

**THE INFLUENCE OF CRIMINAL SUBCULTURE ON CITIZENS' APATHY AND
MOTIVATIONAL INERTIA REGARDING SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL
INTERACTIONS, AS WELL AS PARTICIPATION IN JOINT INITIATIVES OF LAW
ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS TO ENSURE
PUBLIC SAFETY**

Urazbaev Abatbay Askerbaevich

The Education Centre for Special Training, Department for the Coordination of Special
Operations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Tashkent,

Uzbekistan

E-mail: urazbaev.abat@mail.ru

ABSTRACT

The article examines the influence of criminal subculture on public consciousness and motivational inertia of citizens in post-Soviet countries with an emphasis on Uzbekistan. It explores the historical development of the criminal subculture, starting with the repression of the 30s of the twentieth century, as well as its transformation into a modern social reality. Special attention is paid to the role of criminal jargon (slang, sociolect) and behavioral patterns in shaping public opinion about law enforcement agencies. The author also analyzes the problems of interaction between citizens and the state in the field of public security and identifies obstacles to the effective participation of civil society.

Keywords: Criminal subculture, post-Soviet countries, Uzbekistan, historical development, jargon, social dialect, perception of law enforcement agencies, interaction between citizens and the state, public safety, civic activism, repression, social transformation, criminal ideologies.

INTRODUCTION

Criminal subculture is a powerful social phenomenon that has had and continues to have a significant impact on the formation of public consciousness, especially in the post-Soviet countries. Criminal or prison subculture did not originate in the USSR and is not a new phenomenon. «The development of criminal subculture can be traced back to all centuries of mankind's existence, perhaps it is one of the most ancient, archaic subcultures» [1]. The totalitarian-repressive policy pursued in the USSR was one factor in the significant influence of the criminal subculture on mass consciousness and having undergone a transformation after its collapse, this subculture was deeply integrated into public life, influencing language, interpersonal relations and the perception of law enforcement agencies.

The history of criminal subculture in the USSR is closely linked to the period of mass repression that began in the 1930s. The creation of the Gulag system contributed to the formation of the first stable elements of this subculture, the influence of which has only increased since then.

One of the key instruments of influence is a specific language known as criminal (prison) jargon, «fenya», formed in the environment of the criminal executive system. Along with it, a special role is played by informal codes of behaviour, which still influence the attitude of citizens towards law enforcement and public safety.

In everyday speech one can often hear criminal sociolect, and even people who have nothing to do with the criminal world, public figures, including in the writings of writers, and the media also actively use such vocabulary. The spread of the theme of «criminal romance» in everyday speech is evidenced by the high viewing ratings of some so-called «bloggers». Criminal subculture has long been firmly established in the consciousness of citizens, which allows us to talk about its spread in everyday life,

This article examines this phenomenon taking into account its contemporary impact on public consciousness. In particular, it analyses how criminal subculture contributes to the formation of negative perception of citizens' participation in public security.

Historical Context:

The period from 20-30s. XX century began the era of repressions in the USSR, which became one of the main moments in the evolution of criminal subculture in the USSR. Mass repressions and the sending of hundreds of thousands of people to the Gulag camps created favourable conditions for the formation of stable criminal structures within the penal system. According to official statistics, in only two years (1937-1938), known as the years of the Great Terror, 1 million 345 thousand people were convicted on political charges [2]. In total, according to some reports, more than 20 million people were convicted between 1920 and 1953 [3]. Ratio per 100 thousand Thus, in 1936 alone, the ITL¹ SAZLAG² held more than 36 thousand [24] prisoners. In total, more than 330 thousand [25] [6] people passed through the SAZLAG. According to various data, there were more than 800 [5] to 1260 [6] prisoners per 10 thousand population. «Overall, by the end of the twentieth century, approximately one in four men had experienced imprisonment» [7]. At the same time, for the implementation of socialist projects throughout the USSR, the so-called «construction of communism», along with ordinary citizens, both persons from among the beleaguered and probationers were involved on a large scale.

