

Social Influence: Norms & Conformity

- Some of the classic social psychology experiments asked these questions
 - Where does social power come from?
 - Why are people so easily influenced?
 - Why do we conform so readily?
 - What happens to social deviates?

Kelman's Typology of Social Power

Stage 1 - _____

- The influence is _____
- Comes from ability to punish
- Parents, police, judges
- Requires constant monitoring
- The effect is temporary

Stage 2 - _____

- The influence is _____
- Comes from desire to identify with and emulate others (guides)
- Peers, celebrities, role models
- Effective any time someone is in the process of identity development (not just teenagers)
- Does not require monitoring, but may be only temporary in its effects

Stage 3 - _____

- Influence is _____
- Comes from internalizing the attitude or behavior
- Monitoring is not necessary, and the influence is long-term
- The initial influence can be compliance or identification
- But once you have internalized the behavior, you no longer require reinforcement

Example: Seat Belt Use

- You may have been coerced into submission by the law (or asked by friends to buckle up)
- But then if you internalize the action, you buckle up of your own accord
- This is why laws and social pressure can be effective – over time, you may internalize the desired action

Which Type of Power?

- Wendy hated computers until she fell in love with a programmer. Now she owns her own. (Compliance, Identification, Internalization?)
-
- Great Britain has experienced a decrease in petty crime since the advent of CCTV (camera monitoring system) in 1996. _____
 - Mark was introduced to jazz by his college roommate, but remains a fan 10 years later even though he and his roommate have parted ways.
-

Social Norms

- **The implicit or explicit rules a group has for the acceptable behaviors, values, and beliefs of its members**
- Often internalized, they are a powerful source of social influence

Examples

- The norm of _____
– People expect others to behave in line with their beliefs (to not be hypocritical)
- The norm of _____
– Once you have agreed to do something, you should follow through
- The norm of _____
– “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours”

Social Influence Tactics

- Often based on social norms
- Bob Cialdini (“Houdini”) catalogued common tactics (see Chapter 4, as well as 6)
- He began his research because he was easily “chumped” by telemarketers
- For 2 years, he studied how professionals get people to comply with their requests by going under cover into their training grounds

He learned from

- Used car dealers; Insurance salespeople;
- Police bunko squads (“con artist” tactics); Telemarketers
- He noticed the techniques were remarkably similar
- They include the following

Foot-in-the Door

- People comply with a _____ request if they first agree to a _____ one
- The small request is the “foot” and the large request is the “door”
- First ask people to sign a petition, *then* hit them up for a donation to your cause

The soap study

- Researchers asked women if they could bring 6 people into their home to do a full inventory of their soap products
 - Only ____% agreed
- But other women were *first* asked to answer a few questions about soap products
 - ____% agreed with the larger request

The sign study

- People were asked to put a large, ugly sign in their front yards (“DRIVE SAFE”)
 - Only ____% agreed
- But half were first asked to display a 3-inch “Be a Safe Driver” window sign (2 weeks before)
 - Of these people, ____% agreed to the larger request!
- If they had done the small favor, they were four times more likely to agree to the sign

How does it work?

- Guess the norm:
- Consistency, Commitment, Reciprocity

How does it work?

- The norm of _____
- Having already agreed to the “toe hold” request, people are more likely to open the door fully to avoid being perceived as hypocritical

Door-in-the-Face

- The opposite of Foot-in-the Door
- People are more likely to comply with a _____ request if it is preceded by a larger, more unreasonable request
- Telemarketers may ask for a large donation (“\$250 would help us meet our goal of feeding the hungry at Thanksgiving”)
- When you balk, they quickly reassure you that there are smaller pledges you can make – and these sound so reasonable, you might give in

The zoo study

Control condition:

- Subjects were approached on the streets and asked to take a group of juvenile delinquents to the zoo for the afternoon
- _____% agreed
- But in the experimental condition, they were first asked an even *bigger* favor
 - To spend 2 hours a week serving as a counselor for the kids, for at least 2 years
- The result was dramatic:
- _____% of these people agreed to the zoo

How does it work?

- Guess the norm:
- Reciprocity, Consistency, Commitment

How does it work?

- The norm of _____
- The experimenter “does you a favor” by dropping the request – in turn, you comply
- The norm of _____
- To avoid appearing hard-hearted (or cheap), you might comply with the smaller request
 - “even a penny would help”

Low Balling

- People are more likely to perform a high-cost behavior if they have already agreed to the behavior (when believed to be less costly)
- Cialdini asked subjects to participate in a study at 7:00 a.m. (____% showed up)
- But if he first got them to agree to the study, then told them the time, _____% showed up

How does it work?

