

Crime, justice, law, and politics



Crime, Justice, Law and Politics Thomas E. Crider University of Phoenix There are common public misperceptions about crime. For example, members of the public often think that murder occurs frequently, but statistics show that it is the index crime that is least likely to occur.

? This paper will discuss the implications of forming crime control policies by legislative bodies that might be influenced by such inaccurate opinions.?

Media is one of the biggest sources that cause the misperception of the public and lead to the public forming inaccurate opinions. This in turn allows politicians to create crime control policies targeting these misperceptions, but doing nothing in the long run except putting them in favor of the public. The example of murder is a good choice because it represents one of our most heinous of crimes. Because the media covers only the big crimes such as this, it gives the public the impression that murder is almost common place, while in fact it is not (David L.

Altheide, 2006).? There were in 2002, 11, 877, 218 crimes committed in which the police were aware of. Property crimes made up 88 percent, theft made up 59 percent, burglary 18 percent, violent crimes 12 percent, vehicle theft 10. 5 percent, aggravated assault 7. 5 percent, robbery 3. 5 percent, rape .

8 percent, and murder was a whopping . 1 percent. When the media covers violent crimes they intend to incite the public for nothing more than ratings. The content of these broadcasts tend to sway societies views and politicians use these as campaign platforms to get themselves elected into office.

Politicians have also used the media to promote fear to justify the actions

they take to combat crime (Schmallegger, 2007). You may have noticed that many of the most recent policies that have been passed only have an impact on the lower and middle class people. The main reason for this is that it is the upper class who are influencing the laws in their favor. Lobbyists and big business often sway the way laws are created and most of these are in favor of big business.

They do this by way of donations to campaign funds and promises for further funding to get their way. Criminal policies created in this way are called a social trap, which is when individual reinforcers are inconsistent with the well-being of the community. Many policies that our legislation passes are above what the average person can understand. The jargon the laws and policies are written in leave many in the dark and uncertain as to what they cover.

The legislation gives us only the parts that make sense or the parts that they want us to know about, but quite often they contain other bits that often help big business and allow them to do what others are told they cannot. Tax laws, bankruptcies, and monopolization policies are some good examples of these. These laws are different depending on your social status. Another good example would be the recent bailout plan our government enacted.

This bailout only targeted big business and many of these companies spent millions of dollars on lobbying fees to receive what they considered their fair share of our money. In other words, the rich got richer while the poor or middle class continued to suffer and small and private companies went out of business. To this day we have yet to see any improvements that these

bailout were designed to do. They did all of this under the authority that the Constitution gives them, while we just sat back with little say in the matter. Crime control policies are done in much the same way. They are designed to make us believe that the government is working with our best interest at heart, while at the same time limiting the middle and lower class and giving more freedom to the upper class. There are also many instances in which no one can predict the consequences of some of the policies or laws created.

Legislators simply pass some of the to get their other bills passed which are attached to them. These attachments are often unknown to the average citizen and are usually brought up only after the bill has passed. They do this because elections depend on two things.

The first is favorable publicity and the other is organized support. Elected officials are more likely to respond and make promises according to the preferences of those individuals who can provide them with the votes needed to attain office. They also rely on organized support for donations to fund their campaigns. Many officials spend a majority of their time generating positive publicity rather than writing carefully designed legislation because to them positive publicity is more important to them.

James D. Shaffer, a Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Michigan State University, wrote in his paper titled Power In The U. S.

Political Economy-Issues and Alternatives that " many programs to assist the disadvantaged have not succeeded because the political payoff was in the pronouncements of support for legislation addressed to these problems, not

in the design of effective programs. The problem is legislative accountability, and it is a serious problem.” (Shaffer, J.

D) The system; however, is broken and it can be influenced by payoffs in the form of donations. The promise of rewards and future support often influences the design and implementation of many policies passed through legislation including many crime control policies. We need to be able to recognize what is really going on within our government. We need to be able to read between the lines and see through all the false promises. We need to open our eyes and stand up to the rich. We may not have the money but we do have the vote and through the vote we can not only place people in office that will do what is right we can also remove those who do not. This; however, will only work if we stand united.

This; however, is another reason why the law makers and rich can get away with the things they do. The odds of enough people getting together is slim at best and there are always those who will stand against everyone else simply because they have the right to do so. This is also why like the government the judicial system is set up with its own checks and balances. We need institutions which can adjust to unexpected outcomes or laws that are created that may infringe on our individual rights. They need to be able to adjust and compensate for any serious effects that may not been intended or foreseen. Lawmakers are voted into office and because of this they do not represent everyone. It is almost guaranteed that the individual with the money to support their campaign will win.

So the system is flawed in favor of the rich. References David L. Altheide (2006).? The Mass Media, Crime and Terrorism.

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