

Social disintegration and its relationship to the formation of collective violence - a field study on a sample of neighborhood gang criminals in the city of Chlef

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the dialectical relationship between social disintegration and the formation of collective violence in urban society, focusing on the dynamics of neighborhood gangs in the city of Chlef. The study adopted a qualitative approach as a cognitive entry point that allows for a deep understanding of the phenomenon, where the semi-structured interview technique was employed as the main tool for data collection. A purposive sample consisting of 15 young individuals from neighborhood gang criminals was selected using the snowball technique, which allows access to a hard-to-reach community. The study focused on elucidating the various sociological dimensions related to social disintegration and its impacts on the production of collective violence.

The field study revealed the interconnection of factors contributing to the formation of neighborhood gangs in the city of Chlef, where a set of pivotal results emerged that explain the complex social dynamics. It was confirmed that the subculture of the group of companions serves as a fertile ground for gang formation. The study also demonstrated the essential role of fragile living conditions in fueling this phenomenon and the inclination of youth towards criminal behaviors. Furthermore, the absence of social integration is considered the main driver for the increasing likelihood of joining neighborhood gangs.

Keywords: Social disintegration, Collective violence, Neighborhood gangs, Urban dynamics, Social exclusion

1. Introduction

Social disintegration constitutes a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond mere structural disintegration of the social system, representing a state of deep disturbance in the social fabric that binds the components of society. It manifests as a gradual fragmentation of social ties and shared values, where traditional social institutions erode and social control mechanisms weaken, creating a fertile environment

for deviant behaviors and collective violence. This disintegration is not merely a structural collapse, but rather an expression of a deep crisis in the system of values and social norms that govern human interactions. This is manifested in the diminishing role of traditional social institutions such as the family, school, and civil society in the process of socialization, and the increasing cases of alienation and social marginalization that drive individuals, especially the youth, to seek alternative identities and forms of self-expression through violent behaviors.

The study of the relationship between social disintegration and collective violence gains significant importance in the contemporary social context, where a complex interplay of structural, psychological, and economic factors intertwines to create an environment conducive to the emergence of urban gangs. This analysis is a scientific attempt to understand the intricate mechanisms through which social marginalization is transformed into patterns of organized collective violence. Social disintegration does not represent an isolated negative state; rather, it is a dynamic process in which subjective and objective factors interact to create an environment that allows for the emergence of various forms of resistance and violence. The danger of this phenomenon is manifested in its ability to reproduce patterns of marginalization and exclusion within society, where gangs become an alternative to traditional social institutions, providing marginalized individuals with a form of belonging and collective identity.

This study derives its methodological significance from the attempt to uncover the complex mechanisms of interaction between social structures and violent behaviors in a specific local context, represented by the community of Chlef Province as a model for contemporary Algerian urban societies. The choice of the State Security Directorate as the field for the field study grants the research a unique epistemological specificity, as primary sources of information can be accessed through interviews with neighborhood gang criminals. The methodological challenge lies in attempting to decode the subjective experiences of social actors and uncover the psychological and social strategies they employ to adapt to the state of marginalization and exclusion. The research is not limited to describing the phenomenon, but rather seeks to dismantle the complex structures that produce and reproduce patterns of collective violence.

The study starts from a fundamental assumption that social disintegration is not merely a negative state, but rather a complex dynamic process through which strategies of resistance and social adaptation are formed. In this context, neighborhood gangs represent a model of collective response to social and economic marginalization, transforming into an alternative space for the reproduction of identity and belonging. The essence of the analysis lies in understanding how marginal experiences are transformed into forms of counter-social organization, which derive their strength from mechanisms of resistance and rejection of the prevailing social system. These gangs form a parallel value system, based on a complex internal logic that differs from the official social system, making them a social phenomenon worthy of deep analysis.

The study adopts a methodological approach that combines sociological and psychosocial analysis, relying on multiple research tools to ensure objectivity and depth in the analysis. The methodology will depend on in-depth interviews with neighborhood

gang criminals, direct observation, and life history analysis, utilizing advanced theoretical frameworks in sociology and social anthropology. The methodological challenge lies in overcoming the reductionist view of the phenomenon and uncovering the structural and subjective complexities that shape the experience of gang members. The study will attempt to trace the paths of social marginalization, mechanisms of resistance, and psychological strategies employed by these individuals to adapt to the complex social reality.

