committing in the sense that the rewards outweigh the punishment. Furthermore, Wilson and Kelling’s Broken Windows theory suggests that signs of disorder in some neighbourhoods such as graffiti, begging and vandalism sends out a signal that no one cares and that it tolerates aggressive behaviours. Without remedial action, the situation deteriorates, tipping the neighbourhood into a spiral of decline. Therefore, crime doesn’t stem from labelling but from the individual themselves and the opportunities they are given.

Left Realists, however, take a structural approach, arguing that it is relative deprivation, marginalisation and subcultures that cause crime, especially working class crime. Lea and Young argues that although people are better off today, they have a greater feeling of relative deprivation because of the media and advertising have raised everyone’s expectations for material possessions – we are wealthier, but we feel poorer, and thus there is more pressure to get more stuff to keep up with everyone else, which generates historically high crime rates. This can be associated with Merton’s Strain Theory which suggests that deviance stems from the strain between goals a culture encourages individuals to achieve and what institutional structure of society allows them to achieve legitimately. For instance, the American Dream with ‘hard work-success’ ideology but realities of block-To opportunities and emphasis on success created frustration and pressure to resort to illegitimate means. This has given way for deviant adaptations as well, creating subgroups such as conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion to achieve success. Besides, marginalised groups such as the unemployed lack clear goals and organisations to represent their interests which results in feelings of resentment and frustration. Having no access to legitimate political means to their goals, frustration can be expressed through violence and rioting, increasing crime. Lastly, left realists draw on Cohen’s theory of status frustration to explain deviance as a product of delinquent subculture with different values from those of mainstream society. Subcultures function as solution to provide alternative status hierarchy for those denied to achieve by legitimate means.

In conclusion, for labelling theorists, deviance is in the eyes of the beholder, changing constantly according to the meanings people involved give to actions. However, realists believe crime and deviance is real, not socially constructed, stem from not labelling but structural factors and the individuals themselves.