CRIMINOGENIC FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO REOFFENDING AMONG PERSONS RELEASED FROM PUNISHMENT

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Abstract. This article examines the criminogenic factors contributing to reoffending among persons released from punishment. Particular attention is paid to the theoretical foundations of crime determination, the interaction of objective and subjective factors, and the specific features of post-release criminal behavior. The article proposes a classification of criminogenic factors into five groups: personal, socio-economic, socio-psychological, penitentiary, and organizational-legal factors. Special emphasis is placed on socio-economic determinants, including unemployment, lack of vocational qualifications, housing difficulties, unstable income, and social exclusion. Based on scholarly approaches, international standards, statistical data, and the results of a sociological survey, the article substantiates the need to regard employment, vocational training, social support, and reintegration measures as important components of recidivism prevention.

Keywords: persons released from punishment, reoffending, recidivism, criminogenic factors, crime prevention, socio-economic factors, social reintegration, employment, resocialization, post-penitentiary support.

On the occasion of the 33rd anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of Uzbekistan, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan pardoned 615 persons who had sincerely repented of their acts and demonstrated a commitment to rehabilitation. This decision constituted a practical manifestation of the principles of humanism and compassion pursued in the country. The fact that those pardoned included 9 foreign nationals, 29 women, 264 persons under the age of 30 (including two minors), and 9 persons who had been members of prohibited organizations[1] confirms that Uzbekistan's penal policy prioritizes not retribution, but rather rehabilitation, resocialization, and social reintegration. In turn, this approach demonstrates the consistency and purposefulness of a legal policy aimed at reducing the risk of reoffending by providing individuals with trust and opportunities, while strengthening stability and public order in society.

However, available statistical data indicate that the trust and opportunities afforded to persons released from punishment do not always translate into their effective use for successful social reintegration. In particular, during the first nine months of 2025, the number of crimes committed by persons under the supervision of the Probation Service who had been conditionally released early from serving their sentences pursuant to Article 73 of the Criminal Code increased by 182 percent compared with the corresponding period of the previous year.[2] This suggests that the risk of reoffending among this category of persons remains high.

Furthermore, in 2025, previously convicted persons accounted for 19.79 percent of crimes committed in the city of Tashkent. In certain districts, this figure was considerably higher than the citywide average, reaching 26.75 percent in Yangihayot District, 22.96 percent in Yunusabad District, 21.68 percent in Yashnabad District, and 21.18 percent in Chilanzar

District.[3] These circumstances demonstrate the need to further improve preventive measures applied to persons released from punishment and previously convicted persons. In particular, they highlight the importance of conducting an in-depth analysis of criminogenic factors contributing to reoffending and developing scientifically grounded approaches aimed at eliminating or mitigating such factors. Accordingly, this article provides a comprehensive criminological analysis of the socio-economic, psychological, penitentiary, and organizational-legal factors contributing to reoffending among persons released from punishment.

Identifying the causes of reoffending among persons released from punishment and effectively organizing preventive measures requires, first and foremost, a scientific understanding of the nature of the criminogenic factors underlying this phenomenon. Criminal behavior develops within a particular social environment and does not arise randomly; rather, it results from the interaction of a range of objective and subjective factors. Therefore, modern criminology prioritizes the study of crime not merely as an aggregate of committed offenses, but in conjunction with the system of determinants that contribute to its emergence and persistence.

In criminological theory, a criminogenic factor is understood as a set of social, economic, legal, psychological, moral, and organizational causes and conditions that directly or indirectly contribute to the emergence, persistence, or recurrence of crime.[4] From this perspective, a criminogenic factor should not be regarded as the sole cause of crime, but rather as an element within the broader system of criminal determinants. Consequently, crime prevention should not be limited to the application of legal measures after an offense has been committed; it should also focus on eliminating or mitigating the criminogenic factors that contribute to criminal behavior.

In this regard, I.I. Karpets, in examining the determinants of crime, emphasizes that crime never arises under the influence of a single cause. Rather, it results from the interaction of various social processes, individual characteristics, and environmental factors. According to Karpets, effective crime prevention requires identifying not merely the external manifestations of crime, but the causal relationships underlying its occurrence.[5] In this sense, the analysis of criminogenic factors constitutes the starting point of preventive activity.

A similar approach was advanced by V.N. Kudryavtsev, who explains the determination of crime through the “cause–condition–consequence” framework. He emphasizes that while certain factors directly operate as causes of criminal conduct, others create a favorable social environment in which those causes may operate.[6] Thus, although distinguishing between causes and conditions is theoretically important in criminology, from the standpoint of prevention they should be considered as components of an integrated criminogenic system.

A.I. Dolgova likewise views the determinants of crime as a complex social phenomenon and classifies them into socio-economic, political, legal, moral-psychological, and organizational factors. She notes that the actual causes of crime can be identified only by examining these factors not in isolation, but in terms of their interrelationships and mutual influence.[7] This approach is particularly relevant to the study of reoffending among persons released from punishment, since several criminogenic factors may simultaneously affect individuals belonging to this category.

Representatives of Uzbekistan’s national school of criminology have also devoted considerable attention to this issue. In particular, Q.R. Abdurasulova emphasizes that effective preventive measures cannot be organized without identifying the causes of crime and the conditions conducive to its commission. She argues that prevention should not be confined to the application of legal measures, but should also involve eliminating the social factors that lead an individual toward criminal behavior.