The study aims to provide an in-depth critical reading of social disintegration, going beyond traditional approaches that view collective violence as a pathological or deviant phenomenon. It seeks to understand the complex structural dimensions that produce these phenomena and to reveal the dialectical relationships between marginalization and resistance. The results of this study will constitute a cognitive contribution to understanding the complex social dynamics in contemporary urban society and provide a critical perspective on the mechanisms through which social inequality is reproduced. The study will go beyond mere description to attempt to understand the subjective strategies of social actors in the context of social disintegration, opening new horizons for social intervention and public policies directed at marginalized groups.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The literature of the study on structural systems generating social disintegration

2.1.1. Social alienation and the fragmentation of community ties

Alienation has been used by many scholars in various fields such as sociology, psychology, education, and other sciences. This concept has multiple meanings and connotations, with its historical roots tracing back to the works of the Greek philosopher Plato. Alienation is an ancient phenomenon that was initially confined to the individual level, but later evolved and acquired a collective meaning that characterizes contemporary societies. (Khalifa & Hishour, 2023, p. 333)

As for social alienation, it is a state of existential separation between the individual and their social environment, where society transforms from a cohesive mutual support system into a divided and fragmented space. Its manifestations are evident in the decline of traditional value systems and the weakening of social control mechanisms, creating a state of collective alienation. The individual becomes estranged from themselves and their community, struggling in the labyrinths of fragmented identity, where the organic bonds that once formed the cohesive social fabric dissolve. This disintegration generates a state of anomie in which society loses its ability to produce unified behavioral control standards, paving the way for various forms of deviance and collective violence. (Khalifa & Hishour, 2023, p. 338)

The paths to dismantling social bonds are numerous, traversing a complex system of structural and functional transformations. Rapid economic and social changes undermine traditional systems of social cohesion, creating a state of chronic instability. These mechanisms manifest in the diminishing role of traditional institutions such as the family and local community, and the increasing severity of extreme individualism that

undermines the logic of social solidarity. The individual becomes a prisoner of self-interest, liberated from traditional social constraints, creating deep gaps in the social fabric. This disintegration translates into various forms of deviant behavior, where marginalized groups become alternatives for social organization, establishing parallel norms based on the logic of power and dominance.

Social alienation constitutes a profound existential crisis that transcends the material dimension to the psychological and symbolic depths. The alienated individual lives in a state of continuous internal conflict, where their identity fragments among multiple and contradictory affiliations. Its symptoms manifest in a complex state of psychological alienation, where the individual loses their organic connection to their surroundings and reference values. Strategies to compensate for this loss form through the search for more radical alternative identities, whether in violent affiliations or deviant groups. Alienation becomes a system of identity reproduction through mechanisms of rejection and resistance, where violence transforms into a means of self-expression and existence affirmation. And this is what Miller tried to explain through "joining a gang of delinquents helps the delinquent develop and cultivate needs and behaviors that align with the core interests of the lower class." (Youssef, 2004, p. 298)

It is worth noting that marginal spaces represent vital centers for the reproduction of social alienation and the generation of multiple forms of social organization. Marginalized neighborhoods and isolated areas transform into social laboratories for the formation of parallel identities, where alternative organizational systems based on the logic of power and control emerge. Social exclusion becomes a primary driver for building resistance strategies, with neighborhood gangs turning into spaces for compensating social deprivation. These spaces produce their own normative systems, surpassing official standards and establishing a complex internal logic of relationships and power.

2.1.2. Economic fragility and the issue of institutional marginalization

Economic fragility is a set of structural transformations that undermine the social and economic stability of marginalized groups. The economic crisis is not limited to the material dimension alone; it extends to form an intricate map of social and existential exclusion. The manifestations of this fragility are evident in the decline of job opportunities and the collapse of traditional mechanisms for social mobility, where poverty becomes a structural condition deeply rooted in society. Marginalized youth experience a state of existential frustration, where economic resources transform into a complex fence of deprivation and exclusion. This system creates a deep gap between social aspirations and actual possibilities, generating a latent state of rebellion against the existing institutional framework.

In the same perspective, institutional marginalization constitutes a system of structural practices that reinforce economic vulnerability, manifested in the absence of effective redistribution policies and the diminishing role of the state in providing social safety nets. Institutions work to reproduce patterns of exclusion through a complex system of rules and practices that marginalize vulnerable groups, making marginalization

a systematic institutional condition. Economic opportunities become privileges confined to specific groups, creating a state of structural inequality. Young people find themselves trapped in closed circles of poverty and deprivation, prompting them to seek alternatives for adaptation outside the formal system.

