

Violation of the law

Law



“ Do you think that most people will break laws and violate traditional moral values if they are confident that they would not be caught”, you may ask? Of course, naturally, people will violate the laws if they can guarantee themselves not to be caught. Explaining further, if they are sure that there are no consequences to what they are about to do then of course, they have the greatest tendency to break the law. In cases where they have seen people who violated but did not get caught, this particular incident will provide them more confidence in themselves that to break the law will not do them any bad consequence, and that they would not even get caught then all the more that they will carry on with their plan.

In psychology, the aforementioned may be logically explained by B. F. Skinner through his theories known as Positive and Negative Reinforcements (Encarta, 2007). Explaining further, he defined Positive Reinforcement as something which motivates a certain action simply by an administered reward (Encarta, 2007). In our case the reward or what motivates the person to do the act, which is violation or breaking of the law, is the fact that, he or she is confident that he or she would not be caught (Encarta, 2007). It is a positive reinforcement the individual set by himself to motivate him to carry out such an act (Encarta, 2007).

For the purposes of comparison, Negative Reinforcement is technically defined as boosting an action through the removal of an “ aversive stimulus” (Reinforcement, n. d.). Again, let us look into the case in question (Reinforcement, n. d.). Here, if the individual knows that he or she will be caught violating the law, then surely he or she will no longer carry out such an act (Reinforcement, n. d.). Knowing that he or she would be caught is the

Negative Reinforcement set here to prevent the act from occurring (Reinforcement, n. d.).

To explain further, allow me to provide another example: An individual who may want to protest against the government may be motivated to do so especially if he knows that he won't get caught (Reinforcement, n. d.). On the other hand, a person may not push through with the plan of returning a wallet he took since he knows this will be a reason for him to get caught and will surely be punished for it (Reinforcement, n. d.).

References

Encarta. (2007). B. F. Skinner. Retrieved September 24, 2007 from

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