Similarly, I. Ismailov notes that every crime reflects the individual psychological, social, and moral characteristics of the offender and that, particularly in cases of repeated offending, these characteristics may develop into a stable criminogenic orientation. He stresses the importance of taking individual psychological characteristics into account when examining recidivism, noting that without considering such characteristics it is impossible to fully understand the nature and underlying causes of an individual's criminal behavior.[8]

V.S. Ustinov emphasizes that, alongside legal and political institutions, the overall level of cultural development in society plays a decisive role in crime prevention.[9] According to him, democracy alone is insufficient to reduce crime. It can become a powerful anti-criminogenic factor only when accompanied by a high level of legal culture, respect for the law, civic responsibility, and an adequate standard of living.

The classification proposed by V.S. Volkov is particularly significant because it enables a systematic examination of the factors determining crime. Under this approach, the factors influencing crime are not limited to the individual characteristics of offenders; rather, they are assessed in conjunction with the level of socio-economic development of society, the process of individual socialization, and the effectiveness of legal regulation.[10] This approach provides a scientific basis for understanding the multifactorial nature of crime.

In our view, the criminogenic factors contributing to reoffending among persons released from punishment may appropriately be classified into the following five groups: (1) personal (individual) factors; (2) socio-economic factors; (3) socio-psychological factors; (4) penitentiary factors; and (5) organizational and legal factors.

A synthesis of the theoretical approaches discussed above demonstrates that the criminogenic factors contributing to reoffending among persons released from punishment differ in certain respects from the factors underlying crime in general. While criminogenic factors associated with general crime are primarily related to an individual's socialization prior to offending, in the case of persons released from punishment such factors are closely connected with previous convictions, the influence of the penitentiary environment, the degree of resocialization, social acceptance, and the effectiveness of probation and post-penitentiary support. Therefore, the criminogenic factors affecting this category of persons should be studied as a distinct scientific category and classified independently.

Among the factors determining reoffending by persons released from punishment, socio-economic factors occupy a particularly important place. The ability of an individual to maintain a decent standard of living after release, to have a stable source of income, employment, housing, and access to social guarantees constitutes an essential condition for developing and maintaining a law-abiding way of life.[11] Conversely, unemployment, lack of vocational qualifications, absence of a stable source of income, housing difficulties, and economic hardship complicate social reintegration and increase the likelihood of reoffending.

In this context, A.I. Dolgova identifies the socio-economic condition of the population as one of the principal determinants of crime, emphasizing that unemployment, substantial income inequality, poverty, and inadequate social protection are significant factors contributing to an increase in crime. According to Dolgova, these factors restrict individuals' ability to satisfy their needs through lawful employment and may thereby increase their inclination to obtain income through unlawful means.[12]

V.N. Kudryavtsev also pays particular attention to the socio-economic determinants of crime, noting that economic instability, problems in the labor market, and shortcomings in social protection create a social environment conducive to criminal behavior. He further observes that certain economic circumstances, even where they do not directly cause crime, may function as conditions facilitating its commission.[13]

This issue has also received considerable attention in Uzbekistan's criminological scholarship. According to Q.R. Abdurasulova, unemployment, unmet material needs, social inequality, and economic hardship are among the significant factors contributing to the formation of antisocial behavior. In particular, the limited competitiveness of previously convicted persons in the labor market adversely affects their successful resocialization.

International organizations likewise recognize employment as one of the principal means of preventing recidivism. In particular, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in its Introductory Handbook on the Prevention of Recidivism and the Social Reintegration of Offenders, emphasizes that stable employment is one of the most important factors contributing to the successful social reintegration of persons released from punishment.[14] The Handbook further notes that unemployment, economic instability, and insufficient social support may contribute to an individual's return to a criminal environment.

A similar approach is reflected in reintegration frameworks developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank. These frameworks identify job creation, vocational training, labor-market integration, and the establishment of a stable source of income as essential conditions for successful social reintegration.[15] International experience demonstrates that employment-oriented programs not only enhance an individual's economic independence but also strengthen their sense of belonging to society and significantly reduce the risk of reoffending.

The findings of a number of empirical studies also support this conclusion. Research examining the labor-market position of formerly incarcerated persons has shown that their unemployment rate is substantially higher than that of the general population, while employed individuals demonstrate significantly lower rates of reoffending.[16] These findings confirm that employment not only provides economic stability but also constitutes an important social factor in the process of desistance from crime.

The findings of the sociological survey conducted within the framework of this study also support these conclusions. In particular, 91 percent of respondents indicated that special preventive measures aimed at providing vocational training and employment assistance to persons released from punishment should be expressly established in legislation. This demonstrates consistency between practical experience and scholarly approaches and confirms that employment constitutes one of the most important socio-economic dimensions of recidivism prevention.

In our view, unemployment, lack of vocational qualifications, housing difficulties, the absence of a stable source of income, and indebtedness have a secondary criminogenic effect on persons released from punishment, distinguishing their impact from similar socio-economic problems affecting the general population. When combined with a previous conviction, these factors

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restrict access to the labor market, intensify social exclusion, and increase the likelihood of returning to a criminal environment. Therefore, measures aimed at securing employment, providing vocational retraining, facilitating participation in social entrepreneurship, and ensuring access to housing for this category of persons should be regarded not merely as forms of social assistance, but as special criminological preventive measures aimed at preventing recidivism.

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