

Chapter 2

Topic 4 Realist theories

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Activity: Research

Causes of and solutions to crime

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify left and right realist views of the causes of and solutions to the 'problem of crime'.
- Carry out research into students' opinions on these issues.
- Draw conclusions about students' opinions on these issues.

Both left and right realists offer a range of solutions to the problem of crime. Your task is to carry out research to determine which of these solutions are most popular with your fellow students.

Read pages 97-101 of your textbook.

1. As a whole class, design a questionnaire to investigate opinions on how to tackle crime. Your questionnaire should include questions both about the causes of crime and about the range of solutions to the problem of crime proposed by left and right realists.

You need to ensure that you will be able to tell how far your respondents favour right or left realist views. Use questions with tick boxes or a Likert scale to enable easy analysis and sorting of the responses.

Use the following points to help you design your questionnaire:

- a. Right realists see poor socialisation and rational choice as reasons for crime.
- b. Right realists favour making crime less attractive, e.g. by maintaining orderly neighbourhoods and 'zero tolerance'.
- c. Left realists see relative deprivation, subculture and marginalisation as reasons for crime.
- d. Left realists favour solutions that solve structural causes of crime, e.g. community policing and equality of opportunity policies.
- e. Any other causes or solutions you can add from either of these perspectives.
- f. Include questions about standard variables such as gender, age, ethnicity etc.

2. In pairs, distribute the questionnaire to a range of students. Aim for equal numbers of males and females. As a class, you need to get a total of 50 responses.

3. Combine the data from all the responses you have gathered. You will need to sort the questionnaires into the following groups:

- a. Those who on balance favour right realist views of tackling crime
- b. Those who on balance favour left realist views of tackling crime
- c. Those who favour neither left nor right realist views of tackling crime.

5. From your class results, what conclusions can you draw about students' views of how to tackle crime?