

The most common aspects of crime in the old neighborhoods from the inhabitants' perspective



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Abstract

This study aims at identifying the most common aspects of crime in the old neighborhoods from the inhabitants' perspective. In so doing, we used the descriptive method and chose a random sample of 20 inhabitants from La Cité Columbia in Tedjanet, Mila, to whom we administered a questionnaire. Findings show that the most common aspects of crime in such neighbors include the gangsters' crimes, drug dealing and consumption, armed fights, and burning others' cars.

Keywords

Violence;
Neighborhoods;
Crime;
Gangsters.

الكلمات المفتاحية

العنف؛
الاحياء السكنية؛
الجريمة؛
عصابات الاحياء.

مظاهر الاجرام الاكثر انتشارا في الاحياء السكنية القديمة من وجهة نظر القاطنين

ملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة الى معرفة ماهي مظاهر الاجرام الاكثر انتشارا في الاحياء السكنية القديمة من وجهة نظر القاطنين فيها، ومن اجل ذلك قمنا باتباع المنهج الوصفي. حيث اخترنا عينة عشوائية (20 فردا) من السكان القاطنين بحي (لاسيبي كولومبيا) بتاجنانت ولاية ميلة. ولتحقيق اهداف الدراسة قمنا بتوزيع استمارة على افراد العينة، وقد جاءت اهم نتائج الدراسة على النحو التالي: تعتبر جرائم العصابات من أكثر المظاهر انتشارا، المتاجرة بالمخدرات من المظاهر المنتشرة في الاحياء القديمة، الشجار بالأسلحة البيضاء من المظاهر الشائعة في الاحياء، تعاطي المخدرات في وضح النهار من المظاهر المنتشرة، حرق سيارات الاخرين أصبح مظهر متكرر في الاحياء، الشجارات الفردية أصبحت من المظاهر العادية داخل الاحياء.

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I- Introduction :

Crime and violence are two prominent increasing phenomena that destabilize societies despite the social and governmental efforts, as statistics show high increase in the numbers of the delinquent behavior. Therefore, the societies have so long been thinking about solving such old problems. In this regard, crime and violence in the neighborhoods were the focal point of many scholars and politicians, as they highly affect and destabilize the social construct. The scholars and politicians have been investigating the main causes and aspects of these two issues. The demographic boom and the low quality of housing, social services, and public facilities brought about various social flaws and aspects of crime and violence, including theft, murder, aggression, etc. Based on what was said, we raise the following problematic, “what are the most common aspects of crime in the old neighborhoods from the inhabitants’ perspective?”

I.1. Importance of the study:

The study sheds light on the phenomenon of forming gangsters, as witnessed amid the youths in the light of technological and social gaps and challenges. In addition, the study draws the attention of the stakeholders to the risks and aspects of crime that penetrated the society, and to the main fears that bother the inhabitants in order to find solutions and preventive methods.

I. 2. Aims of the study:

This study aims at finding out the most common aspects of crime in the old neighborhoods, their main causes and factors, and how the inhabitants look at such flaws.

II– Identification of the study terms:

II.1 Crime:

Roussi sees that crime is the violation of the law and is punished by the legislator. In addition, it is a human activity; therefore, he excluded punishment on the harmful action of the nature. In this regard, the crime is an external human activity, and there should be no punishment for the internal hatred within the human soul. Since it is a deliberate activity, the people coerced to commit bad actions are not criminals. Moreover, he sees that the harm is a necessary condition in the crime, as the absence of harm would not cause a penal crime¹.

II.2 Violence:

It is about destructing things and properties to influence the others and oblige them to do or stop doing something. The Crime and Justice Encyclopedia defines violence as any behavioral aspect, be it an action or threat, which intimidates and destroys the properties, or harms or kills the individual and society².

II.3 Gangsters:

In his work “The Social Order of the Slum”, Gerald Dale Suttles states that the emergence of gangsters is a societal defense mechanism, as the gangsters are made up of unruly youths, who establish a net of personal connections in the other neighborhoods to strengthen their reputation and control on places. The main characteristics of the gangsters according to the old pattern include³:

- Being a social organization shape related to the urban movement of individuals and families.
- Appearance in poorly organized regions that lack social authority.
- Exclusion from participation in the society mainstream.
- Struggle to control regions.
- An internal structure whose loyalty fosters the struggle.
- A hierarchical organization with defined roles.
- A place to produce a new identity and collaborate.

