

METHODOLOGY AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RESEARCH IN MODERN CRIMINOLOGY

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the current state of development of modern criminological research in Uzbekistan and scientifically illuminates some institutional, legal, financial, technological, and personnel-related problems in the field of criminology, as well as the growing attention at the state level to the development of criminological research in the country. Based on the research results, conclusions and recommendations were made for the further improvement of criminological research in Uzbekistan, strengthening the scientific approach to combating crime.*

Keywords: *criminological research, modern crime, modern criminology, criminology of Uzbekistan, scientific analysis, scientific diagnosis, forecast.*

O‘ZBEKISTONDA ZAMONAVIY KRIMINOLOGIK TADQIQOTLAR HOLATI: MUAMMOLAR VA IMKONIYATLAR

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada O‘zbekistonda zamonaviy kriminologik tadqiqotlar rivojlanishining hozirgi holati tahlil qilinib, kriminologiya sohasidagi ayrim institutsional, huquqiy, moliyaviy, texnologik va kadrlar bilan bog‘liq muammolar, mamlakatda kriminologik tadqiqotlarni rivojlantirishdagi davlat darajasida e‘tiborning kuchayishi ilmiy jihatdan yoritilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari asosida O‘zbekistonda kriminologik tadqiqotlarni yanada takomillashtirish, jinoyatchilikka qarshi kurashda ilmiy yondashuvni kuchaytirish yuzasidan xulosa va tavsiyalar berilgan.*

Kalit so‘zlar: *kriminologik tadqiqotlar, zamonaviy jinoyatchilik, zamonaviy kriminologiya, O‘zbekiston kriminologiyasi, ilmiy tahlil, ilmiy diagnoz, prognoz.*

Entrance

The rise of global crime - religious extremism, terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and other transnational crimes - threatens the lives and well-being of millions of people. Therefore, in many developed countries, attention to a scientifically based approach to combating crime is increasing, and the importance of criminology is growing. Criminological research is an important tool

for identifying the causes and factors of crime and developing effective measures for crime prevention. After Uzbekistan gained independence, reforms in the field of law enforcement began, and attention is being paid to the issues of combating crime and crime prevention at the level of state policy. In particular, the "Uzbekistan - 2030" Development Strategy notes the insufficient targeting of measures for the prevention of offenses and the fight against crime, as well as the lack of a comprehensive approach to them, and emphasizes the need to establish a systematic analysis and diagnosis of crime. This requires raising the development of criminological research in the country to a new level.

In recent years, large-scale work has been carried out in Uzbekistan to modernize the legal system, ensure public safety, and transition to early crime prevention. In the instructions of the Head of State, the main priority task is defined as the early detection of the causes of crimes and the prevention of crime through their elimination. Scientific analysis shows that combating the consequences of a crime alone is ineffective; on the contrary, it is necessary to identify and eliminate the social, economic, and other factors leading to crime. This requires the implementation of a scientifically based preventive policy based on the science of criminology. In this sense, the development of criminological research and the implementation of its results in practice are of current importance for Uzbekistan.

This article analyzes the state and development trends of modern criminological research in Uzbekistan. Existing problems (institutional, legal, financial, technological, and personnel issues) and opportunities in local conditions (increased attention from the state, legal reforms, digitalization, educational programs, and international cooperation) are considered based on scientific sources. Also, the experience of Uzbekistan will be compared with international models and trends, and conclusions and recommendations for the further development of the field of criminology will be presented.

Analysis and results

Institutional problems. One of the factors hindering the development of criminological research in Uzbekistan was the lack of its formation within the framework of independent scientific institutes and centers. It is known that for many years, research in criminology was conducted mainly as part of jurisprudence, in the form of individual initiatives at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs or law universities. As a result of the absence of a specialized criminological research institution, research was conducted not on the basis of a unified program, but in a dispersed manner. Scientific support for crime prevention in the internal affairs bodies was also weak - scientific and methodological developments necessary for practical preventive activities were insufficiently developed.

The weak institutional base of criminological research was manifested in another aspect: the weakness of scientific cooperation between various agencies and organizations. It was noted that the mechanisms of information exchange and cooperation between the bodies engaged in crime prevention (internal affairs, prosecutor's office, court, etc.) and scientific institutions have not been sufficiently established. As a result, each agency operates only within its capabilities and is limited to a comprehensive approach. After all, the fight against crime requires cooperation from various fields: for example, it is necessary to conduct comprehensive research with the participation of sociologists, psychologists, and educators. But in the conditions of Uzbekistan, the formation of such multidisciplinary teams was institutionally difficult. Therefore, the practical effectiveness of criminological research is low, and disruptions have occurred in their implementation in the activities of agencies.

