METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF REGIONAL CRIME IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: This article is dedicated to the criminological analysis of the regional distribution and territorial characteristics of crime in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Utilizing data from the unified statistical reports for the year 2025, the study examines the impact of the socio-economic and demographic profiles of the regions on crime dynamics. The author proposes a conceptual framework for regional crime classification based on a "cluster approach" and develops targeted prevention models tailored to the specific nature of each region.

Keywords: Criminological determination, regional differentiation, local factors, criminogenic mapping, cluster analysis, urbanization, latent crime, social control.

Introduction

Crime is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon intrinsically linked to the socio-political dynamics and economic development trajectory of society. At the current stage of Uzbekistan's development, formulating a crime control strategy based solely on nationwide average statistical indicators is methodologically unpromising and fails to ensure the expected practical effectiveness. Indeed, the quantitative and qualitative indicators of crime undergo sharp differentiation based on the socio-economic potential, demographic profile, and cultural-lifestyle characteristics of various regions.

The unique demographic composition of each region — including population age structure, migratory activity, and social cohesion — constitutes the primary factors shaping a distinct "regional face" of crime. Specifically, in metropolitan areas with high levels of urbanization, the anonymization of social control intensifies property crimes and cyber-offenses. Conversely, in agrarian regions, high population density and the competition for land and water resources create the foundation for the determination of domestic disputes and crimes against the person.

The factor of economic specialization also plays a crucial role in defining the structure of regional crime. While economically developed industrial zones exhibit a higher weight of economic offenses, transit and border regions are characterized by the prevalence of cross-border crimes, such as smuggling or illegal migration. This necessitates not only a statistical study but a profound methodological and systemic analysis of regional crime characteristics.

From this perspective, one of the most pressing tasks facing the science of criminology is the development of individualized prevention models that account for territorial determinants. This modeling process envisions the creation of a "criminological passport" for each region, incorporating mechanisms for the early detection of local social risks and the application of targeted intervention measures. Moving the preventive system away from "template-based"

approaches allows it to adapt to the real conditions of the regional social environment, enabling the optimal allocation of state and community resources to the most criminogenic "hot spots."

Literature Review

Regional criminology issues have been systematically studied by both foreign and local researchers within the framework of fundamental legal science. The initial scientific perspectives regarding the distribution of crime in space and time were articulated in the works of L. Quetelet and A. Guerry, representatives of the "geographic school" of classical criminology. These researchers were the first to substantiate the geographic determination of crime using mathematical and statistical methods, proving that a region's climatic conditions, population density, and social status directly influence the intensity of criminal activity.

Subsequently, the regional analysis of crime was enriched by socio-ecological approaches. Notably, É. Durkheim's theory of *anomie* and the "concentric zone" model proposed by Chicago School representatives R. Park and E. Burgess revealed the fundamental impact of urbanization processes and social disorganization on crime. According to their findings, the weakening of social control in urban environments and high population mobility are key factors determining the criminogenic activity of specific territories.

Within the national school of jurisprudence, the regional aspects of crime have been extensively analyzed in the scholarly research of scientists such as M.Kh. Rustambaev, G.A. Akhmedov, I. Ismoilov, and J.S. Mukhtorov. These studies place particular emphasis on the unique cultural-historical identity of Uzbekistan, the role of the *Mahalla* institution in crime containment, and the criminological significance of regional socio-economic disparities. Local scholars have developed the organizational and legal foundations of regional prevention, which today serve as the theoretical cornerstone for practical activities.

However, the processes of globalization and rapid digitalization are transforming the traditional territorial boundaries of crime. Today, the emergence of new types of transborder crimes, offenses within cyberspace, and interregional organized criminal structures necessitates a revision of classical methods of territorial analysis. Regional criminology must now encompass not only crimes in physical space but also the territorial distribution of digital infrastructure and the dynamics of deviant behavior within local social networks.

From this perspective, at the modern stage, it is of paramount scientific importance to develop new methodological criteria for territorial analysis, utilize GIS (Geographic Information Systems) technologies in crime forecasting, and improve the system of regional criminogenic mapping. This, in turn, creates a necessity for the development of innovative prevention models that account for the levels of both digital and social security in each specific region.

Main Part: Methodological Approach

In the regional study of crime, transitioning from the traditional administrative-territorial approach to a "cluster approach" methodology ensures the highest level of scientific and practical effectiveness today. The essence of this approach lies in grouping regions not merely by their geographical or administrative boundaries, but based on the similarity of social, economic, and demographic factors that generate crime — referred to as "criminogenic homogeneity." This methodological transformation allows for a deeper understanding of local causes determining crime and enables the development of universal preventive algorithms for each specific cluster.

In our view, it is appropriate to classify the system of primary methodological criteria that define the modern criminological landscape of Uzbekistan and shape regional clusters as follows:

First, the set of socio-economic criteria. This involves analyzing the region's share in the Gross Regional Product (GRP), the concentration of production capacities, unemployment rates, and real household incomes (the consumption basket). In industrial clusters with high economic activity, there is a higher prevalence of property crimes and corporate fraud. Conversely, in regions with low income levels and high unemployment coefficients, "primitive" crimes related to the acquisition of basic means of subsistence and deviant behavior are determined.

