Durkheim's Anomie Theory on Civic Participation

Keleigh Shands
Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/scholars_day

Part of the Civic and Community Engagement Commons, and the Political Science Commons

Recommended Citation
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/scholars_day/45

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Carl Goodson Honors Program at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Scholars Day by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.
DURKHEIM’S ANOMIE THEORY ON CIVIC PARTICIPATION
KELEIGH SHANDS
OUACHITA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Purpose of the Project

• Emile Durkheim predicted that accelerated change in society whether that be economic, social, or political result in a state of normlessness or anomie. Researchers proved Durkheim’s theory by looking at the 2008 economic crash and correlating suicides (Hodwitz and Frey, 2016).
• Other researchers looked at Durkheim’s theory on the political upheaval in Eastern Europe (Arts, Hermkens, & Wijck, 1993).
• Researchers proved that other factors like depression and alcoholism don’t effect Durkheim’s theory (Fernquist, 2007).
• Bernburg (2002) used anomie to define crime.
• Researchers looked at Durkheim’s theory on the political upheaval in Eastern Europe (Arts, Hermkens, & Wijck, 1993).

Hypotheses

My overall hypothesis is that voter participation will be higher in the states where organic solidarity is more apparent. The overall hypothesis is subdivided into five other hypotheses.

H1 – The first subdivided hypothesis is that voting will be less in states of higher suicides and vice versa.

H2 – The next hypothesis is that higher divorce rates will decrease voting and vice versa.

H3 – The third hypothesis is higher marriage rates increase voting.

H4 – Income is being tested as an independent variable for the hypothesis that in the states of higher income, voting will be higher.

H5 – The last hypothesis is that Kiwanis clubs per state and voter participation. A significant correlation is found.

Methods and Results

H1 – A two-tailed Pearson Correlation ran on voter participation and suicides. A significant relationship is shown.

H2 – An ANOVA ran on the relationship between divorce and voting. There is no significant relationship.

H3 – An ANOVA ran on the relationship between marriage rates and voter participation. There is no significant relationship.

H4 – A correlation ran on income and voter participation. No significant relationship is found.

H5 – A one-tailed Pearson Correlation run on Kiwanis clubs and voter participation. A significant correlation is found.

Summary of Findings

After running both a Pearson Correlation and ANOVA test on all variables, only two hypotheses were found significant. Hypothesis one was found significant at a .000 level on the Pearson Correlation. It was not found significant for the ANOVA. Hypothesis five was found significant for both the ANOVA and Pearson Correlation. It was found significant at the .008 level for the correlation and at a .001 level for the ANOVA after being recoded into five groups. These results conclude that a significant negative correlation is found between suicides and voter participation on the states. They also conclude that there is a positive correlation and relationship between the number of Kiwanis clubs per state and voter participation.

Limitations

The most prevalent limitation is the data is aggregate. Another limitation is that data was left out of divorce rates per state. The data is missing rates for California, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Minnesota, and New Mexico. Another limitation is that not all the hypotheses were supported. Only two out of five were supported, so it is hard to translate this data towards the overall hypothesis. It would be easy to call the overall hypothesis incorrect with only two out of five subdivided hypotheses being correct, but the two that were correct had some truth to them. Suicides predict anomie, thus the states of higher anomie had less voter participation. This is a twist on my hypothesis. Kiwanis club participation is an example of common sentiments and values among people, so voter participation is higher in states with more Kiwanis clubs. In order to have a well-rounded idea of whether to count or discount the hypothesis, more research will have to be done on the subject.