Convicts developed their own norms, codes of behaviour, rituals, hierarchy and values. At the same time, persons held in penitentiary institutions formed a unique way of verbal relationships, thieves' sociolect - «fentya», which ensured the preservation of identity and a sense of social cohesion to conceal true intentions in the confined prison space. Accordingly, key elements of criminal ideology, value orientations and principles of behaviour were developed, such as denial of cooperation with state structures, especially law enforcement agencies. The terms «snitch» (стыкач - [stu'katʃ]) and «goat» (козел - [kɔz'ɔl]) became part of the criminal worldview, acquired a different social meaning, becoming extremely negative assessments of persons who betrayed their own.

Another factor in the criminalisation of the population and the mass spread of criminal subculture, along with the huge number of convicted persons, was the fact that in the Gulag

¹ "ITL" (Corrective Labor Camps) in the context of Soviet history refers to the camps where forced labor was carried out by prisoners in the Soviet Union, especially during the period of Stalin's repressions

² SAZLAG is an abbreviation for "Central Asian Labor Camp", which refers to forced labor camps that were located in Central Asia during the Soviet period. These camps were part of a forced labor system that housed thousands of prisoners, especially during the period of Stalinist repression. In operational command it was subordinated to the Plenipotentiary Representation of the United State Political Directorate (OGPU) for Central Asia and the ULAG, then to the GULAG of the NKVD, afterwards it was transferred to the Directorate of Correctional Labour Camps and Colonies (UITLC) of the NKVD of the Uzbek SSR.

camps political prisoners and persons who had committed common crimes were held in the same place of detention [8]. «Political prisoners found themselves involved in a criminal and criminal environment and were forced to adapt to the new rules and way of life» [9], absorbing foreign culture, including the use of sociolect.

While the state could not «implement measures to ensure the necessary level of socialisation of these citizens and control the spread of criminal ideas and values to others who worked with them.

«As a result, a criminal socio-psychological climate began to develop, the creation of which served to infect young people with criminal ideas» [10]. At the same time, prisoners who returned to society carried the prison ideology with them. Distinguishing themselves from other citizens by their more aggressive behavior, in some cases positioning themselves as some kind of «authority», a person with a high social status (belonging to a high caste of «criminals») and experience in surviving in an isolated hostile environment, and began to play the role of a relay of principles and norms instilled in places of deprivation of liberty. Former prisoners began to be perceived as carriers of some «correct» morality, which further contributed to the popularisation of criminal subculture among young people, forming new value orientations. It also gave rise to a kind of romanticisation of the criminal world, which began to be perceived as an alternative to the unjust system. Thus, according to research, one of the main factors behind the dominance of criminal culture in modern society is the influence of former prisoners, the retransmission of criminal practices from the older generation to the younger [11], as well as the low socio-economic situation of the population at the time [12].

Simultaneously with these processes, starting in the middle of the twentieth century, youth groups of «backyard» teenagers began to appear in the cities of the USSR, mostly consisting of persons aged 14 to 19 years old, forming groups according to the territorial principle [13]. The relationships between members of the groupings followed the model of criminal subculture. Each of them had certain norms of behaviour, hierarchy and, in particular, the use of «fenya» as a form of identification in verbal communication. As a result, the criminal subculture began to overlap and sometimes merge with broader social life, influencing social norms and the perception of power. In times of political, economic crisis, the system of values and other culture is alternative. Under such conditions, criminal subculture loses its negative connotation and is adopted by other members of society who are not associated with the phenomenon. While the Soviet official authorities for a long time categorically denied the existence of any subculture within society, and even more so the existence of a criminal ideology, hierarchy, and language separate from the official one, no serious countermeasures were taken.