Legal problems. Another obstacle to the development of scientific research in the field of criminology is the insufficiency and lack of normative consolidation of the legal framework. Firstly, the lack of the concept and mechanism of criminological expertise in the legislation of Uzbekistan is criticized in scientific sources. That is, in the process of adopting new draft laws or state programs, the practice of preliminary scientific examination of their criminogenic impact and potential consequences for crime has not been formed. In most cases, a deep criminological analysis is not conducted before the adoption of normative acts, as a result of which the current legislation does not contribute sufficiently to the prevention of crime. For example, the absence of the concept of "criminological legal support" in the legal system for the prevention of women's crime is noted as a serious problem - the effectiveness of preventive measures is decreasing due to the lack of a corresponding regulatory framework in this area. Similarly, some previously adopted laws lacked a criminological approach. For example, experts criticized the fact that the Law "On Combating Human Trafficking," adopted in 2008, does not clearly define the concept of "crime prevention," norms for the rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking are insufficient. The long-standing absence of a special law on the prevention of domestic violence has also been a legal gap - only in recent years has a draft law "On Combating Domestic Violence" been developed and a proposal for its adoption has been put forward. In general, the mechanisms for integrating the results of criminological research into legal policy are poorly developed: the recommendations of criminologists are not necessarily taken into account when preparing legislative acts and decisions. This leads to an underestimation of the impact of legal reforms on crime.

The problems listed above are interconnected and require a comprehensive approach. For example, the institutional problem - the lack of a scientific center - exacerbated the problems of financing and staff shortages. Similarly, the weakness of the legal framework and the lack of practical cooperation have widened the gap between theory and practice. All this hindered the full realization of the potential of criminological science in Uzbekistan. However, based on the initiatives of the President of Uzbekistan, large-scale reforms have been carried out to completely eliminate these problems.

In recent years, a number of conditions have been created in Uzbekistan to bring the development of criminological research to a new level. Decrees and resolutions adopted at the initiative of the President of our country, legal reforms, and international cooperation programs are aimed at eliminating existing barriers and increasing scientific potential in the field of criminology. The main directions of some opportunities are considered below.

Increased attention at the state level (institutional support).

On January 15, 2024, a special Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan established the Research Institute of Criminology[1]. It was determined that this new institute will serve to elevate scientific research activities in the field of public safety and crime prevention to a qualitatively new level.

The Institute has been entrusted with important tasks such as conducting in-depth studies of the criminogenic situation in the republic, analyzing and forecasting crime trends, and performing comprehensive scientific diagnostics of the causes and factors of crime. Based on this, from now on, within the framework of scientific research, social, economic, psychological, and legal factors of crime will be extensively studied, and "State Reports on Crime Trends and Factors" will be prepared and submitted to the government quarterly. This enables the direct integration of scientific conclusions into state policy and practical activities.

Although the new Institute of Criminology is structurally part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, its independence and scientific neutrality are guaranteed by law - it is stipulated that the institute conducts research independently of any agency or official, and freely prepares scientific reports based on its analytical conclusions. Additionally, the Republican Criminology Council was established under the institute, with the purpose of strengthening cooperation between scientific institutions and higher educational institutions, as well as integrating criminology into the educational process. Through this council, it is expected that all law schools, law enforcement agencies, and relevant organizations in the country will unite on a single platform for criminological research. This allows for the coordination of previously dispersed research, the prevention of duplication, and the consolidation of resources.

It is no exaggeration to say that such attention paid by the state to the field of criminology is a significant step towards solving institutional problems.

Legal reforms and improvement of the regulatory framework. The legal foundation for increasing the effectiveness of criminological research is also being gradually improved. Scientific approaches to crime prevention are embodied in a number of laws and resolutions adopted in recent years. In particular, the Law "On Crime Prevention," adopted in 2014, provides for a comprehensive approach to the early prevention of offenses and the implementation of targeted preventive measures. Within the framework of this law's implementation, the interaction of various agencies and the tasks of prevention entities are clearly defined. In the Concept of Public Security of the Republic of Uzbekistan, approved in 2019, the introduction of a system of criminological analysis and forecasting was noted as a specific task. In this strategic document, state bodies were instructed to rely on scientific data and consider the results of statistical and criminological research when planning measures to combat crime.

Regulatory documents related to the Institute of Criminology, established by Presidential Decree, are also elevating the legal framework in the field to a new level. Specifically, a procedure has been introduced for approving "road maps" for curbing crime to the government based on quarterly and annual criminological analytical reports prepared by the Institute. That is, the results of scientific research will now be directly transformed into normative documents - comprehensive action plans - and implemented in practice. This approach strengthens the influence of criminology on legal policy. Additionally, the issue of incorporating the opinions and proposals of criminologists in the lawmaking process is also on the agenda. For example, some scholars propose introducing a procedure for conducting special criminological examinations of draft laws before their adoption. The implementation of such proposals will allow for a preliminary assessment of the potential impact of regulatory legal acts on crime and the prevention of harmful consequences. In particular, to reduce the occurrence of unexpected criminogenic conflicts or gaps in legislation, the practice of conducting expert reviews of draft laws by criminologists is expected to be introduced. This significantly increases the level of scientific validity of the legal framework.

