

Social Influences on Behavior



Group Dynamics



- Humans have a basic drive to form social bonds with others.
- **Social group** – two or more individuals sharing common goals and interests, interacting, and influencing each other's behavior.
- **Norms** – Implicit or explicit rules that apply to all members of the group and govern acceptable behaviors and attitudes

Working in Groups:



- You will undoubtedly work in groups throughout your entire life.
- Social loafing - Exerting less effort when performing a group task than when performing the same task alone

Why Does Social Loafing Happen?



SOCIAL LOAFING

- People acting as a part of a group feel less accountable, so they worry less about what others think of them.
- Rewards may come to group regardless of individual giving more effort
- They may not believe that their contribution makes a difference.
- Motivation matters! - those with lower motivational levels know that someone will pick up the slack (in a group)
- **HOW TO COMBAT? Offer individual evaluations.**

• Deindividuation

- The process of losing ones' "identity" while in a group.
- We tend to do things would not normally do when alone (feel anonymous)

Where does this happen?

1. Sporting contests - fighting
2. Rock concerts
3. Protests - chanting
4. Riots and Looting after natural disasters (Haiti)



Children in costumes that created a sense of anonymity chose to steal candy more often when they were in a group than when they were alone or had been identified by name.



Social influences on motivation

- Norman Triplett (1897)
 - Noticed bicycle racers tended to go faster when others were present
 - Experiment - 3 conditions:
 - Race alone against clock
 - With another cyclist, but not competing
 - With another cyclist, in competition
 - Result: went faster with another cyclist, regardless of competition
 - Found similar results in experiment with adolescents winding fishing reels



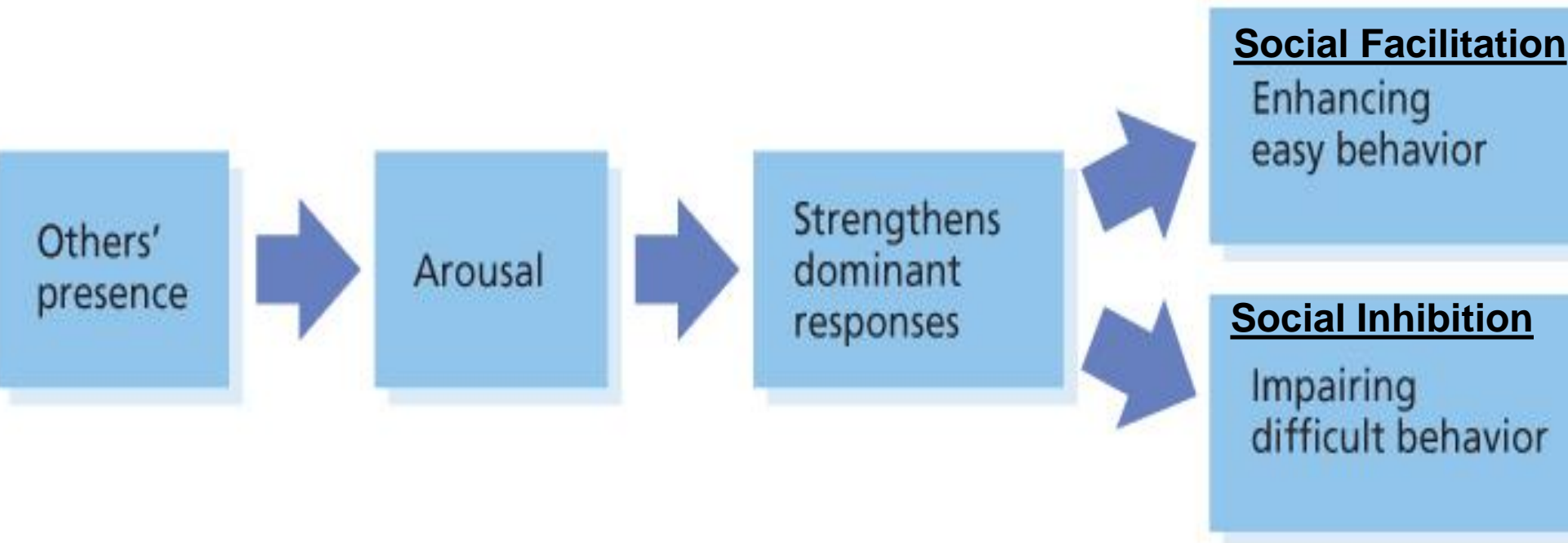
• Robert Zajonc

(or social inhibition)



– “Social facilitation” vs. “Social impairment”

- Presence of others increases general level of arousal
- Arousal increases tendency to perform behaviors that are most dominant (the ones we know best)
 - Improves performance for easy, familiar tasks
 - Performance may suffer for hard, unfamiliar tasks

