

## Prison Life Study: General Information

Purpose: A simulated prison will be established somewhere in the vicinity of Palo Alto, Stanford, to study a number of problems of psychological and sociological relevance.

Paid volunteers will be randomly assigned to play the roles of either prisoners and guards for the duration of the study. This time period will vary somewhat from about five days to two weeks for any one volunteer -- depending upon several factors, such as the "sentence" for the prisoner or the work effectiveness of the guards.

Payment will be \$15 a day for performing various activities and work associated with the operation of our prison.

Each volunteer must enter a contractual arrangement with the principal investigator (Dr. P. G. Zimbardo) agreeing to participate for the full duration of the study. It is obviously essential that no prisoner can leave once jailed, except through established procedures. In addition, guards must report for their 8-hour work shifts promptly and regularly since surveillance by the guards will be around-the-clock, -- three work shifts will be rotated or guards will be assigned a regular shift -- day, evening, or early morning. Failure to fulfill this contract will result in a partial loss of salary accumulated -- according to a prearranged schedule to be agreed upon.

Food and accommodations for the prisoners will be provided which will meet minimal standard nutrition, health and sanitation requirements.

A warden and several prison staff will be housed in adjacent cell blocks, meals and bedding also provided for them.

Medical and psychiatric facilities will be accessible should any of the participants desire or require such services.

All participants will agree to having their behavior observed and to be interviewed and perhaps also taking psychological tests. Films of parts of the study will be taken, participants agreeing to allow them to be shown, assuming their content has information of scientific value.

Two of the problems to be studied are:

1. The development of norms which govern behavior in a novel situation. The creation of a psychological environment within the physical environment provided.
2. The differential perception of the same situation "the prison experience" from people who are initially comparable (from the same population) but arbitrarily assigned to play different roles.

A related issue is: how powerful are labels (such as "prisoner," "guard") in exercising a controlling influence on behavior? Will our simulating "prisoners" and "guards" come to behave in a relatively short time in a manner similar to prisoners and guards in real life prisons? These are some of the concerns which prompt us to invest the considerable time, effort and money which such a study necessitates -- and which should make it a valuable learning experience for all.

Participants: Each volunteer will be interviewed by Mr. Craig Haney and asked to complete the attached information form. He will then be notified whether he can participate in the study. We expect to be able to use about 10-12 prisoners and about that many guards.

Thanks for your interest in this study. We hope it will be possible for you to participate and to share your experiences with us.

Philip G. Zimbardo, Ph.D.  
Professor of Social  
Psychology  
Stanford University