- Guess the norm: Reciprocity, Consistency, Commitment

How does it work?

- The norm of _____
 - Having agreed to do something, you follow through
- Car dealers are infamous for low-balling (after you agree to the purchase price, the salesperson comes back with “bad news”)

“That’s not all”

- People are more likely to comply with a request if the offer is made more attractive by throwing in “extras”
- Late night TV pitch
- Advertise a set of cookware for the unbelievably low price of \$29.95
- If you act NOW, they’ll throw in a set of knives and an orange juicer – all for the low low price of \$29.95

How does it work?

- Norm of _____
 - If you think they are doing you a favor, you may feel compelled to return the favor

Summary

- Foot-in-the-Door – norm of _____
- Door-in-the-Face – _____, consistency
- Low-Balling – norm of _____
- “That’s not all” – norm of _____

Conformity

- Norms lead to conformity
- A change in behavior that occurs in response to real or imagined pressure from others
- Think you’re a nonconformist?

Private vs. Public Conformity

- Conformity isn't always bad
- Nor is it always *real*
- _____ **conformity** – genuine internalization of the social norm
- _____ **conformity** – “faked” compliance with the norm

Candid Camera

- Allen Funt – “honorary social psychologist”
- Conformity was one of his favorite subjects
 - “Face the Rear”
 - “Don't Step on the Black Squares”
 - “Space Doctor”

Post-clips

- Funt was terrific at demonstrating conformity
- But scientists are interested in finding out why we conform – to date, they have come up with two main reasons

Reasons for Conformity

- _____ Influence (“Space Doctor”)
 - We conform to others when they provide us with information
 - Based on need to know the world around us, to predict what is going to happen
 - Permanent, likely to be internalized
- _____ Influence (“Face the Rear”)
 - “Going along to get along”
 - Based on the need to be accepted by others
 - Temporary, likely to require monitoring

_____ Influence

- Sherif's (1936) “autokinetic” research
- He asked, “Why do we have norms?”
- He suspected we need them to help us define reality
- Especially true when reality is _____

Sherif's classic study

- Showed how groups socially construct norms that they can conform to
- Subjects were placed in a dark room and exposed to a pinpoint of light
- It did not actually move, but it appeared to move (optical illusion - the "autokinetic" effect)
- People judge the movement differently
- Thus, the stimulus was very ambiguous
- Subjects estimated the movement of the light alone, then in groups of three
- Each group made several estimates together
- Let's see how quickly the groups "conformed" to one another's estimates of how far the light traveled

Sherif's "autokinetic" norms

- By _____, this group had settled on a "normed" estimate of movement that they then unanimously conformed to
- How different were the groups' norms?
 - They ranged from an average of 2-6 inches!
- Was this private (real) or public (faked) conformity?

How to tell

- Did it last?
- Would subjects (on their own) stick with the norm?
- A year later, solo subjects gave _____ estimates of how far the light "moved"
- Thus, conformity based on informational influence is _____ conformity

Conformity and _____ influence

- 20 years later, Solomon Asch read about Sherif's research
- He thought Sherif's subjects were gullible!
- He believed that if you gave people something unambiguous to judge, they would not show conformity to social norms

Asch's Line-Estimation Study

- Stimuli were objective – big black lines on white cardboard
- Subjects verbally estimated the length of the lines in groups
- Asch planted confederates in the group – they made clearly _____ judgments for 12 out of 18 trials

Stimuli

- Say you (privately) estimate the line to be 3 inches
- But the confederates are going around the table saying “6 inches”
- What do you do?

Results

- The surprise: Subjects conformed to these judgments!
- So much so that Asch decided to try again
- Maybe line estimation is too _____
 - If so, subjects might have been conforming due to informational influence
- So he decided to make the task extremely clear
 - All you have to do is match the standard line to one of three other lines provided

Results

- Subjects conformed even to these judgments!
- In fact, conformity occurred on _____% of the trials
- Further, _____% of S's went along with the group's mistake on at least one trial

Asch was shocked!

- And pretty depressed by these findings
- His follow-up work sought conditions under which the conformity effect would go away
- In order to do that, he had to know what kind of conformity he was dealing with

What kind of conformity?

- Public or Private?
- One way to find out is to have subjects make their responses privately instead of out loud, in front of the group
- Private estimates showed _____ conformity
- Thus, this type of conformity is _____

What else affects public conformity?