Impact of criminal subculture on modern consciousness and attitude of citizens to participation in ensuring public security

Over the decades, criminal subculture has preserved and developed its principles and ideals. In the post-Soviet space, such elements of the subculture as a special jargon have steadily entered the mass culture. Criminal sociolect, being a characteristic feature of criminal subculture, has gone beyond its original socio-cultural context, integrated into the everyday

verbal communication of vast social groups, which has significantly affected the formation of language, behavioral practices and value orientations in society.

At the current stage of society's development, criminal subculture continues to influence various aspects of life, although it has been transformed in the new conditions of the changing social context.

In a number of post-Soviet countries one can notice the integration of elements of criminal language and culture into mass consciousness, especially in youth subcultures. Such phenomena become especially noticeable in urban centres, where young people, seeking to stand out, start to borrow and use jargon and elements of behavior associated with criminal subculture, while not directly related to the criminal environment, uses jargon and elements of behavior associated with criminal romance. Numerous sociological studies conducted by various research centres can serve as an example. Thus, according to studies, in the youth environment the use of criminal jargon in everyday communication is caused by the elementary habit of expressing oneself «like everyone else» or by habit in 32% of respondents [11] [14].

One of the most negative consequences of the criminal subculture, along with the increase in the level of legal nihilism, victimisation of the population, and the growth of corruption, is the formation of apathy and motivational inertia of citizens with regard to social and institutional interactions, as well as joint initiatives of law enforcement agencies and civil society institutions to ensure public safety.

In societies where criminal subculture is actively flourishing, there is a strong perception that any assistance to state authorities may lead to stigmatisation, which in turn may cause social rejection, not only from criminal elements, but also from ordinary citizens. Individuals are afraid of losing their reputational capital and facing public censure, which makes interaction with law enforcement agencies a high-risk and socially ambiguous initiative. This phenomenon is caused by a variety of causal factors, including historical context, social conditions and cultural characteristics. Elements of criminal subculture (sociolect) have been transferred into public life, increasing distrust between citizens and the state.

The phenomenon has been shaped since the era of repression, when whistleblowing was seen as part of state control, and subsequently, in the isolated environment of the penal system, non-cooperation with the authorities became an important aspect of criminal ideology based on the principle of «whoever is not with us is against us» and the use of harsh measures against «deviants».

A special sociolect formed in an isolated hostile environment, known as «fentya», and codes of behaviour that still influence citizens' attitudes towards law enforcement and public security play a special role in this. This aspect is worth considering in terms of its contemporary influence on public consciousness, as well as in terms of the negative perception of citizen participation in security.

Jargon terms such as «quulok» (қулоқ - [qu'lobq]), «snitch», and «goat» play an important role in this context and continue to be used in society to characterise persons cooperating with law enforcement agencies, performing a key function in the formation of a negative perception of citizens' participation in public security processes, associated with betrayal and public

condemnation, and contributing to the creation of an atmosphere of fear and mutual distrust in the social environment.

These circumstances have a significant impact on the institutional capacity of society to effectively implement measures to counter crime and maintain law and order. This, in turn, contributes to the tendency of a significant part of the population to distance themselves from state institutions, which significantly complicates their interaction with law enforcement agencies.

A paradoxical social situation arises in which the desire to help ensure the safety of the immediate neighbourhood and local community collides with the dominant fear of social stigmatisation and potential social censure and loss of reputation.

First of all, this social fact significantly complicates the preventive and investigative activities of law enforcement agencies, the effectiveness of which largely depends on information exchange with civil society. As a result, the tendency of social distance from state institutions is increasing, which further complicates the processes of interaction between citizens and law enforcement structures.

In addition, it creates the preconditions for the institutionalisation and expansion of the criminal environment, as individuals involved in illegal activities may gain a heightened sense of impunity due to the lack of activity of the population in counteracting their actions.

The expansion of criminal subculture is conditioned not only by historical and economic factors, but also by modern socio-cultural processes, in which this subculture is actively promoted and legitimised through media channels, which act as a tool to create a positive image of persons who are or have been in prison and romanticise criminal life.

