



Universidad Nacional de Catamarca - Facultad de Humanidades
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Algerian Youth Caught Between the Triad of Integration, Marginalization, and Neighborhood Gangs.

Ali Taleb Moubarek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Sociology class, Laboratory of African Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, Ahmed Draia University Adrar, Email address, moubarek84@univ-adrar.edu.dz

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Abstract:

Young people constitute the largest segment of Algerian society's demographic structure and are the group most vulnerable to delinquency and crime driven by marginalization, exclusion, and a lack of social integration. These conditions have fostered social integration.

These conditions have fostered social issues among Algerian youth, such as the phenomenon of neighborhood gangs. this study aims to identify the factors driving the spread of this phenomenon viewed as criminal behavior that violates the law and to examine its repercussions for both the individual and society. spread of the phenomenon among young people, considering it as a and legislation, it also seeks to propose mechanisms for curbing and preventing neighborhood gangs and to determine whether legal and security-based approach alone is sufficient to confront them.

Keywords: Algerian youth, social integration, marginalization, neighborhood gangs, factors of proliferation, prevention mechanisms.

INTRODUCTION: Residential neighborhoods in most of the country's states, especially the new ones, are experiencing daily group fights involving young men armed with swords and bladed weapons. This has forced some families to abandon their homes, and neither security measures nor the legal arsenal have been able to curb it. This was acknowledged by the Minister of Justice, Belkacem Zeghmati, during his presentation of the draft law before the relevant committee of the National People's Assembly, when he said that the neighborhood mafia is widespread, especially in major cities, because the current national legislation does not cover all forms of this crime.

Will the issuance of Order No. 20-03, dated August 30, 2020, concerning the prevention and combating of neighborhood gangs, and containing 40 stricter articles, be sufficient to tighten the noose on these neighborhood mafias?

The term "neighborhood gangs" cannot be confined to a single, isolated crime scene, namely residential neighborhoods, because criminals may form gangs within the



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administration, for example, by violating the law and infringing upon employees' rights through extortion, embezzlement, or preventing them from being promoted and participating in their legally mandated labor rights without compromise.

The family may also be an incubator for a gang consisting of either the parents or the siblings, against a member of this family or against a relative, such as preventing inheritance. Crime then becomes an outlet for them, either to avoid bearing the responsibilities that society has accustomed them to from the standpoint of legal and moral duty, or to express the latent violence in the personality structure of the criminal, who is a member of a gang, or perhaps he forms a gang on his own by repeating the behavior if the elements of weakening to submit are easy to achieve.

The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy. The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy. The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy¹.

2. Integration is a multidimensional concept:

Integration is not merely about securing employment; it entails active participation in the economy, society, politics, and culture. It is achieved when young people find quality education linked to the labor market; decent job opportunities or support for establishing small enterprises.

Adequate housing healthcare, and recreational services a space for self expression and participation in local; decision making and social recognition and symbolic value rather than being viewed with contempt or stigma².

3. The Path to ward genuine integration:

Neighborhood gangs cannot be confronted through a security based approach alone, what is needed is a comprehensive youth policy that includes³:

3. 1 Employment: Supporting entrepreneurship, providing high quality vocational training , and linking universities with enterprises and the labor market.

3.2 Spaces: Establishing cultural and sports clubs, as well as centers that attract youth, particularly in marginalized neighborhood.

3. 3 Education: Reforming the educational system and instilling a culture of citizenship education, life skills volunteerism, and participatory democracy.

3. 4 City: Upgrading neighborhoods addressing the housing crisis, and providing transport and public amenities.

¹. Ben Mohamed, Hafidha, Neighborhood Gangs in Algeria: A Sociological Study, Scientific Research Notebooks, Vol. 10/No.

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² Al-Atri, Abderrahim, "The Sociology of Moroccan youth: The debate Between Integration and Marginalization, Journal of Humanities, Vo7,No13, Benm'sik university,Casablanca, Morocco,2026, pp30-37.

