



# FRAME WORKS INSTITUTE



## **Framing and Facts:**

Necessary Synergies in Communicating about  
Public Safety and Criminal Justice

**A FRAMEWORKS RESEARCH REPORT: SEPTEMBER 2013**

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## Introduction

It can be argued that nothing is as emblematic of the travails of race in American life as the criminal justice system. Criminal justice advocates have long used facts about the system's racial biases to call for the need for sweeping reforms — advocating for changes to make the system more equitable, efficient and effective in improving public safety for all Americans. The following statistics, for example, have become commonplace in the advocacy discourse and in media coverage more generally:<sup>1</sup>

- The United States is the world's No. 1 jailer;
- Black men have a 32 percent chance of spending time in prison at some point in their lives, Latino men have a 17 percent chance, and white men have a 6 percent chance of being imprisoned over their lifetime;
- Blacks are 17 percent of the juvenile population but 46 percent of juvenile arrests and 41 percent of waivers to adult court.<sup>2</sup>

On top of these facts, evidence of the extent and costs of mass incarceration is staggering.<sup>3</sup> In times of fiscal constraints, current levels of prison expenditures are clearly unsustainable.

Recent public opinion research suggests that, to some extent, Americans have come to recognize problems with the criminal justice system, particularly in terms of its racial bias. For example, a recent Pew study reports that 70 percent of African Americans and almost 40 percent of whites believe that black Americans receive unequal treatment by the police.<sup>4</sup> The same study also indicates that almost 70 percent of African Americans and 30 percent of whites believe that the courts do not treat black and white Americans equally. In the court of public opinion, the ground seems fertile for the reform of the criminal justice system.

So, if the American public believes the system discriminates against men of color, the data underscore the significance of these racial disparities, and the price of incarceration is so clearly unsustainable, why is advocating for reform so difficult? One answer is that the advocacy community is not framing the issue in a way that allows Americans to connect understandings of the system's problems with a set of viable solutions.<sup>5</sup> Without such a connection, we argue, momentum for reform is lost when people cannot connect their values for the society to specific system reforms and policy changes. Energy dissipates; opposition manipulates opinion and gains ground while citizens are unable to make the case for the reforms they struggle to articulate.

With funding from the Ford Foundation and in collaboration with the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard University, researchers at the

FrameWorks Institute set out to explore this hypothesis and investigate the ability of frames to expand the public conversation about criminal justice reform. To do this, FrameWorks researchers designed an experimental survey that examined the way that frames interact with the facts advocates use to talk to the public about the state of public safety, the criminal justice system and the need for reform. The goal of the experiment was to comment on the effectiveness of the field's communication practice and to explore the potential of other strategies to advance the public conversation about public safety and criminal justice. This is part of a larger project, which over the last three years has sought to discern whether a better narrative could be developed to anchor and advance public thinking.

Literature from the social sciences has shown, convincingly, that the way an issue is framed strongly influences the probability that the public will embrace change.<sup>6</sup> Further, frames form the foundation for political action, action that often becomes codified in policies and legislation.<sup>7</sup> Knowing how to frame public safety issues in ways that open up Americans to progressive reform and help them articulate their desires to legislators and other stakeholders is imperative to winning the ground now, and to setting the stage for future activity.

More specifically, we know that, absent a value — a particularly powerful framing tool — at the top of a communication, people struggle to see the point of engaging with an issue and are left to their own devices in understanding why an issue matters. This is especially true when applied to broad, abstract issues of societal import. Values are broad perspectives that help orient people's thinking by directing them to certain perspectives on what an issue is about and why it matters. In this way, values serve as fundamental organizing principles that people use to evaluate social issues and reach decisions.<sup>8</sup> Further, an effective value has to be “sticky,” easily communicable, and be able to help people reach productive understandings and decisions on the issue in question. With respect to criminal justice, an effective value also has to synergize with other parts of advocates' desired messaging strategy — notably, the facts that the field uses to make its case for systems-level reform. The operative question is: Can values and facts be combined in new ways sufficient to drive home a more powerful message that lifts support for specific reform policies?

Recognizing that the conversation around criminal justice is meant to inform as well as persuade, FrameWorks researchers designed an experiment to test various value-based frames, as well as the facts that advocates often include and want to continue to use in their messaging. In all, the goal was to identify productive messages and to develop strategic recommendations that can be used by advocates interested in moving toward a more reasonable and informed discourse on public safety and criminal justice. Note that this experiment is part of a larger suite of reports that investigate various aspects of Americans' thinking about criminal justice.<sup>9</sup> As such, this particular study sought to identify which perceptual challenges identified in earlier research reports

could be effectively addressed through the use of values and facts — and what remains to be assigned to such other frame elements as Explanatory Metaphors.

## Executive Summary

In an experimental survey conducted with 8,000 respondents, FrameWorks sought to answer three research questions:

1. What is the effect of unframed facts or isolated values on people's attitudes toward criminal justice reform?
2. Which of the five agenda areas tested (juvenile justice, racial disparities, efficiency, causal attribution of responsibility and solutions attribution of responsibility) are the easiest to move and which are the hardest?
3. What is the effect of combining facts and values? In other words, what is the overall best message strategy for advocates to use?

Each of the 8,000 people who participated in the survey was exposed to one, and only one, of the following 20 messages (the actual messages used can be found in the Appendix):

1. **Neutral Facts:** A baseline condition that presents statistics describing the state of the criminal justice system as it affects all adult Americans;
2. **Racialized Facts:** A message that presents a version of the same statistics as the Neutral Facts, shifting to a pointed comparison of African Americans and whites.
3. **Internationalized Facts:** Another version of the same statistics that compares the United States to other countries.
4. **The value of *Prevention*:** This value revolves around taking a preventive approach to public safety and criminal justice, which can “decrease crime and enhance public safety.”
5. **The value of *Pragmatism*:** This value revolves around taking a “common sense” approach to public safety and criminal justice.
6. **The value of *Fairness*:** This value conveys a traditional moral appeal for criminal justice reform, namely, that we should ensure everyone is treated “fairly” and has “equal rights.”
7. **The value of *Cost Efficiency*:** This value emphasizes the cost and the return on investment we are getting from the criminal justice system, maintaining that “using public resources in cost-effective ways” will enhance public safety.
- 8-19. **Combinations, or “crosses” of each of the candidate values with each of the fact sets:** In these 12 conditions, respondents see one of the values and one of the fact sets. For example, the value of *Prevention* is combined with Neutral Facts to make one message that allow us to gauge reactions to this combined frame.

20. **A control message:** Respondents in this group got no message but answered all the same outcome questions as everyone else.

After reading the message to which they were randomly assigned, all respondents answered a set of outcome measures — questions designed to assess their attitudes toward specific areas of the criminal justice reform agenda, including:

- **Causal Attribution of Responsibility:** Whether systems or individuals are to blame for causing public safety problems;
- **Solutions Attribution of Responsibility:** Whether the onus for solving problems related to the criminal justice system lies with the system or individuals;
- **Juvenile Justice:** What kinds of policies they would endorse to reform juvenile justice practices;
- **Racial Disparities:** What kinds of policies they would endorse to address racial disparities in criminal justice outcomes, and, lastly;
- **Efficiency:** Whether they support measures to lower the costs and increase the efficiency of public safety programs.

In sum, the study measured the impact of exposure to facts and values individually and jointly on five dimensions of respondents' attitudes toward public safety and criminal justice.

1. Findings on Question No. 1: What is the effect of unframed facts or isolated values on people's attitudes toward criminal justice reform?

- *Unframed facts (that is, facts without a value) produced minimal gains.* The fact-based messages produced few effects on the outcome measures. There were two exceptions: the internationalized facts actually *decreased* respondents' support for measures to address racial disparities; the Racialized Facts had a small effect in increasing respondents' willingness to attribute the cause of criminal justice problems to systemic factors.

**Take Away:**

Advocates need to provide more than just the facts if messaging is to advance the public safety/criminal justice conversation.

- *Using facts that explicitly mention African Americans and employ racial comparisons causes neither strongly positive nor strongly negative reactions.* In contrast to a “backlash” effect, where audiences recoil from explicit mention of African Americans or have a positive reaction to stark comparisons underlining

the criminal justice system's bias against people of color, respondents were not affected strongly by the presentations of Racialized Facts.

