Factors Underlying the Genesis of Urban Neighborhood Gangs in Algerian Cities

SAADI Zahia [1*], CHIKHI El-Rachid [2]
[1] Laboratory of Population Studies, Health, and Sustainable Development in Algeria, University of Blida 2, Algeria, _Saadizahia76@gmail.com_
[2] Laboratory of Population Studies, Health, and Sustainable Development in Algeria, University of Blida 2, Algeria, _Chikhira26@gmail.com_

Abstract:
Neighborhood gangs are a widespread threat in societies worldwide, especially in urban areas. These gangs, primarily composed of teenagers and young adults, operate within a specific geographical area, engaging in unlawful activities such as violence and intimidation to strengthen their group. Various factors have contributed to the formation and composition of these gangs. This article aims to explore these factors, with a particular focus on the ecological aspects of the city, considering this phenomenon as an urban issue. Additionally, it delves into psychological, social, and cultural factors while also discussing key recommendations for mitigating the spread of this phenomenon.

Keywords: _Gangs, Neighbourhood Gangs, Residential Areas, Streets, Algerian Cities, Ecological Nature of the City._

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[*] **Corresponding author**

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of security has perennially been a cogent global preoccupation, with the blight of violent criminality and delinquency acquiring particular prominence in the precincts of urban agglomerations, particularly those denominated as metropolises. The vertiginous proliferation of urban sprawl, which has characterized the narrative of contemporary cities, has significantly conduced to the amplification of criminality's magnitude and reach, occasioned by the headlong pace of urbanization and the incumbent incapacity of urban conurbations to endow their denizens with the requisites of security. Urban security, in its expansive purview, invariably embraces the sphere of neighborhood gang dynamics, thus prompting apprehensions on a global scale. Algeria, as a sovereign entity, has not been immune to the surging tide of neighborhood gang activities, eliciting pronounced perturbation on the part of the Algerian government, security agencies, and the entire sociocultural strata.

The present manifestation of this exigency has undergone a trajectory of intensification and territorial enlargement in recent epochs, ensconcing itself inexorably within the urban periphery of Algerian municipalities, thereby catalyzing a substantive reevaluation of the urban security issue. In the service of the indivisible right to personal security and collective well-being, remedial imperatives have been instituted by passing Law 20-03 on August 20, 2020 stipulating deterrence vis-à-vis the contagion of neighborhood gang formation. However, a notable lacuna persists in the scholastic inquiry: an exhaustive disquisition into the constituent factors and etiologic underpinnings fomenting the advent of this multifarious phenomenon within the precincts of Algerian urban centers. Consequently, this paper bequests the following problematic: What constituent elements coalesce to engender neighborhood gangs in Algerian cities?

Subsidiary questions:
- Might the ecological nature of the city exert an influence on the concretization of neighborhood gangs?
- To what extent does the marginalization of youth and unemployment contribute to the genesis of neighborhood gangs?

2. Significance of the Study

The phenomenon of neighborhood gangs stands as a prominent urban challenge within Algerian cities, exhibiting a marked increase in both prevalence and diversity. Consequently, the subject of neighborhood gangs carries profound theoretical and scholarly import. It merits comprehensive sociological and psychological inquiry and remediation. This investigation

may serve as an inaugural point of entry into the realm of scientific studies addressing the manifold facets of criminality within Algerian urban environments.

It is imperative to underscore the perniciousness inherent in the emergence of neighborhood gangs, and the concomitant acts of violence and criminality witnessed across a spectrum of Algerian cities that have experienced substantial developmental and proliferative phases of this phenomenon.

3. Study Objectives

- The primary objective of this article is to provide a sociological analysis situated within the field of sociology of crime and deviance, specifically focusing on the concept of neighborhood gangs.
- To ascertain the factors contributing to the formation of the phenomenon of neighborhood gangs in Algerian cities.

4. Literature Review

Sociological investigations into neighborhood gangs, especially within the American context, have transitioned from focusing on urban social disturbances to a broader analysis incorporating socioeconomic influences, urban development, and gang dynamics. Initial inquiries, led by the Chicago School and pioneering figures such as Frederick Thrasher (1924), established a foundational understanding of gang formations through the lens of social, economic, and psychological drivers. This body of work underscored the relevance of urbanization and social strife in contributing to gang proliferation (Thrasher, 1924).

