

Criminality During the Financial Crisis in Greece

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Introduction

The financial crisis that began in 2008 affecting many European countries and mainly Greece has an ongoing impact on public mental health and quality of life. The aim of this study was to investigate the potential impact of the financial crisis on criminality verifying differences in crime rates between the years 2008 and 2011 in Greece.

Methods

Data on crime in Greece for 2008 and 2011 were provided by the Crime Analysis Section of the Public Security Department of the Hellenic Police Headquarters. In order to create a comprehensive global index of criminality we calculated an overall crime rate including the following crimes committed: homicides, financial crimes (fraud, extortion), drug-related crimes, illegal weapon possession, sex-related crimes (rape, sexual exploitation), thefts/ burglaries and robberies. The overall and the aforementioned specific crude crime rates were calculated per 100,000 residents. Paired samples t-test was used to examine the differences in the rates between 2008 and 2011.

Results

A significant increase in the overall crime rate between 2008 and 2011 ($t=5.01$, $p=0.001$) was found. Moreover, between 2008 and 2011 there was significant increase in the crude rates of homicide ($t=2.41$, $p=0.03$), fraud ($t=7.35$, $p=0.001$), extortion ($t=3.22$, $p=0.009$), illegal weapon possession ($t=5.27$, $p=0.001$), theft/burglary ($t=4.62$, $p=0.001$) and robbery ($t=3.23$, $p=0.007$). There were not statistical differences in the crude rates of sex-related and drug-related crime.

Conclusions

According to the results of this study criminality in Greece shows significant increase during the current financial crisis as reflected in many crime indicators.