

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC DEPARTMENT

GRADUATION PROJECT 2016

**Glancing at the Hidden Dangers of Obeying
Totalitarianism Among Asians:
A Study of Female Students' Conformity to
Authoritarian Surveillance and the Remolding
of Thoughts in Wen-de Girl's Dormitory at Fu
Jen Catholic University**

Research Paper, English Composition III

Lamia Wei



Fu Jen Catholic University

Glancing at the Hidden Dangers of Obeying Totalitarianism Among Asians:

A Study of Female Students' Conformity to Authoritarian Surveillance and the Remolding of

Thoughts in Wen-de Girl's Dormitory at Fu Jen Catholic University

Third Draft



Lamia Wei

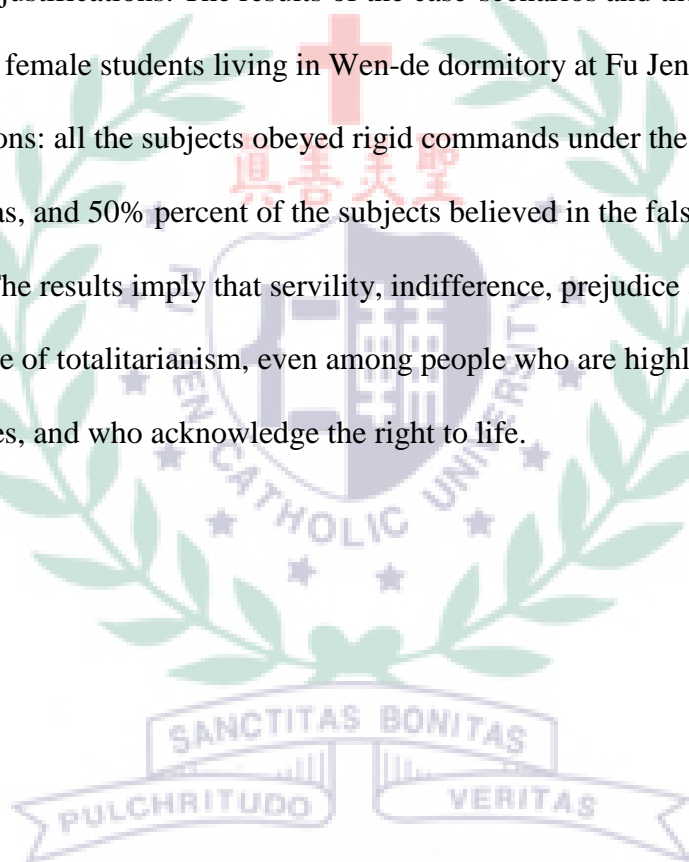
CCIII – Section E

Dr. John Basourakos

26 June 2015

Abstract

Regarding the historical periods of Stalin's and Hitler's regimes, a horrible fact about totalitarianism was its mass-based support, which is sustained by implementing two methods: surveillance and the remolding of thoughts. Therefore, this research project uses a case-scenario that simulates how totalitarian governments rule over people by surveillance and propaganda, to study why the public would conform to the surveillance of authority and accept hypocritical justifications. The results of the case-scenarios and the questionnaires distributed to thirty female students living in Wen-de dormitory at Fu Jen Catholic University exceeded expectations: all the subjects obeyed rigid commands under the supervision of surveillance cameras, and 50% percent of the subjects believed in the false justifications written on a note. The results imply that servility, indifference, prejudice and ignorance in humans help the rise of totalitarianism, even among people who are highly educated in democratic countries, and who acknowledge the right to life.



Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Question: To abuse or not to abuse terrorists to save American citizens' lives
- B. Statistics of the answers to the above question
- C. Brief description of the results of Milgram's and Zimbardo's experiments
- E. Definition of "totalitarianism"
- F. Goal: To use a case-scenario that simulates the features of totalitarianism to investigate whether or not Asian female students at FJU tend to conform to authoritarian surveillance and to the remolding of thoughts.
- G. Results: Female students at FJU easily obey the unfair regulations of surveillance cameras, and they easily believe in an authority figure's false justifications. This implies that servility, indifference, prejudice and ignorance in humans help the rise of totalitarianism even in Asian democratic countries.
- H. Research paper map

II. Literature Review

A. Michel Foucault

1. Background for government's use of surveillance
2. Corrections to the "soul" of criminals by surveillance
3. The relationship between power and the condemned in The Panopticon

C. David Lyon

1. An example of disobeying an authority's remolding of thoughts in Los Angeles
2. Reasons why people allow electronic surveillances in society without being alert to the possibility of tyranny.

E. Stanley Milgram

- An experiment that illustrates the majority's obedience to cause human suffering

F. Philip Zimbardo

- An experiment that illustrates the internalization of one's role and obedience cause most people to commit horrible behaviors

III. Methodology

- A. The goals behind the case-scenarios, post-scenario questionnaires, and post-questionnaire interviews with the subjects

- B. Subjects: female students living in Wen-de dormitory at Fu Jen Catholic University

IV. Results of the Case-Scenarios

- A. Initial reactions on seeing the fish tank

- B. Final actions

V. Data Analysis

- A. Agreement on obedience

- B. Interpretation of the reasons for obedience

1. "I think that the fish doesn't belong to me, but belongs to the owner who can decide

its fate.”

2. “I was convinced that it is for the fish’s own good. It needs to cool down.”
3. “I am afraid of fish.”
4. “I think that it’s o.k. for the fish to stay in the refrigerator.”

C. Paradoxical fear of “Big Brother”

D. Successful brainwashing

E. Interpretation of the reasons for being convinced by authority

1. “The owner of the fish knows it the best.”
2. “I am actually not fully convinced, but I felt more relieved from having the responsibility to trust the note and leave the fish inside the refrigerator.”

F. “Doublethink”

VI. Conclusion

A. Relation to the other two experiments discussed in the introduction

1. Stanley Milgram
 - a. Milgram: requires Western subjects to do something to harm another innocent person. This project requires Asian subjects not to do something to the fish, and to leave the fish suffering.
 - b. Milgram: no justifications. This project requires the subjects to obey authority and gives them a false justification to put them in a dilemma.

2. Philip Zimbardo

a. Illustrates reasons why people commit evil behaviors, but the subjects in the experiment actually think they are in dilemmas between two different types of goodness.

b. This project: put the subjects in a dilemma between two choices of good values (“the fish is in the refrigerator to recover from sunstroke”, and “the fish’s life is valuable but the ice in the refrigerator may kill it”), to determine whether or not the subjects can recognize that leaving the fish in the refrigerator is actually evil.

B. Summary of important findings and patterns

C. Implications for the rise of totalitarianism in democratic countries

D. Hypotheses confirmed or not

E. Further Improvements for the Case-Scenarios and the Questionnaires

1. Post-questionnaire interview questions should be formulated.

2. Students’ responses to a suffering “life” can be hardly measured because they didn’t see the fish as being alive, but only being the property of the fish owner.

3. Students’ responses to a suffering “human life” cannot be measured because the fish are not human beings.

F. Future work: a comparison between Asian students’ reactions and Western students’

reactions to unfair commands that cause the suffering of human lives.

VII. Works Cited

VIII. Appendix A: Questionnaire

IX. Appendix B: Diagrams and Illustrations

X. Appendix C: Interview Questions

XI. Appendix D: Transcripts of the Interviews with the Subjects



Imagine you were a police officer who received an order to abuse a terrorist to gain information that is necessary for protecting countless citizens' lives, and your boss is supervising you by a surveillance camera. Would you or would you not execute the command?

