Using Anomie Institutional Theory to Explain Crime in the ECOWAS Region: Policy Implications

Babatunde A. Akinbobola[1] & Augustine Adu Frimpong[2] & Geraldine Doucet[3]

[1, 2]Department of Public Administration/Policy
Southern University and A & M College
[2,3]Department of Criminal Justice
Southern University and A & M College

ABSTRACT

This study used Anomie Institutional Theory to explain crime in the ECOWAS region to inform policy. The sample size used in this particular study considered the fifteen-member countries in the ECOWAS region. This study employed the correlational research design. The data source for all the variables came primarily from the World Health Organization's (WHO) Mortality Database, the World Development Indicators, The World Bank, UNDP, and the CIA World Factbook. The study finds that development has a significant negative relationship with homicide, this therefore indicates that homicide rates tend to be higher in nations that have younger populations, lower life expectancies, higher infant mortality rates, lower GDPs per capita, and fewer urban residents. The study found a positive significant product term for the interaction between economic participation and noneconomic participation [i.e. similar to analyses of Messner & Rosenfeld (1997); Hughes et al. (2015); Weld & Roche (2016)], indicating that the relationship between economic participation and homicide is actually exacerbated by strong noneconomic participation. This may be indicative of greater anomic pressures in societies where individuals face competing pressures to succeed in multiple institutional domains. The study recommends that Crime control in the ECOWAS region should be a collaborative effort among all stakeholders. Above all, the leadership in the region must ensure institutional balance across the ECOWAS member countries to minimize crime in the region.

Keywords: Anomie, Institutions, Crime, economic, Non-economic, Time-Use, Strains, Homicide, Policy

INTRODUCTION

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa. Jointly, these countries comprise an area of about 5,114,162 km^2, and in 2015 had an estimated population of over 349 million (Adeyemi, 2003). According to the literature, the stated goal of the ECOWAS is to achieve "collective self-sufficiency" for its member states by creating a single large trade bloc by building a full economic and trading union (Adeyemi, 2003; Odeyemi, 2020). The union was established on May 28, 1975, with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos, with its stated mission to promote economic integration across the region (Adeyemi, 2003). Nonetheless, a revised version of the treaty was agreed and signed on July 24, 1993 in Cotonou. Very importantly, the ECOWAS also serves as a peacekeeping force in the region, with member states occasionally sending joint military forces to intervene in the bloc's member countries at times of political instability, crime, and unrest (Adeyemi, 2003; Odeyemi, 2020).

Meanwhile, organized crime, homicides, and other violent related crimes have become widespread in the ECOWAS region (Alesina, Piccolo & Pinotti, 2015). As a result, several attempts have been made by the leadership in the region to curtailing crime. The attempt to minimize crime to provide public safety for the citizens in the region has made crime public policy priority in the ECOWAS region (Alesina, Piccolo & Pinotti, 2015; Foster, 2018). Crime controls have become a major issue to the policymakers in the ECOWAS region because historically, higher crime rates have been associated with higher inequality and poverty (Foster, 2018). Crime has over the years attracted the attention of several policymakers and international peace- and nation building advocates in the sense that any country in the world, regardless of its size, political conditions or even its economy all its internal operations are expected to be affected directly by the crime rates in the country (Eisen, Roeder, & Bowling, 2015; Foster, 2018). Even though, it is observed from the literature that some countries (i.e. Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Japan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and New Zealand, etc.) are trying their best to eliminate the crimes and as a result some of the countries have decreased their crime rates (such as Qatar, United Arab Emirates, etc.) while some countries (like Venezuela, South Africa, Afghanistan,

Honduras, Brazil, United Sates of America, etc.) are taking the necessary measures just to stop the high crimes which may be in the different forms either in form of civil crime or the social crime. The attempt for countries, political leaders, and policymakers to eliminate crime therefore describe how significant crime is at the center stage of public policy (Eisen, Roeder, & Bowling, 2015; Foster, 2018).

In addition, Baliki (2014) argued that among the numerous shocks' households face in developing countries, crime and violence continue to be an economic and social challenge for many communities. According to Walsh (2008), crime imposes high economic costs to the public and private sectors. Walsh (2008) further argued that crime in general lowers public and foreign investment (i.e. high incidence of theft and corruption), it reduces economic activity (safety of commuting from one location to the other), and it harbors black markets (weapon trade, drug consumption, etc.). At the global level, Baliki (2014) argued that governments and political administrations are working very hard to create jobs for youth and to protect the peace and safety of their respective citizens. Also, public safety is a major concern for households, especially in countries with weak security or institutions, and ineffective law and order enforcement (Baliki, 2014). Meanwhile, crime rates are recorded to be very high among poorer nations, particularly in Africa, for example some African countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, etc. are regarded among the poorest countries in the world, for which DR Congo recorded a high homicide rates of 28.3 per 100,000 population in 2015 (Knoema, 2015). Various kinds of crime and coups are on the rise across many African countries, particularly in the ECOWAS region (see Figure 1 and Table 1 for more details).

Table 1: Average Homicide Rate Between 1960 and 2020 for ECOWAS Member Countries

Countries	Benin	Burkina Faso	Cape Verde	The Gambia	Ghana	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau	Ivory Coast	Liberia	Mali	Niger	Nigeria	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Togo
Homicide Rate	1.123	1.250	6.804	7.8	2.091	17.3	1.149	11.6	3.264	10.9	4.428	34.524	0.268	1.729	9

Source: World Bank and Knoema Data Appliance- World Atlas Data

By following a spate of coups that recently displaced democratically elected governments in the sub-region, some leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are on a mission to head off the trend. As a result, the ECOWAS Council of the Wise held a two-day retreat in Lagos whereby members said they were working in concert with the ECOWAS Commission to develop and validate a one-year plan of action aimed at discouraging military intervention in power, promoting democratic stability and minimizing crime in the region (AT Editor, 2019). During the same period, in quest of devising strategies to minimize crime and coup in the ECOWAs region, the Chairman of the council and Nigeria's former President Goodluck Jonathan noted that West Africa in recent times faced unsavory developments that have continued to pose a challenge to peace, security and sustainable development region (AT Editor, 2019; European Union Report, 2014). He further explained that the conference aimed to evolve an agenda for promoting stability in the sub-region. "Within the last two years (between 2020 and 2021), the ECOWAS region have witnessed three military coups in Mali, Guinea and Burkina Faso, as well as coup attempts in Niger and Guinea-Bissau," he said, adding that the trend posed grave threat to democracy in ECOWAS, especially at a time when relentless militancy and terrorist activity across the Sahel and frontline countries had worsened the security situation (European Union Report, 2014).

