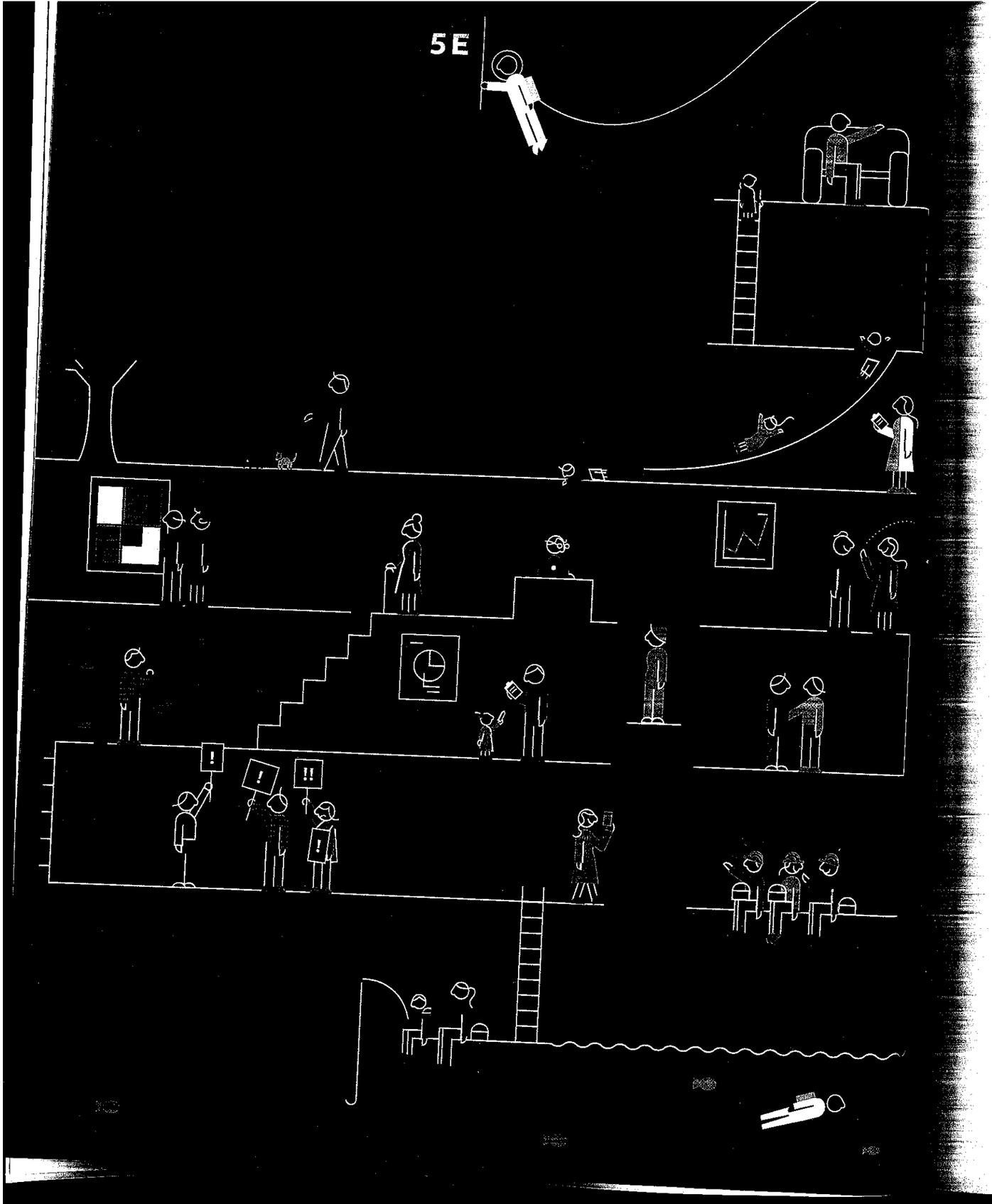


FIFTH EDITION

Social Psychology

Thomas Gilovich
Cornell University

Dacher Keltner
University of California, Berkeley

Serena Chen
University of California, Berkeley

Richard E. Nisbett
University of Michigan

W. W. Norton & Company • New York • London

Groups

TODD ASHKER, A CONVICTED MURDERER, spent over 20 years in the Security Housing Unit, or SHU, in Pelican Bay, a maximum-security prison in fog-filled Crescent City, in Northern California. The idea behind the SHU was to isolate gang members from other gang members (Ashker was a member of the Aryan Brotherhood). In solitary confinement in the SHU, Ashker spent 23 hours a day by himself in a windowless cell about the size of a parking space, often staring at the walls for hours. He could exercise 1 hour a day, by himself, in a moldy, enclosed space, with no clear view of the sky. He could see no other prisoners and received his meals through a slot in the door to his cell. When his family or friends were permitted to visit, he was not allowed to touch them.

When social psychologist Craig Haney first interviewed a sample of SHU prisoners, he found the effects of solitary confinement to be devastating: 70 percent of SHU prisoners showed signs of impending nervous breakdown, 40 percent suffered from hallucinations, and 27 percent had suicidal ideation. One SHU inmate summed it up aptly: "I would rather have gotten the death penalty."

In the despair of solitary confinement, Ashker did something extraordinary: he formed a group with the leaders of rival gangs in cells nearby. Desperate for human contact, prisoners began calling out to one another when in the exercise room. In a series of conversations, the leaders of the rival gangs talked about their parents and grandparents, their children and spouses, their neighborhoods and pasts. They talked about the profound suffering produced by solitary confinement. Moved by these conversations, Ashker and his neighbors called for a truce between the rival gangs. And on July 8, 2013, Ashker led a hunger strike that, through informal word of mouth, involved over 30,000 prisoners in California,

CHAPTER 12

OUTLINE

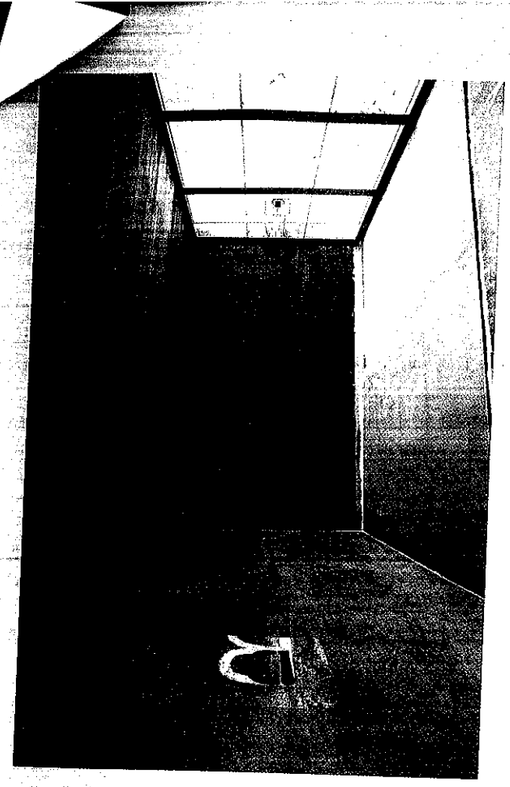
The Nature and Purpose of Group Living

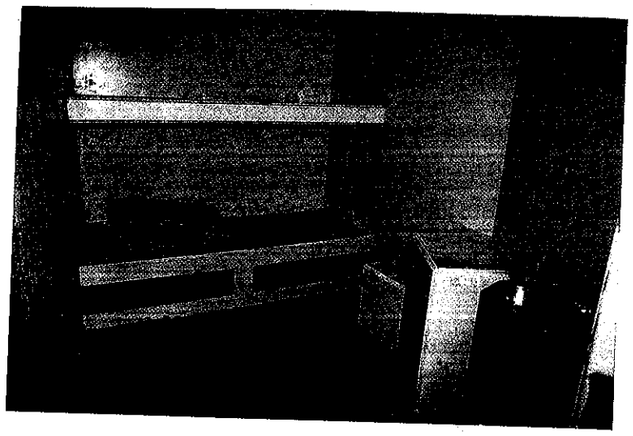
Social Facilitation

Group Decision Making

Leadership and Power

Deindividuation and the Psychology of Mobs





THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUP LIFE
A prison cell (right) and the exercise area (left) in the Security Housing Unit at Pelican Bay.

all protesting solitary confinement as a violation of the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution, which prohibits the use of cruel and unusual punishment.

Ashker's efforts inspired a team of lawyers to sue the state of California to free prisoners from solitary confinement in the SHU. The case involved several social psychologists, including an author of this book, who relied on findings you are learning about to make the case that solitary confinement is indeed cruel and unusual punishment: humans have a drive-like need to belong and connect (see Chapter 10); in fact, isolation, exclusion, and rejection activate the pain centers of the brain much as physical harm does, and when humans are deprived of touch, their stress system can go on overdrive. In 2015, the case was settled in favor of the prisoners, and over 2,000 prisoners across California were moved out of solitary confinement.

There are many lessons to be learned from Todd Ashker's experience of solitary confinement. When we are denied the chance to connect and be in groups, we suffer in profound ways. Our humanity is found in group life. ■

"No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."
—JOHN DONNE, ENGLISH POET

The Nature and Purpose of Group Living

What happened to Todd Ashker in the SHU at Pelican Bay speaks to our fundamentally social nature. Humans and all large primates (except orangutans) live in groups, so group life must provide advantages. Today it's recognized that our capacity to form groups has helped us meet many of the challenges of survival and the reproduction of our genes: in groups we provide care for our extremely vulnerable offspring, find protection from predators, enjoy increased efficiency in acquiring and sharing food, and bolster our defense against aggressors. These benefits of group living are so crucial to survival that we have a psychological need to be with others and belong to groups (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Correll & Park, 2005).

But what, exactly, is a group? This is not an easy question to answer, since there are so many types of groups, and they don't always share many features. The members of a baseball team are clearly a group, but most people wouldn't consider the members of a large lecture course to be a group. Similarly, most people would say that the individuals riding together in an elevator aren't a group. But suppose the elevator breaks down, and those inside must figure out how to escape or summon help. Most would say that the people in the elevator now seem more like a real group. But why?

A group has been described as "a collection of individuals who have relations to one another that make them interdependent to some significant degree" (Cartwright & Zander, 1968, p. 46). Thus, the people in the functioning elevator don't make up a group because they're not interdependent. But once the elevator breaks down and they must decide on joint action (or whether to take joint action), they become interdependent and hence more of a group. There are degrees of interdependence, of course, and therefore degrees of "groupness" (McGrath, 1984). The members of a family are more of a "real" group than are participants in a seminar, and seminar attendees, in turn, are more of a group than are students in a large lecture course. By this reasoning, a nation's citizens make up something of a group, but they are less of a group than the members of a tribe or band, who interact more often and are more directly dependent on one another.

This chapter explores how groups function, how they make decisions, and how group decision making can go wrong. It also examines how people achieve positions of leadership within a group, as well as the effects of power on people. Finally, the chapter explores how orderly groups can devolve into unruly mobs when its members' personal identities are diminished.

Social Facilitation

Let's begin by considering one of the simplest questions about social life: What effect does the presence of other people have on individual performance? Does the presence of others typically help or hinder performance, or does it have no effect at all? To address these questions, let's consider them in more personal and vivid terms. Suppose you're by yourself as you try to perfect a skill—practicing a chord progression on the guitar, mastering a tricky dance move, or working through the intricacies of conjugating French verbs. You feel you're making progress when someone—a perfect stranger, your mother, or even, say, Amy Schumer or W. Kamau Bell—takes a seat nearby and proceeds to observe. What does this other person's presence do to your performance? Does it give you the energy and focus necessary to bring your performance to new heights? Or do you become so nervous and distracted that your performance suffers?

Initial Research

Norman Triplett (1898) is often credited with being the first person to experimentally examine the effect of other people's presence on human performance. Triplett was a bicycling enthusiast (or "wheelman," as they were known at the time). After reviewing speed records put out by the Racing Board of the League

of American Wheelmen, Triplett noticed that the fastest times were recorded when cyclists competed directly against one another on the same track at the same time. Slower speed records were obtained when cyclists raced alone against the clock. This observation led Triplett to hypothesize that the presence of others tended to facilitate human performance.

Triplett realized, however, that cycling records did not offer the best test of his hypothesis, so he conducted what is widely considered social psychology's first experiment (Triplett, 1898). He invited a group of 40 children to his laboratory and had them turn a fishing reel as fast as they could. Each child did so on six trials. On three of the trials, the child was alone; on the other three trials, another child was alongside doing the same thing. Under these more controlled conditions, Triplett found that the children tended to turn the reel faster when in the presence of another child engaged in the same activity. The presence of others appeared to facilitate their performance. Research on this subject thus came to be known as **social facilitation** research.

social facilitation Initially a term for enhanced performance in the presence of others; now a broader term for the effect, positive or negative, of the presence of others on performance.