The results of the answers to the above question from thirty female students at Fu Jen Catholic University (FJU) suggest that twenty four of them would execute the command.

Before assessing the wrongness and the rightness of each decision, perhaps one should give priority to another question: How is the decision made? Is the decision affected by the American government's propaganda machine that all terrorists are an evil force who threaten those "supreme" American values of freedom and justice? Is the decision affected by the pressure of surveillance that implies punishments? Is the decision, more radically, affected by a tendency to obey? Curious about to what extent most persons would obey the commands to abuse innocent victims, Stanley Milgram designs an experiment in which he finds that 26 subjects out of the 40 obey these orders till the end. As Milgram's experiment illustrates the majority's obedience to authority, Philip Zimbardo's prison experiment further reveals that subjects can identify with an authority's abuses of prisoners when a legitimizing ideology is provided.

Both Milgram's and Zimbardo's findings contribute much to studies about the general public's physical and psychological obedience to authority. On the one hand, obedience keeps society in order, but on the other hand, it prepares a hotbed for the rise of totalitarianism.

Authority figures can easily brainwash the obedient masses with hypocritical justifications.

With the help of surveillance, the total domination of a totalitarian regime becomes more effective. According to Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the definition of totalitarianism is by no means to be safely distinguished as an academic issue, “for total domination is the only form of government with which coexistence is not possible”

(xxvii-xxviii). Nevertheless, a totalitarian government usually reflects the following features:

a “personality cult” to the dictators (xxxii), an ideal to globalize its ideological scope (xxvii), secret police (xxvi) and contempt for facts and reality (xxxii). The secret police as a tool of

surveillance and the government’s remolding of thoughts are two methods to help

totalitarianism sustain its mass-based support. As Milgram and Zimbardo mainly focused on

Westerners’ obedient reactions to authority, can the same results apply to Asians? Based on

Milgram’s and Zimbardo’s experiments, this research project aims to use a case-scenario that

simulates the features of totalitarianism to investigate whether or not Asian female students at

FJU tend to conform to authoritarian surveillance and to the remolding of thoughts. As a

result, the post-scenario questionnaire and the post-questionnaire interviews show that female

students at FJU easily obey the unfair regulations of surveillance cameras, and they easily

believe in the authority’s false justifications, too. This implies that servility, indifference,

prejudice and ignorance in humans help the rise of totalitarianism, even in Asian democratic

countries.

This paper includes the following sections: literature review, methodology, results of the case-scenario, data analysis, works cited and appendices. The literature review contains a discussion of Michel Foucault's theoretical contribution to the relationship between penalties and surveillance, of David Lyon's modern dystopia example, and of Stanley Milgram's and Philip Zimbardo's experiments about people's obedience. The results of these secondary sources inspire the design of the case-scenario, the methodology of this research project. The methodology section discusses the goals of the project and the research methods that are used. The results of the case-scenario describe the author's observations of the subjects' reactions to the case-scenarios. The data analysis section discusses the results of questionnaires, interviews and case-scenarios through pie charts, and analyzes the subjects' behavior patterns and their implications. Finally, the works cited section cites all the works consulted, and the appendices include a questionnaire sample, diagrams and illustrations of the results, the interview questions, and the transcripts of the interviews with the subjects.

Michel Foucault, the authority in theorizing about surveillance as part of the transformation of penal styles, discusses the backgrounds for government's increasingly popular use of surveillance in "The Body of the Condemned". He observes that the transformation of penal styles from public execution to subtle controls of human bodies reflects the relation between human bodies and power. Most important of all, he claims that "supervision" develops gradually as a modern subtle penal style that corrects and confines the

body of the condemned. This shows the system of punishment begins to connect with the system of production. Equally important to the study of surveillance, Foucault points out that through surveillance, power produces knowledge that corrects and punishes the “soul” (thoughts, will, inclination) of the criminal (29). As the control of the human body becomes more subtle and indirect, the current power to punish gains its basis and rules that make it possible to extend its effects, hiding its extraordinary singularity. Therefore, Foucault’s systematic analysis of the power mechanisms makes it more clear why modern authoritarians choose surveillance as a tool to control human bodies.

In “Panopticism”, Michel Foucault further demonstrates how unilateral surveillance actually works on the relationship between power and the condemned in an enclosed space by referring to Bentham’s design of the Panopticon. The Panopticon inverts the dungeon’s hiding principle, and makes the prisoner the object of information. The prisoners’ invisibility to other prisoners and to the one seeing them guarantees order in prison, because a “collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities” (201). Unlike the old rules of power, the Panopticon automatizes power, and a perfect application of the Panopticon promises a well-functioning of the disciplinary mechanism even if the prisoners cease to be actually seen, which can be achieved if power is visible and undetermined. In other words, the prisoners are put in a power situation that they themselves succumb to. From Foucault’s study of the Panopticon, one can associate other forms of surveillance that

resemble the Panopticon, such as the secret police and surveillance cameras. In this way, citizens who are surrounded by the secret police or surveillance cameras become “potential criminals” who are unconsciously disciplined.

While citizens who are surrounded by the secret police or surveillance cameras may usually unconsciously succumb to the knowledge that power produces, David Lyon in “Real-Time Dystopia” lights a hope by exemplifying how Los Angeles citizens refuse to accept juridical authority’s nonsense in 1992. Lyon describes a riot that erupted in Los Angeles caused by the acquittal of a white police officer who beat a black man. This social anger is significant because the wrong judgment or wrong knowledge of the juridical authority would be the same if citizens in Los Angeles never protested this “publicly visible” injustice (200). Therefore, “Real-Time Dystopia” is important for this research paper, because it illustrates that people can actually disobey the unfair knowledge that power invests on, and to refuse to let a human being, especially someone from a racial minority, suffer unjustly.

On the other hand, in “Technology and Totalitarianism”, David Lyon discusses the reasons why people allow electronic surveillances in society without being alert to the possibility of tyranny. He uses Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as an example to show how “Big Brother” can create a profound social fear by constant monitoring. In addition, Lyon quotes Giddens to prove it necessary to consider the problems of electronic surveillance: “Totalitarianism is, first of all, an extreme focusing of surveillance” (11). He indicates that

public ignorance, the lack of countervailing organizations, the slowness of legal measurements, the commercial benefits of personal databases, and the language of “privacy” instead of “liberty” when discussing electronic surveillance, all contribute to the neglect of totalitarian tendencies.

Surveillance, no matter what its forms, functions to help totalitarianism remind the public to keep obedient. Stanley Milgram’s “Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority” shows the results of an experiment that tests to what extent a person can resist to obey the commands that betray humanity and common sense. The experimenter ordered naïve subjects that came from different backgrounds to administer electric shocks to a victim played by an actor. Both the responses of the victim and the commands were standardized and in sequence. As the experiment proceeded, the subjects were commanded to administer increasingly more intense shocks to the victim. The preliminary hypothesis was that only a few subjects would continue the shocks till the end. Surprisingly, the results turned out that although the subjects were so frequently agitated that they couldn’t “stare [the victim] in the eye”, 26 subjects out of the 40 obeyed the orders to the end (qtd. in Milgram 64).