In response to minimizing the crime rate in the ECOWAS region, which stands at an average of 8.1 per 100,000 population (World Bank, 2020), the region launched a support project system as a way to provide security for ECOWAS member countries. All these efforts exhibited by the leaderships of the ECOWAS region are in-line with argument that crime is at the center of public policy as stated earlier in the above discussion. In fact, the support project provided the necessary support to ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, organized crime related to it and drug abuse in West Africa (European Union Report, 2014). According to UNDOC (2019), the objective of the project was to contribute to the reduction of drug abuse, illicit drug trafficking and related organized crime in West Africa through the implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa (2008-2014), renewed until the end of 2015, as well as the new Action Plan (2016-2020). In addition, the purpose of this project was to strengthen the capacity of ECOWAS and its Member States and Mauritania to tackle drug trafficking, homicide crime, drug abuse, and transnational organized crime. It aims to reinforce national and regional level responses to drug trafficking, related organized crime and drug abuse in the region. Despite the tremendous effort by the leaderships of the ECOWAS region through the support project to minimize crime, the ECOWAS region is still considered one of the least developed regions in the world but with relatively high rate of homicide crime within the African continent—for which the homicide rate on the African continent (13 victims per 100,000 people) is higher than the global average (6.1 victims per 100,000 people), and far higher than the rates found in Europe or Asia, according to a report released on Monday by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC, 2019).

The UNODC's project in support of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan came to an end in October 2019, however, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continues assisting the ECOWAS member states, as well as Mauritania, in their efforts to combat drug trafficking, drug abuse and transnational organized crime such as homicide crimes, etc. In occasion of the end of the ECOWAS Support Project, the UNODC and the ECOWAS members states published, with the financial support of the European Union, the West African Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (WENDU) Report (2014-2017).The WENDU Report, with a focus on drug interdiction, substance use disorders and treatment, presents the stark realities of the vulnerability of West Africa and Mauritania to illicit drug use, production and trafficking, and its spillover effects as an issue of great public health and safety concerns as well as a threat to good governance, development, peace and security in the region and above. Public safety has become a major concern to many ECOWAS member countries due to the increasing rates of homicides, drug use, trafficking, and many others. Meanwhile, it is not clear in the literature whether the high rates of crime in the region is due to weak institutions.

Surprisingly, it has been argued by Gwilliam (2011) that the comparison of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with other countries in the developing world highlights the extent to which countries in the region trail the world in virtually every possible measure of economic development (Gwilliam, 2011). There are challenges on the substantial investment for the maintaining and upgrading of existing infrastructure or the propensity to under- investing in infrastructure considering the several factors at play (The Compact with Africa, 2017; National Infrastructure Commission, 2017). Meanwhile, low investment in the security services and poor infrastructure development give rise to low employment opportunities thereby decreasing the opportunity cost to commit crime (Montolio, 2018). The ECOWAS region faces several institutional weaknesses—such as corruption, bad government, weak democracy etc., and infrastructural challenges with many people still surviving without access to water, sanitation, power, and other basic living standards required to meet their fundamental needs (Global Infrastructure Outlook, 2017). Despite all these characteristics attributed to the ECOWAS region, little is known about how institutions, family influences, religion, economic factors, and non-economic factors influence crime in the ECOWAS region. Financial issues, social cultural matters (Santos et al., 2018), religion (Islam & Christianity), and high poverty rate as well as bad governance could also contribute to the high crime rates in the region (ECOWAS).

Meanwhile, several scholars such as Bjerregaard and Cochran (2008); Dolliver (2014); Hughes et al. (2015) have concurrently theorized that weak institution leads to high levels of crime in a given society but little is known empirically about the relationship between institutions and homicide crime in the ECOWAS region. Nonetheless, many of the studies that have utilized institutions to explain crime, particularly homicides crime as a cross-nation variable have over the years used the institutional anomie theory of crime (IAT) to examine crime by using a survey-based attitudinal measures or government expenditures across many OECD countries and advanced countries but little is known in less developing countries where poverty rate is very high, more specifically the ECOWAS region. Therefore, this study examines the relationships between homicide rates and time spent in economic versus noneconomic institutional domains to inform public policy and criminal justice policy in the ECOWAS region. This study is designed to investigate time use data in IAT.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anomie Institutional Theory

This section of the dissertation is utilized to discuss the theoretical framework—anomie institutional theoretical framework. The concept "anomie" has been thoroughly defined under the Key *Definition Section of* this paper. As such the concept was explained from three perspectives—Durkheim, Merton, and Messner and Rosenfeld, all of whom present the anomie concept in slightly unique viewpoints. Moreover, since the concept of anomie seems to borrow from each other it was important to illustrate this in the definitions. Anomie (or strain, which are interchangeable with each other) is a term coined and defined by Emile Durkheim, and referred to in sociology as a "state of normlessness" or a state of social disintegration", or disorganization, exploitation and class conflict (Durkheim, 1895, 1982; 1983/1984 as cited by Hall; Hall & Lukes, 1982). The term "anomie" is a French translation of the Greek "anomia", which means "no laws" and when translated in English it means "normlessness" (Olsen, 1965, 2008).