**Take Away:**

Mentioning African Americans explicitly is not detrimental to, nor particularly helpful in, advancing the criminal justice conversation.

2. Findings on Question No. 2: Which of the five agenda areas tested are the easiest to move and which are the hardest?

- *It is fairly easy to get people to attribute responsibility for the cause of criminal justice problems to the "system."* Almost every value, and every combination of value and facts, shifted respondents toward acknowledging systemic (as opposed to individual) factors as the cause underlying the problems with public safety and the criminal justice system. These effects were large, and highly statistically significant. The combination of the *Pragmatism* value and Racialized Facts was the most effective message in increasing systems causal attribution.

**Take Away:**

Shifting people from individual to systems-level thinking about the *causes* of criminal justice problems is relatively easy. This is surprising, given the readiness of FrameWorks' informants to assign responsibility to individuals in both one-on-one and group conversations.<sup>10</sup>

- *Not all combinations of values and facts are productive — some combinations actually decrease support for reform.* While almost all values and combinations of values and facts produced positive movement in the area of causal attribution of responsibility, results in the other outcome areas were mixed. While the combination of *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts produced positive movement in four of the five outcome areas, none of the other values in isolation, or in any other value-fact combination, produced any positive movement, and some combinations actually decreased support for reforms.

**Take Away:**

It is not values in general, nor Racialized Facts alone, that elevate support, but a precise combination of the right value paired with the argument for change represented by the facts specifically mentioning African Americans.

- *None of the frames was able to positively move support for measures designed to increase efficiency of the criminal justice system.* While the combination of *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts was successful in four out of the five outcome areas, it did not encourage support for cost efficiency measures.



**Take Away:**

*Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts tell one story, but are insufficient to explain the need for policies that target system efficiency and effectiveness. Ongoing research on the role of Explanatory Metaphors in reframing criminal justice reform holds promise in increasing support for such measures.

3. Findings on Question No. 3: What is the effect of combining facts and values? What is the overall best message strategy for advocates to use?

- *Combining the value of Pragmatism with facts that point out the racial bias of the system is the most effective message in reframing criminal justice reform policies.* The combination of *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts outperformed all the other messages and produced statistically significant increases in support for four out of the five outcome scales.

**Take Away:**

Leading with the value of *Pragmatism*, and following this values evocation with facts about racial disparities and biases of the system, is the most effective communications strategy.

## Background

The current conversation about public safety and criminal justice in the United States is rife with undisputed facts that would appear sufficient to prompt citizens and interest groups to support dramatic changes and system-wide reform. The FrameWorks Institute has documented the ways that advocates present these facts in their communications, and how these presentations translate into the dominant media narrative on public safety and criminal justice.<sup>11</sup>

Experts use these facts to point out that the United States is the world's leading jailer, with incarceration rates close to an all-time high. These rates of incarceration are especially notable in specific racial and ethnic groups, particularly African Americans. Further, many of those in prison are convicted of non-violent crimes — many of them low-level, drug-related offenses — a fact that, again, is dramatically underscored by international, and racial and ethnic comparisons. The story that experts want to tell expands to cover the high cost of incarceration, the negative effect it has on communities and the bias against people of color in sentencing, as well as the general mistreatment of youth in the criminal justice system.<sup>12</sup>

These facts, in combination with pressure on public budgets and a general liberalization of public opinion, especially with regard to drug use, have given rise to an intense conversation over the direction of criminal justice reform. This contest is waged at two levels: There is an internal debate among experts over the best policies, and an interrelated debate among advocates of reform as they stand before the public. FrameWorks' interviews of expert informants have produced a relatively consensual list of policies that experts agree will move the country toward a fairer, more efficient criminal justice system that will ultimately be more effective in achieving public safety outcomes.<sup>13</sup> The question is whether the frames inherent in advocates' current messaging strategy will enhance the public debate and generate sufficient support for these reforms, or if there are communication strategies that are more effective in accomplishing these goals.

The survey experiment described here uses the items in the consensual agenda outlined by expert informants as performance metrics to assess the power of current and alternate communication strategies. Specifically, the experiment tests whether the presentation of facts alone can change minds, or whether these facts are more effective when accompanied by values — on the assumption that the value can motivate and orient judgment, and the facts can then persuade within that context. Further, this test assesses what the most effective fact presentations are: Does it make more sense to talk about Americans in general, or use more pointed comparisons to the differential effects of U.S. policies on African Americans, or to contrast the U.S. with other countries? The goal of the study is simple: to identify message frames that are most effective in

enriching public conversation and aligning the public's judgments with the experts' recommendations.

## Why Values?

Research by the FrameWorks Institute and others strongly suggests that an effective route to enhancing public conversations and increasing support for sensible policies lies in improving understanding via framing.<sup>14</sup> A critical part of this process is the application of the values that are inherent in all frames. Research has shown that, absent a value at the top of a communication, people struggle to see the point of engaging with an issue and are left to their own devices when it comes to understanding why an issue matters.<sup>15</sup> In addition to providing the motivation for issue engagement, values also provide people with a goal around which to structure their beliefs.<sup>16</sup> In this way, values serve as fundamental organizing principles that people use to evaluate social issues and reach decisions.

As a practical matter, the values contained within alternative frames compete for use in any given situation.<sup>17</sup> The frame, with its integrated value, that “wins” this competition cues accessible patterns of higher-level reasoning and orients subsequent thinking and judgment. Thus, how social issues are aligned with specific values has a significant impact on the public’s ability to reason about, and evaluate, social issues.

## Candidate Values

The candidate values used in this study have their origins in the examination of several sources. FrameWorks conducted participant observation at numerous meetings where a diverse group of experts discussed criminal justice reform and public safety. We also analyzed several national media sources, looking carefully at the values mentioned in coverage. Finally, we examined FrameWorks' previous research on related topics (government, race, etc.) to determine whether values that proved efficacious on those domains warranted representation here. Taken together, we found four values that were either present in extant conversations, likely to produce productive alignments of respondents' attitudes with expert recommendations, or both.

The values frames used in the experiment were intentionally created with a common structure, so respondents saw virtually identical paragraphs save for a few key phrases that embodied the value being tested. For example, all the messages, or treatments, include the statement "we know that communities with high unemployment, underachieving schools, and a lack of other resources have high rates of crime." Holding this statement constant across the messages creates a parallel structure and gives us a rigorous test of the message content (i.e., it allows us to be sure that it is the value in question that is moving support for reforms, rather than some other extraneous variation between the messages). Further, each treatment contained only one value. Instead of mixing message elements haphazardly, the candidate messages are homogenous "doses" of a value. Finally, the candidate messages were presented as excerpts from newspaper editorials, a practice that social scientists use to increase ecological validity — the appearance of realistic messages. Ecological validity leads to more authentic responses. These steps, along with random assignment and an experimental control (i.e., having some respondents see no message to serve as a baseline for comparison), allow us to confidently make *causal* statements linking the values content to success with the outcome measures.

The four candidate values (whose exact wording appears in the Appendix) and the rationale for their inclusion are as follows:

*Pragmatism:* This value revolves around taking a "common sense" approach to public safety and criminal justice. It asks that we identify "practical things we can do" and dismisses "wasting resources sending more people to prison instead of using proven alternatives." It concludes that a "responsible approach" will "make our country safer."

In past FrameWorks research,<sup>18</sup> *Pragmatism* has engendered a spirit of compromise and practicality that supplies an antidote to partisanship, gridlock and feelings of fatalism that surround systems reform. The value also inculcates a sense of optimism,

namely, that problems can be overcome with common sense and careful, solutions-oriented planning.

*Prevention:* This value revolves around taking a preventive approach to “decrease crime and enhance public safety.” Importantly, the actor is society, not the individual. The value argues “we need to do things right now” and avoid postponing action because problems will “get bigger, could cost more to fix and may do more harm.” It concludes that adopting a preventative approach can “make our country safer.”

In past FrameWorks research, the *Prevention* value has acted as a call to action that orients and motivates people toward doing something with immediacy. This value has some of the same “things can be done” flavor of *Pragmatism*, but emphasizes the idea of acting now to avoid future costs and problems. At the same time, *Prevention* is seen as the antidote to crisis appeals and fear mongering, which FrameWorks has found to be generally counterproductive in extended public conversations.

*Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness:* This value emphasizes the cost and limited return on investment derived from the current criminal justice system, maintaining that “using public resources in cost-effective ways” will enhance public safety. The value argues against continuing to “build prisons,” which will “cost taxpayers a lot of money.” It concludes that acting in a way that maximizes efficiency is the best way to reform the system.

This value was taken directly from messages advocates are currently using to promote criminal justice reform. It uses an economic argument to motivate support for change, relying on the argument that reform will save the public money and, secondly, make criminal justice and public safety programs more effective. Frankly, FrameWorks did not expect this value to perform well because of its activation of consumerist thinking. Put bluntly, while no one denies the value of saving money, in this domain, we believed that this would not be a powerful perspective, as this goal is overshadowed by commitments to doing the right thing.

*Fairness/Equal Treatment:* This value makes a traditional moral appeal for criminal justice reform, namely, that society should ensure everyone is treated “fairly” and has “equal rights.” The focus of the argument is on “offering everyone a fair deal.” It argues “if we are unfair to anyone, it will make things worse.” It concludes “a fair approach to criminal justice will make our country safer.”

This value was also taken directly from messages that criminal justice advocates use to promote reform. It represents the opposite of the cost-effectiveness approach, and uses the moral claim about the right to equal treatment as a lever to orient and move opinions. Based on previous FrameWorks research,<sup>19</sup> we strongly suspected that a significant stratum of the public do not think “criminals” actually deserve equal

treatment. For these and other citizens, fairness appeals can have a different meaning, as our research shows that fairness is frequently construed as “getting what you deserve if you break the law.” In this way, fairness appeals can actually create a highly punitive perspective on this issue. The inclusion of this value in the experiment was meant to serve as a rigorous test of this hypothesis, and of the effectiveness of this widely used value in moving public support on criminal justice reforms. Moreover, the way this treatment was worded intentionally avoids references to individuals and specific episodes, which have been shown to be counterproductive when it comes to building support for changes in public policy.<sup>20</sup> In sum, we gave the *Fairness* value its best opportunity to succeed by ensuring that past evidence was incorporated into its execution in the experiment.

## Why Facts?

The discussion surrounding public safety and criminal justice is relatively unique because so many of the arguments offered by supporters of reform are predicated on particular facts. The motive for using these facts is not in question — by and large, the evidence of the current system’s problems is stark and damning — so much so, that the facts seem to “speak for themselves” in making the case for reform. These facts are also multi-sourced and relatively undisputed. Thus, advocates naturally want their messages to include these facts, and feel that, in doing so, they are furthering their case for progressive reforms of the system.

That the field uses these facts so pervasively in its communications does not, however, mean that these facts are effective or represent the best allocation of scarce communicative resources. In addition to questioning the effectiveness of facts in general, there are more fine-grained and tactical questions around specific *types* of facts. Chief among these is the question of whether to build messages around facts that speak to the criminal justice problems faced by all Americans, or to focus on facts that explicitly reference the situations facing people of color.

Specifically, we investigate three sub-questions about the use of facts in messages on criminal justice:

- How well do unframed facts — that is, facts without values — work?
- Which set of facts works best?
- Are facts more, or less, productive when paired with values?



## Candidate Facts

In order to answer these questions, we drew on facts that advocates are using, and consulted with our research partners at the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute, to develop three different fact-based messages: Neutral Facts, Racialized Facts and International Facts. Each messages contains three facts, and each fact uses the same syntactic and semantic structure across the messages. As with the values, we intentionally employed parallel structure in order to be able to confidently attribute any change in respondents' reactions to the specific content of the facts.

The three fact patterns and the rationale for their inclusion are as follows:

*Neutral Facts:* The Neutral Facts are general statements about the incarceration of adults in the United States. They include incarceration rates in general, for drug-related crimes and for arrest rates associated with non-violent crimes. For example, the first fact reads: "In 2010, 18 out of every 1,000 men in the United States were in prison." These facts, which are all true, were used to examine the effect of general facts on the outcome measures and to serve as a baseline to compare the impact of the other two fact sets, and, of course, for tests in combination with values.

*Racialized Facts:* The Racialized set of facts covers the same ground as the Neutral Facts, but builds in an explicit comparison between whites and blacks, specifically using the words "African American." Thus, the first fact is "In 2010, seven out of every 1,000 white men in the United States were in prison. By contrast, 43 out of every 1,000 African American men in the United States were in prison." Notice that, absent the contrast explicitly mentioning "African American" men, this is syntactically and semantically equivalent to the same fact in the neutral condition. This construction allows us to test for the effect of explicitly mentioning race on people's support for reforms.

Without going into the voluminous literature on race and persuasive communication, it is safe to say that it is hard to know a priori what the effect of this experimental manipulation will be. On the one hand, general audiences have been known to display a "backlash" when confronted with explicit use of the words African American.<sup>21</sup> This would imply that the racialized message would be less effective in increasing support. On the other hand, the Racialized Facts may engender a positive response. Further, there has been a noticeable liberalization of mainstream culture; with respect to the issue of marriage equality, for example, there has been a noticeable shift in opinion over the past five years. Finally, for criminal justice advocates, these facts are often presumed to prove sufficiently stark to move opinion.

*Internationalized Facts:* The internationalized set of facts also covers the same basic ground as the Neutral Facts but builds in a comparison between the United States and other nations, a practice that is also reflected among advocates and experts. Here, the first fact is “In 2010, 18 out of every 1,000 men in the United States were in prison, making it the world’s largest jailer. By contrast, four of every 1,000 men in Great Britain and 14 of every 1,000 men in the Russian Federation were in prison.” Again, absent the contrast explicitly mentioning other countries, this is syntactically and semantically equivalent to the same fact in the neutral condition, for reasons stated above.

The International Facts seem to be as stark and damning as the other fact sets; thus, expectations as to their effectiveness are equally unclear. On the one hand, they paint the U.S., particularly in terms of its rates of arrest and incarceration of adults, non-violent and drug related felons, quite badly. On the other hand, scholarly research, as well as previous FrameWorks studies, indicates that audiences tend to dismiss international comparisons, vitiating their impact. The reason for the null findings seems to lay in the widespread idea that the U.S. is somehow “exceptional,” and not subject to international standards.<sup>22</sup>

## Experiment Design

The core feature of this design lay in its testing of facts as well as value messages. Moreover, besides testing facts as well as values in isolation, respondents were randomly assigned to conditions where they saw value-fact combinations: one of four candidate values paired with one of three fact patterns, as described above.

More precisely, the design featured one control group, four conditions where respondents received a values frame, three conditions where they received a fact pattern, and 12 combination conditions that paired a candidate value with a fact pattern.

As with all experiments, respondents answered 30 or so questions that charted their attitudes toward criminal justice and relevant policies after these exposures. The experiment also featured a control group, where respondents did not receive any message. The analysis then compared the effects across conditions, to determine the best, most productive messages, both by themselves and in combination. The individual message, or the combination of value discourse and factual presentation, that succeeds in this experimental survey will be the one that is most likely to succeed in the current political context.

## Outcome Measures

The questions presented to the respondents after exposure to the experimental treatments (and for the control group, after receiving *no* message) form the outcome measures used to assess the effectiveness of the values, facts and the value-fact combinations. The questions were developed and refined from lists emerging from two analyses conducted by FrameWorks,<sup>23</sup> and in consultation with project partners at the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute. This process was supported by an analysis of national media outlets.

All questions were written to conform to standard social science survey practice; for example, they used straightforward, non-leading language with a clear evaluation object. For the purposes of analysis, the questions were grouped into five categories; taken together, these five groups of questions, which are referred to as batteries or scales, cover the salient dimensions of the public safety/criminal justice issue domain.

Note that this grouping means that the exact wordings of the questions, while important, are not critical to determining the messages' effects, because the questions in each battery were averaged into a single value (weighted according to Principle Component Analysis). In statistical terms, this single value represents respondents' underlying attitude on that battery's focus. Each battery was normalized so that scores

fall between 0 and 100 percent, so they can be seen as analogs to public opinion questions.

