

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINATION OF CRIME

Bakhtiyor Erkinovich Berdialiev – Head of the
Research Institute of Criminology of the Republic of
Uzbekistan, Colonel, Doctor of Philosophy in Law (PhD)



Abstract. *This article provides a scientific-theoretical and practical analysis of the socio-economic determinants of crime and their impact on the formation of criminogenic situations. The research reveals the intrinsic link between crime and social life, and the role of economic stability, household income levels, unemployment, poverty, social inequality, and demographic processes in increasing criminogenic risks. Particular attention is paid to the unequal distribution of crime across territorial features, the negative influence of the social environment, and the effectiveness of preventive measures. As a result of the analysis, priority areas for social prevention are identified, and scientifically grounded proposals and recommendations aimed at stabilizing the criminogenic situation are developed.*

Keywords: *crime, socio-economic determinants, criminogenic situation, social prevention, poverty, unemployment, social inequality, territorial crime, demographic factors, criminological analysis.*

The socio-economic determinants of crime represent a complex set of factors directly related to the system of economic relations formed in society, the state of the social structure, and the standard and quality of life of the population. According to universally recognized theoretical principles of criminology, crime cannot exist in isolation from social reality; rather, it is formed, changes, and develops under the influence of the socio-economic conditions of a specific historical period.

According to the scientific views of scholars such as Q.R. Abdurasulova, A.G. Zakirova, I. Ismailov, and others¹, the effective organization of preventive activities

¹ Criminology: Textbook / Q.R. Abdurasulova, A.G. Zakirova, I. Ismailov et al. – T.: Academy of the MIA of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2023. – 318 p.

by internal affairs bodies requires a deep analysis of crime across various sectors of social life. Specifically, identifying the characteristics of crimes committed in domestic life, tourism, trade, entrepreneurship, construction, industry, agriculture, transport, and information-communication technologies, as well as determining the share of criminal acts at objects where material assets are stored, is of great criminological importance.

This approach allows for a comprehensive study of the structure of crime, revealing its dynamics and territorial and sectoral characteristics. Consequently, it creates an opportunity to plan and implement targeted and purposeful preventive measures by internal affairs bodies based on the specific causes and conditions of crime in each respective field.

In recent years, large-scale socio-economic reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan have emerged as a complex system of measures aimed at eliminating the main determinants affecting the criminogenic situation. Specifically, the commissioning of 210 million square meters² of residential and non-residential facilities over the past nine years is a crucial factor in radically improving living conditions, ensuring social stability, and reducing the socio-economic causes of crime.

These indicators are intrinsically linked to systemic reforms in the infrastructure sector—roads, water, electricity supply, support for the construction materials industry, and the introduction of the mortgage system. From a criminological perspective, in areas where housing issues remain unresolved and social infrastructure is underdeveloped, social tension increases, and the probability of forming an environment prone to crime is high. Therefore, reforms in this sector can be evaluated as an effective tool for neutralizing criminogenic factors.

² Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan. 26.12.2025. <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834>

Results achieved in ensuring economic stability have also directly influenced the socio-economic determination of crime. This year, the addition of 5 million people to the high-income bracket, the decrease in the unemployment rate from 5.5% to 4.9%, and the lifting of nearly 1.5 million³ people out of poverty led to a reduction in social risk groups. Considering that unemployment and poverty are recognized in scientific literature as the most significant socio-economic determinants of crime, the decline in these indicators is an objective condition for stabilizing the criminogenic situation.

The introduction of a new system for combating poverty based on the mahalla institute is of particular importance. Transforming 1,435 mahallas into "poverty-free" zones for the first time, and providing over 100 social services—such as credits, subsidies, and compensation—through the mahalla "seven" has strengthened the institutional mechanisms of social prevention. As a result, lifting more than 8.5 million⁴ people out of poverty and halving the unemployment rate has served to ensure social justice and stability in society.

