

Systemic Approach to the Analysis of Crime Characteristics: Current Challenges and Criminological Practice

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ABSTRACT: This article presents a comprehensive analysis of crime characteristics as essential instruments in criminological research. Crime is approached not merely as a collection of unlawful acts, but as a systemically organized socio-legal phenomenon. The central hypothesis asserts that characteristics such as level, structure, dynamics, geography, latency, recidivism, and clearance rate are interdependent parameters reflecting both social and institutional processes. The aim of the research is to highlight the theoretical significance and practical applicability of these characteristics in the context of contemporary challenges such as digitalization, globalization, and social transformation. The methodology employed includes systemic, comparative-legal, and analytical approaches, applied to classify crime characteristics and assess their role in the criminal justice practice of the Republic of Moldova. The empirical foundation of the study is based on statistical data from the General Inspectorate of Police for the year 2023, along with an analysis of normative and social factors influencing crime. The theoretical section examines seven distinct perspectives on the interpretation of crime characteristics: legal, sociological, cultural, critical, constructivist, victimological, and semantic. These approaches facilitate a multidimensional understanding of crime as a legal, social, axiological, and symbolic phenomenon. The applied section highlights specific trends in criminality in the Republic of Moldova: a persistently high rate of property crimes, an increase in cybercrime, the concentration of offenses in urban areas, and significant levels of latency and recidivism. The analysis underscores the correlation between these characteristics and the level of public trust in legal institutions, as well as the pressing need to modernize penitentiary and probation systems. In conclusion, crime characteristics hold both diagnostic and predictive value. Their integrated application enables the formulation of scientifically grounded criminal policy adapted to national conditions. The article concludes with recommendations on improving criminological analysis methodology, developing digital monitoring tools, enhancing inter-institutional cooperation, and increasing citizens' trust in the justice system.

KEYWORDS: Crime Characteristics, Criminological Analysis, Latency, Penal Policy of the Republic of Moldova, Recidivism

Introduction

Crime, as a complex socio-legal phenomenon, demands a systemic approach to its study. Crime characteristics serve as key tools, enabling both a quantitative evaluation of criminal activity and an understanding of its structure, dynamics, geographic distribution, offender profiles, and underlying conditions. These characteristics play an essential role in criminological research, in developing state criminal policy strategies, in forecasting criminogenic risks, and in implementing crime prevention measures.

In today's rapidly evolving society, analyzing crime characteristics is increasingly important. Socio-economic shifts, technological advancements, increased migration, and shifting criminal subcultures fuel ongoing changes in criminal activity, demanding effective responses from the state and academia. In this regard, merely identifying the level or

structure of crime is insufficient; it is imperative to examine each characteristic within its interdependence and to consider the diversity of theoretical approaches used to interpret them.

The purpose of this paper is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of crime characteristics as the foundation of criminological research, with emphasis on their systemic interdependence, practical relevance, and contemporary challenges. To achieve this goal, the following objectives were established: examining the classification and content of the main characteristics of crime; analyzing their role in criminological research and in the practical activities of law enforcement agencies; presenting various theoretical approaches to interpretation; and identifying future directions for using these characteristics in the context of digitization and globalization.

This research employed systemic, comparative-legal, analytical, and legal practice analysis methods, which allowed for an exhaustive treatment of the topic and a scientifically grounded conclusion. The study focuses on applying crime characteristics in Moldova, where socio-economic changes and transnational threats necessitate modernizing criminological analysis and strengthening crime-fighting mechanisms.

The article is structured into several sections, each dedicated to a specific aspect of the topic discussed: from defining and classifying crime characteristics to analyzing their interdependencies and relevant theoretical interpretations. The study concludes with a synthesis of formulated conclusions and the presentation of practical recommendations aimed at contributing to the development of criminological science and strengthening the country's criminal policy.