Economic deprivation represents a complex existential experience that transcends the material dimension to reach the psychological and symbolic depths. The marginalized youth experiences a state of identity fragmentation, where personal aspirations clash with the limited objective opportunities. Psychological resistance strategies are formed through a complex system of mechanisms, by reproducing alternative identities that derive their legitimacy from outside the official institutional framework. Violence and deviance become a means of compensating for deprivation, and a mechanism for self-expression and asserting existence in a society that feels exclusion from. The experience of fragility transforms into a state of continuous struggle with the existing social structures.

Marginalized areas form vital laboratories for producing alternative economic systems that transcend the official framework. Where complex forms of economic solidarity emerge within marginalized communities, relying on mechanisms of adaptation and resistance. Neighborhood gangs transform into spaces for the reproduction of economic resources, establishing a parallel economy based on the logic of power and control. Informal economic activity becomes a survival strategy, where complex networks of exchange and mutual support are formed outside the framework of formal institutions. These spaces represent an active resistance against the logic of economic exclusion.

Addressing economic fragility requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach aimed at rebuilding the economic system on fair and inclusive foundations. These strategies include developing effective employment policies, providing vocational training programs, and creating real opportunities for social mobility. There should be a focus on building an integrated system of social protection that provides effective mechanisms for economic inclusion. The approach also requires dismantling the institutional structures that produce marginalization and creating spaces for effective economic participation. The strategic goal lies in transforming the logic of fragility from a mechanism of exclusion to an opportunity for social renewal and the reconstruction of economic justice.

2.1.3. Psychological alienation and the psychology of social marginalization

Alienation is a well-known concept in sociological heritage. Karl Marx discussed the state of alienation among workers, and Émile Durkheim also addressed it. Alienation is a widespread and complex phenomenon in many societies. Undoubtedly, there are psychological, social, or economic conditions specific to each society that give the phenomenon of alienation its distinctive characteristics and forms. (Al-Sayyed, 2001, p. 130)

While we find that psychological alienation is a state of existential separation between the self and the social environment, where the human experience transforms into

a space of internal fragmentation and continuous conflict, its features manifest in the disintegration of traditional value systems and affiliations, and the decline in the ability to organically connect with society. The individual experiences a state of radical separation from oneself and one's surroundings, where identity becomes a fragmented and contradictory space. The symptoms of this alienation appear in a state of psychological instability, loss of sense of belonging, and a decline in the ability to engage positively with society (Al-Hamdani Mohammad Rashid Saleh, 2001, p. 70). Consequently, the social margin becomes a space of internal conflict, where personal aspirations collide with the limitations of objective opportunities.

The social margin also constitutes a set of psychological and social interactions that establish alternative strategies for adaptation and resistance. These mechanisms manifest in the development of complex psychological defense systems, where the individual resorts to re-producing their identity through alternative paths to the formal social system. Violence and deviance become means of self-expression and existence affirmation, as well as mechanisms to compensate for deprivation and exclusion.

Psychological resistance strategies are formed through the construction of a parallel value system, deriving their legitimacy from within marginal spaces, where the individual experiences a state of psychological repositioning. Thus, the experience of the margin transforms into an opportunity for self-reinvention and the establishment of an alternative identity. This is what Émile Durkheim referred to when analyzing the concept of anomie, which is the loss of norms in society and appears when people lose their sense of purpose in life, especially during times of social change.

Psychological alienation represents a system of communicative rupture between the individual and their social environment, where this dynamic manifests in the decline of the ability to communicate organically and the loss of a sense of collective belonging. The individual becomes a prisoner of a state of complex psychological isolation, where social interactions turn into a space of continuous conflict. This communicative rupture produces complex patterns of defensive behavior, where the individual resorts to building psychological walls as a mechanism for self-protection. The social margin transforms into a laboratory for psychological experimentation, where alternative identities are formed, drawing their strength from the rejection of the prevailing social system. (Layla, 1983, p. 469)

As for the marginal spaces, they are vital laboratories for reshaping psychological identity and building alternative adaptation strategies, where complex systems of psychological solidarity emerge within marginalized groups, relying on mechanisms of resistance and compensation. Neighborhood gangs transform into spaces for the reproduction of self-identity, establishing a parallel value system based on the logic of power and control. Belonging to these groups becomes a strategy to compensate for the state of alienation and exclusion, as they provide alternative networks of psychological and social support (Al-Zayat, 1980, p. 125) . These spaces represent a realm for self-expression and the reinvention of identity away from traditional social constraints.