Although the concept anomie was most closely associated with Durkheim's study of suicide, he actually first wrote about "anomie" in his 1893 book *The Division of Labor in Society*. Durkheim considered anomie to be an

abnormal form of the division of labor where there was too little regulation to encourage cooperation between different social functions (Crossman, 2019; Olsen, 2016). In this book, *Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim wrote about an anomic division of labor, a phrase he used to describe a disordered division of labor in which some groups no longer fit in, as they did in the past. Durkheim observed this occurred among Europeans as societies moved to industrialized labor and the nature of work changed along with the development of a more complex division of labor where there was too little regulation to encourage cooperation between different social functions Willis, 1982, 2007; Coleman, 2019; Olsen,1965, 2008).

Merton's theory of anomie is a borrowing but essentially different from that of Durkheim. Merton (1993) defines "anomie or structural anomie" as a social response, or adaptation, due to a disjuncture between socially approved means (e.g., education) and culturally accepted goals (earn high income). This condition occurs when access to goals is blocked to entire groups of people or individuals, which then result in deviant behavior characterized by rebellion, retreat, ritualism, innovation, and/or conformity.
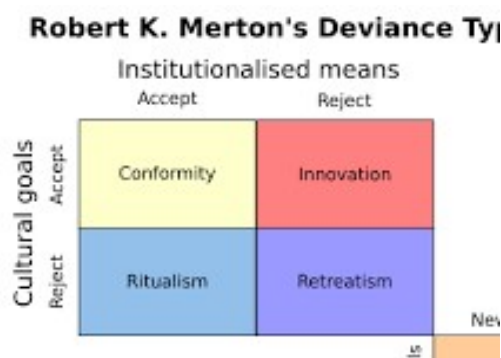
Merton (1938) concluded that Americans were socialized into believing in the American Dream; that a consensus existed about what people's social goals should be: success and material wealth. However, equal access to those goals did not exist: there was a strain between the socially-encouraged goals of society and the socially-acceptable means to achieve them

Based on Merton's definition of structural anomie theory, Messner and Rosenfeld's institutional anomie theory holds that culturally produced pressures to secure monetary rewards, coupled with weak controls from noneconomic social institutions, promote high rates of instrumental criminal activity. Their institutional anomie focuses on the relationships among the various social institutions in society. Empirically, they suggest that the effects of economic conditions on profit-related crime depend on the strength of noneconomic institution (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994, 2001, 2007).

Robert Merton Theory-Social Structural Adaptation Strain

In 1938, Robert K. Merton published his groundbreaking article entitled, "Social Structure and Anomie." Merton proposed that crime rates could be explained by examining the cultural and social structure of society. In particular, Merton developed the theory to explain the relatively high rates of crime present in the United States (Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008). The theory he postulated is called the social strain theory (which is also interchangeable with anomie theory) was developed by sociologist Robert K. Merton (1938), states that social structures may pressure citizens to commit crimes. As previously mentioned, Merton borrowed Durkheim's concept of anomie to form his own theory, called Strain Theory. More precisely, Merton borrowed Durkheim's notion of anomie to describe the breakdown of the normative system. Therefore, Merton's strain may be structural, which refers to the processes at the societal level that filter down and affect how the individual perceives his or her needs. The figure 2.1 below illustrates the adaptation to strain: conformity, rebellion, ritualism, innovation, and retreatism.

Robert K. Merton's Theory of Structural Adaptation Strain

Source: Merton (1938)

According to Merton's strain theory, societal structures can pressure individuals into committing crimes. Classic Strain Theory predicts that deviance is likely to happen when there is a misalignment between the "cultural goals" of a society (such as monetary wealth) and the opportunities people have to obtain them (Merton, 1938).

How Merton's strain theory differs from Durkheim's theory is that Merton argued that the real problem is not created by a sudden social change, as Durkheim proposed, but rather by a social structure that holds out the same goals to all its members without giving them equal means to achieve them. It is this lack of integration between what the culture calls for and what the structure permits that causes deviant behavior. Such construct creates situations that puts great pressure on people to achieve material success by illegitimate means, which leads to crime.

In closing, Merton argued that the American society was a highly unequal and divided, which promoted goals that only some of its' citizens could realistically hope to achieve. When legitimate means of achieving these goals do not exist, the outcome become illegitimate or deviant. Merton's theory best explain crime and deviant more on an individuate level. So, individuate crime is a result of a 'strain' between legitimate goals and lack of opportunities to achieve those goals. The theory of Messner and Rosenfeld, takes Merton's theory and applied it at the institutional level. The next section will address their theory.

Messner and Rosenfeld's Institutional Anomie Theory

In 1994, Messner and Rosenfeld, drawing heavily on Merton's theoretical propositions, proposed a compatible theory of institutional anomie (IAT). Their theory was similarly designed to explain crime rates at the aggregate level and again focused on explaining the high crime rates in the United States (Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008). While Merton explain crime at the social structures level as well as identified patterns, which he calls adaptations, emerge as individuals react to conditions they have little control over. They expanded Merton's theory of structural anomie to include the relationships among the various social institutions in society. In particular, Messner and Rosenfeld stressed the relevance of the imbalance of institutional power that occurs when an economy dominates a society, as with the United States (1994).

In their book, *Crime and the American Dream,* published in 1994 Messner and Rosenfeld suggest that "culturally and structurally produced pressures to secure monetary rewards, coupled with weak controls from noneconomic social institutions, promote high levels of instrumental crime" (Chamlin & Cochran, 1995, p. 411). Their theory addresses how and groups react to conditions they have litter control over. Such anomic condition promotes high levels of instrumental crime. Specifically, Messner and Rosenfeld examined the impact of social institutions in the generation of crime. It was their contention that the social institutions of societies develop to help individuals "(1) adapt to the environment; (2) mobilize and deploy resources for the achievement of collective goals; and (3) socialize members to accept the society's fundamental normative patterns" (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994, pp. 72-73). They identified four social institutions as those primarily responsible for meeting these objectives: the economy, the polity, the family, and the educational system. These institutions play a critical role in the societal and challenges groups face. They maintain that the economy is the social institution that is responsible for the production and distribution of goods in society. The family regulates sexual activity and the propagation of society. Further, the family provides care for dependent persons and emotional support to its members. Similarly, the educational system is responsible for conveying both cultural standards and skills to the younger generations. Lastly, the polity is responsible for mobilizing and distributing power to attain collective goals. However, of all these social institutions, it is the economic that feeds the American Dream (1994).