"The bodily presence of another contestant participating in the race serves to liberate latent energy not ordinarily available."
—NORMAN TRIPLETT

A number of subsequent experiments reinforced Triplett's findings and extended them in two important ways. First, the same effects were obtained when the others were not doing the same thing (that is, not "coacting"), but were merely present as an audience of passive observers (Gates, 1924; Travis, 1925). Second, the same effect was also observed in a vast number of animal species, indicating that the phenomenon is quite general and fundamental. For example, animals as diverse as dogs, fish, armadillos, opossums, and frogs have been shown to eat more when in the presence of other members of the same species than when alone (Boice, Quanty, & Williams, 1974; Platt & James, 1966; Platt, Yaksh, & Darby, 1967; Ross & Ross, 1949; Uematsu, 1970). Ants dig more earth (Chen, 1937), fruit flies do more preening (Connolly, 1968), and centipedes run faster through mazes (Hosey, Wood, Thompson, & Druck, 1985) when together than when alone. For both humans and other animals, then, the presence of others seems to facilitate performance.

SOCIAL FACILITATION AND COMPETITION
Performance is typically enhanced in the presence of others when the activity is well learned, as cycling is for Vincenzo Nibali, of Italy, shown here entering Paris as the winner of Le Tour de France 2014.

But numerous exceptions emerged soon after Triplett's original findings. Floyd Allport (1920), for example, asked undergraduate students to refute philosophical arguments as best they could in a 5-minute period. The students provided higher-quality refutations when working alone than when working in the presence of another student. The presence of others has also been shown to inhibit performance on arithmetic problems, memory tasks, and maze learning (Dashiell, 1930; Pessin, 1933; Pessin & Husband, 1933). And the presence of other members of the same species has sometimes been found to inhibit the performance of nonhuman species (Allee & Masure, 1936; Shelley, 1965; Strobel, 1972).

Resolving the Contradictions

For a time, then, it seemed that the best generalization available about the effect of the presence of others on performance was that it sometimes helps and sometimes hurts—not a terribly satisfying answer. It's about as helpful as an expert saying we might be headed for another economic crash, but then again, we might not. Although that may be all you'd expect from someone trying to predict which way the economy is going, you probably want more from researchers studying a simpler process like social facilitation.

ZAJONC'S THEORY OF MERE PRESENCE Nearly 70 years after Triplett's discovery, social psychologist Robert Zajonc offered an elegant theory to account for the divergent findings on this topic. Zajonc (1965) argued that the presence of others, indeed the *mere* presence of others, tends to facilitate performance on simple or well-learned tasks, but it hinders performance on difficult or novel tasks. Even more importantly, Zajonc's theory explained *why* the presence of others has these effects.

Zajonc's theory has three components (**Figure 12.1**). First, the mere presence of others makes us more aroused. Other people are dynamic and unpredictable stimuli, capable of doing almost anything at any time. We therefore need to be alert, or aroused, in their presence so we can react to what they might do.

Second, arousal tends to make us more rigid and narrowly focused, in the sense that we become even more inclined to do what we're already automatically inclined to do. In the language Zajonc used, arousal makes us more likely to make a **dominant response**. Think of it like this: in any situation, you can respond in a variety of ways, arranged in a hierarchy according to their likelihood of occurrence. Whatever you're most inclined to do in that situation is at the top of the hierarchy and is thus the dominant response. When aroused, Zajonc argued, people are even more inclined to make that dominant response.

The third component of Zajonc's theory specifies that the increase in dominant response tendencies leads to the facilitation of performance on simple tasks and the inhibition of performance on complex tasks. For easy or well-learned tasks, the dominant response is likely to be the correct response. In fact, that's tantamount to what it means for a task to be easy or well learned. Thus, the presence of other people, by facilitating the dominant response, facilitates the correct response and improves performance. In contrast, for difficult or novel tasks, the dominant response is not likely to be the correct response. Again, that's what it

ROBERT B. ZAJONC

dominant response In a person's hierarchy of possible responses in any context, the response that person is most likely to make.

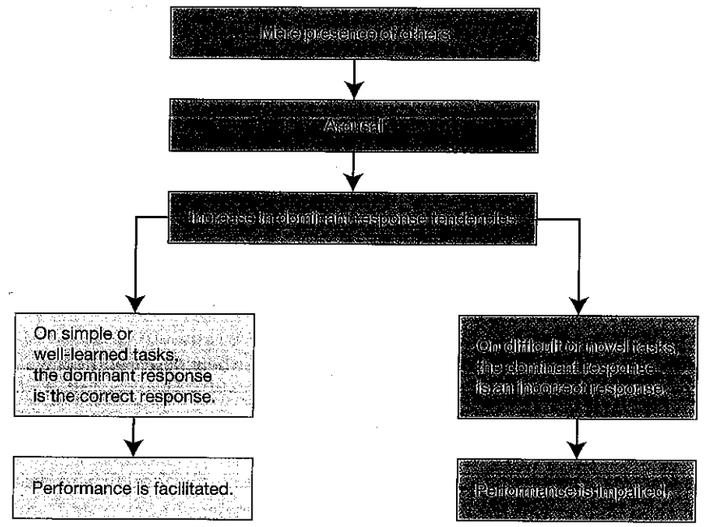


FIGURE 12.1
ZAJONC'S MODEL OF SOCIAL FACILITATION
The presence of others (indeed, their mere presence) increases arousal and facilitates dominant response tendencies. This improves performance on easy or well-learned tasks but hinders performance on difficult or novel tasks.

means for a task to be difficult or novel. Thus, the presence of others facilitates an *incorrect* response and hinders performance.

TESTING THE THEORY Zajonc's theory synthesized the diverse findings that existed at the time and has been tested in a number of studies across species. For example, Zajonc and his colleagues placed cockroaches in the start box of one of two mazes and then shone a light at the start box (Zajonc, Heingartner, & Herman, 1969). Cockroaches instinctively flee from light and head toward a dark area; in this case, the cockroaches would try to reach the dark goal box. In the simple maze (a "runway"), getting to the darkened chamber was easy. The cockroach needed only to do what it does instinctively: run directly away from the light (its dominant response). In contrast, getting to the darkened chamber in the complex maze was more of a challenge: the cockroach had to do more than follow its instincts and flee from the light; it had to execute a turn. Two features of this setup were especially important. First, because cockroaches invariably run from light, doing so is clearly their dominant response. Second, Zajonc created two different conditions: in one, the dominant response led to the goal (the simple maze); in the other, it did not (the complex maze).

Zajonc had the cockroaches run one of these two mazes either alone or with another cockroach. He predicted that cockroaches running the simple maze would get to the goal box more quickly when together than when alone, but that those running the complex maze together would take longer to reach the chamber. That's exactly what happened: the presence of another cockroach facilitated performance on the simple maze but hindered performance on the complex maze (**Figure 12.2**).

"Why cockroaches give lousy surprise parties."

COACTING VS. MERE PRESENCE To show that the *mere* presence of another cockroach has these effects—as opposed to some other, more complex factor than the presence of others of the same species, such as competition—Zajonc added a condition in which the cockroach ran the maze not with another cockroach running alongside, but with other cockroaches merely present as a passive "audience." To create this condition, Zajonc built a set of Plexiglas boxes, or "grandstands," that flanked the two mazes and then filled them with observer cockroaches. Again, as Figure 12.2 indicates, the presence of the observing cockroaches facilitated performance on the simple maze but inhibited performance on the complex maze.

Subsequent tests of Zajonc's theory turned to the real-world behavior of our own species (Ben-Zeev, Fein, & Inzlicht, 2005). For example, consider one study conducted at a university pool hall (Michaels, Blommel, Brocato, Linkous, & Rowe, 1982). College students playing recreational pool were unobtrusively observed and deemed skilled or unskilled based on their performance. Zajonc's theory predicts that the presence of an audience should make the skilled players perform better (for them, the task is easy) and the unskilled players perform worse (for them, the task is difficult). To test this prediction, the experimenters walked up to the pool tables and watched. As expected, the good players did even better than before, and the poor players did even worse.

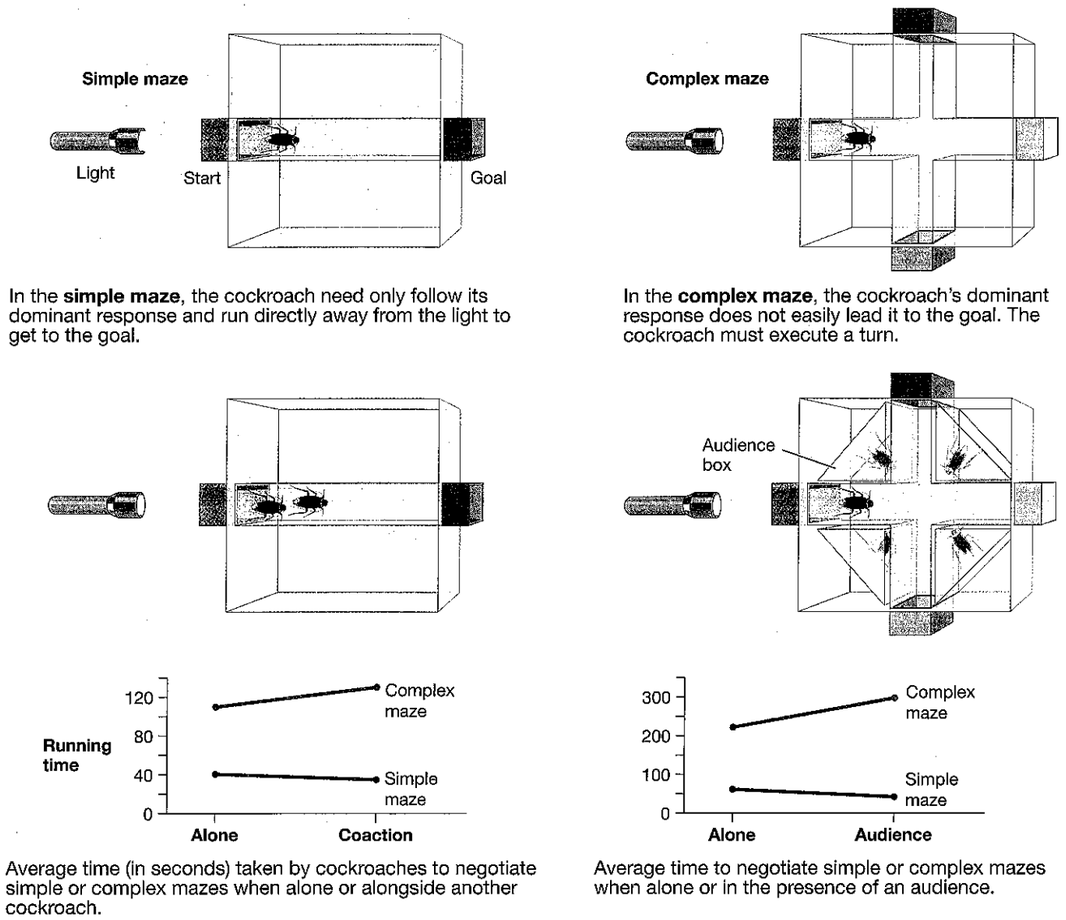


FIGURE 12.2
SOCIAL FACILITATION IN ANOTHER SPECIES
For cockroaches, as for humans, the presence of others increases dominant response tendencies, leading to better performance on easy tasks (in this case the simple maze) and worse performance on difficult tasks (the complex maze).
Source: Adapted from Zajonc et al., 1969.

Mere Presence or Evaluation Apprehension?

Zajonc's theory has stood the test of time, with many studies finding that the presence of others tends to facilitate performance on easy tasks and hinders performance on difficult tasks (Thomas, Skitka, Christen, & Jurgena, 2002). One element of Zajonc's theory, however, has been disputed: whether it is the *mere* presence of other people that increases arousal. When most people reflect on why they would be aroused in the presence of others, it's not just their presence that seems decisive. Instead, it's **evaluation apprehension**—a concern about looking bad in the eyes of others, about being evaluated—that seems to be important (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, & Salomon, 1999; Cottrell, Wack, Sekerak & Rittle, 1968; Seta & Seta, 1992). Several studies have purported to show that it is only when subjects feel they are being evaluated that they

evaluation apprehension People's concern about how they might appear in the eyes of others, or be evaluated by them.

show arousal and consequent facilitation on easy tasks and impairment on difficult tasks.

