

## Shortcomings of the social process perspective

The social process perspective - also called the interactionist perspective – infers that everybody has the potential to become a criminal and that criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other people and not inborn. However, the theory also has its shortcomings.

Social process theories developed different approaches including: social learning theory, social control theory, labeling theory, reintegrative shaming, and dramaturgy. These have come under criticism for their shortcomings.

Social Learning Theory, people learn their behaviors by watching others either getting rewarded for bad behavior, or being punished because of bad behavior.

One of the most influential learning theories is *differential association*. According to Edwin Sutherland, criminality is learned through a process of differential association with others through the communication of criminal values.

Shortcomings are that the mechanism by which delinquency is socially transmitted remains unclear; The theory is untested and it fails to account for the emergence of criminal values; The theory used in per se, is not a sufficient explanation for crime; And It also fails to account for the emergence of criminal values.

Social Control Theories - It focuses on explaining why some people obey the law and others don't. It assumes that deviance crime may result when social controls are weakened. A Shortcoming is that it fails to address case-by-case and other social (political/economic) elements. For example, Arab Spring.

Labeling Theories - Social reaction or labeling theory states that criminality is promoted by becoming negatively labeled by significant others. The downside is that it lacks credibility as narrative of crime causation, is weak in explaining the origin of the crime, and does not support the concept of secondary deviance.

Reintegrative shaming - the theory only works if there is a broad moral consensus of what is wrong and what is right, good or bad. The theory stresses the importance of shame in criminal punishment and that punishment should focus on the offender's behavior rather than on the offender. **Shortcomings are that it** fails to theorize the relationship between shame and pride and fails to concentrate on the emotion of the shame (on the offender) that shaming practices are supposed to induce.

Dramaturgy - suggests that individuals play simultaneous social roles while their interaction with others. When information that a person wants to hide is revealed the course of interaction is interrupted and the 'script' changed. Some of its weaknesses are that it provides a set of related concepts instead of a theory ; It doesn't offer suggestions for institutional change; and it takes the analogy of the theatre/performance too far

In conclusion, the social process perspective states that criminal behavior is learned from interaction with others. It defends that family relationships and troublesome/negative relationships play a key role in predicting criminal behavior. However the social process perspective has its strengths and weaknesses and is not free from criticism. In trying to rationalize behavior and social processes, this theory often diverts the blame from the individual to the society.