

Territorial – Means a Spatial, or a New Approach to the Old Criminological Problem Solving

Dmitry V. Bakharev*

Yugra State University, 16, Chekhova str., Khanty-Mansiysk, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra, 628012, Russian Federation

Abstract: The article presents a new approach to the possibilities of using the method of analysis of patterns of territorial differences formation in crime rates in regions of the same country in order to expand the understanding of crime causative complex as a whole. The author proves that the effectiveness of territorial approach to crime causes understanding will reach its greatest extent when it is a criminological analysis of territorial-spacial systems functioning, a revelation of their destabilizing factors, sources of disorganization and social tension. But this requires a preliminary solution to the problem of identifying the patterns of territorial socio-economic systems functioning, that the author proposes to do on the basis of the "New Economic Geography" modern achievements. For such an approach, the name "spatial analysis of causative crime complex" is claimed. This analysis, carried with reference to some regions of Central Federal District of Russia, demonstrated the received results importance for a better mechanism of theoretical understanding of crime existence in society. In particular, the conclusion was made that the main reason of crime rates increasing within the territorial socio-economic system (specifically, the Russian Federation region) is the imbalance between theoretically estimated potential of socio-economic development of a definite region at a certain stage of society development and actual vector and dynamics of such development in reality.

Keywords: Causes of crime, territorial differences in crime rates, spatial analysis.

INTRODUCTION

It is widely accepted that the problem of identifying crime causes is the main issue in criminology. Extensive knowledge has been accumulated, and many theoretical concepts regarding the origination and existence of crime in a society have been developed in the course of numerous attempts to solve this problem. In the 1970s and 1980s, Soviet criminological science also made significant headway in addressing the issue, mainly owing to large-scale studies aimed at learning crime geography or the patterns that mold its territorial differences.

Study of causes of criminality in territorial aspects is the first and, at the same time, the most comprehensive approach to criminological research, combining a significant number of methods of scientific comprehension. The core of the developed territorial approach, in broad lines, can be quintessentialized as follows. It is applied to examine factors (causes) of criminality and consists of a) analysis and comparison of criminal activeness of the population of certain territorial systems of various levels (city, village, district, region, separate country) and b) identification of particular (economic, social, demographic, cultural, etc.) factors manifested in a specific way within these territorial systems and finding the interrelation of the

above factors with criminality indicators in these areas. Upon the establishment of certain interrelation of changes in indicators within a particular area and observed deviation of individual indicators characterizing various aspects of the life of its population, we conclude that it was those deviations that were the causes of increased activeness of people in the criminal sphere.

The practice of implementation of the territorial approach by Soviet criminologists enabled proving of the thesis that criminality is a social phenomenon because all changes occurring thereto are driven by the nature of transformation of social processes as a whole. The correlation of multiannual and rather broad-ranging empirical studies of criminality indicators with statistical data characterizing particular social life aspects, carried out in relation to inhabited localities or administrative-territorial units of other level, confirmed the hypothesis of the social nature and structure of causes of criminality.

Under the conditions of the administrative-command system and centrally planned economy that existed in the USSR, these scientific conclusions were of very serious significance for the practice as a whole. The overall long-term planning of development in almost all spheres of life of the Soviet society made it possible to predict – in advance and with a high degree of probability – the criminologically significant consequences of the measures of socioeconomic nature that were intended to be implemented by the

*Address correspondence to this author at the Yugra State University, 16, Chekhova str., Khanty-Mansiysk, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug – Yugra, 628012, Russian Federation; Tel: (3467)357-535; Fax: (3467)357-551; E-mail: demetr79@mail.ru

machinery of party and government in a given region of the country. Therefore, already at the planning stage, the specialists had an opportunity to give a reasonable forecast of criminogenic processes development in this territory and to work out a program for prevention of increase in crime therein.

Moreover, in the second half of the 1980s, leading Soviet criminologists noted that, with such presentation of an issue, the problem of causes of criminality is reduced only to finding, in particular conditions of the territory under investigation, what exact reason gives rise to criminality, from what sphere of the people's social life its roots derive. Thus, if the problem is viewed only from this perspective, the most natural way to address it is through meticulous study of all possible correlations between the totality of crimes (or criminals), on the one hand, and various spheres of social life, on the other hand. The points where the correlation relationships are the strongest hide in themselves the key, determinant causes of criminality (Spiridonov and Leps, 1985; Raska, 1985).

