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21st Century Criminology: Bridging Theory and Practice

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Abstract: *The article discusses the evolution of criminology as a scientific discipline, emphasizing the importance of integrating theory with practice in the field of criminal justice. The aim of this scientific endeavour was to analyse contemporary challenges of crime, the impact of modern technologies on criminal investigations, and the role of academic institutions in training specialists. The article examines the unique context of the Republic of Moldova, emphasizing both the advancements and challenges within the criminal justice system.*

Keywords: *criminology; theory and practice; criminal justice; modern crime; advanced technologies; pre-trial detention; criminal investigations, etc.*

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Introduction

Criminology, as a scientific discipline, has evolved significantly in recent decades, adapting to social, technological, and legal changes. In today's context, criminology is no longer just a theoretical science but also an applied one, combining academic research with practical work in the field of criminal justice. This evolution is essential to address the complex challenges of modern crime, which include phenomena such as cybercrime, terrorism, and human trafficking.

Contemporary criminology is based on a variety of theories and methodologies that have been developed and refined over time. From the classical theories of Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham, which laid the foundations of modern penal thought, to the sociological and psychological theories of the 20th century, criminology has evolved to include interdisciplinary perspectives (Beccaria, 1764) (Bentham, 1789). Currently, criminological theories are integrated with empirical data and advanced technologies to offer effective solutions for preventing and combating crime (Siegel, 2018, 45).

A very important aspect of modern criminology is the use of technology in criminal investigations. Advanced technologies, such as ADN analysis, video surveillance, and data analysis tools, have revolutionized the way crimes are investigated and solved (Fisher & Fisher, 2012). For example, the use of artificial intelligence algorithms to predict criminal behaviors and identify patterns in criminal data has become a common practice in many law enforcement agencies (Brantingham, 2017).

However, contemporary criminology faces numerous challenges. One of them is the need to maintain a balance between security and respect for fundamental human rights. In the context of globalization and increased mobility, crime has become increasingly transnational, requiring closer international cooperation and harmonization of national laws (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

In the Republic of Moldova, criminology has started to develop as an academic and practical discipline over the last two decades. The adoption of the CPC of the RM in 2003 represented a significant step forward in modernizing the criminal justice system and integrating contemporary criminological principles (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2003). Additionally, academic institutions such as the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy play a crucial role in training and developing specialists in criminology and criminal investigations (Odagiu & Epure, 2023). The current context of criminology is characterized by a deeper integration of theory with practice,

supported by technological advances and an interdisciplinary approach. This evolution is essential to effectively respond to the complex challenges of modern crime and to ensure a fair and efficient criminal justice system.

Bridging theory with practice in criminology is essential for developing effective strategies for preventing and combating crime. This synergy allows for a deep understanding of criminal phenomena, as well as the application of theoretical knowledge to real situations, thus contributing to the improvement of the criminal justice system.

Criminological theory provides the necessary conceptual framework to understand the causes and dynamics of crime. Classical theories, such as Robert K. Merton's theory of anomie, explain how discrepancies between cultural goals and institutional means can lead to deviant behaviors (Merton, 1938). Additionally, contemporary theories, such as Travis Hirschi's social control theory, emphasize the importance of social bonds in preventing criminal behavior (Hirschi, 1969).

The practical application of criminological theories is crucial for developing effective policies and practices. For example, the criminal routes theory, developed by Paul and Patricia Brantingham, has been used to create crime maps that help law enforcement identify and monitor high-risk areas (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1981). These maps are valuable tools for resource allocation and patrol planning.

The synergy between theory and practice is essential to ensure the relevance and efficiency of criminological interventions. Research shows that crime prevention programs based on well-founded theories are more effective than those without a solid theoretical basis (Sherman et al., 1997). For example, early intervention programs based on social development theory have proven successful in reducing delinquent behavior among young people (Hawkins et al., 1992).

