

Effects of Mass Incarceration in Turkey Following Political Events

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1 Background

- In the last decade, Turkey experienced a month-long nationwide protest in 2013, a failed peace process with the Kurdish separatist group PKK in 2015, and a failed coup attempt in 2016. All these events have been followed by incarceration of thousands of individuals.
- This carried Turkey to second place in incarceration rate among OECD countries right behind United States.
- In this paper, I investigate how these political arrests show up in data (and if it does) and whether there are visible welfare effects of these mass incarceration events.

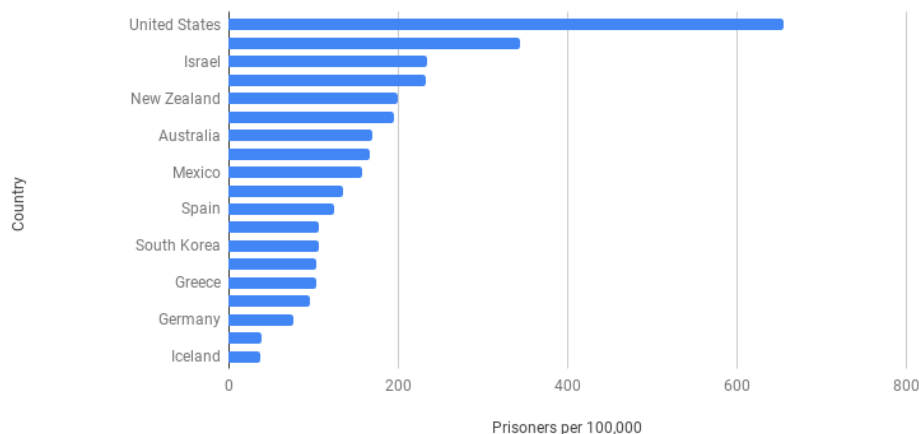


Figure 1: Incarceration rates in OECD countries as of May 2020

2 Data and Exploration

- I am using data from TurkStat website on incarceration in Turkey. The data covers 20 years from 2000 to 2019. I look at the number of people received into prison by the province they used to reside in, their educational background, and type of crime.

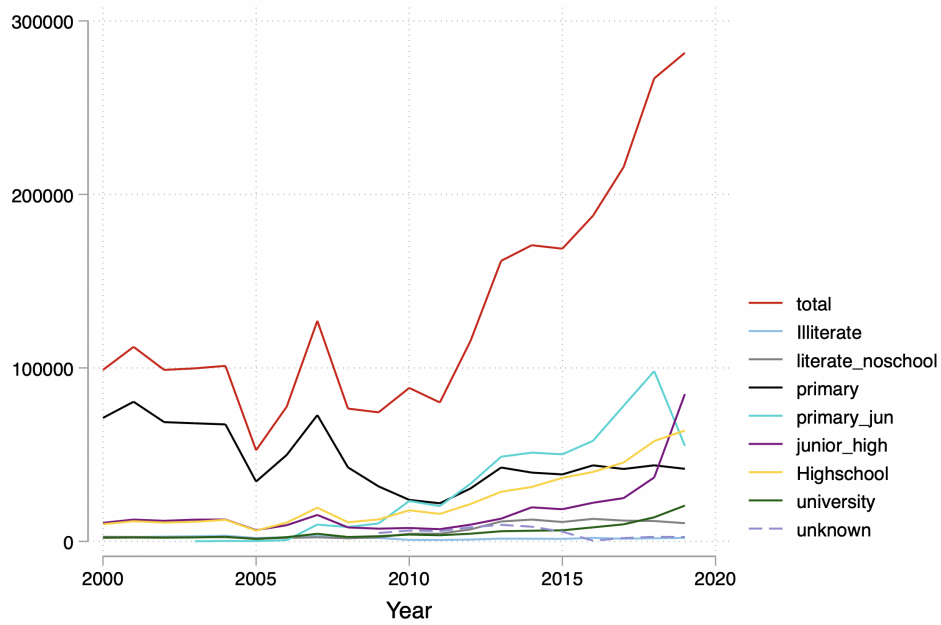


Figure 2: Convicts in Turkey Received Into Prison by Educational Status

- Here I combine the variables into two broader categories: those with at least eight years of education vs those with below eight years of education. We see that the rise in convictions are driven by educated prisoners.

