

# **Criminology in Modern Russia: Its Place in the System of Science and Role in Life of Society**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The article discusses the main approaches to determining the place of criminology in the system of sciences. In accordance with the first point of view, which is by most researchers in the West and in Russia shared, criminology is the sociology of crime. The recognition of criminology as the sociology of crime does not at all preclude the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of various aspects of criminological issues. In the second approach, criminology is as a legal science considered. In the third approach, criminology is as a study of human behavior defined. The fourth approach defines criminology as an interdisciplinary science, a system of international knowledge and methods of interdisciplinary research. Each of these approaches has its “pros” and “cons”, which does not exclude their legitimacy and validity, the problem is their actualization at a particular moment to solve specific research problems. The problems that are especially relevant for Russian criminology are considered. The task of criminology is the creation of effective means of counteracting destructive forces, the formation of new approaches to ensuring national security. The practical and scientific significance of criminology involves the formation of analysis skills and techniques, knowledge of the methodology and modern research methods.

**Keywords:** *criminology, science, crime, research, education, legislation*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Criminology as a science that studies crime should be the most important source and guideline for the formation of the socio-legal policy of the state, for the development of legislation and law enforcement practice. Today, the main problem is the demand for this science by the state (power). The absence of such a demand for Criminology in modern Russia largely determines the development of science and the decline in the quality of criminological research. Meanwhile, in the 1970-1990s, Soviet Criminology was distinguished by a high level of methodological foundations created by it, a clear definition of the subject and boundaries of this science, as well as the development of a conceptual apparatus that is widely used by world Criminology today. It was a time when the authorities were interested in real information about the state of society, including the criminal situation in the country. On this basis, there was a practice of criminological examination of legislation, decision-making in the field of criminal policy and their implementation in law enforcement. Alas, this time has passed.

Nowadays, there is no need to speak about the demand for Criminology by the authorities and Russian society. Criminological information is replaced by the results of ugly polls from the point of view of methodology, which, as a rule, are conducted by order and at the expense of the authorities. Hence the results of the polls that suit the

power; hence the manipulation of public opinion, ignoring and distorting the actual state of things in the social, including in the criminal sphere. Hence the numerous defects of administrative and criminal legislation, the uncontrollable growth of corruption, and as a result, the growth of dissatisfaction, aggression and manifestations of violence accumulated in society.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

As an independent science, criminology occupies a central place in the system of legal knowledge; it is closely connected not only with all branches of legal science, but also with other humanitarian and natural sciences that study the laws of development of society and the nature of human behavior.

Today, world Criminology is mainly Americanized. Most criminologists in the West and in Russia consider this science a sociology of crime; therefore, in the USA and England it is studied mainly not by lawyers, but by sociologists. The recognition of Criminology as the sociology of crime does not at all preclude the need for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of various aspects of criminological issues. On the contrary, this approach is dominant today.

Another point of view is that Criminology is a legal science. Such, in my opinion, a conservative position is still widespread in Russian scientific literature. In most legal educational institutions in Russia, Criminology is “assigned” to the Department of Criminal Law, and as an independent scientific discipline, it is available only at the masters of several universities. In countries of Eastern Europe and in many countries of Asia, for example, in China and Japan, Criminology is also studied at the law faculties.

The third position is based on the fact that Criminology is, first of all, the study of human behavior. This means that it should be studied by biologists, psychologists and psychiatrists; this approach is widespread in the USA.

And finally, there is the fourth approach, which I have already partially mentioned; its essence is that Criminology is an interdisciplinary science, a system of diverse knowledge and methods of interdisciplinary research.

Probably, each of these approaches has its “pros” and “cons”, which does not at all preclude their legitimacy and validity. The problem is their actualization at a specific moment to solve specific research problems.