Analysis of Specific Characteristics of Crime

The analysis of crime characteristics constitutes one of the central elements of criminological research. These characteristics form the conceptual foundation for studying crime as a socio-legal phenomenon, providing not only a quantitative record of its manifestations but also a qualitative revelation of its internal structure, dynamics, criminal motivations, and territorial distribution. The theoretical value of these characteristics lies in their ability to function simultaneously as empirical indicators, tools for comparative analysis, and means for conceptualizing the nature of criminal behavior across diverse social contexts.

Modern criminological research promotes a systemic, interdisciplinary approach to studying crime characteristics. Features like level, structure, dynamics, geography, latency, and recidivism must be examined in relation to other variables and institutional factors. For instance, crime levels, measured by registered offenses per 100,000 inhabitants, reflect not only statistics but also the interplay of criminal behavior, law enforcement practices, and public trust in institutions (Obolentsev, 2014).

Crime dynamics capture changes over time, encompassing both objective and interpretive dimensions. They are shaped by various factors, including revisions to criminal legislation, transformations in the justice system, and updates to statistical recording methods. A decrease in the number of registered crimes does not necessarily indicate an improvement in the criminogenic situation, as it may be caused by changes in registration policies or an increase in the degree of latent crime (Tonry, 2019, pp. 112-115).

The structure of crime allows for an understanding of the dominant types of illegal behavior in a given society. This indicator is especially important for determining the priorities of state criminal policy. For instance, the predominance of property-related crimes may signal socio-economic imbalances, while an increase in corruption or cybercrime reflects institutional and technological dysfunctions. The theoretical significance of the

structure of crime also lies in its capacity to trace the evolution of deviant behavior in the context of social change (Tonry, 2011, pp. 215-220).

Geographic crime patterns highlight territorial dysfunctions in the distribution of criminal activity. This allows for the identification of criminogenic zones and the evaluation of the effectiveness of local mechanisms for maintaining public order. From a criminological perspective, the territorial concentration of crime may be determined by both objective factors (urbanization, economic activity, migration flows) and institutional factors (quality of police work, availability of reporting infrastructure, level of civic engagement). Geographic crime data are essential for spatial modeling of criminogenic risks and planning preventive strategies (Gabor, 2022, pp. 53-55).

Recidivism—the repeated commission of a crime by someone who has previously been convicted—is a key indicator of the efficiency of penal policies. It reflects not only the persistence of individual criminogenic orientations but also the institutional inability to carry out effective resocialization. Recidivism should be approached not only as a quantitative indicator but also as a symptom of systemic problems, inefficient probation supervision, insufficient post-penitentiary reintegration programs, and the marginalization of convicted persons after release (Doltu & Tkach, 2023, pp. 12-15).

The characteristic of crime latency deserves special attention, as it reflects the difference between real and recorded criminal activity. Latency is determined by numerous factors: victim fear, lack of trust in the justice system, normalization of violence in culture, and legal nihilism. From a criminological epistemological perspective, latency makes full and objective knowledge of criminal phenomena impossible and necessitates the use of alternative research methods such as sociological surveys, victimological studies, and analyses of secondary indicators of criminal activity (Varvarici, 2022, pp. 45-50).

The clearance rate—formally indicating the efficiency of the law enforcement system—has a much more complex interpretation. A high clearance rate can be achieved by prioritizing simpler cases, while highly dangerous crimes such as those in the field of digital economy or corruption may remain unsolved. Therefore, clearance should be evaluated not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, based on case typology, social relevance, and investigative difficulty. Other characteristics—motivational, demographic, degree of criminal organization, and technological sophistication—play an important role in the in-depth analysis of the phenomenon. For example, offender motivation may be determined not only by personal interests but also by a symbolic form of protest against social injustice. The socio-demographic profile of offenders helps identify vulnerable groups prone to criminalization and enables the formulation of targeted prevention strategies (Siegel, 2022, pp. 85-95).

Thus, theoretical analysis of crime characteristics goes beyond the description of statistical data. It involves identifying complex relationships, interdependencies, and causal structures that generate and perpetuate the criminogenic situation in society. Applying these characteristics to a specific country—as will be demonstrated later using the example of the Republic of Moldova—allows for the adaptation of criminological tools to the specificity of the national legal, social, and institutional context.