The other experiment that examines how and why common people cross the line between good and evil is Philip Zimbardo’s prison experiment. Philip Zimbardo’s “A Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison” investigates the psychological effects of becoming a prisoner, or a prison guard. The whole experiment simulates a prison

environment. In the experiment, 24 healthy and normal male subjects were selected from 75 volunteers, and half of them played the role of prison guards, and the other half played prisoners. As the experiment proceeded, the interactions between prisoners and guards tended to be negative, even though they could engage in more positive and humanizing forms of interactions. A riot erupted among prisoners during the second day of the experiment, and Zimbardo took the role of superintendent to order the prison guards to “maintain the reasonable degree of order within the prison necessary for its effective functioning” (Zimbardo 7). Following the orders, the guards abused the prisoners more cruelly by removing their clothes and mattresses in the cells, and by forbidding them to empty their sanitation buckets. The results of the experiment, as Zimbardo explained, are that the internalization of one’s roles and obedience make people commit horrible behaviors. Furthermore, the guards began to justify themselves by arguing that the prisoners deserved the treatments that they were subjected to.

The research methodology of this project includes case scenarios, questionnaires and interviews. The case scenarios targeted 30 residents in the Wen-de girl’s dormitory at FJU, and took place in a recreation room in the dormitory where there were a public refrigerator and a surveillance camera. The experimenter put a tank that contained three living fish into the refrigerator, and stuck a note on the tank that read: “These fish need to cool down because they have sunstroke. Whoever removes the fish tank will be caught by the surveillance

cameras.” The tank was put in the most obvious place in the refrigerator, and the most active fish were selected to attract attention. In the room, an electronic surveillance camera faced the refrigerator’s side, and monitored people who opened the refrigerator. The experimenter was seated to the side on a couch in the recreation room to secretly observe how the subjects reacted. After the subjects made their decisions to remove the tank or not to remove it, the experimenter stood up to ask their reasons and to deliver a paper questionnaire. After the subjects completed the questionnaires, the experimenter would ask further questions based on their answers on the questionnaires. After the interview, procedures were undertaken to assure that the subjects would both leave the room in a state of well being, and keep the case-scenario confidential.

The purpose of the case scenarios is to test how female students at FJU react to the unfair regulations of surveillance camera with false justifications. The case scenario tries to simulate a real totalitarian ruling situation that the authority will provide hypocritical justification (“the fish have sunstroke”) to remold the thoughts of people, and to require complete obedience. The case scenarios target residents in a girl’s dormitory because the equipment there meets the investigation’s requirements. Despite a death risk, the fish were guaranteed by scientific research that they can survive the experiment because they went into a kind of hibernation in cold environments within a short period of time. In addition, the questionnaires aim to determine the subjects’ reasons for their decisions, and their reflections

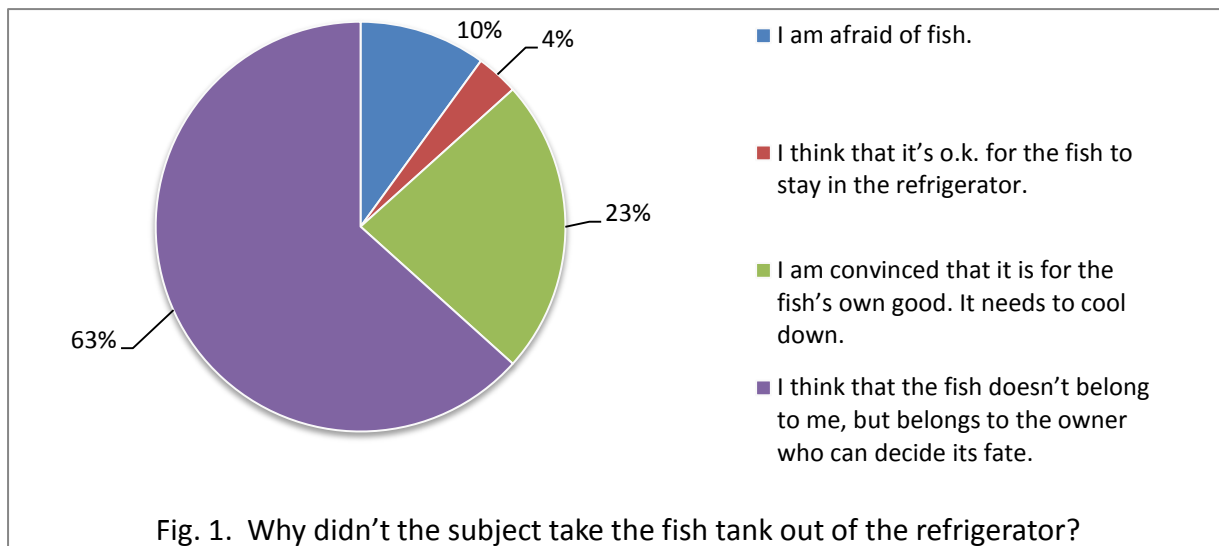
about surveillance cameras.

As the case-scenario proceeded, various situations occurred, but none of the subjects decided to take the fish tank out of the refrigerator. When the subjects opened the refrigerator door, and saw the fish tank, they all paused to read the note. Some subjects failed to see the fish tank in the refrigerator, so they neither received the questionnaires nor were they interviewed. Two of the subjects saw the fish tank but failed to see the note, so they did not answer the questions about the fish's sunstroke. One subject observed the fish's health condition. Two subjects touched the fish tank to determine whether or not the temperature would cause the fish to freeze to death, and one subject touched the fish tank to see how many fish were inside. Nevertheless, most of the subjects were unwilling to touch the fish tank at all. Three subjects were evidently disgusted at what they saw because they made a sound like "Uggh!" Furthermore, two pairs of the subjects happened to see the fish tank together. The first pair of subjects swore as soon as they witnessed the fish tank, but as one of them reacted with indifference to the fish, another subject was influenced and decided to leave the fish alone. The second pair manifested more anger toward the threat of surveillance cameras, and criticized the fish owner's improper treatment of the fish, but later on they shifted the topic of the conversation. Despite their diverse initial reactions, all the subjects eventually grabbed their food and left.

The research results demonstrate no prompt disobedient actions from the subjects.

Excluding their personal values, there are other potential influences on their obedience in terms of the experimental environment. First of all, the “public” refrigerator was stuffed with different food or sometimes, non-foods, and therefore the residents in the dormitory were very much indifferent to unusual “things” that appeared in the refrigerator. In addition, the announcements on the refrigerator door that cursed residents who stole food from the refrigerator created a suspicious and revengeful atmosphere. Secondly, the experimenter who was seated to the side may have also influenced the subjects’ decisions, even though the experimenter pretended to be unaware of the presence of the fish tank in the refrigerator. In fact, one subject confessed that she wished to disobey the command, but she failed to seek the support from the experimenter, so she gave up on this idea.

The subjects’ complete obedience was surprising, but they offered reasons (see fig. 1): 10% of the student subjects were afraid of fish; 4% thought that it is o.k. for the fish to stay in the refrigerator; 23% were convinced that the fish needed to cool down; and 63% thought that the fish belonged to the owner who can decide their fate. It is clear that a majority of the students did not want to get involved with the fish because they thought that the fish did not belong to them. This reason has the following implications: they don’t view the fish as a “living thing” but someone’s “property”, and they are detached and blind to the fish’s sufferings. This kind of human mindset values the owner’s right to property over the fish’s right to life.



Nevertheless, when they were asked during the interviews what they would do if the fish are replaced by a cat, or a dog, or a baby, the students replied that they would save them immediately. Therefore, these subjects did acknowledge that cats, dogs, and babies have a right to life. According to the interviews, the problems are that these subjects' knowledge about fish is not sufficient, but they are sure that cats, dogs, and babies cannot live in a refrigerator. The students cannot empathize with the pain of the fish, but they can feel the pain of those mammals. However, the hidden danger here is that when person A claims the life of person B as his or her property, this type of human being is quite likely to ignore person B's sufferings. For example, Asian parents usually hold the idea that their children are their properties, and they claim that outsiders do not have the right to interfere in their "familial affairs". Therefore, when the domestic violence occurs within a family, people who live in the Asian society dare not save those children victims because they think that they don't know much about other people's domestic affairs, and they will ignore the children's

sufferings. Furthermore, during the interviews, one subject admitted that unless the fish poisoned her food, she did not care what happened to the fish at all.