At the same time, the admission of 168,000 children from low-income families to state preschools on a preferential basis and the introduction of inclusive education in 208 kindergartens represent a long-term strategic direction in crime prevention. Indeed, the creation of equal access to education serves to reduce the risk of deviant behavior and crime among youth in the future.

Overall, the reduction of the poverty level from 8.9% to 5.8% [5]⁵ and the achievement of positive results ahead of the set targets scientifically confirms that the criminogenic situation can be stabilized by systematically eliminating the socio-economic determinants of crime. This situation allows for a significant scientific

³ Same source.

⁴ Same source.

⁵ Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan. 26.12.2025. <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834>

conclusion that demonstrates the impact of social prevention on crime through practical examples.

Furthermore, socio-economic processes directly affect the legal consciousness, value systems, and behavior models of society members. The level of stability in economic relations is one of the important factors determining a person's adaptation to society, respect for the law, and adherence to social norms. In particular, the disruption of economic stability, the limitation of income sources for certain segments of the population, and the insufficient provision of social guarantees and state support mechanisms complicate the process of social adaptation for individuals.

In such conditions, trust in social justice weakens among individuals, and the social significance of legal norms decreases. As a result, in some cases, negative tendencies emerge, such as ignoring legal norms and accepting illegal behavior as an alternative and "justifiable" means of solving life problems. From the perspective of criminology theory, this is evaluated as one of the most dangerous processes in the socio-economic determination of crime.

Results of a complex scientific analysis of crime structure also show practical confirmation of these theoretical conclusions. Specifically, in the 2025 reporting period, a total of 155,002 crimes were committed in the territory of the republic, a significant portion of which corresponds to crimes of a property and economic nature. In particular, theft crimes accounted for 49,213 cases or 31.7% of total crimes, and fraud crimes accounted for 44,127 cases or 28.5%⁶.

These indicators mean that crimes aimed at economic interest—theft, fraud, and other offenses in the sphere of the economy—occupy a priority place in the structure of crime. Overall, the fact that the number of crimes in the sphere of the

⁶ State reports on crime trends and factors (for 12 months of 2025): Information-analytical document. – T.: Research Institute of Criminology of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2026. - 24 p.

economy reached 99,023, representing 63.9% of all crimes, clearly demonstrates that crime is deeply connected to socio-economic factors.

This situation scientifically confirms that in conditions of economic difficulties, limited sources of income, and insufficiently provided social guarantees, the growth of crime, especially property and economic crimes, takes on a regular character. Therefore, in combating crime, it is not sufficient to be limited only to legal influence measures; it is considered necessary to implement complex social prevention measures aimed at ensuring socio-economic stability, increasing employment, and strengthening the social protection system.

In this sense, crime appears as a unique indicator of socio-economic contradictions. Disproportion in the distribution of economic resources, the strengthening of social inequality, and sharp differences between the living standards of the population lead to a decrease in trust toward social justice in society. Such a situation forms a favorable criminogenic environment for the growth of crime, especially property and economic crimes.

Thus, it is not enough to explain crime only through individual or legal factors. Evaluating it as a complex structural part of the socio-economic system requires a complex analysis of macrosocial factors affecting crime. Therefore, identifying the socio-economic determinants of crime and developing measures to eliminate them on a scientific basis is considered one of the most important directions of social prevention. An increase in the unemployment rate is one of the main determinants leading to an increase in crime. In persons without a permanent source of income, social adaptation problems intensify, and the inclination to satisfy material needs through illegal ways increases. Especially, long-term unemployment lowers the social status of an individual and increases the probability of their entry into a criminal environment.

The increase in the share of poor segments of the population is one of the main socio-economic factors leading to the aggravation of the criminogenic situation.

Poverty deepens social inequality in society, forms a sense of injustice in individuals, and causes an increase in social tension. From the perspective of criminology theory, in an environment where opportunities to satisfy material needs are limited, the inclination of individuals to ensure their interests through illegal ways increases. In such conditions, first of all, an increase in the number of property crimes, economic crimes, and corruption offenses is observed.