The significance of criminological science in modern life in Russia is constantly growing. This is due to a number of objective reasons, among which the main one is the growing criminalization of social relations and processes taking place in the development of society. Formed in the country, the “criminal matrix” is expanding and makes itself felt in almost all areas of our lives. Everyday life clearly shows that state-controlled market relations are inevitably criminalized. Another relevant phenomenon is the aggravation of interethnic contradictions; conflicts of cultures arising on this basis reflect the deep processes of criminalization of economic and political relations. The criminalization of the entire structure of social relations inevitably leads to stagnation in the economy, to the degradation of culture, education and science, and the growth of the absurdity of everything that happens. Criminology is called upon to develop a strategy for combating crime, to identify shortcomings and ways to improve legislation and law enforcement practice.

The most important factor in the development of modern society was an unprecedented technological breakthrough. The country has entered a new technological era; new conditions of digital reality are associated with the rapid growth of information flows, intensive development and the wider introduction of digital technologies in various spheres of public life. The transition to the digital world and the availability of new technologies open up broad prospects for society; at the same time, diverse risks and threats are growing incredibly. Criminology in these conditions is becoming one of the important tools for their analysis, forecasting and prevention. The task of Criminology is the creation of effective means of counteracting destructive forces, the formation of new approaches to ensuring national security. In the new digital reality, criminology is designed to comprehend the prospects of the future reformation of social relations and the formation of a new worldview, to create

methodological foundations for answering complex challenges (Khabrieva and Chernogor 2018; Ovchinsky 2016). Hence the growing need for objectivity and reliability of scientific knowledge, without which the filling of criminological information with intellectual content is impossible (Kvashis 2018).

The practical and scientific significance of Criminology involves the formation of analysis skills and techniques, knowledge of the methodology and modern research methods. How successfully do those who conduct criminological research cope with these tasks? Before answering this question, it is necessary to make a few remarks related to the state of Criminology in the modern Russia.

I have already wrote that the boundaries of Criminology, Criminal Law and criminal policing are artificial, because there cannot be a “Chinese wall” between them; together they form a single science with a common goal - combating and preventing crime. However, with the inextricable connection of these sciences, it is criminological ideas that should serve as a generator of political and legislative decisions. The fact that everything often happens with us “exactly the opposite” or, as M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin would say, “in the reverse order of mind” (when novels in law ignore criminological expertise or contradict the criminological picture), the thesis does not refute the priority of criminological ideas.

We live in a World where nothing is perfect. To say that we live in a World disfigured by legal nihilism means to confine ourselves to a “common place” and camouflage the real features of the social, cultural and criminological situation. It is not by chance that it is said about culture, because when the cultural layer in society is weakened, then a “criminal matrix” is formed and degeneration processes begin.

Criminological reality should form the boundaries of criminal and punishable behavior and an understanding of their essence. But we have this reality and criminal legislation exist autonomously; these are two different, increasingly receding planets, each of which lives its own life and spin in its own orbit. Our legal regime is constantly in a state of turbulence, due to which the space of common sense is reduced, and the irrational often crowds out the rational. Hence the repressive vector, which is associated with legislative novels of recent years. The remarkable writer V. Voinovich divides these short stories into “simply meaningless, pointlessly harmful, meaningfully harmful and idiotic”. This is also part of our landscape.

The autonomous existence of legislation and criminological reality is closely related to the autonomous development of Criminal Law and Criminology; this has been said for a long time, but this process, unfortunately, is going on more and more intensively. Among criminologists, the gap from the foundations of Criminal Law is becoming more and more noticeable; they do not keep pace with the “improvement” of the criminal legislation with the help of a “mad printer” and do not see the prospects for implementing the growing criminological material. And among Criminal Law specialists, there is a

noticeable neglect of Criminology, unjustified snobbery, unreasonable claims to leadership, isolation of the search for criminal legal solutions from criminological ideas and accumulated texture. It would seem that the need for integration is obvious, but scientists are increasingly scattering their "apartments". This situation develops fluxes of specialization, it indicates the dangers of separate knowledge enclaves, leads to the stagnation of science, to scholasticism in Criminal Law and to the drift of Criminology to sociology, psychology, to comparative studies or journalism (Kvashis 2017: 7-9).