The five dimensions of the public safety/criminal justice agenda that were used to assess message performance are as follows:

*Systemic vs. Individual: Causal Attributions:*

The first set of questions charts respondents' attributions of causal responsibility for issues in the criminal justice system. In other words, who gets the blame for public safety problems in the United States? The scale is constructed so that higher numbers mean that the respondents view criminal justice problems as systemic, while lower numbers mean that the respondents assign responsibility for these problems to individuals. Thus, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements such as, "The lack of good schools and other support systems leads to high rates of crime." Agreement with the statement is consistent with a systemic attribution, indicating that respondents are recognizing a problem with the system.

*Systemic vs. Individual: Remedial Attributions:*

Questions on this scale are similar to the Systemic vs. Individual: Causal questions, except they focus on responsibility for *solving* (as opposed to causing) criminal justice/public safety problems. Higher numbers here indicate that respondents favor systemic, as opposed to individual, solutions. For example, agreement with the statement "We should make sure that everyone has access to basic services, education, housing and health care in order to reduce crime rates" means respondents are endorsing a systemic approach to treating the crime problem, as opposed to supporting a measure that places the responsibility to solve the problems on individuals.

*Juvenile Justice:*

These questions chart respondents' willingness to support policies to reform the juvenile justice system, chiefly to provide supportive communities, to use age-appropriate techniques and to restrict the ability of juvenile records to affect adult life. For example, one statement reads: "We need to ensure that youths in the system receive services and treatment appropriate for their age." Here, higher numbers indicate support for reform.

*Disparities:*

Like the Juvenile Justice scale, these questions focus on specific policies and attitudes designed to address, in this case, racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Again, these policies are taken from the sensible reforms endorsed by expert informants. Here, higher numbers indicate support for policies such as "Police should treat all people the same way, no matter their race or gender."

*Efficiency/Efficacy:*

The final battery was designed to measure respondents' willingness to endorse measures to increase the criminal justice system's effectiveness and efficiency, while maintaining or improving public safety. A representative statement read "Judges should have more discretion in deciding sentences and should not be required to impose mandatory sentences when they seem unfair." In this scale, higher numbers indicate more support for policies oriented toward the efficiency/efficacy goal.

**Data**

The experimental survey was conducted between April 18 and May 14, 2013. Participants were taken from a double opt-in Internet panel.<sup>24</sup> The study includes 8,000 registered U.S. voters, weighted on the basis of age, gender, education level and party identification to statistically match all registered voters in the United States. Specifically: 37 percent of the respondents were male; the mean age was 46; the median education level was "some college"; 74 percent were white, 13 percent were black. Finally, the respondents' partisanship roughly matched population norms (according to the most recent ANES study) with: Strong Democrats at 21.5 percent, Weak Democrats at 16.9 percent, Independents at 35.3 percent, Weak Republicans at 12.2 percent, and, Strong Republicans at 14.2 percent. Each of the 8,000 respondents was randomly assigned to one message condition as outlined above.

## Results

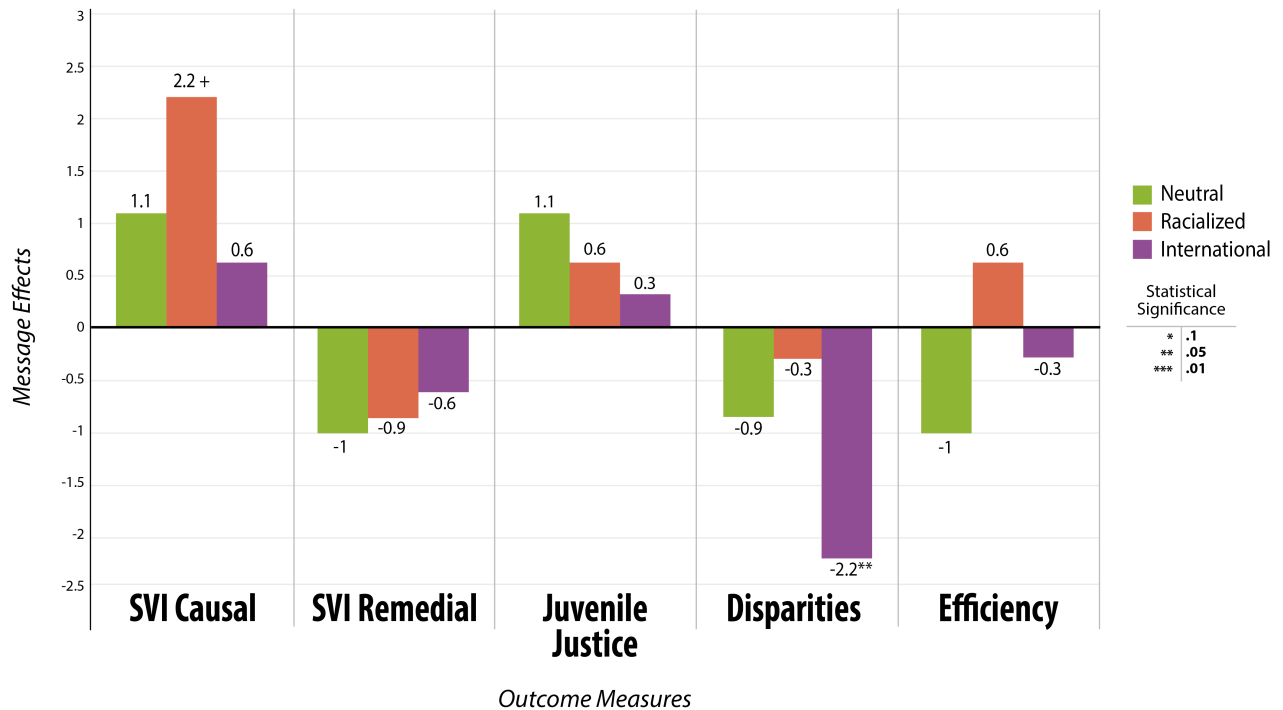
The findings from the analysis are presented in four parts:

- I. The Effect of Unframed Facts
- II. The Effect of Values in Isolation
- III. The Effect of Value-Fact Combination Frames on Causal Attributions
- IV. The Effect of Value-Fact Combinations on Solutions Attributions, Attitudes Toward Juvenile Justice Reform and Racial Disparities<sup>25</sup>

### I. The Effect of Unframed Facts

Figure 1 presents results from the messages where respondents saw only one of the three sets of facts (i.e., without seeing a value).

Figure 1. The Effect of Fact Patterns on Criminal Justice Attitudes



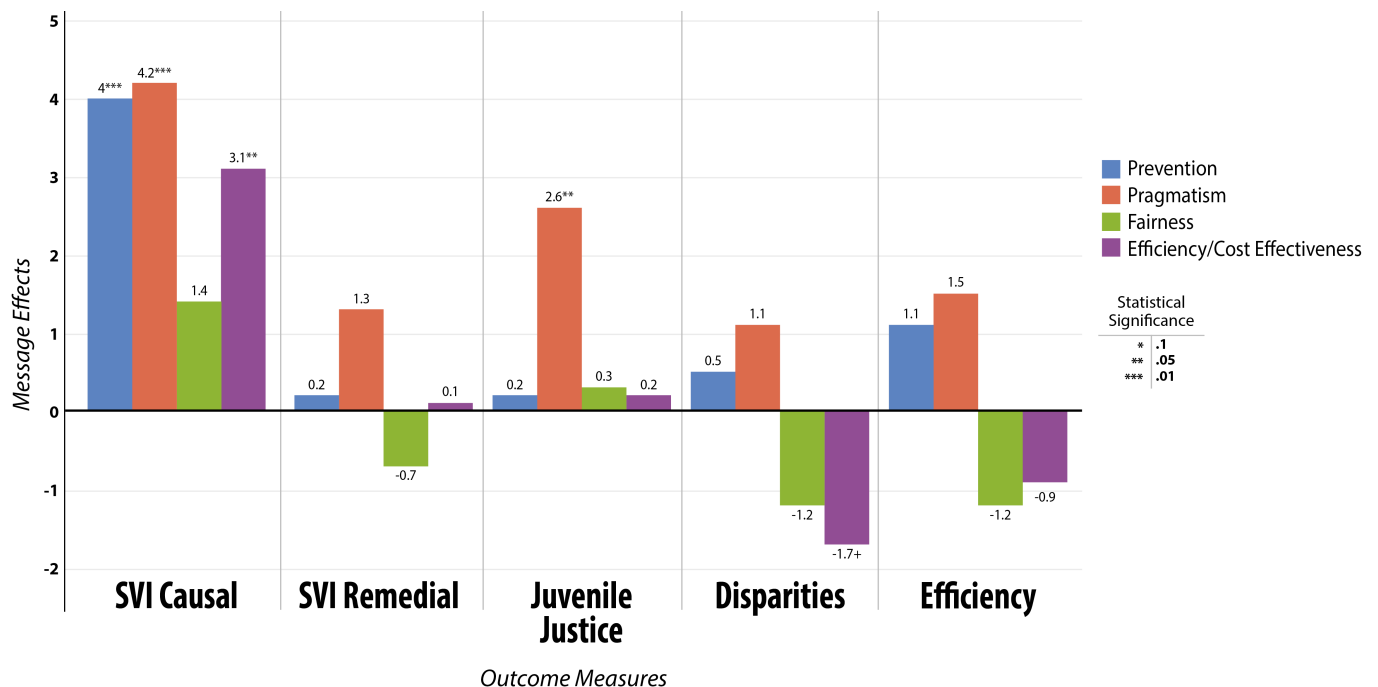
Looking across the three sets of facts, we see only two statistically significant effects on the five outcome dimensions under consideration. Further, one of these effects has an unproductive (negative) impact — Internationalized Facts actually decrease respondents’ support for policies designed to address racial disparities. The positive