One of the major challenges in bridging theory with practice is ensuring that theories are adaptable and applicable in diverse contexts. For example, theories developed in a Western context may need adjustments to be relevant in other cultures and legal systems (Tonry, 2014). The solution lies in interdisciplinary and international collaboration to develop universally applicable and effective theories and practices.

Bridging theory with practice in criminology is not only beneficial but essential for developing effective strategies for preventing and combating crime. This integrated approach allows for a deep understanding of criminal phenomena and the application of theoretical knowledge to real situations, thus contributing to the improvement of the criminal justice system.

Criminological theory

The evolution of criminological theories reflects changes in understanding and approaching criminal behavior over time. The first criminological theories, developed in the 18th century, were influenced by the Enlightenment and the rationalist ideas of thinkers such as Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham. In his work "Dei delitti e delle pene" (1764), Beccaria argued that crimes are the result of rational choices made by individuals who weigh the costs and benefits of their actions (Beccaria, 1764). Bentham developed the utilitarian theory, which holds that laws should be designed to maximize general happiness and minimize suffering (Bentham, 1789).

In the 19th century, biological and psychological theories began to gain ground. Cesare Lombroso, considered the father of modern criminology, proposed the "born criminal" theory, claiming that criminals have distinct physical traits that differentiate them from non-criminals (Lombroso, 1876). This deterministic approach was later criticized and replaced by more complex theories that consider social and environmental factors.

In the 20th century, sociological theories became dominant. Robert K. Merton's theory of anomie explains crime as a result of the discrepancy between cultural goals and the institutional means available to achieve them (Merton, 1938). Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory posits that criminal behavior is learned through interaction with others (Sutherland, 1947).

Modern criminology is characterized by various schools of thought, each offering unique perspectives on the causes and solutions to crime:

- *Classical school*: Founded by Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham, this school of thought argues that crimes result from rational choices and that punishments should be proportional to the severity of the offense to deter criminal behavior.
- *Positivist school*: Represented by Cesare Lombroso, this school focuses on biological and psychological factors that influence criminal behavior. Lombroso argued that criminals have distinct physical traits that predispose them to crime (Lombroso, 1876).
- *Sociological school*: This school includes theories such as Merton's anomie and Sutherland's differential association. Sociologists argue that crime is influenced by social and environmental factors, such as social structure, cultural norms, and interpersonal relationships.
- *Critical school*: This includes theories such as Marxist criminology and feminist criminology, which analyze how power structures and social

inequalities contribute to crime. Critical criminologists argue that laws and the criminal justice system reflect the interests of the powerful and perpetuate inequalities (Quinney, 1970).

Contemporary theories in criminology continue to evolve, integrating interdisciplinary perspectives and advanced technologies to address the challenges of modern crime:

- *Criminal routes theory*: Developed by Paul and Patricia Brantingham, this theory focuses on how offenders choose their targets and routes based on their knowledge of the surrounding environment. This has led to the development of crime maps and place-based crime prevention techniques (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1981).
- *Social control theory*: Proposed by Travis Hirschi, this theory suggests that strong social bonds, such as family, school, and community, discourage criminal behavior. Hirschi argues that individuals with weak social ties are more likely to commit crimes (Hirschi, 1969).
- *Routine activity theory*: Developed by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, this theory suggests that crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, an attractive target, and the absence of a capable guardian. This has influenced crime prevention strategies by modifying the environment to reduce criminal opportunities (Cohen & Felson, 1979).
- *Social development theory*: This theory integrates perspectives from criminology, psychology, and sociology to explain how risk and protective factors influence criminal behavior throughout life. Early intervention programs based on this theory have demonstrated success in reducing delinquent behavior in young people (Hawkins et al., 1992).

Criminological practice

The application of criminological theory in criminal investigations is essential for developing effective strategies to prevent and combat crime. Criminological theories provide a conceptual framework that helps investigators understand criminal motives and behaviors, thus facilitating the identification and apprehension of offenders. For example, the criminal routes theory, developed by Paul and Patricia Brantingham, is used to create crime maps that help law enforcement agencies identify and monitor high-risk areas (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1981). These maps are valuable tools for resource allocation and patrol planning.