The spread and entrenchment of the criminal subculture was facilitated by the focus of literary works, where the central theme was life in the «zone», camps, prisons [15]. For example, E.S. Ginzburg's «Steep Route», V.T. Shalamov's «Kolyma Tales», A.I. Solzhenitsyn's «In the Circle of the First» and many other works, although critical, also contributed to the strengthening of interest in the topic among a wide audience.

Criminal customs and traditions are most effectively propagandised by representatives of mass culture, performers of chanson, songs with slang and obscene words, etc [16].

Films, TV series and music that contain elements of criminal aesthetics become catalysed and assimilated into mass culture. «When watching television programmes and/or feature films that promote criminal activity, listening to «criminal» music or coming into contact in any other way with the criminal subculture, a person begins to «ingratiate» into it, to recognise the values of this subculture. In other words, a person becomes a full-fledged subject of this subculture, and much earlier than he commits a crime» [17].

«Criminal ideology on the Internet is a distinct phenomenon consisting of a central criminal-ideological theme, means of influence and tools of dissemination relevant to the criminological determination of crime. It is often based on the distortion of philosophical, religious and political doctrines, concepts and teachings [18]. Criminal content on the Internet encourages and justifies individual asocial behaviour, distorts value orientations and worldviews, and assimilates criminal jargon into everyday reality.

The influence of criminal subculture on the citizens of modern Uzbekistan can be considered not only in the context of the historical legacy of the repressive policy of the USSR, but also of

the national component. The period of Stalinist repression and the following decades had a significant impact on public consciousness, including on the development and strengthening of criminal subcultures. Mass repressions, arrests and deportations left a deep trace in the public consciousness, causing distrust and fear of the authorities; the preconditions were formed, under which the large-scale displacement of carriers of criminal subculture determined the emergence of deep value orientations and attitudes characterised by alienation and negative perception of state institutions.

In the context of Uzbekistan, where historically and culturally a pronounced negative attitude towards «thieves» and manifestations of «thieves' lifestyle» has been dominant in society, criminal subculture has undergone a process of adaptive transformation due to the need to adapt to the peculiarities of the social structure and cultural norms. As a result, the criminal subculture rethinks its traditional forms of manifestation, including language, symbolism and strategies of interaction with the environment, which allows it to remain stable and influence public consciousness, while remaining within the limits allowed by local conditions.

Some elements of criminal subculture, adapting to regional and local conditions and then to modern social realities, have undergone significant lexical transformations, for example, the slang term «snitch» has been transformed into «quloq»³, «donoschi»⁴, «sotqin»⁵, «axborotchi»⁶, «shepirgan»⁷, and thieves' «laws» were called «street laws» - «kucha qonunlari», opposing the generally accepted norms.

At the same time, there is an active use of the jargonism «goat» (kozel)⁸, which demonstrates not only the preservation but also the adaptation of lexical elements generated by the criminal subculture of the Soviet past, and reflects the deep assimilation of criminal subculture into everyday communication, forming stable stereotypes and models of perception that continue to influence public consciousness and social relations. Such linguistic heritage emphasises the long-term impact of criminal subculture on socio-cultural and political processes, hindering the effective integration of citizens into the legal field and interaction with state institutions, especially law enforcement agencies.

In social media, there are intensive efforts by certain actors to stigmatise citizens who are conscientious and participate on a voluntary basis in joint initiatives with law enforcement structures in the field of public safety. Attempts at stigmatisation are carried out through the use of these jargon expressions, which contributes to the formation of negative attitudes that hinder confidence in such programmes and their perception in society.

In this context, the initiated programmes of law enforcement agencies, focused on activation of citizens' participation in strengthening public safety, including cooperation with internal affairs bodies, aimed at improving the level of security and public order face manifestations of

³ quloq (кулок), [qu'lvq] – a term that literally translates as 'ear';

⁴ donoschi (доносчи), [dɒ'nɔʃtʃi] – etymologically derived from the Russian word "доносчик," which in criminal jargon refers to a person who spreads rumors or informs on others;

⁵ sotqin (соткин), [sɒt'kɪn] – literally means "traitor," a person who betrays a group or cause.