³. Op. cit, pp26-41.

3. 5 Community Security: Bringing the police closer to citizens prioritizing prevention over punishment and ensuring swift, fair justice.

3. 6 Participation: Involving youth in local councils, associations, unions, and civil society.

3. 7 Reintegration: Allocating programs for released individuals and providing psychological support and social assistance to victims.

3.8 Responsible media: Avoiding stigmatization and hate speech, while highlighting successful, positive role models.

4. Structural and Symbolic Marginalization:

Algerian youth today constitute a central element in any discussion regarding development and stability; however, they do not form a monolithic group. There are young people who are integrated into education, the workforce, and civil society; other who live on the margins of opportunity; and a third segment that finds an alternative to national and social belonging in neighborhood gangs.

Consequently, the relationship between integration, marginalization, and neighborhood gangs can be understood as one of cause and effect, rather than merely an isolated security issue.

Marginalization does not stem from individual failure, rather it arises from structural and cumulative imbalances.

4. 1 Economically: it manifests as high unemployment' particularly among degree holders' alongside the dominance of the informal economy and low wages.

4. 2 Spatially: There is a stark disparity between major cities and the interior and southern regions, with neighborhoods lacking basic amenities and proper urban planning.

4. 3 Socially: issues include family breakdown in certain neighborhood, a lack of psychological support, and an absence of spaces for youth.

4. 4 Politically: There is a crisis of confidence in institutions and a perception that decisions are made without youth involvement.

4. 5 Symbolically: Neighborhood youth are often stigmatized and viewed with automatic suspicion, a dynamic that drives them to ward isolation or violence¹.

5. Neighborhood gangs are a consequence not a cause:

When avenues for social integration are blocked, young people seek alternative sources of belonging and validation.

This is where the neighborhood gang emerges as an organization offering symbolic and material protection within the local area status and peer recognition, quick income sometimes through illicit activities and language, set of symbols and identity that stand in contrast to those of mainstream society.

¹. Ibid, pp26-41.

Yet the gang is rarely the end of the road; rather it often serves as a stage in a trajectory of exclusion. Some young people begin as victims but evolve into active participants driven by environmental pressures.

Furthermore sensationalist media coverage can cast a blanket stigma over all the neighborhood's youth, thereby exacerbating the very marginalization that requires addressing.

6. The concept of neighborhood gangs:

Recently, there has been much talk about neighborhood gang crimes, where the person following the name thinks that it is limited to neighborhood gangs only. In different definitions of this type of crime, there seems to be a deficiency in setting a proactive strategy to reduce it. Even Order No. 20-03 dated August 30, 2020, related to the prevention and combating of neighborhood gangs, considers that a neighborhood gang is "any group under any name whatsoever (here I open a parenthesis before completing the definition, as it was supposed to contain an explanation of the meaning of under any name so that it would not be included among the criminal acts of joking that lead to unintentional assault, for example).

Consisting of two or more persons, belonging to one or more residential neighborhoods, committing one or more acts with the purpose of creating an atmosphere of insecurity in residential neighborhoods or in any other spatial area, or with the purpose of imposing control over them, through moral or physical assault on others, or endangering their lives, freedom or security, or damaging their property, while carrying or using bladed weapons, visible or hidden¹.

Upon rereading this explanation of the crime of neighborhood gangs, we find that the legislator was not flexible enough in explaining the act from its material and actual aspect and linking the connection between them, as he was content with mentioning that this type of crime is committed by two or more people in a residential neighborhood or elsewhere. It is customary among legal people that the description of the crime does not stop at the superficial explanation of the stereotypical image of crime in its legal and societal sense in that the act does not fall under the deterrent respect of the law, which makes the crimes of neighborhood gangs appear at first glance from the analysis as crimes outside of the criminal classification, even though they appear to be field-based societal crimes whose goal is to spread confusion and intimidation and to enable the achievement of the goal of revenge against anyone who wants to impose a legal or moral order.

