



# Left Realism, Right Realism and police community relations.

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## Abstract

In a nutshell, every country in the world deals with crime and deviance. The activities committed by wrongdoers reflect the reality of our society. One thing about humans is how they stick together through shared habits, land, and ways of living - tied by constant contact and reliance on one another. Still, life among them isn't equal, with power gaps and bias based on gender woven into daily routines. When looking at crime, two strong ideas stand out: views from the political left and those from the right, each judging wrongdoing and law enforcement differently, especially regarding trust between officers and neighbourhoods. A shift began when crimes climbed sharply - a moment sparking Left Realism, born not only to face rising numbers but also challenge older beliefs, including strict Marxist thinking and cautious policies both dismissed harm felt by victims, often overlooked in poorer districts. It brings to the fore what we may call the square of crime, which includes the state, the offender, the victim, and the public, and puts

forth that what will improve the situation is a push for democratic policing, community input, and better police accountability, from which trust will emerge. At the core of both perspectives is the relationship between police and the community. While Left Realism is for a cooperative and trusting relationship, Right Realism is for order and authority. What is put forth is a middle path which includes community-based practices along with tough law enforcement, which in turn will do away with the issue of police legitimacy and social justice.

## Introduction

Society is dynamic and changes over time. Left and right realism are two sides of the same coin. In 1970, left realism was developed, and in 1980, Marxist theory was developed and highlighted the approaches, emphasizing that crime is a real and serious problem. Left Realism is a criminological theory that was developed and emerged in the 1980s. Left realism emphasizes that people commit crimes according to their own interests or self-interest; they take crime seriously and focus on the real impact on the working class and mainly marginalized communities. On the other hand, right realism is also a criminological theory that explains and emphasizes offenders or wrongdoers as rational; they commit crimes for a reason or there will definitely be a logic or logical explanation. In a study, it was observed that in every society, there is a class



conflict with target deviance. Hard times push some folks toward bad choices, leaving others hurt, struggling, or worse. Left realism sees money gaps as fuel - people feel pushed aside, grow bitter, start lashing out without even meaning to at first. When society keeps shouting about making it big, yet shuts doors on fairness, frustration builds - that tension pulls people off lawful paths, says right realism. Blocked chances make shady routes seem like options, slowly changing how someone views right and wrong. Over time, regular lives bend under pressure until breaking rules feels normal. No sudden switch, just steady drift from pain, neglect, unmet hopes. What begins as survival can harden into habit, reshaping who a person becomes criminal minded person. Crime committed by an individual occurs due to a systematic issue such as capitalism, which reflects unequal power relations that may dominate innocent people. The person who belongs to capitalistic societies holds power and they have different psychiatric aspects from the person belonging to the BPL level (below poverty level). Individuals with power try to control those below the poverty level, resulting in inequality and unequal power relations. As a result, the below-poverty-level person sometimes strikes out from the control of these people, and they turn into deviance. In many cases, it has been seen that these individuals are not habitual offenders; only society makes them criminal-minded persons, and by this way they commit unlawful activity. In right realism, when an individual commits a crime, they feel guilty for the act committed by them, but in left realism, when an individual never feels guilty about what they have done, because they are not rational, they are habitual offenders. In this way, crime always reflects society's condition and the conflicts occurring in the nation. In criminology, contemporary perspectives emphasize a multidisciplinary approach that aims to understand and examine the causes of crimes. Crime gets examined by left and right realists through many angles - genetics, mind patterns, surroundings, plus how people interact. These views tie into today's shifts, like global ties growing and daily habits changing. So it's suggested: body makeup, thinking styles, and group pressures shape law-breaking actions. Things rooted in DNA, brain function, or nerve system glitches can lead someone to offend. Who a person is inside - their mindset, emotional state, ways of misjudging situations - also steers conduct that breaks rules. On the other hand, social factors such as peer pressure, poverty, and family environment are crucial and responsible for an individual committing a crime. Not all persons are habitual offenders; many individuals commit crimes for the sake of family maintenance, and mainly an individual commits crimes to feed himself/herself and his child and family<sup>1</sup>.

### **Contrasting the relation between Police and Crime**

The police community plays a crucial role in maintaining peace in society, and police presence and activity are expected to reduce criminal activity in society. For example, according to the 2011 census, India has a population of approx one billion and more, against this rate of population district armed police strength of 1545772 as in 2017. In the past few years, the crime rate in India was approximately 7.2% in 2023. Becker (1968) put forth the idea that a criminal will commit a certain crime only if the opportunity is at a minimum of all that is put forth. In his report, the model in terms of number and the offenses a criminal commits, is based on his or her probability of conviction, sentence if convicted, and also that of which may have influenced the issue, such as income. From other income generating activities, which include legal and illegal activities, his

