Discussion points

• Effects of time and place?
  – The early 1960s were a different time
• Effects of demographics?
  – Tested only men, in all three roles

Scenario

• You’re assistant manager at a restaurant
  – Police officer calls
  – Describes a theft there, and the perpetrator
  – The description matches an employee
  – Officer asks you to confiscate the employee’s clothing and do a strip search
• What do you do?

Scenario

• McDonald’s assistant manager:
  *You have no idea what you would’ve done in that situation. You think you do but you don’t.*
• Is she special, or is she like the rest of us?
  – Dispositional attribution: She’s special
  – Situational attribution: She’s not so special, and anyone in the same situation would be at risk

The Stanford Prison Experiment

• 18 participants randomly assigned to be prisoners or guards
  – College students, paid $15 per day
  – Study was to last two weeks
    • Canceled on day 6
  – Gave more-or-less informed consent
    • Passed IRB then, probably wouldn’t today

Discussion questions

• Why ...
  ... do ordinary people end up doing evil things?
  ... don’t victims of abuse leave their surroundings?
The Stanford Prison Project

- Prisoners were arrested by actual police
  - Taken to mock prison
  - Basement of Psych department
  - Strip searched and “deloused,” put in chains and jumpsuits, assigned numbers
- Guards had uniforms, billy clubs, sunglasses
  - Billy clubs to be used “only as symbolic weapons”

Abu Ghraib prison, Iraq

- Site of prisoner abuses by US Army and CIA personnel, 2003-2004

Among 12 people convicted for offenses at Abu Ghraib:

- Lynndie England (w/ Charles Graner)
- Sabrina Harman
Discussion questions

- Why ...
  ... do ordinary people end up doing evil things?
  ... don’t victims of abuse leave their surroundings?
- Situational pressures help trigger actions
- Then, dissonance reduction helps people grow into their roles
- Observers may reinforce these roles, by making dispositional attributions