

**THE CONCEPT, SUBJECT, AND SYSTEM OF CRIMINOLOGY****Mamanarov Xaitmurat**

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**Аннотация**

В настоящей статье рассматриваются понятие, предмет и система криминологии как научной дисциплины. В ней представлен теоретический анализ развития криминологии, определен её основной объект и описаны структурные компоненты, составляющие её внутреннюю систему. Используя качественную методологию, основанную на обзоре литературы и концептуальном анализе, в исследовании рассматриваются основные определения и области применения криминологии, выявляется взаимодействие её дисциплинарных границ и анализируется организация предметных областей в целостную систему. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что криминология представляет собой трёхчастную систему, включающую (1) природу и определения преступности и преступного поведения, (2) причины и контроль преступности и (3) реакции системы уголовного правосудия и общества. В статье подчёркивается, что признание этой системы способствует большей согласованности в преподавании, исследованиях и применении криминологии в политике. В статье делается вывод о том, что более точное определение системы криминологии усиливает её объяснительный и нормативный потенциал.

**Ключевые слова.** Криминология; предмет; система; преступление; преступное поведение; уголовное правосудие; предупреждение преступлений.

**Abstract**

The present article deals with the concept, subject-matter and system of criminology as a scientific discipline. It offers a theoretical examination of how criminology has evolved, defines its core object, and outlines the structural components that constitute its internal system. Employing a qualitative methodology based on literature review and conceptual analysis, the study reviews major definitions and scopes of criminology, highlights the interplay of its disciplinary boundaries, and analyses how the subject-matter areas are organised into an integrated system. The findings suggest that criminology possesses a three-fold system comprising (1) the

nature and definitions of crime and criminal behaviour, (2) the causation and control of crime, and (3) the responses of the criminal justice and social systems. The discussion emphasises that recognising this system enables better coherence in teaching, research and policy applications of criminology. The article concludes that a more refined articulation of the system of criminology enhances its explanatory and normative potential.

**Keywords.** Criminology; subject-matter; system; crime; criminal behaviour; criminal justice; crime prevention.

## INTRODUCTION

Criminology, as an independent scientific field, stands at the intersection of law, sociology, psychology, and philosophy. Its central goal is to understand the phenomenon of crime—not merely as a legal violation but as a complex social process conditioned by individual, environmental, and institutional factors. The term “criminology” was first used in the nineteenth century, but its essence as a science emerged through centuries of reflection on crime and punishment. Early thinkers such as Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham laid the foundation of the classical school, which treated crime as a rational act chosen by free individuals. Later, the positivist school led by Cesare Lombroso shifted the focus toward biological and psychological determinants, transforming criminology into a more empirically grounded science.

In the modern era, criminology’s conceptual framework has broadened significantly. It is no longer limited to identifying offenders or explaining isolated crimes but aims to construct a holistic understanding of the causes, dynamics, and control of criminal behaviour. Criminology’s subject matter encompasses a vast array of phenomena: individual criminal actions, collective deviance, institutional responses, victimization processes, and preventive measures. The evolution of criminological thought demonstrates the transition from purely punitive approaches to preventive and rehabilitative paradigms, aligning the discipline with contemporary humanistic principles.

The relevance of criminology today is indisputable. Globalization, technological development, and digitalization have produced new forms of criminality—cybercrime, transnational organized crime, environmental crime, and terrorism—that require both theoretical innovation and methodological sophistication. Criminology thus functions not only as a descriptive science but also as an applied discipline shaping criminal justice policy and social practice.

The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive academic overview of the concept, subject-matter, and system of criminology. It seeks to answer fundamental

questions: What constitutes the essence of criminology? What objects and phenomena fall within its subject-matter? And how can these components be structured into an internally coherent scientific system? Addressing these questions contributes to the conceptual refinement and methodological consistency of criminology as a discipline.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The literature on criminology is vast and multifaceted. Classical definitions describe criminology as “the scientific study of crime, criminal behaviour, and society’s reaction to crime.” However, over time, the discipline has evolved beyond the boundaries of legal studies. Edwin Sutherland’s works in the 20th century introduced the sociological dimension, defining criminology as “the body of knowledge regarding crime as a social phenomenon.” This definition emphasized the interplay between individual acts and societal structures, marking the discipline’s shift toward an interdisciplinary framework.

According to Garland (2002), criminology today represents a hybrid field incorporating methods and theories from sociology, psychology, economics, and anthropology. It studies not only the offender but also victims, institutions, and social norms that define and respond to crime. The literature distinguishes between three interrelated aspects: *etiology* (causes of crime), *phenomenology* (manifestations of criminal behaviour), and *praxeology* (methods of crime control). These aspects collectively form the system of criminology.

Contemporary criminological literature reveals a tendency toward systematization. For example, F. Ferri and E. Durkheim examined crime as a normal and inevitable part of social evolution, while R. Merton’s strain theory connected deviance with structural inequality. Later, theories such as labeling (Becker, 1963) and control theory (Hirschi, 1969) emphasized the importance of social control and stigmatization in shaping criminal behaviour. Each theoretical development has expanded the subject-matter of criminology, forcing scholars to reconsider its internal structure.