Because the mental structure of Algerian society, in some aspects, rejects being subject to the law in the event of violations, and it is a lower class that is not sufficiently

¹ Mezhoud, Salim, The Concept of the Neighborhood Gang Phenomenon in Algeria: Factors of Presence and Treatment, *Haqaiq Journal for Psychological and Social Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Algeria, 2021, pp. 10-23.

educated in the culture of respect, which makes it try to impose the law of the tyrannical ego in advance of the legitimacy of the law in deterring it, so the moral and disciplined citizen suffers from the barbarity and stereotypical behavior with which he stands bewildered in finding the appropriate solution, which he assumes that he is not obligated to confront it because it is outside the law.

According to the newspaper Al-Khabar, lawyer and human rights activist Boujemaa Ghachir said, "Not all conflicts that occur in neighborhoods are the work of a gang." He explained, "It is a mistake to classify all the actions that young people do in neighborhoods as being carried out by gangs. Actions may be committed by an individual or several individuals who do not constitute a gang, due to the solidarity of family members with each other when fights occur, for example.¹"

7. Factors Contributing to the Spread of the Neighborhood Gang phenomenon Among Algerian Youth:

7.1 Family and educational factors:

7.1.1 lack of social control.

Studies confirm that the decline in the role of the family is one of the most important factors contributing to:

Family disintegration and poor follow-up: field studies prove that poor follow-up of children and school dropout are among the most important widespread sociocultural factors.

Other researchers also point out that the absence of dialogue and family communication drives teenagers to search for role models and alternatives to appreciation outside the home.

Failure of upbringing: The absence of social control is presented as a main reason, as upbringing institutions (family, school, neighborhood) fail to perform their educational and cultural roles, especially in times of crisis, leaving a void filled by street and gang culture.

7.1.2 Psychological factors: the search for belonging and status

The need for belonging and appreciation: The teenager or young man finds in the gang an alternative to appreciation and self-affirmation away from the authority of parents or the rejection of society, so the gang gives him a sense of power, control, and identity that he lacks.

The gang as an alternative family:

In the absence of family support, the gang becomes the family that provides the moral and material support that young people need to feel a sense of belonging and status².

¹ Op. cit, pp13-17.

². Lamine Othmane, Berkou Mezouz, Inadequate Early Cognitive Schemas in Neighborhood Gangs: Two Case Studies in Setif Province, *Journal of Studies in the Psychology of Deviance*, Vol. 7, No. 1, University of Batna, 2022, pp. 78-97.

7. 2 Urban spatial factors: the environment of marginal neighborhoods.

The local environment plays an important and decisive role in creating the condition for the spread of the phenomenon of neighborhood gang.

Informal housing and rehousing: New residential neighborhoods resulting from deportation and rehousing often lack mechanisms for building social relationships and oversight, making them more vulnerable to widespread manifestations of violence, deviance, and crime.

Violent subculture: Subcultures emerge in marginalized neighborhoods that view violence and threats as a means of imposing influence and building a false image of power and control.

7. 3 Digital agents and drugs:

7. 3. 1 stimulants and accelerators.

The role of social networking sites:

Videos circulating about violence spread the culture of violence and give an impression that may be exaggerated at times that the phenomenon is growing, which creates a state of intimidation, instilling fear and a lack of feeling of lost security and psychological reassurance among young people, or as Ulrich Beck calls it, liquid fear.

Linkage to drugs: The growth in crimes related to neighborhood gangs is directly related to drugs and psychotropic substances, which doubles the seriousness of the phenomenon and makes it part of a broader criminal network.

When a case is classified as drug smuggling, it may not be included in the statistics of neighborhood gang, despite its close connection to them, and many daily acts of violence in neighborhoods do not reach the judiciary or official statistics.

