Broken Windows Theory

James Q. Wilson & George L. Kelling, 1982

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The Broken Window Theory: The Impact of Neglect on Social Order

- *If a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. One unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It has always been fun.)*

A house in which a window is broken:

- **If → Pane of Glass is replaced; it implies**
  - Owner is present'
  - Cares about the property; and
  - Will not tolerate its disrepair
- **But If→ window remain broken: it implies;**
  - The property has no guardian
  - An invitation
  - Every window will be broken
  - Vandalism of the house will implies

The Escalating Effects of Neglect: Understanding the Broken Window Phenomenon

- *"Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside."*

- *"Or consider a pavement. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of refuse from take-out restaurants there or even break into cars."*

Broken Window Theory

Philip Zimbardo,

In 1969, Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist from Stanford University, ran an interesting field study. He abandoned two cars in two very different places: one in a mostly poor, crime-ridden section (**Bronx**) of New York City, and the other in a fairly affluent neighborhood of Palo Alto, Calif. Both cars were left without license plates and parked with their hoods up.

- **Results:** The car in the Bronx was quickly vandalized and stripped of parts, while the car in Palo Alto remained untouched for a week.

- **Conclusion:** The experiment suggests that social context significantly influences behavior. In areas with high crime rates, people may be more likely to engage in deviant behavior due to a perceived lack of social control and a sense of apathy towards community property.

- **Key Takeaway:** The experiment highlights the power of the social environment in shaping individual actions.

Individuals begin to commit crime such as <u>Panhandling</u>, <u>prostitution</u> and <u>drug dealing.</u> These crime soon become part of the <u>regular activities</u> taking place in the <u>abandoned building</u> and will then spread out into neighborhood. This Creates more problems for the whole neighborhood and the society, due to less involvement of community

How it can be halted?

- Fix the broken windows;
- Attack the initial factor of the Causal Chain
  - Disorder caused by disreputable people
  - Breakdown in informal control
  - Invitation of predatory criminal
  - High crime rate in the neighborhood

Conclusion

- **Little things matter-** Take care of little things and the Big things will take care of themselves

- "if a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge

- Carelessness implies vulnerability

Blue-Collar Crimes versus White-Collar Crimes

The main difference between blue-collar crimes and white-collar crimes is the type of criminal activity and the social standing of the offenders:

- **Blue-collar crimes:** Blue-collar crimes refer to crimes committed by individuals or groups from working or lower class of society. It includes violent acts, such as murder, sexual assault and robbery, as well as non-violent acts such as illegal gambling and prostitution. It is often easier to detect as it has a clear victim and are without doubt of illegality in the action observed. These crimes are typically committed out of an immediate desire or need. They are more sensational crimes and thereby put more pressure on police due to fear. They often involve the use of force resulting in harm of people and has greater chance to be reported by the victim.

White-Collar Crimes refers to illegal activities committed by individuals or organizations in professional or business settings. These crimes often involve deceit, abuse of trust, and exploitation of power for personal or corporate gain.

It is committed by individuals in positions of power and trust, such as executives, professionals, and government officials. It involves deception, fraud, and abuse of authority rather than violence. Embezzlement, fraud, bribery, insider trading, money laundering, and environmental crimes are some of the examples of these crimes.

It can have significant financial and social consequences, often exceeding the impact of traditional street crime. According to US Department of Justice the cost of white collar crime is 18 time higher than street crime

Key Differences from Street Crime:

- High-status individuals vs. individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Deception and exploitation vs. violence and force.

- Often less visible and more difficult to detect.

- White-collar crime is a serious societal issue that undermines trust and erodes the integrity of business and government institutions

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura (1925-2021) a Canadian psychologist developed '**Social Learning Theory'** in **1977**.

Three main assumptions:

- People learn through **observing**, **imitating** and **modeling** others' behaviour – process called **observational learning**.
- **Cognitive processes** are essential part of the learning processes – called **mediational processes**.
- Learning does not necessarily lead to change.

Experimental Basis of the Theory:

In 1961 and 1963, Albert Bandura conducted a series of experiments to determine whether social behaviors (aggression) could be accrued by observation and imitation, e.g. **Bobo doll experiment.**

Bobo doll experiment

It was series of experiments to study how children learn aggression through observation. The experiments took place between 1961 and 1963 at Stanford University.

In the experiment, children were exposed to an adult model who acted aggressively towards an inflatable Bobo doll. The children were then placed in a room with the Bobo doll and other toys, and researchers observed their behavior. The children who observed the aggressive model were more likely to imitate the adult's behavior.