Advancements in the field, marked by contributions from scholars like Albert Cohen (1955), shifted the analytical focus toward the examination of subcultures. Cohen's work elucidated how lower-class youths, navigating the disparities between their realities and mainstream societal expectations, gravitate towards delinquent subcultures as mechanisms for status attainment and societal pushback (Cohen, 1955). This perspective was further enriched by researchers such as (Miller, 1958) and (Cloward, 1960), who delved into the intrinsic cultural dispositions of lower-class communities, arguing for the natural emergence of gangs as surrogate familial structures offering a sense of belonging and identity .

The discourse expanded in the latter half of the 20th century, with scholars like (Short, 2001)examining the evolving nature of gang dynamics against the backdrop of economic recession and social disintegration. These studies highlighted how economic deprivation, coupled with the erosion of

traditional family and community support systems, fosters environments conducive to gang affiliation as alternative avenues for socio-economic mobility and community.

Collectively, this scholarly work presents a nuanced understanding of neighborhood gangs, framing them as complex social phenomena deeply intertwined with the socio-economic and cultural tapestries of their respective environments. The evolution of gang research reflects a growing recognition of the multifaceted causes behind gang membership, ranging from economic motivations to the search for identity and belonging within the socio-economic strata of society.

5. Conceptualization of Neighbourhood Gangs
5.1. Definition of Neighbourhood Gangs

Linguistically, a gang constitutes a collective of individuals engaging in communal activities. The term "gang" has its origins in Old English, specifically from the word "gan," signifying "to go." Furthermore, it shares etymological kinship with the Old Norse term "gangr," which denotes "a congregation of men." In contemporary contexts, the term "gang" is frequently employed to describe an assemblage of individuals involved in criminal activities collectively. Those affiliated with criminal gangs may be colloquially referred to as "gangsters." (Simple English, 2023)

In academic discourse, the nomenclature "neighborhood gangs" assumes multifarious definitions. According to the United Nations, neighborhood gangs are delineated as "an urban phenomenon characterized by highly regimented assemblies of urban youth, intricately organized and engaged in acts of violence or anti-social behaviors underpinned by threats, coercion, and physical force, all in furtherance of their predefined objectives" (United, 2010, p. 15). It is noteworthy that the United Nations accentuates the absence of a standardized nomenclature for neighborhood gangs on a global scale. Nevertheless, it does underscore the interchangeability of the terms in use. Anglophone jurisdictions typically refer to them as "street gangs" or "youth gangs." In the French milieu, the designations "Gang de jeunes" or " groupements de jeunes" are commonplace. In Quebec, the descriptor "gang de rue" holds sway, and within select Francophone enclaves in Africa, they are denominated as "groups de justiciers," denoting avenging groups, among sundry appellations spanning diverse nations across the globe.

Another characterization posits neighborhood gangs as "any collective entity endowed with the proclivity for continual adaptation to the urban milieu, immersed in a milieu of illicit activities that are integral to their collective identity, typically comprising youthful individuals and adolescents

who share a common sociocultural backdrop" (Hilmi, 2017, p. 37)

Furthermore, there exists the perspective that perceives them as "street gangs engendered by the urban youth, chiefly renowned for their proclivity toward street brawls and internecine conflicts among youth clusters within neighborhoods or streets. These coalesce as diminutive, quasi-organized groups, often constituted by a mere quartet or quintet of adolescents loitering at street corners, ensnared in the web of narcotic consumption. They may be construed as organized youth entities driven by the pursuit of pecuniary gains through the drug trade" (Remo, raymond, fisher, robinson, & laurie, 1999, p. 9)

Jean-François proffers an assertion that neighborhood gangs align closely with conventional criminal organizations, as they evince a formalized structural framework and exhibit a conspicuous degree of intricacy. These street gangs manifest as semi-structured collectives comprised predominantly of youthful citizens. They orchestrate methodical and lucrative criminal enterprises while concurrently engaging in spontaneous communal endeavors, often catalyzing impulsive acts of criminality, including acts of violence perpetrated against rival youth factions (Thibodeau, n.d, p. 2)

Meanwhile, Klein propounds the notion that neighborhood gangs epitomize "adolescent groups, distinctly discernible as a separate entity by external observers from the societal fabric. These self-identify as a cohesive unit, christen themselves with a bespoke appellation, and actively partake in delinquent behaviors that invariably provoke adverse reactions from law enforcement agencies and the denizens of their respective neighborhoods" (Joe, 1993, p. 13)