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<sup>1</sup> Shichun Ling, Rebecca Umbach and Adrian Raine, 'Biological Explanations of Criminal Behavior' (2019) 25 Psychology, crime & law : PC & L 626 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2019.1572753>>.



or her tendency. This particular model reports that an increase in police presence reduces expected gains and increases the predicted penalties for criminals. Thus, a rise in police presence causes a decrease in crime. This is supported by empirical evidence. This study reports a positive relationship between crime and police presence at the same time. In 1974, Swimmer proposed a different model to study the bi-directional relationship between police and crime, which is a solution to the simultaneous measurement issue of crimes and police. He applied his model to crime and police data, which showed that when police presence increases. The causes of crime drop on the other hand we see that which of crimes goes up it's a rise in the. Police force in violent & property related crimes. As an increasing in the police presence has seen a greatly deter crime, while a rise in the crime rate brings a slight increase in the police force. There is a lot of evidence that increasing police protection and police strength is associated with reducing the level of robbery and burglaries, but unfortunately, it does not affect motor vehicle theft or murder. In many studies or research, it has been seen that the way police work is much more crucial than the number or increase in police personnel. Few other studies have reported on what else motivates crime. We examined international homicide and robbery rates in a set of developed and developing countries, which analyzed trends and issues in that which we looked at is the variation and scale of these crimes across different economic groups of nations. We observe a lower Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate and higher income inequality for a high crime rate. In Pakistan, a study reported that economic factors, including. Poverty and unemployment are considered to be the causes of the rise in crime rates (Gillan, Rehman, & Gill, 2009). In a study that looked at crime data from 2011 to 2012 in India, we see that urban. Population share of the total population, gross domestic product per capita, unemployment rate. Identify large differences in the total crime rate. This research looks at the issue of that relationship in the Indian setting. We look at state-wise data available for crime incidence and police presence in 2016 and compare it with what was seen in 2011 and 2015. Some data from the NCRB and the BPRD for crime incidence for the entire calendar year, and for police presence, we use data as of the start of the next year. Generally there are three types of crime that an individual committed such as crimes against children and women, crime related to property, violent act against person. Therefore the traditional criminology speaks that male person are very much involve in crime rather than female, so in many cases we have seen male person dominating the female person and grievous crimes like rape, murder, domestic violence and sexual assault this crime are committing in our society. Basically this all crimes are cognizable and non-bailable sections and if someone committed this crime they have to face death penalty or rigorous lifetime imprisonment and also liable to fine. But then also in every day in some different places we used to see these offences committed. Although crime against children is a disease that if an individual is committed crimes like sexual assault, child labour and others on children's. For providing protection in India there is Protection of children from sexual offences act. After that crimes against property you are very serious problem in our nation that we have to see in every neighbourhood have this type of issues in the family. These kinds of crime start with a small problem but later gradually they escalate. And crimes against schedule casting, schedule tribe is a serious problem that every lower cast section of the society have to face that's why our Indian constitution provide protection for scheduled cast, scheduled tribe and their us many facilities for the upliftment of this backward classes, which we put forth to be in agreement with Becker's economic theory. We also present two additional hypotheses that



we propose based on other studies. Therefore crimes actually diminish when police increases in strength and that in the case of increasing crime rate we see an increase in police strength<sup>2</sup>.

### **Crime and police community scenario**

The sense of safety in the human community depends on the police authorities. Living in freedom without any kind of restrictions in a safe society is the fundamental right of every citizen of a nation. These are the basic fundamental rights that the police community should protect and uphold, and the interests and fundamental rights of citizens. To live in a safe and thriving community, which brings about a sense of belonging, is a basic human need, and without it, the growth and development of our best selves does not happen. In addition, we may say that police-community relations, which is the interaction between the police and the communities they serve, is important. The health of police community relations is an indicator of a community's overall health. Transparency is crucial for the police community and citizens because the police authority should work in a format where its workings of the police authority are transparent to society. The society will definitely have peace of mind when the police authority works openly; if the police authority maintains clear and greater transparency, then the society will feel that police officers and the police authority are a part of the society, and if the police authority does not maintain transparency, then the society feels that the authority is separate from them. It has been seen in many cases that when a victim is victimized for a serious crime and when the victim goes to the police station to lodge an FIR, it has been seen in many cases that the police officer tries to convince the victim not to lodge an FIR or complaint. Many times it has been seen that police officers blame the victim for the crime, and sometimes they used to say the allegations are false without conducting any investigation by the police authority; in this way, a victim is being secondarily victimized by the police authority. When left with no other option, the victim goes to the court for a court complaint under Section 210 of BNSS, 2023. This section allows a magistrate to take cognizance of an offense. The magistrate verifies and allows the court complaint petition by the victim; after this process, the learned court issues an order to the police authority to start an FIR. In this way, the public is losing faith in the police authorities in a very severe way. In many cases of 498A, when a female person goes to the police station and lodge a complaint about her husband and her in laws, the police officer take the complain and start a FIR under section 498A of IPC. But later, the police officer instead of arresting the husband and his family member the police officer summons's them in police station, and demand a bribe for avoid to making the arrest the husband and his family member. And after taking the bribe the police officer comply the notice of 41A Cr.P.C notice and suggest the husband and his family members to surrender before the learned court and take bail. And when the magistrate used to see the 41A Cr.P.C comply notice, immediately the magistrate grants bail to the husband and his family member. By this way after 498A which is a non-bailable section and it is the duty of the police officer to go and arrest the accused but in some cases they never do so and give the privilege to the husband and his family by not arresting them. On the other inside the community is a fine place to live, as communities go, it is very average. Average income, average levels of education, and average amount of crime. However, our