effect sees Racialized Facts increasing respondents’ identification of the causes of criminal justice issues with systemic factors. Still, to preview later results, even in the area of causal attribution of responsibility, the Racialized Facts in isolation were outperformed by the *Pragmatism*-Racialized Facts combination (see Part III below). *The bottom line is that facts alone have a minimal effect on the public safety/criminal justice conversation and associated judgments. Furthermore, these effects are unpredictable across different areas of the agenda.*

## II. The Effect of Value Frames in Isolation

Figure 2 presents results from the conditions where respondents saw only one of the four candidate values; in other words, they saw one of the values without seeing any of the facts.

Figure 2. The Effect of Value Frames on Criminal Justice Attitudes

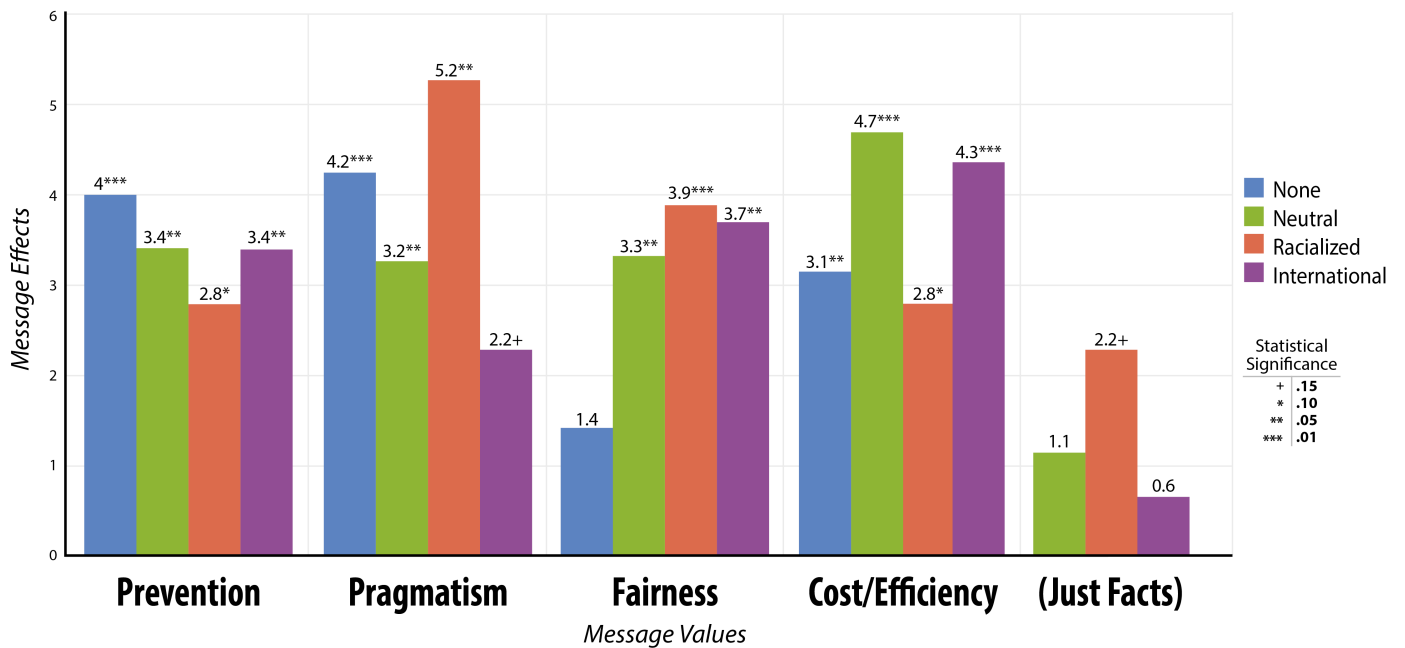


As we will discuss shortly, three values — *Prevention*, *Pragmatism* and *Cost/Efficiency* — prompt respondents to make more systemic attributions on the System vs., Individual: Causal scale. On the other four scales, *Pragmatism* outperforms other values, with its greatest effect (a 2.6 percentage point increase) seen on the juvenile justice reform measures. On the other hand, *Fairness* and *Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness* often produce negative movement, especially on support for measures to address racial disparities and measures to increase the efficiency of the criminal justice system.

### III. The Effect of Value-Fact Combination Frames on Causal Attributions

Figure 3 charts the results of the investigation of the value-fact combination frames' impacts; it presents the effect of these messages on respondents' willingness to attribute the cause of issues with the criminal justice system to systemic, rather than individual, factors.

Figure 3. The Effect of all Tested Messages on Causal Attributions



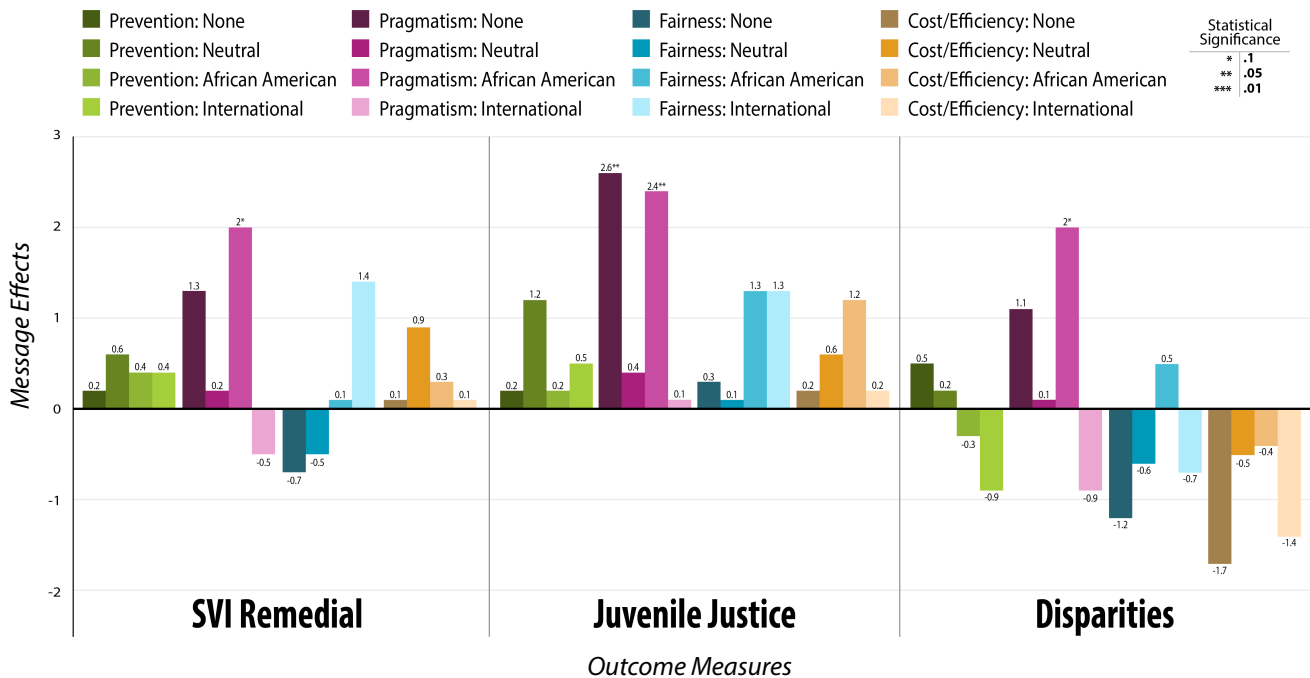
We can see that respondents are easily moved to make systemic attributions. Of the 12 fact-value combinations, all produce statistically significant movement on this dimension. The largest change is caused by the combination of *Pragmatism*-Racialized Facts frame — 5.2 percentage points. However, notice again that facts alone (the bottom cluster of Figure 3) produced negligible change on this important area of public thinking.



