

	<div>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</div> <div>Issue 1, Vol. 9, 2026</div>
	<div>RESEARCH ARTICLE</div>
	<div>Crime Between the Concept and the Significations of the Traditional Pattern and the Emergent Pattern</div>
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<div>Issue web link</div>	<div>https://imcra-az.org/archive/389-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-1-vol-9-2026.html</div>
<div>Keywords</div>	<div>traditional crimes; emergent crimes; newly arising crimes; cyberspace; criminal transformation.</div>
<div>Abstract</div> <div>The unprecedented technological and informational transformation witnessed by contemporary societies, particularly with the rapid expansion of cyberspace and digital communication technologies, has profoundly reshaped the nature of criminal behavior. This transformation has led to the emergence of novel forms of criminality that differ fundamentally from traditional crimes in terms of methods, tools, scope, and actors involved. Unlike conventional criminal acts, emergent crimes rely on technological intelligence, digital infrastructures, and transnational networks, thereby challenging classical legal concepts and law enforcement mechanisms. This study seeks to examine crime through a dual analytical lens by contrasting the traditional conceptualization of crime with the evolving notion of emergent crime. It aims to clarify the conceptual foundations of both patterns, identify their defining characteristics, and highlight the principal factors contributing to the rise of emergent criminality. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology, the study demonstrates that emergent crimes represent not merely a quantitative increase in criminal acts but a qualitative transformation that necessitates new legal interpretations, policy responses, and institutional frameworks.</div>	
<div>Citation</div> <div>Alloui L. (2026). Crime Between the Concept and the Significations of the Traditional Pattern and the Emergent Pattern. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i>, 9(1), 942-949. https://doi.org/10.56334/sci/9.1.86</div>	
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<div>Received: 25.04.2025</div>	<div>Accepted: 28.11.2025</div> <div>Published: 03.01.2026 (available online)</div>

Introduction

Crime constitutes a persistent human and social phenomenon that has accompanied human societies since their inception. Regardless of the level of cultural, economic, or technological development, no society has been entirely free from criminal behavior. Crime represents a direct violation of collective values and a serious threat to public order, social stability, and individual security. For this reason, the state has historically assumed the responsibility of combating crime through the establishment of legal norms that define criminal conduct, regulate procedures for prosecution, and impose punitive sanctions. Given the impossibility of completely eradicating crime, the legal system aims primarily at its containment, deterrence, and social regulation.

Traditionally, crime has been treated as a legal concept grounded in the principle of legality, whereby no act may be deemed criminal nor punished except pursuant to a legal text. However, crime is not a static phenomenon. It evolves in response to broader social, economic, and technological transformations. As societies undergo modernization and digitalization, criminal behavior adapts accordingly, giving rise to new patterns of crime that transcend conventional spatial, temporal, and jurisdictional boundaries.

In this context, technological progress—particularly the proliferation of information and communication technologies—has facilitated the emergence of new criminal practices that were previously unknown. These emergent crimes differ significantly from traditional crimes not only in their technical modalities but also in their organizational structures, perpetrators' profiles, and the challenges they pose to law enforcement agencies. Consequently, the legal designation of crime has expanded to encompass what is now commonly referred to as *emergent crimes*.

This development raises a fundamental conceptual and legal problem: how should emergent crimes be defined and distinguished from traditional crimes within an agreed-upon legal framework, especially given the novelty and complexity of the phenomenon? Accordingly, this study seeks to address the following central question:

What is meant by emergent crime, and in what respects does it differ from traditional crime?

To answer this question, the study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach. It begins by examining the general concept of crime (First), then proceeds to clarify the concept of emergent crime by defining it and identifying its most salient characteristics (Second). It further presents illustrative examples of emergent crimes and analyzes the principal factors contributing to their emergence (Third). The study then highlights the distinguishing features of perpetrators of emergent crimes in comparison to traditional offenders (Fourth), before concluding with a systematic comparison between traditional and emergent crimes (Fifth).

First: The General Concept of Crime

Human conduct is deemed lawful when it conforms to the commands and prohibitions prescribed by legal norms. Conversely, when such conduct violates legal rules, it is classified as unlawful and may attract criminal liability. Crime, therefore, represents the most serious form of legal violation, as it directly infringes upon fundamental social interests protected by criminal law.