II. 4 The old neighborhood:

It is an old place with a popular heritage, narrow streets, overlapping houses, very few necessary facilities, and traditional architecture and culture⁴. It is characterized with a special organization and is inhabited by common people with limited-income.

III- Methodology :

III.1 Method of the study:

We used the descriptive method that describes and interprets phenomena. It focuses on determining the circumstances and relations between the events and facts. It is the most common in the psychological and social studies; thus, it suits our study, which targets knowing the beliefs and orientations of individuals and communities. The descriptive research is not limited to collecting and organizing data; rather, it interprets them as well. Bouhouch & al Dhinet defines it as a method to quantitatively describe and depict a phenomenon through collecting, organizing, analyzing, and studying data⁵.

III.2 The temporal and spatial limitations:

The study took place in La Cité Columbia in Tedjnanet, Mila, and lasted for 15 days in March 2024.

III.3 Sample of the study:

The population of the study includes the inhabitants of the old neighborhoods in Tedjnanet, Mila, while the sample includes 20 inhabitants who were chosen at random from the district of La Cité Columbia.

III.4 The study tool:

After studying the topic, reviewing the literature, and seeking the help of some teachers, we designed a questionnaire made up of 10 open and close-ended questions.

III.5 The psychometric properties of the study tool:

***The validity:**

The validity considers whether the tool measures what it was designed to measure, and the clarity of the statements.

➤ The interrater validity:

After making the primary draft, we had to check the content of the questionnaire and seek feedback. Therefore, we contacted some teachers from the University of Constantine 02, who confirmed that the statements of the questionnaire correspond to the axes they belong to. Therefore, we confirm the validity of the tool.

***The consistency:**

It is about making sure the tool would give the same results if reused again with the same sample under the same conditions.

➤ The split-half:

We calculated the half correlation and found out a value of 0.79. Besides, the value of consistency is 0.85 using Spearman' equation, and 0.86 using Guttman equation. Thus, the questionnaire has a high consistency.

III.6 The statistical methods:

We relied on the percentages and frequencies.

IV-Data treatment:

Table 01: The percentage of violence in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There is violence in this neighborhood	Yes	20	20	100%
	No	20	0	0%

Source: by the authors

Table 01 shows that all the informants confirm the wide existence of violence in the neighborhood.

Table 02: The categories that exercise violence in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There is a specific category that exercises violence	Adolescents	20	10	50%
	Youths	20	10	50%

Source: by the authors

Table 02 shows that violence is practiced by youths (50%) and adolescents (50%).

Table 03: The types of violence in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There are different types of violence in this neighborhood	Material	20	15	75%
	Verbal	20	3	15%
	Psychological	20	2	10%

Source: by the authors

Table 03 shows that the material violence is the most widespread in the neighbored, as it reached a rate of 75%. This type manifests in hitting, deconstructing, and vandalizing the others' properties. Besides, the verbal violence ranked 2nd, with a rate of 15%. Finally, the psychological ranked the last with a rate of 10%. This violence manifests in bullying, blackmailing, harassment...etc.

Table 04: The percentage of violence amid the youths

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There are criminal youths in this neighborhood	Yes	20	15	75%
	No	20	5	25%

Source: by the authors

Table 04 shows that most of the youths are criminals, as 75% of the informants confirm.

Table 05: The percentage of violence in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There are criminal gangsters in this neighborhood	Yes	20	20	100%
	No	20	0	0%

Source: by the authors

Table 05 shows that the neighbor has criminal gangsters that manage the neighborhood and its inhabitants, as confirmed by all the informants.

Table 06: The timings of crime increase

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There are special timings for crimes increase in this neighborhood	In summer	20	10	50%
	In winter	20	3	15%
	All the time	20	7	35%

Source: by the authors

Table 06 shows that summer is the timing that witnesses more crimes, as 50% confirm. On the other hand, 15% say that crimes decrease in winter. Finally, 35% see that the crimes exist all along the year.

