



# Results of domestic migration on juvenile delinquency in Adana, Turkey



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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The aim of this study is to determine the effect of migration on children in the juvenile justice system. The study takes into account whether these children arrived in the city via migration or not, the types of crimes against property and persons committed by the children brought before the Juvenile Courts, and the types, frequency, and durations of punishments and precautionary decisions they received. In addition, the study examines the children's ability to realize the meaning and consequences of their crimes and to lead their future behaviors effectively.

**Method:** Data gathered from children between 3 and 18 years of age who appeared before the 1, 2, and 3 numbered Juvenile Courts of Adana Courthouse after January 2004 on charges of committing a crime, and/or children who were sent to or who applied to the Provincial Directorate for National Education based on the decision of the Court has been evaluated retrospectively.

**Results:** Six hundred and eighty children were studied. Of these, 602 (88.5%) were male and 78 (11.5%) were female. The average age of the child at the time of the commitment of the crime was 13 years and 8 months  $\pm$  2.18 years. It has been observed that there are statistically meaningful differences for children involved in delinquency between cases whether they come via migration or regardless of migration and types of crimes committed ( $p = 0.004$ ). When cities faced with migration from other places and types of crime committed by children are compared, it has been observed that there are meaningful differences between the types of crimes committed by non-migrant versus migrant children ( $p = 0.012$ ).

**Conclusions:** It is important to state the reasons for delinquency and to obtain data to prevent future delinquency and to put forward regional and local recommendations within the scope of the data.

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## 1. Introduction

Juvenile Delinquency is defined as criminal behaviour by children and adolescents with or without violence.<sup>1</sup> To be able to understand these behaviours showed by children and considered criminal, it is important that personal and social aspects of these behaviors and personal traits of the children who act in a criminal way, the families of them and the region with which they are in interaction be examined.<sup>2,3</sup>

There are a variety of reasons because of which children exhibit transgressive behaviour or why they are pushed to delinquency.

Homelessness, poorness, inadequacy in education system, the increasing number of broken families and negative conditions in which the children<sup>4</sup> are some of the adverse factors which affect socialization of the children, and indirectly the condition of being in delinquent activity.

That the children are neglected by their parents is one of the significant factors which increase the risk of their being pushed to the delinquency.<sup>5–8</sup> With the studies, it has been revealed that the children who are neglected physically and emotionally by parents, whose parents do not supervise effectively, and who have a substance use story in their families are pushed to delinquency. For instance, 78.3% of children who were proven to have been exposed to maltreatment in United States of America in 2012 were understood to have been neglected by their parents (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, 2013). In brief, child neglect that can

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also be defined bad experiences in long-term childhood is another important reason resulting in delinquency.<sup>9</sup>

Another factor for delinquency is migration movement. Migration is a population movement which changes the structure of the society with economic, cultural, social, political, ecological and personal.<sup>10</sup> aspects of the process of geographical change of place. Domestic migration is movement of population by the people inside the country from a region to another one perpetually, seasonally, obligatorily or voluntarily.<sup>11,12</sup>

Since 1950, there has been a dense domestic migration in Turkey not only from the countryside to the cities but also from primarily Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions, Central and Northern Anatolia to the West and the South. After Second World War, human-driven labor force has become unimportant in the countryside with the liberalization and mechanisation in the agriculture and the fact that public investment centers upon Western cities has increased domestic migration in Turkey.<sup>13</sup> Based on these reasons, domestic migration from the countryside to the cities has been considered as a serious problem especially for the developing countries such as Turkey. According to,<sup>14,15</sup> increasing labor force demand with the industrialization process has been creating one of the main reasons for migration from the countryside to the cities because much time is needed for migrating people so that they can become urbanized or be integrated into the city they have come. Inadequate conditions resulting from nongenuine urbanization and anomaly (rupture of social bonds between the society and the person) can be a factor for perpetration. Nuclear family in shanty settlement who come via migration and have a secluded and special social life style by respecting customs have a very different way of life than extended family in the countryside and modern nuclear family in the city. Children and adolescents are the most affected groups by the culture conflict resulting from these cultural differences between families coming via migration and the ones residing there. Children and adolescents cannot reach entertainment world, adventure, fame and richness which they think to get in the city, and at the same time they begin to get the idea that due to inadequate education and lack of talents compared to their peers, they cannot achieve work and the future of which they dream. As a reaction to all these discrepancies, being in need of such behaviors as proving themselves, children are pushed to delinquency by imitating town-dwellers peers and rebelling at the authority. Moreover, the fact that traditional family moral laws showing changes with urban life have decreasing sanction power to protect children and there are no institutions which can carry out social function of the family make delinquency among teenagers easier.<sup>16,17</sup>