In the RM, criminological theory is embedded within the legal and procedural framework of criminal investigations. The Criminal Procedure Code, adopted in 2003, mandates the use of scientific and technical methods in criminal inquiries, ensuring a structured and rigorous approach (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2003). Additionally, collaboration between academic institutions, such as the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy, and law enforcement agencies contributes to the training and development of specialists in criminology and criminal investigations (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).

Modern technologies play a very important role in criminology, revolutionizing the way crimes are investigated and solved. The use of advanced technologies, such as ADN analysis, video surveillance, and data analysis tools, has transformed criminal investigations by offering new methods of collecting and analyzing evidence.

For example, ADN analysis has become an essential tool in identifying suspects and exonerating innocent individuals. Video surveillance technologies, including the use of security cameras and drones, enable real-time monitoring of high-risk areas and the collection of visual evidence (Fisher & Fisher, 2012). Additionally, data analysis tools, such as artificial intelligence algorithms, are used to predict criminal behaviors and identify patterns in criminal data (Brantingham, 2017).

In the RM, modern technologies are embedded in criminal investigation procedures. For instance, the CPC mandates audio-video recording of interrogations to ensure transparency and fairness in the evidence-gathering process. Additionally, the use of videoconferencing in cross-border judicial procedures supports international cooperation and enhances the efficiency of the justice process (Consilium, 2020).

Case study: Implementation of undercover investigation techniques

Undercover investigation techniques are essential in combating organized crime and other forms of serious crime. These techniques allow investigators to infiltrate criminal networks and gather critical information that would otherwise be impossible to obtain.

In the Republic of Moldova, the use of undercover investigation techniques is regulated by national legislation and is implemented by law enforcement agencies in collaboration with academic and research institutions. For example, the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy offers specialized training courses for investigation officers, ensuring that they are prepared to use undercover techniques effectively and legally (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).

A notable example of the use of undercover investigation techniques in the Republic of Moldova is the drug trafficking operation, in which undercover officers successfully infiltrated trafficking networks and gathered evidence that led to the arrest and conviction of the leaders of these criminal organizations (Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Moldova, 2021). This operation demonstrated the effectiveness of undercover investigation techniques and highlighted the importance of collaboration between various law enforcement agencies and academic institutions.

Interaction between theory and practice

The synergy between academic research and practical application in criminology is essential for developing effective strategies to prevent and combat crime. Academic research provides a solid theoretical framework and rigorous methodological tools, which can be applied in practice to improve investigative processes and law enforcement operations. For instance, academic studies on criminal behavior and associated risk factors have led to the development of evidence-based crime prevention programs (Sherman et al., 1997).

In the Republic of Moldova, collaboration between academic institutions, such as the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy, and law enforcement agencies, such as the Prosecutor General's Office, has been crucial for implementing innovative practices in criminal investigations. For example, research on undercover investigation techniques has been integrated into training programs for investigation officers, thus enhancing the efficiency and legality of these techniques.

Examples of best practices in collaboration between academic institutions and law enforcement agencies

A notable example of best practice in the collaboration between academic institutions and law enforcement agencies is the joint project between the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy and the General Inspectorate of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This project focused on using modern technologies, such as videoconferencing and audio-video recordings, to improve the interrogation process and evidence collection (Consilium, 2020).

Additionally, the collaboration between the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy and the National Anticorruption Center (CNA) led to the development of specialized training programs for investigation officers, focusing on combating money laundering and organized crime. These programs were designed based on academic research on methods for

detecting and preventing financial crimes, thus contributing to the increased competence and efficiency of investigation officers (Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Moldova, 2021).

Evaluating the impact of theory on practice, and vice versa, is essential to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of criminological interventions. Studies show that crime prevention programs based on well-founded theories are more effective than those without a solid theoretical foundation (Sherman et al., 1997). For example, early intervention programs based on social development theory have demonstrated success in reducing delinquent behavior among young people (Hawkins et al., 1992).