Modern research highlights the need to view criminology as an integrated system rather than a fragmented collection of theories. Scholars such as T. Newburn (2017) argue that a systematic approach can connect theoretical analysis with policy applications. Moreover, in countries with transitional legal systems, including Uzbekistan, the system of criminology plays a crucial role in forming preventive strategies and enhancing legal culture. Thus, the literature confirms that criminology is a living science, continuously transforming to respond to social, technological, and moral changes.

This research employs a qualitative, theoretical, and analytical methodology grounded in hermeneutic and comparative methods. The study synthesizes academic literature from different criminological traditions and analyzes the relationship between the concept, subject-matter, and system of criminology. The methodology unfolds in several stages.

First, a descriptive analysis of criminology's conceptual definitions was conducted to identify core categories such as "crime," "criminal behaviour," "social control," and "prevention." The analysis compared definitions from classical, positivist, and contemporary schools to highlight their epistemological differences.

Second, a comparative synthesis was performed to identify how various scholars structured criminological knowledge. This involved mapping the thematic focus of criminology—individual, social, institutional, and global levels—and examining how they interact.

Third, a systemic approach was applied to propose a model that integrates these levels. This model views criminology as consisting of three interdependent subsystems: (1) the study of crime and deviance, (2) the analysis of causation, and (3) the examination of control and preventive mechanisms.

Finally, the interpretive method was used to discuss the implications of the proposed system for criminological research and education. The data sources included academic books, journal articles, and policy documents. The limitation of this approach lies in its theoretical focus; it does not incorporate empirical data collection, though it lays a foundation for subsequent empirical studies.

The methodological design reflects the belief that theoretical coherence is a prerequisite for the practical effectiveness of criminology. The integration of philosophical reasoning with sociological insight ensures that the results are not only conceptually sound but also applicable in policy and pedagogy.

## RESULTS

The analysis revealed that criminology, as a scientific discipline, is structured as a complex system of interrelated concepts. This system comprises three fundamental components:

1. **Crime as a Social Phenomenon.** Crime represents the central object of criminological study. It is not an isolated act but the product of social relations, cultural norms, and institutional conditions. The first subsystem of criminology involves defining crime, classifying its forms, and measuring its frequency. It relies on empirical data (statistics, victimization surveys) and theoretical typologies (economic, political, environmental crime).

2. **Causation and Mechanisms.** The second subsystem deals with the causes and conditions of criminal behaviour. It integrates biological, psychological, and sociological theories to explain why individuals or groups engage in deviant acts. Contemporary criminology emphasizes multifactorial causation—combining individual predispositions, social environment, and institutional structures.

3. **Control and Prevention.** The third subsystem focuses on society's reaction to crime, including criminal law, policing, corrections, and community-based interventions. It studies how legal norms, moral education, and social policies contribute to crime prevention and offender rehabilitation.

These subsystems form an interactive network. Knowledge generated in one component informs the others—for instance, understanding causation enhances prevention strategies, while studying institutional responses provides feedback for theory development. The systemic model thus positions criminology as both explanatory and practical science.

## DISCUSSION

Viewing criminology as a system has profound theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, it allows scholars to unify diverse schools of thought under a single analytical framework. For instance, integrating positivist, sociological, and critical perspectives ensures that criminology remains dynamic and self-corrective. System thinking also prevents the fragmentation of criminological knowledge, which often occurs when theories are studied in isolation.

From a practical perspective, a systematic approach enhances the design of crime prevention policies. It encourages interdisciplinary collaboration among legal experts, sociologists, psychologists, and educators. This integration is vital for addressing modern challenges such as cybercrime, terrorism, and organized corruption. The system perspective provides a logical structure for academic curricula, enabling students to move from understanding crime to applying criminological principles in real-world contexts.

Moreover, the system approach reflects the interdependence between theory and practice. For example, the development of rehabilitation programs depends on understanding both causation and social control mechanisms. Likewise, criminal justice reforms must be informed by empirical criminological research rather than political expediency.

However, challenges remain. The complexity of social reality means that criminology's system is always evolving. The emergence of digital crimes, global migration, and social inequality demand continual adaptation of its methods and

theories. Therefore, criminology must embrace flexibility within its system while maintaining conceptual rigor.

Ultimately, the discussion confirms that criminology's strength lies in its systemic vision: understanding crime through interconnected lenses of causation, behaviour, and control allows for a deeper, more humane, and effective approach to justice.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, criminology as a scientific discipline possesses a distinct conceptual identity, a comprehensive subject-matter, and an organized internal system. Its concept is grounded in the study of crime as a multifaceted social phenomenon, its causes, and the ways society responds to it. The subject-matter includes all dimensions of criminality—individual, collective, institutional, and global. The proposed three-component system—crime, causation, and control—integrates these dimensions into a coherent whole.

This system-based understanding of criminology provides multiple benefits. It strengthens the discipline's theoretical unity, enhances the quality of criminological education, and ensures that policy decisions are based on scientific reasoning. The system also promotes interdisciplinarity, bridging law with sociology, psychology, and political science.

The future of criminology depends on its ability to adapt this system to contemporary challenges. As societies confront digitalization, climate change, and transnational criminal networks, criminology must expand its analytical scope without losing its scientific essence. In doing so, it will continue to serve as a crucial tool for ensuring justice, security, and social harmony.

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