Notably, such studies have been gradually shifting to the periphery of criminological knowledge in Russia since the early 1990s. This change has occurred because most of the conclusions made by Soviet scientists contradict present-day realities in many ways. In particular, the Soviet criminologists noted that an increased level of crime was recorded mainly in the regions with the highest immigration rates; by contrast, the figures were much lower in the regions where the immigration rate was low. However, today, even a preliminary study of crime rates in regions with the largest departure and influx of migrants shows that the crime rates in "donor" regions significantly exceed the rates in "recipient" regions.

Additionally, during the Soviet period, regions with intense economic development were always "of concern" in terms of crime rates; however, socially and economically active territories currently demonstrate relatively low (in comparison with the average Russian territory) crime rates (Bakharev, 2011: 39-40; Bakharev, 2013: 403-404).

Thus, the current factors that influence the increase or decrease in crime rates in constituents of the Russian Federation and, accordingly, shape Russia's crime map – the geography of Russian crime – have yet to be identified. Relevant surveys during recent decades have mainly been aimed at solving purely descriptive tasks; they document the levels, structure

and dynamics of crime in different regions, but no significant progress has been made in explaining what trends cause such situations under the conditions of the market-based economic management rather than the previous planned economy. Why is this so?

To address this question, we previously conducted a retrospective analysis of the main Russian and foreign concepts of crime causes as well as the main approaches to *studying* the very phenomenon of crime causes. This analysis concluded that the theoretical reasoning regarding the phenomenon of crime in the Soviet Union naturally happens under the influence of the Marxist ideology, which forged a vivid global, *macro-level* approach to studying and explaining the specifics of the development of social processes, resulting in the *theory of social contradictions* explaining the main cause of crime. In Russia, unlike in other countries, the influence of the Marxist ideology has also led to the mainstreaming of a *deterministic approach* in understanding crime causes (Bakharev, 2016a: 122-123, 132).

The theoretical presupposition of this approach is as follows: crime, being one of the descriptors of the wellbeing of a social organism, is determined not by separate social life elements or phenomena but by *the totality of socioeconomic, sociopolitical and other factors affecting crime through the integrated interaction with each other* (Prozumentov and Shesler, 2014: 57). Therefore, the main focus should be learning the trends that shape crime situations in a transforming a social system *rather than on identifying specific factors* correlated with the crime rate (which is typical for the *causal* approach in contrast to the deterministic approach). According to this approach, any significant variation in crime rate should be considered a *dysfunction of the social organism*, that is, a deviation from the "normal" functioning of the society at a certain historical stage (Bluvshstein, 1985: 33-35).

Because the starting point for the studies under the deterministic approach is the understanding of common trends of functioning of a social organism, it is rather interesting for us to investigate a field such as *territorial differences in crime* first because of the unique social organisms – socioeconomic systems at regional and settlement levels – that are featured here as the main objects in Russian criminology. Second, it is also interesting to learn whether the influence of the deterministic concept of crime influences identifying trends that shape crime's territorial differences.

Notably, the method of comparing crime rate and socioeconomic rates across several territorial entities (very rarely across separate countries and usually across the regions of one country) is the very first positivist method in criminology. It was first mentioned in research papers in the second quarter of the 19th century by Quetelet, Gerry, Dupin, and others (Bakharev, 2016a: 144-146). Soviet criminology has also largely contributed to the development of this field (Bakharev, 2016a: 164-195). We found that the traditional causal scheme of studying territorial differences in crime dominated Soviet criminology until the early 1980s. As mentioned above, the point of such studies was to identify links between crime rates and the statistic figures that show the situation in various spheres of life in regions and cities. As a result, in planned Soviet society when the orientation of socioeconomic processes could be, so to say, “manually” corrected, the possibility of a centralized influence on crime was theoretically substantiated (Orekhov, 1982).

Some Soviet criminologists believed that studies using a deterministic approach to analyze territorial differences in crime were actually doomed to failure until the patterns of the functioning of complex social systems were established not only in statics but also in dynamics. This understanding, in turn, first required the identification of the factors that show the nature, specificity and orientation of the main socioeconomic processes taking place in society and second how these factors are linked to the theory of social contradictions as the motive power of social progress in general (Spiridonov and Leps, 1985: 16-18). For the first time, E.E. Raska tried to solve this problem in the monograph “The Fight Against Crime and the Social Management” (Raska, 1985) using the example of Estonia under the conditions of the Soviet centralized and planned society.

However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the study of territorial differences in crime using the deterministic approach gradually declined, as there was not even a rough understanding of the patterns under which regions and cities were now functioning in the market-based model of industrial relations instead of the planned one.