## IV. The Effect of Value-Fact Combinations on Remedial Attributions, Attitudes Toward Juvenile Justice Reform and Racial Disparities.

Figure 4 presents the results of all the tested messages except the isolated facts (which appear in Figure 1) on the bulk of the study’s outcome measures.

Figure 4. The Effect of Values and Value-Fact Combination Frames on Remedial Attribution, Juvenile Justice Reform and Racial Disparities



Looking across the chart, we can see that the messages based on *Pragmatism* — the purple family of treatments — outperform the rest of the messages tested in the study. Looking more closely, we see that it is either the value *Pragmatism* alone (as is the case with support for juvenile justice reform, where the value causes a statistically significant 2.6 percentage point gain), or *Pragmatism* paired with Racialized Facts that cause statistically significant increases in support for these reforms. Specifically, *Pragmatism* paired with Racialized Facts sees a 2 percent increase in the number of respondents making systemic attributions for solutions to criminal justice issues, and a 2 percent increase in support for measures to address racial disparities in the criminal justice system. None of the other messages increase support for these outcome measures to statistically significant degrees.

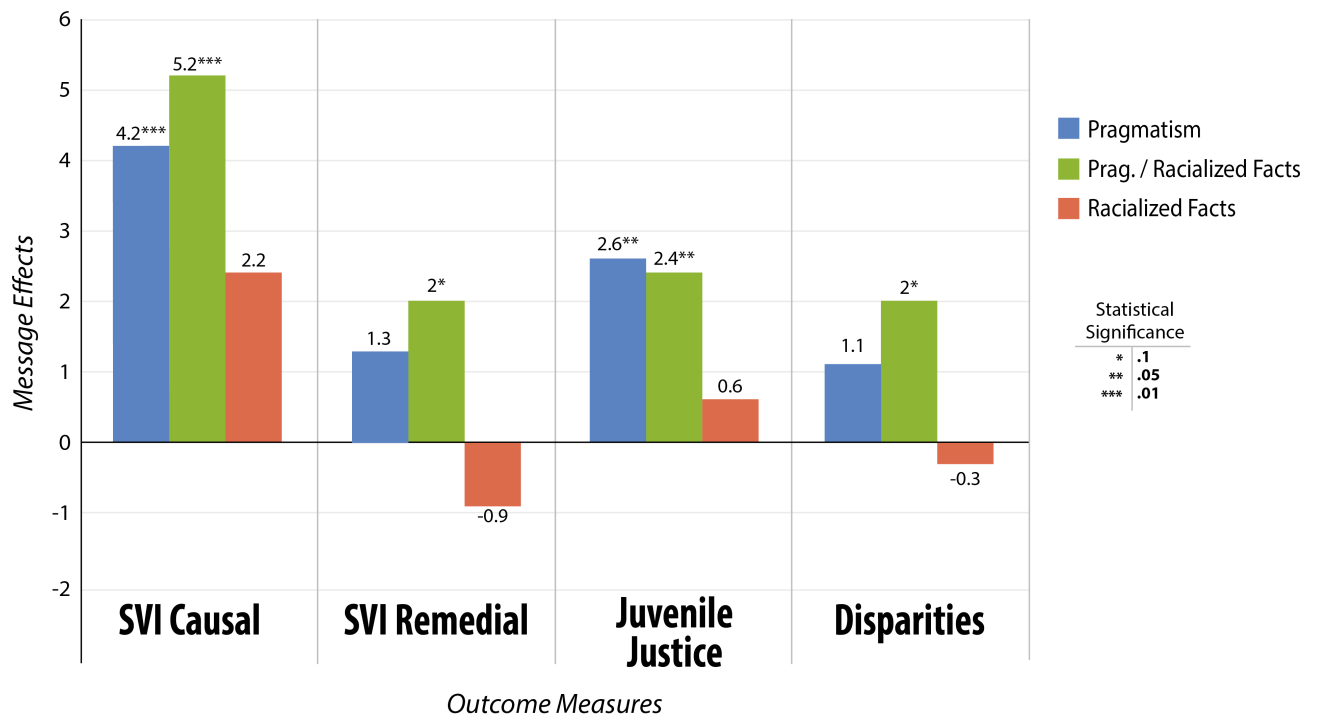
On the other hand, the other value frame families, especially with respect to the Racial Disparities outcome measures, frequently cause *retrograde* movement. In other words, these frames *depress* support for measures that experts advocate. The frames, including the values of *Fairness* and *Cost/Efficiency*, decrease support by as much as 1.7 percentage points on Racial Disparity measures.

Finally, while not represented on the graph, none of the values, facts or value-fact combinations caused statistically significant improvement on measures to decrease the cost and improve the efficiency of the criminal justice system. This result is discussed in detail below.

## Summary of Key Experimental Survey Finding

Figure 5 selects and concentrates the results from the previous figures to underline the central result from the experiment — namely, that combining the *Pragmatism* value and the three Racialized Facts provides the best message to increase support for the measures to change the criminal justice system advocated by experts.

Figure 5. Effects of Pragmatism, Racialized Facts and Pragmatism + Racialized Facts Combination Frame Messages



The critical point here is that **Pragmatism and Racialized Facts synergize to produce effects that neither the value alone nor the facts alone achieve**. Comparing the effects of the *Pragmatism + Racialized Facts* combination frame (the green bars) against the *Pragmatism* value (the blue bars) and the *Racialized Facts* messages (the red bars) across the outcome dimensions in Figure 5 documents this finding. In three of the four cases, the combination causes more productive movement than the value in isolation and, in the Juvenile Justice area, the difference between the combination frame and the values frame is minimal.

## Recommendations

- 1. Advocates need to provide more than just the facts.** Put simply, unframed facts do little to win support for the measures experts recommend. While the facts detailing the current problems in the criminal justice system are indisputably true and undeniably stark, by themselves they lack sufficient power to change the conversation and move public support. In nearly all cases, unframed facts produced no movement on this study's outcome measures. Of the two exceptions, Internationalized Facts actually *decreased* support for measures designed to address racial disparities in the system. Racialized Facts moved respondents toward identifying the system as the cause of criminal justice problems, but this effect is minimally significant and dramatically overshadowed by positive movement produced by value-fact combination frames.

In short, the 8,000 respondents in this study, who statistically match the population of the United States, required a more refined messaging strategy. Specifically, the findings show that Americans need a way of understanding these facts — they need an “interpretive bridge.” This bridge, provided by the value portion of the frame, allows people to move from merely observing uncontextualized facts towards a more integrated and comprehensive worldview about public safety and criminal justice. In particular, the value bridge provides a foundational motivation by answering the question: What is at stake with criminal justice reform and why should I care? This motivation acts as an antidote to cynicism, fatalism and hopelessness, prompting people to resist the tendency to withdraw when faced with dramatic public crises centered on seemingly insoluble problems. Likewise, the value orients people towards specific ways of addressing the problem. In the case of public safety, the bridging value allows people to pivot from the depressing facts to the more optimistic view of the ability of solutions to improve outcomes. Absent this bridge, people's inclinations toward reform cannot move forward.