Theoretical Approaches to Interpreting Crime Characteristics

As the analysis shows, crime characteristics are not just statistical parameters but also objects of theoretical reflection. Various currents of criminological thought interpret indicators such as the level, dynamics, structure, geography, recidivism, latency, and clearance rates differently. Each approach starts from its own methodological basis, leading to a different understanding of the nature of crime and the role of its characteristics in research.

Legal criminology views crime characteristics as tools for documenting and analyzing criminal acts. In this framework, the level of crime is determined by official statistics, and its dynamics are recorded based on legal documentation criteria. The structure of crime reflects the classification of offenses provided by the penal code, and recidivism has a clear legal definition: the repeated commission of a crime by someone already convicted. Clearance rate is seen as an indicator of the efficiency of law enforcement agencies, and latency is recognized but not subjected to in-depth analysis, since attention focuses on the formal features of the elements constituting the crime and its subject. Thus, the legal approach ensures precision and univocity in the use of crime characteristics but limits their interpretation to the legislative framework (Newburn, 2017, pp. 69–98).

Sociological criminology perceives crime characteristics not only as quantitative data but also as relevant social indicators reflecting the state of society. The level of crime is viewed here as a result of social conditions—economic situation, unemployment rate, migration, and other factors. Crime dynamics are interpreted as manifestations of structural transformations, reforms, or social crises. The structure of crime allows for the identification of predominant forms of deviant behavior in various population categories. The geography of crime is used to establish connections between urbanization and criminal activity. Recidivism is interpreted as a result of insufficient social adaptation, and latency, as an effect of citizens' distrust in the justice system. The sociological approach emphasizes that crime characteristics are not just numbers but reflect the functioning and condition of society (Bîrgău & Nastas, 2022, pp. 73–75).

Cultural criminology highlights the symbolic and value-based aspects of crime. It interprets crime characteristics as reflections of cultural conflicts, protests against prevailing moral norms, and expressions of subcultural identity. For example, the structure of crime may be associated with the spread of certain youth subcultures where illegal behavior is romanticized or even normalized. Offender motivation becomes a key category: it is understood as a reflection of a value system opposing the dominant culture. The geography of crime is perceived as the space where cultural conflicts unfold. Recidivism and organized crime are treated as manifestations of collective cultural identity and group behavior. The cultural approach aims to understand the meanings and contexts of criminal behavior rather than merely describing it (Cioclei, 2024, pp. 115–116).

Critical criminology proposes a radical reevaluation of the meaning of crime characteristics. These are considered indicators of social injustice and structural inequality. The level and structure of crime are analyzed through the lens of power, class differences, and marginalization. Latency is interpreted as evidence of the elite's disregard for violence. Clearance and recidivism reflect selective application of the law based on social class. The critical approach invites reconsideration of the concept of crime as a socially constructed phenomenon imposed by dominant groups. It emphasizes that crime characteristics may serve not as objective measures of social danger but as tools for legitimizing repressive mechanisms.

Constructivist criminology rejects the idea of the objectivity of crime. All characteristics are seen as products of social construction, dependent on historical context, political will, and institutional processes. What is considered a crime is not an absolute fact but depends on who defines the boundaries of acceptable behavior. The level of crime is not an objective fact but the result of recording and interpretation. Latency is not a system deficiency but a consequence of selective attention to certain forms of behavior. Recidivism and criminal activity are labels society applies to certain categories of people. Constructivism helps understand how and why representations of crime are formed and what interests they reflect (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1996).

Victimological criminology shifts the focus from offenders to victims. It examines crime characteristics through victimization, assessing how often and in what forms crime

affects individuals. Latency stems not only from documentation flaws but also from fear, dependency, or victims' feelings of guilt. Recidivism is understood as a possible result of secondary victimization when a person, confronted with injustice, loses trust in institutions and ends up being prosecuted themselves. Victimological approaches aim at protecting and supporting victims, as well as gaining a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of crime (Bîrgău & Nastas, 2022, pp. 114-120).