TESTING FOR EVALUATION APPREHENSION A number of social psychologists have argued that evaluation apprehension, not mere presence, is the critical element underlying social facilitation. To test this hypothesis experimentally, there must be three conditions: one with the subject performing alone, one with the subject performing in front of an evaluative audience, and one with the subject performing in front of an audience that cannot evaluate the subject's performance. In one such study, the investigators cleverly built "from scratch" a response hierarchy in their participants so they'd know exactly what the dominant and subordinate responses were (Cottrell et al., 1968). They gave the participants a list of ten nonsense words (such as *nansoma, paritaf,* and *zabulon*), and had them pronounce two of the ten words once, two words twice, two words 5 times, two words 10 times, and two words 25 times. The participants were thus much more familiar with some of the words than with others. After this initial training phase of the experiment, the test phase began. Participants were told that these same words would be flashed on a screen very briefly (some so briefly they might not be visible) and that their task was to identify each word as it was shown. If they couldn't identify a word, they should guess. Unbeknownst to the participants, none of the target words was actually shown, and they were reduced to guessing on every trial (this task is thus known as a *pseudorecognition test*).

The participants performed this task either (1) alone, (2) in the presence of two other students who watched the proceedings attentively, or (3) in the presence of blindfolded "observers." The blindfolds in the latter, mere presence condition were supposedly to prepare the blindfolded individuals for an experiment in perception, but in reality their purpose was to make it clear to the participants that these individuals could not evaluate them. The researchers were interested in how often the participants gave a dominant response by guessing the most familiar word (those they had pronounced 25 times) and how this rate varied across the three conditions. The results, shown in **Figure 12.3**, highlight the importance

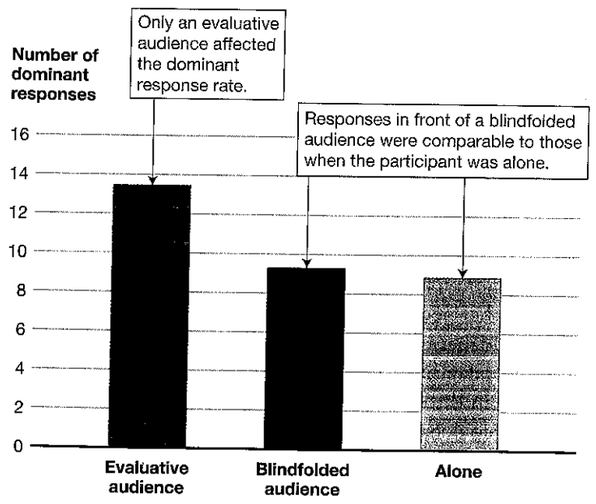
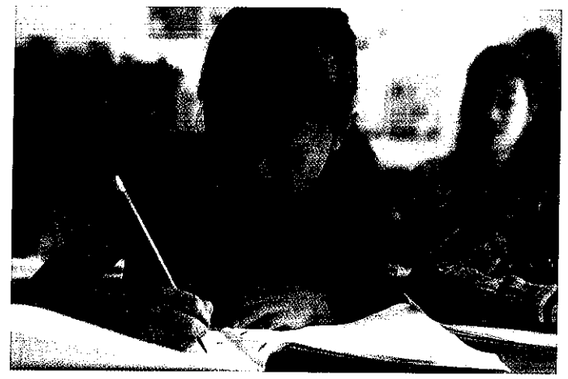


FIGURE 12.3
EVALUATION APPREHENSION AND SOCIAL FACILITATION
This graph shows the average number of dominant responses made by participants who were responding alone, next to a blindfolded audience (who therefore couldn't monitor or evaluate their performance), or next to an attentive audience (who could evaluate their performance). Participants were more likely to exhibit dominant responses in the presence of an attentive audience, but not a merely present, blindfolded audience.
Source: Adapted from Cottrell et al., 1968.

of evaluation apprehension. Participants performing in front of an evaluative audience made more dominant responses than those performing alone; those performing in front of a blindfolded audience did not. Thus, the audience that couldn't evaluate what was going on had no effect on performance. This experiment seems to demonstrate rather conclusively that it's the concern about others as a source of evaluation, and not their mere presence, that's responsible for social facilitation.

TESTING FOR MERE PRESENCE More careful scrutiny, however, gives rise to doubts about the results of the experiment just described. More specifically, although participants in the alone condition were alone in an objective sense (no one else was physically present), they may not have been *psychologically* alone. After all, they were in an experiment, one in which they were asked to perform a strange task. It seems likely that they might feel apprehensive about the prospect of their performance being surreptitiously recorded (which it was). Thus, the alone condition used in this study may not have been a "true" alone condition. To adequately test Zajonc's theory, then, it is essential to create a condition in which participants *feel* that they are truly alone.

In an ingenious experiment, Hazel Markus (1978) showed that the mere presence of another person, in the absence of any concern about that person being evaluative, is indeed sufficient to create arousal that facilitates performance on an easy task and impairs performance on a difficult task. When participants arrived individually for the experiment, they were told to go into an adjoining room to wait for the other participants to arrive. While there, they had to put on the necessary attire for the experiment: take off their own shoes, put on a pair of lab socks over their own socks, put on a pair of oversized lab shoes, and put on a similarly oversized lab coat. The participants did all this and waited, in vain, for the "other participants" to arrive. In reality, there were no other participants. After 10 minutes, the experimenter reappeared and stated that the other participants were apparently not coming, and the experiment would have to be scratched. The participants were then instructed to change back into their own clothes.



Unbeknownst to participants, all of this changing of clothes was surreptitiously observed and timed through a one-way mirror. Markus was interested in how quickly participants could perform the novel tasks of putting on and taking off the unfamiliar lab coat, socks, and shoes, as well as how quickly they could perform the well-learned tasks of taking off and putting on their own, very familiar, shoes. Participants did this in one of three conditions: alone, with another person watching attentively, or in the mere presence of a repairman working on a piece of apparatus with his back to the participant.

Even though the participants did not think they were "performing," Zajonc's theory predicts that they should change their own clothes faster and the novel clothes more slowly when in the mere presence of another person. As shown in **Table 12.1** (see p. 418), that's exactly what happened. Participants took off and put on their own shoes more quickly, and the experimenter's shoes, socks, and coat more slowly, when in the presence of another person—even when the

DOMINANT RESPONSES AND SOCIAL FACILITATION
People tend to do better on well-learned tasks but worse on difficult or poorly mastered tasks in the presence of others. Presumably, the children who know the material well will do better on these standardized tests in the presence of other test takers because their dominant responses will be correct. But children who don't know the material well will be more likely to give incorrect answers in the presence of others.

TABLE 12.1 SOCIAL FACILITATION AND THE EFFECT OF AN AUDIENCE

	Alone	Merely present audience	Attentive audience
Well-learned tasks (own shoes)	16.5 seconds	13.5 seconds	11.7 seconds
Novel tasks (lab shoes, socks, and coat)	28.8 seconds	32.7 seconds	33.9 seconds

Source: Adapted from Markus, 1978.

other person had his back turned and was unable to observe. Thus, when a true alone condition is included, an effect of the mere presence of someone else can be observed. Note again that the effects were stronger for an attentive audience than for a merely present audience, but that's not a problem for the theory. It just means that evaluation apprehension can add to a person's arousal and thus intensify the effect of mere presence. These results and those of similar investigations strongly support Zajonc's theory that the mere presence of another does indeed have an effect on performance (Platania & Moran, 2001; Schmitt, Gilovich, Goore, & Joseph, 1986).

Beyond Social Facilitation

One hundred years of research on social facilitation has made it clear that the mere presence of others is sufficient to increase arousal and thus facilitate performance on well-learned tasks and inhibit performance on novel tasks. It's also clear, however, that people are complex stimuli and that their presence can have a variety of effects that overlay the influence of mere presence that we just examined. People are often very concerned about making a good impression, and their evaluation apprehension can intensify arousal and lead to more pronounced social facilitation effects.

social loafing The tendency to exert less effort when working on a group task in which individual contributions cannot be monitored.

SOCIAL LOAFING
When their contributions cannot be individually monitored, people have a tendency to loaf, working less hard than they would otherwise and relying on the efforts of others to get the job done.

One phenomenon that runs counter to the standard social facilitation effects is what social psychologists call **social loafing**, the tendency to exert less effort when working on a group task in which individual contributions cannot be monitored (Hoeksema-van Orden, Gaillard, & Buunk, 1998; Karau & Williams, 1995; Plaks & Higgins, 2000; Price, Harrison, & Gavin, 2006; Williams, Harkins, & Latané, 1981). If you and your friends have to move a couch up a flight of stairs, for example, you might be tempted to coast a bit and hope that your friends' more vigorous efforts will get the job done. In these situations, people often loaf because their contributions are not seen as crucial to the success of the effort and because their individual contributions—and hence they themselves—can't be assessed.

LOOKING BACK

Even the most minimal group situation—the mere presence of a single other person—can influence performance, as can concerns about being evaluated. The presence of others is arousing, and arousal accentuates a person's existing performance tendencies. Easy tasks are made easier, and difficult tasks are made more difficult.

Group Decision Making

"[When people] come together . . . they may surpass, collectively and as a body, the quality of the few best. . . . When there are many who contribute to the process of deliberation, each can bring his share of goodness and moral prudence."
—ARISTOTLE

When people come together in groups, one of the most important things they do is make decisions. Groups that can't decide what to do or how to act don't function well. They wallow, bicker, backstab, and often split apart. You won't be surprised to know, then, that social psychologists have spent considerable energy studying how groups make decisions and what makes those decisions better or worse (Kerr, MacCoun, & Kramer, 1996; Laughlin, Hatch, Silver, & Boh, 2006; Levine & Moreland, 1990, 1998; Rose, 2011; Sommers, 2006).

Much of the research on group decision making has been guided by the assumption that decisions made by groups are typically better than decisions made by individuals. The thinking is that many heads are better than one. And indeed, when groups and individuals are presented with problems for which there are precise, factual answers, groups are more likely than the average individual to come up with the correct solution (Laughlin & Ellis, 1986).

Yet in many contexts, group decisions are no better than those made by individuals. The key to understanding such contexts is to recognize that although arriving at a best possible solution to a problem may be the *group's* most important goal, it may not be the most important goal for any of the individual group members. Individuals may be more concerned with how they will be judged by everyone else, how they can avoid hurting someone's feelings, and how they can dodge responsibility if things go wrong. When people get together to make group decisions, some predictable social psychological processes unfold that can undermine the stated goal of arriving at the best possible choice.

Groupthink

In informal settings where social harmony is all-important and the costs of making an incorrect decision are not great, it's hardly surprising that group pressure to be agreeable can lead to defective decision making. But what happens when life and death are literally at stake and the incentives to "get it right" are high? In those contexts, surely people wouldn't go along with faulty reasoning merely to preserve group harmony or to avoid embarrassment, would they? In fact, they would—and they often do.

Irving Janis carefully analyzed a number of decisions made at the very highest levels of the U.S. government and found evidence of just this sort of faulty, and

often calamitous, group decision making (Janis, 1972, 1982; see also Esser, 1998). Here are a few of the fiascos Janis studied:

- The Kennedy administration's decision to foster the overthrow of Fidel Castro's regime by depositing a group of CIA-trained Cuban refugees on the beaches of Cuba's Bay of Pigs but failing to provide air cover. (The refugees were captured in short order, thus humiliating the United States internationally, both for its role in trying to undermine a sovereign nation and for initially denying its involvement in the affair.)
- The Johnson administration's decision to increase the number of American soldiers fighting in Vietnam. (This policy failed to advance U.S. objectives in the region and substantially increased the number of lives lost.)
- The conclusion by the U.S. naval high command that extra precautions were not needed at Pearl Harbor despite warnings of an imminent attack by the Japanese. (This had severe repercussions on December 7, 1941, the "day of infamy," when the Japanese destroyed a large part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet at the Pearl Harbor naval base in a surprise attack.)

groupthink Faulty thinking by members of highly cohesive groups in which the critical scrutiny that should be devoted to the issues at hand is subverted by social pressures to reach consensus.

Janis attributed these disastrous decisions to **groupthink**, a kind of faulty thinking by highly cohesive groups in which the critical scrutiny that should be devoted to the issues at hand is subverted by social pressures to reach consensus. Other investigators have made the same claim about more recent disasters, such as the ill-fated launches of the space shuttles *Challenger* and *Columbia* and other consequential government decisions (Esser & Lindoerfer, 1989; Glanz & Schwartz, 2003; Rose, 2011).

SYMPTOMS AND SOURCES OF GROUPTHINK According to Janis, groupthink is the compromised decision making of a group, fueled by a shallow examination of information, a narrow consideration of alternatives, and a sense of invulnerability or moral superiority (Janis, 1972). Especially under the direction of a strong leader, groups may discourage others from coming forward with dissenting ideas and assessments, ignore or reject alternative viewpoints, and end up overly confident about the wisdom and moral correctness of their proposed solutions. Thus, the very source of a group's potentially superior decision making—the airing of differing opinions and the presentation of varied facts and perspectives—never comes into play (**Figure 12.4**).