In the Republic of Moldova, the evaluation of the impact of theory on practice is conducted through studies and annual reports produced by academic institutions and law enforcement agencies. For instance, the annual report of the Prosecutor General's Office includes a section dedicated to evaluating the effectiveness of the investigative techniques used, as well as recommendations for improving them based on academic research.

Challenges and perspectives

The application of criminological theory in practice faces numerous challenges, ranging from legal and administrative complexities to resistance to change from law enforcement agencies. One of the main challenges is ensuring coherence and consistency in the application of criminological theories across diverse legal and cultural contexts. For example, theories developed in a Western context may require adjustments to be relevant and applicable in other cultures and legal systems, such as that of the Republic of Moldova (Tonry, 2014).

Another major challenge is integrating modern technologies into criminal investigations. Although advanced technologies, such as ADN analysis and video surveillance, have revolutionized criminal investigations, their use raises issues related to privacy and personal data protection (Fisher & Fisher, 2012). Additionally, there are challenges related to training and preparing investigation officers to effectively utilize these technologies.

Conflicting cases and legal complexities represent another significant challenge in applying criminological theory. For example, in the Republic of Moldova, cases of money laundering and organized crime are often complex and involve multiple jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies (Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Moldova, 2021).These cases require effective coordination among various agencies and a clear and consistent interpretation of the law.

A notable example of legal complexity is the use of undercover investigation techniques. While these techniques are essential for combating organized crime, they raise issues regarding their legality and ethics. In the Republic of Moldova, the use of undercover investigation techniques is regulated by national legislation, but their practical application can be challenged in court, complicating the investigation process.

Future perspectives in criminology include the development of new research directions and the implementation of innovative practices to address emerging challenges. One promising area of research is the use of artificial intelligence and big data analysis to predict criminal behaviors and identify patterns in criminal data (Brantingham, 2017). These technologies can enhance law enforcement agencies' ability to prevent and combat crime.

Moreover, international and interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for the development of criminology. Joint projects between academic institutions and law enforcement agencies from different countries can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices. For instance, the collaboration between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in combating human trafficking and cross-border crime has demonstrated the effectiveness of international cooperation in addressing complex crime issues (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2020).

Although the application of criminological theory in practice faces numerous challenges, future prospects are promising. The development of advanced technologies, international and interdisciplinary collaboration, and the adaptation of criminological theories to diverse legal and cultural contexts are essential for effectively addressing the challenges of modern crime.

Case study: Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova, located in Eastern Europe, has undergone a series of significant legal and institutional transformations since gaining independence in 1991. The country's legal system is based on the civil law tradition, influenced by European legal models, particularly the Romanian and French systems. Adopted in 2003, the CPC of the RM establishes a modern legislative framework that regulates criminal procedures and ensures the protection of fundamental rights for individuals involved in criminal proceedings (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2003).

Criminology in the RM is an evolving discipline, focusing on researching criminal phenomena and implementing effective strategies for preventing and combating crime. Academic institutions, such as the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy, play a crucial role in training and developing specialists in the fields of criminology and criminal investigations (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).

Analysis of the application of preventive detention in the criminal process

Preventive detention is a measure that restricts personal freedom applied within the framework of the criminal process to ensure the proper conduct of judicial proceedings and to prevent evasion, obstruction of justice, or the commission of new offenses. In the RM, the application of preventive arrest is regulated by the CPC, which outlines the criteria and conditions that must be met in order to impose this measure.

According to research conducted by Iurie Odagiu and Ghennadi Epure, the reasons for restricting a person's freedom are closely linked to the risks identified in the practice of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and incorporated into national legislation. Thus, there are reasonable grounds for the detention of a person if at least one of the following risks is present in a particular criminal case: the risk of evasion, the risk of hindering the proper conduct of justice, the prevention of the commission of a new crime, and the risk of causing public disorder (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).