Finally, the semantic approach proposes a philosophical interpretation of crime as a feature of a society that generates dangerous actions. Crime characteristics acquire a unique meaning: level refers not only to the number of crimes but also an indicator of the potential criminogenic intensity; dynamics reflects the internal transformations of this potential; structure indicates distortions in values and institutions; recidivism serves as evidence of the persistence of criminogenic factors; latency points to society's inability to recognize its own pathologies; clearance measures the capacity of institutions to react to manifestations of internal evil. Such an approach allows for perceiving crime as a symptom of a moral and social crisis (Shestakov, 2022, pp. 134-237).

Thus, the various theoretical approaches to interpreting crime characteristics provide diverse perspectives on their nature, causes, and mechanisms. The legal approach is oriented toward formal precision and law application; the sociological approach toward identifying the social roots of crime; the cultural approach toward understanding its symbolic aspects; the critical approach toward dismantling structural inequalities; the constructivist approach toward awareness of the conditional nature of the concept of crime; the victimological approach toward protecting victims; and the semantic approach toward a philosophical interpretation of crime as part of human culture and history. The integrated use of these perspectives enables not only the description of the criminal phenomenon but also a deep understanding of its significance in societal life.

Interdependence of Crime Characteristics and Their Practical Relevance

As previously demonstrated, crime characteristics are not merely individual parameters describing the criminogenic context; they are elements of a single system, closely interdependent. The change of one characteristic is almost always accompanied by changes in others, which underscores the necessity of a systemic approach in analyzing crime. Understanding these interconnections allows not only for a deeper comprehension of the nature of crime but also for the more effective elaboration of prevention, forecasting, and combat strategies.

One of the most evident examples of interdependence is the relationship between the level of crime and its dynamics. The level of crime, expressed by the number of registered crimes per 100,000 inhabitants, serves as a starting point for analysis, while dynamics reflect how this level changes over time. For instance, a decrease in the level of crime may result from efficient preventive measures and strengthened public order, but it may also reflect an increase in crime latency, when citizens report crimes less frequently or law enforcement agencies tighten their registration criteria. Thus, level and dynamics can function not only as indicators of the scale of criminal activity but also as markers of society's trust in the legal system and its efficiency.

Equally important is the correlation between the structure of crime and the geography of crime. Structure determines what types of offenses predominate in a given society, while geography indicates where exactly they are concentrated. For example, in large cities of the Republic of Moldova, property-related crimes such as pickpocketing, fraud, and vehicle thefts are more frequent, whereas in rural areas, crimes committed within private life—domestic violence and minor conflicts—are more prevalent. These differences are influenced by population density, mobility, access to resources, and the specificities of the

social environment. Therefore, for effective prevention, it is necessary to consider not only the general structure of crime but also its territorial distribution.

Another significant aspect is the interdependence between recidivism and the clearance rate of crimes. A high clearance rate may reduce the risk of recidivism, as it creates a deterrent effect through punishment. Conversely, when offenders believe that their actions will remain unpunished, the probability of recidivism increases. Moreover, recidivism may indicate deficiencies in the correctional and rehabilitation system, calling for adjustments in penal policy and strengthening of reintegration programs for released individuals.

The relationship between crime latency and the clearance rate also requires special attention. If the clearance rate remains high, one might conclude that most crimes are documented and included in official statistics. However, in a context of high latency, these statistics become only the "tip of the iceberg," masking the true extent of criminal activity. Causes of latency may include lack of trust in the police, fear of consequences, victim stigmatization, or even the desire to maintain confidentiality, especially in cases of domestic violence. Thus, reducing latency through the reinforcement of trust in state institutions and the protection of victims can contribute both to the accuracy of statistical data and to the effectiveness of crime prevention and response systems.

Moreover, the socio-demographic profile of offenders influences other characteristics of crime. For example, juvenile delinquency is more often characterized by spontaneity, group behavior, and low levels of organization. These traits influence the growth rate of crime, as young people are more receptive to changes in the social environment, such as economic crisis, unemployment, or legislative shifts. At the same time, the age structure of offenders also affects motivational peculiarities: youth tend to commit impulsive and emotional crimes, while adults are more often motivated by material gain, financial hardship, or personal advantage.

