

Chapter 19

The Economic Anomie and Crime in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the anomic situation and crime in Turkey. For this, it has been tested whether there is a correlation between crimes and poverty, gini coefficients, and crude divorce rates. According to the results found by the panel data analysis method, there has been a linear correlation between the crime rates and variables such as crude divorce rate, gini coefficient, and poverty in Turkey between 2008-2019. In the study, when there is a one-unit increase in the crude divorce rate, the average number of crimes per thousand people increases by 0.68.

INTRODUCTION

When one says society, order comes to mind. There are costs for maintaining the mentioned order. It can be said that one of these costs is that certain segments of the society or some individuals and groups in the society disturb the peace of the society by committing crimes. Social scientists like Durkheim considered a crime as normal behavior for the social structure to function healthily. (Durkheim, 1982, p.99). Because the social order is not a static structure; it is an environment in which processes and relationships are constantly changing. The social orders in question have been constantly altering since primitive society. There was a period in the middle ages, in which the phenomenon of crime was interpreted and reacted differently. For example, in the middle ages, for punitive purposes, people were brutally tortured and this was perceived as normal at that time. Even in the dark ages, there were developments and changes, but the change in the 18th century was revolutionary.

After the eighteenth century, criminals were approached from a more humane perspective. Previously, people lived in traditional societies; after the 18th century, people lived in a society that Durkheim described as “organic”. In feudal societies, there was mechanical solidarity and control in society, existing customs, and culture. However, after the invention of the steam engine, production began to increase

rapidly, especially in industrial societies. Mechanization has gradually entered the production life. But, people began to flock to the more attractive cities.

As the division of labor and specializations developed in the organic society, human behavior has become individualized compared to the traditional society. The Solidarity of people in urban life has begun to transform from mechanical to organic, or in other words, from communities to societies. Even though there were positive developments such as technological developments and industrialization, they also brought negative developments such as the alienation of people from their own labor and loneliness.

The economy is a concept that is followed by not only people but also institutions. Economic rights have now entered the literature and laws as human rights. Today, the economy can be said to be the most important issue of distribution of rights. When the distribution of rights is imbalanced, society also falls into imbalance. Kiray (2006, p. 155) explained the elements that provide balance to the social structure as follows:

“1- Natural resources, 2- Technology used to process them, 3- Population and its characteristics, 4- Social organization, and 5- Value system arising from the interaction of all.”

All these elements are to create the concept of economy. Economy, on the other hand, is the most important element necessary for the provision of human needs and the maintenance of life. Other factors are also important, but the economy is like a locomotive among others. These elements are necessary and indispensable for human life. Disruption in social balance creates restlessness, but criminal behavior is sometimes a normal human response, according to Durkheim. While crime and economic anomie are examined in this article, it is examined whether some crimes against property are related to anomie. The aim of the study, while defining the concept of anomie, is to analyze the effect of economic anomie (as an independent variable) on crime rates by comparing them with theft, looting and fraud crimes, and unemployment, etc. Some important assumptions of the study are discussed within the framework of the difficulties in economic and social life leading people to crime.

BACKGROUND

Some authors have scrutinized the concept of crime at the micro-level; some have tried to explain it at the meso level and some authors have tried to explain it at the macro level. Structural theories deal with crime at the macro level. This does not mean that the causes of all crimes must be addressed at the macro level. However, since the theory of anomie is a structural and functional theory, it deals with crime at the macro level. In fact, such theories are among the sociological mainstream theories. The theory has been valid since the beginning of criminology. The common point of structural theories is that they investigate the causes of crime from a holistic perspective. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter is to learn the causes of crime and to contribute to the prevention of criminal behaviors that disturb society. This study focuses on the factors that cause crimes today and what should be done to prevent them. For this, the theory of anomie is emphasized. As can be seen below, the economic aspect of the theory of anomie has predominantly been dealt with the causes of crime and the economic aspects have been tried to be identified and efforts have been made to propose related solutions. The method applied in order to do this is the panel data analysis method.

Since macro theories focus on the structural causes of crime rather than individual causes, panel data analysis is conducted with non-personal objective data and crime data as well as unemployment, gini

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