Final Thoughts on Social Context

- Even though "others" can clearly influence us, we are still ultimately responsible for our actions
- Remember that we, too, are part of society, so we have an impact on the actions of others
 - This is, in effect, a responsibility to be a positive influence

Upcoming

- Psychopathology
- Final Exam
 - 2006 Summer Short session exam
 - 1:00 Classes
 - **Jul 31st (Monday) 2:50 - 5:40 pm**