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<sup>2</sup> '3.-Exploring-Relationship-between-Police-Presence-and-Crime-Rates.Pdf' <<https://www.vikasanvesh.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/3.-Exploring-Relationship-between-Police-Presence-and-Crime-Rates.pdf>> accessed 26 March 2026.



community has a significant issue. The citizens of the community and the police do not get along at all. People do not trust the police to be fair and impartial, and the police feel threatened by citizens. Things are very tense. Trust grows when police and neighbourhoods connect, shaped by shared moments rather than just duty. Where people live matters - backgrounds, skin colour, past run-ins with cops - affect how safe folks feel reaching out. Strong ties form slowly, built on actions more than words between patrols and locals. When trust fades, cooperation slips, making crime solving harder and streets tenser. How officers show up each day shapes whether people speak up or stay silent. Safe streets mean nothing if people still fear walking on them. Though officers patrol more often now, suspicion lingers like dust after a storm. Cooperation crumbles when each side watches the other through narrowed eyes. Without shared effort, solving crimes becomes guesswork shaped by silence. Progress begins only once neighbors and law enforcers stop measuring distance and start bridging it. Arrests alone won't rebuild what was worn thin by repeated friction. For a long time in fact for many years police success in many areas was measured solely in terms of arrest stats. The police were evaluated based on these numbers. Addressing these issues with care and cultural competence is key to better relationships. The police were evaluated solely by these numbers, which in turn put a great deal of pressure on them to make arrests. Therefore, despite the focus on arrests, many other elements of community-oriented policing, which include trust building, attention to local issues, and presence in non-enforcement roles, were often left out. By removing the arrest quota, we see a chance for officers to balance crime investigation and become part of the community<sup>3</sup>.

## Conclusion

In the views of similarities between left and right realism, the basic paramount and fundamental is that each talks about crime. In right realism's aspect the criminals choosing the path of crime and by this way they particularly choose the deviance and developed the characteristics of a habitual offender. Where as in the aspect of left realism, crime somehow target innocent people due to power imbalance and inequality present in the society. Left Realism and Right Realism present different but in the same time complementary views of crime and policing which in total are very much at the core of what we see in the relationship between the police and the community. Left Realism looks at the social bases of crime like inequality, marginalization and relative deprivation. It posits that community based policing, greater public input, and fixing structural issues work best, which in turn will build trust between the police and the public. In this, effective policing is the outcome of legitimacy, fairness, and working with local communities. At the same time, Right Realism is into individual responsibility, deterrence, and very tough law enforcement. It stands by hard-line policing strategies, more watchful police presence, and harsher penalties to maintain order. Therefore moral plays a very crucial role for an individual in the commission of crime. If an individual values moral aspects, then they never commit crime; they always maintain discipline and support, respect the rules, regulations, and laws of the nations. But if an individual doesn't focus on moral aspects, then it is very much uncertain that the individual will think before committing a crime. They never understand the consequences of commission of unlawful activities. Though law and punishment are aimed at improving the moral quality of an individual and

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<sup>3</sup> ['Police-Community Relations | Overview, Importance & Examples - Lesson | Study.Com'](https://study.com/academy/lesson/police-community-relations-importance-comparisons.html)  
<<https://study.com/academy/lesson/police-community-relations-importance-comparisons.html>> accessed 27 March 2026.



mainly maintaining the discipline and crime rate of society. From this point of view, strong and present policing, which instills fear of what will happen if one breaks the law, does what is needed to reduce crime and at the same time raise public confidence. In the field of police community relations, Both approaches put forth what is important. Left Realism reports on trust, accountability, and social justice as key elements, while Right Realism brings forward discipline, control, and efficiency. It is also suggested that to fully benefit from these perspectives, we must not stick to one approach, which in turn causes imbalances, too much leniency, or too little. Thus, we see that an effective model of policing integrates both theories. A balanced approach which puts in practice strong law enforcement at the same time as community engagement and social awareness is what we should see. In the end, positive police community relations are a result of more than just authority; they are a result of legitimacy, fairness, and the public's active role in working with law enforcement agencies.