23% of the female subjects were convinced that the fish needed to cool down from sunstroke, so they left the fish alone. This reason has the following implications: they are ignorant about fish, and therefore easily brainwashed. The hidden danger among these subjects is that authority can easily control and remold their thoughts, no matter how hilarious and suspicious the authority's justifications are. Nevertheless, it seems that these subjects are not that ignorant. During the interview with a subject who chose this answer, she believed that she would save the fish if she found the fish dying a few days later.

10% of the female subjects did not save the fish because they were afraid of the fish. These subjects can be further divided into two types: those who are simply afraid of the fish and would not approach them, and those who are disgusted by the fish and convey intentions to "eliminate" them without approaching them. The latter type demonstrates a strong human-centered view of life. Like many Taiwanese girls' fears of cockroaches, this fear or dislike of the fish labels fish as an inferior life form on earth that is worthless to human beings. Interestingly, neither cockroaches nor fish bite or harm human beings, but these female subjects would feel threatened by cockroaches and fish, and would become more anxious to cause the fish disappear. For example, after the case-scenario, a subject who chose this answer asked the experimenter: "Can you not put the fish with my food? I don't want to

see them next to my food.” The hidden danger among these subjects is that they can hate certain living things without having good reasons to feel this way, and they are glad to see those lives they dislike “disappear” completely on earth. Authority can take advantage of such people’s habits of thinking, and to maintain prejudices against another living thing that doesn’t even harm them.

Among all of the reasons for obedience, 4% of the female subjects thought that it is fine for the fish to stay in the refrigerator. During the interview with the only subject who chose this answer, she relied on her knowledge that fish can swim even in the winter, and she thought that only when the fish are in the freezer will they risk dying. In addition, she observed the fish’s condition before leaving the room. She thought that even though it is monstrous to put fish in the refrigerator, it is fine if the fish’s lives are not in danger.

When the author compared the subjects’ answers to the question about whether or not their decisions were influenced by the surveillance cameras to their answers during the interviews, a paradoxical fear of “Big Brother”¹ emerged. According to the survey, 93% of the female subjects believed that they were not influenced by the surveillance cameras (see fig. 2). During the interviews, the students explained that they did not intend to take the fish tank out of the refrigerator at all, so they were not troubled by the surveillance cameras’ supervision. In contrast, they were afraid of being questioned by the fish’s owner at the

¹ “Big Brother” is a fictional character in George Orwell’s dystopia novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. He is a leader and symbol of a totalitarian state, whose image constantly appears on the tele-screens with the phrase: “Big Brother is watching you.” Nowadays, “Big Brother” has become a metonym for mass surveillance.

thought of taking out the fish tank from the refrigerator, but the way in which the fish owner could catch the “criminal” is by using surveillance cameras. Therefore, their potential decision to take out the fish tank was actually barred by an “unconscious” fear to surveillance cameras in the first place, but the subjects were not aware of this.

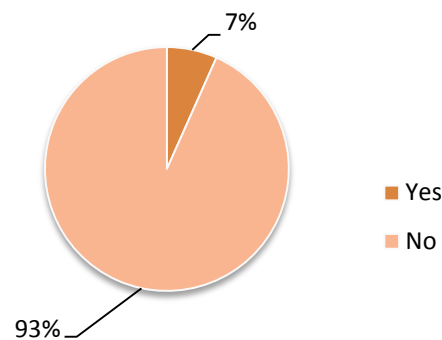


Fig. 2. Was the subjects' decisions affected by the surveillance camera that was watching them?

The question about whether or not the subjects were convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down was used to investigate how many subjects were brainwashed. The results show a successful brainwashing: half of the female subjects started to believe that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to recover from sunstroke (see fig. 3). Their beliefs that the fish’s owner knows the fish’s condition the best (47%) is one reason, and the other reason is that the subjects actually doubted the fish owner’s justification, but they feel more relieved from taking responsibility to trust the false justification and leave the fish inside the refrigerator (53%). The first reason indicates a blind trust in authority. During the interviews, the subjects that chose this answer believed that even if the fish were dying, the owner of the fish would save them. The second reason is more complex. The second

reason indicates that the subjects tend to “self-hypnotize” themselves to agree with the fish owner’s justifications, even though they were not comfortable with those justifications that violate common sense. The hidden danger of these results is what Hanna Arendt called the “evil of banality”, or “banality of evil” (303). This idea is further clarified by Amos Elon, who wrote the introduction for Hanna Arendt’s *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*: “Evil comes from a failure to think. It defies thought for as soon as thought tries to engage itself with evil and examine the premises and principles from which it originates, it is frustrated because it finds nothing there. That is the banality of evil” (xiv).

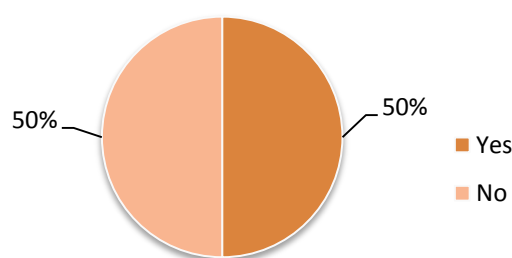


Fig. 3. Were the subjects convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down?

Lastly, the results of the questionnaires indicate that five student subjects appear to have “double think”. “Doublethink” is a term originated in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (864). According to Orwell, this means that people consciously and unconsciously believe in two contradictory opinions. They forget certain truths when it is necessary to forget them, and recall those truths when they need to give carefully-constructed lies. In this case, subjects who had doublethink “disagreed” that the fish can survive in the refrigerator, but “agreed” that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to recover from sunstroke. The function of

doublethink causes the subjects to feel confident about their opinions, and to eliminate their guilt of lying. The hidden danger of this result is that authority can easily manipulate these people to tell lies willingly, meanwhile keeping them completely faithful to authority.

Compared to Stanley Milgram's experiment and Philip Zimbardo's prison experiment, the case-scenarios of this research project differ in goals, methodologies, and findings. In terms of goals, Milgram investigates Westerners' obedience to administer sufferings to actors who appeared to be innocent human victims, while this research project aims to investigate Asian female college students' obedience that allows authority to cause sufferings. As for Zimbardo, he explores the reasons that drive common people to commit evil behaviors, but this research project intends to identify the reasons why people who allow evil to happen do not think that they are guilty. In terms of methodologies, Milgram requires the subjects to obey the rigid commands administered orally and in person, while the case-scenarios of this paper instruct the subjects using a written poster, and the authority is represented by the surveillance cameras.