6. Factors and Elements Underlying the Emergence of Urban Neighborhood Gangs in Algerian Cities:

Numerous factors drive the emergence of youth participation in neighborhood gangs, underpinned by the inherent advantages that these associations offer, which exhibit considerable diversity in their distinctive features and multifarious functions proffered to their constituents. Among these contributing factors are:

6.1. Psychological Factors:

▪ **Quest for Social Status:**

Cohen posits that the genesis of gangs and the consequent engagement of youth in deviant conduct can be construed as a retaliatory reflex and a mode of expression for societal estrangement. This is intricately intertwined with an earnest quest for social standing and recognition, often occasioned

by their inability to attain these prerequisites within the fabric of their lives. Notably, the milieu encompassing their educational institutions and domestic environments may serve as veritable arenas for this quandary. The relentless pursuit of social standing thus constitutes the paramount issue underpinning the aspirations of young individuals, particularly as appraised through the perceptions of their peers. Frustration invariably ensues when individuals falter in the attainment and possession of social standing, leading them to experience a profound sense of disillusionment. Consequently, the propensity to gravitate towards like-minded groups who share comparable sentiments becomes increasingly pronounced. In so doing, these individuals endeavor to establish an alternative value system, one that is attuned to their perceived inadequacies. (Al-Samri, 2010, pp. 66-67)

▪ **Alienation from a Sense of Belonging:**

The imperative for a sense of belonging embodies a quintessential psychological need, predicated upon the essentiality of adolescents and young adults becoming integral constituents of familial units, scholastic establishments, or peer associations. This sense of belonging augments their subjective psychological security and engenders sentiments of self-worth and regard within their social milieu. Indeed, it bequeaths upon them a distinctive sense of acceptance, conferring them with the mantle of inclusion and value within the familial or communal framework to which they belong. In this context, it is imperative to recognize that the need for a sense of belonging during adolescence and youth presupposes a heightened proclivity for feelings of estrangement. This pertains to a rejection of the precepts espoused by parental authorities. Consequently, adolescents and young adults find themselves at odds with societal conventions, fraught with disquietude and trepidation. Their ensuing solitude fuels a quest for alternate forums of participation, interaction, and support. This pursuit culminates in the establishment or affiliation with gangs, providing these cohorts with an avenue for assuming significant roles as group members. The outcome is one characterized by emotional warmth, security, and a pervasive sentiment of solidarity (Thibodeau, n.d, p. 3)

6.2. Societal Factors:

❖ **Familial Factors:**

Foremost among the pantheon of societal factors exerting substantial influence upon the formulation of an individual's character resides the familial unit. This dynamic institution embodies a multifaceted entity with social, economic, cultural, and biological dimensions. Co*nstituted by a consortium of individuals linked through bonds of

matrimony, consanguinity, or adoption, familial relations are defined by a nexus of interdependencies and roles that span a gamut of educational, social, cultural, and economic functions (Assad, 1993, p. 73) . As such, the family functions as an epicenter for the concretization of an individual's persona and as the crucible from which the foundational tenets of their social milieu emerge. By this token, the character of an individual is inevitably molded by the family unit, serving as the crucible within which the societal values and behavioral paradigms of the overarching culture are transmitted. Empirical studies have ascertained that a preponderance of delinquent and criminal elements emanate from fragmented familial environments, where the absence of appropriate parental roles of nurture and moral guidance is palpably conspicuous (Hisham, 1985, p. 28)

Among the familial vicissitudes germane to the formation of gangs are:

- **Familial Dissolution:** Familial dissolution denotes the rupture of marital bonds and the disintegration of the web of familial relations. This fracturing results from the discord sown between spouses, precipitating occurrences such as divorce, demise, or emigration, among other precipitating factors. (Salem, Bahaa Rizki, & Salem, 2016, p. 95). Familial disintegration serves as a chief catalyst nurturing the formation and recruitment of adolescents and young adults into the fold of gangs. It is marked by the absence of parental solicitude or care, engendering a state of neglect in which children are subjected to a panoply of harsh experiences and trying circumstances. The absence of parental guardianship or the emotional support it bestows casts the child into a precipice of insecurity and an abyss of self-esteem deficits. Consequently, the child is confronted with a sense of forsakenness within their familial context. The cumulative outcome is one of disillusionment, prodding them to seek solace in the embrace of gangs, where they endeavor to compensate for the emotional destitution experienced within their familial confines.
- **Erroneous Parenting Modalities:** Frequently, certain parents resort to injudicious parenting modalities in their approach to nurturing their progeny. This practice, characterized by the injudicious application of either excessive indulgence or punitive severity, contributes to the developmental deviations evident in their offspring during adolescence and early adulthood. These misguided parenting methods encompass:

