

URBANIZATION AND CRIME (In Turkey)

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I — Generalities on the relationship between urbanization and crime. II — Hypotheses to be tested. III — Scarcity and inadequacy of the data which we have. IV — Evaluating of the data. V — Conclusion.

I — Almost every criminologist has sought the relationship between urbanization and crime. With the words of Clinard, "several writers have recognized that there are quantitative differences in the incidence of crime in areas of varying degrees of urbanization. Scientific explanation of this variation, however, have been largely of an a priori nature, since there has been little empiric research on the factors operating in the violation of legal norms in different types of societies. Durkheim was one of the first writers to state clearly that urbanization inevitably results in a greater amount of crime, and such a position has, in part, been validated by later research which, however, has usually been restricted to one extreme of the continuum of urbanization, namely, the great metropolitan areas." (CLINARD: p. 239). Along the same line, Sutherland and Cressey, Barnes and Teeters state that the number of serious crimes in proportion to population tends to increase with size of the community, in other words, in delinquency and crime rates the city exceeds the country (SUTHERLAND and CRESSEY: p. 154; BARNES and TEETERS: p. 137). Nevertheless, increasing crime rates in proportion to urbanization have not been reported for all countries. For example, according to Radzinowicz, in the southern districts

of Poland the crime rates decrease as communities increase in size and there are many communities of the same size which vary greatly in crime rates in Poland (SUTHERLAND and CRESSEY: p. 155).

Despite the exceptions which we have mentioned above, generally accepted notion is that crime rates increase with the size of community or with the degree of urbanization and the qualitative aspects of the city crime are different from that of the country crime.

As explanation of the variation which seems to exist between the city and country crime, various reasons have been forwarded. Sutherland says that this variation is due to differential association and differential social organization (SUTHERLAND and CRESSEY: p. 157).

Clinard thinks that mobility, impersonal relations, lack of informal social control, differential association, nonparticipation in community organizations, organized criminal culture, criminal social types account for the different crime rates of the city (CLINARD: p. 239).

Szabo, sociologically prefers the term "milieu technique" to the term "city" and sees it applicable to the totality of the industrial society. According to Szabo, this "milieu technique" makes some changes at the levels of society, culture and personality which distinguish the city from the country. Although, this difference is to be gradually disappeared. This "milieu technique" constitutes a different socio-cultural environment which produces different type of behavior and as a result different type of criminality both in quantity and quality (SZABO: pp. 210, 223, 224).

Some writers have even tried to explain the high rates of crime in cities with the existence of too much external stimuli which make the people overexcitable (GUADAGNO: p. 190).

Everyone agrees that the city has suitable localities for breeding special types of crime such as gambling houses and the like. Inversely, the rural areas are deprived of the facilities which are

necessary to commit certain crimes, e.g., if there is no bank in a village there will be no bad cheque writers.

As Barnes and Teeters claim, the detection by the police, can be a serious variable in comparing crime rates in urban and rural areas (BARNES and TEETERS: pp. 137, 139). After all, generally, the figures given by police are used as statistical material.

II — If we are to find out the situation with this respect for Turkey, it is necessary to think of some hypotheses. Taking into consideration the nature of urbanization in Turkey which is mainly demographical and migratory, we should stress upon the difficulties of the people moving into cities from rural areas, in adaptation culturally and economically. Moreover, we can surmise that criminal products of city life should increase as the population of the city increases.

Of course, one can forward many possibilities in considering the same social phenomenon. For instance, if the people coming into the city settle by homogenous groups and their activities tend to confine among themselves, there may not be any cultural conflict. But this situation calls for systematic migration which does not correspond to the fact. To clarify the circumstances we should have a clear picture of the various aspects of the migration. Otherwise, we have to proceed only by hunch.

As we do not have a solid knowledge based on scientific research about the ecological structures of cities in Turkey, we have to manage with what we observe superficially. According to our observations, with respect to crime our cities carry the characteristics of conglomeration, that is, crowding, impersonal relations, lack of informal social control. As for cultural conflict and differential association, we can tell, by general impression, especially in metropolitan areas, they must exist to a certain extent.

These considerations take us to the hypothesis that, in Turkish cities too, because of impersonal relations, lack of informal social control, cultural conflict and differential association crime rates ought to be higher than that of rural areas. If this hypothesis

is correct, then, crime rates in cities should increase proportionately with the size and population of the community.

We can only test this hypothesis, of course, as far as our data's limitations.

III — After these remarks on the subject matter which is given to me by the organizer of this seminar, Professor Sulhi Dönmezer, Director of the Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology of the University of Istanbul, I would like to describe my attitude toward the task I have tried to accomplish. At first glance, I had the impression that the result of this study could not be satisfactory. Because, the data we had at hand were insufficient and unreliable. When I told Professor Dönmezer about this, he replied that if I could show the lack of information about the problem in Turkey, it would be of some scientific value. I think, this needs not to be demonstrated, it is self-evident.

All we have as data pertaining to our problem are the census of population in five year intervals and the unpublished crime figures given by Police Administration for three cities, namely, İstanbul, Ankara, and Kocaeli. These figures cover an eleven year period, from 1960 to 1970. First of all, we do not know how these figures are collected and whether they are mere estimates or actual figures. Since there is not any explanatory notes about these figures we have to take them as actual figures. But some of their features are almost unbelievable. For instance, according to these figures, in 1960 only one car is stolen in İstanbul.