The historical record shows that social psychological forces have had a hand in numerous instances of faulty decision making. Less clear, however, is whether these psychological processes cluster together to produce a recognizable condition of groupthink (Henningsen, Henningsen, Eden, & Cruz, 2006). Do such conditions as cohesiveness, insularity, and high stress tend to occur together, or are they separate variables that each might lead to groupthink in separate ways? And are symptoms of groupthink *essential* ingredients of this sort of faulty decision making? Questions like these have not been adequately resolved, and the evidence gathered to test Janis's thesis has been mixed (Aldag & Fuller, 1993; Rose, 2011; Tetlock, Peterson, McGuire, Chang, & Feld, 1992). Nonetheless, his observations have been useful in identifying social factors that can lead to calamitous decisions, as well as factors that can improve group decision making.

For example, strong, directive leaders who make their preferences known sometimes intimidate even the most accomplished group members and stifle

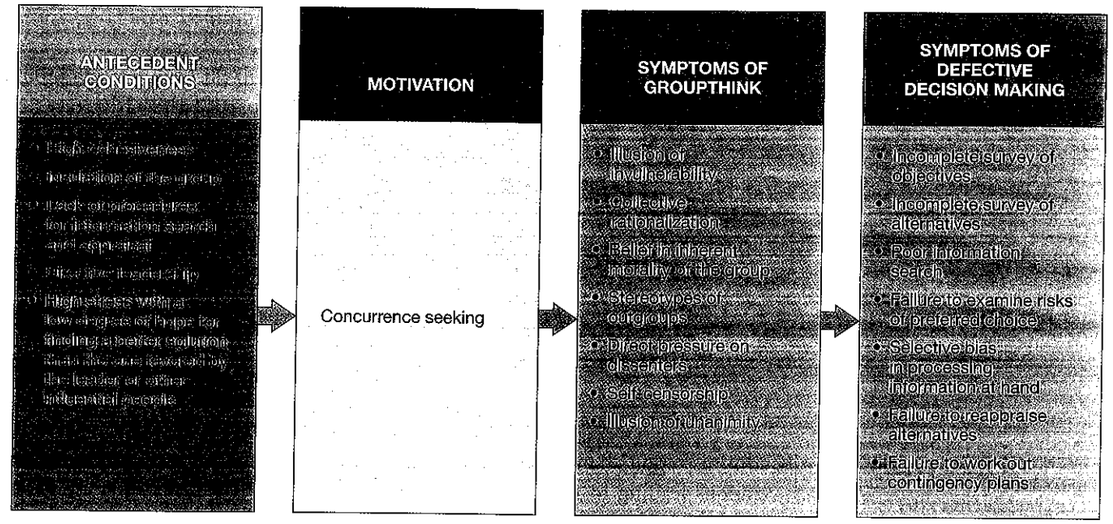


FIGURE 12.4
ELEMENTS OF JANIS'S GROUPTHINK HYPOTHESIS
Certain conditions lead decision-making groups to be excessively concerned with seeking consensus, which detracts from a full, rational analysis of the existing problem.
Source: Adapted from Janis & Mann, 1977, p. 132.

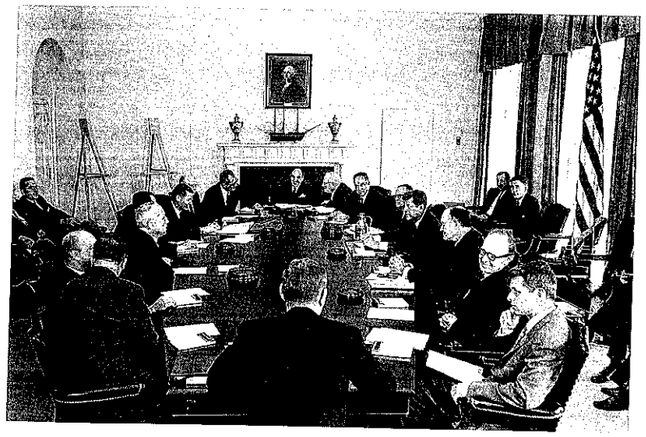
vigorous discussion (Hildreth & Anderson, 2016; McCauley, 1998). Also, just as Janis contends, at times the issue that must be decided is so stressful that groups seek the reassurance and comfort of premature or illusory consensus. In addition, both strong leaders and the drive to find consensus breed **self-censorship**, the decision to withhold information or opinions. Janis reports that Arthur Schlesinger, a member of President Kennedy's inner circle during the Bay of Pigs deliberations, was ever afterward haunted

self-censorship Withholding information or opinions in group discussions.

> for having kept so silent during those crucial discussions in the Cabinet Room. . . . I can only explain my failure to do more than raise a few timid questions by reporting that one's impulse to blow the whistle on this nonsense was simply undone by the circumstances of the discussion. (Quoted in Janis, 1982, p. 39)

Some of the participants in that fiasco have written that the pressures to agree with the flawed plan were so great because the group was newly created, and the participants were reluctant to step on each other's toes. In contrast, by the time that same group came together to deliberate over subsequent crises, they had been around the block with one another and were more willing to offer and accept criticism without worrying so much about threatening their relationship with the group.

PREVENTING GROUPTHINK In light of the perils of groupthink, Janis offers several ideas for improving group deliberations (see also Lu, Yuan, & McLeod, 2012). Freer, more vigorous discussion is likely to take place, for example, if group leaders refrain from making their opinions or preferences known at the



PREVENTING GROUPTHINK
John F. Kennedy's cabinet met during the Cuban missile crisis to try to resolve the impasse with the Soviets over Soviet missiles in Cuba. They took steps to avoid groupthink by encouraging vigorous debate and making recommendations based on unbiased analysis.

beginning. Groups can also avoid the tunnel vision and illusion of consensus by making sure the group isn't cut off from outside input. People who weren't part of the early stages of a discussion can provide a fresh perspective and also put the brakes on any rash actions that might otherwise develop. Finally, a similar safeguard against rash action and unsound argumentation is to designate one person in the group to play devil's advocate—to be given every incentive to name any and all weaknesses in the group's proposed plan of action.

In addition to his analysis of foreign policy fiascos, Janis also examined a number of highly successful decisions, including the Kennedy administration's handling of the Cuban missile crisis, and claimed that the deliberations leading to these successful decisions were not marked by symptoms of groupthink. Janis noted how President Kennedy and his advisers, embarrassed by the Bay of Pigs disaster, took steps to ensure that all future policies would be evaluated more thoroughly from then on. In the case of the Cuban missile crisis, the president frequently excused himself from the group so as not to constrain the discussion. He also brought in outside experts to critique his advisers' analysis and tentative plans, and he appointed specific individuals (his brother, Robert Kennedy, and Theodore Sorensen) to act as devil's advocates (see **Box 12.1** for other behaviors that make for smarter group decision making). These safeguards seem to have paid off because the negotiations that kept Soviet missiles out of Cuba were one of the enduring highlights of the tragically short Kennedy administration.

Group Polarization

group polarization The tendency for group decisions to be more extreme than those made by individuals; whatever way the group as a whole is leaning, group discussion tends to make it lean further in that direction.

Today's headlines of acrimonious elections, gridlock in Congress, the culture wars over immigration and abortion, and protests on college campuses suggest that we are living in a time of profound discord. Might basic group processes have something to do with the social divisions we are experiencing? One contributor to such social divisions is **group polarization**, whereby group decisions tend to be more *extreme* than those made by individuals. Whatever way the majority of the individuals are leaning, group discussion tends to make them lean even further in that direction (Esteban & Schneider, 2008; Myers & Bishop, 1971; Zuber, Crott, & Werner, 1992).

"It's agreed, then, that we move forward on the philodendron."

In one study, for example, French students expressed their opinions about President Charles de Gaulle (a French general during World War II) and about Americans, first individually and then again after having discussed them in groups. The results? Their initially positive sentiments toward de Gaulle became even more positive, and their initially negative sentiments toward Americans became even more negative (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969). It appears that we are more likely to hear "ugly American" from a group of foreigners than from a collection of individual foreigners.

BOX 12.1 **FOCUS ON WORK**

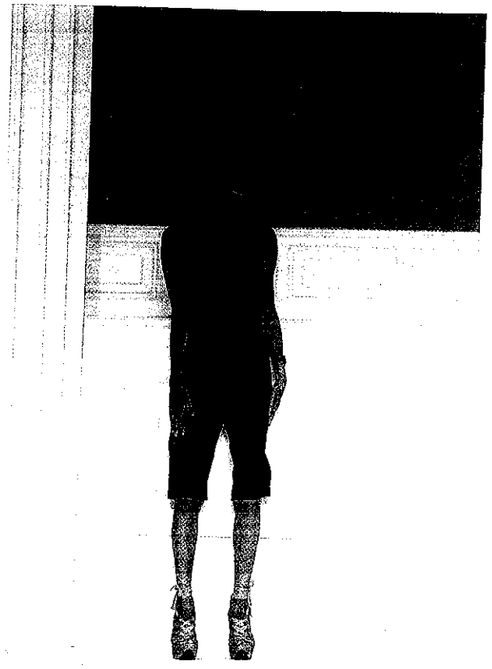
Social Determinants of Collective Intelligence

The study of groupthink is largely a story about the poor decisions groups are vulnerable to in certain conditions. This literature begs the question, What group processes make for smarter decision making? Anita Woolley and Thomas Malone have been seeking answers to this very question. In one early study in this research program, small groups of students engaged in a variety of well-tested decision-making tasks (Woolley, Chabris, Pentland, Hashmi, & Malone, 2010). The groups of participants reasoned through practical intelligence tasks, such as identifying what five things a person would need to survive alone in the desert. They tackled tasks requiring logical reasoning. They engaged in open-ended brainstorming. Each group's scores on these tasks were tallied to yield a score of the group's collective intelligence. What dynamics raised a group's collective intelligence? One hypothesis might be that it just takes one really smart person to lift the intelligence of a group's decision making. This proved not to be the case. How well each individual did on decision-making tasks prior to the study had no influence on the collective intelligence of that person's group. Instead, groups that had more empathic individuals, as assessed in an emotion recognition task prior to the study, had higher collective intelligence scores. Also, groups that practiced effective turn-taking as they deliberated, where each member had the chance to voice ideas freely, scored higher in their collective intelligence. Groups led by one domineering person prone to monologues and decrees proved to be less intelligent. And finally, as the proportion of women in the group rose, so, too, did the team's collective intelligence, presumably because women are more likely to engage in social behaviors—empathic listening, effective turn-taking, more open-ended discussion—that promote collective intelligence.

Why does group discussion lead to more extreme positions by group members? Why is it that individuals in a group don't simply conform to the group average instead of moving the group in one direction or the other? Research indicates that two causes work in concert to produce group polarization. One involves the persuasiveness of the information brought up during group discussion; the other involves people's tendency to try to claim the "right" position among the various opinions within the group. Let's consider each explanation in turn.

THE "PERSUASIVE ARGUMENTS" ACCOUNT When trying to decide on a course of action, people consider the merit of different arguments. It stands to reason that when people are predisposed to favor one course of action in a given situation, they can think of more and better arguments for that action. Of course, any one person in the group is unlikely to think of *all* the arguments in favor of one alternative or the other. So, when the issue is discussed by the group, each person is likely to be exposed to new arguments. This expanded pool of arguments, in turn, is likely to be skewed in favor of the action the people were predisposed to.

The net result, then, is that group discussion tends to expose the average person to even more arguments in favor of the position that the average person was already inclined to take. This exposure serves to strengthen those initial inclinations, and group polarization happens. This explanation suggests that personal, face-to-face discussion is not necessary to produce group polarization. All that's needed is exposure to the pool of arguments that true group discussion tends to elicit. Several studies have tested this idea by having participants read the arguments of other group members in private so that they are exposed to the arguments without knowing who in the group might have advanced them. In support of the persuasive arguments interpretation,



RISK TAKERS
The value placed on risk taking is reflected in the widespread admiration of bold entrepreneurs who took big chances and ended up reshaping entire industries. Vera Wang altered the landscape of bridal fashion and Steve Jobs transformed the world of computers, music, and communications.

these studies have shown that reading others' arguments is indeed sufficient to produce group polarization (Burnstein, Vinokur, & Trope, 1973).

THE "SOCIAL COMPARISON" INTERPRETATION Another process that encourages group polarization is the very human tendency to compare ourselves with others. "Am I as smart as most people here?" "Do my neighbors all drive better cars than I do?" "Am I getting as much out of life as everyone else?" Consider how these sorts of comparisons might lead to group polarization. For example, when evaluating an issue for which people are inclined to take risks (for example, a career choice early in life), people are likely to think they're more tolerant of risk than the average person. In this case, riskiness is valued, and people like to think of themselves as having more than an average amount of a valued trait. On the other hand, when considering an issue for which people are inclined to be cautious (investing money that belongs to a beloved relative), most people are likely to think they are more prudent or risk averse than the average person. People tend to think, in other words, that they are farther out on the correct side of the opinion distribution on most issues.

