



THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF CRIMINOLOGICAL FORECASTING IN IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CRIME PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of criminological forecasting, the stages of its formation and development, as well as its significance in crime prevention activities. The scientific essence of forecasting, its role in legal and criminological research, and its practical importance in the system of crime prevention and control are highlighted. The study analyzes the scientific views of foreign scholars who contributed to the development of criminological forecasting and explores contemporary trends in its advancement. The role of forecasting in improving the effectiveness of crime prevention activities is substantiated, including its potential for assessing the state and dynamics of crime, as well as the prospects for applying artificial intelligence, Big Data technologies, and Smart technologies. Based on the findings, scientifically grounded recommendations for improving the national system of criminological forecasting have been developed.

Keywords: criminological forecasting, forecast, crime prevention, crime, criminology, futurology, crime analysis, public safety, artificial intelligence, Big Data, Smart technologies.

Throughout all periods of human history, people have sought to know what the future holds and what events and circumstances await them. Various methods have been used to achieve this goal. In ancient times, this role was performed by prophets, sages, priests, and oracles, whereas today such aspirations are often manifested through appeals to fortune-tellers and psychics. As a result, forecasting processes have acquired an unprecedented scope in the modern world.

Every individual consciously or unconsciously strives to assess the consequences of their decisions and actions in advance, forming certain perceptions and judgments about the future and attempting to envision possible scenarios of its development. It is no coincidence that prominent scholars emphasized the principle of “to see, to foresee, and to act” as a universal formula of human activity. This principle is applicable to virtually all spheres of human life.



The term “forecast” originates from the ancient Greek word prognosis, which means “prediction” or “foresight.” However, the modern understanding of forecasting differs significantly from simple speculation about the future. Forecasting is distinguished from other forms of prediction and assumption by a higher degree of substantiation and scientific validity. In this sense, a forecast is not merely an ordinary judgment about the future but a specific form of scientific knowledge.

This concept is widely used as a scientific term in both the social and natural sciences. Scientific thinking, when seeking to understand objective reality, should rely not on abstract assumptions but on scientifically grounded knowledge. Therefore, foresight is recognized as one of the essential characteristics of scientific inquiry.

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language, the concept of a “forecast” is defined as the preliminary determination and prediction of the possible development, course, and consequences of events, phenomena, or processes that may occur in the future on the basis of specialized research, available data, and information. In addition, the term also refers to a conclusion or inference formulated in advance.

Thus, the process of forecasting is not limited merely to reflections about the future. It involves the systematic study of the development dynamics of a particular phenomenon or process through the use of modern scientific methods and tools. To determine the possible future state of an object, it is necessary to scientifically examine the processes of its emergence and development, as well as compare them with its current condition. Therefore, the fundamental prerequisite for forecasting is its reliance on the principle of scientific validity.

A forecast represents a model of the future constructed on the basis of information about the past and the present. It enables individuals to form an understanding of the probable development of expected events and phenomena, assess the potential negative consequences of decisions in advance, and take measures to prevent them. Undoubtedly, any forecast is probabilistic in nature. However, a thorough analysis of initial data, the use of reliable information sources, and the proper selection of forecasting methods and techniques can significantly enhance its accuracy and reliability.

In contemporary conditions, forecasting has become an indispensable necessity in virtually all spheres of activity. This is because it is directly aimed at addressing practical needs. Consequently, forecasting has become a focal point of attention for scholars in medicine, economics, political science, sociology,



philosophy, law, and many other disciplines. Considering the extensive use of forecasts in almost every area of public life, this list could be continued indefinitely. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that forecasting is conducted by representatives of various scientific fields whose common objective is to improve the effectiveness of development within a particular sphere and to prevent potential adverse consequences through their timely anticipation.

One of the most significant forms of forecasting for our purposes is legal forecasting. Legal forecasting is applied in various branches of law, including criminal law, penal law, criminology, criminalistics, operational-search activity, labor law, and others. The problem of predicting the future state of a particular object or phenomenon has remained relevant throughout history and across all areas of human activity. From this perspective, the importance of criminological forecasting is reflected not only in assessing potential future developments but also in analyzing the current state of crime and studying past trends in its development.

The formation of scientific views on forecasting dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. According to A.A. Gertsenzon, “the first attempts at long-term scientific forecasting of crime as a whole and of its individual characteristics were undertaken in the 1920s.” In addition, B.M. Shaver noted that “based on the study of investigative practice concerning specific categories of crimes, it is possible to identify not yet detected but probable methods and techniques of committing crimes.”

Despite their predictive orientation, these views lacked sufficient scientific substantiation. This is confirmed by the opinion of G.A. Avanesov, who argued that “during that period, scientific crime forecasting had not yet been fully developed, although the necessary prerequisites for its emergence already existed.”