- **Abuse:** Constituting a paradigm of violent and draconian behavior, abuse encompasses acts of derision and vulgarity meted out against the child by their parents or custodial figures. This practice often culminates in physical or psychological harm inflicted upon the adolescent, resulting in injuries and emotional trauma, both corporeal and psychological. The concomitant suffering compels the adolescent to extricate themselves from the yoke of parental oppression, seeking acceptance in alternative realms, with gangs frequently serving as their preferred refuge.
- **Neglect:** Neglect refers to the parental failure to meet the fundamental needs of the child, spanning provisions such as sustenance, protection, attire, and beyond. Concurrently, it encompasses educational and emotional neglect, epitomized by the parents' dereliction of their obligation to provide an adequate degree of care. This state of deprivation engenders a sense of want within the child, rendering them susceptible to gang membership as a means of compensating for their emotional deficiencies, which were conspicuously absent within the precincts of their familial habitat.
- **Emotional Deprivation:** Emotional deprivation signifies the deficiency or insufficiency of affection. The significance of feeling loved looms large in the lives of young individuals, constituting an indispensable prerequisite for their psychological maturation. The enduring need for consistent love and the perception of its presence are seminal facets of adolescent existence. Emotional deprivation exacts a heavy toll upon the young, imparting upon them a profound sense of familial disfavor. The confluence of emotional absence in satisfying the psychological requisites of these adolescents and the inadequate vigilance exercised by their parents propel them towards feelings of marginalization. Consequently, these juveniles seek refuge in the embrace of gangs, where they anticipate emotional succor and the validation of their self-worth.
- **Laxity in Parental Oversight:** Once an individual attains a certain degree of physical autonomy, they invariably slip free from the shackles of parental oversight. This emancipatory process arises out of the intrinsic challenges posed to parental

authority in maintaining control over the adolescent, rendering them increasingly prone to straying from the path of rectitude.

❖ **Educational Disengagement:**

Educational disengagement refers to a student's departure from formal schooling or, alternatively, a student's choice not to enroll in an educational institution (Tarikh, 2013, p. 9). It signifies the early cessation of formal education for various reasons or the absence of a student's enrollment in any educational facility. Furthermore, it encompasses scenarios wherein individuals abstain from and exhibit a lack of interest in pursuing further educational endeavors. Consequently, educational disengagement pertains to the discontinuation of a student's educational journey with no subsequent reengagement (Mohammad Abbas, p. 268). This phenomenon represents one of the most daunting challenges afflicting societies at large, particularly in the context of developing communities. The repercussions of this issue extend to both the disengaged students and the broader community. Schools, as official social institutions, are entrusted with multifaceted responsibilities, including education, the transmission of cultural and social heritage, and the provision of an environment conducive to students' holistic growth—encompassing physical, mental, social, emotional, and psychological dimensions. Schools are, alongside families, among the most critical social institutions. Consequently, schools should adopt a comprehensive approach, addressing all facets of students' lives, rather than limiting their focus to academic instruction. Schools ought to tend to students' physical, mental, social, emotional, and psychological needs, offering them assistance in resolving their challenges through the engagement of specialists and educational counselors. When schools fall short in fulfilling their mandates, alternative avenues emerge, and the predicament of educational disengagement leads to personal loss and societal detriment. The situation becomes even more precarious when street gangs emerge as the de facto custodians and substitutes for the safety and belongingness that dropout students seek (Thibodeau, n.d, p. 8)

From a related perspective, AL zawahreh, in his study "La Formation des Bandes," underscores that a significant portion of gang members demonstrates subpar academic performance, with academic failure constituting one of the catalysts for gang affiliation. The act of abandoning formal education, gravitating towards the streets, and idly passing time invariably draws dropout students into associations that engage in unlawful activities. (Al-Zawahreh, 2013).