What happens when everyone in a group is inclined to make the same choice—say, a risky choice—and are also inclined to think of themselves as more likely than average to take risks? Many people will inevitably find that their tolerance of risk is closer to average than they thought—perhaps even below average. This realization leads some individuals to attempt to show that they are in fact more risk tolerant than average. The group as a whole, then, becomes a bit riskier on those issues for which a somewhat risky approach initially seemed warranted. Similarly, the group would become a bit more conservative on those issues for which a somewhat cautious approach seemed warranted. In other words, the desire to distinguish oneself from others by expressing a more extreme opinion in the "right" direction leads predictably to the group polarization effect. As one journalist put it, "People are always trying to outdo one another; if everyone in a group agrees that men are jerks, then someone in the group is bound to argue that they're assholes" (Kolbert, 2009, p. 112).

A CLOSER LOOK

Taking It to Extremes: Politics and Group Polarization

Group polarization, the tendency for group members to embrace more extreme positions after discussing an issue, can be intensified when the group consists largely of like-minded individuals. Such was the focus of a 2007 study on conservative versus liberal political views in the United States. The results showed clear-cut group polarization: after deliberating with ideologically similar others, liberals became even more liberal and conservatives became even more conservative. Moreover, the political beliefs within each group became increasingly similar.

For Critical Thinking

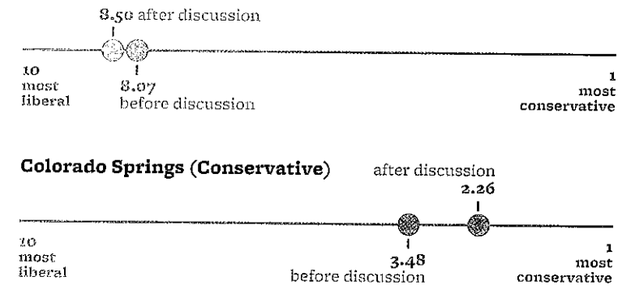
1. Elaborate on the findings of the group polarization study using what you have learned about *confirmation bias, conformity,* and *social identity theory.*

2. What are some implications of group polarization in contexts such as courtroom juries, hiring committees, and university classrooms and departments?

Polarization on Hot-Button Issues

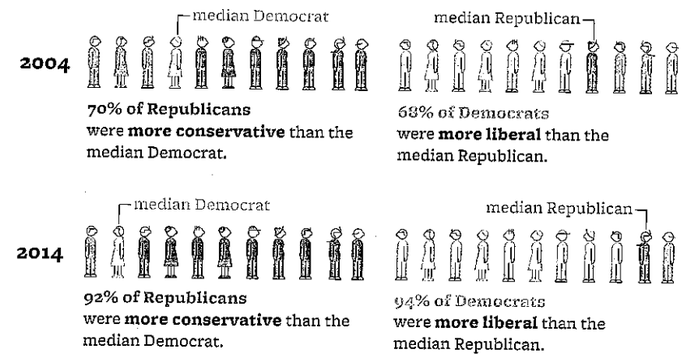
In this study, residents of relatively liberal Boulder, Colorado, and relatively conservative Colorado Springs had 15-minute discussions about climate change, affirmative action, and same-sex civil unions with people from their own community. Before and after the discussions, participants rated their views on the topics on a 1–10 scale. The graph shows participants' average ratings for the three topics.

Overall Polarization among Groups



Polarization of U.S. Political Views

Group polarization has broader implications for the political climate. As people seek out homogeneous social environments, they are increasingly exposed only to views that resemble their own, which pushes their views further toward the extremes.



Soures: Colorado study: Schkade, Sunstein, & Hastie, 2007; U.S. political views: Pew Research Center, 2014.

THE DANGERS OF GROUPTHINK
Postmortem analyses of the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 identified examples of apparent groupthink on the part of those responsible for the decision.

The social comparison interpretation can be tested by doing just the opposite of what was done to test the persuasive arguments account: expose people to everyone else's positions without conveying the content of any of the arguments for or against one position or another. As predicted, in one experiment when people were told only about others' positions and not provided any arguments or reasons underlying those positions, the group polarization effect was observed (Teger & Pruitt, 1967). But the group polarization effect in this experiment was weaker than usual, as would be expected if both persuasive arguments and social comparison contribute to the effect.

LOOKING BACK

Groupthink can lead to defective decision making as people in highly cohesive groups censor their reservations, reject alternative viewpoints, and succumb to group pressures. To avoid this problem, the group should encourage the airing of all viewpoints, leaders should refrain from stating their opinions at the outset, and someone should be designated to play devil's advocate. Group decision making can also lead to group polarization, in which group decisions tend to be more extreme than those made by individuals due to the force of persuasive arguments and social comparison.

Leadership and Power

Social hierarchies are a natural part of group life. So are leaders and people who are led. When children as young as 2 join their first groups—their packs of friends in preschool—some quickly rise to the top rungs of status. When middle-school children form groups of friends at summer camp, they quickly identify the leaders and those who are more likely to follow (Savin-Williams, 1977). Even in the egalitarian confines of a college dorm, hallmates within the first week of living together agree on who are the floor leaders and who are not (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001).

Groups quickly evolve into hierarchies because having leaders helps solve some of the problems inherent in group living (Anderson & Brown, 2010). The allocation of resources can give rise to intense conflict between group members, and a social hierarchy provides rules for dividing up resources that, although often unfair (those on top get more), can dampen or avoid that strife. Group decision making can sometimes be unmanageably complex, and hierarchies provide a shared notion of who guides group discussion and how decisions are made. The collective actions in which groups engage demand that individual behaviors be coordinated, and having leaders helps get the group going and provides needed order. Finally, group life often requires that individuals sacrifice their own interests to benefit the group, and leaders (especially charismatic leaders) can help motivate selfless action.

That leaders and hierarchies are an inevitable part of group life leads us to two important questions: Who rises to positions of leadership? And what happens to leaders once they're in positions of power?

Characteristics of Leaders

How do people rise to positions of leadership in social hierarchies? The influential Italian philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli offered his hypotheses in *The Prince*, the most influential book ever written on the nature of leadership. His thesis, formulated amid the turmoil of sixteenth-century Italy, is that people rise to positions of leadership by being deceptive, by pitting competitors against one another, and by coercion, fear, and manipulation rather than directness, honesty, and inspiration (Machiavelli, 1532/2003). This strategy can be effective in short-term encounters—for example, if you have to negotiate a single deal (Gunnthorsdottir, McCabe, & Smith, 2002). But on balance, studies find that people who adhere to the Machiavellian philosophy of power actually report feeling less powerful in their work and personal lives than other people (Anderson, John & Keltner, 2012).

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS
Influential Italian statesman Niccolò Machiavelli.

Actually, one of the most important determinants of leadership is skillful expertise relevant to the goals of the group; there is simply no substitute for having specific talents that enable the group to achieve its goals (Anderson & Brown, 2010; French & Raven, 1959). The emergency room nurse who has the most adroit and timely skills in surgery will rise in the ranks at that hospital; the software engineer who knows how to write the best code will rise in today's tech world. Cameron Anderson and Gavin Kilduff have found that groups tend to choose quickly as leaders those individuals who demonstrate knowledge and skill in tasks that are central to the group's identity and goals (Anderson & Kilduff, 2009). When leaders have the knowledge and skill that enable better group performance, everyone benefits.

Of course, leadership is not based on expertise, knowledge, and technical skill alone. Groups are more likely to be effective if they're cohesive and have a sense of unity and common cause—when they function smoothly together and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Thus, individuals who have the social skills to build strong, cooperative relations among group members also increase their chances of rising to positions of leadership. In summer camps, the more socially dynamic, outgoing children tend to become leaders (Savin-Williams, 1977). In college dorms and in the workplace, individuals who are socially engaged and adept at building and maintaining relationships are more likely to achieve status and reach positions of leadership (Anderson et al., 2001; Judge, Bono, Hies, & Gerhardt, 2002). And emotionally intelligent people, who can read the moods and needs of others, tend to be effective managers (Côté & Miners, 2006). Even in our close primate relatives, the socially skilled chimpanzees and bonobos who build strong alliances, negotiate conflicts between subordinates, and ensure just allocations of resources are the ones who acquire and maintain elevated positions of rank in their primate hierarchies (de Waal, 1986).

Finally, alongside expertise and social skills, someone who can provide rewards to the group is more likely to rise to a leadership role. Studies show that individuals who share resources with others are more likely to rank highly in

social hierarchies (Anderson & Brown, 2010; Willer, 2009). Our tendency to grant authority to the more generous group members is another example of how leadership often comes to those whose traits and talents promise to benefit the group as a whole.

The Elements of Power

When people assume leadership positions, they experience many changes: more responsibility and the challenge of managing people with diverse needs and interests, but also increased wealth and prestige, the respect of colleagues, and that great intangible that so many in history have lusted after—power. And with power, a person's behavior is likely to change in many ways, sometimes in ways we wouldn't expect.

power The ability to control one's own outcomes and those of others; the freedom to act.

To understand the influence of power on social behavior, it's important to describe it more carefully. **Power** is usually defined as the ability to control one's own outcomes and those of others; it's also described as the freedom to act and to be free of constraints (Fiske, 1993). In the most general sense, your power is about your capacity to influence others and make a difference in the world (Keltner, 2016). Power is related to three other kinds of social rank—status, authority, and dominance—but it's not synonymous with them. **Status** is the result of an evaluation of social attributes that produces differences in respect and prominence among group members (French & Raven, 1959). It's possible to have power without status (think of a dictator or a corrupt politician) and to have status without power (think of a religious leader in a slow-moving line at the Department of Motor Vehicles). **Authority** is power that derives from institutionalized roles or formalized positions within a hierarchy (Weber, 1947). But power, of course, can exist in the absence of formal roles (such as within informal social groups). **Dominance** is behavior enacted with the goal of acquiring or demonstrating power. Yet power can be attained without any attempt to establish dominance (as with leaders who attain their positions through their efforts to create goodwill among group members).

status The outcome of an evaluation of attributes that produces differences in respect and prominence.

authority Power that derives from institutionalized role or arrangements.

dominance Behavior enacted with the goal of acquiring or demonstrating power.

POWER AND INTIMIDATION
High-power people often feel less constrained by social rules about appropriate behavior than people of lower rank. President Lyndon Johnson approaches Senator Theodore Green more closely than is generally socially acceptable, touches his arm, and leans in close to his face as he seeks to intimidate him into voting the way Johnson wants him to.

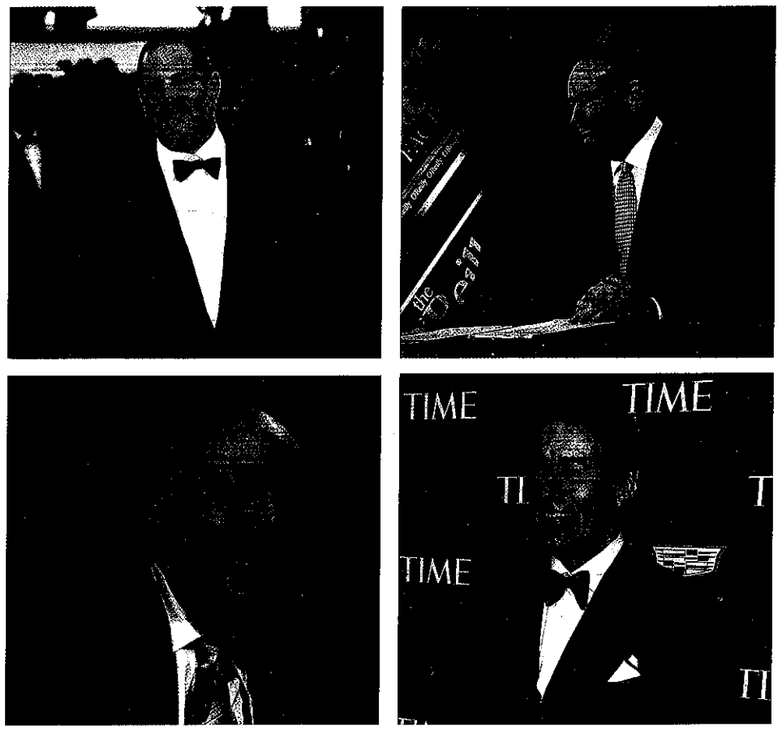
The Influence of Power on Behavior

Many chapters of human history are defined by astonishing abuses of power, such as the horrifying genocides perpetrated by Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, and Bashar al-Assad. This impulsive, often immoral side to power is reflected in such time-honored sayings as "Power corrupts" and "Money [a source of power] is the root of all evil." And it begs for an explanation from social psychology.