- The Size of the _____
- Manipulating the # of confederates (range: 1-15), he found that _____ were needed
- Anything less, and conformity dropped
- Anything more was superfluous
- The next slide shows this effect in another context (crowd research)

- The Size of the _____
 - if you give S's even one person who agrees with them, the effect goes away
 - “the _____ effect”
 - The next slide shows Asch's results
- Normative pressures to conform may not be private or stable, but they are certainly powerful
- In Asch's research, subjects were unwilling to appear to be “different”
- In order to be accepted, they went along with a clearly erroneous group norm

Peer Pressure

- This happened even with a group of strangers – imagine how powerful social norms are when they come from people we care about (e.g., our peers)

Informational vs. Normative Pressures to Conform

- **Informational**

- Need for mastery
- Goal is accuracy
- Results in _____ conformity
- Behavioral change is usually _____
- Classic research: _____

- **Normative**

- Need for belonging
- Goal is social acceptance
- Results in _____ conformity
- Behavior change might be _____
- Classic research: _____

What happens to deviants?

- One way of understanding the power of normative influence is to look at what happens when people don't conform
- When people don't have legal recourse, they use social sanctions instead

The Johnny Rocco Study

- A classic study by Schachter (1951) demonstrated this process
- The way groups treated deviants boils down to two stages
 - Pressure to go along
 - _____ if pressure fails

Schachter's Procedure

- Groups of S's were told they would be "Student Social Workers"
- Meet weekly to discuss their "caseload" (other students on campus)
- First task was to read and discuss the case of "Johnny Rocco" – a budding JD
- They had to decide what type of punishment to give him
- The majority in each group voted for a judicious mix of support and discipline
- But Schachter planted a _____ confederate, who wanted stiff punishment for Johnny
- He maintained his position, no matter what the other group members said
- The group's response to the deviant was consistent

Groups' Response to Deviance

- At first, they paid him the most attention, trying to persuade him to conform
- When it was clear they would not succeed, they ignored him completely – cut him off
- Later, they voted to have him ousted from the group
- When told that wasn't possible, they assigned him menial tasks so that eventually, he would remove himself from the group
- The remarkable consistency shown across groups shows that we are very versed in how to treat deviants
- No wonder most of us “fall in” with others – the social consequences of deviance are severe

Conformity to Gender Norms

- Gender norms are very powerful
- From childhood on, we are programmed to behave in masculine or feminine ways
- Boys in particular are teased for anything “girlish”
- Sometimes consequences for gender deviance can be extremely harsh (e.g., *Boys Don't Cry*)

Gender deviance study

- The goal was to study actors' reactions to their own gender deviance in the lab
- The method was to make people think they had succeeded at a cross-sexed test
- Do RU men and women fear backlash for gender deviance?
- If so, will they hide their own deviant success from others?

Method (N = 135)

- Men and women were randomly assigned to perform either a male or female “knowledge test”
- Everyone is going to be a winner – false positive feedback
- Before they took the test, they saw a list of winners on the screen (either all male or female)

The Tests

- Male test domain: cars, motorcycles, sports, weapons, home improvement, finance, pop culture
- Female test domain: beauty, fashion, cooking, dating rules, pop culture
- Items tapped obscure knowledge – a high score had to be credible

Congratulations!!!

- You have scored in the 96th percentile!
- Now you have the opportunity to publicize your success (on a hypothetical Web site)
 - 1 = full name, 2 = first initial, last name, 3 = no thanks
- Would they lie to the E about their success?
 - did not lie; 2 = claimed not to have won; 3 = claimed to have won the wrong test
- High scores on both measures = hid their success

Results so far

- Gender _____ refused publicity more than gender _____ did
- They also lied to experimenter about their success (some deviants even claimed success in the same-sexed test)

Fear of Backlash

- Also asked what *other people's* reactions would be if their test scores were made public
- Would they tease you? label you? think you were odd? Call you names? Be proud of you? Congratulate you? (reverse scored)
- 11 items total

Summary

- Men and women reported being afraid of social reactions to their deviance
- And when under this threat, they were likely to _____ both on the Web site and from the experimenter
- Even though they were successful, they preferred to keep it under wraps

Implications

- These findings suggest that sex stereotypes may be preserved, in part, because actors themselves _____ their deviance
- Who can blame them? Deviants are ____ treated well by others
- But it should give us pause to consider the power of social norms and our own role in stereotype maintenance