

CRIME PREVENTION POLICIES IN URBAN AREAS: PREVENTIVE POLICING AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS

KENTSEL ALANLARDA SUÇUN ÖNLENMESİ POLİTİKALARI: ÖNLEYİCİ POLİSLİK VE UYUŞTURUCUYLA MÜCADELE

ПОЛИТИКА ПРЕДУПРЕЖДЕНИЯ ПРЕСТУПНОСТИ В ГОРОДСКИХ РАЙОНАХ: ПРОФИЛАКТИЧЕСКАЯ ПОЛИЦЕЙСКАЯ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ И БОРЬБА С НАРКОТИКАМИ

Birce BEŞGÜL*

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the intersection of urban security, preventive policing, and drug control policies in Türkiye with particular emphasis on the growing challenge of synthetic substances. The study examines how rapid urbanization, socio-economic disparities, and migration flows have reshaped the dynamics of drug-related crime in metropolitan areas. Drawing on criminological theories such as social disorganization, strain theory, and community policing, it situates the Turkish experience within global debates on urban crime and preventive security governance. Methodologically, the paper relies on policy reports, official statistics, and comparative analysis to evaluate multi-level preventive initiatives including Narkotim patrol units, school-based safety programs, family-centered projects, and technology-driven applications such as UYUMA. The findings demonstrate that preventive policing strategies in Türkiye have shifted the focus from reactive interventions to proactive community engagement by integrating law enforcement with education, health, and social welfare systems. Furthermore, the sharp increase in synthetic drug use and seizures highlights the urgency of adaptive, data-driven, and multi-stakeholder frameworks. Overall, the study concludes that Türkiye's preventive policing experience represents a valuable model for understanding how contemporary states can design inclusive, sustainable, and technologically supported drug control strategies that simultaneously enhance national security and reinforce urban resilience.

Key Words: Preventive Policing, Urban Security, Drug Control Policies, Synthetic Drugs, Community Policing, Türkiye.

* **ORCID:** [0000-0002-6324-2141](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6324-2141), Asst. Prof., Turkish National Police Academy, Faculty of Homeland, bircebesgul@gmail.com

Kaynak Gösterim / Citation / Цитата: Beşgöl, B. (2025). CRIME PREVENTION POLICIES IN URBAN AREAS: PREVENTIVE POLICING AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS. *Karadeniz Uluslararası Bilimsel Dergi* (68), 23-41. **DOI:** [10.17498/kdeniz.1799838](https://doi.org/10.17498/kdeniz.1799838)

ÖZ

Bu makale, kentsel güvenlik, önleyici polislik ve Türkiye'deki uyuşturucu ile mücadele politikalarının kesişim noktasını, özellikle sentetik maddelerin artan tehdidinde vurgu yaparak incelemektedir. Çalışmada hızlı kentleşmenin, sosyo-ekonomik eşitsizliklerin ve göç hareketlerinin metropol alanlarda uyuşturucu bağlantılı suçun dinamiklerini nasıl dönüştürdüğü ele alınmaktadır. Sosyal düzensizlik, gerilim teorisi ve toplum odaklı polislik gibi kriminolojik kuramlardan hareketle Türk deneyimi, kentsel suç ve önleyici güvenlik yönetişimine ilişkin küresel tartışmalar bağlamında konumlandırılmaktadır. Yöntemsel olarak çalışma; politika raporlarına, resmî istatistiklere ve karşılaştırmalı analize dayanarak Narkotim devriyeleri, okullara yönelik güvenlik programları, aile merkezli projeler ve UYUMA gibi teknoloji tabanlı uygulamaları kapsayan çok düzeyli önleyici girişimleri değerlendirmektedir. Bulgular, Türkiye'de önleyici polislik stratejilerinin odak noktasını tepkisel müdahalelerden proaktif toplumsal katılıma kaydırıldığını ve kolluk birimlerinin eğitim, sağlık ve sosyal hizmet sistemleriyle entegrasyonunu güçlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca sentetik uyuşturucu kullanımında ve yakalamalarında görülen belirgin artış, uyarlanabilir, veri temelli ve çok paydaşlı çerçevelerin aciliyetini ortaya koymaktadır. Genel olarak çalışma, Türkiye'nin önleyici polislik deneyiminin modern devletlerin kapsayıcı, sürdürülebilir ve teknoloji destekli uyuşturucuyla mücadele stratejileri tasarlayarak hem ulusal güvenliği güçlendirme hem de kentsel dayanıklılığı artırma potansiyelini anlamada önemli bir model sunduğu sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Önleyici Polislik, Kentsel Güvenlik, Uyuşturucuyla Mücadele Politikaları, Sentetik Uyuşturucular, Toplum Destekli Polislik, Türkiye

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье анализируется пересечение городской безопасности, профилактической полицейской деятельности и политики контроля над наркотиками в Турции, с особым акцентом на растущую проблему синтетических веществ. Исследование рассматривает, каким образом быстрые процессы урбанизации, социально-экономическое неравенство и миграционные потоки трансформировали динамику наркопреступности в крупных городах. Опираясь на криминологические теории — социальную дезорганизацию, теорию напряжения и концепцию полицейской деятельности в сообществе — турецкий опыт помещается в контекст глобальных дискуссий о городской преступности и профилактическом управлении безопасностью. Методологически работа основывается на анализе политических докладов, официальной статистики и сравнительных исследований для оценки многоуровневых профилактических инициатив, включая патрульные подразделения Narkotim, школьные программы безопасности, семейно-ориентированные проекты и технологические приложения, такие как UYUMA. Полученные результаты показывают, что стратегии профилактической полицейской деятельности в Турции сместили акцент с реактивных вмешательств на проактивное взаимодействие с сообществом, интегрируя правоохранительные органы с системами образования, здравоохранения и социального обеспечения. Кроме того, резкий рост потребления и изъятий синтетических наркотиков подчёркивает необходимость адаптивных, основанных на данных и многосторонних управленческих моделей. В целом работа приходит к выводу, что турецкий опыт профилактической полицейской деятельности представляет собой ценную модель для понимания того, как современные государства могут разрабатывать инклюзивные, устойчивые и технологически поддерживаемые стратегии борьбы с наркотиками, одновременно укрепляя национальную безопасность и городскую устойчивость.

Ключевые слова: профилактическая полицейская деятельность, городская безопасность, политика контроля над наркотиками, синтетические наркотики, полицейская деятельность в сообществе, Турция

1. Introduction

Urban security has arisen as one of the most pressing challenges of the twenty-first century since rapid demographic, economic, and technological transformations redesign the dynamics of cities worldwide. Once regarded predominantly as centers of opportunity, cultural exchange, and economic growth, modern cities have also become focal points of social inequality, crime, and insecurity (Savage, 2017). Amid the various dimensions of urban crime, drug-related offenses stand out for their multifaceted implications as they affect public health, foster organized criminal networks, weaken social cohesion, and challenge the capability of law enforcement institutions. Thus, drug control policies have become a central issue within broader debates on urban security and preventive policing.