It is the economy that operates to promote the main values of the *American Dream* (e.g., monetary and material achievement, individualism, competition) and that the most important characteristic of our economy is its capitalistic nature (p. 76). It is the emphasis on monetary success promoted in a capitalistic society coupled with weakened controls from non-economic institution – an imbalance of institutional power skewed toward the economy (i.e., "institutional anomie") – that ultimately results in comparatively high rates of crime, especially utilitarian crime, within the United States (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994; Bjerregaard, & Cochran, 2008). This economic dominance is evidenced by: (1) the devaluation of non-economic institutional functions and roles; (2) the accommodation to economic requirements by other non-economic institutions; and (3) the penetration of economic norms and values into the other non-economic institutions. In other words, the other social institution, they argue are not as valued as the economy. Nonetheless, these non-economic social institutions (education, family, political governance) all operate, in part, to support the pursuit of economic goals (Chamlin & Cochran, 1995), which, in turn, promotes institutional anomie. Rosenfeld (1989) acknowledge that the proliferation of economic opportunities or "meritocracy" can actually enhance societal strain as it can lead to increased competition for the allocation of scarce resources and thus increase in anomie. As a result, this particular study is designed to test predictions derived from IAT using data from cross-national surveys across the ECOWAS regions that ask respondents to account for their activities throughout the day. Based on the available datasets, the study will test the hypothesis, derived from institutional anomie theory, that homicide rates are higher in

nations whose citizens devote a larger percentage of their time to economic roles and functions than to noneconomic activities. The study also examines how participation in noneconomic activities may moderate the relationship between time spent in economic activities and homicide.

How Messner and Rosenfeld's Institutional Anomie theory Expand Merton's Theory: Similarities and Differences

According to Japaskurt (2020), Messner and Rosenfeld in 1994 expanded Merton's theory of structural anomie to include the relationships among the various social institutions in society. In 1994, Messner and Rosenfeld, drawing heavily on Merton's theoretical propositions, proposed a compatible theory of anomie also designed to explain the high rates of crime in the United States. They agree that American society places an over emphasis on material and monetary attainments, the American Dream. They define the American Dream as the "commitment to the goal of material success, to be pursued by everyone in society, under conditions of open, individual competition" (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994, p.69).

Similar to Merton, they contended that the American Dream also embodies other fundamental value orientations stressed by our culture, those of individualism, universalism, achievement, and materialism (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994, p.69; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2006, p.129). They then expanded Merton's theory by integrating his anomie theory with certain aspects of structural control theory. Specifically, Messner and Rosenfeld examined the impact of social institutions in the generation of crime. It was their contention that the social institutions of societies develop to help individuals "(1) adapt to the environment; (2) mobilize and deploy resources for the achievement of collective goals; and (3) socialize members to accept the society's fundamental normative patterns" (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994, pp.72-73). They identified four social institutions as those primarily responsible for meeting these objectives: the economy, the polity, the family, and the educational system.

Contrary to earlier strain theories, Institutional Anomie theory (IAT) is based off a societal level of thinking, rather than an individualistic level. Messner and Rosenfeld conducted their tests using families, schools, and political institutions. It is comparable to Merton's strain theory. Similar to Merton's theory, Messner and Rosenfeld argue that society puts pressure on individuals to achieve socially accepted goal. As noted from crime literature, Durkheim's theory regarding rapid social change and Merton's original Anomie theory, Messner and Rosenfeld proposed an Institutional Anomie theory. Almost all the strain theories such as Durkheim's theory and Merton's theory were created to explain the pressure societies put on individuals. However, this particular strain theory (Merton's theory strain theory) focuses on the societal level of "the American Dream" and focus on micro level of discussion, but the Messner and Rosenfeld's primary focus was on the macro level of things.

Brief Review of Emile Durkheim Discussion of Anomie Theory

According to Crossman (2019), Emile Durkheim is credited to be the father of sociology. Durkheim was born in the mid-19th century in France, the son of a Jewish rabbi. He was interested in behavioral studies, religion, and educational methods and began teaching at the university level as a young man. He wrote several pieces that were published, focusing on such subjects as religion and suicidal behavior. In 1893, Durkheim wrote a book titled *The Division of Labor in Society*, which was a collection of ideas about sociological norms. Durkheim proposed that social norms were maintained differently in various populations (Crossman, 2019). Durkheim argued that primal societies faced less crime and antisocial behaviors among people because everyone was at equal value, both in work and relationally. Without a political or economic hierarchy, most people maintain a communal sense of social order, and crime is very low. He further theorized that for developed societies, an economic hierarchy brings an imbalance and people receive rewards for their work and behavior. This implies that specific work and behaviors are merited more than others, leading to resentment and potential crime and disruption of the social order. Durkheim's work has been studied and reviewed by sociologists as a model for societal behavior (Crossman, 2019).

2.2.3 Brief Review of Robert Agnew Strain Theory

General Strain Theory is a theory of Criminology, developed by Robert Agnew. General strain theory has gained a significant amount of academic attention since being developed in 1992.

This theory is considered to be a solid theory and has accumulated a significant amount of empirical evidence, and has also expanded its primary scope by offering explanations of phenomena outside criminal behavior. This theory is presented as a micro level theory because it focuses more on a single person at a time rather than looking at the whole society.

Agnew constructed general Strain theory by building upon the work of prior strain theorist, Robert Merton. Merton posited that crime was caused by strain, the differences between one's economic aspirations and their actual means of achieving those aspirations (Merton 1938). Although strain theory quickly achieved popularity in its early beginning in the 1960's if faced harsh criticisms as a result of competition with newer theories such as control and social learning (Agnew 1992).

