THE PROBLEM OF LATENCY IN ORGANIZED THEFT OFFENSES UNDER CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a comprehensive analysis of the problem of latency in theft offenses committed by organized criminal groups. It elucidates the theoretical foundations of latent criminality, its criminological nature, and the specific features of its manifestation in contemporary conditions. Based on an analysis of national legislation and law-enforcement practice, the study identifies the principal factors influencing the level of latency in organized theft offenses.

Official statistics play a crucial role in assessing crime and ensuring the effectiveness of counter-crime policies. However, a certain proportion of criminal acts remains unreflected in official reports. In criminological discourse, this phenomenon is conceptualized as "latent criminality."

The level of latency is particularly high in theft offenses perpetrated by organized criminal groups, which substantially impedes an accurate evaluation of the true scale of criminal activity.

In the scientific study of crime, the segment not captured by official statistics acquires independent analytical significance. Within criminology, this phenomenon is systematically examined through the framework of latent criminality. M.H. Rustambaev defines latent criminality as the portion of crime not reflected in official statistics yet exerting a negative impact on social relations, emphasizing the necessity of accounting for this phenomenon in the formulation of preventive policies. Z.S. Islamov associates latency with the effectiveness of law-enforcement practices, noting that deficiencies in timely crime registration and impartial investigation inevitably contribute to rising latency levels.

From this perspective, latent criminality should be regarded not solely as a criminological category but also as an organizational and legal challenge.

Organized crime represents one of the most dangerous and stable forms of criminal activity. Its defining characteristics include the existence of a stable group, distribution of roles, systematic planning, and the extraction of sustained criminal profit.

In our assessment, Uzbekistan currently lacks a unified and comprehensive methodology for evaluating latent criminality. This limitation constrains the capacity to determine the actual scale of organized theft offenses.

The latency of organized theft offenses generates several adverse consequences:

1.Distortion in the assessment of crime dynamics;

2.Ineffective planning of preventive measures;

3.Erosion of public trust;

4.Economic stabilization of criminal groups.

Rustambaev considers the reduction of latent criminality to be among the strategic priorities of crime prevention policy.

According to the author's position, the latency of organized theft offenses should not be viewed merely as a statistical issue but rather as a threat to national security and economic stability.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the inviolability of property is constitutionally guaranteed, and the state assumes responsibility for its protection. Criminal liability for theft is established under Article 169 of the Criminal Code. Nonetheless, practical observations indicate that not all theft offenses—particularly those involving organized criminal structures—are fully registered.

An analysis of national practice reveals several key factors contributing to latency:

1.Professional execution of offenses.

Theft offenses committed by organized groups are typically premeditated. Activities such as surveillance of targets, examination of security systems, and the use of technical tools complicate detection. As noted by Mirboboev, organized groups continuously refine their criminal methods, thereby increasing the level of concealed latency.

2.Non-reporting by victims.

Victimological research demonstrates that some citizens refrain from reporting crimes due to perceptions of insignificant loss or distrust in law-enforcement agencies. This tendency is particularly prevalent in cases of minor property theft and constitutes a manifestation of natural latency.

3.Registration and procedural constraints.

In certain instances, crime reports may not be formally registered due to insufficient evidence at the preliminary inquiry stage. Islamov emphasizes that shortcomings in crime qualification and registration procedures may contribute to artificial latency.

4.Utilization of digital technologies.

In recent years, organized groups have increasingly relied on digital communication tools, encrypted messaging platforms, and remote coordination techniques. Such developments further complicate detection. Luneev characterizes modern crime as technologically adaptive.

In this context, the application of digital technologies in crime control must remain aligned with human rights guarantees.

In our view, reducing the latency of organized theft offenses necessitates:

1.Implementation of a unified integrated video-surveillance platform across commercial and financial facilities;

2.Establishment of a national database for combating vehicle theft;

3.Development of anonymous electronic reporting platforms;

4.Simplification of mechanisms for securing digital evidence within operational-search activities.

Within the conceptual framework advanced by the author, the reduction of latent criminality should be institutionalized as an independent strategic direction of state policy in the sphere of crime prevention and control..

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