Traditional security approaches that analyze primarily on punitive measures and post-crime interventions alone are accepted as insufficient against evolving urban realities and its threats. With globalization, mass migration, and technological change, criminal dynamics have become progressively complex and adaptive (UNODC, 2022). In addition, the rise of synthetic drug markets — characterized by cheap production and rapid distribution — presents a growing challenge to urban security (UNODC, 2022). In particular, the rapid proliferation of synthetic drugs reflects the urgency of shifting from reactive enforcement to proactive prevention (UNODC, 2022). Preventive policing therefore signifies a paradigm shift that aim to responding to crime and to mitigating its root causes through reducing opportunities, targeting risk groups, and fostering community resilience (Bayley, 2006).

The need of new preventive strategies against synthetic substances can be easily observed by taking current statistics into account. For example, the scale of methamphetamine seizures in Türkiye—rising to nearly 22 tones in 2023 (Turkish Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (TMCDDA), 2024)—points to the severity of the challenge. Moreover, addiction treatment statistics reveal that synthetic drugs currently account for the majority of clinical cases, surpassing traditional narcotics such as heroin. This evolving process strains public health systems and complicates the operational urgencies of law enforcement. In this sense, requiring closer cooperation between security agencies, health institutions, and international partners must be urgently realized as counter measures (Demir & Yılmaz, 2023).

This article analyzes the intersection of urban security, preventive policing, and drug control policies in Türkiye with particular focus on the challenges posed by emerging drug threats mainly synthetic substances. The main research question guiding this study is how preventive policing strategies can be developed and implemented against the supply and demand dimensions of drug-related crime while concurrently strengthening social resilience. To answer this question, the study touches upon criminological theories such as social disorganization (Shaw & McKay, 1969), strain theory (Merton, 1968), and community policing models (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990), while placing the Turkish experience within broader global developments. Methodologically, the study is based on qualitative content analysis that evaluates policy documents, national statistics, and security strategy reports published by the Ministry of Interior, the Turkish National Police, and international organizations such as UNODC and EMCDDA. The analysis also integrates secondary academic literature on preventive policing, urban crime patterns, and synthetic drug markets to assess Türkiye’s evolving policy responses. This approach offers an in-depth examination of both institutional practices and their socio-criminological implications.

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

A review of the current literature shows that although there is extensive study on drug trafficking, organized crime, and narcotics markets, analyzes that focus specifically on Türkiye's preventive policing strategies in terms of synthetic drugs remain limited. Most research assesses either law enforcement effectiveness or general public health aspects that leave a conceptual and empirical gap concerning how preventive policing incorporates with community-based resilience and urban security agendas. This study addresses this gap by offering a focused analysis that links rising drug threats with preventive policing mechanisms in Türkiye. By uniting criminological theory with empirical policy assessment, the article contributes to the literature by presenting a coherent analytical framework for understanding how policing strategies can adapt to the rapidly changing dynamics of synthetic drug markets.

Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Türkiye occupies a strategic position in terms of preventing drug trafficking routes. Yet in recent years, Türkiye has also faced increasing domestic demand for drugs, especially synthetic substances such as methamphetamine and synthetic cannabinoids (EMCDDA, 2021; TMCDDA, 2024). This dual challenge brings about Turkish authorities to implement multidimensional policies that integrate law enforcement, public health, and community engagement.

In this context, preventive policing strategies are prioritized as a critical component of Türkiye's anti-drug policy. Initiatives such as Narkotim units that operate in high-risk neighborhoods and communicate directly with young people demonstrate how field-oriented policing can combine deterrence with early intervention (General Directorate of Security, 2022). The School Police project and youth-focused awareness programs are other critical applications of preventive policing. The school policing reveals a recognition that long-term resilience is directly related to shielding younger generations from early exposure to drugs (Ministry of Interior, 2021). Community-oriented policing and family engagement strategies are often developed in cooperation with civil society organizations such as Yeşilay (Ünlü, 2018). Meanwhile, the use of technological tools such as the UYUMA mobile application and crime mapping systems validates how data-driven intelligence and citizen participation can improve the effectiveness of preventive measures (Ratcliffe, 2016).

By examining Türkiye's preventive policing initiatives from Narkotim units and school-based programs to technological innovations and multi-stakeholder partnerships, this paper contributes to the literature on urban security through indicating that sustainable drug control requires a holistic and multidimensional approach that is integrated to law enforcement, education, health, and social policy. Türkiye provides a precious case study for comprehending how preventive policing can function both as a national security instrument and as a mechanism for developing urban resilience against the evolving drug threats.

2. Theoretical Framework

Urban security and crime prevention policies are included one of the most critical fields within security studies. Classical approaches that focus on the security dimension of individuals' shared living spaces highlight penal sanctions and the reactive interventions of law enforcement agencies following the occurrence of crimes. On the other hand, these reactive models have proven increasingly inadequate confronted with complex social problems that are brought about by rapid urbanization, migration, socio-economic inequalities, and globalization, particularly since the second half of the twentieth century (Crawford, 1998). With the development of modern urban security approaches, it is observed that the identification and elimination of the root causes of crime in addition to the reduction of criminal opportunities have gained prominence. In other words, instead of focusing solely on post-crime interventions, contemporary urban security studies underline the anticipation of criminogenic situations and the examination of their underlying drivers.

The concept of preventive policing signifies a critical turning point within modern urban security approaches. Bayley (2006) stresses that police organizations should not transform into institutions that intervene only after a crime has taken place. Instead, he argues that police must assume a proactive role to maintain social peace and reduce the possibility of criminal behavior. In this regard, preventive policing extends beyond being a mechanism of security provision through supporting social cohesion, safeguarding public welfare, and eventually improving the quality of life. This approach that constitutes the foundation of preventive policing is implemented through measures such as increasing the visibility of patrol services, early intervention with at-risk groups, environmental arrangements that diminish criminal opportunities, and awareness-raising projects targeting society at large (Skogan, 2006). This multidimensional standpoint has empowered policing to extend into education, health, and social policy fields.

Drug-related crimes present a perilous intersection between urban security and preventive policing. Drug use and trafficking have serious implications for individual health and exert direct consequences on organized crime structures, street-level violence, and societal insights of security. According to the UNODC (2022) report, drug-related crimes in urban areas are considered major risk factors for both public health and social welfare. Within the framework of urban security, two major dimensions are underlined in the fight against drugs that are supply reduction and demand reduction. Reuter and Trautmann (2009) emphasize the importance of supply-reduction strategies, which target to end the drug market by preventing the financial resources of criminal organizations, strengthening border security, and dismantling illicit financial structures. Conversely, demand-reduction strategies primarily aim to avoid individuals - particularly young people- from turning to drugs. Hughes and Stevens (2010) reveal that education campaigns, rehabilitation centers, school-based programs, and family-focused initiatives are preventive and deterrent mechanisms for the youth. Collectively, these strategies represent a comprehensive approach: While supply reduction limits accessibility, demand reduction prevents initiation, thus enabling long-term social transformation (Hughes and Stevens, 2010).