It was also found that the studies within the causal approach could not fully explain the co-relation of today’s social processes and crime rates. Moreover, as we have already said, most of the conclusions by the Soviet scientists largely contradict present-day realities

in many aspects, such as the influence of migration, urbanization and economic development intensification on crime rate (Bakharev, 2011; Bakharev, 2013).

Finally, (concerning this problem) *the most burning question* (that arose in the papers of Quetelet and Gerry and that also drew the attention of Russian criminologists of the prerevolutionary period as well as many of the Soviet researchers), namely, *why in some regions with successful development in economic and social terms, crime rates are sometimes much higher than they are in less economically and socially developed territories*, still remains unanswered.

All these contradictions which greatly complicate the adequate explanation of patterns formation of territorial differences in crime rates in modern Russia are not reflected and explained in modern researches of not only criminologists but also geographers and economists.

In our opinion the effectiveness of territorial approach to crime causes understanding will reach its greatest extent when it is a criminological analysis of territorial-spatial systems functioning, revealing their destabilizing factors, sources of disorganization and social tension.

At the same time, the main attention should be focused not on separate fragments of social reality, not on studying torn out of integral social organism processes and phenomena in their interaction with criminality, but precisely on that qualitatively new that is revealed as a result of universal interaction and mutual influence of all the basic components and spheres of a certain social system.

Thus, as we believe, it is the solution of the problem of *identifying patterns of territorial socio-economic systems functioning in modern conditions* that at a great extent determines further progress in the sphere of scientific cognition of society crime determination patterns.

THEORETICAL BASIS AND METHODOLOGY

In the Soviet period the solution of the problem of territorial socio-economic formations of regional (settlement) level mechanisms functioning understanding was considerably hampered, firstly, by the fact that in the planning and directive society development paradigm, the systemic nature of functioning was not objectively inherent, and secondly, by obvious lack of attention of Soviet public science to

social sphere in general. These days a whole range of preconditions has been formed to perceive socio-organic nature of a town, and to an even greater extent – of a region (federalization of regional arrangement in Russia, the system of local self-government development and so on), that is in a scientific way to fix their ability to self-development both in the time and spacial aspects as all-sufficient social systems. But above of all, very significant (in the context of indicated problem) is the progress in the field of identifying the patterns of development of socio-economic processes in territorial aspect that has been made by Western scientists.

To address these issues, we analyzed the current state of the regional economy and socioeconomic geography. It was determined that a new interdisciplinary field, “New Economic Geography”, is currently being formed at the juncture of these sciences to study socioeconomic processes in the spatial projection. Having analyzed the latest developments of the representatives in the field (Fujita, Krugman and Venables, 1999; Fujita and Krugman, 2003; Kolomak, 2013; Kuznetsova, 2013), we defined the main factors that set the vector and dynamics for socioeconomic processes in Russian regions under modern historical conditions. They include the following: 1) the economic and geographical position of the regional socioeconomic system; 2) the type and structure of the settlement network (mainly cities); 3) the size and density of the population; 4) the infrastructure development level (particularly transport routes); 5) the degree of the territory’s attractiveness for the residents of other regions and foreigners; 6) the state of the region’s economic base; 7) the specifics of the existing institutional environment in the region; and 8) the degree of the region’s “social space compression”¹ (Bakharev, 2016b: 306-312).

Based on the analysis and evaluation of the abovementioned spatial development factors of socioeconomic processes, we would like to try to identify the patterns of the functioning of Russia’s regional territorial systems, which may further be used to learn their crime determination mechanism.

The specific method of using spatial analysis in criminology is as follows.

1. The initial theoretical preconditions for the application of this analysis are not new: its starting point is the abovementioned hypothesis laid out in the deterministic concept of studying crime causes, that is, *the crime (being one of the attributes of a social organism) is determined not by separate social phenomena or processes; instead, it depends on the specificity of the entire process, integrated interaction and the mutual influence of all main components and spheres of life of a society, i.e., on societal development as a whole*. Therefore, before attempting to identify trends that lead to changing crime situations, we should first identify the patterns of functioning of a particular social system and the factors that establish the nature and specificity of the main socioeconomic processes in a society; only then is it reasonable to use this knowledge for existing trends that shape the specifics of crime in social communities at a particular level, i.e., territorial crime differences.

Such analysis only became possible recently, when foreign economic geographers and economists used econometric models, i.e., experimented, to confirm the most popular viewpoints of the role and importance of certain factors (cities, the distance between them, transport routes, migration flows, etc.) in forming the socioeconomic activity of the population within certain areas. As a result, we now have some serious theoretical preconditions to construct models of the functioning of a certain spatially localized social system; these models have also had a positive effect on the profundity and reliability of research outcomes in all social sciences that involve the spatial aspect in studying their subjects.

