



## **ANALYSIS OF WESTERN COUNTRIES' EXPERIENCE IN COMBATING LATENT CRIME**

**Narbaeva Nodira Jumanazarovna**

**Karakalpak State University named after Berdakh**

**<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19090011>**

### **ARTICLE INFO**

Received: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Accepted: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Online: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

### **KEYWORDS**

*latent crime, hidden crimes, Western countries, law enforcement, civic participation, social prevention, crime statistics*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The article analyzes the experience of Western countries in detecting and combating latent crime. The study examines methods for identifying hidden crimes, law enforcement systems, civic participation, and social prevention approaches in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden. The research demonstrates that reducing latent crime relies not only on legal mechanisms but also on social trust, moral education, a culture of communication, and active public engagement.*

Studying foreign experience in combating latent crime is of paramount importance. This is because in any society, official crime statistics do not fully reflect the real situation. The share of hidden or unreported crimes reaches high levels in some countries, which creates serious challenges for law enforcement agencies in planning their activities, developing preventive measures, and ensuring social security. Therefore, developed countries have developed specific institutional, technological, and cultural approaches to reduce latent crime and detect it at an early stage.

Analysis of foreign experience shows that each country employs different mechanisms in combating hidden crime, depending on its political structure, cultural values, and technological capacity. For example, in European countries, assessing crime based on statistical analysis, actively involving civil society institutions, and identifying the share of hidden crimes through social research are widely implemented. In Eastern countries, on the other hand, the main directions include strengthening moral and religious values, enhancing collective oversight, and integrating digital technologies into law enforcement systems [1,41].

It should be noted that the experience of the United States is considered one of the most advanced systems in detecting and combating latent crime. In this country, measures against hidden crime are implemented through the digitalization of law enforcement activities, the extensive use of analytical systems, and active public engagement. Since the late 20th century, the "National Crime Victimization Survey" (NCVS) has been conducted in the U.S., with crime statistics based not only on official police reports but also on anonymous surveys of the population. This approach has provided broader information on the hidden portion of crimes, i.e., those remaining latent.

In addition, modern crime prevention strategies in the United States are based on the "problem-oriented policing" system. This approach involves analyzing the causes of crimes, as well as social and psychological factors, in each locality and developing individual solutions for them. In their research, Ronald Victor Clarke and John Eric specifically emphasized the

role of this model in reducing latent crime, noting that “to detect and prevent crime, law enforcement agencies must identify the root of each problem, that is, the social conditions that give rise to criminal activity.”

Furthermore, the “Community Policing” model in the U.S., which promotes citizens’ active participation in ensuring safety in their neighborhoods, has played a significant role in reducing latent crime.

The experience of the United Kingdom is also of great importance in combating latent crime. In this country, crime statistics are not solely based on official police reports but are also formed through specialized national surveys such as the “Crime Survey for England and Wales.” This system captures instances where individuals have been victims of crime but did not report them to official authorities, providing a more accurate understanding of the scale and dynamics of latent crime [2,17].

The U.K. has also implemented the “Neighborhood Policing Teams” system, in which law enforcement officers maintain regular contact with local residents, study their security-related concerns, and collect information about crimes anonymously. This model increases public trust in the police and has proven effective in uncovering hidden crimes.

Additionally, non-profit organizations, such as the “Victim Support Service,” operate in the U.K., providing psychological, legal, and social assistance to crime victims. This support increases the likelihood that victims will report crimes, directly contributing to the reduction of latent criminal activity.

Germany is another country that has paid particular attention to social and psychological factors in the study of latent crime. Crime prevention in Germany is centered on the principle of proactive civic participation. The German legal system is supported by a robust scientific infrastructure aimed not only at detecting committed crimes but also at analyzing their hidden forms.

It is noteworthy that since the 1970s, Germany has adopted the concept of “shadow area research,” which studies latent crime through sociological surveys, anonymous interviews, and psychological testing. Another important aspect of the German experience is the activity of criminology research centers. For instance, the Kriminologisches Forschungsinstitut Niedersachsen (KFNI) conducts regular studies on latent crime, using methods such as victim surveys and self-report surveys. These approaches together enable the analysis of crime beyond official statistics [3,221].

The German government has also implemented the “police close to citizens” concept, which fosters trust through continuous interaction between law enforcement officers and the public. Studies indicate that when public trust in the police increases by 10%, the number of unreported crimes decreases by 6–7%.

In France, the issue of latent crime has been the focus of serious scientific and political attention since the 1980s. The country’s crime prevention system is based on the “general safety” concept, which analyzes both overt and hidden forms of crime in relation to social environment, migration, unemployment, urbanization, and digital security.

Since 2007, France has implemented the “Living Conditions and Safety Survey” conducted by the National Institute of Statistics to study hidden crime. In addition, the French experience highlights the role of the “proximité policière” or proximity policing system,

introduced by the government in 1999. This system aims to cultivate a culture of crime reporting among citizens through regular interaction between police officers and local communities. As a result, the detection rate of hidden crimes, especially in sensitive areas such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and youth crime, has improved.

The French government has also developed a social prevention approach in criminological research, interpreting crime not merely as a legal offense but as a result of social inequality, cultural crisis, and communication breakdowns. Accordingly, significant attention is given to education, family policies, and community collaboration to reduce hidden forms of crime [4,48]. Thus, France's experience demonstrates a model focused on human security, emphasizing social protection, civic participation, anonymous reporting systems, and a communicative culture to combat latent crime.

Sweden is another country with an advanced model that combines sociological approaches and welfare policies in combating latent crime. In Sweden, the study of hidden forms of crime is carried out not only by law enforcement agencies but also by independent scientific institutions, particularly the "Council for Crime Prevention."

Since the 1970s, Sweden has implemented the "National Crime Survey," which examines citizens' personal experiences with crime and their perceptions of safety. This system annually covers over 20,000 respondents and is compared with official statistics, revealing that 45–50% of unreported crimes are identified each year.

In Sweden, the main focus in combating latent crime is on social trust and a culture of openness. Studies show that over 85% of the population expresses full confidence in the police, significantly increasing the reporting of hidden crimes. Moreover, "criminological prevention" has become a key component of national policy, establishing coordinated cooperation between local authorities, schools, and social services to address hidden forms of crime such as domestic violence, youth deviance, and cybercrime.

Overall, the Swedish experience demonstrates that combating latent crime relies not only on legal mechanisms but also on social welfare, trust, moral education, and a culture of transparency.

While crime detection in Western countries primarily relies on legal mechanisms and statistical monitoring, Eastern countries approach this issue through traditional social structures, collective responsibility, religious and moral values, and educational systems. Consequently, in Eastern experiences, reducing latent crime focuses more on transforming individuals through internal moral development, essentially aiming to "eliminate the roots of crime from the human heart."

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