❖ **Peer Cohorts:**

This represents gatherings of individuals who exert substantial influence on social development. These collectives spontaneously congregate based on shared age brackets and interests, facilitating emotional interaction among members guided by spontaneously evolving values within the context of their associations. Functionally, peer cohorts play a pivotal role in preparing youngsters for social integration (Bouteraa & Ben Ammar, 2019, p. 3). In this context, peer cohorts and social interactions among peers constitute the principal arenas for individual development following a person's departure from the family milieu, as they integrate into communities of peers characterized by homogeneity and shared traits. These collectives often inhabit a common environment, namely the peer group. Over time, these collectives may evolve to the extent that they elude control, frequently culminating in the emergence of delinquent gangs. As temporal progression unfolds, these collectives crystallize in their orientations and refine their methodologies for engaging in delinquent behavior and criminal activities.

6.3. Economic Factors:

Economic factors stand as a pivotal element contributing to the manifestation of marginalization, poverty, and unemployment. These socioeconomic conditions propel individuals towards criminality, deviance, and the formation of antisocial groups. Research within the realm of criminology has demonstrated that the exponential growth of criminal gangs can be attributed to the rapidity of economic shifts and transformations. These dynamics generate unmet needs among many individuals who find themselves incapable of fulfilling these requisites. Consequently, they are compelled to either establish or affiliate with criminal organizations, predominantly due to the dire financial straits afflicting their families, with poverty being a primary driver. Poverty is understood here as the absence of an individual from the bare minimum threshold of well-being, encompassing fundamental necessities required for sustenance. An impoverished individual lacks the requisite resources in comparison to prevailing societal norms, subsequently rendering them excluded from commonplace societal activities and routines (Ghundi, 2016, p. 186). In this context, Dr. Ali Manna posits in his examination of juvenile delinquency that poverty, in and of itself, does not inherently lead to criminal behavior; rather, it is the perception of poverty that wields greater influence in motivating individuals towards delinquency. Poverty is intrinsically relative, particularly within third-world nations. Under such circumstances, individuals resort to theft due to exigent need, especially within disadvantaged societies (Manaa, 2004, p. 63).

The necessity for monetary assets predominantly arises from acute impoverishment, which escalates to a juncture where entities resort to unlawful endeavors, including but not limited to drug smuggling, theft, and other financially motivated crimes. This phenomenon is precipitated by material scarcity and the resultant unfulfilled necessities. It is incontrovertible that a significant proportion of individuals affiliated with criminal syndicates hail from socioeconomically marginalized communities, marked by penury, dearth, and inferior standards of living.

- **Unemployment:**

Unemployment reflects social exclusion, particularly affecting young individuals eager to work but unable to find employment. This challenge contributes to urban issues, notably the formation of gangs among the unemployed youth, fostering insecurity, disillusionment, and societal instability. In response, some youths resort to criminal activities. In Algeria, youth unemployment highlights broader marginalization and job market exclusion, often due to inadequate education. This situation intensifies young people's awareness of social injustices, driving their desire to integrate and participate in society (Hayes, 2024).

6.6. Ecological Factors:

- **The Urban Character of New Residential Neighborhoods:**

The design of residential neighborhoods exhibits regional variation, often constrained to the mere division of land parcels. Simultaneously, the planning of new residential areas frequently overlooks sociological and behavioral considerations, which fall under the purview of "urban social ecology." This interdisciplinary field focuses on scrutinizing the intricate relationship between individuals and the urban environment they inhabit (Laknoush, 2018, p. 109)

Indeed, the layout and architectural design of urban areas wield a profound influence on the psychological and social disposition of their inhabitants. This dynamic interplay between individuals and their urban settings can potentially generate psychological and social maladies, which, in turn, may engender deviant behaviors. It follows that the process of urban planning and architectural design possesses the capacity to reshape the conduct of residents, especially within areas that spring into existence without meticulous forethought. This predicament accentuates the critical necessity of addressing the issues that plague these underserved localities through comprehensive reconstruction initiatives.

Urban planners frequently resort to erecting residential complexes in

peripheral, vacant zones to which populations migrate in a haphazard and unplanned manner. Unfortunately, these endeavors often prioritize engineering constraints over sociological considerations (Ghaith, p. 109)This discordance can manifest in residents' reluctance to embrace these new dwellings, which subsequently impedes the development of social interactions within the community. Such interventions, which inadvertently detach a social stratum from its established habitat or impose living conditions misaligned with their cultural proclivities, give rise to a panoply of non-standardized behavioral responses (chombert de Law, 1995, p. 25)**.**

- ▪ **Residential Environment:**

According to Rapport, the residential environment assumes the role of a microcosm characterized by specific environmental attributes. Within this context, inhabitants exercise their agency in alignment with cultural parameters tethered to their ways of life. This agency reflects their aspirations to embody cultural ideals, values, and conceptualizations. Pertinently, empirical studies underscore the pivotal importance of the residential function, accounting for a substantial 50% of the urban landscape (Ghbari, 2005, p. 163).