Messner and Rosenfeld bridge the gap between all the Scholar's Theory that is Emily Dukhein, Robert K. Merton and Robert K. Agnew to expand more on Anomie institutional theory which is the basic focus of this study.

ECOWAS Institutions

According to the literature, there are five executive bodies comprise the institutional framework of ECOWAS, which includes the following: (1) the Authority of Heads of State and Government, which is responsible for the general direction and control of the community's executive functions; (2) the Council of Ministers, which is composed of two representatives of each Member State and empowered with the responsibility of policy-making as well as acting as intermediary between the Authority and the subordinate institutions (Stoutjesdijk, 1970); (3) the Executive Secretariat, which acts as the principal executive arm in coordinating and assisting the Authority and the Council in implementing the Treaty; (4) the Tribunal, which has the responsibility to settle disputes among Member States concerning the interpretation or application of the Treaty; and (5) the Fund for Cooperation, Compensation and Development, which will finance projects and compensate Member States that suffer from liberalization of trade (Stoutjesdijk, 1970).

Meanwhile, it is observed from the literature that the Authority in the ECOWAS region is empowered to establish various technical commissions as it deems necessary, the Treaty especially provides for the establishment of four technical and specialized commissions (Stoutjesdijk, 1970). The subject matter areas of the four commissions are as follows: Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments; Industry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources; Transport, Telecommunications, and Energy; and Social and Cultural Affairs. According to Zagaris (1978), each commission has only two express functions: (1) to submit reports and recommendations from time to time to the Council, and (2) to possess "such other functions as are imposed on it under this Treaty."

The success of ECOWAS institutions may well depend upon the ability of the commissions to perform meaningful and autonomous activities. In the past, the failure of governments to surrender sovereignty to inter-governmental organs has prevented the establishment and efficient functioning of organizations capable of achieving regional integration. The actual responsibilities and roles to be assumed by the Tribunal, Secretariat, and the Fund will be critical in the development of ECOWAS (Stoutjesdijk, 1970, Zagaris, 1978).

Structural Characteristics and Cultural Orientations and Homicides Crime

In perusing the literature, it was observed from criminal justice and criminology literature that both conceptually robust and intuitively appealing, institutional anomie theory (IAT) has over the years provided key insights into how structural characteristics and cultural orientations can come together to influence crime rates at a systemic level (Bernburg, 2002). In addition, it was also observed from the literature that IAT is a versatile perspective that has been used both comparatively across nations (Bjerregaard & Cochran, 2008; Dolliver, 2014; Hughes et al., 2015), and also within them (Chamlin & Cochran, 1995; Piquero & Piquero, 1998; Maume & Lee, 2003). However, this versatility comes with a price. IAT relies on highly abstract sociological concepts such as ''economic dominance'' and ''the institutional balance of power.'' Unambiguous measurement of these concepts is virtually impossible, and there is considerable debate about the validity of competing measures (Chamlin & Cochran, 2007; Messner, 2003; Messner & Rosenfeld, 2006). While there are a variety of measures of IAT's core concepts (see e.g., Chamlin & Cochran, 1997; Cullen et al., 2004; Hughes et al., 2015), scholars primarily favor two avenues of measurement: (1) measures of government social expenditures, most notably variations on the decommodification index (Batton & Jensen, 2002; Rosenfeld & Messner, 2009; Savolainen, 2000), and (2) survey questions that measure attitudes and values regarding different institutions (Cao, 2004; Chamlin & Cochran, 2007; Jensen, 2002).

Review of Time Use Data

According to Al Baghal et al. (2014), time use is a systematic accounting of how respondents spend their time over a given period. This is primarily done either by: (a) experience sampling, (b) stylized questions, or (c) time use diaries (Al Baghal et al., 2014, p. 520). Time use studies began to appear in the early 20th century and focused on how specific groups, such as American workingmen and English rural families, spent their time (Hoeben et al., 2014; see, e.g., Bevans, 1913; Lundberg et al., 1934; Pember Reeves, 1913). Today, time use

diaries are considered valid and reliable windows into everyday life (Al Baghal et al., 2014; Michelson, 2005). A wide range of nations, including the United States (ATUS 2013), currently collect time use data (Harvey & Pentland, 1999). Researchers in diverse fields such as economics, urban planning, political science, and psychology now use this information (Hoeben et al., 2014).

While not very common, time use data have been applied several times in criminological research (Hoeben et al., 2014). These applications have usually been situated in individual-level studies of delinquency in adolescents (see, e.g., Anderson & Hughes, 2008; Gordon & Caltabiano, 1996; Kivivuori 2007; Riley 1987). However, to our knowledge, no studies have aggregated time use data to the national level as a measure of institutional strength. Baumer & Gustafson (2007) come perhaps the closest. Their study assesses familial commitment using three stylized questions from the 1974–1977 General Social Survey (GSS), asking respondents how often over the previous year they had visited their siblings, parents, and other relatives, respectively (Baumer & Gustafson, 2007, pp. 635–636). However, Baumer & Gustafson (2007) only use the time use questions as a partial indicator of one concept (commitment to family). And while the GSS measures are far less obtrusive than directly asking about how much respondents value their family (as is done in the World Values Survey), respondents are still required to make a summary judgment about familial contact throughout an entire year. Stylized questions of this nature are generally less valid than other methods used to collect time use data, such as diaries, because of inconsistencies in respondents' memories (Bolger et al., 2003).