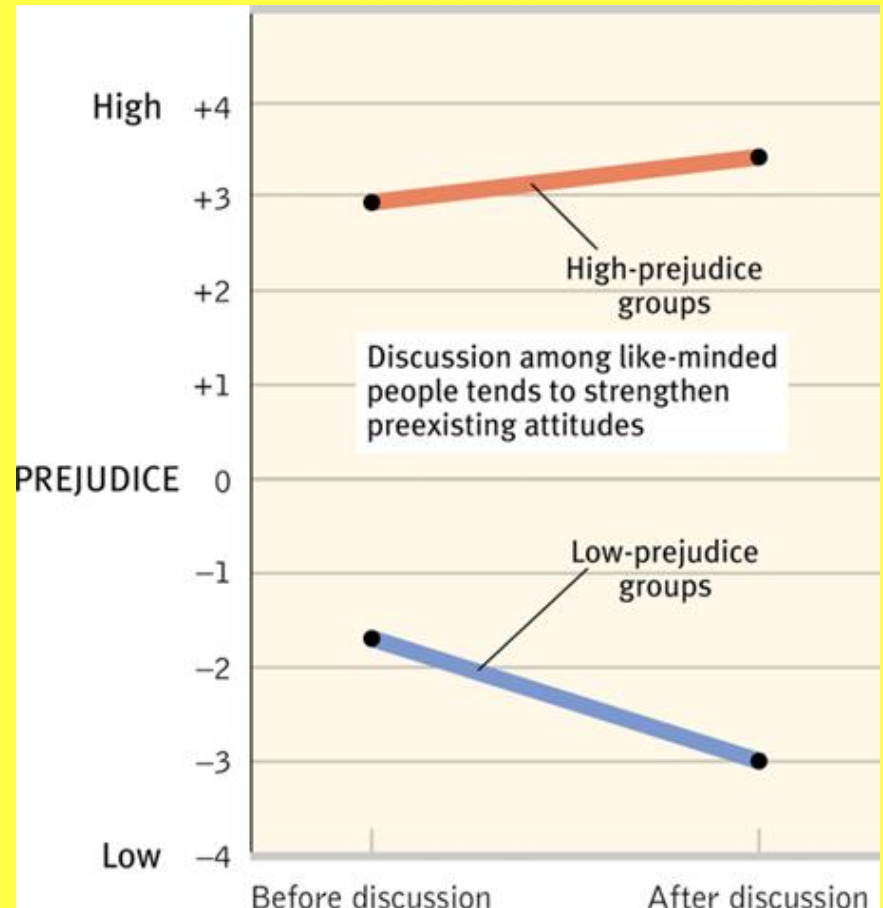


• Group polarization

- Interaction and discussion of individuals in a group with similar beliefs/attitudes tends to make these beliefs/attitudes more extreme.

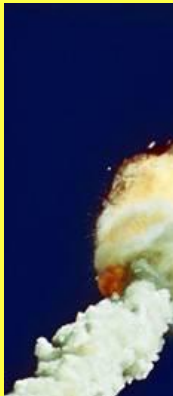
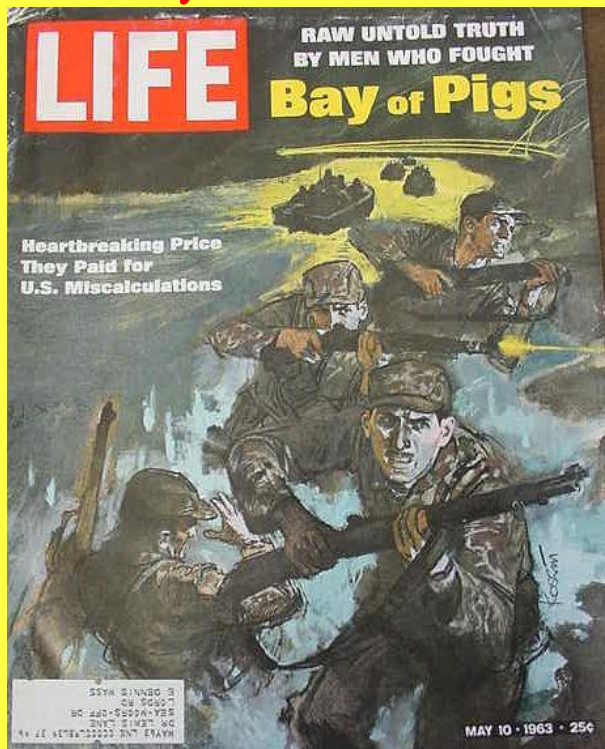


As a group, both the Black Panthers and the Ku Klux Klan are **more extreme than the average individual in the group.**



• Groupthink

- A pattern of thinking in which group members fail to realistically evaluate the wisdom of various options and decisions
- Happens when group focus shifts from objectively evaluating decisions to maintaining the group
- The group moves from *prove why we should do this* TO *why we shouldn't do this*





I know what we're going to do today...

Ways to Minimize Groupthink

- Avoid isolating the group
 - Bring in outside experts
- Critical evaluators / Devil's advocate
 - Role is to question assumptions and uncontested information
- Open climate
 - Leader invites and accepts divergent thinking
- Avoid being directive
 - Strong leaders speak last or sometimes not at all



GROUPTHINK

WHO NEEDS GOOD IDEAS WHEN YOU CAN ALL AGREE ON
A BAD ONE

Power of Individuals

- The power of social influence is enormous, but so is the power of the individual.
- Non-violent fasts and appeals by Gandhi led to the independence of India from the British.



Gandhi

Minority Influence

- Minority influence refers to the power of one or two individuals to sway majorities.
- Remember that a third of the individuals in Milgram's study resisted social coercion.
- They have a consistency in the expression of their views.
- Examples:
 - Gandhi, MLK Jr., Rosa Parks
 - An unarmed individual single-handedly challenged a line of tanks at [Tiananmen Square](#).