2. *The methodological platform* of spatial analysis in criminological studies is based on a *systematic approach* to understanding the structure and patterns of the functioning of socioterritorial communities at various levels. The main component of such a *systematic approach* is the *modeling* method, which involves building logical models of similar communities. Any element (subsystem) of this model should include crime as a consequence of the integrated influence of the development vector (dynamics) and of the specifics of the interaction of all major socioeconomic processes combined into the elements of the model. Those

¹i.e., the contraction of habitable, developed, economically active areas and the specific reduction of economic ecumene due to depopulation of the territory and reduced economic activity.

factors that influence the spatial development of socioeconomic processes should be integrated into the socioterritorial community model as the key elements, whose interaction drives logically acceptable change in all basic constituent elements of this model.

3. To analyze and assess factors of socioeconomic development of territorial societal systems, *cartographic* and *statistical* research methods are used. The first method includes the visual analysis of the territorial localization of the studied objects; cartometry, i.e. measuring distances, areas and other values using maps; and learning trends and dynamics of socioeconomic phenomena and processes within territorial aspects. Widespread use of the cartographic method is a hallmark of spatial analysis that sets it apart from other research trends developed within crime geography. The statistical research method is initially used within spatial analysis to quantitatively assess phenomena and the studied processes (factors of socioeconomic development of some territorial socioeconomic systems and the outcome of such development over a certain period of time) using socioeconomic statistics for the country's regions and their cities and towns.
4. Another essential component of spatial analysis is *the comparative method*, which has multiple aspects and a consistent role in this situation. First, upon comparing socioterritorial communities to determine whether they have socioeconomic development factors, an assessment is carried out to learn the amount of such factors. Second, the most important parameters of the socioeconomic development of socioterritorial communities over a certain period of time (defined based on a built model of the functioning of such a social system) are compared with the potential of the community at the beginning of a given period. Third, we need to compare the outcomes of the socioeconomic development of a particular socioterritorial community with its crime rates over the same timeframe. Fourth, the final results of the comparison of socioeconomic development and crime rates in a particular territory should be checked against the results from other socioterritorial communities.
5. To decide what socioterritorial communities will be used for comparison within the spatial

analysis, a preliminary *typologization* procedure with respect to all of these communities at a certain level, i.e., only cities or only regional socioeconomic systems, is carried out. The objects belonging to one typological group, i.e., those that are qualitatively similar but not quantitatively, may be compared. Thus, the criteria for typologization within the spatial analysis during criminological research are as follows: a) the potential or "initial environment" of a socioterritorial community for successful socioeconomic development and b) various conditions to fulfill this potential.

6. Finally, because the analysis of the functioning quality of a particular socioterritorial community (region or locality) will be carried out on a dynamic basis (i.e., both the potential for the socioeconomic development of a region or a locality at the beginning of a certain period and the dynamics and the outcome of such development at the end of the given period will be analyzed), the spatial analysis also uses *the historical approach*. This approach will allow the evolution of the phenomena and processes (including crime) to be traced through the time; it will also connect their vector and dynamics with the significant events that occurred during the period studied.

Thus, *the key feature* of the spatial analysis as one of the research trends to study the mechanism for crime determination in a society within a territorial context is the fact that for its successful implementation, a researcher should develop specific *spatial* or *geographical* thinking. Such thinking allows the researcher to learn the specific property of the space occupied by a certain social system affecting the order of the objects located there, i.e., to learn the patterns of functioning of this social system within the spatial scale by synthesizing territorial, systemic, historical, typological and comparative approaches. The patterns learned may be used for previously known patterns of territorial differences in crime and, as a result, broaden the concept of the crime determination mechanism in general.

We have developed the general methodological scheme for the spatial analysis of crime causes, which includes three main stages: 1) the spatial analysis of the functioning of socioterritorial communities located within the state administrative-territorial boundaries (for example, the borders of the constituents of the Russian

Federation) that fall into one typological subgroup in terms of their socioeconomic development potential; 2) the analysis of crime trends in such socioterritorial communities; 3) the comparison of the results of spatial analysis of functioning of socioterritorial communities and the results of the analysis of their crime trends and the description of identified patterns of functioning of the crime determination mechanism in socioterritorial communities studied (Bakharev, 2016c: 435).

Because the spatial analysis of the functioning of territorial socioeconomic systems is a fairly new “field” of research in modern social sciences and has not yet been properly developed, it should be given special attention.