The multidimensional dimension of preventive policing is critically important in drug control practices. Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) explain community-oriented policing as a method that creates trust between the police and society, heartens citizen participation in crime prevention processes, and seeks collective solutions to local problems. Within the context of drug control, this approach encourages the active participation of families, schools, civil society organizations, and lastly local governments. Therefore, security turns into a shared social responsibility rather than a task entirely undertaken by the police.

Hence, punitive interventions by law enforcement signify only one element of the broader process of combating drugs within the framework of urban security. In order to make drug control programs be effective, they must be conducted in a combined approach including education, health, and social services. In other words, when youth projects, rehabilitation services, technological surveillance tools, and mechanisms for community participation are developed and integrated into one another alongside policing strategies, it becomes possible to create sustainable security policies. In light of this, preventive policing must be taken into account as a holistic approach that enhances the safety of urban life, strengthens social solidarity, and supports collective welfare.

3. Urban Drug Crimes and Their Dynamics

Urbanization is a pivotal factor in the economic, social, and cultural development of modern societies. Nevertheless, it is a clear fact that it brings a range of security challenges

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

nearby this development. Rapid population growth, migration, socio-economic inequalities, and increased social mobility directly influence the dynamics of crime in cities (Felson, 2002). Within this framework, drug use and drug-related crimes have arisen as some of the most serious challenges for urban security. Drug crimes are not confined only to the issues covering individual addiction and health. They also represent a multilayered threat due to their connections with organized crime groups, their potential to escalate street-level offenses, and their negative effects on public perceptions of safety (UNODC, 2022). Predominantly in regions with dense youth populations, drugs often are both a cause and a consequence of crime. Therefore, a multidimensional approach is required to comprehend the dynamics of drug-related crimes in urban locations.

The root causes reflect the necessity to evaluate several factors in detail such as socio-economic conditions, migration flows, demographic transformations, social problems stemming from urbanization, and public health vulnerabilities. Each of these factors underlines the complexity of drug-related criminality dossier in cities. Moreover, studies conducted in Türkiye reflects that the trajectory of drug-related crimes in urban contexts cannot be explained exclusively by law enforcement activity. Rather, it requires the integration of social policies, education, and the contributions of local governments to be fully understood (Ünlü, 2018).

Accordingly, this section analyzes the dynamics of urban drug-related crimes under five sub-dimensions that are the relationship between urbanization and security, the role of socio-economic factors, the impact of migration and demographic change, the societal implications of drug use, and the general trends observed in Türkiye. By examining these interrelated dimensions, the link between drug-related crimes and urban security can be evaluated in a more inclusive and nuanced manner.

3.1 Urbanization and the Security Dimension

Urbanization is one of the most influential dynamics on the economic, social, and cultural development of modern societies. In the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, the accelerated pace of urbanization has required a redefinition of security policies. Since cities have turned into centers of social progress due to the economic opportunities, social mobility, and cultural diversity they offer, they have simultaneously emerged as focal points that crime and security issues concentrate (Savage, 2017). In this regard, the relationship between urbanization and security should not be observed solely as a demographic phenomenon but rather as a complex progression that includes social, economic, and political dimensions.

The impact of urban settings on crime dynamics has been hotly debated in the literature. Felson (2002) indicates that the anonymity of urban life, the intensity of population activities, and the weakening of social control mechanisms bring about the probability of crime. In particular, organized criminal activities mainly drug use and trafficking tend to occur in urban environments that make cities primary arenas in relation to the individual and organized crime. From the perspective of urbanization–crime studies, social disorganization theory developed by Shaw and McKay (1969) indicates that the weakening of social bonds as a result of rapid urbanization and migration processes contributes to higher crime rates. In large metropolitan location composing of heterogeneous populations, cultural tensions and economic inequalities can trigger young people toward risky behaviors. On this basis, drug use arises both as an outcome of social exclusion and a domain exploited by organized crime structures.

In Türkiye, the process of urbanization has been closely associated with migration and rapid population growth that puts urban security at the center of national policy issues. According to the 2022 report of the General Directorate of Security, drug-related crimes are

concentrated largely in metropolitan centers such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Adana (General Directorate of Security, 2022). These cities that are accepted as major destinations for internal migration are notable for demographic diversity and socio-economic disparities. It is a clear fact that such conditions need local security policies that are more flexible, comprehensive, and preventive in nature. Apart from this, the impact of urbanization on security is not limited to increases in crime rates; it also transforms perceptions of security (Cozens & Love, 2015). Residents of large cities often perceive themselves as more exposed to risks, which in turn elevates expectations from law enforcement agencies (Cozens & Love, 2015). This dynamic demonstrates that security policies are formed by taking crime statistics, social perceptions and public expectations into account.

The increasing visibility of drug-related crimes in urban areas underlines the need of preventive approaches within security policies. In this regard, it is seen that although reactive measures are obligatory, they are not sufficient alone in terms of counter measures. In this sense, proactive measures target the root causes of crime are required in addition to reactive ones. Bayley (2006) emphasizes that in democratic societies policing should not be limited to post-crime interventions but should also include the development of social and environmental actions that avoid crime before it occurs. Within this structure, preventive policing arises as one of the most tactical tools in urban security and drug control. The strong correlation between urbanization and drug-related crimes are also confirmed in international level analysis. Data from the UNODC (2022) reveal that drug-related offenses are disproportionately concentrated in large cities worldwide. Among the underlying reasons are the relative ease of access to drugs in urban environments, the broader customer base of street-level markets, and the suitability of urban structures for the activities of criminal organizations.

The nexus between urbanization and security reveals that drug-related crimes are not simply a matter of individual addiction or health issue, rather, a multidimensional phenomenon entrenched within the multifaceted dynamics of urban life. As in Türkiye's major cities, the global evidence indicates that it is impossible to improve effectual drug control strategies without taking into consideration the dynamics of urbanization. Hence, sustainable urban security necessitates strategies that extend beyond punitive involvements and incorporate social, cultural, and preventive methods.

3.2 Socio-Economic Factors

One of the most critical elements of crime dynamics in urban locations is the socio-economic structure. Unemployment, poverty, income inequality, and social exclusion are accepted as the principal factors that increase the threat of individuals engaging in criminal activity. In cities with a large youth population, the correlation between socio-economic inequalities and drug use or trafficking is particularly striking (Merton, 1968). Individuals who struggle with unequal opportunities and have limited access to networks of social mobility may remark illicit activities as alternative paths both for economic survival and social recognition. Sociological approaches explain this situation through strain theory. Merton (1968) argues that when individuals face barriers to achieving legitimate societal goals, they may resort to illegal behaviors as alternative means. In this sense, drug trafficking can be perceived by low-income youth as both a source of financial gain and a means of attaining social status (Agnew, 1992). This demonstrates how socio-economic factors play a significant role in terms of shaping the causes of crime.