Thus, it can be said that official statistics reflect only the visible aspect of the phenomenon that which reaches state institutions rather than its actual scale on the ground. In short, neighborhood gangs are not merely a matter of individual deviance; rather, they are the product of a breakdown in the social integration system¹.

When economic security (due to unemployment), family support (due to breakdown), social justice (due to marginalization), and cultural and athletic opportunities (due to a lack of constructive outlets) are absent, young people find a refuge in gangs that provides what society has failed to offer.

8. The impact of neighborhood gangs:

8. 1 On Youth: jeopardizing their lives and futures through imprisonment, addiction and drug abuse and premature death, as well as the loss of hope, leaving illegal migration as the only outlet for marginalized young people.

¹Bouhlit, Yazid, Preventive Measures Against Neighborhood Gangs in Light of Order 20-03, Journal of Legal and Political Research, Vol. 7/No. 2, University of Guelma, 2022, pp. 205-221.

8. 2 On Society: The loss of social security and declining trust in official institutions, the weakening of the social fabric and the fragility of social ties and relationships, and the emigration of skilled talent.

8. 3 On The Economy: Security and healthcare costs fall upon the state treasury, meanwhile the loss of youthful energy and human capital which could have served as a productive human resource has resulted in wasted potential¹.

9. Mechanisms for combating neighborhood gangs:

With reference to the Algerian government's intention to combat neighborhood gang crimes by enacting Order No. 20-03 dated August 30, 2020, this is an initiative we appreciate in light of the absence of specialized texts in the Penal Code. However, the practical mechanisms of this decree must be explained in terms of the following:

2. 1 Outlining a set of methods to combat neighborhood gang crimes with a proactive approach before they occur. This means learning to avoid loss before it happens. Furthermore, the theoretical frameworks for any criminal act are carried out through approximate operations that may not give the exact time of the crime but at least inform the security forces of its location.

2. 2 Conducting an inventory of residential buildings that do not meet security standards, such as those located outside the city limits, which are vulnerable to attacks and crimes like theft, embezzlement, assault, and violent assault.

2. 3 Accurately identifying the most frequently committed types of criminal behavior and compiling statistics on similar cases in terms of targeted groups (gender, age, and the most significant effects of the attacks) through a socio-psychological analysis. This analysis aims to understand the criminal behavior and the criminal personality, determining whether the acts are motivated by revenge or simply acts of vandalism. This will help rule out the possibility of terrorist acts orchestrated by foreign entities seeking to sow chaos and disrupt security, especially during a crucial period or significant political event such as elections².

2. 4 Enacting laws and establishing monitoring and follow-up committees is also insufficient.

The Algerian legislator's reliance on legal texts alone may reduce citizens to mere readers of empty pronouncements unless they are accompanied by a detailed explanation of civic responsibility and the necessity of citizen participation in combating neighborhood gang crimes. This process is fundamentally based on vigilance, caution, and a culture of reporting, which we observe is barely present. This is because the concept of citizen participation has not been simplified to emphasize it as an essential national duty, rather than a reactive, optional response for which there is no

¹. Op. cit, pp210-115.

². Official Gazette No. 51, dated August 30, 2020, Order No. 20/03, concerning the prevention and combating of neighborhood gangs.

accountability or prosecution. Since the harm affects the citizen, they must be the first to protect the safety of their neighborhood or home through necessary vigilance.

Security agencies must change their emergency intervention behavior, which has been observed to be ineffective, slow, and inaccurate, because the legal loopholes in the management of state institutions do not contain basic or supplementary laws for after the completion of a housing purchase transaction. For example, the Housing Promotion and Management Office, as soon as the citizen finishes paying the housing dues, immediately relinquishes its responsibilities for bearing part of the problems and solving them in a legal manner according to what is stipulated in its internal law or the law that is absent in such civil mediation that is supposed to exist, because protection is everyone's responsibility and in coordination with all state institutions and individuals.

