

Breaking social norms assignment

Sociology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Fathers Day, was the day to finish the long backpacking trip in Big Basin state park and return to the car for the three hour long drive back to the “civilized world”. Before leaving, one must pass by Berry Creek Falls. Having already passed while on the way into the park and tidily observed the falling water from the orderly observing deck, coming out of the park presented itself with a neat opportunity to break one of many of society’s standards of “correct behavior”, also known as a norms.

Although the norm of standing from a preordained deck to observe natural wonders may not be as widespread of a norm as saying pleases and thank yous, or even as hiding disagreeable bodily functions while in public, however in the subculture of the hikers it is well known and even more well observed. The norm to break was to climb off of the well built vista point and walk right under the waterfall. The Setting and Audience The redwoods dominated most of the scenery, with the occasional unidentifiable generic shrub.

The ground was covered in vibrant green redwood clover, with the natural black soil poking out underneath, not the aroma backyard dirt, this soil has identifiable components to it; sticks, rocks and minerals that made me wish I had paid more attention in geology class, and a plethora of leaves that give the handy tree identification booklet a backpack weight justification.

Although this was all phenomenal scenery hardly anyone was giving it any notice, as all eyes were drawn to the falls at the tip of the trail. Running water fills all of the senses.

You can hear the rapid gush falling down the three to two story high fall. You smell the wetness of the surroundings, with the intense earthy smells that come from such well watered vegetation. The feel of the water as tiny droplets hit your skin after a 25+ mile hike and two day trip without running water is in fact true transcendence. The people who were hiking around 2 p. M. Were mostly tourists. I heard many different NORM BREAKING OBSERVATION 4 languages mostly Chinese, although there was a lovely French couple, and two very polite Swedish families that I observed.

As the space was so vast it did not seem as though the 50 or so people in the area were crowded by any means. Two large groups, with 10+ each, of Asian people who were surprisingly pushy and dominating of the decks. They crowded people off, including small children who needed to be closer for a better view and refused to yield to backpackers or bicyclers, thus doing some norm breaking of their very own. The remaining foreign people blended with the traditional upper class American families out for a day hike.

The general stereographic seemed to be upper class families or couples, all day hiking with 4 total backpackers present during the entire stop at Berry Falls. For the most part I felt calm and collected while observing the beginning of my experiment. Found a lovely bench across the creek to study the scenery and people of the chosen setting. I chose this norm to break because it seemed so natural a gesture yet everyone was bound to not partake in what would hopefully be a wonderful experience.

The Reaction Discussion The reaction from my spontaneous splash in the falls was not at all what I expected. Instead of the indignation and annoyance

as ruining the scenery for others I heard laughter over the roar of rushing water over my ears. Even more fascinating three children and a couple, seemingly unrelated, came down and started to play under the falls as well. The Deviance Present Deviance is present when there is a “ violation of the norms” (Heinlein, 2013). There was deviance present when walked under the waterfall since that was a violation of the norms for the park.