The experiment demonstrated observational learning, which is a type of learning that differs from classical and operant conditioning. The study also highlighted the importance of controlling variables in experiments to establish cause and effect.
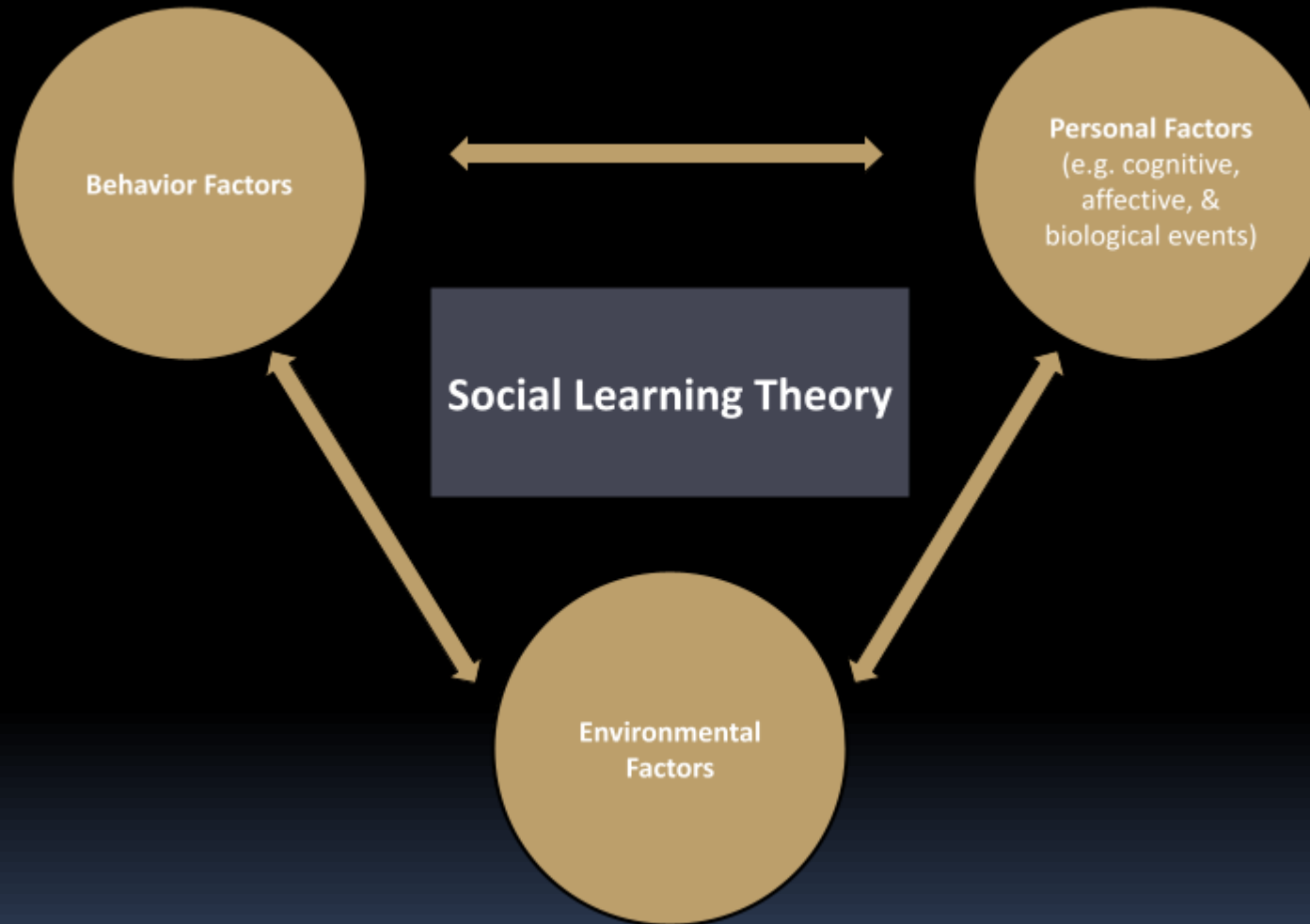
Behaviors learned through modeling