I. Definition of Crime

Like many contemporary legal systems, the Algerian legislature has refrained from providing an explicit statutory definition of crime. Instead, it has confined itself to enumerating criminal acts and prescribing corresponding sanctions. This legislative choice has left ample room for juristic interpretation, resulting in diverse doctrinal definitions of crime based on varying theoretical criteria.

Some jurists define crime as *"a positive or negative human act arising from fault, which the legislator considers harmful or dangerous to public interests or social relations, and to which a criminal sanction is attached"* (Merle & Vitu, 2010). This definition emphasizes the social harm element and the legislator's evaluative role. Others adopt a more concise formulation, defining crime simply as *"any act for which the law prescribes a punishment"* (Garofalo, 1914). While this definition underscores the principle of legality, it has been criticized for reducing crime to its punitive consequence rather than its substantive components.

Such definitions have attracted criticism for relying excessively on punishment as the defining criterion of crime, thereby neglecting its essential constituent elements. Defining crime solely through its legal consequence risks circular reasoning, as punishment itself presupposes the existence of a crime.

In response to these critiques, a more balanced doctrinal approach has emerged, defining crime by reference to both its elements and its legal effects. According to this view, crime may be defined as *"an unlawful act or omission, attributable to a criminal will, which violates a legally protected interest and for which the law prescribes a criminal sanction"* (Ashworth & Horder, 2013). This definition integrates the material element (the act or omission), the moral element (criminal intent or fault), the legal element (violation of a legal norm), and the consequence (criminal sanction).

From this perspective, crime is not merely a legal abstraction but a dynamic social phenomenon shaped by historical, cultural, and technological contexts. As societies evolve, so too do the forms and meanings of criminal conduct, paving the way for the emergence of new criminal patterns that challenge traditional legal classifications.

The Conceptual Structure of Crime and the Emergence of New Criminal Patterns

It is evident from the doctrinal definitions advanced by jurists that crime encompasses two inseparable dimensions: criminalisation and sanction. Criminalisation reflects the legislative determination that a specific conduct constitutes an unlawful infringement of legally protected interests, while sanction represents the legal consequence imposed in response to that infringement. These two aspects jointly constitute the normative foundation of criminal law and distinguish criminal acts from other forms of legal violations.

From this perspective, crime may be defined as *"an unlawful act or omission attributable to a legally recognised penal will, for which the law prescribes a punishment or a security measure."* This definition integrates both the substantive and procedural dimensions of crime, emphasizing not only the unlawfulness of conduct but also the presence of culpability and the attachment of a penal response by the legal system (Ashworth & Horder, 2013).

I. Elements of Crime

According to the prevailing view in criminal law doctrine, the legal structure of crime is founded upon three essential elements: the legal element, the material element, and the mental element. The absence of any one of these elements precludes the establishment of criminal liability.

1. The Legal Element

The legal element, also referred to as criminal unlawfulness, constitutes the normative basis of crime. An act acquires a criminal character when two cumulative conditions are satisfied. First, the conduct must fall within the scope of an incriminating legal provision that expressly defines it as a crime and prescribes a corresponding sanction. This requirement reflects the principle of legality (*nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege*), which safeguards individuals against arbitrary criminalisation (Cassese, 2017).

Second, the act must not be subject to any legally recognised ground of justification. Grounds of justification—such as self-defense, necessity, or the lawful exercise of a right—negate the unlawfulness of conduct even if it corresponds to the material description of a criminal offense. Consequently, the absence of such justificatory grounds is a prerequisite for the act to retain its criminal character (Fletcher, 2007).

2. The Material Element

The material element refers to the external, tangible manifestation of criminal conduct and constitutes the objective dimension of crime. It is composed of three interrelated components: the criminal act, the criminal result, and the causal relationship between them.

The criminal act may take either a positive or negative form. A positive act consists of conduct whereby the offender performs an action explicitly prohibited by law, such as homicide, theft, fraud, or bribery. A negative act, by contrast, arises from an omission, where the offender refrains from performing a legally mandated duty, such as a judge's refusal to render judgment or a witness's unjustified failure to appear before a court after lawful summons (Merle & Vitu, 2010). The criminal result consists of the infringement or endangerment of a legally protected interest, such as life, property, public order, or state security. Finally, a causal relationship must exist between the act or omission and the criminal result, such that the latter may be objectively attributed to the former. Without this causal nexus, criminal responsibility cannot be established.