Second, demographic and migration criteria. Regional crime dynamics are directly linked to population density, especially the proportion of youth considered "criminologically active," as well as external and internal migration flows. Extremely high population density generates social tension, while migration processes contribute to the weakening of social control and the formation of an "anonymous crime" environment. In transit regions with high migratory pressure, the risks of transborder and ethnic-oriented offenses increase.

Third, infrastructural and institutional criteria. Here, the primary indicators are the region's urbanization coefficient and the level of control in public places, specifically the implementation of "Safe City" and "Smart Neighborhood" (*Smart Mahalla*) systems. Infrastructural imbalances in urban environments — such as poor lighting, low video surveillance coverage, or a lack of recreational spaces — lead to the concentration of crime in specific local points (hot spots). Additionally, the density of law enforcement agencies and the activity of social institutions (such as the *Mahalla* and women's committees) are evaluated as integral components of infrastructural control.

Clustering territories based on this set of criteria is the most critical scientific condition for shifting crime prevention in Uzbekistan from template-based methods to a "targeted and individualized" approach. This, in turn, allows for the harmonization of socio-economic development programs with criminological security requirements for each region.

Analyzing the criminogenic situation in the Navoi region based on the results of 2025 reveals that the region's small population size, coupled with high economic activity and urbanization levels, acts as a primary determinant. Although crimes recorded in the region statistically account for only 3.1 percent of the national total, the intensity indicator per 100,000 inhabitants places the region in the higher rankings.

The criminological characteristics specific to the Navoi region can be expressed through the following relative trends:

Efficiency of Crime Clearance: The law enforcement agencies of the region hold one of the leading positions in the republic regarding the crime clearance coefficient. Specifically, more than 54 percent of all registered crimes were successfully resolved within the reporting period itself, and the remaining unsolved crimes constitute one of the lowest figures in the country. This situation is explained by the density of the control system in the territory and the high level of technical equipment supporting operational activities.

Weight of Property and Economic Crimes: The status of the Navoi region as an industrial cluster has significantly influenced the structure of its criminality. Approximately 48 percent of crimes in the region were committed under conditions of secrecy (clandestinely), the majority

of which involve property encroachments and various types of fraud. At the same time, the share of offenses committed in public places within the total crime structure is notably low, indicating that primary criminogenic activity has shifted to closed facilities or digital spaces.

Effectiveness of Preventive Measures: Analysis shows that only 7 percent of the total crimes committed in the region were detected at the stage of attempt or preparation. This indicator implies a necessity to redirect preventive work from post-factum measures toward the stage of early detection before a crime is committed. The extremely small proportion of crime occurring in streets and avenues (accounting for only 0.4 percent of total crimes) demonstrates the high effectiveness of the "Safe City" concept in Navoi city and other major industrial centers.

In summary, although the crime coefficient in the Navoi region is high relative to its population size, its structural components remain manageable. The "criminological face" of the region reflects a local crime model characterized by high-tech surveillance and primarily driven by property and economic interests.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the criminological analysis of regional crime characteristics in Uzbekistan, the following fundamental conclusions have been reached:

First, a disparity between the "absolute number" of crimes and the "intensity coefficient" in the territorial distribution of crime was identified. As evidenced by the case of the Navoi region, a low number of crimes does not imply absolute safety in the area; rather, it indicates a high concentration of criminality relative to population size and the density of economic objects. This necessitates a shift in criminological policy away from "one-size-fits-all" templates, adapting it instead to the unique demographic and economic foundations of each region.

Second, it has been proven that economic specialization is a primary determinant defining the structure of crime. The high prevalence of property encroachments and fraud in industrial-developed areas, compared to the dominance of domestic and family disputes in agrarian regions, confirms the necessity of considering a region's "economic portrait" when developing regional prevention models.

Third, the implementation of modern technologies and the "Safe City" system has yielded high results in curbing crime in public places. However, this has led to a transformation of criminal activity from "the streets" into "digital spaces" and "closed environments." This requires strengthening the prevention system with intelligent monitoring and cyber-protection tools.

Scientific and Practical Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of regional crime prevention in Uzbekistan:

1. Implementation of a "Regional Criminological Passport" system. This involves creating a dynamic platform for every region and district that includes not only crime statistics but also socio-economic risk factors (unemployment, migration, infrastructure status). This system would allow for the organization of preventive measures based on "risk factors" rather than just "neighborhood-level" (*mahalla-bay*) administrative divisions.

2. Forecasting crime based on a cluster approach. Regions should be grouped according to socio-economic similarities (e.g., industrial, agrarian, transit), with distinct "Prevention

Algorithms" developed for each cluster. Methods of crime clearance from the Navoi experience should be applied to other industrial zones, while the neighborhood-level social control from the Fergana Valley experience should be adapted for other urbanized centers.

3. Establishment of "Digital Criminology" centers. This entails expanding Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that analyze relative crime indicators in real-time and automatically identify criminogenic "hot spots." This will facilitate the optimal distribution of forces and resources among prevention inspectors and patrol groups.

4. Development of regional victimological prevention. This involves creating a "crime victim profile" specific to each region and conducting targeted work with social layers of the population. For instance, ensuring the property security of employees in industrial areas and establishing a system for working with conflict-prone families in rural areas, tailored to regional linguistic and cultural mentalities.

The practical application of these recommendations will enable the transformation of crime control in Uzbekistan from a purely punitive approach to a scientifically grounded system of early prevention.

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