Considering the specifics of using spatial analysis in criminology described earlier, this stage of the research (which relates to regional socioterritorial systems) should be implemented through the following steps.

- I. Build a logical model of a region as a system of interacting elements (subsystems).
- II. Define the factors, which both form separate elements (subsystems) of the regional system and determine the specifics of the interaction of these subsystems and, thus, the peculiarities of the functioning of the entire system in relation to other regional socioeconomic systems; describe the general role and importance of each factor against the known patterns of spatial socioeconomic development processes and the formation of socioeconomic development vectors of a particular region.
- III. Describe the criteria for the assessment of socioeconomic development factors, which together form the potential for the region's development, and develop procedures for analyzing the extent to which they are available within certain regional systems.

- IV. Describe the criteria for assessing the successful functioning of a regional socioeconomic system.
- V. Create or use the existing typology of regional socioeconomic systems and select a group of regions for the analysis.
- VI. Compare the “initial environment”, dynamics and outcomes of the socioeconomic development of the regions of the selected typological group.

A logical model of the development of socioeconomic processes within the space of a particular region, which also illustrates the systemic nature of its functioning and which was built with certain assumptions and simplifications, may be established as follows.

The elements (subsystems) of a regional territorial socioeconomic system should include the following (Figure 1):

- Settlement structure;
- Infrastructure complex;
- Production (economy) sphere; and
- Social sphere.

The economic and geographical position of a region shapes the network of its localities, especially its cities and towns. The settlement structure, together with infrastructure networks (transport, electric power, water, gas and heat supply) that consider the natural resource base available in the region, forms the industry structure and generally defines the developmental nature of the economic sphere. The social sphere of the region (birth rate, health, education, culture of the population, etc.) and the quality of its human capital, which is a decisive factor in the overall living climate in cities and towns of the

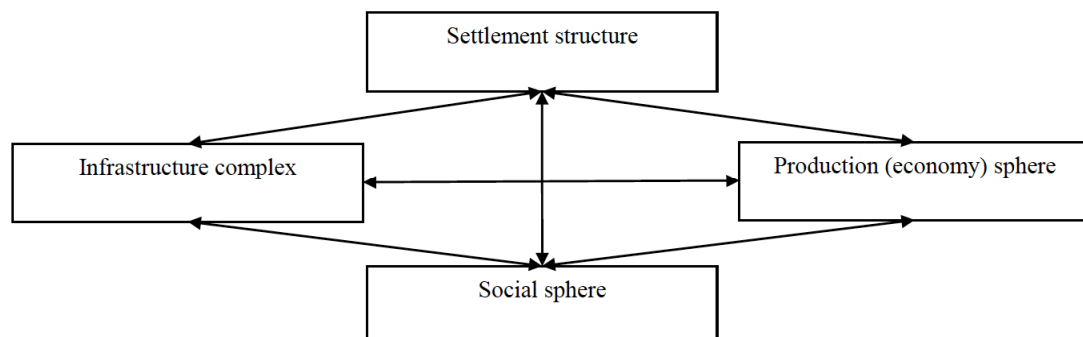


Figure 1: Interaction of a regional system's elements (subsystems).

region, largely depend on the economy's development. The importance of human capital growth, i.e., the level of innovativeness of the population in a modern postindustrial society, is increasing as the key factor, the "driver", of the development of the economy and society in general. Of course, this was also true during all the recent developmental stages of human civilization, but now, it became more notable.

Thus, *the dynamic model* of the territorial socioeconomic development of a region and the dependence of crime rates on the nature of such development in modern Russia may be presented as follows.

When the general living climate and quality of the social environment deteriorate, the settlement structure of a region will inevitably degrade, demonstrating a decrease in urban population (due to the high death rate and reflux migration) and the depopulation of the surrounding rural periphery. Developed social space will start shrinking, which will increase the risks of "erosion" of infrastructural arteries; they will simply fall into decay (first, the road network), or there will be a dire shortage of specialists who maintain them. Surely, in such conditions, the region will not only be unable to develop economically, i.e., to increase the production rate of goods and services, but also will not be able to even maintain its previously achieved production rates over time. As a result, the budget component of the process of regional development management is also at risk. Due to the lack of financial resources caused by reduced tax revenues from enterprises, the regional authorities will not be able to adequately fulfil their social obligations to support healthcare, education, science, culture, etc. Many social problems in the region will increase, and this will inevitably bring a new spiral of socioeconomic deterioration to the region in general.