3. The Mental Element

The mental element represents the psychological and moral connection between the offender and the criminal act. It reflects the degree of culpability and constitutes the subjective foundation of criminal responsibility. This element exists when the material act is the product of the offender's will and consciousness (Robinson, 2020).

The mental element may take the form of criminal intent, in which case the offense is described as intentional, or non-intentional fault, such as negligence, recklessness, or lack of due care, in which case the offense is classified as unintentional. The determination of the mental element is essential for assessing both the gravity of the offense and the appropriate sanction.

Second: Definition and Characteristics of Emergent Crime

Emergent crimes—also referred to in legal and criminological literature as newly arising crimes, contemporary crimes, or modern criminality—constitute a distinct category of criminal phenomena that have arisen as a direct consequence of profound transformations in contemporary life. These transformations encompass changes in patterns of living, economic relations, technological advancement, social organisation, and communication systems.

Emergent crimes have been described as “criminal phenomena produced by deviant currents resulting from transformations in lifestyles, means of production, and welfare systems, and which are inseparably linked to the social, economic, cultural, and political changes of contemporary societies.” Such crimes are not merely an extension of traditional criminality but represent a qualitative shift in criminal behaviour and organisation (Castells, 2010).

I. Definition of Emergent Crime

Emergent crime is frequently associated with technology-related criminality, particularly offenses committed through or against digital systems. It is described as “emergent” because it has fundamentally disrupted established criminal patterns and challenged the classical theory of crime at conceptual, procedural, and institutional levels.

Importantly, the term *emergent crime* does not constitute a technical legal concept defining a specific offense with predetermined elements. Rather, it is a descriptive and normative expression used to denote a broad category of criminal behaviors unified by the novelty of their methods, tools, and operational environments.

Legal scholars have encountered significant difficulty in formulating a comprehensive and exclusive definition of emergent crimes. This difficulty stems from several factors: the novelty of the phenomenon, the absence of exhaustive knowledge of its forms, the diversity and rapid evolution of its patterns, and the technological complexity characterising its commission. As a result, no single, universally accepted definition of emergent crime has yet been established (Wall, 2007).

Some scholars define emergent crimes as “a modern form of organised crime characterised by scientific management methods, innovative behavioural patterns, and the extensive use of advanced technologies.” Others adopt a more functional approach by classifying emergent crime through a fourfold framework:

1. Criminal patterns that are unknown or unfamiliar to society.
2. The use of new methods, means, and techniques in criminal activity.

3. The employment of advanced technology—particularly cyberspace—either as a tool for committing crime or as the object of the crime itself.

4. The utilisation of innovative and technologically sophisticated methods for evading detection and judicial prosecution.

Emergent crimes have also been defined as “criminal acts that have spread extensively alongside scientific and technological development, whose perpetrators rely on modern technologies, planning, organisation, and speed, thereby posing a serious threat to societal stability and security.” In another formulation, they are described as “forms of crime previously unknown to society, or so rare as to escape recognition, distinguished by their novelty in type, pattern, and scale.”

II. Criteria for Classifying Crimes as Emergent

Several criteria may be employed to distinguish emergent crimes from traditional criminal patterns:

- a. **Social Criterion:** A crime is deemed emergent if it is new to the prevailing social order, arising as a result of broad social, cultural, scientific, and technological transformations affecting the structure of society.
- b. **Legal Criterion:** New behaviours and phenomena that violate evolving social norms and values are considered emergent crimes once the legislator intervenes to criminalise them and prescribe sanctions.
- c. **Procedural Criterion:** A crime is classified as emergent when novel methods and tools are employed in its commission, concealment, or evasion of investigation and prosecution, particularly through the intensive use of technology.

Characteristics of Emergent Crimes

Emergent crime is fundamentally a by-product of scientific, technological, and socio-economic development. Unlike traditional criminality, which is generally stable in form and method, emergent crimes are dynamic, adaptive, and technologically mediated. They are distinguished by a set of interrelated characteristics that reflect both their structural complexity and their operational sophistication.

1. Complexity

One of the most salient characteristics of emergent crimes is their **high degree of complexity**. Perpetrators employ advanced and multifaceted methods to conceal criminal activity, obscure evidentiary traces, and simulate legality. These techniques often involve layered transactions, digital anonymization, jurisdictional fragmentation, and the exploitation of regulatory gaps, making detection and prosecution particularly difficult (Wall, 2007; Castells, 2010).