In Türkiye, rapid urbanization along with migration and unemployment has aggravated socio-economic disparities. According to data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), high youth unemployment rates bring about a growing number of minors

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

and young adults are drawn into criminal activities. Reports by the Turkish National Police (2022) further indicate that drug-related crimes are concentrated in socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. These findings advise that security policies must be implemented by law enforcement in cooperation with social policy interventions. Moreover, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA, 2021) underlines that individuals living in low-income neighborhoods are more exposed to drug use and have limited access to rehabilitation services.

Apart from this, socio-economic circumstances not only affect individuals' tendency to commit crimes but also shape the broader perception of their security in urban settings. Residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods are more frequently exposed to incidents of crime and violence, that destabilizes social trust and reduces collective security (Wacquant, 2008). Therefore, socio-economic inequalities act both as individual-level risk factors and structural impediments to social consistency. It is a significant fact that drug control policies that contempt the socio-economic dimension tend to lack sustainability. In this sense, preventive policing policies must be complemented with mechanisms of social support such as educational projects, youth employment opportunities, family counseling services, and local government-led social cohesion programs.

3.3 Migration and Demographic Change

Migration is another prominent factor influencing the social and demographic structure of modern cities. Both internal and international migration flows upturn population density, improve social diversity, and simultaneously require the restructuring of security policies. In large metropolitan areas, the impact of migration is felt not only as a demographic transformation but also through its economic, cultural, and security dimensions (Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 2014).

Türkiye is among the countries that have experienced intensive both internal and external migration over the past two decades. Internal migration has mostly flowed from rural parts to major capitals that bringing about the reshaping of urban social structures. Concurrently, external migration has transformed Türkiye into a major country for asylum and shelter related to the conflicts in neighboring countries. Since 2011, Türkiye has hosted approximately 3.5 million Syrians, becoming the country with the largest refugee population in the world (UNHCR, 2022). At this point, it is critical to highlight that migration itself is not inherently a source of crime. Nevertheless, rapid population growth, economic integration challenges, and cultural differences necessitate the proactive redesign of security policies. In recent years, Türkiye has developed integration policies that concerns migration as a humanitarian and social issue. Under successive governments, policies have expanded to include education, health, and employment measures designed to facilitate the integration of migrants into society (Ministry of Interior, 2021). These measures aim to ease adaption and to mitigate crime risks that may arise from social exclusion in urban areas.

Within the scope of drug-related crime, migration and demographic change constitute a particular issue of sensitivity in terms of urban security. Neighborhoods in which high concentrations of migrants live sometimes experience social integration difficulties. These social integration difficulties can be used by organized criminal groups as exploitation. Yet, Türkiye's preventive policing initiatives determines these vulnerabilities through community-oriented policing activities in addition to the social cohesion projects in migrant-dense districts. Narkotim operations, school-based awareness programs, and municipal social projects targeting migrant youth serve preventive functions in this regard (Turkish National Police, 2022).

A unique feature of Türkiye's migration policy aims to balance security concerns with humanitarian responsibilities. Policies covering migration and demographic change seek to reinforce social cohesion, develop migrants' participation in urban life, and minimize security risks. This approach not only contributes to urban security but also reflects Türkiye's broader international orientation, which highlights humanitarian diplomacy (Kirişci, 2003). As it is seen, migration and demographic change must be taken into consideration as key factors affecting the dynamics of drug-related crime in urban environments. By implementing social cohesion programs and preventive policing strategies, Türkiye has taken noteworthy steps to diminish potential risks while fostering integration. In this respect, Türkiye represents a significant case of balancing migration management with security in a way to resonate both domestically and internationally.

3.4 The Social Impacts of Drug Use

Drug use is not simply an individual health problem but rather a multifaceted phenomenon that exerts profound impacts on public security, economic development, and social cohesion. Understanding these broader effects shows why urban security policies increasingly prioritize preventive strategies instead of reactive measures.

The heart of these dynamics is directly related to the public health factor. Drug use and dependence bring about complex outcomes that can be listed as acute and chronic health problems, comorbid mental disorders, and the spread of infectious diseases. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), tens of millions worldwide suffer from substance use disorders, yet only a small proportion can consistently access treatment and rehabilitation services. The presence of comorbidities such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder complicates treatment continuity, while overdose deaths and drug-related emergencies impose further burdens on public health systems (UNODC, 2022). Moreover, injecting drug use is accepted as risks for blood-borne infections such as HIV and Hepatitis C. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA, 2021) reports that harm-reduction programs across Europe have significantly mitigated these risks. Correspondingly, Türkiye's national strategies to expand treatment capacity, counseling, and psychosocial support services underline the necessity of all-inclusive method that incorporates epidemiological surveillance, primary care counseling, and specialized treatments (General Directorate of Security, 2022).

Apart from the health dimension, the link between drug use and crime further demonstrates the societal burden. Criminological studies emphasize that this relationship is not one-dimensional. At this point, Goldstein's (1985) tripartite framework classifies three channels that are economic-compulsive crimes committed to obtain drugs, psychopharmacological violence committed under intoxication, and systemic violence linked to disputes in illicit markets. In urban circumstances, each of these channels becomes observable conditional on the presence of street markets, unstable income, and organized criminal groups (UNODC, 2022). Empirical research approves that correlations between substance use and specific crime types vary by context (Bennett & Holloway, 2009). In Türkiye, police reports illustrate that drug-related offenses are particularly concentrated in youth-dense cities that emphasize the need for preventive policing practices including patrols, targeted neighborhood interventions, school safety programs, and intelligence-led operations (General Directorate of Security, 2022).

The impacts of drug use also extend into family and social life. Families often faces with problems such as economic strain, caregiving burdens, and psychosocial stress that might weaken household functioning. In this regard, relatives of drug users frequently report anxiety, burnout, stigma, and social isolation which emphasize the prominence of

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

professional counseling and family-based interventions (Copello, Templeton, & Velleman, 2005; Orford et al., 2010). Stigmatization at the societal level delays help-seeking behavior and undermines adherence to treatment (Room, 2005). Consequently, it is critical for governments to implement and expand family-centered programs, support groups and community-based counseling services in order to reduce stigma and strengthen resilience. In Türkiye, recent policies to expand access to social support and counseling services demonstrate a comprehensive approach that aim at easing family burdens and fostering social solidarity (General Directorate of Security, 2022).