IV — Before to begin analysing and comparing the figures let us show them as they are for each of the three cities year by year. First we shall see the census figures for each city for the years of 1960, 1965 and 1970. Then, we are going to put down the figures of selected types of crime which we thought pertinent in showing the trends in urban criminality. It is generally agreed that crimes against property are the ones which are committed mostly in cities. Fraudulent crimes are also can easily flourish in urban areas. For that reason we have selected robbery, theft and larceny to represent the city crime.

CENSUS FIGURES

for Istanbul

Year	Population
1960	1.466.535
1965	1.742.978
1970	2.132.407

for Ankara

1960	650.067
1965	905.660
1970	1.236.152

for Kocaeli

1960	73.488
1965	89.547
1970	120.694

CRIME FIGURES

for Istanbul

Years	Total for all crimes		Robbery		Theft		Larceny	
	Case	Perpetrator	Case	Perp.	Case	Perp.	Case	Perp.
1960	5073	5415	6	16	1209	1050	41	43
1961	6415	7786	24	22	1776	1553	36	50
1962	5731	8195	20	27	1453	1249	49	74
1963	5860	7544	12	19	1545	1218	24	31
1964	5528	4962	2	2	1547	928	24	20
1965	5084	4264	4	3	1525	903	20	20
1966	5907	7208	16	21	1618	1407	32	31
1967	6530	9924	26	44	1337	1545	47	46
1968	5226	8407	15	25	1189	1117	39	47
1969	8471	9905	24	46	1894	1298	51	36
1970	6209	7986	59	103	1173	1032	35	31

for Ankara

Years	Total for all crimes		Robbery		Theft		Larceny	
	Case	Perp.	Case	Perp.	Case	Prep.	Case	Perp
1960	7165	11221	23	42	1626	2260	130	178
1961	8293	13379	38	63	1983	2656	125	153
1962	7842	22993	45	85	1692	2083	140	172
1963	8127	13778	51	108	1910	2860	152	265
1964	15413	9778	109	140	4247	3314	456	394
1965	16559	20398	69	88	5482	3434	434	318
1966	18215	19927	33	42	5801	3277	341	235
1967	12445	19548	17	29	3186	3504	255	195
1968	11333	20595	13	22	2572	3533	168	170
1969	16598	23847	66	47	3616	4894	174	236
1970	14261	19289	26	58	3174	3921	175	232

for Kocaeli

1960	1403	2015	2	4	233	290	18	20
1961	1443	2214	6	9	258	254	11	12
1962	1177	1782	6	13	233	275	17	27
1963	1058	1469	3	3	180	247	5	6
1964	1085	1490	3	3	229	274	8	12
1965	1057	1369	2	2	241	263	4	9
1966	1058	1453	5	6	215	244	5	8
1967	1026	1571	2	3	187	210	6	9
1968	1055	1583	—	—	188	240	8	10
1969	973	1619	—	—	207	288	3	3
1970	445	1425	4	6	208	281	9	13

If we examine and compare the above figures, we can easily see those particularities:

In the same city the total criminality and selected ones do not follow quantitatively the growth of population. They go up and down, whereas the population increase steadily. So, looking at these figures, it is not possible to say that the crime incidence in the cities increases accordingly with the increase of population.

Taking the same years's population and crime rates, one can say that, lesser the population higher the crime rates. As a matter of fact, in Kocaeli, crime rate is four to six times higher than in Is-

tambul: Kocaeli has, approximately, twenty times less population than Istanbul, Ankara has nearly half of the population of Istanbul. Crime rates in Ankara is three to six times higher than in Istanbul.

One can look at the situation the figures show from various angles and accordingly we can evaluate the data with different considerations.

If we take them as accurate numbers, we can conclude that urbanization or at least continuum of urbanization in Turkey decreases the criminality. If that is the case, it is, no doubt, very interesting and the reasons of this situation must be investigated with rigorous scientific methods. For the time being we do not have means to perform this investigation. But we should add that the case must be just the opposite. Because, there are many speculative reasons to think so. As we do not want to arrive at conclusions by speculation, we are not going to forward possible factors to this effect.

And if we do not attribute accuracy to these figures, then they are just useless in demonstrating anything. As we stated before, we have not enough reasons to take them as accurate numbers. Therefore, it is not possible to draw any conclusion from them.

V — Conclusion : To find out any relationship between crime and urbanization in Turkey, we have tried to examine the crime figures obtained from the police. We have seen that if you take them as accurate numbers, in Turkey, urbanization seems as a factor to decrease the criminality. This conclusion seems to us improbable because of serious defects of the data which we possess. Though we cannot demonstrate actually and factually the effects of urbanization on criminality in Turkey; we feel that criminality mounts up dangerously in urban and metropolitan areas. It is evident that it is almost impossible to measure the activities of several vice rackets and white-collar criminals. But city dwellers sense the danger and they are in fear for their lives and properties.

The only valid conclusion we can arrive at is that we need serious research work on the matter. First of all, systematic surveys must be done with the collaboration of authorities. Then, we can

begin the researches aiming to find out the factors related to the criminality in the process of urbanization.

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