2. Secrecy in Perpetration

Secrecy constitutes a core operational principle of emergent crime. Criminal acts are typically committed in environments shielded from direct surveillance, such as cyberspace or transnational financial networks. This secrecy is essential for ensuring the continuity and success of criminal operations while avoiding the scrutiny of competent legal and security authorities (McGuire, 2012).

3. Profit-Oriented Motivation

Emergent crimes are predominantly **economically motivated**. The pursuit of material gain represents their primary objective, often overriding ethical, legal, or social considerations. This profit-driven nature explains the professionalisation, planning, and organisational sophistication that characterise many emergent criminal activities, particularly those linked to financial and cyber domains (UNODC, 2021).

4. Underrepresentation in Official Criminal Statistics

A distinctive feature of emergent crimes is their **limited visibility in official crime statistics**. This underrepresentation may be attributed to several factors:

- The relatively lower reported incidence compared to traditional crimes;
- The absence of specialised classification frameworks capable of capturing emergent criminal patterns within criminal record systems;
- Victims' lack of awareness that a crime has been committed against them, particularly in cyber-related offenses;
- Difficulties in identifying offenders due to anonymity, technological mediation, or cross-border execution (Wall, 2007).

5. Novelty and Continuous Evolution

Emergent crimes are characterised by **novelty, unfamiliarity, and constant evolution**. They develop in parallel with technological innovation and scientific advancement, enabling perpetrators to discover new opportunities and increasingly sophisticated techniques. This process leads to the professionalisation of criminal activity and continuously challenges traditional investigative and legal frameworks (Grabosky, 2001).

6. Fluidity of the Concept of “Emergence”

The notion of emergence itself is **relative and fluid**. A criminal pattern regarded as novel today may lose its emergent character within a few years as it becomes widespread or legally regulated. The discovery of newer technologies often accelerates this process, continuously redefining the boundaries of emergent crime (Wall & Williams, 2013).

7. Association with Urban Environments

Emergent crimes are predominantly **urban phenomena**. Urbanisation provides the social density, technological infrastructure, and economic complexity necessary for their development. Consequently, societies with higher levels of urbanisation tend to exhibit higher rates of emergent criminal activity (Clinard & Abbott, 2011).

8. Individual Origin with Organised Manifestation

Although emergent crimes frequently manifest in organised or collective forms, their conceptual origin is often **individual**. Innovation, planning, and criminal creativity typically originate with individuals, even when execution involves networks or organised groups. Modern organised crime has increasingly incorporated these individual innovations, making it a central component of emergent criminality (Paoli, 2014).

9. Deception, Camouflage, and Precision

Emergent crimes are marked by **cunning, deception, and camouflage**. Perpetrators rely on misleading appearances, technical precision, and strategic concealment, enhancing both the effectiveness and danger of their actions. These characteristics pose serious threats to public security, economic stability, and individual rights (UNODC, 2021).

Third: Forms of Emergent Crimes and Their Causes

Emergent crimes manifest in diverse and constantly evolving forms, closely linked to the transformations of contemporary life. Their emergence is governed by a complex interplay of social, economic, technological, and political factors.

I. Forms of Emergent Crimes

Given their dynamic nature, it is neither possible nor methodologically sound to confine emergent crimes to a fixed set of forms. New patterns may emerge at any time, while existing ones may transform or disappear. Nevertheless, several classifications have been proposed in criminological literature.

According to the **Arab Security Media Office (2005)**, emergent crimes may be classified as follows:

1. **Economically Motivated Crimes:** These include organised crime networks, electronic commerce fraud, electronic money laundering, smuggling, and drug trafficking. Such crimes exploit global markets, digital platforms, and financial systems.
2. **Politically Motivated Crimes:** This category encompasses terrorist crimes, the formation of clandestine organisations, political assassinations, and acts aimed at destabilising state institutions or public order.
3. **Crimes Arising from Moral Degradation:** These crimes reflect a breakdown in moral and ethical values and include trafficking in women and children, the production and distribution of pornographic materials, and administrative and financial corruption.
4. **Technology-Dependent Crimes:** This category includes computer crimes, information systems crimes, cyber fraud, and crimes involving the trafficking and transplantation of human organs, often facilitated by advanced medical and digital technologies.