Addressing psychological alienation requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach aimed at rebuilding social communication and repairing the deteriorating psychological bonds. These strategies include activating the role of educational and psychological institutions in social reintegration, providing effective mechanisms for psychological support and rehabilitation, and focusing on building an integrated system of psychological care that offers opportunities for expression and effective participation. Additionally, it involves dismantling the social structures that produce alienation and creating spaces for dialogue and communication that restore psychological and social cohesion. Therefore, the strategic goal lies in transforming the logic of alienation from a mechanism of separation into an opportunity for psychological renewal and the reconstruction of collective identity.

2.2.Dynamics shaping collective violence

2.2.1.Mechanisms of collective deviance and the sociology of crime

According to Webster's Dictionary, "deviance is behavior or attitudes that violate accepted moral and social norms," (Webster, 1984, p. 370) while in the Oxford Dictionary, it is defined as "the violation of moral and social norms, contrary to what is normal or customary." (Hornby, 1985, p. 237) Deviance also refers in sociology to "behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and ways of life that breach the norms, rules, ethics, and expectations of a society." (Scott, 2006, p. 53)

Collective deviance constitutes a sociological phenomenon that transcends the simplistic understanding of criminal behavior, as it is rooted in social structures and collective psychological dynamics. Human societies carry within them an intricate system of values, norms, and structural pressures that drive certain groups to deviate from the norm and the prevailing social order. The process of deviance is not merely an individual violation of rules, but a collective expression of latent crises within the social fabric, where complex mechanisms of interaction and mutual influence are formed between group members and between them and their social and cultural environment.

The sociological determinants of collective criminal behavior are numerous and complex, involving structural and functional factors. Social marginalization, economic gaps, and institutional disintegration create a fertile environment for the emergence of collective deviance patterns. Social institutions—such as the family, school, and civil society—play a pivotal role in shaping the behavioral trajectories of groups, acting either as deterrents or incentives for deviance. Social disintegration and weak community control mechanisms create spaces for collective rebellion. In this context, crime transforms into a strategy of resistance or expression of social discontent. This is what Émile Durkheim referred to as a "pathological social condition that arises when the collective conscience loses control over the emotions and sentiments of individuals." (Naji Mohammad, 2002, p. 4)

While the psychological dimension of the group is considered a fundamental axis in understanding the mechanisms of collective deviance, the psychological dynamics of groups operate under a different logic than the individual logic, where a collective identity is formed that can transcend ethical and legal constraints. The concept of

"diffusion of responsibility" emerges as a complex psychological mechanism that allows individuals to commit acts they cannot imagine doing alone. Social pressure, collective identification, and the need for belonging drive individuals to adopt deviant behaviors as a means of collective affirmation and identity reproduction.

The last few decades have witnessed radical transformations in patterns of collective deviance, with the emergence of forms linked to technology, globalization, and rapid social changes. The electronic space has become a fertile ground for the emergence of new types of collective crimes such as cybercrime and digital extremism. Deviance is no longer confined to the physical realm; it now extends through social media networks and electronic platforms, creating complex challenges for traditional control mechanisms.

Addressing the phenomenon of collective deviance requires a multidimensional holistic approach that combines social, preventive, and therapeutic interventions. Effective strategies are based on a deep understanding of the social environments that produce deviance, with a focus on enhancing community resilience and rebuilding social bonds. This includes developing rehabilitation and social integration programs, promoting shared values, and creating real opportunities for participation and inclusion, which limits the margins of deviation and restores social cohesion.

2.2.2. The structure of deviant groups and the logic of alternative solidarity

Deviant groups surpass the simplistic concept of criminal gangs; they are social structures with their own internal logic and organizational system. This system is formed by a network of relationships and bonds that go beyond mere criminal collusion to build a cohesive collective identity. Solidarity within these groups relies on mechanisms of loyalty and belonging, where deviance becomes a strategy for survival and the reproduction of the collective self. The strength of these groups stems from their ability to create an alternative value system that challenges the prevailing social order and provides individuals with a form of protection and solidarity contrary to official institutions.

