

# Stanford prison experiment: overview



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Thought Paper # 1 The Stanford Prison experiment was a study of the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner or guard. It was conducted by Philip Zimbardo in the 1970's. The experiment was basically conducted to explain how a person's behavior changes when they are in a role of authority or vice versa. This experiment was only held for a week because it ended up getting too out of control for them to continue it. For this study, I think that at the time the benefit to society did outweigh the potential harm to participants.

Yes, at the time setting I think it was okay to potentially harm people if the results could have a large impact or to provide some new information. I believe this because back in the 70's they didn't have much research ethics. I also believe that no person should sign up for something that they obviously cannot handle. First of all, I honestly would not sign up to take place in this experiment because I would not be able to go through what all those prisoners went through.

I also, nonetheless would be able to be a prison guard treating the other "prisoners" in such a matter. If I were a prisoner in this study, I would definitely like to have the right to stop participating at any time. If they didn't allow me to leave whenever I wanted to I wouldn't be playing the part of a prisoner anymore, I would definitely be one at that point. I would also like to have the rights to clean water, warm food, and to be able to use an actual bathroom instead of having my bucket of pee in my cell. That would just be disgusting.

I also would like the right to my blanket and pillow to sleep comfortably and to keep myself warm. So, I obviously wouldn't be a good candidate for this

experiment. If I were the experimenter, I believe I would have done the study. The reason I say this is how I stated before I would only allow people who would actually be able to go through the process of being treated bad/disrespected or the person treating others bad/disrespectful. I believe if things got to that point of how in the actual experiment would of happened, then yes I would have.

The reason for this was because in the actual experiment it got out of control after the subjects entered too deeply into the roles they were assigned. The prisoners felt dehumanized and began to forget that they were not genuine prisoners, but only subjects in a psychological experiment. The guards became ever more sadistic, seeing the inmates more and more as the enemy instead of just fellow students. If the experiment wouldn't have gotten so out of control as it actually did, then no.

Of course I wouldn't have because then I wouldn't have to worry about anybody getting too physically or emotionally hurt, etc. Also, another thing I would have done differently is telling the parents or legal guardians everything that was going on instead of hiding it from them before any of the students would be considered to be in the experiment. Overall, I just wouldn't want to be part of this experiment at all. Although I did enjoy watching the video and learning a lot about the Stanford Prison study.