In terms of the findings, Milgram finds that even though his subjects had intense emotions, over fifty percent obeyed their orders until the very end. Similarly, the results of this research project show that all the subjects did not demonstrate prompt disobedience, but during the interviews, three subjects revealed that they were going to file a report with the management of the dormitory, if they found the fish dying later on. In this way, the subjects

could escape being questioned by the fish's owner. In addition, the subjects' initial reactions in the case-scenarios suggest that community support or numbness are important to Asian individuals' decisions. The subjects' reasons for being obedient also reveal noticeable hidden dangers. By analyzing their reasons for obedience, one can conclude that servility, indifference, prejudice and ignorance among Asians are all causes for the potential rise of totalitarianism, even among people who are highly educated, who acknowledge the right to life, and who live in democratic countries. Furthermore, the subjects share three kinds of behavior patterns: a paradoxical fear of surveillance cameras, being successfully brainwashed and a propensity to "doublethink". Therefore, the research results confirm the hypotheses that the female students at Fu Jen Catholic University easily obey authoritarian surveillance and the remolding of thoughts. The result is a warning sign. Although it is almost impossible to root out people's tendency to obey, the voice of refusal to the propaganda disseminated by authority figure is essential to society. Like the Los Angeles riot example in David Lyon's "The Real-Time Dystopia", one voice that refuses to accept an authority figure's nonsense can affect the whole city.

Nevertheless, the research methodology used for this project needs many improvements. First of all, the post-questionnaire interview questions should be formulated and administered to each participating subject. Secondly, the subjects' responses to a suffering "life" can be hardly measured because most of them did not regard the fish as living beings, but as

property belonging to the fish owner. Thirdly, the simulation of a totalitarian ruling is not completely parallel to real situations. The subjects' responses to a suffering "human life" cannot be measured because the fish are not human beings. The study of human obedience is still worth developing, and in the future, perhaps more experiments can be done to compare Asian students' reactions and Western students' reactions to human sufferings.



Works Cited

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 1973 ed. New York: Harcourt Brace

Jovanovich, 1973. Print.

Elon, Amos. Introduction. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. By

Hannah Arendt. New York: Penguin, 2006. vii-xxiii. Print.

Foucault, Michel. "The Body of the Condemned." Trans. Alan Sheridan. *Discipline and*

Punish—The Birth of the Prison. 1979 ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. 3-31.

Print.

---. "Panopticism." Trans. Alan Sheridan. *Discipline and Punish—The Birth of the Prison*.

1979 ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1979. 195-228. Print.

Lyon, David. "Real-Time Dystopia." *The Electronic Eye—The Rise of Surveillance Society*.

Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994. 199-201. Print.

---. "Technology and Totalitarianism." *The Electronic Eye—The Rise of Surveillance Society*.

Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994. 11-14. Print.

Milgram, Stanley. "Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority." *Human*

Relations 18.1 (1965): 57-76. Web. 5 May 2015.

Orwell, George. "Nineteen Eighty-Four." *Animal Farm, Burmese Days, A Clergyman's*

Daughter, Coming up for Air, Keep the Aspidistra Flying, Nineteen Eighty-Four. 1976

ed. London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1976. 741-925. Print.

Zimbardo, Philip., Craig Haney, and Curtis Banks. "A Study of Prisoners and Guards in a Simulated Prison." *Naval Research Reviews* (1973): 1-17. Web. 5 May 2015.



Appendix A: After-Scenario Questionnaire

Glancing at the Hidden Dangers of Obeying Totalitarianism Among Asians:

A Study of Female Students' Conformity to Authoritarian Surveillance and the Remolding of

Thoughts in Wen-de Girl's Dormitory at Fu Jen Catholic University?

This survey is designed to determine how many female students choose to obey or disobey the unfair regulations of surveillance cameras, and their reasons for doing so. We assure that ALL RESPONSES to all questions will be held completely confidential by the researcher. Only summaries or anonymous comments will be shown in the final report. Please be completely honest and open with your reasons. Thank you for your time!

I agree that the results of this case scenario and my opinions about surveillance cameras can be used for academic purposes anonymously.

Description of the sample for this survey:

This questionnaire will be delivered to at least 30 anonymous female residents living at the Wen-de girl's dormitory at Fu Jen Catholic University. It is estimated that they will answer and return the questionnaires right after they finish participating in the case scenario.

I. Reflection on the case scenario

1. Did you take out the fish tank from the refrigerator?

Yes (Go to Q2) No (Go to Q8)

2. Did you see the note on the fish tank?

Yes No

3. Which of the following reasons persuaded you to remove the fish tank? (First instinct)

To make space for food in the refrigerator.

To save the fish from freezing to death.

Other reasons: _____

4. Did you fear being caught by the surveillance cameras?

Yes

No

5. Did you try anything to protect yourself from the supervision of the surveillance cameras?

Yes

No

6. During the experiment, were you convinced that the fish should stay in the refrigerator in order to cool down?

Yes (Go to Part II)

No (Go to Q7)

7. Following the previous question. Why didn't you think so? (Go to Part II)

I thought that keeping the fish in the refrigerator is more dangerous to the fish's life than the fish getting sunstroke.

I didn't know whether or not the writer of the note is an expert on fish.

8. Did you see the note on the fish tank?

Yes

No

9. Why didn't you take the fish tank out of the refrigerator? (First instinct)

I didn't want to be caught by the surveillance cameras.

I was convinced that it is for the fish's own good. It needs to cool down.

Other reasons: _____

10. Was your decision affected by the surveillance camera that was watching you?

- Yes No

11. Instead of taking out the fish tank from the refrigerator, what did you do before leaving the room?

- Grab my food and leave.
- Others: _____

12. After this experiment, did you start to think that “maybe the note is right that the fish can live in the refrigerator”?

- Yes No

13. During the experiment, were you convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down?

- Yes (Go to Q14) No (Go to Q15)

14. Following the previous question. Why were you convinced? (Go to Part II)

- The owner of the fish knows best.
- I am actually not fully convinced, but I felt more relieved from having the responsibility to trust the note and leave the fish inside the refrigerator.

15. Following question 13. Why didn't you think so?

- I think keeping the fish in the refrigerator is more dangerous to the fish's life than the fish getting sunstroke.

I didn't know whether or not the writer of the note is an expert on fish.

II. Opinions about surveillance cameras

1. If you noticed the presence of surveillance cameras in a particular space, would you avoid committing embarrassing, illegal, or immoral behaviors?

Yes

No

2. Do you feel that sometimes your behaviors in public betray your own free will when under the watch of the numerous surveillance cameras in Taipei? (For example: You are thirsty, but you are not allowed to drink in the MRT station.)

Yes

No

3. If you were a police officer who received an order to abuse a terrorist to collect necessary information to protect countless citizens' lives, and your boss is supervising you by a surveillance camera, would you execute the command?

Yes

No

This is the end of questionnaire. Thank you for your valuable time and participation!

Appendix A: After-Scenario Questionnaire in Chinese

窺見亞洲人服從極權統治的潛在危險：

輔大女學生對統治者監視與洗腦的反應問卷調查

您好，這份問卷旨在調查輔大女學生對一項監視器模擬情境的反應和其原因，測試學生們會遵照亦或違背指示。我們保證所有的實驗結果和您的個別意見都會完全**保密**，且只會以**匿名**的形式作為學術研究用途。因此請您**拋開一切道德顧慮**，誠實且放心的作答！誠心感謝您！