Alternative solidarity in deviant groups forms a system of relationships and practices that ensure internal cohesion. These groups rely on advanced mechanisms of self-regulation and strict internal systems that govern the behavior of members and frame their relationships. The concept of the "collective charter" emerges as a fundamental mechanism for organization, where a system of rules and rituals is created to establish a cohesive collective identity. The strength of this solidarity is manifested in the group's ability to generate a deep sense of belonging and mutual protection, transcending traditional bonds to create an alternative form of social organization based on the logic of confronting official institutions.

In this regard, both social isolation and marginalization contribute to pushing individuals towards seeking alternative identities that provide a sense of value and meaning. Deviant groups serve as compensatory spaces that give their members a sense of strength and belonging. In this context, deviance transforms into a strategy for resistance and social repositioning. The concept of "collective identification" emerges as a complex psychological mechanism that allows individuals to transcend their individual

fragility by merging into the collective identity, thereby creating a system of mutual solidarity and protection.

Deviant groups develop multiple mechanisms to reproduce their social structure and ensure their continuity. These strategies rely on continuous recruitment and the creation of a system of values and beliefs that frame collective behavior. The organizational hierarchy and internal promotion systems emerge as essential mechanisms for maintaining cohesion, creating a complex hierarchical structure that ensures loyalty and discipline. Alternative socialization processes and initiation rituals serve as effective tools for instilling collective values and reinforcing a shared identity.

Contemporary social transformation imposes complex challenges in understanding the structure of deviant groups. With the emergence of new forms of organization that transcend traditional boundaries of space and time, electronic networks and digital spaces have become fertile environments for the formation of alternative collective identities, necessitating renewed strategies for intervention and confrontation. The effective societal response lies in a deep understanding of the sociological dimensions of deviance, with a focus on social integration and rehabilitation programs that target the causes of marginalization and provide real alternatives for integration.

2.2.3. The psychology of power and violence in marginalized spaces

Social marginalization creates a tense psychological environment where power becomes a strategy for survival and compensation for structural exclusion. Violence emerges as a symbolic and psychological mechanism for self-expression and repositioning within the distorted social hierarchy. The dynamics of power are formed through an intertwined network of relationships that blend oppression and resistance, where violence becomes a means to compensate for accumulated feelings of helplessness and frustration.

Power in these spaces is not merely external domination; it is a complex psychological process that reproduces patterns of social interaction charged with tension and conflict. This means that if "the failure to achieve goals is characterized by an individual nature, the individual seeks an individual solution to their problem. However, if the failure of individuals to achieve their goals is linked to social structure due to a lack of opportunities, individuals are likely to seek a collective solution, which is represented in the specific deviant culture." (Frank & Marilyn, 1994, pp. 189-190)

It is noteworthy that violence in marginalized spaces represents a strategy for adaptation and resistance, transcending its role as merely a destructive act to become a psychological and social mechanism for self-expression. Its system forms as a biological and psychological response to continuous threats and structural exclusion, becoming a means to restore dignity and assert existence. Thus, the mechanisms of violence emerge as an alternative logic for communication in marginalized communities, transforming into a language for negotiation and social repositioning. This creates a complex cycle of relationships that blend oppression and resistance in the face of exclusion and marginalization systems.

The psychology of power is rooted in marginalized spaces within a system of perceptions and psychological representations. The sense of helplessness and marginalization serves as a fundamental driver of compensatory power dynamics, where individuals seek to regain strength through alternative mechanisms of dominance. Psychological compensation processes emerge as a central axis in understanding these dynamics, where violence transforms into a means of restoring a sense of dignity and value. This logic creates a system of relationships that blend weakness and strength, thus making violence a psychological strategy to overcome feelings of frustration and exclusion.

The past few decades have witnessed radical transformations in patterns of power and violence in marginalized spaces, with the emergence of forms linked to technology and globalization. Digital networks and electronic spaces have become new environments for reproducing power relations, where alternative patterns of domination and resistance are formed. The concept of "symbolic violence" emerges as an advanced mechanism of control, where technology transforms into a tool for marginalization and exclusion. These transformations create a complex system of relationships that blend physical and digital spaces, imposing new challenges in understanding the dynamics of power and violence.