The economic consequences of drug use add another critical layer for comprehending the whole agenda. Direct costs cover health care expenditures, treatment and rehabilitation programs, and criminal justice expenses, while indirect costs include lost productivity and weakened labor force participation. EMCDDA (2021) estimates that the economic burden of drug use in Europe reaches billions of euros annually, much of it absorbed by health care, law enforcement, and justice systems. The UNODC (2022) further emphasizes that financial flows within illicit drug markets fuel organized crime networks, undermining legitimate economic activity. Similar to Europe, in Türkiye, investments in drug control comprise security, health, and social services, yet from an efficiency perspective, early intervention and preventive programs—such as school-based awareness campaigns, family counseling, and youth employment initiatives—prove more cost-effective in the long run by curbing secondary increases in health and criminal justice expenditures (WHO, 2020; EMCDDA, 2021).

Finally, the societal impact of drug use is directly related to the issues of social integration. Individuals with substance use disorders have risks of exclusion in terms of education, employment, and housing. Processes of stigmatization and labeling erode social capital and hinder reintegration (Link & Phelan, 2001; Room, 2005). Therefore, current policies highlight completing security measures with psychosocial support and education-to-employment programs that strengthen ties with local communities. Research by UNODC (2022) and WHO (2020) underlines that community-based interventions that jointly realized by municipalities, schools, NGOs in addition to the law enforcement improve social cohesion and decrease drug use among risk groups. In Türkiye, awareness campaigns that target families and youth are jointly presented with school-based prevention programs, neighborhood and youth centers.

The social impacts reveal that effective drug policies must address not only the results of crime but also its root causes. Integrating public health, social policy, and preventive policing alongside a balanced application of supply and demand reduction strategies provide conditions for sustainable outcomes. In Türkiye, the development of preventive approaches and multi-stakeholder interventions currently has generated significant institutional capacity to mitigate the health, security, and social challenges posed by drug use within the urban framework (General Directorate of Security, 2022).

4. General Trends in Türkiye

Türkiye is located as a strategic intersection country related to its geopolitical position, demographic structure in terms of particularly its young population for both drug supply and demand threat. Its location along the so-called “Balkan Route” has made the country a key transit corridor between East and West (UNODC, 2022). Yet in recent years, Türkiye has developed security policies focusing on domestic and border control in order to prevent transit state position. Taking these general trends into consideration, it is critical for assessing the direction of national security policies and preventive strategies for Türkiye in

order to stand against expansion of drug use domestically and prevention of transit corridor to other countries.

The fight against supply has long been a cornerstone of Türkiye's one of the top agenda issues. According to the Turkish National Police (General Directorate of Security, 2022), the number of operations has increased significantly in recent years, with notable rises in seizures of heroin, methamphetamine, and synthetic drugs. In addition to these counter measures, Türkiye also plays an active role in international cooperation such as partnering with organizations mainly Europol, Interpol, and UNODC in cross-border operations in order to strengthen its position not only as a national actor but also as a regional security provider (Kirişçi, 2003). Technological investments in border security during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) era including thermal cameras, unmanned aerial vehicles, and border walls have further developed Türkiye's ability to combat drug trafficking (Ministry of Interior, 2021). These new techniques are efficiently implemented to ensure that supply-reduction strategies are pursued in a sustainable manner.

As a part of these counter measurement efforts, Türkiye has diversified its demand-reduction and preventive approaches. In this regard, one of the most prominent initiatives is the deployment of "Narkotim" units that operate in neighborhoods where high concentrations of youth lives as deterrent and preventive functions. Within the context of youth projects, School-centered programs and the "School Police" initiative have sought to insulate young people from risky behaviors (General Directorate of Security, 2022). Families are also added to these projects for cooperation against the early detection of drug usage through collaborations with the Green Crescent (Yeşilay), family counseling centers (ADEM), and youth projects. Treatment and rehabilitation capacities have also increased in number with specialized centers such as AMATEM and ÇEMATEM playing an active role as a part of the new domestic security policy. Furthermore, the Ministry of Interior's "UYUMA" mobile application has enabled citizens to report suspicious activities easily, illustrating how technology can be effectively integrated into preventive policing (Ministry of Interior, 2021).

Patterns of drug use indicate further insights into national trends. Data from TÜİK and General Directorate of Security reveal that cannabis, heroin, and currently synthetic drugs remain the most widely used substances in Türkiye (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2022). According to EMCDDA (2021), overall prevalence rates are below the European average that demonstrates the effectiveness of preventive strategies and awareness campaigns. Among youth, the proliferation of educational and community-based initiatives has played a noteworthy role in terms of containing usage levels (Ünlü, 2018). At the same time, rising methamphetamine use has emerged as a critical concern not only for Türkiye but also for the whole world population especially for the youth. UNODC (2022) explains that methamphetamine flows across Asia to Europe increasingly pass through Türkiye positioning the country both as a transit and a target market. Despite this transit threat, stronger law enforcement capacity and enhanced border measures have prevented this trend from producing deeper social harms.

A final defining feature of Türkiye's approach in terms of countering drug usage is related to its multi-stakeholder model. Coordination mechanisms have been established among the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Family and Social Services and civil society organizations in order to underscore that drug control is not solely a security issue but also a matter of social policy. As a part of Türkiye's human security policy, counter-narcotics strategies are accepted as both domestic and foreign policy issue. In this regard, the fight against drugs is linked to the goals such as strengthening social cohesion, protecting family unity, and preparing youth for the future (Kirişçi, 2003).

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

Taking the issue both at internal and foreign policy level demonstrates how security strategies in Türkiye have increasingly been aligned with broader policies of social welfare.

Taken together, these developments exemplify how Türkiye's fight against drugs includes both supply and demand-side measures into the scene and integrates preventive policing with social policies. Within the scope of balancing security with human-centered approaches, Türkiye combine technological advances, law enforcement initiatives, and community-based programs to develop inclusive and sustainable models of drug control.

5. Preventive Policing Strategies and the Fight Against Drugs

While punitive measures and operational interventions remain significant, it is equally essential to adopt proactive approaches that aim the root causes of crime and prevent drug use. Within this context, preventive policing seeks to reduce crime enabling factors by intervening early with at-risk groups, and ensuring the active participation of communities in security processes (Bayley, 2006). In other words, preventive policing strategies in drug control have increasingly highlighted field-oriented methods, youth-focused programs, community-based approaches, and the use of technological tools.

5.1 Narkotim Applications

The Narkotim initiative is one of the most effective policing instruments that is established under the General Directorate of Security in Türkiye. The Narkotim is composed of specialized units that operate directly in neighborhoods where high-risk for drug use and trafficking are identified. Different from traditional enforcement units, Narkotims are designed not only to apprehend offenders but also to engage with communities, particularly young people, in order to reduce risk factors and prevent crime before it occurs (General Directorate of Security, 2022). Thus, their presence in local areas provides proactive monitoring of urban drug markets, early intervention against risky behaviors and direct communication with citizens.