Social inequality and sharp differences between the incomes of the population also appear as an important socio-economic determinant of crime. The unfair distribution of material wealth in society leads to the marginalization of certain social groups—that is, exclusion from social life and the state of not feeling like a full member of society. As a result, the foundation is created for criminal behavior to be accepted among certain layers as socially "justifiable" and an alternative method of solving life problems. This forms a dangerous social environment for the emergence of stable and reproducible forms of crime.

At the same time, socio-economic problems in the processes of urban planning and territorial planning can also cause criminogenic consequences. Specifically, forecasts that the unsystematic and uncontrolled expansion of cities with a population of more than 250,000 people could lead to a reduction of 27,000 hectares of cropland by 2050 clearly show the strategic importance of this problem. Irrational use of land resources, insufficient development of infrastructure, and weakening of social control in suburban areas appear as additional factors increasing criminogenic risks.

From this point of view, the designation of 45 agglomeration areas in the country for the first time and the introduction of the "Sustainable City" platform are evaluated as an advanced institutional approach aimed at the systematic solution of socio-economic and criminogenic problems. The introduction of the "Living

Convenience Index"⁷ allows for identifying existing problems across cities, especially at the mahalla level, and evaluating issues related to social infrastructure, employment, security, and quality of life on a scientific basis. This serves to develop targeted and effective mechanisms for social prevention.

In general, raising the issue of poverty reduction to the level of a nationwide movement and the lifting of more than 8.5 million people out of poverty in the past period shows the effectiveness of the systematic policy aimed at eliminating the socio-economic determinants of crime. Such reforms are an important condition not only for improving the standard of living of the population but also for ensuring social stability in society and stabilizing the criminogenic situation in the long term.

Our main goal is to provide our people with a permanent income. A person with money strives to dress and eat well, use quality education and qualified medical services, have meaningful rest—in a word, to live prosperously⁸.

Also, certain problems arising in the process of economic reforms, difficulties in fully adapting to market relations, and the high share of the informal economy play an important role in the socio-economic determination of crime. Such imbalances in the economic system limit the opportunities for creating stable sources of income for certain segments of the population and negatively affect the level of employment. As a result, the integration of individuals into the legal labor market becomes difficult, and the probability of them falling into social risk groups increases.

Carrying out labor activity in the sphere of the informal economy is characterized by insufficient legal guarantees, the lack of regulation of labor relations on a contractual basis, and the weakness of state control and reporting mechanisms. Persons working in such conditions are deprived of social protection

⁷ Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan. 26.12.2025. <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834>

⁸ Address of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan. 26.12.2025. <https://president.uz/uz/lists/view/8834>

tools, and their legal consciousness and trust in the law decrease. From the perspective of criminology, the informal sector creates a favorable environment for various offenses, including economic, financial, and crimes committed through information technology.

These theoretical conclusions are also confirmed by the statistical data of 2025. Specifically, during the 12 months of 2025, a total of 8,448 crimes were committed by unemployed persons, which accounted for 5.4% of total crimes. It is noteworthy that 3,763 of these crimes, or 44.5%⁹, are crimes that could have been prevented through prevention measures. This situation shows that the ineffective application of social prevention mechanisms is leading to an increase in crime among the unemployed.

Also, the fact that 3,472 of the crimes committed by the unemployed, or 41%, fall into the category of detectable crimes means that offenses are often open and of a domestic nature. At the same time, 1,213 crimes, or 14.5%, being committed with the help of information technology indicates that the connection between unemployment and crime in the digital environment is strengthening. This shows that modern forms of crime are connected not only with socio-economic problems but also with the lack of digital literacy and control mechanisms.