3. Methods

3.1. Study problem

Social disintegration represents a complex cognitive phenomenon that transcends the superficial analysis of social phenomena, where the social fabric intertwines in a whirlpool of structural and psychological transformations that produce changing patterns of collective behavior. In the context of the contemporary urban society of the Wilaya of Chlef, a profound research issue emerges in understanding the complex mechanisms through which the social margin transforms into a space for organized collective violence. The phenomenon is not merely a behavioral deviation; rather, it represents an integrated system of complex interactions stemming from a deep crisis in social, economic, and cultural structures. How does social disintegration contribute to shaping the mechanisms of collective violence among neighborhood gangs in the Wilaya of Chlef?

Sub-questions:

- How does the reference culture of the comrades' group contribute to the formation of neighborhood gangs in the Wilaya of Chlef?
- Do the precarious living conditions of families play a role in the emergence of neighborhood gangs?
- Does the lack of social integration lead to an increase in the likelihood of joining street gangs? Sub-questions:

Research hypotheses:

- The reference culture of the comrades' group contributes to the formation of neighborhood gangs in the city of Chlef.
- The fragile living conditions of families play a role in the emergence of neighborhood gangs in the city of Chlef.
- The absence of social integration leads to an increase in the chances of joining gangs in the neighborhoods of the city of Chlef.

3.2. Study objectives

This field study aims to explore the relationship between social disintegration and the formation of collective violence in the context of the city of Chlef. It seeks to deeply and intensively understand the psychological and social dimensions that drive young people to engage in neighborhood gangs, focusing on how social disintegration influences the formation of these violent behaviors. The research aims to analyze the direct and indirect factors contributing to the disintegration of the social fabric and how this disintegration translates into patterns of organized collective violence within neighborhoods. It also aims to provide a comprehensive analytical view of the environmental, economic, and psychological conditions that drive young people to join these gangs, while attempting to understand the internal cohesion mechanisms of these groups and the complex systems of power and loyalty that govern their interactions.

3.3. Study methodology

Each research topic has its own specificity, and the researcher must discover the uniqueness of their study, which is highlighted through the announced research objectives. Accordingly, the qualitative method was relied upon, which is concerned with understanding and interpreting social phenomena from the perspective of the respondents themselves. This method is characterized by its ability to delve deeply into personal experiences and the complex contexts of the studied phenomenon. Through it, the study sought to explore the intricate details and profound meanings behind the phenomenon of collective violence, focusing on the personal narratives and subjective interpretations of neighborhood gang offenders. The qualitative method allows the researcher greater flexibility in understanding complex and non-linear experiences, helping to produce rich and deep data about the studied phenomenon, away from rigid generalizations or strict quantitative measurements.

3.4. Data collection Techniques

The choice of research technique stems from the problem and hypotheses, and it is noted that our research problem and hypotheses align with qualitative data. The semi-structured interview was used as the main tool for data collection, conducted with 15 young members of neighborhood gang criminals in the city of Chlef. The interviews were designed to allow flexibility and depth in exploring the respondents' experiences and their social and psychological backgrounds. The interview questions covered multiple aspects of the respondents' lives, such as family background, economic conditions, personal experiences in gangs, internal cohesion mechanisms, and reasons for joining the group.

The interviews used open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to freely express their experiences and perceptions, providing rich data about the studied phenomenon.

3.5. The study sample and Delimitations

The study relied on purposive and snowball sampling to select respondents from neighborhood gang criminals. Participants were deliberately identified based on predetermined criteria, such as actual membership in neighborhood gangs and willingness to participate in the research. Snowball sampling was used to reach more participants through recommendations and referrals from initial participants. The study was conducted over the period from the beginning of October 2024 to the end of November 2024, allowing for the collection of in-depth and comprehensive data on the studied phenomenon.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The results of the study and their discussion in light of the first hypothesis.