Crucially, the physiological dimension of a dwelling—comprising human relations and intra-dwelling communication—merits profound consideration. The morphological features of a residence contribute significantly to shaping the behavior of its occupants. The phenomenon of overcrowding within family households, where multiple individuals inhabit a single room, exerts considerable influence on interaction patterns among the occupants. Moreover, this circumstance may impose psychological pressure on individuals. Chombert de Law asserts that overcrowding constitutes a fundamental factor impacting the behaviors and practices of dwelling inhabitants and may culminate in the emergence of deviant tendencies (chombert de Law, 1995)

In a study conducted in 2022 by the National Center for Criminal Research on adolescent theft, it was revealed that 46% of families associated with accused adolescents resided in a singular, confined room. In stark contrast, the prevalence of families inhabiting four or more rooms did not surpass a mere 2.7%. Furthermore, an alarming 46.2% of these families were compelled to dwell in residences deemed unfit for habitation, while a modest 33.4% inhabited dwellings suitable for habitation. Additionally, it is imperative to acknowledge that the neighborhood and the residential abode are inextricably intertwined, with the former exerting profound influence over deviant propensities (Ghbari, 2005).

▪ **Corrupt Neighborhoods:**

Neighborhoods represent significant social entities that educate individuals, acquaint them with diverse behavioral patterns, and either reinforce or challenge the processes of socialization. In essence, residential neighborhoods complement the familial role in the socialization process, either acting as a supportive or oppositional force, contingent upon the specific attributes of the neighborhood in which an individual resides. It is axiomatic that an individual's character formation occurs as a product of the neighborhood they inhabit, as well as the standing of that neighborhood relative to others, and the role it plays within the broader societal context (Ghbari, 2005).

Clifford Shaw, in one of his studies on five siblings known for their extensive criminal histories, illustrated how a neighborhood plays a pivotal role in delinquency and crime. Shaw described such neighborhoods as areas characterized by social disorganization, where law and order are lacking, and the corrupt environment encourages criminal acts. Moreover, these environments may even glorify criminals, endowing them with qualities of manliness and valor (Al-Saati., 2005, p. 115).

In light of the foregoing, it becomes evident that neighborhoods assume a substantial role in shaping individuals, particularly young people. They serve as organic social sanctuaries guiding frameworks. The pervasiveness of deviant behaviors and the proliferation of criminal activity within these neighborhoods are reflections of the neighborhood's intrinsic character, which, in turn, molds the behaviors of its inhabitants.

Overall, neighborhoods wield substantial influence over individual development, particularly during the formative years of youth. They function as natural social havens and guiding frameworks. The prevalence of deviant behaviors and the proliferation of criminal activity within their confines mirror the innate character of the environment in which individuals have come of age.

6.7. Lack of Recreational and Leisure Facilities:

Recreational and leisure facilities hold a pivotal societal role in the contemporary landscape. They play a crucial part in assisting individuals in mitigating life's stressors, breaking away from the daily grind, and fulfilling their physical needs through engagement in diverse sports and artistic activities. Furthermore, these facilities facilitate the development of social bonds, mental and intellectual prowess, psychological adaptation, personal stability, and self-satisfaction, ultimately nurturing sound mental health.

Among the challenges confronted by Algerian youth today, one

prominent issue pertains to the effective utilization of leisure time within their society. Frequently, public spaces, thoroughfares, and markets bear witness to groups of idle youth who lack gainful occupation and are consequently engaged in aimless meandering and undesirable interactions. This predicament can be attributed to the scarcity of recreational and leisure facilities within their residential neighborhoods, limiting the options for constructive use of leisure time. The dearth of such facilities, coupled with the improper allocation of free time, substantiates a causal link with the proliferation of neighborhood-based gangs.