The **approach/inhibition theory** of power offers one account of how simply having power can lead to its abuse (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). If, as noted earlier, power involves a lack of constraint and the freedom to act as one wishes, when people experience elevated power, they should be less concerned about the evaluations of others and more inclined to engage in behavior that satisfies their goals and desires (Guinote, 2007, 2017; Guinote & Chen, 2018). In contrast, reduced power is associated with increased constraint and a vulnerability to the actions of others. As a result, the experience of diminished power should make a person more vigilant and careful in making judgments and decisions and more inhibited with respect to taking action. In effect, power gives the green light to an individual to pursue personal goals and desires. Reduced power is more like a yellow light: caution is in order.

approach/inhibition theory A theory maintaining that high-power individuals are inclined to go after their goals and make quick (and sometimes rash) judgments, whereas low-power individuals are more likely to constrain their behavior and pay careful attention to others.

The approach/inhibition theory of power makes two core predictions. The first concerns the influence of power on how people perceive others. High-power individuals, inclined to go after their own goals, are predicted to be



ABUSES OF POWER
As the approach/inhibition theory of power maintains, being in a position of power can lead people, such as the powerful men shown here (film producer Harvey Weinstein, Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, former talk show host and television journalist Charlie Rose, and the late Fox News Chairman and CEO Roger Ailes), to ignore many of the usual constraints on behavior and to act in ways that promote their desires.

"Power is like drinking gin on an empty stomach. You feel dizzy, you get drunk, you lose your balance."
—POPE FRANCIS

"Power is the ultimate aphrodisiac."
—HENRY KISSINGER, FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE

less careful and systematic in how they assess others (Brauer, Chambres, Niedenthal, & Chatard-Pannetier, 2004). Consistent with this hypothesis, high-power individuals are more likely to stereotype others rather to than carefully attend to individuating information about them (Fiske, 2010). High-power people are also less accurate judges of others' emotions (Gonzaga, Keltner, & Ward, 2008).

One dramatic demonstration of the empathy failures associated with elevated power was provided by Joseph Magee and his colleagues (Magee, Galinsky, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006). These investigators first induced people to feel relatively powerful or powerless by having them recall a time when they exerted control over another person or when someone else exerted control over them. Participants then performed a simple perspective-taking task: drawing the letter *E* on their forehead so that someone across from them could read it. This task requires the participant to take the other person's perspective and draw the *E* in reverse. As you can see in **Figure 12.5**, participants feeling a surge of power were much less likely to draw the *E* in a way that took the other person's perspective into account. Power reduces the ability to take the perspective of others (Galinsky, Rucker, & Magee, 2016).

The empathy deficits produced by power can have unfortunate consequences. Theresa Vescio and her colleagues have found that powerful men who stereotype female employees by focusing exclusively on their weaknesses tend to grant female employees fewer resources (Vescio, Gervais, Snyder, & Hoover, 2005), evaluate them more negatively, and anticipate less success by female employees than by male employees (Vescio, Snyder, & Butz, 2003). In a similar vein, feeling powerful leads prejudiced whites to focus to a greater extent on the weaknesses of black employees relative to other employees (Vescio, Gervais, Heidenreich, & Snyder, 2006).

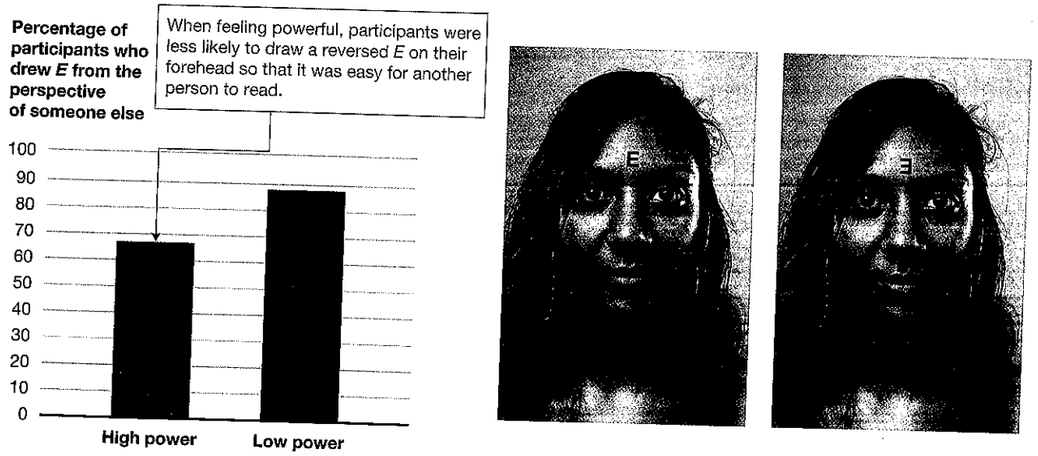


FIGURE 12.5
POWER AND EMPATHY FAILURES
This study showed how power diminishes one's capacity to consider the perspective of others.
Source: Magee et al., 2006.

These findings likely converge with your own observations that powerful individuals often appear somewhat out of touch, whereas the powerless seem more clued in. But are there costs to the heightened vigilance that low-power individuals maintain as they carefully attend to others? There are indeed. The experience of diminished power makes people less flexible in their thoughts and less able to shift their attention to meet the varied demands of the task at hand (Smith & Trope, 2006). For example, Pamela Smith and her colleagues induced people to feel elevated power or diminished power by priming them with low- or high-power words (*obey, dominate*) or having them recall an experience of low or high power (Smith, Jostmann, Galinsky, & van Dijk, 2008). Participants then worked on a variety of cognitive tasks. In one task, words were flashed one at a time on a computer screen, and participants indicated whether a current word on the screen matched the word presented two trials earlier. In another, the Stroop task, participants had to name the color of the ink (red, for example) in which a word (*sedan*, for example) was written—a task made more difficult on trials in which the word itself referred to a color different from the font color (*blue*). Performance on these tasks requires considerable cognitive flexibility and control. In the Stroop task, for example, the participant must ignore the meaning of the word when naming the color of the ink in which it is written. As predicted, participants randomly assigned to feel relatively powerless proved less effective in performing these cognitive tasks. The vigilant and narrowed focus that comes with a sense of reduced power can diminish an individual's ability to think flexibly and creatively.

The second core element of approach/inhibition theory is the prediction that power should make people behave in less constrained and sometimes more inappropriate ways. Take sex, for example. Do you think it's mainly CEOs, politicians, and rock stars who exhibit sexually inappropriate behavior? Think again. Social psychologists have found that just giving people the faintest whiff of power—for example, by having them recall an experience when they had power or having them read power-related words (priming them with ideas of power)—can lead them to act in sexually assertive and potentially problematic ways. People who have a good deal of power, as well as individuals who are primed with feelings of power, are more likely to touch others and approach them closely, to have sexual ideas running through their minds, to feel attraction for a stranger, to overestimate another's sexual interest in them, and to flirt in an overly forward fashion (Kunstman & Maner, 2011; Rudman & Borgida, 1995). In one survey of 1,261 employees, the higher an individual's rank in the organization, the more likely he or she was to report having had sexual affairs when married (Lammers, Stapel, & Galinsky, 2011). Power differences are almost always involved when men sexually harass women (and less typically men) at work with patterns of inappropriate comments, sexually forward behaviors, and coercion and threat (Cortina & Berdahl, 2008). More generally, power frees the individual from being concerned about the constraints of sexual norms and enables more disinhibited sexual behavior (Lammers & Maner, 2016). Power would indeed appear to be the ultimate aphrodisiac—but mainly for the person feeling powerful.

Perhaps most unsettling are studies showing that elevated power is associated with increased antisocial behavior. At work it's the more powerful who are more likely to interrupt and swear at others (Pearson & Porath, 1999). It's

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."
—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"The fundamental concept in social science is Power, in the same sense that Energy is the fundamental concept in physics. . . . The laws of social dynamics are laws which can only be stated in terms of power."
—BERTRAND RUSSELL

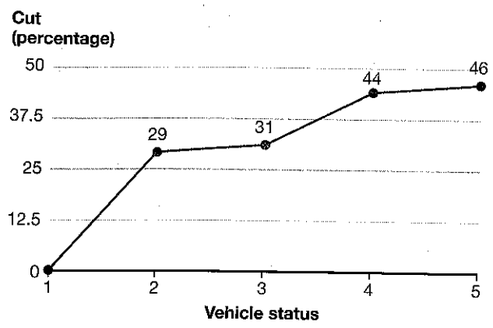


FIGURE 12.6
POWER AND UNETHICAL BEHAVIOR
Power can lead to more impulsive behavior, as in this study where driving a fancy car led drivers to be more likely to cut illegally in front of a pedestrian.
Source: Piff et al., 2012.

wealthy white teenagers who are more likely to shoplift than poorer students of color (Blanco et al., 2008). Power even produces more antisocial behavior in how people drive. Paul Piff and his colleagues had a confederate stand at an edge of a marked crosswalk on a busy street abutting a university campus in California (Piff, Stancato, Côté, Mendoza-Denton, & Keltner, 2012). In California, it is state law for the driver to give the right of way to the pedestrian. Piff and colleagues then kept track of which cars stopped for the pedestrian and which did not, noting the status of the car on a 5-point scale (where 1 is lowest in status and 5 is highest). As you can see in **Figure 12.6**, drivers of the fancy cars stopped 46.2 percent of the time; drivers of the low-status cars always obeyed the law.

It's important to bear in mind that the consistent effect of power is that it disinhibits. As the great presidential biographer Robert Caro observed, "Power reveals." Power encourages people to express their underlying inclinations, both good and bad. In one study that illustrates this idea, Serena Chen and her colleagues preselected participants who were either self-interested and exchange oriented or more compassionate and communally oriented (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001). Each participant was then randomly assigned to a high-power or low-power position in a clever, subtle manner: high-power participants were seated in a snazzy leather professorial chair during the experiment; low-power people were seated in a plain chair. Participants were then asked to complete a long questionnaire with the help of another participant, who was late. Consistent with the idea that power amplifies the expression of preexisting tendencies, the high-power communally oriented participants performed the lion's share of the task. In contrast, the more self-interested participants with high power acted in a more self-serving fashion, leaving more of the task for the other participant (see also Gordon & Chen, 2013). The same difference was not found between low-power communal versus exchange participants. The effects of power, then, depend on who holds it. Power corrupts the corruptible.

"I'm not a machine, Deborah. I can't just turn my greed on and off."

LOOKING BACK

Individuals are more likely to become leaders if they have knowledge and skills that help a group get along and reach its goals. Power is the freedom from constraints to act and the ability to control one's own outcomes and those of others. Knowledgeable, outgoing, and socially adept people tend to assume positions of leadership within a group. Power tends to make people less careful in their thoughts about others and more impulsive in their behavior.

Deindividuation and the Psychology of Mobs

Consider the following quite similar reactions to two very different events in San Francisco. The first involved the tragic circumstances surrounding the murders of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, San Francisco's first openly gay supervisor, in 1978. On November 27 of that year, Milk's political rival Dan White shot and killed both Moscone and Milk in City Hall. In a rather swift trial, White's lawyers argued that he was minimally responsible for his deeds because of severe depression. His lawyers claimed that his depression led him to subsist on a junk-food diet, which further "diminished his capacity" to distinguish right from wrong. These tactics, ridiculed in the press as the "Twinkie defense," were nonetheless effective. Instead of a first-degree murder conviction, White was found guilty of the lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter and faced a maximum sentence of eight years in prison. With good behavior, he would be eligible for parole in less than five years. (White ended up serving a little over five years, but 22 months after his release from prison, he committed suicide.)

The verdict infuriated members of San Francisco's gay community. Many thought the verdict would have been more severe if a supervisor other than Harvey Milk had been slain. The evening of the verdict, gay activists organized a peaceful protest march, but events quickly got out of hand. It began with several demonstrators smashing the glass windows and doors of City Hall. Over the pleas of rally organizers urging calm, the crowd began to chant, "Kill Dan White! Get Dan White!" Vandalism and violence soon intensified. When police moved in to quell the disturbance, a battle ensued. The demonstrators threw rocks and bottles at police, set fire to numerous police cars, and looted nearby stores. They were met with a strong police response. In the end, 12 police cars were gutted by fire, 20 police officers were injured, and 70 demonstrators needed medical attention. Eight people were arrested. As unfortunate and destructive as the rioting was, it nevertheless strikes most people as understandable. However

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MOBS
(A) Upon learning of the killing of Harvey Milk and George Moscone by Dan White, large crowds of demonstrators gathered to mourn their passing. (B) When Dan White was given a light sentence in his trial for the murder, demonstrators again took to the streets, this time rioting and setting cars on fire in protest of what they saw as a travesty of justice.

much they might disapprove, most observers would not think of the rioters' actions as bizarre: the rioters were lashing out against a justice system they thought had failed.