- The results of the interviews reveal a complex structure of social formations within neighborhood gangs, where collective cohesion emerges as a fundamental mechanism for belonging and identity. The interviewees indicate that the formation process begins through geographical ties and neighborhood relationships, gradually evolving into a cohesive social system that relies on strict internal standards. These standards manifest in mechanisms of loyalty and absolute belonging to the group, where individuals are subjected to a collective authority that imposes a precise hierarchical structure determining each member's status and level of influence.
- From the interviews emerged a complex system of acceptance and integration processes within peer groups. This process requires a series of tests and practices aimed at assessing the new member's abilities and loyalty. These tests range from simple tasks like committing minor offenses to complex tasks that require high levels of violence and criminality. This system represents a strict mechanism for sorting and classification, where an individual gains their status through their ability to demonstrate absolute loyalty and submission to collective standards.
- The collective identity serves as the main driver of behavior within neighborhood gangs. The respondents reflect a complex image of complete identification with the group, where individual identity fades in favor of collective identity. This identification is reinforced through an integrated symbolic system that includes a special language, specific attire, and internal rituals. This cultural system represents a means of expressing belonging and creating a psychological and cultural barrier that separates the group from the external social environment.
- The interviews revealed a complex system of control and social regulation mechanisms within the groups. This system relies on several strategies ranging from intimidation to incentivization. Strict penalties are imposed on violators, ranging from physical punishment to expulsion from the group, which represents the highest degree of social punishment. In contrast, those who comply enjoy a prestigious status and social advantages within the group.

- Interviews highlight the importance of interpersonal interactions in the reproduction of behavioral patterns within peer groups. Socialization mechanisms work to establish specific behavioral norms through processes of imitation and emulation. New members acquire normative behaviors through direct interaction with founding members, creating a continuous cycle of behavioral pattern reproduction.
- The in-depth analysis of the interviews reveals the complex psychological and social dimensions of belonging. Belonging to a group represents a psychological and social response to deprivation and marginalization. Belonging to gangs provides a form of compensation for the lack of social recognition and creates a space for a sense of strength and identity in the absence of traditional integration channels.

4.2. Study results and discussion in light of the second hypothesis

- The results of the interviews reveal the deep economic impact on paths of deviation, where extreme poverty and chronic unemployment are the main drivers for entering the world of crime. The respondents recount painful details about a harsh living reality characterized by a lack of job opportunities and a decline in living standards. The narratives show that the majority of gang members come from poor families suffering from chronic economic fragility, which drives them to seek quick alternatives for making money. In this context, crime represents a survival strategy and a way to escape the vicious cycle of poverty, where crime becomes an alternative source of income in the absence of job opportunities.
- From the interviews, a tragic picture of the housing reality resulting from social fragility emerged. The respondents describe the miserable living conditions characterized by overcrowding, informal housing, and the absence of the minimum requirements for a decent life. These conditions create a fertile environment for frustration and violence, as the psychological and spatial pressure leads to a state of continuous tension. The feeling of spatial exclusion leads to the formation of alternative identities that derive their strength from violence and rebellion against the lived reality. Narratives show that limited living space drives young people to seek alternative spaces for self-expression, and these spaces find their way into forming groups of companions and gangs.
- The in-depth analysis of the interviews reveals the profound psychological dimensions of unemployment and its impact on shaping criminal behavior. Unemployment represents more than just the absence of income; it is a state of existential frustration and loss of hope. The respondents recount bitter experiences of professional and social exclusion, where they feel helpless in the face of life's demands. This frustration serves as a strong motivation to engage in marginal behaviors as a means to compensate for social deficiency. The narratives show that gangs provide an alternative to the lost professional identity, where individuals gain social status through group affiliation.
- The interviews highlight various strategies that young people resort to in order to adapt to difficult economic conditions. These strategies range from attempts at illicit gain to the formation of informal solidarity networks. The respondents describe how social relationships are transformed into mechanisms for survival and resistance, where gangs form a type of alternative social organization. The narratives show that these strategies stem from a logic of survival and resistance in the face of harsh

conditions, representing an attempt to control one's destiny in the absence of official empowerment channels.

- The analysis reveals the complex relationship between social deprivation and violence. Violence represents a psychological response to feelings of frustration and helplessness, transforming into a means of self-expression and reclaiming dignity. The narratives recount how violence forms a mechanism to compensate for social deficiency, and how it provides a false sense of power and control. The researchers demonstrate how violence is employed as a tool for social negotiation and the restoration of lost status.
- The interviews highlight the complex dimensions of identity construction in the context of social fragility. Belonging to gangs constitutes an attempt to reconstruct identity in the face of marginalization. The narratives show how these groups provide an alternative value system that compensates for social void. Individuals acquire their identity through collective belonging, where violence and crime become a means of self-expression and reclaiming lost social status. The fourth axis