Digitalization of processes (technological capabilities). The digital reforms being implemented in our country are opening new horizons for criminological research. Recently, several information systems have been implemented in internal affairs bodies and the legal system as a whole. For example, information on crimes and offenses is collected and processed electronically through information systems such as "E-public safety," "E-court," and "Electronic criminal-legal statistics."

Academic programs and personnel training opportunities. New steps are being taken in the field of training scientific and pedagogical personnel in criminology. The aforementioned Research Institute of Criminology is planned to serve not only as a research center but also as an educational center. A system of postgraduate education for young researchers and independent scholars has been established at the institute. The Presidential Decree also assigns the Institute the authority to train highly qualified scientific personnel in the field of criminology and confer academic degrees, which will help address staffing issues in this field. Specialized councils have now been established in our country to defend PhD and doctoral dissertations in criminology. In addition, special courses and specializations in criminology are being introduced in institutions such as the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Tashkent State University of Law.

Another opportunity in this area is the first International Criminology Forum "Advanced Practices of World Criminology" held in Tashkent in 2024, within which the creation of a new generation of textbooks is planned. The annual hosting of this forum among about 30 foreign research and educational institutions and organizations is a result of the attention given to this field. As a result of such academic efforts, the ranks of criminologists will expand in the coming years, and the continuity of the scientific school will be ensured. Attention is also being paid to improving the qualifications of professors and teachers: internships and seminar-trainings are being organized abroad with the support of international organizations. In conclusion, the opportunities in education and scientific personnel are creating a solid foundation for guaranteeing the sustainable development of criminology.

The aforementioned opportunities will ensure the advancement of criminological science and modern criminological knowledge in Uzbekistan to a new level. Of course, it is necessary to fully utilize these opportunities and transform them into practical results.

Conclusions and suggestions

As evident from the above analysis, the field of criminological research in Uzbekistan is undergoing a complex evolutionary process. On one hand, during the years of independence, numerous valuable scientific works have been conducted, and a knowledge base on various aspects of crime has been established. However, on the other hand, serious institutional, legal, financial, technological, and personnel-related issues in the development of criminology have hindered the full realization of this scientific field's potential. Now, as a result of the reforms being implemented in our country, it has become possible to gradually address these problems. The focus on criminology at the state level - the establishment of the Institute, the introduction of legal norms - has created a solid foundation for the field's advancement. Digitalization

processes and international cooperation are elevating scientific approaches to a qualitatively new level.

The results of studying the topic can be summarized as follows. Firstly, the necessity of integrating criminological research findings into law enforcement practice has been confirmed. The effectiveness of crime prevention directly depends on the quality of scientific analysis. Therefore, it is crucial to effectively organize the activities of the newly established Institute of Criminology and transform it into a true "brain center." The government and agencies should consistently utilize the mechanism for making appropriate decisions based on the criminological forecasts and analytical data prepared by the Institute. It is proposed to strictly monitor the implementation of annually developed crime "road maps" and assess their effectiveness.

Secondly, it is necessary to continue initial efforts to increase the number of scientific and pedagogical personnel in the field of criminology and enhance their potential. It is advisable to develop high-quality new curricula and manuals, and to include "Criminology" as a mandatory subject in legal higher education institutions. Expanding master's and doctoral programs in criminology and developing measures to provide material and moral incentives for researchers are essential. It is also important to improve the criminological knowledge of practicing law enforcement officers - for this, it is recommended to incorporate special courses on criminology into the programs of professional development institutes.

Thirdly, additional measures should be taken to strengthen the legal framework for criminological research. In particular, we believe it is necessary to introduce a procedure for conducting criminological examinations when adopting legislative acts. This procedure serves to assess the potential impact of new laws or decrees on crime in advance and to mitigate negative consequences. According to experts, criminological expertise "evaluates factors that may influence the state of crime and helps to reduce tension in society," and therefore it is advisable to incorporate it into the legislative process.

Fourthly, it is necessary to increase financial support for research in the field of criminology. In this regard, it is possible to consider gradually increasing funds allocated from the state budget, as well as attracting funds from the private sector and public organizations. For example, if grant competitions on social security and crime prevention are announced under the sponsorship of large business entities, this will stimulate scientific research. It is also necessary to establish a system for assisting local scientists in participating in international grant projects and providing guidance in the preparation of grant documents. Another proposal regarding financial support is the introduction of a system of financial bonuses for agencies and regions that have

implemented proposals developed through criminological research. For instance, regional or city administrations that have significantly reduced crime rates could receive additional incentives, taking into account the effectiveness of programs developed based on criminological analysis in their area. This will also increase interest in scientific approaches at the local level.