Table 07: The aspects of crime in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
There are different aspects of crime in the neighborhood	Drug dealing	20	20	100%
	Gangster crimes	20	19	95%
	Armed fights	20	10	50%
	Drug consumption	20	20	100%
	Burning others' cars	20	9	45%
	Individual fights	20	20	100%
	Using dogs for intimidation	20	10	50%
	Sexual harassment	20	6	30%
	Homosexuality	20	12	60%

Source: by the authors

Table 07 shows that there are different types of crimes in the old neighborhoods. In this regard, drug dealing and consumption and individual fights ranked 1st with a rate of 100%. In addition, 95% of the informants mentioned the gangsters' crimes. Besides, 50% mentioned armed fights and use of dogs, 45% mentioned burning others' cars, 30% mentioned sexual harassment, and 60% mentioned homosexuality because most of the youths take drugs.

Table 08: Facing violence

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
Each inhabitant faced violence	Yes	20	12	60%
	No	20	8	40%

Source: by the authors

Table 08 shows that 60% of the informants faced violence, while 40% were not victims.

Table 09: The security in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
The authorities provide security in this neighborhood	Yes	20	0	00%
	No	20	20	100%

Source: by the authors

Table 09 shows that the local authorities do not provide security, as 100% of the informants confirmed so.

Table 10: Factors and causes of crime increase in the neighborhood

Statement	Answers	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
The causes of crime increase in this neighborhood	Unemployment	20	20	100%
	poverty	20	17	85%
	Lack of the basic facilities	20	15	75%
	Lack of security	20	20	100%
	Bad peers	20	10	50%
	Illiteracy	20	9	45%

Source: by the authors

Table 10 shows different factors that contribute to crimes in the old neighborhoods, mainly the high unemployment, as 100% of the informants confirm. In addition, all the informants mentioned the lack of security, while 85% stated poverty, and 75% mentioned the lack of the basic facilities. Finally, 50% mentioned the bad peers and 45% said that illiteracy brings about crimes and violence.

. Interpretation of the study results:

Our findings show different causes of violence, as the youth are pushed by frustration due to the absence of the necessary facilities to spend free time in, unemployment which pushes them to express the economic need through bad behaviors, and drug consumption to escape the social reality and bad circumstances. In addition, the marginalization of the old neighborhoods regarding development and housing created a feeling of exclusion from society for the inhabitants, leading them to embrace bad values that increase violence and crime. In this regard, John Pitts distinguishes between two types of gangsters, namely very organized criminal gangsters with high competencies from poor neighborhoods, and random unorganized gangsters that rely on violence⁶.

In addition, the old neighborhoods involve different aspects of violence. In this regard, the youths learn violence as a means of self-protection, and then get used to it and include it within their routine activities. This does not mean they are evil in reality, because the evil behavior is shaped and forged by drugs and alcohol consumption to escape social and emotional reality, which they do not manage to adapt with or face⁷. In the same context, drugs dealing and consumption is the most common aspect of crime in such neighborhoods, as an alternative to decent jobs they could not get, and as an escape from the social and psychological pressures. Moreover, fights are widespread under the principle of “the survival of the fittest”. Besides, the gangsters disseminate worries and fear about the lives and properties, and destabilize the neighborhoods, which lack security; the gangsters consider the neighborhood a private property, and that everyone must obey them.

Furthermore, the other aspects include homosexuality that spread widely amid the adolescents and youths due to drugs taking, as confirmed by scholars. Drugs numb the mind and increase estrogen. Additionally, the sexual harassment is widely seen, all along with burning the others’ cars, which seems to be a new phenomenon. Finally, the use of dogs to intimidate the inhabitants and control the neighborhood is another aspect that raises worries.

Conclusion:

Facing the phenomena of crime and violence in the old neighborhoods is the responsibility of all the social actors, local authorities, media, police, associations, academics, religious men, and others in order to make peace and stability. In so doing, we suggest that:

- It is necessary to make in-depth social and psychological studies about the phenomenon of gangsters, and to make statistics about the categories and places that witness the most the phenomenon.
- The higher authorities must develop the research methods and monitoring abilities to find the drug dealers.
- The ethical and human values must be promoted in the youth houses and streets using banners and caricatures that call for good ethics, and awareness campaigns on the importance of ethics must be started.

- The government must create jobs to reduce unemployment, and grant monthly aids to the unemployed.
- It is necessary to respect law and apply justice on everyone equally, without discrimination.
- It is necessary to provide financial and material aids to the youths who lack funds to start their businesses.
- Racism, ethnic discrimination, and hate speech must be fought and substituted with love discourse.
- Centers must be established to care for homosexuals, and spiritual atmospheres must be created, mainly in the religious days, to preach against violence

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