4.3. The results of the study and their discussion in light of the third hypothesis.

- The results of the interviews reveal a system of institutional failures in achieving social integration, where the respondents describe a tense and fragmented relationship with official institutions. They feel a deep gap between themselves and the social support mechanisms, and this disconnect is evident in the absence of effective rehabilitation programs and the weak institutional response to the psychological and social needs of marginalized youth. The respondents recount bitter experiences of frustration and repeated rejection, which drives them to seek social alternatives that provide a sense of belonging and appreciation. In this context, gangs form an alternative space to compensate for institutional deficiencies, providing a value system and structure that replace official institutions.
- The in-depth analysis of the interviews highlights the pivotal role of education as a potential mechanism for integration, while also noting the complex challenges that hinder this process. The respondents describe tragic educational experiences characterized by marginalization and exclusion, where they feel a lack of belonging within the educational institution. The manifestations of failure in the education system are evident through rigid curricula and the absence of psychological support and career guidance programs. The respondents recount how the school has transformed from a space of creativity and empowerment into an area of frustration and marginalization. In contrast, gangs provide an alternative identity based on a different value system that offers a sense of respect and status.
- The interviews reveal the reality of civil society in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration. The respondents describe the limited community practices in addressing the issues of marginalized youth, highlighting the weakness of intervention mechanisms and the absence of integrated vocational and psychological rehabilitation programs. The respondents indicate that community initiatives lack depth and continuity, often relying on superficial approaches that do not address the root causes of exclusion. In contrast, gangs provide an alternative social support system based on

mechanisms of solidarity and collective loyalty, making them an attractive option for marginalized youth.

- The respondents describe the transition from a marginalized identity to a collective gang identity as a strategy for psychological compensation. The narratives highlight how gang affiliation serves as a means to regain dignity and a sense of self-worth. The respondents recount detailed accounts of identity transformation processes, where the gang becomes a space for self-expression and the achievement of lost social recognition. Thus, this transformation represents a complex psychological response to exclusion and marginalization. The respondents describe the transition from a marginalized identity to a collective gang identity as a strategy for psychological compensation. The narratives highlight how belonging to gangs serves as a means to regain dignity and a sense of self-worth. The respondents recount detailed accounts of identity transformation processes, where the gang becomes a space for self-expression and the achievement of lost social recognition. Thus, this transformation represents a complex psychological response to exclusion and marginalization.
- The interviews highlight a diverse array of strategies for resisting social exclusion. The respondents describe how violence and crime are employed as means of social negotiation and reclaiming status. These strategies form a response to the institutional exclusion system, as young people seek to create alternative spaces for recognition and appreciation. This resistance manifests in the construction of parallel social structures that provide alternative forms of power and influence. It also recounts how gangs transform into spaces of symbolic resistance against the social exclusion system.
- The researchers emphasize the necessity of developing comprehensive and integrated approaches to social intervention. The narratives highlight the need for multidimensional rehabilitation programs targeting psychological, professional, and educational aspects, and emphasize the importance of building a social support system based on the principles of respect and empowerment. The results show that positive integration requires a radical transformation in institutional approaches, with a focus on inclusivity and recognition of individual capabilities.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the field study reveals a system of social interactions that lead to the formation of collective violence. Social disintegration represents a fundamental driver in the structure of gangs, where the social space transforms into a fertile environment for the reproduction of societal violence patterns. The results highlight that the process of formation transcends traditional approaches to criminal behavior, becoming a strategy for survival and resistance. In-depth analysis reveals how social margins turn into spaces for symbolic resistance, where collective violence serves as a mechanism for social negotiation and the restoration of lost dignity. The study shows that social disintegration does not represent a simple negative state, but rather a system of reproducing alternative social structures that derive their strength from mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization.

From another perspective, the study offers a deep critical view of contemporary social transformations, highlighting how pathways of collective violence are formed as a structural response to social crises. The study reveals that gangs do not merely represent a marginal phenomenon; they constitute an alternative social system with its own internal logic and standards. The depth of this transformation is evident in the ability of these formations to reproduce new forms of social organization, where margins turn into spaces for resistance and establishment. Thus, the results underscore the importance of understanding collective violence as a phenomenon that transcends singular explanations, becoming a profound reflection of structural crises in contemporary society.

Based on these results, the study proposes a set of strategic interventions to address the roots of social disintegration and reduce manifestations of collective violence. These interventions focus on strengthening the value system and rebuilding social bonds by activating the role of educational and community institutions in reproducing normative systems and shielding vulnerable groups from slipping into violent behaviors

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