It is necessary to follow up with prisoners who finish their prison term after they leave, because some of them automatically return to crime as soon as the family environment prepared to receive them and help them to integrate is absent. The absence of the role of the family and social assistance from civil society institutions may create a factor for committing recidivism crimes, perhaps with the same elements who previously practiced crime as a profession. Crime is not new and then becomes a prisoner who is arrested, but it is renewed as soon as he leaves prison. Everyone has noticed the idea of the electronic bracelet and the criticisms directed at it, so this calls for the need to search for other mechanisms to contain the prisoner after the end of his prison term in a way that benefits him, his family and his society¹.

10. Mechanisms for preventing neighborhood gangs:

Among the mechanisms for preventing neighborhood gangs stipulated in this new decree is the establishment of a National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs. This committee submits its annual report to the President of the Republic, which is then presented to the government. The implementation of the report is monitored by the relevant public authorities, civil society, and the private sector. Additionally, there is a Provincial Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs, whose role is primarily to implement the national strategy for preventing neighborhood gangs at the local level, monitor the activities of these gangs early, and notify the relevant authorities.

This text also guarantees the protection of victims of neighborhood gangs through health, psychological, and social support, ensuring their safety, security, physical and psychological integrity, and dignity, and facilitating their access to justice.

10. 1 Composition of the National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs:

The government officially revealed the composition of the National Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs, which is headed by a representative of the Minister

¹. Nezari, Souad, "Neighborhood Gangs: Asociological Approach to Formation Dynamics and Mechanisms of Prevention and Containment, abhath Journal, Vol. 01, No 11, 08 May1945 University Guelma, algeria2026, pp101-118.

of the Interior and Local Authorities, in addition to representatives of several ministries. The government also granted the governors of the Republic the authority to form provincial committees to combat crime, who will have the discretionary power to establish this committee whenever necessary. The National Committee will meet 4 times a year, and will submit an annual report on the phenomenon of crime in neighborhoods to the President of the Republic, Abdelmadjid Tebboune¹.

According to the text of the executive decree issued in the latest issue of the Official Gazette, which defines the composition of the National and Provincial Committee for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs, the National Committee is chaired by the Minister in charge of the Interior or his representative from the Ministry of Justice, and representatives of the Ministers of Religious Affairs, National Education, National Solidarity, and Post and Telecommunications, in addition to representatives of public administrations and institutions, such as a representative of the General Directorate of National Security, and the National Gendarmerie Command.

According to the same decree, with regard to civil society, two representatives from national associations active in the field of violence and social ill prevention are appointed to the National Committee. Regarding expertise, two individuals recognized for their competence in criminology, one in sociology, and one in psychology are appointed. The National Committee may, by decision of the Minister of the Interior and upon the proposal of the authorities, bodies, associations, and organizations to which its members belong, renew their terms for a renewable three-year period.

Members of the National Committee are appointed by decision of the Minister of the Interior, upon the proposal of the authorities, bodies, associations, and organizations to which they belong, for a renewable three-year term.

The National Committee meets in ordinary session four times a year and in extraordinary session whenever necessary. The Committee Chair prepares the meeting agenda and sends it to the members at least fifteen days before the meeting date. This period may be shortened for extraordinary sessions, but not less than eight days.

According to the same source, the National Committee drafts and approves its internal regulations. The Committee is provided with a secretariat staffed by the relevant departments of the Ministry of the Interior. The National Committee prepares periodic reports detailing its activities in preventing and combating neighborhood gangs, which are submitted to the Prime Minister. It also prepares an annual report for the President of the Republic.

According to the same decree, and with regard to the provincial committee for the prevention of neighborhood gangs, it is created at the provincial level whenever necessary by a decision of the provincial governor who is regionally specialized. The provincial committee is made up of the governor or his representative from the

¹Mezhoud, Salim, The Concept of the Neighborhood Gang Phenomenon in Algeria: Factors of Presence and Treatment, *Haqaiq Journal for Psychological and Social Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Algeria, 2021, pp. 10-23.

