

Process Paper

I chose the Stanford Prison experiment because I have done work canvassing for a prison moratorium here in Massachusetts and am interested in prisoners rights. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting to study prisoner's rights, through an experiment that worked to strip away the volunteer's rights and freedoms. This topic also explores the responsibilities of researchers to run ethical experiments.

I first conducted my research by exploring many secondary sources and websites to provide me with a basic understanding of the experiment. I then started to look towards more primary sources to get more specific information and facts. I looked towards a lot of transcripts, interviews, and footage from the experiment to help me. I found it difficult to find a lot of important quotes that I could use in my project. I had a lot of information and ideas, but very little evidence to back it up, and I struggled with finding all of the evidence I needed. I overcame this by talking with my town librarian about helpful databases and sources to use. Through this, I was able to develop and improve my research skills. My most important source was my book "The Lucifer Effect." This primary source was created by Zimbardo and gave me a lot of accurate information about exactly what he was thinking and what was taking place throughout the experiment. I was lucky enough to get to interview Douglas Korpi, who was one of the prisoners in the experiment, and he talked about his personal experience during the study. These sources are what helped me build my major claims sections on my website.

I created my project by organizing my text around my visuals on my website. I decided to split the website in half, and fill one half with images and the other with videos. I also color coded my evidence to stay organized. A red line next to a quote indicates a primary source while a gray line indicates a secondary source.

In this study, Phillip Zimbardo conducted an experiment to study situational factors of behavior. However, this study appeared to be extremely unethical, as it violated prisoners' human rights. On top of this, this experiment violated many ethical responsibilities as Zimbardo allowed the guards to abuse and dehumanize the prisoners. This ultimately led to a breaking point within the study, where it became clear that Zimbardo could no longer continue his experiment. This was due to the level of harm inflicted upon the prisoners, and the ethical problems created by Zimbardo interference during this experiment.

Zimbardo used the results of his study to lead to reform within the prison system and within future psychological studies. Zimbardo's study caused many new laws to be passed that protected juveniles from the harmful prison environments. This also created many new regulations within psychology that prevent future experiments from becoming unethical. The remarkable results of this case demonstrate the power of one's self versus their situation, making it an interesting case to study.