## Social behavior - its elementary forms

# Routledge & Kegan Paul - Social behavior; its elementary forms : Homans, George Caspar, 1910



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Thus, as we have pointed out so often, Other in our little group gives the best advice and gets the most approval. Did this person, rather than another, reward a man's actions? The Theory of Games may be good advice for human behavior but a poor description of it. A man's past history of success, of stimulation, of the acquisition of values all affect the way he behaves now.

Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms (Homans, 1961)

The frequency with which the person performs the action depends also on the pattern in which the reward comes.

#### SOCIAL BEHAVIOR ITS ELEMENTARY FORMS

If a child acquires at his mother's knee a value like independence, he may, when he grows up, try to change his society radically instead of preserving it. On the other hand, it may give great emotional satisfaction to the man who does the punishing, and that is something not altogether to be despised. In general, a man's satiation with a particular reward renders all his other rewards relatively more valuable to him.

Social behavior; its elementary forms: Homans, George Caspar, 1910

Now let us look at the constant of proportionality, k, in Herrnstein's equation.

Social behavior: its elementary forms: Homans, George Caspar, 1910

The greater the value of the reward, the more sensitive to stimuli the person may become--so much so that if the value to him of a potential reward is very high, he may become oversensitive and, until corrected by failure, respond to irrelevant stimuli. The psychologist may have so arranged its cage that the motion of a metal key will release a grain of corn to the pigeon. The best thing for us to do would be to ignore him when he cried.

#### Elementarformen sozialen Verhaltens

We soon discovered that this was not true in her case. In risk the odds on success are accurately known; in uncertainty they are not known.

Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms. By George Caspar Homans. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961. 404 pp. \$5.50

People sometimes say that virtue like hers is its own reward, that no external reward, no change in the behavior of others, is needed to maintain it.

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