Messner et al. (2008) were the first to explicitly suggest using time use data in IAT research. In particular, they noted that ''indicators could be based on accounts of the actual allocation of time devoted to the enactment of roles in the respective institutional domains'' (Messner et al., 2008, p. 177). They proposed that since time is a finite resource that is equally abundant and distributed in all societies, time use data is useful for both comparative researches generally, and IAT research specifically—this particular assertion motivated the use of time use data to explain the homicide crime in the ECOWAS region by using IAT. Measures of how Italians versus Koreans spend their time are easily interpretable, unlike more structural indicators such as the decommodification index, which may be influenced by any number of omitted variables (Messner et al., 2008). Likewise, choosing how to spend one's time is inherently an exercise in expressing institutional values, since performing one role (that is, working overtime) may preclude one from taking on another role (that is, acting as a caregiver; running for local office) (Messner et al., 2008, p. 168). Answering Messner et al.'s (2008) call to research, this particular study examines the average amounts of time that a country's citizens spend in economic and noneconomic activities, and assess relationships between these new measures of institutional strength and country-level homicide rates.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs the correlational research design. This research design was employed because it enables the researchers to operationalize the Anomie Institutional Theoretical Framework by examining the significant relationship between homicide rates and time spent in economic versus noneconomic institutional domains for countries in the ECOWAS region? This design enables the researchers to explain to policymakers the degree to which the Anomie Institutional theory of homicide crime holds true in the member countries of ECOWAS region. The study's population takes into accounts the fifteen (15) member countries of ECOWAS region. The fifteen-member countries of ECOWAS region as at the year 2020 have a total population of approximately four hundred million people, according to Africa Development Bank Group-AfDB (2021). This study considers all the fifteen-member countries in ECOWAS in each year for the period studied as its unit of analysis.

The sample size of the study was made up of the fifteen-member countries of the ECOWAS region. The homicide data came primarily from the World Health Organization's (WHO) Mortality Database. Time use surveys in the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) dataset take the form of time use diaries, in which respondents (usually age 15 and older, but with some exceptions) autobiographically recall and report the number of minutes spent on various activities over a 24-hours period (see Miranda, 2011; Juster, 1985, for time use diaries generally). The study obtains Life expectancy data from the World Bank, sex ratio data from the 2020 CIA World Factbook. All the other control variables were derived from the World Development Indicators for the period of 2020. Gini index data will come from The World Bank and the CIA World Factbook.

 Model Specification to Test Anomie Institutional Theory

HMR= f (DEV, SR, EI, EP, NEP, IBEPN)……………………………… (**model 1**)

$$HMR_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DEV_{it} + \beta_2 SR_{it} + \beta_3 EI_{it} + \beta_4 EP_{it} + \beta_5 NEP_{it} + \beta_6 IBEPN_{it} + \mu_{it} .... (3)$$

Where, HMR= homicide rates, DEV= development, SR=sex ratio, EI= economic inequality (Gini index), EP= economic participation, NEP= noneconomic participation, and IBEPN= product term for the interaction between

economic participation and noneconomic participation. In the equation above i represents the number of countries used (i =1, 2,.....N) and t represents the time, while $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5,$ and β_6 are coefficients.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Homicide Rate	15	34.26	.27	34.52	7.5490	8.94326	79.982
Economic Participation- Minutes per Day	15	186.00	177.00	363.00	255.7333	48.18486	2321.781
Noneconomic Participation- Minutes per Day	15	246.00	74.00	320.00	162.2000	61.07162	3729.743
Development Indicator	15	22.40	50.90	73.30	59.2600	5.68843	32.358
Economic Inequality- Distribution of Family Income	15	17.00	33.70	50.70	39.6467	5.20369	27.078
Sex Ratio- Males per 100 Females	15	8.76	94.05	102.81	99.5453	2.60863	6.805
Valid N (listwise)	15						

Source: SPSS Data Output

In all 15 countries (N=15) from the ECOWAS region was considered for the analysis of the study. Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics or the summary statistics for all study variables. From the dataset, the dependent variable—homicide rates per 100,000 population, has a mean value (before log transformation) of 7.54 and a standard deviation of 8.94. The homicide values range from a low of 0.27 in Senegal to a high of 34.52 in Nigeria. This variable was log transformed for analyses due to positive skew in the distribution. Based on the homicide dataset, eight countries have especially very high homicide rates in the ECOWAS region: Nigeria (34.52), Guinea (17.30), Ivory Coast (11.6), Mali (10.9), Togo (9.00), The Gambia (7.8), Cape Verde (6.80), and Niger (4.43).

With regards to the discussion of the indicator of economic strength, Table 2 reveals that the economic participation variable, has a mean of 255.73 minutes per day and a standard deviation of 48.18, indicating considerable variation in the economic participation among the 15 countries in the ECOWAS region that was included in the sample. This measure ranges from a low of approximately 177 minutes per day in Burkina Faso to a high of about 363 minutes per day in Cape Verde. Based on the available literature and the argument by IAT from Messner et al. (2008) perspective, the high values of economic participation in some countries like Cape Verde, Nigeria, The Gambia, Togo, Niger, etc. could indicate either that working individuals in these countries may spend longer days at work or that a larger share of these national populations works in the paid labor force relative to countries with lower values (such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Ivory Coast, etc.).

Table 2 reveals that the composite measure of noneconomic participation (which include the average daily time spent in family, education, and religious/civic activities) has a mean value of 162.20 minutes per day, ranging from approximately 74 minutes per day in The Gambia to 320 minutes per day in Senegal. The standard deviation of the measure of the noneconomic participation is 61.07, indicating considerably high variation in noneconomic participation than for the economic measure (see Table 2 for more details). For the case of the life expectancy at birth, Table 5.1 reveals that the ECOWAS region's life expectancy at birth has a mean value of 59.26 years, ranging from approximately 50.90 years in Sierra Leone to 73.30 years in Cape Verde. The standard deviation of the measure of the development indicator (Life expectancy at birth) is 5.89, indicating considerably low variation in the life expectancy at birth across the ECOWAS region.