The technological advancement of crime is also correlated with multiple characteristics. Cybercrimes typically have a high degree of latency, as victims either do not report to authorities or are unaware that they have been victimized. These crimes are also difficult to detect, often committed remotely, using anonymous technologies and encryption methods. Furthermore, cybercrime has a clearly defined structure, most commonly involving fraud, financial manipulation, phishing, and other forms of digital deception. Thus, technology not only generates new forms of crime but also alters traditional features such as clearance rates, latency, and structure.

An additional important factor is the influence of organized crime on other characteristics. Organized criminal groups are distinguished by a high degree of planning, professionalism, and coordination, making their activities more discreet and harder to investigate. Consequently, the latency of these crimes increases, and detection decreases. In addition, organized crime tends toward long-term activity, which affects recidivism, as members of these groups continue committing crimes even after temporary arrest or conviction. These aspects underscore the need for specialized approaches in investigating and combating organized crime.

There is also a strong connection between the level of crime and the social structure of offenders. In regions with high poverty, unemployment, and social marginalization, there is a higher incidence of property-related crimes committed by vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, in the fields of administration and business, service-related crimes and corruption prevail, committed by individuals with higher education and social status. These trends indicate that the level of crime is not just a statistic, but a reflection of social equity, access to legal opportunities, and the quality of governance.

In the context of prevention and forecasting, the interdependence of crime characteristics plays an essential role. For example, changes in the geography of crime may

signal the migration of criminal groups or a shift in the criminogenic situation caused by economic or administrative reforms. A sharp rise in the rate of intensification of crime in a certain category (e.g., theft or fraud) may represent a symptom of a social crisis requiring prompt intervention. Analyzing motivational peculiarities allows for identifying the causes of crime and developing targeted preventive measures aimed at specific population groups.

These interconnections are also important for managing criminal policy. State institutions responsible for security and public order must take into account how one characteristic influences another to avoid misinterpretations and make well-founded decisions. For instance, a decrease in the level of crime may be interpreted as a success of the legal system, but if it is accompanied by an increase in latency and a decrease in the clearance rate, it may indicate not a resolution of the problem, but rather its concealment. Therefore, crime characteristics must be analyzed comprehensively, as elements of a unified system reflecting the state of society and the quality of legal regulatory institutions.

More than that, the interdependence of crime characteristics has relevance for international cooperation in the field of security. Transnational threats such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and terrorism are not limited by the borders of a single country. Their analysis requires understanding not only the internal dynamics of crime but also comparative analysis of characteristics across different countries. For example, the increase in technologically driven crime in one country may be linked to intensified control in another, highlighting the need for coordinated action and information exchange between national law enforcement authorities.

In conclusion, crime characteristics cannot be analyzed in isolation from each other. They form a complex system in which every change generates a chain reaction affecting multiple aspects of the criminogenic situation. Only through understanding these interdependencies is it possible to build an efficient system of forecasting, prevention, and combating crime. This entails not only collecting and analyzing statistical data but also applying an interdisciplinary approach that includes legal, sociological, psychological, and technological perspectives.

Application of Crime Characteristics in the Criminological Practice of the Republic of Moldova

Applying crime characteristics in the Republic of Moldova is crucial for both scientific analysis and practical approaches to public safety. Moldova's transitional society—marked by socio-economic disparities, political instability, mass migration, and rapid digitization—exhibits a unique criminological landscape, necessitating tailored analytical models.

