

CAUSES OF CRIME

Mamanarov Xaitmurat

Lecturer, Department of "Fundamentals of State and Law", Faculty of Law, Termez State University

sardorhaitmurodov2506@gmail.com

Аннотация

В статье представлено комплексное академическое исследование причин преступности с междисциплинарной точки зрения. В ней рассматриваются биологические, психологические, социологические, экономические и культурные детерминанты преступного поведения, а также анализируется теоретическая эволюция криминологической мысли от классических до современных парадигм. Опираясь на сравнительные и аналитические методы, исследование синтезирует результаты международных и национальных исследований, демонстрируя, что преступность – это многофакторное явление, обусловленное личными предрасположенностями, социальным неравенством, институциональной неэффективностью и моральным упадком. Результаты подчеркивают, что ни одна теория не может полностью объяснить преступное поведение; вместо этого необходима систематическая интеграция биологических, социальных и ситуативных факторов. В обсуждении подчеркивается важность научно обоснованных превентивных мер и необходимость адаптации криминологических моделей к социально-экономическому контексту каждой страны.

Ключевые слова: причины преступности, преступное поведение, криминология, социальное неравенство, девиантность, профилактика, междисциплинарный подход.

Abstract

The article provides a comprehensive academic examination of the causes of crime from an interdisciplinary perspective. It explores the biological, psychological, sociological, economic, and cultural determinants of criminal behaviour and analyses the theoretical evolution of criminological thought from classical to contemporary paradigms. Drawing upon comparative and analytical methods, the study synthesizes global and national research findings to demonstrate that crime is a multifactorial phenomenon influenced by personal predispositions, social inequalities, institutional inefficiencies, and moral disintegration. The results highlight that no single theory can

fully explain criminal behaviour; instead, a systematic integration of biological, social, and situational factors is essential. The discussion underscores the importance of evidence-based preventive measures and the necessity of adapting criminological models to the socio-economic context of each country.

Keywords: causes of crime, criminal behaviour, criminology, social inequality, deviance, prevention, interdisciplinary approach.

INTRODUCTION

Crime is among the most complex and persistent social phenomena confronting modern societies. Its causes have long been the subject of scholarly debate, ranging from moral philosophy to advanced behavioural science. Understanding why individuals commit crimes is not merely an intellectual exercise; it is fundamental for formulating effective policies, ensuring social stability, and protecting human rights. The question of causation has shaped criminology since its emergence as a scientific discipline in the nineteenth century. Cesare Beccaria, Jeremy Bentham, and later Cesare Lombroso introduced the foundational frameworks that still influence criminological inquiry today. While classical theorists emphasized free will and rational choice, positivists stressed biological and psychological determinism.

In contemporary scholarship, the problem of causation has evolved far beyond the individual offender. Modern criminology examines the interplay between structural and cultural contexts that produce deviant behaviour. Crime arises not only from individual pathology but also from social disorganization, inequality, unemployment, and weak moral institutions. Economic transitions, rapid urbanization, and digital technologies have introduced new forms of criminality that cannot be adequately explained by earlier theories.

The aim of this article is to analyse the multifactorial causes of crime and to synthesize the most influential theoretical perspectives explaining its origins. It seeks to demonstrate that crime is a social process shaped by interdependent variables — biological predispositions, psychological conditions, and socio-economic circumstances. Furthermore, the article highlights the necessity of integrating these perspectives within a coherent scientific framework that supports preventive and rehabilitative policies. The importance of this topic lies in its direct impact on criminal justice reforms, education, and public safety strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The study of crime causation has undergone significant theoretical transformations. The classical school, represented by Beccaria and Bentham, argued that crime results from the rational calculation of pleasure and pain. This utilitarian

view treated punishment as a deterrent mechanism rather than a moral retribution. However, by the late nineteenth century, positivist thinkers like Lombroso and Ferri challenged this assumption, asserting that biological and psychological anomalies predispose individuals to criminality. Lombroso's theory of the "born criminal" marked the first attempt to link crime to heredity and anatomy.

Later, sociological paradigms revolutionized the field. Émile Durkheim's concept of *anomie* explained crime as a normal element of social evolution, occurring when social norms fail to regulate human desires. Robert Merton expanded this idea through strain theory, arguing that the gap between culturally approved goals and legitimate means fosters deviant adaptation. Edwin Sutherland introduced the differential association theory, emphasizing the role of socialization and interaction in learning criminal behaviour. Similarly, Becker's labeling theory shifted focus from the act itself to society's reaction, demonstrating how stigmatization perpetuates deviance.

Recent literature reflects growing interest in integrated models. Social control theory (Hirschi), routine activity theory (Cohen and Felson), and rational choice theory (Cornish and Clarke) have all contributed to a multidimensional understanding of crime. In the 21st century, scholars increasingly combine economic, environmental, and digital factors into criminological analysis. For example, cybercrime and organized transnational crime require global perspectives that incorporate political and technological determinants.

In addition, local criminological studies — including those from developing societies — highlight specific contextual causes such as unemployment, corruption, and weak legal institutions. Contemporary research thus recognizes that criminal behaviour cannot be understood without considering socio-economic and cultural structures. The reviewed literature therefore supports an integrated, interdisciplinary model as the most promising framework for explaining crime causation.