In this context, Paul Taban's observations warrant attention. He suggests that the mere provision of physical education, as an example, within a neighborhood, does not singularly obliterate the wellspring of deviant behavior. Rather, it is the spirit of sportsmanship and the profound sense of affiliation young inhabitants foster towards their sports teams that serve as a bulwark against deviance (Ghbari, 2005, p. 166). Engaging youth in activities that align with their predilections, aspirations, and inclinations during their leisure hours cultivates sentiments of elation, contentment, and solace, significantly contributing to their personal maturation. Conversely, the omission of recreational involvement during leisure time exposes them to the lure of criminality and the allure of deviant conduct (Nashat, 1970, p. 76).

6.8. Cultural Factors:

Cultural factors encompass the prevailing societal ideas, ethical values, social customs, acquired moral virtues, individual education, adherence to religious teachings, and the availability of media channels. They also encompass the scientific progress within a society and the adoption of modern methodologies in organizing its affairs (Hasnin, 1976, p. 128).

▪ **Erosion of Religious Values:**

Religion plays a significant role in individuals' lives, imparting wise preventive policies before delinquency and criminality take root. These policies essentially revolve around reinforcing faith in human souls, fostering complete and sincere spiritual and psychological formation, imposing and endorsing various religious rituals and practices as a means of self-regulation, and urging individuals to cultivate various moral virtues. Failure to strengthen religious values, instill noble principles, monitor the performance of religious obligations, and nurture faith can lead individuals towards criminality. Religion constitutes one of the foundations upon which society is structured, delineating permissible and forbidden behaviors.

▪ **Media Outlets:**

Media outlets encompass various means of communication,

information, ideas, opinions, news, images… etc., all of which have become globally accessible due to the proliferation of satellite television channels, technological and scientific advancements, and the advent of the internet and social media platforms (Al-Heiti, 2020, p. 263). However, these media outlets, in their diverse forms, have contributed to the propagation of crime and deviance. They do so by disseminating programs and content that alter the customs, traditions, ethics, and culture of Algerian society, often portraying Western lifestyles. This is evident through cinema, drama series, police dramas, and various other programs. These media outlets are among the factors driving individuals to form gangs by broadcasting sensationalized crime stories. Such programs have a profound impact on individuals, particularly teenagers and young adults, who are the most vulnerable group. With the continuous evolution of these media channels (television, internet, social media, and smartphones), programs like "Most Dangerous Criminals," for instance, broadcast news about criminals, glorifying their exploits, depicting them as heroes who outsmart law enforcement. This captivates the attention of young viewers, prompting admiration and emulation, ultimately leading to their involvement in criminal activities. Hence, the role of media in the formation of neighborhood gangs can be summarized by:

- Glamorizing the extravagant and luxurious lives of criminals.
- Portraying criminals as role models to be emulated.
- Cultivating collective sympathy towards criminals and gang members due to factors like poverty or orphanhood.
- Displaying innovative criminal techniques, detailing planning and execution, thus aiding neighborhood gangs in the commission of criminal acts.
- Providing instruction on handling weapons and evading the law without consequence (Al-Saghiri, 2021, pp. 5-6).

6.9. Cultural Conflict:

Cultural conflict emerges as a potent catalyst in the genesis of neighborhood gangs. It encompasses the discord that arises when two distinct cultures intersect, marked by dissonance in values, customs, traditions, and social class stratifications, along with tensions between various societal segments, minorities, and the overarching communal fabric. Indeed, it can be succinctly summarized as the scenario where "certain individuals find themselves in discord due to their adherence to fundamentally incongruent elements" (Al-Saati., 2005, p. 115)

Expounding upon this notion, gangs, while adhering to their unique sets of criteria and values internally, often find themselves at odds with the

broader societal framework. Selin expounds that "the conflict in behavioral norms, emanating from cultural strife, is a noteworthy determinant of delinquency" (Ghbari, 2005, p. 117). This cultural conflict assumes various facets:

- First, it materializes in contexts where standards and cultures collide. This phenomenon is conspicuously observed among immigrant populations transitioning to new locales, as they grapple with the retention of customs and traditions from their countries of origin. Such dissonance was notably exacerbated during the haphazard relocations of residents to nascent neighborhoods.
- Second, cultural conflict can be a byproduct of social disparities between middle and lower social strata.
- Third, it can emanate from an individual's simultaneous adherence to juxtaposed value systems, notably the subcultural ethos of the gang in conjunction with the overarching societal culture. Cohen underscores that the gang's subculture essentially serves as an alternative pathway for disenfranchised youth seeking a niche within the societal framework, given the futility of realizing their aspirations within the contours of prevailing cultural norms.