The visibility of Narkotim officers in local areas are accepted as deterrence force while also strengthening the communication and trust between citizens and law enforcement institutions. In this case, the Narkotim application reflects a new approach that demonstrates a clear departure from the classical raid and capture model. The Narkotim reveals a preventive policing practice that blends security provision with social engagement and support. To take part in daily life, Narkotims carry out patrols in schools and youth-dense neighborhoods, organize awareness seminars, and collaborate with community leaders to identify vulnerable groups. For example, their efforts are supported by campaigns such as "En İyi Narkotik Polisi: Anne" ("The Best Anti-Narcotics Officer: The Mother"), which emphasizes the role of families in early detection and prevention (Ünlü, 2018). This multi-layered engagement underscores how preventive policing can extend beyond law enforcement operations, embedding itself in the broader social fabric (Ünlü, 2018). Through adopting this approach, Narkotims also normalize the presence of police in daily life as an accessible actor that communicate with families, schools, and local institutions in order to protect social well-being.

At international level, Narkotim application resonate with the concept of hot spot policing that highlights the presence of police resources in crime-prone areas. Sherman and Weisburd (1995) indicates that proactive interventions in high-crime areas considerably reduce overall criminal activity. As an example of this indication, Narkotim groups in Türkiye similarly work on the basis of a risk-focused model. However, these groups extend its scope through incorporating a youth-centered and socially integrative dimension. This hybrid model situates the Turkish experience at the intersection of enforcement and prevention in

addition to drawing lessons from global best practices and adapting them to local socio-cultural realities.

Eventually, the Narkotim model is a significant example to analyze how preventive policing can function as a bridge between security bodies and society in terms of forming a more participatory framework for addressing drug-related issues. By combining deterrence with community engagement and targeting young populations, Narkotims exemplify an innovative response to the urban dynamics of drug-related crime in Türkiye.

5.2 School Policing and Youth Projects

Young people are accepted as one of the most vulnerable risk groups within the framework of drug use. In this case, protection of them from early exposure is a cornerstone of long-term prevention policies. In Türkiye, the implementation of “School Police” initiative ensures that students can pursue their education in a safe environment in addition to reducing their possibility of engaging in risky behaviors (Ministry of Interior, 2021). The school police initiative maintains a visible police presence both in and around schools for enhancing perceptions of safety and creating opportunities for direct interaction between officers, teachers, and students. This engagement provides law enforcement to detect early signs of risk and early intervention to emerging problems.

Moreover, these efforts are supported with broader awareness-raising projects such as Narkonokta information stands that are established in universities, youth centers, and public spaces to inform people about the dangers of drug use. Through brochures, interactive activities, and face-to-face communication, these stands help to break down stigma while cultivating a culture of prevention across different segments of society (General Directorate of Security, 2022). What is more, collaborative projects with the Ministry of Youth and Sports provides young people chances to participate in social, cultural, and athletic programs. Through engaging youth in constructive and identity-building activities and providing alternative channels for social integration, these programs diminish the likelihood of involvement in drug-related behaviors.

In theoretical term, these initiatives represent the principles of early intervention strategies that highlight the significance of determining risk factors before they take place as problematic behaviors (Hughes & Stevens, 2010). It is a known fact that preventive efforts that priorities schools and youth centers are accepted as the most effective mechanisms in terms of building resilience particularly when they integrate education and family involvement. The Turkish case illustrates this dynamic through preventive policing and youth projects that are increasingly implemented as part of a comprehensive strategy integrating security, education, and social policy.

School policing and youth projects demonstrates how preventive policing extends beyond traditional enforcement in order to address the social aspect of drug control. Through ensuring safe learning environments, endorsing awareness, and offering expressive alternatives to young people, these initiatives contribute to immediate crime prevention and strengthening social cohesion as a long-term solution.

5.3 Community-Oriented Policing and Family Involvement

A significant pillar of preventive policing is ensuring the active involvement of society in security processes. The philosophy of community-oriented policing highlights strengthening trust between police and citizens while localizing crime prevention activities (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). In Türkiye, this model has been progressively applied to drug control programs in order to raising awareness among families and neighborhood residents. By embedding policing within local contexts, the approach shifts from a top-down

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

enforcement model to one that prioritizes collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility (Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990).

Families play a key role in preventing young people from turning to drugs. Since parents are primary guardians of children's socialization, they are often the first to detect behavioral changes that may indicate risk of drug usage. Thus, family-focused initiatives that can be categorized as counseling services, workshops, and seminars form a central part of preventive strategies. In Türkiye, programs that are realized with the Green Crescent have provided parents with both knowledge and tools to protect their children from drug-related risks. These initiatives strengthen the "social leg" of preventive policing, complementing operational strategies with community resilience (Orford et al., 2010).

Additionally, neighborhood-level engagement is a critical element for reinforcing these family-based strategies. Police officers recurrently interact with local citizens to encourage reporting of suspicious activities and build partnerships with schools, NGOs, and municipalities. Such initiatives promote a sense of shared vigilance, making it more difficult for drug markets to establish and sustain themselves at the community level (Ünlü, 2018). Through mobilizing families and communities, preventive policing surpasses its traditional boundaries and becomes an integrative instrument for social unity.

Eventually, community-oriented policing and family involvement demonstrate the prominence of a holistic method against drug usage. These strategies both enhance cooperation between law enforcement and society and strengthen the broader fabric of resilience. In this regard, they make communities less vulnerable to drug-related threats. Türkiye can be accepted as a critical example to observe how preventive policing can serve as a bridge between security institutions and the everyday lives of citizens by creating a more sustainable basis for long-term urban security.

5.4 The Use of Technological Tools

A critical dimension of modern urban security policies is related to the implementation of technological instruments. In Türkiye, systems such as the City Security Management System (KGYS), license plate recognition systems, and mobile reporting applications have become indispensable components of preventive policing strategies (Ministry of Interior, 2021). These tools are used to increase the operational capacity of law enforcement in addition to facilitate proactive interventions in terms of enabling faster detection, monitoring, and response.

Among these innovations, the UYUMA mobile application is particularly gain prominence. The UYUMA application allow citizens to directly report suspicious situations to the police and enhances social participation in crime prevention. In this regard, it embodies the concept of community intelligence, in which the public becomes an active source of information and cooperation for law enforcement (UNODC, 2022). This participatory implementation of technology transforms the traditional role of citizens from witnesses to active partners for ensuring community safety. Apart from this, mobile applications such as UYUMA may also be integrated to the AI in the future in order to filter false positives, prioritize urgent alerts, and even predict clusters of drug-related incidents. Such developments would combine citizen participation with algorithmic efficiency through the world (Lum & Isaac, 2016).