A relevant example is a case where the court partially granted the prosecutor's request for the application of preventive detention for a period of 30 days, opting for house arrest. The court justified this decision by stating that house arrest could ensure the proper conduct of the criminal process while balancing public interests and the rights of the suspect.

The role and competencies of investigation officers

Investigation officers play an essential role in the criminal process in the Republic of Moldova, being responsible for collecting and analyzing evidence, conducting investigations, and ensuring the legality of procedures within the criminal justice system. The competencies of investigation officers are regulated by the Criminal Procedure Code and other specific normative acts that establish their duties and responsibilities (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2003).

The training and professional development of investigation officers are provided by academic institutions such as the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy (2023), which offers specialized training programs in the field of criminal investigations and undercover techniques. These programs are crucial for preparing investigation officers to utilize modern investigative methods and adhere to international human rights standards.

A notable example of best practice in training investigation officers is the collaboration between the "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy and the National Anticorruption Center (CNA), which has led to the development

of training programs focused on combating money laundering and organized crime. These programs were developed based on academic research and contributed to increasing the competence and efficiency of investigation officers (Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Moldova, 2021).

The Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Moldova was adopted by Law no. 122 on March 14, 2003, and came into force on June 12, 2003. It was republished in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Moldova no. 248-251 on November 5, 2013, with subsequent amendments and additions. The Code regulates criminal procedures, including the rights and obligations of the parties involved, preventive measures, investigation and trial procedures for crimes, and appeals.

An important aspect of the legislative framework in the Republic of Moldova is its alignment with international and European standards in the field of human rights. The Republic of Moldova is a party to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and other relevant international treaties, which requires adherence to strict standards in criminal justice (Council of Europe, 1950).

In the Republic of Moldova, several institutions are involved in the enforcement of the law and the administration of criminal justice. These include the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor General's Office, the courts, and specialized agencies such as the National Anti-Corruption Center (CNA). These institutions work together to ensure the rule of law and the protection of citizens' fundamental rights.

The "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy is a higher education institution that plays a vital role in training and developing police officers and other specialists in the field of criminal justice. The Academy offers training programs in various areas, including criminology, criminal investigations, and criminal law, thereby contributing to the enhancement of competence and efficiency within the criminal justice system of the Republic of Moldova (Academia „Ştefan cel Mare", 2023).

Although the RM has made significant progress in modernizing its criminal justice system, there are still numerous challenges that need to be addressed. These include corruption, the lack of adequate resources for law enforcement institutions, and the need to improve training and professional development for criminal justice personnel (Transparency International, 2022).

Another important aspect is the necessity to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of individuals involved in criminal proceedings. This includes, among other things, guaranteeing a fair trial, upholding the

presumption of innocence, and ensuring access to quality legal assistance (European Court of Human Rights, 2023).

The legal and criminological context in the RM reflects the country's ongoing efforts to align with international and European standards in criminal justice. Although significant challenges remain, the progress made in modernizing the legislative framework and in the professional training of criminal justice specialists is encouraging. Collaboration between national and international institutions, as well as a firm commitment to respecting human rights, will be essential for strengthening an effective and equitable criminal justice system in the Republic of Moldova.

Analysis of the application of preventive detention in the criminal process

Preventive arrest is one of the most severe preventive measures in criminal proceedings, primarily aimed at ensuring the proper conduct of judicial procedures and preventing evasion, obstruction of justice, or the commission of new crimes. In the RM, the application of preventive arrest is regulated by the CPC, which sets out the criteria and conditions required for the imposition of this measure (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2003).

According to the CPC of the RM, preventive detention can be imposed if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the suspect or defendant will attempt to evade prosecution or judgment, will hinder the discovery of the truth in the criminal process, will commit other offenses, or will cause serious disturbance to public order (Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2003).

An essential aspect of the application of preventive detention is the seriousness of the committed offense. Courts must evaluate whether the offense for which the suspect is being investigated is sufficiently serious to justify the deprivation of liberty. Additionally, the legality of this measure must be subsequently confirmed by a judicial warrant (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).