Now consider the striking similarity to the violence that erupted in the same city three years later in response to a very different kind of event: the San Francisco 49ers' *victory* over the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl XVI, a victory that earned the city its first professional championship in any sport. Within minutes of the game's conclusion, giddy fans poured out of homes and bars and into the streets to celebrate. At first it was all harmless, celebratory stuff—horns blared, beer was chugged, champagne was sprayed. As the evening wore on, however, events took a more sinister turn, eventually echoing what had transpired in the aftermath of the Dan White verdict. Bonfires were started in an intersection and atop a car. When police tried to restore order, they were met with a barrage of stones, bricks, and bottles. Before the streets were cleared, 8 police officers and 100 others were treated for injuries, and 70 arrests were made.

Deindividuation and the Group Mind

"Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, . . . their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a crowd puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind."
—GUSTAV LE BON

These two events in San Francisco's history, as well as a great many similar events around the world, challenge us to understand how large groups of people can transform into unruly mobs. How do peaceful gatherings spin out of control and become violent? Why do law-abiding citizens, when immersed in a crowd, engage in acts of destruction they would never commit alone? How can we understand the psychology of "the mob"?

Social psychologists have addressed these questions in the context of examining the *emergent properties of groups*—behaviors that emerge only when people are in groups. People do things in groups that they would never do alone. Indeed, we often hear people say that a group has "a mind of its own." As a result, the behavior of large groups of people is more than the sum of the behavioral tendencies of its individual members. You might dance, sing, and play air guitar at a rock concert with all your friends, but you wouldn't likely do that if the band were playing a private concert just for you.

EMERGENT PROPERTIES OF GROUPS
Some behaviors surface only when people are part of a group and submerge their individual identities into the group. The people in this flash mob converged at this spot after receiving e-mails telling them when and where to gather. Their actions reflect the fact that they are in a group—behavior that would be highly unlikely if each of them were there alone.

One of the first people to offer an extensive analysis of the psychology of the mob was a nineteenth-century French sociologist, Gustav Le Bon. Le Bon thought that people tended to lose their higher mental faculties of reason and deliberation when they were in large groups: "By the mere fact that he forms part of an organised crowd, a man descends several rungs in the ladder of civilization" (1895, p. 52). For Le Bon, this descent stems from the collection of individual, rational minds giving way to a less self-reflective "group mind."

Social psychologists have expanded on Le Bon's ideas by examining how the thought patterns of individuals change when they come together in large groups and how these changes make them more susceptible to group influence. Most of the time, we feel individuated—that is, we feel individually identifiable by others, we consider ourselves individually responsible for our actions, and we are concerned with the propriety and future consequences of our behavior. But as a number of social psychologists have noted, we often experience a loss of individual identity—a sense of **deindividuation**—when we're in a large group (Diener, 1980; Zimbardo, 1970). When in large crowds, we sometimes feel "lost in the crowd," caught up in what's happening in the moment, with a diminished sense of responsibility for our actions.

deindividuation A reduced sense of individual identity accompanied by diminished self-regulation that can come over people when they are in a large group.

A Model of Deindividuation

Philip Zimbardo (1970) proposed a theoretical model of deindividuation that specifies how certain conditions create the kind of psychological state that promotes the impulsive and often destructive behaviors observed in mobs (**Figure 12.7**). Perhaps the most important of these conditions are the anonymity individuals enjoy by blending in with a large group and the diffusion of responsibility that occurs when there are many people to share the blame. These conditions, along with the arousal, heightened activity, and sensory overload that often accompany being immersed in a large group, lead to the internal state of deindividuation. The deindividuated state is characterized by diminished self-observation and self-evaluation and a lessened concern with how others evaluate us.

Thus, a deindividuated person is less aware of the self, more focused on others and the immediate environment, and hence more responsive to behavioral cues from others—for good or for bad. Being in a deindividuated state lowers the threshold for engaging in actions that are typically inhibited. People are more likely to engage in a host of impulsive behaviors, both because there is more of a "push" to do so (because of increased arousal and the presence of many other impulsive people to imitate) and because the constraints that usually "pull" them back from such actions are weakened (because of a lessened sense of personal evaluation and responsibility).

What emerges is the kind of impulsive, irrational, emotional, and occasionally destructive behavior characteristic of mobs. This kind of behavior often creates its own momentum and is less responsive to stimuli that might, if a person were alone, bring it under control. Thus, Zimbardo's model of deindividuation is not an account of mob violence per se. Instead, it is a theoretical analysis

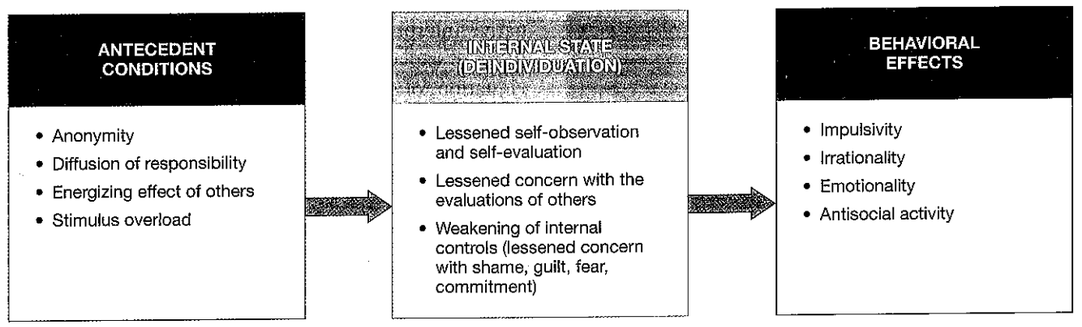


FIGURE 12.7
A THEORETICAL MODEL OF DEINDIVIDUATION
Certain conditions lead to an internal state of deindividuation, which in turn leads to impulsive behaviors that in other situations would be kept under control.
Source: Adapted from Zimbardo, 1970.

DEINDIVIDUATION AND RIOTING
When people are in a group and angry, they may let go of self-control and give in to impulses to wreak havoc. Normally law-abiding citizens merge into this crowd and break windows and smash cars with little thought to personal responsibility or the law.

of crowd-induced *impulsive* behavior—behavior that because of its very impulsivity often turns violent (Spivey & Prentice-Dunn, 1990).

One implicit element in the model is that people often find the impulsivity that accompanies deindividuation to be liberating. Zimbardo argues that people go through much of their lives in a straitjacket of cognitive control. Living under such constraints can be tiresome and stifling, so people sometimes yearn to break free and act more impulsively. In support of this idea, Zimbardo notes that virtually all societies try to safely channel the expression of this yearning by scheduling occasions when people are encouraged to "let loose." We see this in harvest rites in agrarian cultures, carnivals in religious societies, galas and festivals throughout history, and, perhaps, in the mosh pits and use of intoxicants at modern rock concerts.

Testing the Model

It should be noted at the outset that the psychology of the mob and other emergent properties are extremely difficult to study. People are on their best behavior when they enter a scientific laboratory, and it's difficult to create a situation where they will act impulsively and destructively. Also, there are ethical constraints against putting people in situations where aggressiveness and acts of destruction are likely. Therefore, some of the most informative research on the subject takes place out in the world and not in the lab (for exceptions, see Lea, Spears, & de Groot, 2001; Postmes & Spears, 1998).

This research also involves relatively few controlled experiments. Instead, it often involves the examination of archives—data originally gathered with no thought to its relevance to deindividuation. Investigators use these records to search for predicted correlations between various antecedent conditions and resultant behaviors.

DEINDIVIDUATION AND IMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR
At many rock concerts, in the spirit of deindividuated joy, people will crowd surf over their fellow concertgoers.

Because these empirical tests are not controlled experiments, they don't control for, or rule out, various alternative interpretations of the results. Indeed, you might think of explanations having nothing to do with deindividuation for some of the empirical results reported here. Even so, it's important to ask whether any one alternative interpretation can account for *all* of the relevant findings. If each finding requires a *different* alternative explanation, but all fit the model of deindividuation, the deindividuation account becomes the most likely and most parsimonious interpretation.

SUICIDE BAITING Imagine you're on your way to class when you notice a disturbance up ahead. When you get closer, you find that everyone is looking up at the top floor of a high-rise dormitory. Apparently, a student is halfway out an open window and threatening to jump. What do you do? Try to stop the tormented person from jumping? Call for help?

Hard as it may be to believe, people occasionally do just the opposite—they engage in suicide baiting, urging the person to jump. Is suicide baiting more likely when many people are gathered below? In other words, are people more likely to engage in suicide baiting when they feel deindividuated?

To answer these questions, researchers examined 15 years of newspaper accounts of suicidal jumps and averted jumps (Mann, 1981). They found 21 instances of attempted suicide, and suicide baiting occurred in 10 of them. They then analyzed the data to determine whether two variables associated with deindividuation—the cover of darkness and the presence of a large group of onlookers—were related to whether suicide baiting occurred. Quite remarkably, suicide baiting was more than twice as likely when the crowd size exceeded 300. Also, suicide baiting was more than four times as likely if the episode took place after 6 p.m. As people feel more anonymous, either by being lost in a large crowd or under the cloak of darkness, they are more inclined to egg on a potential suicide.

It's possible to question some of the details of these analyses—for example, why the cutoffs were set at 300 people and 6 p.m. It's also possible to suggest alternative interpretations: for example, the larger the group, the more likely it is to contain a psychopath who starts the baiting. However, the data are nevertheless consistent with the idea that variables leading to deindividuation also lead to antisocial behavior.

THE CONDUCT OF WAR Wars have always been a part of what English novelist and scientist C. P. Snow calls the "long and gloomy history of man." The conduct of warfare, however, has varied enormously from culture to culture and epoch to epoch. For example, warfare practices vary in their ferocity. At the high end are beheadings, ritualistic torture, and the systematic slaughter of civilian noncombatants. At the very low end would be what Tom Wolfe (1979) has described as single-combat warfare: the David and Goliath battles in which the warring parties each select a single warrior to do battle with each other. The losing side pays a price in territory or some other form of wealth, but less damage is done to both groups.

Is the brutality of warfare related to deindividuation? The theory predicts that it should be. It should be easier for people to let go of the usual prohibitions against barbarity when they feel anonymous and unaccountable for their actions. To determine whether such a relationship exists, the warfare practices of 23 non-Western cultures were investigated (Watson, 1973). The researchers examined each culture to see whether its warriors were deindividuated before battle (for example, by wearing masks or war paint) and how aggressively they waged war (whether they tortured the enemy, whether they fought to the death in all battles, and so on). As predicted, there was a strong correlation between deindividuation and aggressiveness in warfare. Among those cultures whose warriors changed their appearance before battle, 80 percent were deemed particularly aggressive; among those cultures whose warriors did not change their appearance, only 13 percent were deemed especially aggressive. When warriors are disguised in battle, they fight more ferociously. (On the other hand, the ancient Celts were in the habit of fighting

WARFARE AND DEINDIVIDUATION
Warriors in tribes that deindividuate themselves before battle by wearing war paint and war masks tend to engage in more brutal warfare practices.

naked, and they were ferocious fighters that the Romans were terrified to face. Of course, whether to consider nakedness an increase in individuation or a decrease isn't clear.)

HALLOWEEN MAYHEM For Americans, one of the most familiar occasions for uninhibited and impulsive behavior is Halloween night. The destructive acts that occur on that holiday range from mild episodes of egg throwing to much more serious hooliganism. One group of social psychologists decided to take advantage of the Halloween atmosphere to conduct an ambitious test of the role of deindividuation in antisocial behavior (Diener, Fraser, Beaman, & Kelem, 1976). They set up research stations in 27 homes throughout the city of Seattle and monitored the behavior of over 1,000 trick-or-treaters. At each participating house, the children were told they could take one piece of candy from a large bowl sitting on a table in the entrance to the house. Next to the bowl of candy was a bowl filled with coins. The experimenter then excused herself from the scene and covertly monitored the children's actions from afar. Would the children take just their allotted single piece of candy, or would they take more—and perhaps even some coins?

individuation An enhanced sense of individual identity produced by focusing attention on the self, which generally leads people to act carefully and deliberately and in accordance with their sense of propriety and values.

self-awareness theory A theory maintaining that when people focus their attention inward on themselves, they become concerned with self-evaluation and how their current behavior conforms to their internal standards and values.

The investigators examined the influence of two variables connected to deindividuation. First, the children arrived either individually or in groups, and the investigators expected those in groups to feel more anonymous and therefore be more likely to transgress. Second, the experimenter purposely "individuated" a random sample of children arriving both alone and in groups; before departing, she asked each child his or her name and address and then repeated this information aloud for emphasis. Individuating the children—that is, identifying them by name so they'd no longer feel anonymous—was predicted to inhibit any temptation to transgress.

As **Figure 12.8** shows, both variables had the anticipated effect. The children who arrived in groups were much more likely to transgress than those who were alone, regardless of whether they were anonymous or not. Children who were anonymous were much more likely to transgress than those who were individuated, regardless of whether they were alone or in groups. Putting these two findings together, the children in anonymous groups were the most likely to transgress.