In addition to the citizen engagement, data-driven technologies have also reinforced the analytical capacity of police organizations. Artificial intelligence-supported data analysis, predictive algorithms, and crime mapping techniques are actively used to identify risk areas and allocate resources more efficiently (Ratcliffe, 2016). These tools allow the transition from reactive policing to intelligence-led strategies where early warning

systems monitor targeted patrols, surveillance, and preventive interventions. In practice, this allows law enforcement to concentrate on hotspots and high-risk groups before crime occurs.

Artificial intelligence has further expanded the domain of technological applications in drug control. For example, machine learning algorithms are integrated into systems such as KGYS and in this way, it can detect unusual activity patterns, anticipate high-risk environments and support real-time decision-making. Concurrently, forensic laboratories in Türkiye increasingly depend on AI to classify new psychoactive substances (NPS) and detect chemical variations that evolve quickly for traditional approaches (UNODC, 2022). Natural language processing tools are also being explored to monitor digital spaces with a special focus on social media to identify emerging slang terms and trafficking networks related to synthetic drugs (Europol, 2021). These new technological instruments enhance situational awareness and provide early warning indicators that strengthen preventive policing.

Despite their advantages, AI-driven tools raise critical questions in terms of ethics, accountability, and data privacy. It is hotly debated that predictive policing systems may reproduce biases embedded in their datasets if not carefully regulated (Ferguson, 2017). Thus, the necessity of embedding these tools within transparent and accountable governance framework must be taken into concern. Türkiye's integration of surveillance infrastructure, participatory mobile applications, and advanced analytics support this clarity in preventive policing. The combination of these tools reveals how technology can function as a force multiplier for law enforcement while simultaneously supporting communities. As a result, technology becomes both an operational instrument and a strategic enabler for sustainable urban security and an indispensable element of the country's evolving drug control policies.

6. Emerging Drug Threats in Urban Security

Urban security in the present century is increasingly affected by the dynamics of illicit drug markets that are continually evolving through the emergence of new and synthetic substances. Although heroin, cocaine, and cannabis have historically dominated international trafficking routes and law enforcement dossier, the last two decades have witnessed the proliferation of synthetic drugs and increasingly preferred novel psychoactive substances that bring about new challenges to the existing frameworks of regulation, detection, and prevention. The proliferation of these new categories of drugs has high potential risks for especially for the youth since these substances are cheap for production, easy to transport, and capable of rapid chemical modification. With this step, new drugs have transformed the landscape of urban security in terms of intensifying public health risks, fueling organized crime, and complicating the work of preventive policing.

The consequence of these emerging threats can particularly be observed in metropolitan areas since dense populations, social inequalities, and digital markets create the possible circumstances for the spread of synthetic substances. At the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Türkiye, has experienced a rapid rise in synthetic drug use and trafficking in recent years. At the same time, global monitoring bodies such as the UNODC and EMCDDA emphasize that new psychoactive substances are proliferating at an unprecedented pace, creating a constantly shifting target for law enforcement and public health institutions. Amid these circumstances, synthetic substances such as methamphetamine and synthetic cannabinoids must be taken into account critically as emerging threats for urban security analysis.

6.1 Synthetic Substances

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

In recent years, usage of synthetic substances is a hotly debated problem within the context of drug usage. This trend is reinforced by broader regional and global dynamics: the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA, 2023) reports a rapidly diversifying synthetic stimulant market in Europe, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime notes how low cost of production, ease of transport, and rapidly evolving chemical variants make synthetic substances especially attractive to traffickers (UNODC, 2022). Similar to the European countries, Türkiye has seen a dramatic shift in usage of synthetic substances particularly methamphetamine, synthetic cannabinoids, and diverse new psychoactive substances (NPS). According to the TMCDDA (TMCDDA, 2024), methamphetamine seizures reached a record high of approximately 21.9 tones in 2023, significantly exceeding earlier statistics and signing the scale of the phenomenon.

Quantitative data from Türkiye underline the severity of the synthetic threat. In 2023, the total amount of narcotics seized was reported at nearly 12 tones by the Trade Ministry's anti-narcotics teams, including significant quantities of methamphetamine, Captagon tablets, and smuggled cocaine (Turkey Minute, 2024). Turkish police reports corroborate that methamphetamine now dominates narcotics seizures, while the rate of heroin seizures has declined markedly—from 16.2 tones in 2022 to 21.9 tones in 2023 for methamphetamine, whereas heroin seizures fell from over 7–8 tones to about 3.3 tones in the same period (Hurriyet Daily News, 2024).

Apart from this, mortality and treatment draw a black portrait. The 2024 annual narcotics report demonstrated that methamphetamine was detected in 148 of 300 direct drug-related deaths in Turkey in 2023, accounting for approximately 50% of overdose cases when multiple-substance deaths are contained (Hurriyet Daily News, 2024, 2024). Treatment demand statistics also point to methamphetamine as a leading substance of abuse, with a surge in methamphetamine-associated psychiatric disorders observed in current clinical reports (Ergelen Yalçın & Paltun, 2025).

These transformations reflect broader European trends. The EMCDDA's European Drug Report 2023 indicates that synthetic stimulants and new psychoactive substances have been easy to reach, with synthetic cathinone seizures reaching tens of tones and new synthetic opioids (e.g. nitazenes) evolving as potent overdose threats (EMCDDA, 2023; Reuters, 2025). At this point, Türkiye's has a critical role by being a transit state on the Balkan Route. Government statements and policy reports emphasize Türkiye's strategic importance for both cocaine trafficking and methamphetamine smuggling, which has brought about the adoption of an assertive stance in interdiction and intelligence-based drug enforcement (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). At the same time, the rapid increase in domestic methamphetamine consumption has required a parallel progress in terms of preventive policing, forensic capacity, and community-based interventions.

The evolving character of synthetic substances specifically being cheap, rapidly changing, and highly potent presents the necessity of adaptive preventive policing strategies. Türkiye's law enforcement responses this threat includes large-scale operations, enhancement of coordination with international agencies, and increased investment in forensic drug analysis for keeping pace with evolving chemical variants. Yet it is a clear fact that these measures alone may not suffice. Preventive strategies must integrate real-time intelligence gathering, rapid detection of new synthetic compounds, public health outreach especially targeted at young populations, and community resilience-building in urban areas where youth unemployment, social vulnerability, and limited access to health services are detected.

Within the context of preventive policing approaches, Turkey's existing preventive policing strategies such as Narkotim patrols, youth education programs, the UYUMA mobile

reporting application and community-oriented policing initiatives are undergoing further adaptation to the synthetic drug issue. Predictive policing methods, artificial intelligence monitoring such as detecting new slang on social media, forecasting hotspots of synthetic drug use and rapid forensic testing can pointedly expand the power for proactive response.

