Pluralistic ignorance
Pluralistic ignorance I

The widespread misperception of social attitudes and norms produced by the discrepancy between private attitudes and public behavior (often produced by a fear of embarrassment).

Assume others’ beliefs differ from yours even though behavior is identical.
Pluralistic ignorance II

Examples: confusing lectures; political correctness; affirmative action (VanBoven, 1999); intervening in emergencies; alcohol consumption on campus (Miller & Prentice, 1994)

Leads people to a) conform to imagined norms, or b) feel alienated.
Conformity

“Do as most do, and most will speak well of thee”
Thomas Fuller
Subtle Conformity

Behavioral mimicry (Chartrand & Bargh 1999)

- Exp rubs face
- Exp shakes foot
- Sub rubs face
- Sub shakes foot
“Rational conformity”

Sometimes it make sense to follow others because they know more.

The problem is that many time we assume that others know more, when this is not the case.
Conformity and fire exits

- Two exits
- Herding Behaviour
- Fire
  - Fire
Asch famous experiment

Standard

Comparison

a b c
Initial response
Asch results

- The amazing thing is that we all trust our vision so conformity is hard to achieve here.
- 75% of people conformed at least once.
- More conformity in larger groups.
- More conformity in difficult tasks.
- More conformity in high desirable groups.
Conformity @ workplace
Conformity summary

- Conformity is a large force in determining human behavior.
- It is one of the worse outcomes of groups.
- Conformity leads to other problems (pluralistic ignorance, mob behavior, compliance, obedience etc.)
Obedience
Obedience

After WW2 people were thinking that this could not take place in the US.

What was it about the Germans that allowed them to obey in such a way?
A movie
Obedience summary

- The power to obey is within each of us
- Worrying and frightening, but common and each to achieve
- Diffusion of responsibility is a key
Groups summary

Groups can be useful and good

Groups can help get more information, view points etc

Yet groups can also hinder the same processes that they are useful for
## Categories of social influence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Explicit request</th>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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Group decision making

People make worse decisions in groups but their confidence increases.

Important exceptions are “markets for decisions” such as the Iowa and Hollywood markets, and HP.