Because of uncontrolled migrations, the population of the cities has increased rapidly, and problems like unemployment and sheltering have appeared for the city residents who are not ready for fast population increase. Furthermore, education system of places to which people move has been affected badly by rapid population growth. In fact, we are faced with crowded classrooms and schools, insufficient education and teaching materials and school environments as problematic conditions.<sup>18</sup> As a result of these circumstances with many negative cases brought along unplanned urbanization and cultural nonconformities in social circles, it is made easier for adolescents to show behaviors within the scope of crime and violence at school and around it.

What's more, those who move via migration make their children work instead of sending them to school so that they can contribute to family income as they have economical difficulties. These children who are made to work so as to meet the economic needs of families work either for unqualified jobs such as boot polishing, portering, selling mussel or illegal jobs like lotto, selling smuggled cigarettes. This case causes their education rights to be

violated and that leads them to get into harmful habits by means of their work places, thereby hindering those children made to work at a very young age from education and this circumstance paves the way for delinquency among children.<sup>19</sup>

Crimes committed by the children are mostly for meeting pecuniary needs nowadays and the crimes committed by the children at the utmost are against property in Turkey.<sup>16</sup>

A lot of research puts forward that compared to others, crimes against property and the person are committed by the children more.<sup>20,21</sup> The most common type of crimes against property by the children pushed to delinquency is simple larceny and qualified theft. In addition, it has been stated that there has been an enormous increase in sex crimes by the children in recent years.<sup>22,23</sup>

The statement that every person not completing 18 age is regarded as a child which is regulated under the title of Definitions of Article 6 of Turkish Penal Code is incongruent with the definition indicated in Article 1 of Convention on the Rights of the Child of which Turkey is a party<sup>22</sup> and the transgressive behaviours of a person regarded as a child are punished with a less enforcement compared to an adult with the same behaviours according to Turkish Penal Code.

During the last century, population has been increasing in the cities at a very rapid rate and there has been a fast population movement from the countryside to the cities. Being not ready for this phase, the cities have been expanding in an unplanned and uncontrolled way, and crime rates mounting with unplanned urbanization not only threaten people's right to live but also disrupt the integrity of social life.

Domestic relations and social surroundings can change with the effect of socio-economic changes, globalization and modernization in Turkey—a developing country. In addition to traditional values, modern West effects can be felt; opportunities of the young increase with urbanization and modernization. On the other hand, attitudes of parents become more permissive and supervision of parents on their own children can decrease. When the fact that these socio-cultural, educational and economical conditions can cause risky behaviors of the adolescents to increase is taken into account, it is highly important that these issues be studied.

The number of the adolescents involved in a crime is increasing day by day. The problems of the adolescents are thought to cause trauma, abuse, family problems and lack of social support, a variety of incompatible, anomalous, anti-social behaviours. Moreover, it is believed that there are bad experiences and insufficient social support under these behaviours.

In this study, it is aimed that by taking into account of whether they come to the city via migration or not, the crimes against property and the person by the children pushed to delinquency, types of crimes brought to Juvenile Courts, their kinds, frequency, durations of punishments, precautionary decisions and existence of their ability to realize crime and lead their behaviors could be investigated.

## 2. Method

Data belonging to children between 3 and 18 ages who come/made to come to 1, 2, 3 numbered Juvenile Courts of Adana Courthouse after January, 2004 on charges of commitment of crime, and/or children who are sent/apply to the Provincial Directorate for National Education because of measures taken by the decision of the Court has been evaluated retrospectively.

All data in this study has been obtained from court decisions, information in dossier archives of Provincial Directorate for National Education, Department of Special Education and Guidance, Counselling and Research Center in Central Districts Seyhan and Yüreğir. 680 children who are confirmed that they are made to

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