

Soft determinism

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Soft Determinism Soft determinism holds a similar view to that held by the universal causation theory in hard determinism; that all things result from a series of causal events. However, soft determinism differentiates between external and internal causes, which results in a belief, in limited freewill and moral responsibility (Trusted 23). For the soft determinist, freewill allows him act according to their nature as defined by society, the environment, family, and other psychological factors. Soft determinism contends that moral responsibility, human freedom, and determinism are compatible. Freedom, in this case, can be defined as the ability to act without external impediments, which allows an individual to forbear and do as he wills (Trusted 24). In addition, it is also the power for an individual to act in the manner in which his will determines, meaning that if one chooses to rest, he could either rest or move as he wills. Therefore, one is free unless they are forced to take actions that are not according to their will.

Soft determinism differentiates between external and internal causes. The internal causes are those actions that are as a result of one's inner desires and wishes, as well as those that result from one's freewill (Trusted 39). For instance, a person may leave the country because of their desire to travel overseas. External causes, on the other hand, are those that an individual is forced to undertake due to outside influences, such as being forced to leave the country because of government action. The distinction between external and internal causes explains the reason why a soft determinist needs freewill. Acting with freewill in soft determinism means that one is acting as per his/her nature, rather than according to external pressures exerted upon their situation. This is referred to as the liberty of spontaneity theory, which is a central theme in self-determinism (Trusted 39). While man's nature is <https://assignbuster.com/soft-determinism/>

also determined by external factors, he also has freewill because they possess spontaneity freedom. Although circumstance and nature determine man's choices, the option taken is as a result of free will.

With regards to moral responsibility, if internal causes like desires and wishes have a significant impact on actions taken, one is considered to be morally responsible (Trusted 41). For instance, choosing not to save a burning child because one does not feel like doing so means they are morally responsible for the death of that child, while failing to do so because one is crippled means they are not morally responsible for the death. The justice system considers soft determinist ideas when considering sentencing and punishment. For example, a husband, who ends up killing his wife for no reason, but to free himself to marry his mistress is guilty of murder and will be punished for it. This is different to a situation in which the wife pointed a loaded gun at him, at which point the court would have to take external factors into account (Trusted 42). In this case, the husband would have diminished moral responsibility due to psychological and emotional trauma, resulting in less severe punishment.

Therefore, soft determinism provides universally enforceable laws based on reason. Our choices are backed by internal choices that result from desire and not any other factor, giving man a degree of responsibility. In addition, soft determinism is essential for moral responsibility because its absence would mean decisions are taken at random and are meaningless. Moral responsibility, therefore, would be absent without soft determinism and free will. Soft determinism also gives man the moral right to exert punishment, providing justice and enabling the protection of society.

Works Cited

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Trusted, Jennifer. *Free Will and Responsibility*. Oxford [Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 2012. Print.