⁶ axborotchi (ахборотчи), [ax'bɒrɔtʃi] – literally means "informant," a person who conveys information, usually in the context of observation or data collection.

⁷ shepirgan (шепирган), [ʃɛpɪr'gɑn] – literally means "whisperer," a person who whispers, conveying information in a secretive manner.

⁸ In criminal jargon, "kozel" - [kɒ'zɔl] refers to a person who is despised for cooperating with the authorities, although its literal meaning is "male goat".

apathy and motivational inertia of citizens, which is expressed in their lack of interest in social and institutional interactions.

This phenomenon can be seen as a result of adaptive transformation, taking into account the social psychology of citizens, in which participation in official programmes is perceived as a threat to personal image and status. This, in turn, significantly hampers the effective implementation of joint initiatives of law enforcement agencies and civil society institutions aimed at ensuring public safety. This is particularly evident in relation to citizens involved in road safety.

Confronting the criminal subculture

In the modern world, many countries face the problem of the negative influence of criminal subculture, and special programmes have been developed in various states to combat this phenomenon. In the USA and Western European countries, the approach to counteracting criminal subculture differs. For example, in the USA, Volunteer Police and Auxiliary Police[19], Community Policing[20], federal departmental programmes [21], which involve active interaction between law enforcement agencies and local communities in order to create trusting relationships [22]. Positive experience of involving citizens in ensuring public safety is also available in Belarus [23].

To overcome the consequences of the influence of the criminal subculture and repressive legacy, Uzbekistan will have to work actively to involve citizens in public security issues. Developing a partnership between the state and society based on trust, respect and mutual understanding is key to improving the situation.

Education and information campaigns: it seems appropriate to conduct large-scale educational activities aimed at deconstructing stigmatising stereotypes related to the interaction between citizens and law enforcement agencies. Particular attention should be paid to emphasising the importance of civic responsibility in the mahallas as a basic element of socio-cultural sustainability, as well as the role of active youth participation in mechanisms for maintaining public order.

Public Involvement in Local Security Initiatives: The development and implementation of national and local programmes that provide for the direct participation of citizens in ensuring the security of their territorial communities is an effective mechanism for increasing the level of civic engagement, based on an analysis of successful foreign practices that have contributed to the strengthening of mutual trust and social stability.

CONCLUSION

The influence of criminal subculture on modern society persists and is transformed in new conditions, influencing the consciousness of people in post-Soviet countries. This influence is manifested in the use of criminal jargon, negative attitudes towards law enforcement agencies and refusal to participate in public safety. The consequences of Soviet repressions, distrust in state institutions, criminal subculture and stigmatisation of cooperation with law enforcement

agencies are among the main factors preventing citizens from actively participating in ensuring public safety.

The deficit of civic activity and low level of motivation of the population to participate in ensuring public security in Uzbekistan is a complex socio-cultural phenomenon caused by both the steady influence of criminal subculture and the legacy of repressive practices of the Soviet period. These factors determine the formation of negative attitudes towards cooperation with state institutions, which, in turn, creates significant barriers to the institutionalisation and implementation of effective civic participation in public security.

Overcoming these problems requires the implementation of multifaceted programmes aimed at transforming public consciousness, capable of deconstructing stereotypes and stable patterns of perception towards the participation of citizens in joint initiatives of state bodies, formed under the influence of many years of dominance of the criminal subculture.

Educational programmes that emphasise the importance of civic responsibility and demonstrate the positive effects of constructive interaction with law enforcement structures have the potential to become a key tool in transforming prevailing public attitudes to motivate citizens to joint law enforcement and civil society initiatives to ensure public safety.

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