The escalation of social disadvantage and the scaling up and deepening of social differences within the regional socioeconomic system inevitably increase the likelihood of personal problem (conflict) situations, which in particular cases may lead to the abnormal behavior of a particular individual within a community, i.e., a single demonstration of behavior that the majority of society members consider to be a socially deviant act (including crimes). The occurrence of such deviant behavior and its nature, focus, duration and severity depend both on the conflict situation and the specific interaction between social and psychophysiological factors in the structure of the deviant behavioral

mechanism (Kudryavtsev, 2013: 204-205). However, the possibility of a conflict situation in the life of an individual member of society and the maturity of value-normative regulators of his or her activity and the psychophysiological development level of an individual largely certainly depend on the quality of the social environment, which is naturally the product of the functioning of the territorial socioeconomic community.

By analyzing the functioning of the given model in the spatial context and having defined the patterns of such development, we may attempt to assess the potential or "initial environment" of every region with regard to such patterns. This potential, as we have already mentioned, depends on the socioeconomic development factors available in a particular regional social system, which have been discussed earlier. The evaluation criteria and analysis of these factors have already been described previously (Bakharev, 2016a: 274-282), and owing to the extensiveness of the material, we have to omit this issue in this article.

According to the scheme offered earlier, the next thing we should consider is a methodological basis for developing criteria to assess the success of the functioning of the regional socioeconomic system. Prior to developing such a basis, we need to consider the following questions.

- What sort of development of the territorial socioeconomic system will fairly improve the quality of its social environment, or, put simply, what changes that occur within this system prove its development?
- Can we say that those positive changes in the social sphere (the improvement of health indicators, living standards, education, etc.) whose achievement was naturally a priority task for local, regional, and state socioeconomic policy in general are the "development" of the territorial system?

Does the development of a territorial system lie primarily in quantitative and qualitative changes to its economic sphere, which is the basis for the social sphere because it is impossible to fundamentally improve the local population's social welfare without sufficient economic resources? Or does territory development always involve a certain shift in its settlement structure and infrastructure network – i.e., the base that, as shown earlier, any territorial socioeconomic system has and that largely sets the

prospects for the future functioning of this system in general?

In our opinion, neither growing rates of regional economic development nor increases in the population's social wellbeing, in aggregate or separately, can clearly bespeak positive dynamics of regional development, especially if such changes are observed during the deterioration of the settlement and infrastructure networks in the region. *Only the relatively steady and proportional development of all components of a territorial socioeconomic system demonstrates a favorable vector for its development on the whole.* Thus, we can speak of the *development* of a regional system and not temporary improvement in certain areas of its components only when the regional economy, population welfare and social sphere figures grow and such growth comes with an increase, or at least preservation, of the same level of socioeconomic development potential of the region (assessed based on what the factors are for such development, the extent to which they are available, and how they are combined).

As mentioned earlier, a comprehensive assessment of how well-balanced such development is and whether it corresponds to the initial potential of the territorial system is possible only when we *compare* socioterritorial entities whose potential or "initial" environment for socioeconomic development (measured by assessing to the extent to which these development factors are available) are more or less the same. In our opinion, the most appropriate group of regions in this respect are the constituents of the Central Federal District: they are relatively similar in terms of basic socioeconomic environment; they are located in almost identical natural and climatic conditions; they have a similar production and infrastructure base, a similar population distribution system and age of its residents; and they all experience positive-negative tendencies of the Moscow Region to some extent. The exception is Moscow and the Moscow Region itself, which stand out from the group in all respects. Additionally, a number of regions with a high level (over 75%) of the urban population in 2003 stand out from the rest: the Vladimir, Ivanovo, Tula and Yaroslavl Regions. As a result, twelve regions in the Central Federal District were selected for this research: the Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kaluga, Kostroma, Kursk, Lipetsk, Orel, Ryazan, Smolensk, Tambov and Tver Regions.

Thus, we assume that the successful functioning of socio-territorial communities assessed through

analyzing data on the level and dynamics of the economic development of the territory, its demographic reproduction rates, the quality of health of its population, and the quality of its population in general (level of education, etc.) depends on the vector and intensity of the "center-peripheral" processes (according to J. Friedman (Friedmann, 1966)) as well as the severity of the social space compression process. Therefore, the most favorable socioeconomic environment resulting from relatively higher rates for the above aspects shall be, in our opinion, in those territorial systems of the regional level where socially developed space is the least compressed and positive urbanization and migration processes, by contrast, are most active.

As we have predicted, these regional systems also have the lowest criminogenic situation. The dynamic and progressive vector of their socioeconomic development have a beneficial effect on the general social wellbeing of the population in these territorial systems. In contrast, an increased crime rate signals certain deviations from the normal functioning of a certain territorial socioeconomic system. It is quite logical that these deviations or dysfunctions should be treated as the causes of increased crime rates within the given territorial system.

