Why do we have an obligation to obey the law?

Many US Citizens think that:

(a) everyone, including the poor, should obey the law, and

(b) all able-bodied, working age citizens ...should support themselves through legitimate (legal) work, even if that work is hard, low-paying, and unsatisfying.

Shelby thinks that in some cases, the ghetto poor don’t have an obligation to obey the law.

*Question 1.* What is the Principle of Reciprocity? (We talked about this with the CBI.)

*Question 2.* Shelby says: “Most U.S. citizens think that ... when the ghetto poor engage in criminal activity or refuse to work legitimate jobs, this is ... a failure of reciprocity on their part.” Reconstruct this line of thought. Why is breaking the law a failure of reciprocity?

*Question 3.* Why, according to Shelby, is it permissible for the ghetto poor to break the law? (That is: why is it not a failure of reciprocity?)

*Question 4.* If Shelby is right, does this mean that the ghetto poor can never be morally criticized? Why not?


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