The research applies a qualitative, analytical, and comparative methodology designed to systematize theories of crime causation and identify their practical implications. Data were collected through a critical review of academic literature, including books, peer-reviewed articles, and official policy documents on criminology and criminal behaviour. The analysis proceeds through four stages.

First, conceptual identification of the main theories was performed to classify them according to disciplinary orientation — biological, psychological, sociological, and interdisciplinary. Each theory was examined for its explanatory variables and underlying assumptions.

Second, comparative analysis was applied to reveal convergences and contradictions among different theoretical models. For instance, biological determinism was compared with social disorganization and rational choice perspectives to assess their explanatory scope.

Third, the study adopted a systemic synthesis approach, seeking to integrate micro-level (individual) and macro-level (social) determinants of crime. The model developed emphasizes feedback loops between environmental pressures, individual decision-making, and institutional responses.

Finally, interpretive evaluation was conducted to determine the applicability of these theories in the context of transitional societies, such as those undergoing economic and legal reforms. The study relies on secondary data and theoretical sources, avoiding quantitative bias and focusing on the conceptual depth of causation models. The limitations lie in the absence of empirical measurement; however, this design allows for theoretical generalization and conceptual clarity.

The chosen methodology reflects the interdisciplinary nature of criminology, combining philosophical reasoning with empirical social analysis. It aims to bridge the gap between theoretical abstraction and policy-oriented practice.

RESULTS

The analysis confirmed that crime is the product of a multifactorial system in which individual, environmental, and institutional elements interact dynamically. The findings can be grouped into three interrelated categories:

1. **Individual Factors.** Biological and psychological conditions play a partial but important role. Genetic predisposition, hormonal imbalance, and neurological disorders can increase susceptibility to aggression and impulsivity. Psychological studies emphasize low self-control, antisocial personality traits, and cognitive distortions as risk factors. However, these conditions alone do not predetermine criminality; they interact with social influences.

2. **Social and Economic Factors.** Poverty, unemployment, inequality, and marginalization are central causes of crime in most societies. Rapid urbanization, weakened family institutions, and limited access to education foster social disorganization. Criminological data consistently show a correlation between low socio-economic status and high crime rates. Economic strain leads individuals to adopt illegitimate means of achieving socially approved goals, supporting Merton's strain theory.

3. **Institutional and Cultural Factors.** Weak legal institutions, corruption, and ineffective law enforcement create environments where crime flourishes. Cultural

tolerance toward certain deviant behaviours also reduces social control. In transitional economies, insufficient trust in justice systems often pushes citizens toward informal or illegal solutions.

The results suggest that the most accurate explanation of crime emerges from an integrated model that combines biological predispositions, psychological dynamics, social environment, and institutional frameworks. Preventive strategies must therefore operate at multiple levels: early education, family support, fair economic policy, and transparent governance.

DISCUSSION

The discussion focuses on the theoretical and practical implications of these findings. Conceptually, the study supports the shift from mono-causal to systemic explanations of crime. Traditional schools—classical or positivist—captured only partial aspects of criminal behaviour. Modern criminology must adopt a holistic approach integrating biological, psychological, and structural perspectives. This integration not only improves theoretical precision but also aligns criminology with contemporary interdisciplinary science.

From a practical standpoint, understanding the multiple causes of crime provides the foundation for evidence-based policymaking. Crime prevention requires a coordinated strategy involving education, employment, social welfare, and justice reforms. Countries that have implemented comprehensive prevention systems—such as community policing and restorative justice—show significant declines in recidivism and youth crime. The findings also imply that punitive policies alone cannot reduce crime rates; they must be complemented by socio-economic development and moral education.

Moreover, the discussion emphasizes that causation theories must be culturally adaptable. A model effective in Western societies may not directly apply to regions with different traditions or economic realities. Therefore, criminology should not merely import foreign theories but reconstruct them according to national contexts. The global expansion of criminological research offers opportunities for comparative studies that enrich the discipline and foster international cooperation in crime control.

Ultimately, the discussion concludes that understanding crime causation requires continuous synthesis of theory, data, and practice. Only a flexible, interdisciplinary, and context-sensitive criminology can respond to the challenges of the modern world.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the causes of crime constitute a complex network of interdependent factors that defy simplistic explanations. Crime arises where individual

vulnerabilities intersect with social inequalities, institutional failures, and cultural contradictions. The theoretical analysis demonstrates that biological, psychological, and sociological approaches each contribute unique insights, but only their integration forms a comprehensive explanatory model.

The study underscores that effective crime prevention depends on acknowledging these multiple layers of causation. Governments and policymakers must therefore invest not only in law enforcement but also in education, healthcare, and community development. Criminology's future lies in constructing flexible systems of knowledge that combine theory with practical application.

By reaffirming the systemic nature of crime causation, this article contributes to the refinement of criminological theory and the promotion of humane, evidence-based justice. The prevention of crime is not merely a task for the state; it is a shared social responsibility requiring collective moral and intellectual effort.

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