MAIN RESULTS

The methodology of the research and its main outcome have already been described (Bakharev, 2015b). However, in this paper, we would also like to mention that the comparison of the "initial" environment, dynamics and results of socioeconomic development in regions in the selected typological group in 2003-2013² showed that the current spatial development of socioeconomic processes commonly follows the patterns described by foreign

²There were several arguments in favor of taking 2003 as the starting point. First, the All-Russian Population Census was conducted in 2002, and based on it, a large amount of data regarding the population statistics of the regions were corrected in 2003. Second, a number of necessary statistical rates (such as the education level of the population) can be calculated only on the basis of the data received from censuses. Finally, an analysis of the crime rate should also be conducted with 2003 as the starting point. The official statistics showed a noticeable decrease in the number of recorded criminal acts in 2002. However, this decrease was not due to successes in battling crime but to the adoption of the new Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation (effective since 01.07.2002), which greatly complicated the activity of law enforcement bodies and, as a result, had a negative impact on registering committed crimes². The final year for the analysis, 2013, was selected due to the fact that (as is clear now) it marked the end of a certain political, economic and social stability in the Russian Federation. Serious changes in relations with other countries, which happened in 2014 (with Ukraine, Western Europe and the United States), caused crisis phenomena both in the country's economy and social sphere, the scale, and accordingly, the negative consequences of which are increasing in Russia ever year.

representatives of spatial science. Positive trends in the socioeconomic development of a regional system (which include, first and foremost, the economic growth that largely forms a base for broad reproduction of the region's population and the enhancement of its health as well as for improving the quality of the region's population itself as measured by its level of education) closely correlate with the following factors: a) the growth of the population and its density in large cities and their surrounding territories; b) the maintenance of the settlement network contour; c) the maintenance of an active balance in migration; d) the improvement of the region's infrastructure (transport networks, etc.); and e) the diversification of the economy, primarily due to expansion of the services sector. However, the research also showed that a lack of (or slow) compression of social space indicates the positive socioeconomic development of the region.

The analysis of crime levels in the abovementioned regions of the Central Federal District of Russia against the socioeconomic processes that took place there in 2003-2013 allowed us to identify the following patterns.

- Among the regions analyzed during this period, those with the highest and/or positive figures that mark the outcome of the population's activity in these territories in the socioeconomic aspect and those with the highest and/or positive figures that mark the quality of the population itself were those where the nature and the vector of socioeconomic development best correlated with the positive model of spatial socioeconomic development of regional territorial systems (Belgorod, Voronezh, Ryazan and Tambov Regions). The study of crime tendencies showed that this group of regions also had the best criminogenic situation within the mentioned period, whereas the regions with negative socioeconomic processes had the least favorable criminogenic situation (the Smolensk, Tver and Orel Regions). The unclear general development trajectories of similar processes in the Bryansk, Kaluga, Kostroma, Kursk and Lipetsk Regions caused ambiguity in interpreting the criminal situations that developed there.
- The social wellbeing of the population in a region largely depends on the region's economy level and growth; the deterioration of the region's settlement structure and a strong tendency for the depopulation of its certain territories are also the main destructive factors for the region's

development on the whole. This tendency was most evident during the analysis of crime in the regions; their network of settlements suffered severe deformation during the period considered, particularly in the Tver Region, which had the highest average crime rate.

- A fast-growing economy in a region with no improvement in the population's quality of life (Kaluga Region) also fails to drastically improve the situation with crime; however, a balanced development of the economic and social spheres of a region can prevent a sharp surge of criminal activity among the population (as in the Bryansk, Kostroma and Kursk Regions).
- When the above becomes impossible and the stagnant economy cannot fuel the social sector of a region, the crime rates noticeably increase (as in the Orel and Smolensk Regions), although not as much as in regions with a strong tendency for social space compression.

The main pattern identified after comparing the region's initial "chances" for success in terms of the development of its socioeconomic basis (against identified patterns of the spatial development of socioeconomic processes) and following the actual results in this field and statistical crime rate is as follows. *The social wellbeing of a region's population*, with the crime rate being one of the main wellbeing indexes, initially depends on the *potential* of each regional socioeconomic system in terms of the theory of spatial science and on the *extent to which this potential is fulfilled* as measured by the actual outcome achieved by regional systems in their economic, demographic, social and other development. The higher this potential is, the more opportunities the region has for successful socioeconomic development and the better the outcome it may gain in this sphere. Underused potential leads to a worsening of the population's social wellbeing in a region and inevitably to the growth of negative crime trends.