我同意這份實驗結果和我的看法可以**匿名**作為學術研究用途使用。

第一部分：實驗檢測

1. 請問您有從冰箱中取出魚缸嗎？

有（請至第二題） 沒有（請至第八題）

2. 請問您有看到魚缸上的指示便條嗎？

有 沒有

3. 以下哪項**原因**使您決定從冰箱拿出魚缸呢？（請直覺作答）

為了清出放食物的空間。

為了讓魚不在裡頭被凍死。

其他

4. 請問您在過程中曾擔心被監視器拍到嗎？

有 沒有

5. 請問您在過程中曾試圖防止自己被監視器拍到嗎？

有，我曾試圖掩飾自己（例：遮住臉、背對監視器）。

不，完全沒有。

6. 在過程中，請問您是否被紙條的理由所說服？（為了讓魚從中暑的症狀中回復，因此讓魚留在冰箱裡）

有（請至第二部分） 沒有（請至第七題）

7. 承上題，請問您沒有被說服的原因？（請至第二部分）

我覺得對魚來說，把它留在冰箱比中暑更危險。

我不知道寫紙條的人是否真的是魚類專家。

8. 請問您有看到魚缸上的指示便條嗎？

有 沒有

9. 請問您沒有把魚缸拿出冰箱的原因？（請直覺作答）

我不想被監視器拍到，進而被抓到。

我覺得這是為了魚好，牠需要從中暑的症狀中冷卻。

其他:_____

10. 請問您在做出要不要拿出魚缸的決定時，有被一旁看著的監視器影響嗎？

有 沒有

11. 若您沒有拿出魚缸，請問您在離開前做了什麼呢？

拿出自己的食物然後離開

其他:_____

12. 在您決定不拿出魚缸後，請問您有開始認同：「或許紙條是對的，魚或許可以在冰箱這樣的低溫環境順利生存」嗎？

有 沒有

13. 在過程中，請問您是否被紙條的理由所說服？（為了讓魚從中暑的症狀中回復，因此讓魚留在冰箱裡）

有（請至第十四題） 沒有（請至第十五題）

14. 承上題，請問您被說服的原因？（請至第二部分）

我覺得魚的主人應該最了解牠

我其實半信半疑，但是這個理由讓我較安心、較無罪惡感。

15. 承第 13 題，請問您沒被說服的原因？

我覺得對魚來說，把它留在冰箱比中暑更危險。

我不知道寫紙條的人是否真的是魚類專家。

第二部分：對監視器的看法

1. 倘若您在一個特定的環境意識到監視器的存在，請問您會因此避免做出不雅、不法、不合乎道德的行為嗎？

會

不會

2. 請問您是否覺得台北市隨處可見的監視器，讓您在公開場合的行為有時被迫違背自身自由意志?(例如:口渴想喝水，但是捷運上不能喝。)

是

否

3. 假設你是一位美國警官，且你接到長官的指示：為了取得重要資訊，確保無數國民的生命安全，你必須刑求一位恐怖份子，且時間有限。現在，您和恐怖份子正面對面在一方斗室裡，長官正透過監視器監看整個過程，請問您會執行命令嗎？

會

不會

問卷到此結束，感謝您的參與和寶貴的時間！

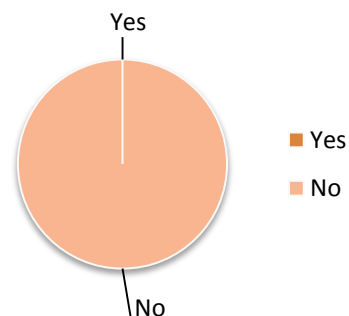


Appendix B: Diagrams and Illustrations

I. Reflection on the case scenario

1. Did you take out the fish tank from the refrigerator?

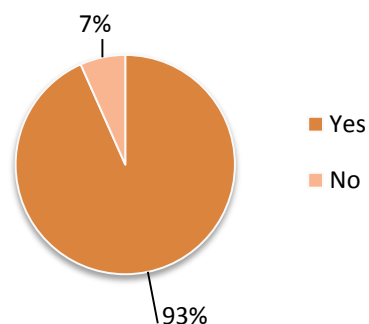
Yes	0	0%
No	30	100%



All the female students in Wen-de dormitory at Fu Jen Catholic University obeyed the commands and did not take out the fish tank from the refrigerator. In Milgram's experiment, only 65% of the subjects obeyed the rigid orders, but in this research project, all the subjects complied with the commands.

8. Did you see the note on the fish tank?

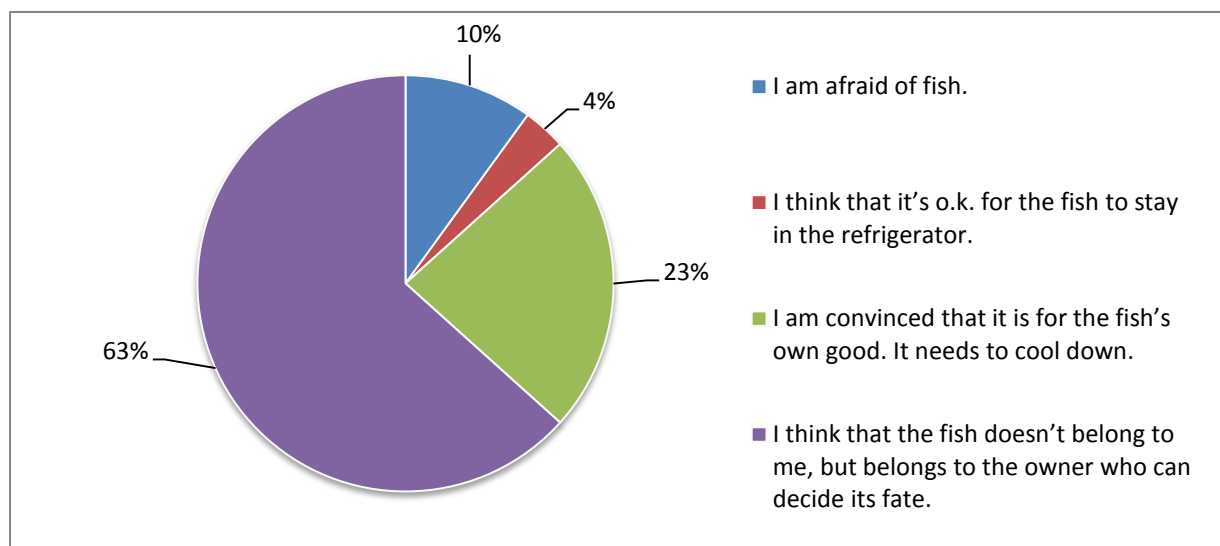
Yes	28	7%
No	2	93%



Among the 30 female subjects, only 2 subjects failed to see the note on the fish tank. These two subjects did not answer question 13, question 14 and question 15.

9. Why didn't you take the fish tank out of the refrigerator?

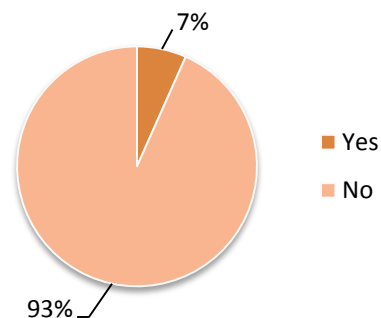
I am afraid of fish.	3	10%
I think that it's o.k. for the fish to stay in the refrigerator.	1	4%
I am convinced that it is for the fish's own good. It needs to cool down.	7	23%
I think that the fish doesn't belong to me, but belongs to the owner who can decide its fate.	19	63%



Among their reasons for not taking the fish tank out of the refrigerator, 10% of the female student subjects were afraid of fish; 4% thought that it is o.k. for the fish to stay in the refrigerator; 23% were convinced that the fish needed to cool down; and 63% thought that the fish belonged to the owner who can decide their fate. It is clear that the majority of the subjects did not want to get involved with the fish because they thought that the fish did not belong to them. In addition, 23% of the subjects believed in the false justification that the fish have to stay in the refrigerator to recover from the sunstroke.