II. Causes of the Emergence of Emergent Crimes

The concept of emergent crime arose as a direct consequence of profound transformations in the social and economic structures of contemporary societies. Several interrelated factors contribute to its emergence, most notably:

- The weakening of family cohesion and traditional social bonds under the pressures of modern life;
- The rapid and expansive growth of economic and commercial activities, creating new opportunities for exploitation;
- The accelerated development of media and communication technologies, often accompanied by legislative inadequacies and regulatory lag;
- The fragmentation of grand ideological frameworks and the rise of ethnic, sectarian, tribal, and religious conflicts;
- The erosion of religious and moral restraints;
- Widespread corruption, whether within public administration, criminal justice institutions (police, prosecution, judiciary), or governmental structures more broadly (Transparency International, 2022).

These factors collectively create an environment conducive to the proliferation of emergent crimes, while simultaneously undermining the effectiveness of traditional crime-control mechanisms.

Additional Socio-Economic Causes of Emergent Crimes

- **Poverty:** Poverty resulting from declining national income, public indebtedness, and recurring financial crises constitutes one of the principal structural drivers of criminality in general and emergent criminality in particular. Under conditions of economic deprivation, emergent crime becomes, for some individuals, a means of meeting basic needs or compensating for social exclusion. Technological crimes, in particular, may appear to offer low-risk, high-reward alternatives to traditional forms of illegal activity (UNODC, 2021).
- **Unemployment:** Like traditional criminality, emergent crime is closely linked to unemployment and adverse economic conditions. However, in the context of emergent crimes, unemployment often intersects with digital literacy and technological access, enabling unemployed or underemployed individuals with technical skills to exploit modern technologies for illicit purposes (Clinard & Abbott, 2011).

- **Globalisation:** Globalisation has significantly expanded the scope and intensity of emergent crimes. The acceleration of technological innovation, the expansion of cyberspace, and the global interconnectedness of financial and communication systems have facilitated the transnationalisation of criminal activity. These developments have increased both the volume and seriousness of emergent crimes, often reflecting the misuse of technologies originally designed for legitimate economic and social purposes (Castells, 2010; Wall, 2007).

Fourth: Distinguishing the Traditional Criminal from the Perpetrator of Emergent Crimes

The traditional criminal is generally an ordinary individual who engages in conventional criminal activity due to adverse social circumstances, economic deprivation, or deficient social integration. Such offenders rely primarily on physical means and traditional tools to achieve their objectives and may resort to violence when necessary.

In contrast, the perpetrator of emergent crime represents a qualitatively different criminal profile. This modern offender exploits the profound advances in information and communication technologies to achieve criminal objectives with minimal physical confrontation and heightened efficiency.

Characteristics of the Perpetrator of Emergent Crimes

1. **Patterned and Qualitative Specialisation.** The emergent criminal is characterised by a distinctive and specialised modus operandi. This specialisation is shaped by the offender's education, technical knowledge, cultural capital, and prior experience. Consequently, the criminal act bears a recognisable personal imprint that differentiates it from other forms of criminal conduct (Paoli, 2014).
2. **High Intelligence and Professionalism.** Perpetrators of emergent crimes generally possess advanced technical competencies and a high degree of intelligence. They employ modern technological tools—such as computers, encrypted communication systems, and digital platforms—with a level of expertise that surpasses that of ordinary users. This professionalism enhances their capacity to plan, execute, and conceal criminal activity effectively (McGuire, 2012).
3. **Non-Violent or “Soft” Criminality.** Unlike traditional criminals, perpetrators of emergent crimes—particularly cybercrimes—rarely rely on physical violence. Instead, they commit what is often described as *soft crime*, characterised by indirect interaction with victims through technological interfaces. The absence of face-to-face confrontation reduces psychological barriers to offending and facilitates the commission of crimes in environments removed from immediate social or legal pressure (Wall & Williams, 2013).
4. **Social Adaptation and Invisibility.** The emergent criminal typically maintains a high degree of social integration and does not display overt hostility toward society. On the contrary, successful adaptation enhances the offender's capacity to operate undetected. This invisibility, enabled by technological mediation, significantly increases the offender's criminal dangerousness (Grabosky, 2001).