Thus, we believe that the *main cause* for the deterioration of the population's social wellbeing and the consequent growth of crime within a certain regional socioeconomic system is the beginning of its dysfunction against its usual manner, where the main dysfunction is the *imbalance between the socioeconomic potential available in this social community at a certain stage of historical development and its vector, as well as its actual development rate*.

We believe the *factors* of this dysfunction of a socioterritorial community in today's historical stage of Russian society are the *drawbacks in the mechanism of the state-public management of socioeconomic processes*. The most crucial of these, the one that triggers other drawbacks and their nature, is the hypertrophied and inefficient system of state and political institutions, which obviously lacks balance with, or rather dominates, the sociopolitical institutions of Russian society. The latter cannot fully counterbalance state structures, which have a negative impact on the economic institutions of Russian society and their development over the last decade, leading to monopolization of the economic sphere as a whole. The poor organizational structure of political and economic institutions in the country virtually prevents normal institutional interaction at the level of regional communities; therefore, the impulses of socioeconomic development generated by those communities are becoming less tangible. As a result, people's political and economic activity is noticeably and steadily declining at the regional level and overall in Russia.

We believe that overcoming these contradictions and returning to the model of progressive social and economic development is possible only if the political structure of Russian society undergoes fundamental reforms under the principles established in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. Only total democratization and liberalization of the Russian political sphere can create such conditions under which the main cause of economic stagnation – their underused potential for socioeconomic development – and, as a result, the deterioration of crime in Russia's regions will gradually have less of an impact.

CONCLUSION

What is the central conclusion for further understanding the causal complex of crime in general? We assume that it has three points.

First, we suggest a solution for a longtime criminological question – *why is the crime rate in a "rich" region higher than that in a "poor" region?* The answer is that *in this case, a "rich" region is less productive in using its large social-economic potential than a "poor" region with its smaller potential is.*

Second, we have found a path to move to the next level in studying the patterns of the territorial differentiation of crime rates – from quantitative to qualitative level. Because studying the interlinkage

between not only *final* socioeconomic figures but also *potentially possible* ones allows the issue of the *quality* of socioeconomic growth and its correlation to crime rates to be raised.

Third, this is virtually a "revival" of the forgotten *theory of social contradictions* as the stimulus for not only the human civilization's progress but also social deviations, including crime. The idea that the main cause of increasing crime is the imbalance, i.e., the *discrepancy* between the potential and the actual socioeconomic development, is nothing but detailing, elaborating, investigating, and hence developing this theory.

These results suggest that in conditions of not only the centrally planned but also the market method of economic activity, a hypothesis, based on empirical data, that considers deterioration of criminality indicators as a sign of manifestation of social and economic ill-being in a certain territorial social system is confirmed. This means once again that (but, hopefully, at a qualitatively different level) a long-standing idea stating that the root of criminality lies in negative changes in the socioeconomic sphere of society is proven. However, under current conditions, knowing general patterns of evolution of this sphere, we can both determine the nature and estimate the extent of such negative trends, and therefore (having an idea about the nature of relationships between changes in the socioeconomic sphere and in the sphere of criminality), we are able to make relatively exact predictions of changes in indicators of criminality itself. As a result, a seemingly important step is taken to achieve the main goal of criminological science, namely, to comprehend the principles of functioning of criminality as a social phenomenon and to develop a mechanism for influencing it, i.e., to obtain, in the foreseeable future, the possibility of implementation of full-scale social control over criminality.

Currently, the main outcome of our research is the conclusion that the issue of achieving effective social control over crime may only be addressed if the country demonstrates sustainable and progressive socioeconomic development. However, such development is possible only when effective economic institutions (free competition, no market entry restrictions, ensured property rights, favorable conditions to promote innovations, etc.) are formed in this country. The long-term trend of the progressive development of the society's economic and social spheres can be ensured only through the influence of

inclusive *political* institutions (elections and succession of power, political pluralism, an independent judiciary and media, etc.) (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2015: 105-108; Goldstone, 2014: 193-196). Eventually, the issue of crime control, as well as other issues of the functioning of a society, comes to the issue of the society's institutional structure and the efficiency of its constituent political and economic institutions. In our opinion, this means that the development of criminological science (as well as many other social sciences – sociology, economics, etc.), at least in works studying crime as a social phenomenon and the mechanisms of its determination (i.e., the macro-level issues in this science), shall focus on institutional theory, namely, using that theory's terminological and methodological base to study the agenda.

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