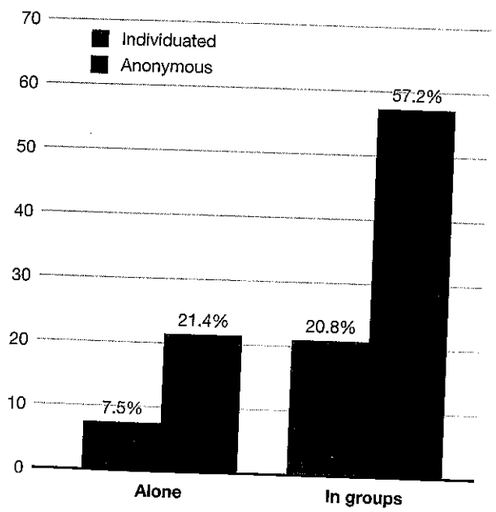


FIGURE 12.8 DEINDIVIDUATION AND TRANSGRESSION
In this study, the percentage of trick-or-treaters who transgressed was affected by whether they had been asked to give their name (individuated condition) or not (anonymous condition) and whether they were alone or in a group.
Source: Adapted from Diener et al., 1976.

Self-Awareness and Individuation

If "losing ourselves" in a crowd and becoming deindividuated makes us more likely to behave impulsively, it stands to reason that being especially self-aware and self-conscious would have the opposite effect. Anything that focuses attention on the self, such as being in front of a camera, seeing ourselves in a mirror, or wearing a name tag, may lead to **individuation** and make us particularly inclined to act carefully and in accordance with our sense of propriety. This is just what **self-awareness theory** predicts. When people focus their attention on themselves, they become more concerned with self-evaluation and how their current behavior conforms to their own standards and values (Duval & Wicklund, 1972).

BOX 12.2

Not So Fast: Critical Thinking about Correlated Trends

If you look up statistics on the number of people regularly attending their church, temple, or mosque each year over the past quarter century and tally up instances of especially brutal episodes of violence each year over that same time span (beheadings, suicide bombings, torture), you'll observe a high correlation between the two. Why? Has increased religious fervor encouraged a dehumanization of religious outgroups? Has exposure to gruesome images of this sort of violence led people to seek solace in religion?

Perhaps both are true, and by this point in the book we hope you've learned not to jump to any one conclusion on the basis of a simple correlation. But there's another possibility: the two may have absolutely nothing to do with each other, and their correlation reflects the basic fact that both religiosity and episodes of violence have increased over this time period. The number of people attending religious services has gone up over this period simply because the world population has gone up. Beheadings and bombings have gone up for all sorts of geopolitical reasons. The broader point is that whenever *any* two variables have increased over time, there will be a substantial year-to-year correlation between them. Thus, if you look up the number of search requests for, say, Ryan Gosling or Kate Upton over the past five years and the number of search requests for jihad (or the number of bombings for that matter), you'll find a positive correlation between the two. Both have been going up during that time, so they *have* to be correlated.

Statisticians refer to any systematic increase or decrease over time as a *secular trend* (from the late Latin word for "age" or "span of time"), and the lesson here is that it's important to be especially cautious about interpreting a significant correlation involving two such trends. Again, correlation does not equal causation. It may have no more meaning than the correlation between the yearly sales of salted caramel ice cream and legalized marijuana (both of which have been growing substantially in recent years).

STUDIES OF SELF-AWARENESS Many experiments have shown that people do indeed act in ways that are more consistent with their attitudes and values when they've been made self-conscious by being placed in front of a mirror or an attentive audience (Duval & Lalwani, 1999; Froming, Walker, & Lopyan, 1982; Scheier, Fenigstein, & Buss, 1974). In one study, college students were asked to solve a series of anagrams and told to stop when a bell sounded. In a control condition, nearly three-quarters of them fudged a bit by continuing to work beyond the bell. But in a condition that caused participants to be made self-aware by working in front of a mirror, fewer than 10 percent cheated (Diener & Wallbom, 1976). Although most students *say* that cheating is a bad thing, it appears to take some self-awareness to get them to act on that belief. Note that because being in a state of self-awareness is the flip side of feeling deindividuated, all of these experiments that support self-awareness theory also provide indirect support for the model of deindividuation.

INDIVIDUATION AND SELF-AWARENESS
Anything that focuses attention on the self and individual identity is likely to lead to heightened concern with self-control and propriety. Name tags on these people at a business conference can encourage a sense of individuation and, most likely, restrained behavior.

A clever study in a work setting provides yet more evidence that self-awareness promotes behavior that is more in keeping with personal standards

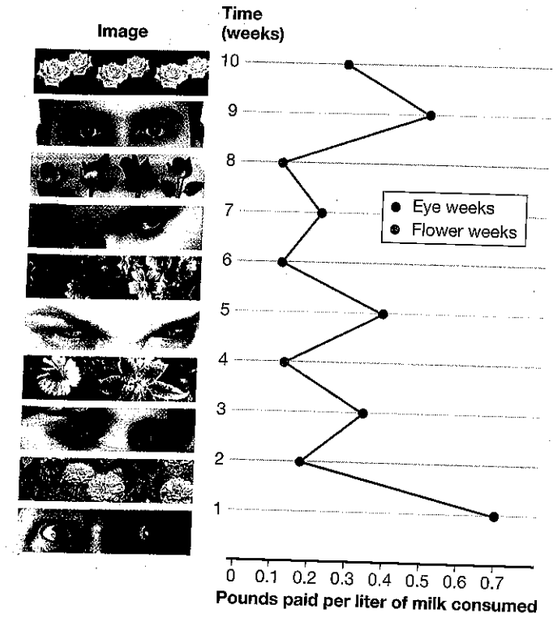


FIGURE 12.9
SELF-AWARENESS AND SOCIALLY APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IN THE OFFICE
People gave more money to cover the expense of milk when made self-aware by images of people looking at them.
Source: Bateson et al., 2006

spotlight effect People's conviction that other people are paying attention to them (to their appearance and behavior) more than they actually are.

(Bateson, Nettle & Roberts, 2006). In many offices, it's common to have a regularly offered goody, be it coffee, snacks, or tea, with an "honest box" next to it, in which people donate to cover the cost of the refreshment. The trouble, though, is that people are prone to exploit such a public good. In Melissa Bateson's Department of Psychology at the University of Newcastle, the distribution of coffee ran according to such an honor system, where people were free to contribute whatever they wanted for milk. You can see the results in **Figure 12.9**. When Bateson and colleagues placed an image of flowers on a wall near the coffee dispenser, her work colleagues on average gave 15 pence for every liter of milk. When an image of a person's eyes stared at them as they contributed, prompting greater self-awareness, their donations jumped considerably, rising to 70 pence when it was that of a stern-looking male (at bottom). Self-awareness prompts more socially appropriate behavior.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE SPOTLIGHT EFFECT

The inverse relationship between self-consciousness and deindividuation raises the question of how self-conscious people typically are in the normal course of events. There are pronounced individual differences, of course, in how focused people are on themselves and in how much they believe that others are focused on them as well (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975). But there is also reason to believe that the typical level of self-consciousness is fairly high, particularly when others are around. People begin to feel deindividuated only in the presence of a large crowd. This is why, as noted earlier, it has been assumed that people enjoy feeling deindividuated; it's a welcome break from the usual self-conscious state.

Evidence that people are indeed prone to a high level of self-consciousness comes from research on the **spotlight effect**—people's conviction that other people are paying attention to their appearance and behavior more than is actually the case. People who make an insightful comment in a group discussion, for example, believe that others will notice their comment and remember it better than other people actually do. People who suffer an embarrassing mishap, such as triggering an alarm in a public building or stumbling while entering a lecture hall, think others are judging them more harshly than they actually are (Epley, Savitsky, & Gilovich, 2002; Fortune & Newby-Clark, 2008; Gilovich, Kruger, & Medvec, 2002; Gilovich, Medvec, & Savitsky, 2000; Savitsky, Epley, & Gilovich, 2001).

In one of the clearest demonstrations of the spotlight effect, participants who arrived individually for an experiment were asked to put on a T-shirt sporting a picture of the pop singer Barry Manilow. Despite obvious signs of displeasure, everyone did so. They then reported to another room down the hall where, upon entering, they found a group of fellow students filling out questionnaires. After leaving the room moments later, the participants had to estimate the percentage of those other students who would be able to recall the person pictured on the T-shirt. As predicted, the participants overestimated how much they had stood out in their new shirt. They estimated that roughly half the other students would be able to identify that it was Barry Manilow pictured on their shirt, when in fact only about one-quarter were able to do so (Gilovich et al., 2000).

LOOKING BACK

Research on deindividuation has shown that the diminished sense of self-awareness that sometimes occurs when we are immersed in large groups makes us more likely to get caught up in ongoing events and encourages impulsive, and sometimes destructive, actions. Research on self-awareness and the spotlight effect has shown how carefully we typically monitor our own behavior with an eye toward what others might think and how our awareness of self encourages us to act with a greater sense of propriety.

Chapter Review

SUMMARY

The Nature and Purpose of Group Living

- Human beings, like all large primates except the orangutan, are group-living animals who influence, and must get along with, others.

Social Facilitation

- *Social Facilitation* refers to the positive or negative effect that the presence of others has on performance. Arousal from the presence of others increases people's tendency to do what comes naturally. On easy tasks, people are predisposed to respond correctly, so the presence of others facilitates performance on easy tasks; on new or hard tasks, when they're not predisposed to respond correctly, the presence of others hinders performance by making people more likely to respond incorrectly.
- The mere presence of others leads to social facilitation effects, and other factors, including *evaluation apprehension*, can intensify these effects.
- *Social loafing* is the tendency to exert less effort on a group task when individual contributions cannot be monitored.

Group Decision Making

- *Groupthink* refers to the faulty thinking by members of cohesive groups, in which critical decision-making scrutiny is undermined by social pressures to reach consensus. Groupthink has been implicated in the faulty decision making that has led to various policy fiascos.
- Group decision making is affected by how cohesive a group is, how directive its leader is, and by ingroup pressures that can lead to the rejection of alternative viewpoints and to *self-censorship*, the tendency to refrain from expressing reservations in the face of apparent group consensus.
- Group discussion can create *group polarization*; initial leanings tend to be made more extreme by group discussion.
- Group polarization can result when group discussion exposes members to more persuasive arguments in favor of a consensus opinion than they would have thought of themselves; it can also result from social comparison, when people compare their opinions with those of others.

Leadership and Power

- Power involves control and the freedom to act. It derives from interpersonal sources, such as a person's position of authority or expertise, as well as individual factors, such as the ability to engage with others socially and build strong alliances.
- People with knowledge and skills that help group members get along and help the group reach its goals are generally more likely to become leaders.
- According to *approach/inhibition theory*, people in elevated positions of power look at the environment in terms of how they can satisfy their personal desires and act in disinhibited ways, sometimes leading to excesses and abuses.

Deindividuation and the Psychology of Mobs

- Large groups sometimes transform into unruly mobs; the anonymity and diffusion of responsibility people feel in large groups can lead to a mental state of *deindividuation*, in which they are less concerned with the future, with normal societal constraints on behavior, and with the consequences of their actions.
- The deindividuated state of getting lost in the crowd contrasts with how people normally feel, which is individually identifiable. *Self-awareness theory* maintains that focusing attention on the self leads people to a state of individuation, marked by careful deliberation and concern with how well their actions conform to their moral standards.
- People tend to overestimate how much they personally stand out and are identifiable to others, a phenomenon known as the *spotlight effect*.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Open-plan offices, where large communal desks are used in place of private rooms or cubicles, are becoming increasingly popular. From the perspective of Zajonc's social facilitation theory, do you think open-plan offices are likely to facilitate or hinder performance and productivity? Why or why not? How might it depend on the type of work being conducted?
2. Can you think of any examples in your own life where groupthink has taken place? What factors contributed to groupthink in these situations? What kinds of safeguards could you put in place in similar future situations to promote better decision making?
3. Suppose your company is trying to decide whether to make a risky new hire. Individually, most of the members of the hiring team lean toward hiring the candidate, as it could substantially increase revenues if it works out. When the hiring team gets together to discuss the potential hire, how might you predict that the attitudes of the individuals in the group will shift? What decision is likely to be made?
4. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli argued that people gain power through deception, manipulation, coercion, and the use of fear tactics. How does this perspective compare with research findings about who rises to power?
5. Do you think it's accurate to say that power corrupts? Why or why not? What factors influence the extent to which power leads to prosocial versus antisocial behavior?
6. What does research on deindividuation show about why crime rates are so high on Halloween?
7. How could you use your knowledge of self-awareness theory to reduce cheating behavior on a test that relies on the honor system?

The answer guidelines for the think about it questions can be found at the back of the book . . .

ONLINE STUDY MATERIALS

Want to earn a better grade on your test?

Go to INQUIZITIVE to learn and review this chapter's content, with personalized feedback along the way.