7. Conclusion

This article analyzes the intersection of urban security, preventive policing, and drug control policies in Türkiye by taking the growing threat of synthetic substances into account. The study has shown that drug-related crime is not merely a criminal justice concern, rather, is a multidimensional dossier that includes public health, social cohesion, and community resilience. In this regard, the Turkish case figures out how a country positioned both as a transit and a target state must create strategies that extend beyond punitive enforcement by adding incorporate preventive, community-based, and technology-driven approaches to the portrait.

The findings demonstrate that preventive policing strategies such as Narkotim units, school-centered programs, community-oriented policing, and the integration of technological tools like the UYUMA mobile application have considerably broadened the scope of Turkey's counter measurements. These initiatives emphasize a paradigm shift from reactive enforcement to proactive prevention. In this sense, law enforcement is embedded within neighborhoods, schools, and families instead of operating solely as an external authority. Furthermore, the inclusion of multi-stakeholder cooperation including security institutions with ministries, municipalities, and civil society organizations indicates that Türkiye's anti-drug policies have balanced state authority with societal participation.

Apart from this, the study also touches upon the critical challenge of synthetic substances which rapidly alter the landscape of drug use and trafficking in Türkiye. The intense rise in methamphetamine seizures, treatment admissions, and drug-related fatalities shows that synthetic drugs expand the scale of the problem through transforming its character. These developments demand solutions that are flexible, adaptive, and closely aligned in relation to global trends since synthetic drugs are often transnational in terms of both production and distribution.

Taken together, the Turkish experience underlines the necessity of a holistic and multidimensional approach for drug control. In this regard, preventive policing integrated with education, health, and community support systems can be accepted as an efficient instrument for addressing both drug-related crime and its structural causes. By adding preventive policing at the center of urban security framework, Türkiye take the seat as a significant example of how contemporary states can confront evolving drug threats in ways that reinforce both national security and social resilience. Apart from its empirical findings, this study also provides several contributions to the broader literature on urban security, drug policy, and preventive policing. Firstly, by linking Türkiye's evolving policing practices with the global increase of synthetic substances, the article offers a conceptual bridge between traditional criminological approaches and the evolving dynamics of synthetic drug markets that is an area remaining underexplored in current scholarship. Secondly, the analytical framework presented shows how preventive policing can function not only as a security instrument but as a multidimensional governance mechanism that combines health, education, and community resilience perspectives. Within the light of these findings, this framework can be adapted and tested in other national contexts facing similar synthetic drug challenges. Finally, the study opens new paths for future research by emphasizing the necessity for comparative analyses between preventive policing models, evaluations of technology-driven early warning systems, and long-term evaluations of community-centered

Crime Prevention Policies in Urban Areas: Preventive Policing and the Fight Against Drugs

anti-drug interventions. In this respect, the article places conceptual basis that can guide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in terms of designing more holistic, adaptive, and socially grounded strategies against evolving drug threats.

REFERENCES

- Bayley, D. H. (2006). *Changing the guard: Developing democratic police abroad*. Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, T., & Holloway, K. (2009). The causal connection between drug misuse and crime. *British Journal of Criminology*, 49(4), 513–531, doi:10.1093/bjc/azp014
- Copello, A., Templeton, L., & Velleman, R. (2005). Family interventions in the treatment of alcohol and drug problems. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 24(4), 369–385, doi:10.1080/09595230500302356.
- Crawford, A. (1998). *Crime prevention and community safety: Politics, policies and practices*. Longman.
- Demir, B., & Yılmaz, B. (2023). Emerging challenges of synthetic cannabinoid use in Turkey: Public health and policy responses. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 58(7), 912–925. doi:10.1080/10826084.2023.2176489
- EMCDDA. (2021). *European drug report 2021: Trends and developments*. European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.
- EMCDDA. (2023). *European drug report 2023: Trends and developments*. European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.
- Ergelen Yalçın, M., & Paltun, S. C. (2025). *Methamphetamine-related psychiatric emergencies in Türkiye: Clinical features, risk factors, and follow-up results from a tertiary mental health center*. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 16, doi:10.3389/fpsy.2025.1675959.
- General Directorate of Security. (2022). *Drug-related crime report 2022*. General Directorate of Security, Retrieved from <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/>
- General Directorate of Security. (2022). *Türkiye Drug Control Report 2022*. Ankara: General Directorate of Security.
- Goldstein, P. J. (1985). The drugs/violence nexus: A tripartite conceptual framework. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 15(4), 493–506, doi:10.1177/002204268501500406
- Hughes, C. E., & Stevens, A. (2010). What can we learn from the Portuguese decriminalization of illicit drugs? *British Journal of Criminology*, 50(6), 999–1022, doi:10.1093/bjc/azq038
- Hurriyet Daily News*. (2024, March 15). *Turkey reports record methamphetamine seizures in 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/>
- Kirişçi, K. (2003). Turkey's "demonstrative effect" and the transformation of the Middle East. *The Middle East Journal*, 57(1), 28–41. doi:10.2307/4329810
- Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. C. (2001). Conceptualizing stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 363–385, doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363.
- Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure* (Rev. ed.). New York: Free Press.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2023). *Press release on Turkey's anti-drug efforts*, Retrieved from <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/>
- Ministry of Interior. (2021). *Annual security and drug prevention report*. Retrieved from <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/>
- Ministry of Interior. (2021). *Drug control strategy document* Ankara: Ministry of Interior.
- Orford, J., Velleman, R., Copello, A., Templeton, L., & Ibanga, A. (2010). The experiences of affected family members: A summary of two decades of qualitative research.

Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy, 17(S1), 44–62, doi:10.3109/09687637.2010.514192.

Ratcliffe, J. H. (2016). *Intelligence-led policing*. Routledge.

Reuters. (2025, January 20). *European drug markets see rise in nitazenes and synthetic opioids*. Retrieved from <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>

Room, R. (2005). Stigma, social inequality and alcohol and drug use. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 24(2), 143–155, doi:10.1080/09595230500102434

Savage, S. (2017). *The governance of crime and security in the twenty-first century*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1969). *Juvenile delinquency and urban areas*. University of Chicago Press.

TMCCDA (Turkish Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction). (2024). *Annual drug report 2024*. Ankara: Ministry of Health.

Trojanowicz, R., & Bucqueroux, B. (1990). *Community policing: A contemporary perspective*. Anderson Publishing.

Turkey Minute. (2024, February 10). *Turkish customs seize 12 tonnes of narcotics in 2023*. Retrieved from <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/>

Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). *Drug use statistics 2022*. Turkish Statistical Institute, Retrieved from <https://www.tuik.gov.tr/Home/Index>

UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). (2022). *World drug report 2022*. Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/>

Ünlü, A. (2018). *A contemporary evaluation of Turkish drug-control policy*. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 54, 142–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687637.2016.1216946>

WHO (World Health Organization). (2020). *World health statistics 2020*. Geneva: World Health Organization.