In general, systemic problems in the process of economic reforms, unemployment, and the high share of the informal economy directly affect the criminogenic situation as socio-economic determinants of crime. Therefore, in combating crime, it is a scientifically and practically grounded necessity to implement complex measures aimed at deepening economic reforms, involving the population in formal employment, reducing the informal sector, and strengthening targeted preventive work with the unemployed.

⁹ State reports on crime trends and factors (for 12 months of 2025): Information-analytical document. – T.: Research Institute of Criminology of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2026. - 60 p.

Analysis shows that 6,726 unemployed persons who committed crimes accounted for 10.9% of the persons identified across total crimes. This indicator confirms that the state of unemployment is an important socio-economic factor increasing the risk of committing a crime. The significant share of unemployed persons in the structure of crime subjects is explained by their low level of social adaptation, the lack of stable sources of income, and the insufficiently effective functioning of social control mechanisms.

From the perspective of criminology, this situation shows the necessity of evaluating the unemployed layer as one of the social risk groups of crime and strengthening targeted social prevention measures toward them. Especially, the high share of crime among the unemployed scientifically justifies the need to apply economic employment and social support mechanisms in a complex way, rather than being limited only to a punishment-oriented approach in preventing crime.

In conclusion, it is impossible to stabilize the criminogenic situation without eliminating the socio-economic determinants of crime. Therefore, in the social prevention system, complex measures aimed at ensuring employment of the population, reducing poverty, and strengthening social protection mechanisms take on priority importance.

The conducted complex scientific analyses confirmed that the socio-economic determination of crime is intrinsically linked with the economic processes taking place in society, the living standard of the population, the state of employment, and the level of social inequality. It was scientifically grounded that crime does not exist in isolation from social life but is formed and develops under the influence of a specific socio-economic environment.

As a result of the analyses, it was determined that property and economic crimes occupy a priority place in the structure of crime, and the level of committing a crime is high, especially among the unemployed, the poor, and persons belonging to social risk groups. The significant share of unemployed persons among total

identified criminals allows for evaluating unemployment as an important socio-economic determinant of crime.

Also, the high share of the informal economy, difficulties in adapting to market relations, uncontrolled expansion of cities, and insufficient development of territorial infrastructure appeared as factors strengthening criminogenic risks. This situation shows that social prevention should be carried out not only through law enforcement measures but also in close connection with socio-economic reforms.

In conclusion, it scientifically confirms that state policy aimed at reducing poverty, involving the population in formal employment, and strengthening the education and social protection system is effective in eliminating the socio-economic determinants of crime.

Based on the above scientific conclusions, for the purpose of preventing crime and stabilizing the criminogenic situation, it is advisable to express the following scientific-practical proposals and recommendations:

1. **Strengthen the employment-oriented approach in the social prevention system.** It is necessary to expand targeted programs aimed at involving unemployed persons and those working in the informal sector into the formal labor market and to keep a separate preventive record of them as a social risk group of crime.
2. **Improve legal and institutional mechanisms aimed at reducing the informal economy.** It is advisable to eliminate the favorable environment for offenses by legalizing labor relations in the informal sector and introducing simplified mechanisms in tax and labor legislation.
3. **Introduce a targeted model of social prevention at the mahalla level.** It is necessary to organize work with poverty, unemployment, and social risk groups through the mahalla institute and to strengthen the mutual exchange of information among prevention subjects.

4. **Introduce criminological expertise in urban planning and territorial development.** In the processes of city expansion and agglomeration development, it is necessary to evaluate criminogenic risks and make scientifically grounded decisions aimed at eliminating them.
5. **Strengthen measures to prevent digital crime among youth and the unemployed.** Taking into account crimes committed through information technology, it is important to increase digital literacy and organize preventive work in the online environment.
6. **Introduce a criminogenic forecasting system based on socio-economic indicators.** It is necessary to predict crime risks in advance based on indicators such as unemployment, poverty, migration, and social inequality and to plan prevention measures.

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