With respect to the economic inequality- measure by the Gini Coefficient Index, Table 2 reveals that the ECOWAS region recorded an average economic inequality value of 39.65 %, ranging from approximately 33.70% in Guinea to 50.30 % in Guinea-Bissau. The standard deviation of the measure of the distribution of family income as a measure of economic inequality (Gini-Index) is 5.20, indicating considerably low variation in the economic inequality across the ECOWAS region. In relation to sex-ratio variable measure as males per every 100 females, Table 2 reveals that the ECOWAS region recorded an average sex-ratio value of 99.55 %,

ranging from approximately 94.05% in Guinea to 102.80 % in Nigeria. The standard deviation of the sex-ratio measured as males per 100 females is 2.61, indicating considerably very low variation in the sex-ratio variable across the ECOWAS region. Toward this end, Table 2 further presents a summary statistic for the development indicator across the countries in the ECOWAS region. Table 2 reveals that the ECOWAS region recorded an average development indicator for the Life Expectancy at Birth was 22.40 years, ranging from approximately 53.63 years in Nigeria to 74.72 years in Cape Verde.

Table 3: Mean Number of Minutes per Day in Economic and Noneconomic Participation (N = 15)

Economic Participation (paid work)	Minutes per Day	Noneconomic Participation *(family, education, and religious/civic)*	Minutes per Day
1 Cape Verde	363	1 Senegal	320
2 Nigeria	350	2 Sierra Leone	320
3 The Gambia	338	3 Ghana	217
4 Togo	308	4 Burkina Faso	212
5 Niger	308	5 Guinea	208
6 Guinea	278	6 Guinea-Bissau	197
7. Ghana	268	7 Liberia	196
8 Senegal	240	8 Cape Verde	192
9 Benin	238	9 Ivory Coast	188
10 Liberia	236	10 Mali	186
11 Sierra Leone	234	11 Nigeria	184
12 Guinea-Bissau	229	12 Nigeria	120
13 Mali	228	13 Togo	112
14 Ivory Coast	204	14 Benin	88
15 Burkina Faso	177	15 The Gambia	74

Note: Values rounded to the nearest minute

Source: Author's Ranking of Economic Participation and Noneconomic Participation for the 15 ECOWAS Member Countries.

Table 3 presents ECOWAS countries rankings for economic participation and noneconomic participation based on the available datasets. When considering the relationship between time devoted to economic and noneconomic activities, based on the Anomie Institutional Theory, the researcher expects to see an inverse relationship in which populations that are highly involved in economic activities have less time for noneconomic pursuits since the two variables will be competing from 24 hours in a given day, and the reverse is true. The validity of this expectation is based on Messner et al.'s (2008) argument that because time is a finite resource, individuals must often resolve role conflicts in favor of one institution over another.

Moreover, in relation to Table 3, there is some evidence of an inverse relationship in the sample, with a weak inverse correlation (r = –0.746 see Table 3 for more details) between economic participation and noneconomic participation that is significant at 5% and 1% significance levels. For example, Cape Vade ranks first in economic participation and eighth in noneconomic participation. Similarly, Senegal ranks eighth in economic participation and first in noneconomic participation. Again, Nigeria is ranked second in economic participation and eleventh in noneconomic participation. These countries may reflect an emerging trend toward ''demanding societies,'' characterized by both high economic pressures and heavy reliance on traditional social groups (e.g., family, religion, education, etc.).

Correlation Analysis between Homicide Rates and Anomie Institutional Time-Use Variables

Table 4: Bivariate Correlation (N=15 countries)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Homicide rate (log)	1						
2. Economic Participation	0.53	1					
3. Noneconomic Participation	0.253	-0.746**	1				
4. Development (Life. Expectancy)	-0.317**	-0.353	0.227	1			
5. Economic Inequality (Gini Index)	0.657**	0.377	0.023	-0.548**	1		
6. Sex Ratio [Males per 100 Females]	-0.187	0.062	0.018	-0.506*	-0.094	1	
7. Interaction (Economic x Noneconomic) Participation	0.939***	0.452*	0.921***	0.095	-0.219	0.100	1
*Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p< 0.001. Log= logarithm, LB=Life Expectancy, WVS=World Values Survey.*							

Source: Author's summary of the correlation output from SPSS 20.0

Table 4 presents bivariate correlation analysis for all the study variables. Table 4 reveals that there is a weak positive nonsignificant relationship between economic participation and homicide rate across the ECOWAS region (i.e. Pearson's correlation coefficient value for the economic participation=0.53). Table 4 further reveals that there is a weak positive nonsignificant relationship between noneconomic participation and homicide rate across the ECOWAS region (i.e. Pearson's correlation coefficient value for the noneconomic participation=0.253). These particular findings of the independent variables (economic participation & noneconomic participation) called for the log transformation of three-levels study models.

For the case of the development indicator (i.e. life expectancy at birth), Table 4 reveals a weak inverse relationship between the life expectancy at birth and homicide (r = –0.317**) which is significant at 5% significance, indicating that more developed nations tend to have lower levels of fatal violence. This finding is consistent with the following prior researches (see Chamlin and Cochran, 2006; Hughes et al., 2015), which revealed a strong inverse relationship between homicide rates and development indicators.

Table 4 further reveals a moderately strong positive relationship between economic inequality and homicide (r = 0.657**) and a moderately strong inverse relationship between economic inequality and development (r = – 0.548**). These findings were also consistent with Hughes et al. (2015) study, which revealed a strong positive association between economic inequality and homicide. The study further revealed a strong negative relationship between economic inequality and development indicators (such as life expectancy at birth, GDP per capita, etc.). Above all, Table 4 reveals also that sex-ratio is not significantly associated with homicide but exhibited a negative weak association (-0.187).