As a party to the European Convention on Human Rights, the RM must respect the standards established by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) regarding preventive detention. The ECHR has emphasized in numerous cases the importance of adhering to the principles of proportionality and necessity in the application of preventive measures. For example, in the case of Guţu v. Moldova, the Court found that preventive detention must be justified by concrete and relevant reasons, and its duration must be reasonable (European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), 2007).

The legal oversight of preventive arrest is crucial to prevent abuses and ensure the protection of individuals' fundamental rights. In the RM, the courts are required to periodically review whether the continuation of preventive arrest is justified. Furthermore, individuals under preventive arrest have the right to challenge the measure before higher courts (CPC of the RM, 2003).

Although the legislative framework in the RM provides clear mechanisms for the application and oversight of preventive arrest, significant challenges remain in practice. These include the excessive use of preventive arrest, the prolonged duration of this measure, and the lack of effective alternatives such as house arrest or judicial control (Transparency International, 2022).

Another important aspect is the necessity of ensuring continuous training for judges and prosecutors regarding human rights and international standards. Collaboration with academic institutions and international organizations can contribute to improving practices and respecting the fundamental principles of criminal justice.

The application of preventive detention in the criminal process in the Republic of Moldova is regulated by a legislative framework that seeks to ensure a balance between the need to protect public order and respect for the fundamental rights of individuals. However, practical challenges and the need to better align national practices with international standards remain essential issues that must be addressed to ensure a fair and effective criminal justice system.

The Role and Competencies of Investigation Officers

Investigation officers play a crucial role in the criminal justice system, being responsible for collecting and analyzing evidence, conducting investigations, and ensuring the legality of criminal procedures. In the RM, the competencies and duties of investigation officers are regulated by the CPC and other specific regulations, which clearly define their role and responsibilities.

Investigation officers are authorized to conduct special investigative activities on behalf of the state, primarily aimed at preventing and combating crime, ensuring state security, and protecting the rights and legitimate interests of individuals. Special investigative activities include measures such as surveillance, interception of communications, undercover infiltration, and other specific techniques for collecting information (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).

According to Law No. 59/2012 on special investigative activities, investigation officers are responsible for implementing special investigative

measures in accordance with legal provisions and respecting the fundamental rights of individuals. They collaborate with prosecutors and other competent authorities to ensure the efficiency and legality of investigations (The Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2012)

The competencies of investigation officers are diverse and encompass a wide range of specific activities. Among the main competencies are:

- *Collection and analysis of evidence*: Investigation officers are responsible for collecting the material and informational evidence necessary to elucidate offenses. They utilize advanced investigative techniques to obtain relevant evidence and analyze the collected data (CPC of the RM, Art. 90).
- *Surveillance and interception of communications*: Investigation officers have the authority to conduct surveillance and intercept communications during criminal investigations. These measures are authorized by the prosecutor and carried out in accordance with legal provisions to ensure respect for fundamental rights (The Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2012).
- *Undercover infiltration*: Investigation officers can conduct undercover activities to obtain valuable information from criminal environments. This competency involves infiltrating criminal groups and gathering relevant data to resolve criminal cases (Odagiu & Epure, 2023).
- *Collaboration with other authorities*: Investigation officers closely collaborate with prosecutors, judges, and other competent authorities to ensure the efficiency and legality of investigations. They participate in joint investigative teams and share relevant information to resolve cases.
- *Protection of witnesses and other participants in criminal proceedings*: Investigation officers are responsible for protecting witnesses and other participants in the criminal process who may be exposed to risks due to their cooperation with the authorities. This includes implementing physical protection measures and ensuring confidentiality (The Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2008).

Training and Professional Development

The training and professional development of investigation officers are essential for ensuring their competence and efficiency. The "Ştefan cel Mare" Academy in Chişinău plays a significant role in this regard, offering specialized training programs in criminal investigations and undercover techniques. These programs are crucial for preparing investigation officers to

utilize modern investigative methods and adhere to international human rights standards.