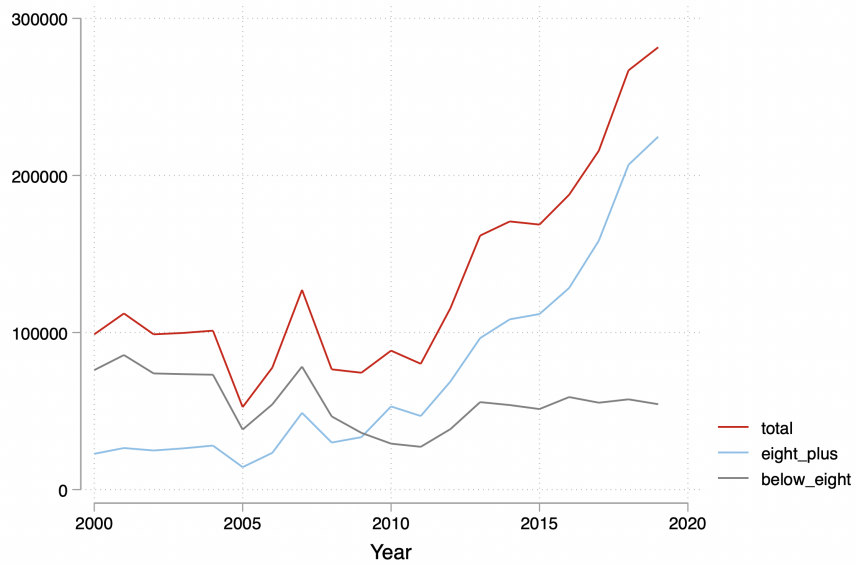


Figure 3: Imprisonment in Turkey by Educational Status

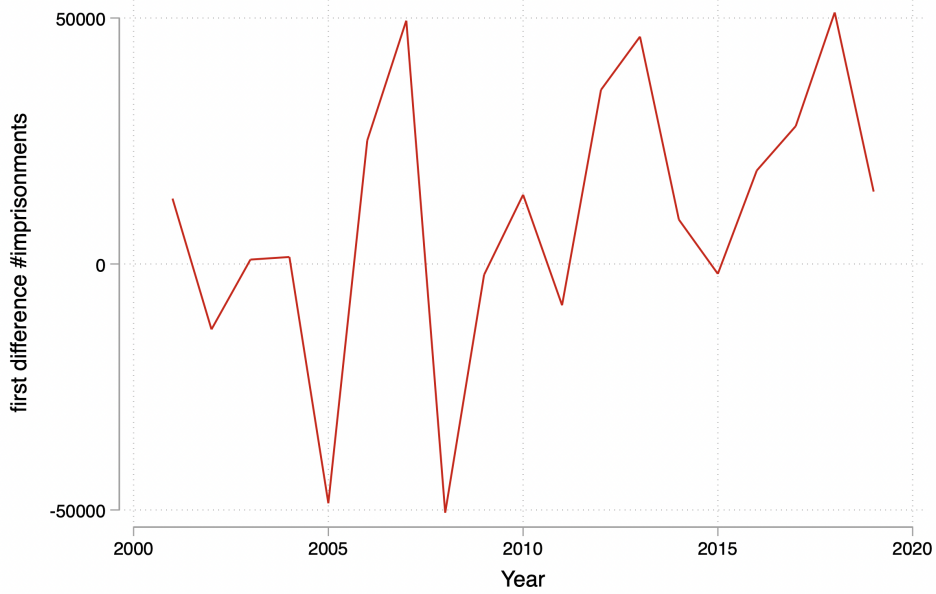


Figure 4: Imprisonment in Turkey First Difference

- The first difference captures the mass imprisonment of political opponents followed by 2013 Gezi Protests and 2016 coup attempt.
- There seems to be some seasonality. I tried to see if it was related to election cycles but did not turn out significant nor add any explanatory power.

2.1 Welfare Measures

- I use GDP per capita, suicide rates, and divorce rates as my welfare proxy measures.
- Province level GDP per capita data for years 2000-2003 was not available on TurkStat, Treasury, or TCMB (Turkish Central Bank) websites. I found a paper that approximated province level GDP per capita for those years using nightlights data (Dusundere, 2019). I use their estimates in this paper.
- I also extracted data from YSK (Turkish Election Institution) website on party vote, municipality, and seat shares. I plan to use these data to investigate the political motivation behind arrests.

3 Methodology

- I use difference in differences to see if provinces that incarcerated more people experienced better or worse economic outcomes.

Table 1: The Effect of Mass Incarceration on GDPk

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	L.gdpk	L.gdpk	L.gdpk	L.gdpk
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
cpk	1527.692*** (77.97)	1166.618*** (76.71)	1434.729*** (75.72)	1037.839*** (72.48)
postcoup x cpkp90	-2027.343*** (598.76)	-1553.529*** (437.13)		
cpkp90	-734.327** (280.41)	-467.969* (206.85)		
postcoup x cpkp75			-811.330 (500.85)	-565.578 (362.46)
cpkp75			-400.566 (233.33)	-153.775 (170.67)
population	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)	0.001*** (0.00)
postcoup	-1005.575*** (234.44)	1411.171*** (376.58)	-902.805*** (238.93)	1685.530*** (375.92)
constant	2959.311*** (157.40)	384.107 (257.00)	3134.647*** (155.18)	588.517* (255.09)
R-sqr	0.335	0.658	0.326	0.653
dfres	1533	1516	1533	1516
BIC	28852.9	27953.5	28873.0	27974.9

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

4 References

- <https://www.tepav.org.tr/tr/haberler/s/4450>
- more coming