One of the most important parameters is the level of crime, which, according to data from the General Inspectorate of Police under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova for the year 2023 (*Annual Report of the GIP, 12 Months 2023, 2024*), amounts to 25,977 registered cases—approximately 999 crimes per 100,000 inhabitants. This indicator has remained relatively stable over the past three years; however, its interpretation must be made in the context of a high likelihood of latent crime, particularly in sensitive areas such as domestic violence, corruption, and crimes committed through the use of digital technologies. The dynamics of crime in 2023 show a 2.3% decrease in the number of registered crimes compared to 2022. This trend may reflect both a real improvement in the criminogenic situation and a change in registration practices, intensified administrative control over police statistics, or a decline in citizen reporting to law enforcement agencies. Therefore, the dynamics of crime should be analyzed in correlation with other characteristics, especially latency and crime clearance rates.

The structure of crime in Moldova remains typical for countries with a high level of socio-economic vulnerability. The main portion consists of property-related crimes,

particularly thefts (34.6%) and fraud (9%). This structure indicates a dominant criminal motivation related to material insecurity and the absence of legal mechanisms for economic self-realization. At the same time, there is an increase in the share of crimes committed using information technologies, resulting from the rapid development of online services, digital payment platforms, and remote banking.

The geography of crime reveals a clear concentration: 35.7% of all crimes occur in the capital city of Chișinău. This is explained by intensive urbanization, the concentration of economic activity, and a higher level of professional expertise among personnel in the capital. At the same time, rural regions exhibit significant hidden crime, particularly in the areas of domestic violence, local-level corruption, and illegal migration. This fact calls for the necessity of differentiated criminological policies that include accessible mechanisms for citizen reporting and the strengthening of community policing structures.

Criminal recidivism in 2023 reached 24.3% of the total number of registered cases (6,307 offenses), highlighting chronic inefficiencies in the system of social reintegration. The lack of adequate post-penitentiary programs, probation services, professional adaptation, and social monitoring leads to secondary criminalization of those who have served their sentences. Recidivism is particularly high in cases of property crimes and illicit drug trafficking.

The crime clearance rate for the same period was 53.6%, with significant variations depending on the type of offense. Violent crimes enjoy a relatively high clearance rate, while in the case of cybercrime, fraud, and corruption, it is considerably lower. This situation reflects the lack of technical resources, insufficient training of specialists in information technologies, and a low level of inter-institutional cooperation. Increasing efficiency in solving crimes requires both organizational reforms and the modernization of human resources.

Crime latency in Moldova is challenging to measure but clearly significant. It is particularly pronounced in cases of domestic violence—due to cultural barriers, fear of retaliation, and distrust in the system—as well as in petty corruption and routine bribery within state institutions. Latency distorts the image of crime and makes an adequate governmental response impossible without the use of supplementary sociological and victimological analysis methods.

The socio-demographic profile of offenders in Moldova is dominated by males (81%) and individuals aged between 18 and 35 (approximately 47%). The largest share belongs to unemployed persons, individuals with low educational attainment, and representatives of marginalized groups. At the same time, in recent years, there has been an increase in the proportion of crimes committed by members of the middle and upper classes, particularly in the fields of economics and public administration. This indicates a transformation of the social landscape of crime and necessitates the adaptation of prevention strategies to the specifics of various social groups.

Technological advancement of crime constitutes one of the most pronounced trends. The growing number of crimes committed in digital space calls for the creation of specialized cyber units, expert training, and international cooperation. Cybercrime is characterized by a high degree of latency, cross-border nature, and low clearance rate, transforming into a threat to national security.

Thus, the use of crime characteristics in the analysis of the situation in the Republic of Moldova allows for the identification of both stable patterns and emerging threats generated by social transformations and globalization. Under these conditions, criminological practice requires not only the registration of crimes but also the development of comprehensive, adaptable, and scientifically grounded strategies oriented toward prevention, social reintegration, and restoration of social justice.

Conclusions

The analysis of crime characteristics in the Republic of Moldova reveals that these are not merely statistical indicators but essential analytical tools for examining crime as a socio-legal phenomenon. These characteristics allow for the identification of patterns, risk estimation, development of prevention strategies, and systemic management of public safety. Each characteristic of crime—level, dynamics, structure, geography, recidivism, latency, etc.—plays a distinct role in understanding the phenomenon and requires an integrated application. Their cumulative use ensures a comprehensive picture of the state of crime and its mechanisms of reproduction.