A notable example of best practice in training investigation officers is the collaboration between the "Ștefan cel Mare" Academy and the National Anticorruption Center (CNA), which has led to the development of training programs focused on combating money laundering and organized crime. These programs were developed based on academic research and have contributed to enhancing the competence and efficiency of investigation officers.

Investigation officers in the Republic of Moldova play an essential role within the criminal justice system, possessing diverse competencies and significant responsibilities in preventing and combating crime. Continuous training and close collaboration with other authorities are vital for ensuring the efficiency and legality of investigations. Respecting fundamental rights and aligning with international standards remain essential priorities for strengthening a fair and effective criminal justice system.

The role and competencies of investigation officers

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have contributed to enhancing the competence and efficiency of investigation officers.

Investigation officers in the Republic of Moldova play an essential role within the criminal justice system, possessing diverse competencies and significant responsibilities in preventing and combating crime. Continuous training and close collaboration with other authorities are vital for ensuring the efficiency and legality of investigations. Respecting fundamental rights and aligning with international standards remain essential priorities for strengthening a fair and effective criminal justice system.

Conclusions

In analyzing the contemporary criminological and legal context, a series of essential findings highlight the importance of integrating criminological theory with judicial practice. First, it is observed that the Republic of Moldova has adopted a modern legislative framework aligned with international and European standards to regulate criminal procedures and ensure the respect for the fundamental rights of individuals involved in criminal processes. This legislative framework is essential for the effective functioning of the criminal justice system and for the protection of human rights.

Secondly, the application of preventive arrest, as a severe measure of deprivation of liberty, is strictly regulated to prevent abuses and ensure compliance with the principles of proportionality and necessity. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights emphasizes the importance of providing a clear and relevant justification for this measure, as well as the need for a reasonable duration.

Third, the role and competencies of investigation officers are clearly defined and include a wide range of specific activities, such as collecting and analyzing evidence, conducting surveillance and intercepting communications, infiltrating undercover, and collaborating with other authorities (The Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2012) Continuous training and professional development of investigation officers are essential to ensure their competence and efficiency.

To improve the collaboration between theory and practice in the fields of criminology and criminal justice, a series of recommendations are necessary. First, the development of continuous training programs that integrate theory and practice is essential. These programs should include modules that combine theoretical knowledge with practical case studies, thus facilitating the transfer of knowledge and experiences between theorists and practitioners.

Second, creating collaboration platforms, such as joint workshops and conferences, can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences. These events should focus on practical issues and applicable theoretical solutions, thus contributing to the improvement of existing practices.

Third, applied research projects that involve collaboration between academic institutions and law enforcement agencies are essential for developing innovative solutions and improving existing practices. These projects may include case studies, data analyses, and the development of new investigative methods (The Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2012).

Fourth, implementing mentoring programs in which experienced professionals guide young investigation officers and other practitioners can facilitate the transfer of knowledge and best practices. These programs can include training sessions, counseling, and periodic evaluations.

Fifth, utilizing technology in education and practice can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of investigative activities. The development and use of online learning platforms can facilitate access to educational resources and allow investigation officers to continuously update their knowledge.

Integrating criminological theory with judicial practice has significant implications for future criminal policy and legislation. First, criminal policies should be based on solid criminological research and empirical data to ensure their effectiveness and fairness. This implies close collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Second, future legislation should reflect the latest findings and practices in criminology and criminal justice. This can be achieved through regular consultations with experts and by incorporating the results of applied research into the legislative process (The Parliament of Republic of Moldova, 2012).

Third, criminal policies should be flexible and adaptable to respond quickly to new challenges and trends in crime. This involves constant monitoring of criminological developments and periodic updates to legislation and judicial practices.

In conclusion, combining criminological theory with judicial practice is essential for developing a modern and effective criminal justice system. By implementing the above recommendations and adapting criminal policies and legislation to new criminological realities, it is possible to ensure a fair and efficient criminal justice system capable of addressing current and future challenges.

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