

Functionalists view on crime

[Law](#), [Criminology](#)



Functionalists view on crime Crime is behaviour that breaks the law.

Functionalist explanations, like other sociological models such as labelling or conflict theory, look at the implications of crime and crime control policies, rather than directly attempting to explain the causes of criminal behaviour.

However, unlike other biological, psychological, and sociological models that remove blame from offenders by claiming criminals have little free will, a

functionalist approach favours repression of criminal activity and the use of appropriate sanctions. The major distinction between functionalist and all

other theories of crime causation is the former's apparent positive view of deviant behaviour. Ordinary crime is not a threat to the social order. In fact,

society needs criminal behaviour (and legal responses to it) to function

properly. Of course, the crime rate should remain within an acceptable

limit, as too high a rate of crime might indicate an emerging problem, such as the rise of anomic conditions or lack of social norms. Overall, crime is

treated as a key indicator of systemic well-being. Yet, a low crime rate is not considered necessarily indicative of social stability. Society's response to

crime in the form of negative feedback helps the citizenry recognize the

boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This is just one aspect of a cybernetic social system attempting to remain in homeostasis while continuing to

gradually make progress. Crime is part of any social system; defined as a pattern of social acts in pursuit of individual and collective goals and

governed by its need to maintain its own structure. Marxist view on crime

Crime is behaviour that breaks the law. While Marx did not write at length about crime, Marx argued that the laws were generally the codified means

by which one class, the rulers, kept another class, the rest of us in check.

Marxists recognise that for a society to function efficiently, social order is necessary. However, apart from communist societies, they consider that in all societies' one class — the ruling class — gains far more than other classes. Marxists agree with functionalists that socialisation plays a crucial role in promoting conformity and order. However, unlike the latter, they are highly critical of the ideas, values and norms of capitalist society, which they term 'capitalist ideology'. Modern Marxists point to education and the media as socialising agencies, which delude or 'mystify' the working class into conforming to a social order, which works against its real interests.