The study demonstrated the interdependence between crime characteristics. For example, variations in the level of crime can be correlated with changes in rhythm, which in turn influence crime clearance rates, recidivism, and latent criminality. The geography of crime reflects not only the territorial distribution of illegal acts but also the degree of urbanization, socio-economic conditions of the population, and access to public services. The structure of crime is influenced by technological advancements, legislative changes, and the evolution of criminal subcultures. Thus, no single characteristic exists in isolation - all form a unified system in which any change generates a chain reaction.

Special emphasis is placed on the use of application of crime characteristics in the context of the Republic of Moldova, where, the transitional economy, intensified migration, and digitalization, require adaptation of criminological analysis to new realities. While the level of crime remains relatively stable, in-depth analysis is needed to address hidden deviant behavior. Although crime dynamics show a slight decreasing trend, this evolution must be interpreted cautiously, as it may associated with rising latency. The structure of crime reflects a prevalence of property and economic offenses, and the digitalization of crime demands modernization of the law enforcement system and strengthening of professional competencies.

The theoretical analysis has shown that the interpretation of crime characteristics depends on the methodological approach used. Legal criminology emphasizes the formal dimension of crime, sociological criminology investigates its social roots, cultural approaches examine the symbolic nature of deviance, and critical perspectives highlight structural inequalities and power relations. Constructivist and victimological approaches contribute to understanding how crime is produced and perpetuated through social interactions and relationships between victims and offenders. The semantic perspective offers philosophical reflection on crime as part of human culture and history.

The use of crime characteristics in scientific research and public policy has not only diagnostic but also predictive and strategic value. Based on the analysis of these characteristics, models of crime development can be elaborated, vulnerable groups identified, and efficient preventive measures designed. This approach becomes even more necessary in the face of contemporary challenges such as the technological advancement of crime, increasing latency, the spread of organized crime, and transnational threats.

At the same time, the collection and analysis of crime characteristics face multiple difficulties. Lack of standardized record-keeping, weak citizen reporting culture, and absence of automated analysis systems affect data reliability. These deficiencies highlight the need to improve methodology, train specialists, and build public trust in the justice system and law enforcement institutions.

Based on the analysis conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Crime characteristics constitute a fundamental element of criminological research, providing essential information regarding the state of public security;

- Each characteristic (level, dynamics, structure, geography, recidivism, latency, etc.) contributes to the understanding of crime and should be analyzed within an integrated framework;
- The application of crime characteristics in the Republic of Moldova presents specific features determined by the socio-economic context, the level of trust in the legal system, and the influence of digitalization;
- Theoretical approaches to interpreting crime characteristics expand the possibilities of analysis, allowing crime to be treated not only as a legal phenomenon but also as a social, cultural, and philosophical one;
- To increase the objectivity and quality of criminological analysis, it is necessary to promote transparency, accessibility, and modernization of data collection and processing technologies.

Recommendations:

- Develop a criminological monitoring system based on the integrated use of all essential crime characteristics;
- Improve methodologies for data collection and analysis, including addressing crime latency, standardizing records, and implementing digital platforms;
- Elaborate a strategic approach to public security management, oriented toward long-term trends and anticipation of criminogenic risks;
- Strengthen public trust in law enforcement agencies, which will improve the accuracy of statistics and enable a more effective response to crime;
- Design targeted prevention programs that take into account the age, gender, and social status of offenders, as well as the motivational specifics of crimes;
- Intensify international cooperation, especially in the fight against cybercrime, organized crime, and transnational threats;
- Invest in training professionals capable of working with criminological data, using modern analytical methods, and responding promptly to emerging forms of criminality.

Crime characteristics are more than mere statistics; they are critical indicators of societal conditions, institutional effectiveness, and legal culture. Thorough analysis and strategic application of these characteristics should underpin a scientific criminal policy focused on prevention, victim protection, and strengthening the rule of law. Only such an approach will make it possible not only to register crime but also to effectively intervene in its causes, reducing social risks and improving the quality of life in society.

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