The next important stage in the development of forecasting theory was the emergence of a new independent scientific discipline—futurology (prognostics)—during the 1950s and 1960s. This laid the foundation for the rapid development of scientific forecasting across virtually all fields of science and technology. Over time, prognostics evolved into two main branches: general prognostics and special prognostics.

While general prognostics focuses on studying the general patterns of future development and forecasting methods, special prognostics is aimed at examining the prospects for the development of technology, nature, economics, law, and other spheres of social life. These branches continue to serve as the most important methodological foundations of forecasting theory and practice.



The first scientific concepts of criminological forecasting were developed during the 1960s and 1970s by such criminologists as A. Quetelet, G.A. Avanesov, Yu.D. Bluvshstein, S.E. Vitsin, I.I. Karpets, S.S. Ovchinsky, A.A. Gertsenzon, V.N. Kudryavtsev, and N.F. Kuznetsova. Their research established a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the development of professional criminological forecasts.

Subsequently, the findings of these scholars were introduced into the activities of staff units within the internal affairs bodies. However, a significant portion of the achievements in criminological forecasting did not receive widespread practical application due to their complexity and the insufficient development of implementation mechanisms. As a result, many of these scientific ideas remained largely within the sphere of academic debate among criminologists.

At the same time, certain problems in this field persisted until the early 2000s. One of the main reasons was the lack of innovative approaches to forecasting activities. In many cases, research conducted in this area did not differ substantially from the results achieved in earlier periods and was often limited to analytical reports on the state of crime and the factors influencing it. Consequently, insufficient attention was paid to potential future changes in crime and to trends in its development.

In subsequent years, forecasting issues attracted considerable interest in many countries around the world. This contributed to the further development of criminological forecasting, its scientific advancement, and its transformation into one of the most important tools for evidence-based planning of state policy and the activities of law enforcement agencies in the field of crime prevention and control.

At present, criminological forecasting is recognized as an important scientific mechanism for assessing the future state and dynamics of crime, identifying trends in its development, and supporting strategic decision-making aimed at preventing offenses.

An analysis of the aforementioned theoretical views and scientific sources demonstrates that forecasting has evolved throughout the history of human civilization as an essential means of understanding the future and preparing for it. Over time, it transformed from simple prediction or intuitive assumptions into a scientifically grounded field of research and became widely applied across all spheres of public life. The significance of forecasting has increased particularly in





the fields of law and criminology, where it serves as an important mechanism for the preliminary assessment of the state, dynamics, and trends of crime.

The conducted analysis indicates that the scientific foundations of criminological forecasting were established in the second half of the twentieth century. The studies of A. Quetelet, G.A. Avanesov, Yu.D. Bluvshstein, V.N. Kudryavtsev, N.F. Kuznetsova, and other scholars laid the theoretical groundwork for this field of knowledge. Subsequently, prognostics developed as an independent scientific discipline, contributing to the improvement of the methodology and practical mechanisms of criminological forecasting.

Under contemporary conditions, criminological forecasting is not limited to the analysis of crime rates and patterns; it also makes it possible to scientifically assess the causes of offenses, their developmental trends, and their potential consequences. In this regard, criminological forecasting constitutes an important component of the system of crime prevention and contributes to increasing the effectiveness of efforts aimed at combating crime.

At the same time, the findings of this study indicate the need for further improvement of the criminological forecasting system in our country.

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. To improve the legal framework of criminological forecasting within the system of crime prevention by clearly defining its objectives, tasks, and mechanisms in relevant regulatory and legal acts.

2. To establish a unified national information database for criminological forecasting through the integration of data from internal affairs bodies, the prosecution service, courts, and other authorized state institutions.

3. To develop an early warning system for identifying potential growth points of offenses and risk factors by introducing Big Data technologies and artificial intelligence into preventive activities.

4. To enhance the knowledge and practical skills of law enforcement officers and prevention inspectors in the field of forecasting through specialized training courses and professional development programs.

5. To strengthen the scientific and methodological foundation of criminological forecasting by expanding the scope of both fundamental and applied research and by incorporating advanced international experience into national practice.

6. To establish regional criminological forecasting centers responsible for the systematic assessment of the criminogenic situation in each region and for the targeted planning of preventive measures.



In conclusion, it should be emphasized that criminological forecasting represents one of the strategic directions of crime prevention. The development of its scientifically grounded mechanisms is of great importance for ensuring public safety, preventing offenses, and effectively implementing state preventive policy. In the twenty-first century, the further improvement of criminological forecasting through the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence will remain one of the priority directions for the development of this field.

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