



## CRIMINOLOGICAL FACTORS OF RECIDIVISM IN UZBEKISTAN: CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL REINTEGRATION AND CRIME PREVENTION

**Umarova Nazokat Fakhriddinovna**

Student of Tashkent state university of Law

Criminal justice faculty

[unazokat05@gmail.com](mailto:unazokat05@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-7151-8595>

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20489815>

### ARTICLE INFO

Received: 24<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Accepted: 30<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Online: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026

### KEYWORDS

*Recidivism, criminology, crime prevention, social reintegration, probation, post-penitentiary adaptation, criminal justice, rehabilitation, repeat offending.*

### ABSTRACT

*Recidivism remains one of the most pressing challenges facing contemporary criminal justice systems worldwide. The repeated commission of crimes by previously convicted individuals not only undermines public security but also indicates shortcomings in rehabilitation and reintegration mechanisms. This article examines the criminological factors contributing to recidivism in Uzbekistan and analyzes the challenges of social reintegration faced by formerly incarcerated individuals. Particular attention is paid to socio-economic, psychological, legal, and institutional determinants of repeat offending. The study also evaluates the role of probation services, employment opportunities, family support, and community involvement in preventing recidivism. Based on comparative international practices and the current legal framework of Uzbekistan, the article proposes recommendations aimed at strengthening post-penitentiary reintegration and enhancing crime prevention policies.*

Recidivism is recognized as one of the most significant indicators of the effectiveness of criminal justice systems. The tendency of previously convicted individuals to reoffend after serving criminal sanctions reflects not only personal behavioral issues but also broader social, economic, and institutional deficiencies. In criminological theory, recidivism is generally understood as the commission of a new crime by a person who has

previously been convicted of a criminal offense.<sup>1</sup>

The problem of recidivism has become increasingly relevant in the context of modern criminal policy, where rehabilitation and social reintegration are regarded as essential goals of punishment. While incarceration aims to protect society and deter criminal conduct, it is equally important to ensure that offenders successfully reintegrate into society upon release. Failure to

<sup>1</sup> Siegel, Larry J. *Criminology: Theories, Patterns, and Typologies*. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2021



achieve this objective often results in repeated criminal behavior, contributing to higher crime rates and increased burdens on law enforcement agencies and correctional institutions.<sup>2</sup>

In Uzbekistan, substantial reforms have been implemented in recent years to humanize criminal justice policy, improve probation services, and strengthen mechanisms of social support for former offenders. Nevertheless, recidivism remains a significant criminological challenge requiring comprehensive analysis and effective preventive measures.

Criminologists have long regarded recidivism as a complex social phenomenon influenced by multiple interrelated factors. According to classical criminological theories, criminal behavior may be shaped by biological, psychological, and environmental influences.<sup>3</sup>

The social learning theory developed by criminologist Edwin Sutherland suggests that criminal behavior is learned through interaction with deviant social groups.<sup>4</sup> Individuals who maintain contact with criminal subcultures after release from prison may therefore face a greater risk of reoffending.

Similarly, Robert Merton's strain theory explains recidivism as a consequence of social inequality and limited access to legitimate opportunities.<sup>5</sup> Former offenders who

experience unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion may resort to criminal activity as an alternative means of achieving economic goals.

Contemporary criminological research emphasizes that recidivism should not be viewed solely as an individual failure but rather as a result of broader structural and social conditions affecting post-release adaptation.

One of the primary criminological factors contributing to recidivism is socio-economic instability. Employment plays a crucial role in the successful reintegration of former offenders. Numerous studies demonstrate that stable employment significantly reduces the likelihood of reoffending.<sup>6</sup>

In Uzbekistan, many formerly incarcerated individuals face difficulties obtaining employment due to limited professional qualifications, social stigma, and employer reluctance to hire individuals with criminal records. As a result, economic insecurity often becomes a driving factor behind repeated criminal behavior.

Housing instability also contributes to recidivism. Individuals lacking stable accommodation frequently encounter difficulties reintegrating into society and may become vulnerable to criminal influences. Research indicates that access to housing, education, and healthcare services substantially

<sup>2</sup> Cullen, Francis T., and Cheryl Lero Jonson. *Correctional Theory: Context and Consequences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Lombroso, Cesare. *Criminal Man*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006

<sup>4</sup> Sutherland, Edwin H. *Principles of Criminology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1947

<sup>5</sup> Merton, Robert K. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press, 1968

<sup>6</sup> Visher, Christy A., and Jeremy Travis. "Transitions from Prison to Community." *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 29, 2003



improves reintegration outcomes and reduces recidivism rates.<sup>7</sup>

Psychological determinants play a significant role in recidivism. Many repeat offenders exhibit behavioral patterns associated with impulsivity, aggression, substance abuse, and low self-control.<sup>8</sup>

Long periods of incarceration may negatively affect psychological well-being and hinder social adaptation. Prison environments sometimes reinforce criminal identities rather than facilitate rehabilitation. Consequently, former prisoners may struggle to establish lawful lifestyles upon release.

Mental health disorders constitute another important risk factor. Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addiction problems often remain untreated during incarceration, increasing the probability of subsequent criminal conduct. Effective psychological support and counseling programs are therefore essential components of recidivism prevention strategies.