- 2. Framing the facts in terms of differential effects on African Americans is not detrimental to, nor particularly helpful in, advancing the criminal justice reform agenda, but can add power to values messages.** In contrast to the conventional wisdom on communicating about race in the United States, this study demonstrates that respondents, again, who statistically match the country's population, do not react negatively to explicit racialized appeals, at least in the domain of criminal justice. This study finds no evidence for the so-called “backlash” effect.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, the study finds that such appeals, on their own, are not particularly effective in *increasing* support for criminal justice reforms. However, in keeping with the first recommendation above, the presentation of facts about racial

disparities, in combination with certain value frames, can add to the effectiveness of messages.

- 3. Shifting people from individual to systems-level thinking about the *causes* of criminal justice problems is an important, but relatively easy, communications task.** Many value-fact combination message frames were effective in shifting respondents' assignment of responsibility for the causes of criminal justice problems from *individuals* to *systems*. This is quite astonishing. Studies of American public opinion, including previous FrameWorks research, reveal the effortlessness with which people place the blame for what experts see as collective problems on individuals.<sup>27</sup>

To illustrate, we would not ordinarily expect people to endorse beliefs like “Living in a bad environment increases an individual’s likelihood of getting involved in the criminal justice system,” a statement that was part of the causal attributions of responsibility measure. However, this study empirically shows the power of frames to increase people’s willingness to make such systemic causal attributions. The importance of this transfer of causal responsibility away from individuals to the system as a whole cannot be understated — this mental step is a necessary prerequisite of support for public policy solutions to social issues, and, more specifically, of support for policies designed to address contexts that shape behaviors and outcomes. Values appear to help reinforce and anchor the public’s inchoate sense of societal responsibility for these problems.

In fact, all of the value-fact combinations moved people toward an assignment of systemic causal responsibility. The message combining *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts achieved the greatest movement. As we will discuss further, this dramatic 5.2 percentage point increase in the ability to see systemic causes demonstrates the potency of this combination.

- 4. Using a combination of *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts creates a powerful synergistic effect and is an effective communication strategy.** It should be clear by now that the combination of the value of *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts exerts a powerful “one-two” framing punch, driving the kind of change that experts wish to elicit. This frame channeled respondents toward placing responsibility on the system as the source of problems and solutions in the criminal justice system. Equally important, it moves the public toward supporting policies designed to eliminate the flaws in the way juvenile justice is administered and toward steps that address the racial disparities propagated by the system. These are powerful findings for criminal justice advocates.

Stepping back to entertain the question of why this combination was so successful, we observe that, while the facts describe the situation in the administration of

criminal justice accurately and dramatically, they leave the next step open to interpretation — in other words, they emphasize a problem while not helping people think about the possibility of a solution. As discussed, absent the value bridge, people lack the motivation and orientation to connect their sense of the problem with perspectives and judgment on solutions. In the case of public safety and criminal justice, we imagine two public reactions to the presentation of Racialized Facts. First, people could say the system is biased, and perhaps that it is “unfair.” While this is a productive interpretation, the path between it and attitude change can easily be shortcut by cynicism and hopelessness regarding the potential to *address* this bias and *achieve* actual change. On the other hand, exposure to Racialized Facts alone can lead to the devastating reaction that something is wrong with “those people,” and minority culture more generally. Under this interpretation, *public* policy interventions to address *systemic* problems in the criminal justice system seem inappropriate — the facts are interpreted as problems with individuals and groups of people, and systems-level changes are seen as not addressing the “real problem.” Both reactions have been observed in FrameWorks’ past research.<sup>28</sup>

Now, consider what the value of *Pragmatism* adds to these interpretations. It immediately focuses peoples’ attention at the *systems* level and channels thinking away from problems with individuals (immorality) and groups (deficient “cultures”). This sets up a systemic perspective from which people can interpret the facts. From this scope on the issue, the value prompts people to think about *solutions* — that addressing the system via policy is feasible, and has the ability to improve outcomes. The bottom line is that the facts and the value work together to establish a more contextualized narrative — a foundation from which people can see the problem, recognize the importance of action and productively evaluate solutions.

- 5. Not all values and value-fact combinations work: Avoid using the values of *Fairness* and *Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness* in messaging on public safety and criminal justice.** It is absolutely critical that, in addition to the positive findings discussed above, advocates understand that apart from the combined frame of *Pragmatism* + Racialized Facts, *the other facts or values, either in isolation or in combination, produced minimal positive movement*. In fact, the results demonstrate that deploying messages based around *Fairness* and *Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness* can be counterproductive — wasting valuable communication resources and even turning people against the very policies that experts advocate. Advocates must be wary of general recommendations to “use values” or “support your argument with facts” — these admonitions are empty, and even dangerous, if not refined by the specifics of empirical framing research.

Why do these tactics fail to achieve the desired goal or move respondents in the wrong direction? Discussions of *Fairness* have the potential for devolving into

minute discussions that attempt to apportion the blame on individuals for criminal justice problems — instead of leaping over them as discussions of *Pragmatism* do. *Pragmatism* has a propulsive force that moves people's thinking forward, while *Fairness* frequently gets caught in its various American interpretations — many of which lead to punitive and regressive perspectives about crime and public safety. As the evidence in this study indicates, people tend to reject explicit *Efficiency* appeals, possibly due to Americans' cynicism or hopelessness, which lead to unfavorable consideration of measures to reform the criminal justice system.

With respect to *Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness*, the lack of movement can be attributed to the reasons listed in the next recommendation.

- 6. The value-fact combination of *Pragmatism* and Racialized Facts establishes an effective narrative, but is insufficient to explain the need for policies that target the system's efficiency and effectiveness. Explanatory metaphors, with their ability to explain how the system works, can help people reason about how to improve the system and its outcomes.** While the combination of *Pragmatism* + Racialized Facts is highly effective at broader motivation and reorienting, it proves less effective at deeper solutions and process reform. Specifically, this combined frame (as well as the other frames tested) was not capable of moving respondents' support for measures designed to increase the system's efficiency — lower its costs while improving its outcomes.

To address this challenge, FrameWorks has developed a pair of Explanatory Metaphors — powerful analogies designed to link aspects of the criminal justice system to extant and productive patterns of thinking.<sup>29</sup> FrameWorks' researchers are able to demonstrate that the right Explanatory Metaphors model key aspects of *how the system works* and, through this improved understanding, help people recognize effective and efficient solutions. Absent this process understanding, people struggle to see how the system is inefficient and what specific steps could be taken to make it less so.

## Conclusion

In sum, data from 8,000 respondents prove that frames can help advocates make the first step in changing the public safety/criminal justice debate by reconfiguring the public's underlying understanding of causality — from individual to systems responsibility. While vital, this step does not fully address the broader aspects of the public safety/criminal justice issue. To take these next steps, we happily report that advocates can continue to use fact messages that explicitly mention differential impacts of the system on African Americans — the research shows that these facts play an important role in effective framing. However, based on the experimental results, we strongly suggest that advocates expand the “just the facts” strategy to incorporate and lead with particular values that orient and motivate the public's reactions. The value to use is *Pragmatism*; it provides the necessary bridge for people to reach the conclusions about responsibility and public policy mandated by experts. In addition to this recommendation, the experiment yields a cautionary note: Advocates should avoid leading with other values, like *Fairness* and *Cost Efficiency/Effectiveness*, which have the potential to derail the conversation and even cause counterproductive interpretations. Finally, on more complex dimensions like system efficiency and effectiveness, Explanatory Metaphors are required to provide more robust understandings of dimensions of the system from which the value-fact frame can reach deeper levels of public thinking about public safety and criminal justice.

In the end, this report offers two pieces of great news: Advocates can frankly share data about the inequitable situation confronting people of color in the criminal justice system and, by leading off this discussion with the value of *Pragmatism*, can lead the public toward favorable consideration of the criminal justice reform policies experts endorse.



## Appendix

### **Four Values Treatments:**

*Insert in all:* “The following passage was taken from an editorial that appeared in a major newspaper. Please read it carefully and answer the questions that follow.”

*Note: Values treatments and fact patterns formatted to resemble newspaper snippets.*

#### **1. Prevention**

Lately there has been a lot of talk about how changing the criminal justice system can prevent some problems facing our country. For example, we know that communities with high unemployment, underachieving schools and a lack of other resources have high rates of crime. This problem particularly hurts children and young adults who may end up in the system. If we prevent problems in our communities before they happen, we can decrease crime and enhance public safety. Specifically, we need to do things right now that will address these and other issues. On the other hand, if we postpone dealing with these problems, they can get bigger, could cost more to fix and may do more harm. A preventive approach to criminal justice will make our country safer and help all Americans.