Social Learning Theory (SLT) posits that we learn by observing and imitating others.
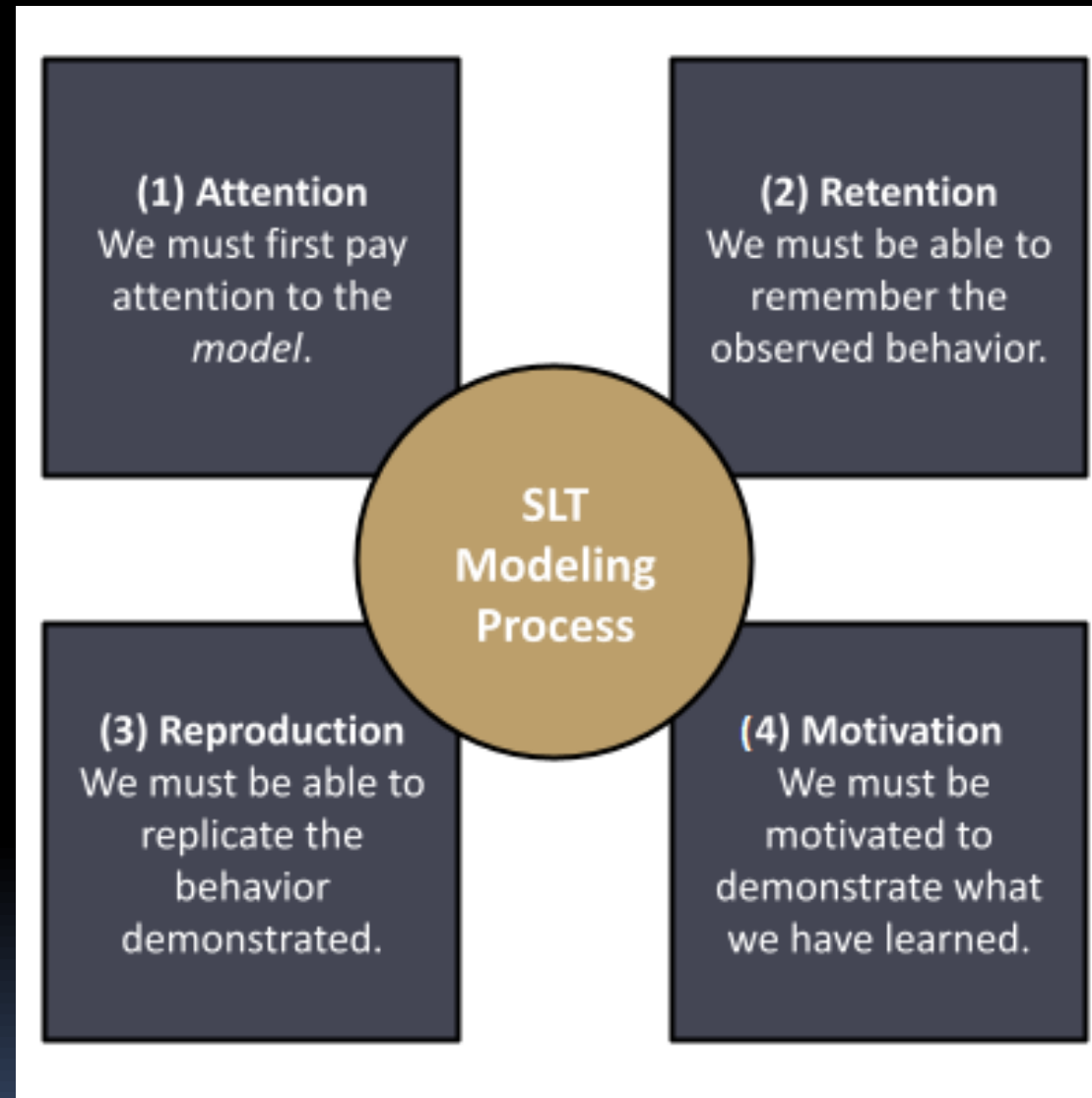
Key Processes:

- Observation: We pay attention to the behavior of others.Imitation: We try to replicate the observed behavior.

- Modeling: We are more likely to imitate those we perceive as similar to ourselves.

Bandura's Four Mediational Processes:

1. Attention: We must pay attention to the model.

2. Retention: We must remember the observed behavior.

3. Reproduction: We must be physically and mentally capable of reproducing the behavior.

4. Motivation: We must be motivated to perform the learned behavior, influenced by rewards and punishments.

SLT emphasizes the role of cognition in learning, recognizing that learning can occur even without immediate behavioral change. It highlights the importance of observing and imitating others as a primary mechanism for acquiring new behaviors and knowledge.

In a 2018 study using the SLT to explore learning from role models, students confirmed the processes above, describing how they were "selectively and consciously paying attention, using retention strategies, reproducing observed behavior and being motivated to imitate" (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018, p. 1).