The danger of degradation of both sciences is also indicated by the increasingly noticeable desire for disintegration within each of them. It seems to me that in Criminal Law the divide between the specialists in the General and Special Part is widening, all the more so since the gap in the interconnections and mutual conditionality of the norms of both parts of the Criminal Law is becoming more noticeable. As for Criminology, here the gap between its methodological foundations and the applied part is even deeper; it is more noticeable and goes much faster.

In recent decades, Criminology has been developing more and more in the paradigm of investigating the crime of specific subsystems, identifying its individual segments and forming on this basis a growing number of "private" criminological theories artificially divorced from the foundations of this science (family criminology, criminology of mass communications, political criminology, and criminology in sports, medicine and other "Criminology"). It seems to me that the endless fragmentation of Criminology into parts where there are no clear boundaries of the subject is not quite the right path. But even if it turns out that I am wrong, the cooperation and integration of scientific knowledge will be all the more necessary; it is imperative that the development of such specialization is based on uniform methodological foundations of criminological science

A few years ago, I wrote that Criminology was "tear to pieces", and the fundamental problems cementing this science were much less attention. This also applies to different coverage of the main methodological problems in various textbooks. On the one hand, this may be good, but on the other hand, the educational process still presumes a single concept, a unity of methodological foundations and decisions, a unity of the conceptual apparatus of Criminology (Kvashis 2017: 1017).

All this is important also because in recent years such megastars of the scientific firmament, such as B.V. Volzhenkin, A.E. Zhalinsky, V.N. Kudryavtsev, N.F. Kuznetsova, have left the stage. They were drivers of innovation in science, its intellectual donors; a constellation of people incredibly bright and talented, whose scientific works are the visiting cards of the time, has gone. Now the ranks of such professionals are greatly thinned; there are fewer generalists who have excellent command of Criminal Law and Criminology than there are fingers on the hand. Among the actively working criminologists, two groups can be distinguished: in the first, their average age is above 80 years (I call them the

"Dino squad"), in the second, closer to 70 years. There are only a few who replaced them, and those who can replenish this series are not yet visible on the horizon. Time changes a lot, it supplants individuals who can go against the trend, it encapsulates a new environment where other talents appear - the ability to manipulate and produce scientific counterfeit goods.

Returning to the question of the quality of criminological research, I note that the transformation and mutation of the quality of many studies are in line with changes in society; they correspond to the general trend towards amateurism and a decrease in the level of any, including scientific, products. This negative trend is due to many reasons lying on a different plane; between them are different in intensity and complex in nature relationships. Without claiming to be a system, we will point out only some of these reasons.

Despite the challenges of the time, most criminological research is still carried out in the traditional paradigm of the 1980s, the methodology and methodology of which were built in statics, without taking into account the ongoing and upcoming social changes associated with technological transformations. The ever wider penetration of the Internet and other technical means has facilitated access to information, but at the same time radically changed the interests and psychology of youth, discouraged the independent understanding of knowledge and creativity, which ultimately sharply reduced the level of intelligence and general culture. Against this background, a new environment has formed that does not accept talented people, where it is impossible to deviate from the mainstream; It is distinguished by its massiveness, rapid expansion and impersonality.

The indicated trend is largely due to the exorbitant bureaucratization of the management of education and science, the absurd and destructive attitudes to the quantitative growth of publications, to the consideration of formal indicators, which gave rise to a pursuit of the number of publications and citation indices, eliminating the already dying out desire for creativity. The bureaucratization of science brought a lot of painful problems that entailed a sharp decline in the level of scientific and pedagogical work; it created the basis for quasi-science when dilettantes and imitators who did not know the basics of the subject and did not own the research methodology and method entered the forefront. Others write so much that there is no time to think, there is no "stop" button to think. Therefore, in the publications so many "noise" and "spam" have accumulated (Jalinsky 2016: 457).