#### **2. Pragmatism/Responsible Management**

Lately there has been a lot of talk about how managing the criminal justice system more responsibly can address some problems facing our country. For example, we know that communities with high unemployment, underachieving schools and a lack of other resources have high rates of crime. This problem particularly hurts children and young adults who may end up in the system. If we take a common-sense approach to solving our communities’ problems, we can decrease crime and enhance public safety. Specifically, we need to identify practical things we can do to address these and other issues. On the other hand, if we spend resources sending more people to prison instead of using proven alternatives, these problems will remain. A responsible approach to criminal justice will make our country safer and help all Americans.

#### **3. Fairness**

Lately there has been a lot of talk about how changing the criminal justice system to make it fairer can address some problems facing our country. For example, we know that communities with high unemployment, underachieving schools and a lack of other resources have high rates of crime. This problem particularly hurts children and young adults who may end up in the system. If we treat everyone fairly, assuring them equal rights, we can decrease crime and enhance public safety. Specifically, we need to ensure that the system offers everyone a fair deal to address these and other issues. On the other hand, if we are unfair to anyone, it will make things worse. A fair approach to criminal justice will make our country safer and help all Americans.

#### **4. Efficiency/Cost Effectiveness**

Lately there has been a lot of talk about how changing the criminal justice system to make it more efficient can address some problems facing our country. For example, we know that communities with high unemployment, underachieving schools and a lack of other resources have high rates of crime. This problem particularly hurts children and young adults who may end up in the system. If we focus on using public resources in cost-effective ways, we can decrease crime and enhance public safety. Specifically, we need to invest our resources wisely to address these and other problems. On the other hand, if we continue to build prisons, it will still cost taxpayers a lot of money in lost productivity and taxes. An efficient approach to criminal justice will make our country safer and help all Americans.

#### **Three Fact Patterns:**

##### **1. Racialized Facts.**

*Insert:* “Recent reports lead some people to say that the criminal justice system in the United States treats African Americans more harshly than it treats whites. For example:”

- In 2010, seven out of every 1,000 white men in the United States were in prison. By contrast, 43 out of every 1,000 African American men in the United States were in prison.
- In 2010, 35 out of every 100,000 white people were serving time in state prisons for drug-related crimes. By contrast, 280 out of every 100,000 African Americans were serving time in state prisons for drug-related crimes, though the drug use of African Americans and whites in the U.S. is roughly equal.
- In 2010, five out of every 1,000 white men in the United States were arrested for non-violent crimes. By contrast, 14 out of every 1,000 African American men in the United States were arrested for the same non-violent crimes.

##### **2. Neutral Facts.**

*Insert:* “Recent reports lead some people to say that the criminal justice system in the United States is too harsh. For example:”

- In 2010, 18 out of every 1,000 men in the United States were in prison.
- In 2010, 77 out of every 100,000 people in the United States were serving time in state prison for drug-related crimes.
- In 2010, about seven out of every 1,000 men in the United States were arrested for non-violent crimes.

### **3. International Facts.**

*Insert:* “Recent reports lead some people to say that the criminal justice system in the United States is too harsh. For example:”

- In 2010, 18 out of every 1,000 men in the United States were in prison, making it the world’s largest jailer. By contrast, four of every 1,000 men in Great Britain and 14 of every 1,000 men in the Russian Federation were in prison.
- In 2010, 77 out of every 100,000 people in the United States were serving time in state prison for drug-related crimes. By contrast, 23 out of every 100,000 people in Great Britain and 58 per 100,000 people in the Russian Federation were serving time for drug-related crimes.
- The U.S. keeps people in prison longer for non-violent crimes than do many other countries: People serve 16 months for burglary in the U.S. , compared to five months in Canada and seven months in Great Britain.

### **Outcome Measures:**

*Insert in all:* “The following are a number of statements about public safety and the criminal justice system. Please indicate whether you agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly with the following statements:”

*Note:* Question order to be randomized for each respondent.

### **Systemic vs. Individual: Causal Attributions**

1. Crime rates in this country are high because there are many people who don’t have the basic resources they need to succeed.
2. Living in a bad environment increases an individual’s likelihood of getting involved in the criminal justice system. The lack of good schools and other support systems leads to high rates of crime.

### **Systemic vs. Individual: Treatment Attributions**

1. Making sure that the numerous parts of our criminal justice system and related policies are connected and coordinated leads to greater public safety.
2. Crime is a problem that affects all of us, not just a few people, so we all have a vested interest in making our communities safer.
3. Alternative sentences to incarceration designed to hold people convicted of crimes accountable while helping them change their lives is the most effective way to reduce crime.

4. We should make sure that everyone has access to basic services, education, housing and health care in order to reduce crime rates.

### **Juvenile Justice**

1. In order to grow up successfully, young people need safe and supportive communities.
2. We need to ensure that youths in the system receive services and treatment appropriate for their age.
3. The criminal records of young people convicted of crimes should follow them into adulthood (*Reverse Code*).

### **Disparities**

1. Legislatures should be required to consider the racial impacts of any changes to the criminal justice system.
2. Police should not be allowed to use a person's race in deciding to pull them over or make an arrest.
3. Police should treat all people the same way, no matter their race or gender.
4. Police should make a conscious effort to interact with communities of color and poor communities in the same way that they do with white communities or wealthy communities.

### **Efficiency/Efficacy**

1. There need to be alternatives to prison for minor offenses.
2. We need to eliminate the death penalty.
3. Judges should have more discretion in deciding sentences and should not be required to impose mandatory sentences when they seem unfair.
4. We need to put more public money towards creating programs in communities that will help prisoners re-enter society and therefore reduce the chance that they will commit new crimes and return to prison.
5. Incarceration should be the last resort of the criminal justice system, reserved for individuals who truly pose a danger to society.
6. Prosecutors should be allowed to convict people of multiple crimes for the same offense (*Reverse Code*).

## About the FrameWorks Institute

The FrameWorks Institute is an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1999 to advance science-based communications research and practice. The Institute conducts original, multi-method research to identify the communications strategies that will advance public understanding of social problems and improve public support for remedial policies. The Institute's work also includes teaching the nonprofit sector how to apply these science-based communications strategies in their work for social change. The Institute publishes its research and recommendations, as well as toolkits and other products for the nonprofit sector, at [www.frameworksinstitute.org](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org).

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>20</sup> Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible?* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>21</sup> see: Peffley, M., & J Hurwitz, J. (2007). Persuasion and resistance: Race and the death penalty in America. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51, 4; Ford, P., Maxwell A., & Shields, T. (2010). What's the matter with Arkansas?: Symbolic racism and 2008 presidential candidate support. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 40, 2; Brewer, P. (2001). Value words and lizard brains: Do citizens deliberate about appeals to their core values? *Political Psychology*, 22, 1; Haider-Markel, D., & Joslyn, M. (2001). Gun policy, opinion, tragedy, and blame attribution: The conditional influence of issue frames. *Journal of Politics*, 63, 2; Kinder, D., & Sanders, L. (1996). *Divided by color: Racial politics and democratic ideals*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>22</sup> See: Lipset, S. (1997). *American exceptionalism: A double-edged sword*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company; Simon, A., O'Neal, M., & Kendall-Taylor, N. (2012). *Steps toward valuing education: A FrameWorks research report*. Washington, DC: FrameWorks Institute.

<sup>23</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> For details see [www.surveysampling.com](http://www.surveysampling.com).

<sup>25</sup> Each value or counter message's effectiveness is charted by the effect that exposure to that treatment has on the five dimensions that comprise the outcome measures. Multiple regression was used to compute these estimates. This statistical technique fits a line simultaneously across all the variables in that analysis.

For this report, each regression includes covariates for race, education, gender and partisanship. As stated above, each of the groups of questions that comprise the outcome measures were averaged and scaled to 100 points, so the coefficients can be interpreted as the percentage increase or decrease that the value has on respondents' support for a given outcome measure.

The figures presented in this report summarize the regression results in order to condense and focus the presentation of the results.

<sup>26</sup> See note 21.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit.

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