It is recommended to acknowledge that the cultural conflict delineated in our study encompasses a broader spectrum, encompassing customary practices, traditions, and behavioral idiosyncrasies that demarcate diverse segments of Algerian society. These frictions frequently escalate into conflicts and altercations, thereby contributing substantively to the emergence of discrete neighborhood-based gangs.

6.10. Security Factors:

▪ Frailty of Law Enforcement:

Security, encapsulating the individual's tranquility stemming from the absence of existential threats owing to the possession of requisite means to counter such threats when they materialize, assumes a paramount role in both individual and societal contexts. Within residential environs, particularly those marked by high population densities, the need for a secure milieu is inexorable. Regrettably, certain residential precincts find themselves bereft of the presence of police and gendarmerie stations, or are constrained by meager material and human resources that undermine their ability to align with burgeoning demographic demands. Invariably, this lacuna perpetuates opportunities for criminal evasion and engenders an operational milieu where law enforcement agencies struggle to effectuate routine administrative duties aimed at averting criminal misconduct. This predicament, fundamentally

rooted in the debilitation of security apparatuses, has prominently abetted the ascension of neighborhood gangs. These entities, often resorting to self-assertion and advocacy for their rights, precipitate internecine violence within residential enclaves. Moreover, they have adroitly exploited the complacency of security oversight, thereby exacerbating the proliferation and deployment of bladed weapons in altercations, vendettas, and intimidation tactics, thus amplifying insecurity within neighborhoods. The dereliction of duty by law enforcement agencies has, indisputably, been instrumental in nurturing the contours of this security conundrum.

7. Conclusion

Neighborhood gangs predominantly comprise adolescents and young adults who operate within specific geographic areas. Their activities, often unlawful, revolve around violence and intimidation to bolster their group identity. These gangs adopt a distinct subculture that sets them apart from other societal groups, characterized by unique attributes and functions that serve the gang's underlying objectives. This phenomenon, influenced by various factors, begins with social environments significantly shaping individual personalities. Early experiences and interactions within the familial sphere embed residues that persist in one's personal psyche, potentially driving subconscious inclinations toward gang affiliation, either in search of belonging or due to a loss of familial status. Furthermore, family-related disruptions, such as a lack of parental discipline and misguided parenting methods, can propel individuals toward street gangs. Additionally, poverty and unemployment create conducive conditions for the emergence and formation of gangs, primarily driven by economic gain and monetary accumulation. Notably, ecological factors significantly influence the formation and development of neighborhood gangs, encompassing the ecological composition of cities, urban neighborhood characteristics, and the scarcity of recreational facilities, green spaces, and essential public amenities like schools and security centers. These aspects collectively steer the behavioral patterns of neighborhood residents towards deviance. It is crucial to acknowledge the significance of security factors, especially the deficiency in neighborhood security surveillance, which markedly fuels the escalation of violence, riots, drug trafficking, and other unlawful endeavors undertaken by local gangs. Furthermore, cultural dynamics, media representations, and cultural clashes have been instrumental in crafting subcultures that diverge sharply from the wider societal norms. In addition to these elements, the diminishment of religious principles has added layers of complexity to the intricate web that underlies the formation of neighborhood

gangs. Undoubtedly, these multifarious factors coalesce to give rise to the described phenomenon, though there may be other contributory elements not addressed herein. Amidst these multifaceted contributors, an integrated strategy to mitigate gang prevalence is proposed, encompassing:

- Enhancing the role of families in nurturing and actively engaging with their children in daily life, providing essential care.
- Reintegrating children and adolescents who have disengaged from education, as well as unemployed youth, by encouraging their participation in constructive activities.
- Improving and redesigning residential neighborhoods according to culturally congruent standards, incorporating various recreational, entertainment, and educational facilities to occupy the leisure time of youth.
- Adapting neighborhoods and locations where neighborhood gangs congregate for security surveillance, such as areas lacking adequate lighting, abandoned buildings, and suspicious places like train and bus stations.
- Elevating the educational and cultural levels of residents in newly developed residential areas, prioritizing social considerations over architectural ones in neighborhood design.
- Enforcing the provisions of Decree 30 August 2020 concerning the prevention and combatting of neighborhood gangs in all its facets.

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