10. Was your decision affected by the surveillance camera that was watching you?

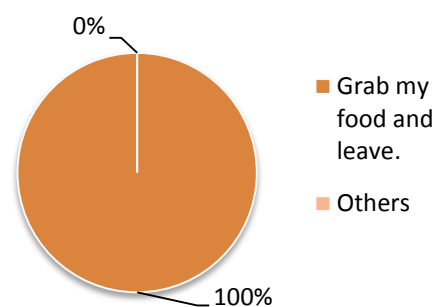
Yes	2	7%
No	28	93%



Among the 30 female student subjects, most (93%) thought that their decisions were not affected by the supervision of surveillance cameras, while 2 subjects (7%) thought that they were. This shows that the majority of the subjects believed that their decisions were unaffected by the supervision of surveillance cameras.

11. Instead of taking out the fish tank from the refrigerator, what did you do before leaving the room?

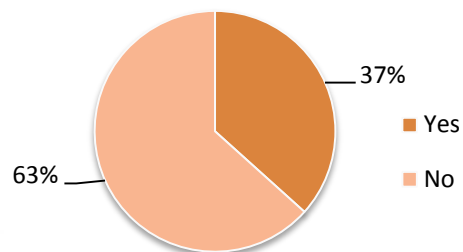
Grab my food and leave.	30	100%
Others	0	0%



Instead of doing something else, all the subjects grabbed their food and left the room after seeing the fish tank. This shows that the subjects' behaviors were not affected by seeing the fish in the refrigerator. Students came to the refrigerator to fetch food, and cared nothing else.

12. After this experiment, did you start to think that “maybe the note is right that the fish can live in the refrigerator”?

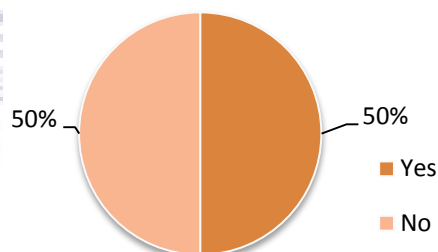
Yes	11	37%
No	19	63%



Over half of the female subjects (63%) started to think that the fish can live in the refrigerator, while the other 37% did not. This result shows that subjects changed their beliefs after the case-scenarios.

13. During the experiment, were you convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down?

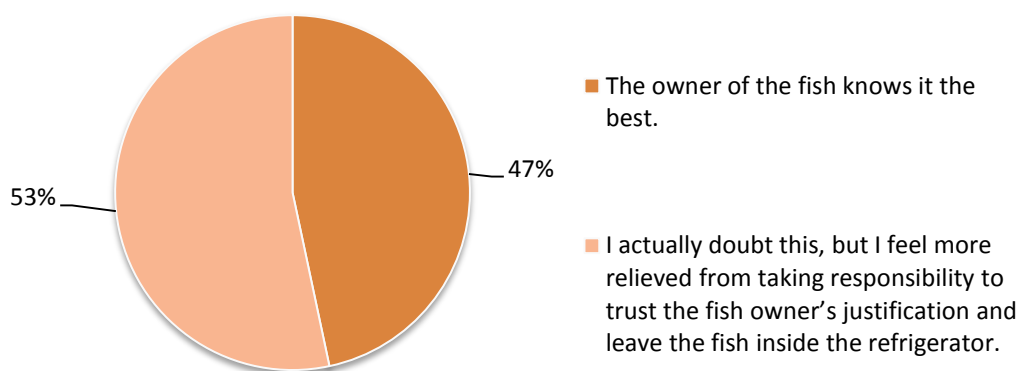
Yes	15	50%
No	15	50%



Half of the subjects were convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down, while the other half still doubted this. The result shows that half of the subjects got brainwashed and believed the fish owner’s false justification that the fish have sunstroke.

14. Why were you convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down?

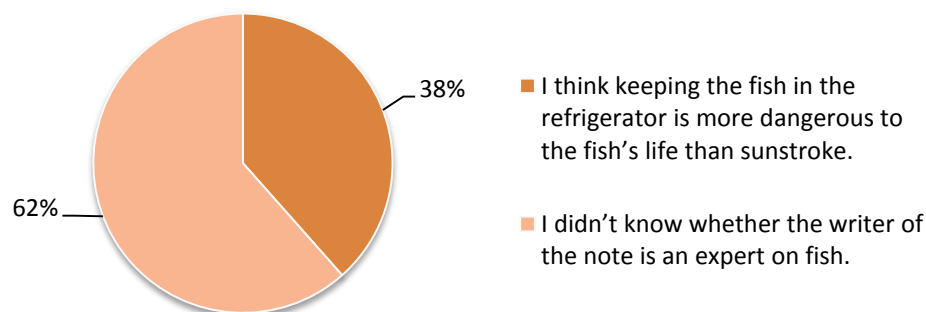
The owner of the fish knows best.	7	47%
I actually doubt this, but I feel more relieved from taking responsibility to trust the fish owner's justification and leave the fish inside the refrigerator.	8	53%



Among the 15 female subjects who were convinced that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down, 7 of them (47%) believed that the owner of the fish knows the fish's condition best, and the other 53% of the subjects actually doubted this, but they feel more relieved from responsibility to trust the fish owner's justification and leave the fish inside the refrigerator. The percentages of the two reasons for being convinced that the fish should stay in the refrigerator are quite close.

15. Why **weren't** you convinced by the note that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down?

I think keeping the fish in the refrigerator is more dangerous to the fish's life than sunstroke.	5	38%
I didn't know whether the writer of the note is an expert on fish.	8	62%



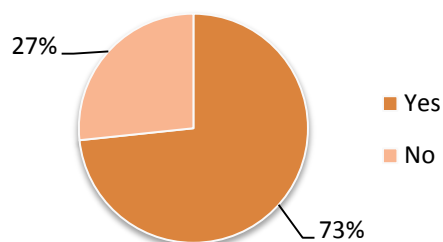
Among the 13 female subjects who were not convinced that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to cool down, over half of the subjects (62%) thought that they didn't know whether the writer of the note is an expert on fish. The other 38% of the subjects thought that keeping the fish in the refrigerator is more dangerous to the fish's life than having sunstroke.

The result shows that among subjects who were not brainwashed, 62% of them questioned authority itself, and the other 38% of the subjects decided to believe the fish owner's justification or not by their reasons and common sense.

II. Opinions about surveillance cameras

1. If you noticed the presence of surveillance cameras in a particular space, would you avoid committing embarrassing, illegal, or immoral behaviors?

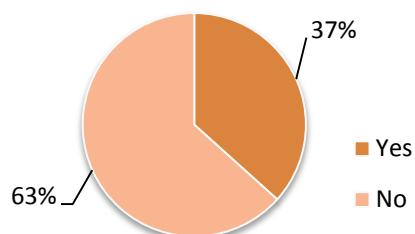
Yes	22	73%
No	8	27%



Over half of the female subjects (73%) thought that if they noticed the presence of surveillance cameras in a particular space, they would avoid committing embarrassing, illegal, or immoral behaviors. Only eight subjects (27%) thought they would not.

2. Do you feel that sometimes your behaviors in public betray your own free will when under the watch of the numerous surveillance cameras in Taipei? (For example: You are thirsty, but you are not allowed to drink in the MRT station.)

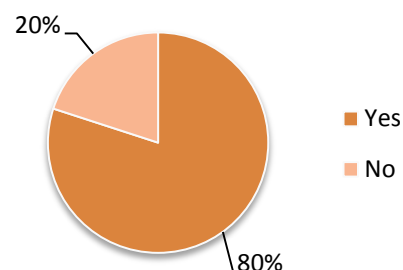
Yes	11	37%
No	19	63%



63% of the female subjects felt that sometimes their behaviors in public betray their free wills when they were under the watch of many surveillance cameras in Taipei, while 37% did not.