Fifth: Distinguishing Traditional Crimes from Emergent Crimes

Traditional crimes, long recognised within criminal law, differ fundamentally from emergent crimes in terms of origin, structure, and penal philosophy.

Traditional criminality consists of offenses expressly recognised as punishable because they directly infringe upon fundamental social interests and violate established rules of conduct. Emergent criminality, by contrast, arises from rapid social, technological, and regulatory transformations and often includes behaviours that initially fall outside existing punitive provisions.

Criminal law scholars have introduced a regulatory distinction between the two patterns under the framework of **social criminal law**. According to this view, **traditional crimes** are primarily addressed through punitive policies aimed at **reforming the offender**, regardless of the type of punishment imposed. In contrast, **emergent crimes** prioritise **general deterrence and social protection**, reflecting the perceived gravity and novelty of the threats they pose.

In emergent crimes, general deterrence assumes precedence because society often lacks a clear awareness of the protected legal interest. The legislature therefore relies on the threat of punishment to cultivate social abstention from such conduct. Moreover, the presumption that individuals are aware of criminal law norms is significantly weakened in the context of emergent crimes, as these offenses are often legislative responses to exceptional or unprecedented circumstances (Ashworth & Horder, 2013).

This approach has been subject to criticism. Opponents argue that criminal dangerousness should be assessed based on an individual's readiness to commit crime, irrespective of whether the offense is traditional or emergent. From this perspective, the nature of the crime should not eclipse the offender's personal propensity toward criminal behavior.

It is important to note that the continuous evolution of modern life generates numerous forms of emergent deviance, some of which may overlap conceptually. **Newly arising crimes** constitute a subset of emergent crimes but precede formal criminalisation due to rapid technological or scientific advancement. Prominent examples that emerged in the late twentieth century include credit card fraud and electronic surveillance abuses.

The key criterion distinguishing newly arising crimes from emergent crimes lies in technological dependence. Newly arising crimes are typically committed using the latest advanced technologies, whereas emergent crimes encompass both technologically mediated offenses and crimes arising from broader economic, regulatory, and scientific developments.

In sum, emergent crimes include:

- Traditional crimes transformed through advanced technological methods or tools; and
- Entirely new crimes that did not previously exist.

Their defining characteristic remains continuous evolution, adaptability, and renewal.

Conclusion

This research leads to the following conclusions:

- Emergent crime constitutes a distinct analytical framework or criterion. Whenever its defining elements are present, an offense may be classified as emergent. It is fundamentally rooted in scientific and technological progress and in the ability of offenders to exploit such progress for criminal purposes.
- Although emergent crime remains quantitatively limited compared to traditional crime, it poses a substantial qualitative threat to individuals, public security, moral values, and societal stability due to its complexity, concealment, and transnational reach.
- Emergent crime places an additional burden on law enforcement and judicial authorities. Given the impossibility of eradicating traditional crime, confronting emergent crime presents even greater challenges.

Recommendations

In light of the above, the study recommends the following:

Continuous capacity-building and specialised training for judicial police officers and investigative authorities to enhance their ability to detect, prevent, and combat emergent crimes.

Strengthening international cooperation mechanisms to facilitate information exchange, technical assistance, and the sharing of best practices in addressing emergent criminality.

Adopting a firm penal policy by tightening sanctions for emergent crimes while ensuring proportionality and respect for fundamental rights, thereby reinforcing general deterrence and protecting societal interests.

Ethical Considerations

This study is based exclusively on doctrinal legal analysis, theoretical interpretation, and the review of publicly available academic literature and official reports. It does not involve human participants, personal data, interviews, surveys, experiments, or any form of intervention requiring ethical approval. Consequently, approval from an institutional ethics committee was not required.

The author affirms that the research was conducted in full compliance with the principles of academic integrity, objectivity, and transparency. All sources consulted have been appropriately cited, and every effort has been made to avoid plagiarism, misrepresentation of sources, or any form of academic misconduct.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to express sincere appreciation to colleagues and scholars in the fields of criminal law and criminology whose academic works contributed to the theoretical foundation of this study. Gratitude is also extended to the academic institutions and open-access databases that facilitated access to relevant legal and criminological literature.

Any errors or omissions that may remain are solely the responsibility of the author.

Funding

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The study was conducted independently by the author.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The research was conducted without any financial, professional, or personal relationships that could be construed as influencing the research outcomes or interpretations.

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