Table 5: OLS Regression Estimates of the Relationship between Homicides Rates and Anomie Institutional Time-Use Variables (N=15 countries)

Variables	Estimated Coefficients	
	B	Beta
Development [LB]	-0.425** (0.161)	-0.270
Sex Ratio [Males per 100 Females]	-0.589** (0.266)	-0.343
Economic Participation	0.177 (0.108)	0.955
Noneconomic Participation	0.321 (0.188)	2.191
Economic Participation x Noneconomic Participation	0.424** (0.194)	0.341
Constant	18.624*** (5.097)	
F-statistics	5.049**	
R^2	0.835	
Adjusted R^2	0.669	
*Note: Standard errors are in parenthesis. In Table 5, economic participation and noneconomic participation are mean centered. * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p< 0.001. Dependent Variable= log Homicide rate & LB=Life Expectancy.*		

Source: Author's summary of the ordinary least squared (OLS) regression output from SPSS 20.0

Table 5 presents the regression results estimating the relationship between Anomie Institutional Time-Use variables and homicide rates across the ECOWAS region. In relation to Table 5, the explanatory or predictor variables include life expectancy at birth, sex ratio, Economic Participation, Noneconomic Participation, and Anomie interaction variable (i.e. Economic Participation x Noneconomic Participation), which were consistent with prior researches (see Messner & Rosenfeld, 1997; Hughes et al., 2015; Weld & Roche, 2016). With respect to Table 5, about 83.5% variations in the homicide crime could be attributed to the following variables, such as life expectancy at birth or the level of development, sex ratio, Economic Participation, Noneconomic Participation, and Anomie interaction variable (i.e. Economic Participation x Noneconomic Participation). Meanwhile, based on the F-statistics (5.049*), it can be concluded that the overall model for prediction is statistically significant and could be used to predict homicide rates in the ECOWAS region. As discovered earlier in Table 4, development has a significant negative relationship with homicide (b = –0.317). Meanwhile, in Table 5 the regression coefficient value for life expectancy at birth (-0.425**) in the regression model is statistically significant at 5% significance level, which also exhibit a negative relationship between life expectancy at birth and homicide rates. This indicates that homicide rates tend to be higher in nations that have younger populations, lower life expectancies, higher infant mortality rates, lower GDPs per capita, and fewer urban residents.

With respect to sex-ratio, the data reveals that the sex ratio variable is statistically significant to the homicide rates at 5% significance with a coefficient of -0.589**. This implies whenever the sex ratio increases by 1% in the ECOWAS region, homicides rates will be expected to fall by 58.90% in the region. This finding is also consistent with prior researches by Messner and Sampson (1991); and Weld and Roche (2016), which revealed that sex ratio also has a significant negative relationship with homicide, suggesting that nations with more men relative to women have lower levels of deadly violence or homicide rates.

Unfortunately, the introduction of the time-use variables, such as economic participation and noneconomic participation, was not statistically significant at 5% significance level. Similar to Weld and Roche (2016) analysis for economic and noneconomic participation application in the OECD countries, the variables of economic participation, and noneconomic participation in the time-use datasets were not significant. Similar to the findings of Weld & Roche (2016), neither economic participation nor noneconomic participation is significantly related to homicide across the countries in the ECOWAS region.

Toward this end, as part of testing for the Anomie presents in the ECOWAS region, the study introduced a product term for the interaction between economic participation and noneconomic participation similar to the analyses of the following scholars—Messner & Rosenfeld (1997), Hughes et al. (2015), and Weld & Roche (2016). This variable was introduced because IAT theorized that the effect of economic dominance on crime is greatest when coupled with weak institutional controls (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2007), therefore the researcher expects to find a negative interaction term, indicating that the relationship between economic participation and homicide is weakened by greater noneconomic participation. Contrary to the study findings, the study found a positive significant product term (b = 0.424**), indicating that the relationship between economic participation and homicide is actually exacerbated by strong noneconomic participation. This may be indicative of greater anomic pressures in societies where individuals face competing pressures to succeed in multiple institutional domains.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To conclude, IAT is an evolving intellectual enterprise (Messner et al., 2008, p. 179 cited in Weld & Roche, 2016), open to both theoretical and methodological innovation. Hypothetically, the results suggest that IAT research should consider the possibility of 'demanding' societies, where both economic and traditionally noneconomic institutions are infused with a criminogenic competitive ethos (Weld & Roche, 2016). Also, it is important for readers to note that the public policy implications and crime control strategies has been based on a number of different theories which have helped in understanding the different types of crimes and the ways by which the crime prevention strategies are built and implemented. Therefore, based on the study findings, and on the political will of the leaders across the ECOWAS member countries, the underlisted policy suggestions and implications are expected to help minimize the crime rate in the region:

•   Ensuring Institutional Balance across the ECOWAS member countries to minimize crime in the region. Countries within the region must ensure to design policies that will help the citizens to maintain institutional balance for their respective time use (i.e. 24-hours trade-off) to minimize crime in the ECOWAS region. In fact, the study finds an evidence for the presence of Messner and Rosenfeld institutional anomie theory within the time use datasets across the ECOWAS region to explain crime. The positive relationship that existed between the

IAT indicator and homicide rates indicates that the relationship between economic participation and homicide is actually exacerbated by strong noneconomic participation. This may be indicative of greater anomic pressures in societies where individuals face competing pressures to succeed in multiple institutional domains (Weld and Roche, 2016). Institutional anomie theory (IAT, henceforth) is best understood as an elaboration of macrolevel elements in Robert K. Merton's classic anomie theory. Following Merton, IAT retains the idea of systemic imbalance as a source of aggregate-level differences in criminal offending. The theory derives its name from its focus on "institutional balance of power" as the causally salient macro-level entity. Messner and Rosenfeld argue that an institutional arrangement where the (market) economy is allowed to dominate without sufficient restraints from other institutional spheres, such as the family and the polity, will be particularly criminogenic. They propose that the American society is an example of such a social system, in part because capitalism developed in the United States in a virgin territory as far as preexisting institutional structures. It is notable that, at the level of individual behavior, IAT is independent of strain theoretical assumptions frequently associated with Merton's anomie theory. Indeed, by focusing on the restraining potential of families and other conventional institutions, IAT is highly compatible with control theoretical explanations of crime.

- Crime control in the ECOWAS region should be a collaborative effort among all stakeholders. That is, all the stakeholders, both private and public organizations should partner together to increase developmental projects across the regions to ensure growth and development. This will go a long way to minimize crime in the ECOWAS region.

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