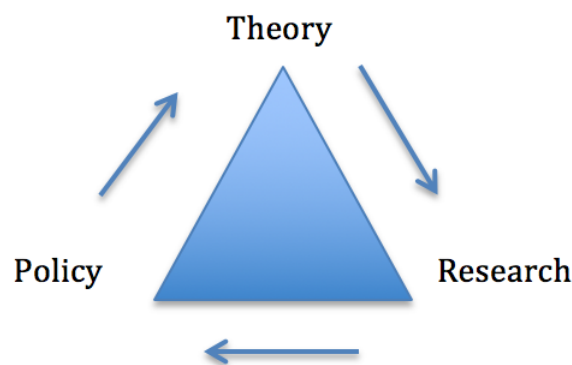


4.1: Importance of Policy in Criminal Justice

Why is Policy so Important in Criminal Justice?

Everyone is affected by the criminal justice system through public policy. Policy represents social control and ensures members of society are compliant and conform to the laws. Policies include issues related: to juvenile justice, drug legislation, intimate partner violence, prison overcrowding, school safety, new federal immigration laws, terrorism, and national security.

Modern-day crime policies can be traced to changes in crime and delinquency in the 1960s. That decade saw major increases in the crime rate along with widespread social unrest as a result of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights movement. The work of the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice highlighted the crime problem and the criminal justice system's failure to address the problem. The commission called for new approaches, programs, policies, funding models, and research on the cause of crime. In addressing the causes of crime (theory), and using appropriate data collection (research), effective policies and programs could be proposed.



Theory-Policy-Research

When discussing crime policies, it is important to understand the difference between “crime prevention” and “crime control.” Policies and programs designed to reduce crime are crime prevention techniques. Specifically, **crime prevention** “entails any action designed to reduce the actual level of crime and/or the perceived fear of crime.”^[1] On the other hand, crime control alludes to the maintenance of the crime level. Policies, such as the three strikes law or Measure 11, seek to prevent future crime by incapacitating offenders through incarceration. Other policies like sex offender registration acknowledge that sex offenders exist and registering them will control the level of deviation, sometimes preventing-or perceiving to prevent future offenses.

Public policies and laws are created at different levels of government, with micro-level policies enacted on the local level and macro level applied at the federal or state level. For example, at the local level, some towns and cities might create specific ordinances tailored to their unique needs, such as banning cigarette smoking in the downtown area. At the federal level, policies are created that apply to the federal criminal justice system and can apply to states as well. However, federal laws can differ from state laws, such as marijuana legalization. Individual organizations can also make policies that address their individual agency needs, such as requirements for local police officers. Therefore, depending on who creates the policies, they can be far-reaching or extremely localized.^[2]

Fake News Exercise

Fake News has received a lot of press lately. In fact “fake news” was the top word in 2017. For people under 30, online news is more popular than TV news and people under 50 get half of their news from online sources.

Here are 4 steps for evaluating News:

1. Vet the Publisher's Credibility.
 - What is the domain name? A domain name that ends with “.com.co” is not to be trusted. Something like abcnews.com looks legit, but if it is listed as abcnews.com.co, be wary.

- What is the publication's point of view? Check out the "About Us" section to learn more about the publishers. It will also tell you if the publication is meant to be satirical, like the Onion.
- 2. Pay Attention to Writing Quality.
- Does the publication have all caps or way too many emphatic punctuation marks?!?!?!? Proper reporting does not adhere to such informal grammar. The article you are reading is probably not vetted.
- 3. Check out the Sources and Citations.
- Does the publisher meet academic citation standards? Your teachers and professors constantly tell you to cite and reference appropriately. This is how we can check your sources. The same is true for online news. Check the sources.

Ask the Pros

- Check out fact-checking websites like factcheck.org

Read more at <https://www.summer.harvard.edu/inside-summer/4-tips-spotting-fake-news-story>

Take the Fake News Quiz! <https://www.channelone.com/feature/quiz-can-you-spot-the-fake-news-story/>

1. Lab, S. (2016). *Crime Prevention: Approaches, Practices, and Evaluations*. (9th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. ↩
2. Lab, S P., Williams, M.R. Holcomb, J.E., Burek, M.W., King, W.R., & Buerger, M.E. (2013). *Criminal Justice: The Essentials* (3rd ed.). New York, NY. Oxford University Press. ↩

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