Ministries of Education and Vocational Training and the Directorate of Urban Planning, in addition to a representative of the neighborhood committees, who is specialized in criminology. The provincial committee may seek the assistance of any person who, by virtue of his competence, can help it in its work.

The government has officially announced the composition and operating procedures of the National and Provincial Committees for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs, headed by Abdelkader Zerrouk, representative of the Minister of the Interior.

According to the executive decree published in issue 47 of the Official Gazette, which defines the composition of the National and Provincial Committees for the Prevention of Neighborhood Gangs:

The National Committee is headed by Abdelkader Zerrouk, representative of the Minister of the Interior.

According to the same decree, under the heading of ministries, Habib Chehra was appointed as representative of the Minister of Justice, Keeper of the Seals, and Abdelkader Qatsha as representative of the Minister of Religious Affairs.

In addition to Hussein Munir, representing the Minister in charge of National Education, as well as Mohamed Cherif Sabba, representing the Minister in charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and Hakim Azrouk Azghaimi, representing the Minister in charge of Vocational Training and Education, along with Nabil Jalab, representing the Minister in charge of Culture, and Mohamed Hamid, representing the Minister in charge of Youth, and Noussab Boubaker Dahlal, representing the Minister in charge of Post and Telecommunications.

As for Bahia Sebaa, she was appointed as the representative of the Minister in charge of National Solidarity and the Family, while Abdelrahman Fassi was appointed as the representative of the Minister in charge of Urban Planning, and Slimane Kada as the representative of the Minister in charge of Communication. Hamid Maghnous was appointed as the representative of the Minister in charge of Health, and Najib Zerrouki as the representative of the Minister in charge of Employment¹.

According to the same source, regarding public administrations and institutions, Abdelkader Khaliha was appointed as the representative of the General Directorate of National Security, and Mounir Marrouche as the representative of the National Gendarmerie Command. Ghania Kaddache was appointed as the representative of the National Office for Combating Drugs and Addiction, and Henda Kiar was appointed as the representative of the National Institute of Public Health.

According to the same decree, and with regard to civil society, Amina Hariche, Secretary General of the Algerian Forum for Executives and Youth Promotion, was appointed to the National Committee, along with Rachid Tebbal, President of the Scientific Committee

¹ Beddiaf zouhir, harizi, Manal, The Reality of the phenomenon of social Marginalization in Algerian society: AReading of Concepts and Repercussions, journal of Administration and Organizations, Vol41, N022 , alger2025, pp12-30.

of the National Association for Awareness and Vigilance to Combat Social Ills. With regard to competencies, two individuals recognized for their competence in the field of criminology were appointed: Djilali Mestari, a specialist in sociology, and Dalila Zouad, a specialist in psychology¹.

11. CONCLUSION:

Algerian youth are not the problem they are the solution, integration is not a luxury but a prerequisite for security, stability and development.

Neighborhood gangs are merely a symptom of a deeper malaise a lack of opportunity and recognition so combating them begins with opening the doors of society, not just the doors of prisons.

If young people do not find a place in society, they will seek one elsewhere, even if that place is on the violent fringes.

Establishing mechanisms to reduce the phenomenon of neighborhood gangs is not solely dependent on deterrent laws. Rather, it requires a study of the sociological causes and a re-evaluation of urban planning to better meet the needs of Algerian families, their culture, and their aspirations, while also providing essential services, including recreational opportunities, and creating job opportunities for young people.

Finally, and as a crucial mechanism for containing and combating neighborhood gang crime, a social approach must be implemented.

The legal approach alone is not enough to curb the phenomenon of neighborhood gangs, or those who sow and spread terror in the hearts of citizens and residents in residential complexes, due to the severe psychological damage that the assault operations cause to the victim's psyche. In addition, psychological studies should be conducted to diagnose the appropriate treatment if the opportunity for treatment precedes the period of imprisonment, as the safety of society is from the safety of the citizen and the progress of the state is from the stability and safety of society.

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