3. If you were a police officer who received an order to abuse a terrorist to collect necessary information to protect countless citizens' lives, and your boss is supervising you by a surveillance camera, would you execute the command?

Yes	24	80%
No	6	20%



A majority of the female subjects (80%) said that they would execute the command to abuse that terrorist to collect necessary information. Only 6 students (20%) would not execute the command. In Zimbardo's prison experiment, the subjects that took the roles of guards abused the prisoners to maintain their authority, and the result of this question also shows that a high percentage of student subjects would abuse another human being for a reason that they believe is absolutely right.

Appendix C: Interview Questions

1. During the scenario, did you feel any concern about the fish's lives even for a moment?

Why or why not?

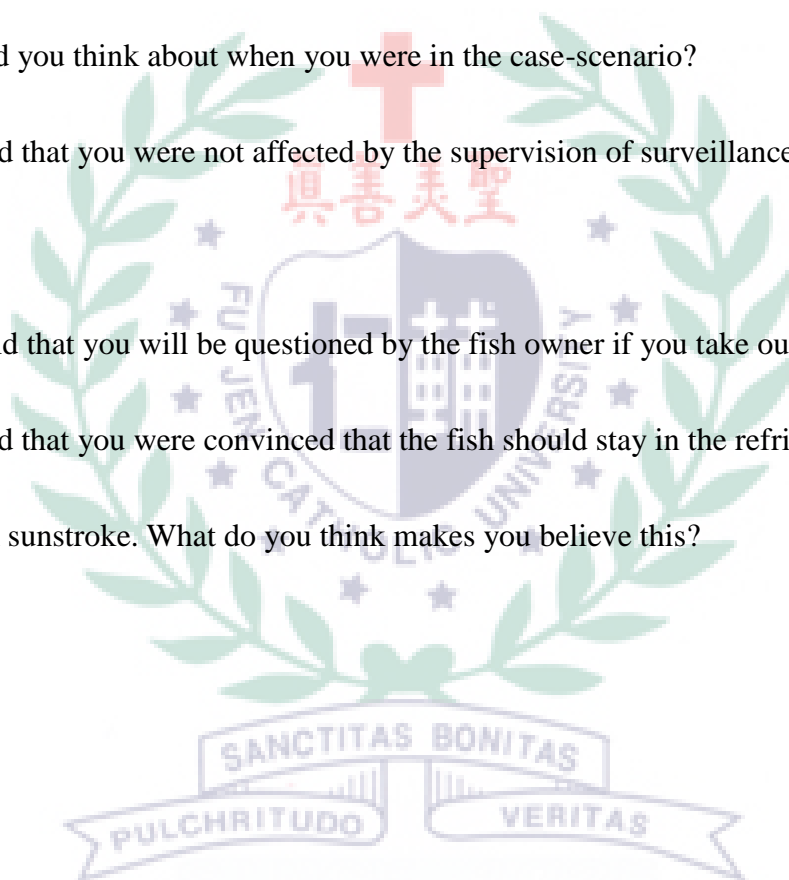
2. If the fish are replaced by cats, dogs, or babies, would you still obey the commands? Why or why not?

3. What else did you think about when you were in the case-scenario?

4. You answered that you were not affected by the supervision of surveillance cameras. Why not?

5. Are you afraid that you will be questioned by the fish owner if you take out the fish tank?

6. You answered that you were convinced that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to recover from sunstroke. What do you think makes you believe this?



Appendix D: Transcripts of the Interviews with the Subjects

Q1: During the scenario, did you feel any concern about the fish's lives even for a moment?

Why or why not?

Subject#5: I didn't. You can feel that the temperature inside the refrigerator is not very low.

People opened the refrigerator door so frequently that sometimes the food inside the refrigerator rotted.

Subject#6: I didn't. I believed that the fish owner would save it. In addition, it is not my business whether or not the fish would die.

Subject#9: I didn't worry about the fish's lives because I thought they would only risk dying if they were put in the freezer.

Subject#10: I did worry about their lives for some moments. However, I decided not to touch the fish tank because it belonged to the owner.

Subject#11: I didn't because I thought that the fish owner should have known them the best.

Subject#20: I did worry about it at the beginning, but later on I thought that the fish can swim in the river even in winter, so I left them there.

Subject#24: I did, but I thought that fish swim in the winter, so I abandoned the idea to save them. However, I would save them if I saw them dying three days later, or even tonight. I think I will save them if I see them again tonight.

Subject#26: I was afraid that the fish might die. After all, they have lives. However, I

believed that the fish owner would save them anyway, or others who see the fish may save them, too.

Subject#30: I didn't care about the fish's lives. Whether or not they had sunstroke or were dying was not my business.

Q2: If the fish are replaced by cats, dogs, or babies, would you still obey the commands?

Why or why not?

Subject#1: No, I will definitely save them. I may hear them crying or making agonizing sounds, and I would empathize with their pains. However, I cannot empathize with the fish's pain because I cannot distinguish their emotions and feelings. I didn't even know whether or not they were in pain. Were they?

Subject#3: Of course I wouldn't. I would take them out immediately from the refrigerator, because it is common sense that they cannot stay in the refrigerator. The owners of those animals would be accused of animal abuse!

Subject#4: No, I would save them. I didn't save the fish because I thought that they can survive in the river even in winter.

Subject#5: No, I think I will save them. I don't understand fish much. They are cold-blooded animals, so maybe they can stay in a cold environment like in a refrigerator. However, I am sure that mammals such as cats, dogs, and babies cannot survive in the refrigerator.

Subject#27: No, I would save them, but ...I really don't know the reasons why I would save

those mammals but I didn't save the fish.

Q3: What else did you think about when you were in the case-scenario?

Subject#5: I was worrying that the fish tank may be broken when someone took out their food without noticing the fish tank. The refrigerator is stuffed with so much food.

Subject#18: Can you not put the fish with my foods? I don't want to see them next to my food.

Subject#26: The fish owner is ridiculous. She abused the fish but she threatened us by surveillance cameras. What if the fish have diseases? They may poison my food! If the fish poison my food, I will definitely take the fish tank out.

Q4: You answered that you were not affected by the supervision of surveillance cameras. Why not?

Subject#11: I didn't intend to touch or take out the fish tank at all, so I was not influenced by the surveillance cameras.

Subject#21: I do not bother to care about the presence of surveillance cameras in my daily life, so I was not influenced by them.

Q5: Are you afraid that you would be questioned by the fish owner if you take out the fish tank from the refrigerator?

Subject#11: Yes. After all, that fish tank doesn't belong to me.

Subject#21: Perhaps I will, because the fish owner has made it clear that she didn't want

anybody to touch that fish tank.

Subject#27: Yes. The fish owner has explained the reasons, and I was afraid that I would ruin her business.

Subject#28: Yes. I would try to report to the management of the dormitory instead of taking out the fish tank by myself. In this way, the fish owner wouldn't know it was me who ruined her business.

Subject#29: Yes. I would keep observing whether or not the fish are dying. If they are, I would report it to the dormitory instead of touching the fish tank.

Q6: You answered that you were convinced that the fish should stay in the refrigerator to recover from sunstroke. What do you think makes you believe this?

Subject#15: I think that I don't really understand fish, and this is why I am convinced.

Subject#23: I don't have enough knowledge about fish.

Subject#25: In fact, I didn't think that the reason was hilarious. However, I would take the fish tank out if I saw it the second time.