The market quickly reacted to the bureaucratization of science: there were a lot of magazines with a dubious reputation; they induced a surge in the activity of amateurs and manipulators. Some "scientists" have citation indexes going wild, others erect monuments for themselves, replicating their works with an indecent amount of references to themselves great, etc. It doesn't matter if they praise or criticize you, it's important that your citation index grows. It doesn't matter that most of these "scientists" are unknown to science, that their works have

no scientific value, it's important that they are leaders in all bureaucratic indicators. For science, they were, and will remain stillborn, and the dead, as you know, do not have shame.

A classic is right: "There is movement, there is no advancement!". Among the shortcomings of this "movement", in addition to the aforementioned ones, the superficiality of analysis and incompetence, the incorrect use of the basic concepts of science, the misunderstanding of the complex relationships between phenomena, the formulation of banal, legally illiterate conclusions and recommendations that discredit criminology as a science are becoming increasingly noticeable. All this is an imitation of science. What has been said about the level of publications also applies to the quality of dissertations. In addition, total plagiarism has become the norm here. Criminological literature is now highly infected. However, as one optimist noted, it is never so bad that it does not get worse. Therefore, the task of scientists is to counter the profanity of science and stop the flow of counterfeit products that have flooded the literature.

Among the many reasons for this situation, it is worth mentioning the involvement of an increasing number of unprepared people in the criminological research orbit, which is directly related to the limitations and costs of legal education (lack of understanding of the importance of Criminology, too pragmatic, utilitarian attitude of students and university administrations towards it), and personnel policing deficiencies, with a dismissive attitude to Criminology from the authorities. As a result, all this leads to a decrease in the quality and validity of many legislative decisions, to their endless correction and changes. About 500 laws are passed annually in the country; for all the growing needs of legal regulation, such a rule-making race undermines the foundations of Law and Jurisprudence.

Since the late 1990s, the development of Criminology in Russia has almost stopped. Moreover, in the early 2000s it came to the point that Criminology as an academic discipline was excluded from the curricula for students. It took 10 years to rehabilitate this discipline, but for several generations of law students, time and knowledge were lost. Without knowledge of the basics of Criminology, they went to practice, and some still manage to participate in criminological research and even lead them. We are daily reaping and will continue to reap the benefits of this

### 3. CONCLUSION

Awareness of the need for change and "updating of Criminology" is still extremely slow, but it seems that it is already hanging in the air, and judging by the appearance of several new studies, this awareness will expand. This gives hope that our criminological thought will one day "recover" and Criminology will again become a science in demand by life. True, they say that hope in Russia dies first. Time will tell...

stupidity in Law Enforcement practice and enacted law acts.

The sources of the absurdity of the situation lie in the fact that the value of humanitarian knowledge has been squeezed out to the periphery of public demand. The country has not yet experienced legal madness in its various aspects. A paradoxical fact: with a drop in demand for lawyers in the country, a complete legal education is being implemented. The network of legal educational institutions was constantly expanding; law faculties were created in construction, medical, pedagogical and other universities. The system of departmental universities was expanding especially rapidly, institutions were transformed into academies, academies into universities, and universities quickly grew into a network of branches. Today, in addition to "civilian" law schools, a growing army of lawyers is graduated from educational institutions of all Law Enforcement agencies. As a result, several different legal communities have emerged that are training law enforcement officers with different levels of education according to the same curriculum. Despite the formal generality of the programs, the teaching of majors in these universities prevails over basic scientific disciplines. Therefore, although all of them are considered lawyers, their basic knowledge of knowledge is mostly superficial; due to different levels of education, they usually speak different languages. This is another independent problem. Another series of problems created the transition of law schools to the European education system. Since in law institutions and services their graduate bachelors with a shortened education, to put it mildly, are not in demand, there is a need to deploy a master's network, and here there are problems of organization and quality of education. In addition, the system of "second education" is working, where a lawyer is obtained in three years. Of training, a network of paid distance learning and evening training is widely developed. As a result, for various reasons, the state of education and training of lawyers, and hence the state of legal thought, is very alarming and threatens with catastrophe.

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