Family support is widely recognized as one of the most effective protective factors against recidivism. Individuals who maintain strong family relationships during and after incarceration generally demonstrate lower rates of repeat offending.<sup>9</sup>

In the Uzbek context, family and community institutions play a particularly important role in social reintegration. Traditional values

emphasizing social solidarity and collective responsibility can contribute positively to the rehabilitation process. At the same time, family conflicts, domestic violence, and weak social ties may increase vulnerability to criminal behavior. Former offenders who lack social support networks often experience difficulties securing employment, housing, and emotional stability.

The mahalla institution may serve as an important mechanism for facilitating social adaptation and monitoring individuals at risk of reoffending. Strengthening cooperation between local communities, probation authorities, and social services could significantly improve reintegration outcomes.

Correctional institutions are expected to rehabilitate offenders and prepare them for reintegration into society. However, criminological studies indicate that imprisonment may sometimes contribute to recidivism by exposing individuals to criminal subcultures and reinforcing antisocial attitudes.<sup>10</sup>

The phenomenon of prisonization refers to the process through which inmates adopt the norms and values of prison culture. Such adaptation may complicate reintegration and increase the likelihood of future criminal behavior.

To address these challenges, correctional institutions should

<sup>7</sup> Petersilia, Joan. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

<sup>8</sup> Andrews, D. A., and James Bonta. *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. New York: Routledge, 2017

<sup>9</sup> Travis, Jeremy. *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005

<sup>10</sup> Clemmer, Donald. *The Prison Community*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958



prioritize educational programs, vocational training, psychological counseling, and rehabilitation initiatives. International experience demonstrates that rehabilitation-focused prison systems generally achieve lower recidivism rates compared to purely punitive approaches.

The development of probation services represents one of the most important reforms in Uzbekistan's criminal justice system. Probation aims to supervise offenders while facilitating their reintegration into society through individualized support measures.

Probation authorities assist former offenders in obtaining employment, education, and social services. They also monitor compliance with legal obligations and provide guidance aimed at preventing future criminal behavior.

Despite notable progress, several challenges remain. These include limited resources, insufficient staffing, and inadequate coordination between state institutions responsible for reintegration. Strengthening probation infrastructure and expanding rehabilitation programs could significantly enhance crime prevention efforts. Many countries have adopted innovative strategies aimed at reducing recidivism rates.

In Norway, correctional policy emphasizes rehabilitation, education, and human dignity. The Norwegian model has achieved some of the lowest recidivism rates in the world.<sup>11</sup> In

Germany, extensive vocational training programs help former prisoners acquire practical skills necessary for employment after release.<sup>12</sup> In Japan, community participation and social responsibility play a central role in offender reintegration. Volunteer probation officers actively support former offenders and contribute to successful rehabilitation.<sup>13</sup> These international experiences demonstrate that comprehensive reintegration policies are more effective than punitive approaches alone.

The following measures may contribute to reducing recidivism in Uzbekistan: expanding employment opportunities for former offenders, strengthening vocational education and professional training programs, improving psychological rehabilitation services, enhancing probation supervision mechanisms, increasing community participation in reintegration efforts, developing housing assistance programs, promoting public awareness to reduce stigma against former offenders, strengthening cooperation between government agencies and civil society organizations, expanding digital monitoring and risk assessment tools, improving statistical monitoring of recidivism trends.

**Conclusion:** Recidivism remains one of the most complex criminological challenges facing Uzbekistan. Its causes extend beyond individual behavior and are deeply rooted in social, economic,

<sup>11</sup> Pratt, John. *Scandinavian Exceptionalism in an Era of Penal Excess*. London: Routledge, 2013

<sup>12</sup> Dünkel, Frieder. "European Penitentiary Systems and Their Impact on Recidivism." *European Journal of Criminology*, 2017

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, David T. *The Japanese Way of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002



psychological, and institutional factors. Effective crime prevention therefore requires a comprehensive strategy focused on rehabilitation and reintegration rather than punishment alone. Strengthening probation services, expanding employment opportunities, improving mental health support, and

enhancing community involvement can significantly reduce recidivism rates. By incorporating international best practices while considering national traditions and legal realities, Uzbekistan can further develop an effective system of post-penitentiary reintegration and crime prevention.

### **Используемая литература:**

1. Siegel, Larry J. *Criminology: Theories, Patterns, and Typologies*. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2021;
2. Cullen, Francis T., and Cheryl Lero Jonson. *Correctional Theory: Context and Consequences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2017;
3. Lombroso, Cesare. *Criminal Man*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006;
4. Sutherland, Edwin H. *Principles of Criminology*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1947;
5. Merton, Robert K. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press, 1968;
6. Visher, Christy A., and Jeremy Travis. "Transitions from Prison to Community." *Crime and Justice*, Vol. 29, 2003;
7. Petersilia, Joan. *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003;
8. Andrews, D. A., and James Bonta. *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. New York: Routledge, 2017;
9. Travis, Jeremy. *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005;
10. Clemmer, Donald. *The Prison Community*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958;
11. Pratt, John. *Scandinavian Exceptionalism in an Era of Penal Excess*. London: Routledge, 2013;
12. Dünkel, Frieder. "European Penitentiary Systems and Their Impact on Recidivism." *European Journal of Criminology*, 2017;
13. Johnson, David T. *The Japanese Way of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.