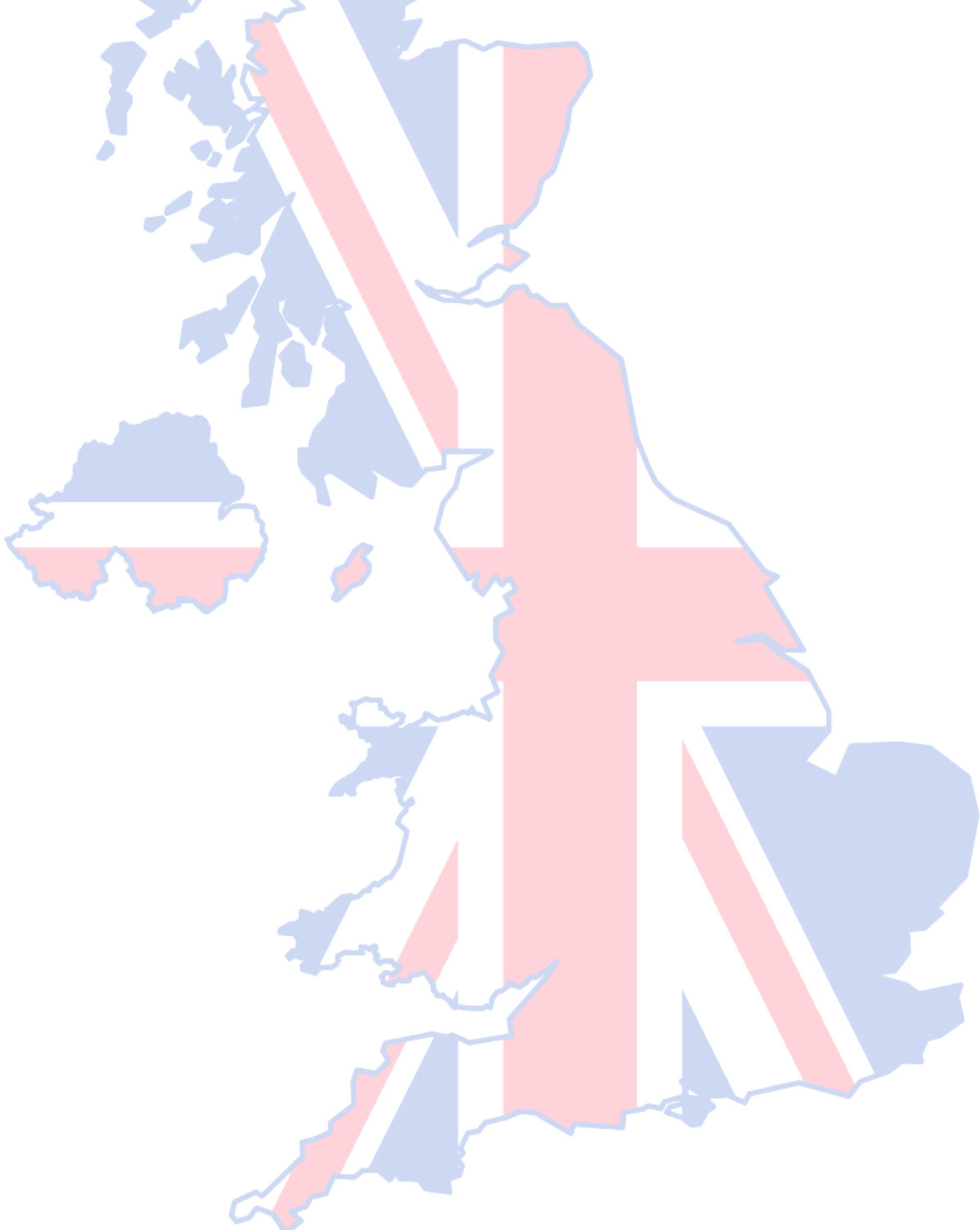
In conclusion, it is worth emphasizing that ensuring the rule of law in society and combating crime directly require reliance on scientific achievements. The science of criminology serves as a "guiding star" in the field of public safety - it reveals the internal patterns of crime and helps determine strategies for combating it. The reforms implemented in Uzbekistan in recent years have opened unprecedented opportunities for criminological research. To fully utilize these opportunities, it is necessary to thoroughly analyze the problems and take decisive steps to address them. The analysis and proposals presented in this article demonstrate that if the state, scientific community, and practitioners act in unison, the science of criminology in Uzbekistan will undoubtedly develop rapidly in the near future and become a crucial factor in preventing and reducing crime. Therefore, we must not miss the opportunity to elevate the field of law enforcement in our country to a new level through the development of criminological research, the practical application of scientific findings, and the effective adoption of international experience.

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