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Research Article

ANTHROPOLOGICAL LOOK AT THE AGGRESSIVITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRECARIOUS SITUATION IN KENNEDY DISTRICT OF ABOBO (ABIDJAN)

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ABSTRACT

The renewed aggressive behavior among young people in Abidjan in general and in Abobo commune in particular, has become a major concern for the population, the government and especially scientists. This study aimed to determine the factors associated with the upsurge of aggressive behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy neighborhood of the municipality of Abobo. It is based on a collection of data by observation and immersion in the field of aggressive youth, approached through contacts established with their leaders. The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted from November 19, 2016 to February 28, 2017 among 60 young boys first obtained by snowball and then by empirical saturation. The data collected was then transcribed manually in their entirety and each transcript was subjected to thematic content analysis. The analysis shows that the majority of young people were militia or members of a self-defense group during the post-election crisis of 2010 and are idle. Almost all of them are drug users and adulterated alcohol. The majority of these youth reported being abused during their childhood. Our study makes it possible to understand that the expression of aggressive behaviors of the young people of the Abobo Kennedy district is part of a logic of frustration with promises not held by politicians, all associated with idleness, the use of psychoactive substances and events experienced during childhood. The creation of care structures and real employment opportunities for young people in precarious environments seems to be necessary.

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INTRODUCTION

Aggression and violence among young people are of great concern in human societies, especially modern societies. Most societies today are confronted with the considerable increase in the number of young people who, from pre-adolescence, present behavioral difficulties. In the underdeveloped countries, their fate is much more serious. They are plagued by major economic and social problems. The Ivorian society does not escape this situation. Indeed, since the 1990s, Côte d'Ivoire, like many countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Sudan, etc.) has started. To record the first manifestations of juvenile violence. The massive use of young soldiers is a major feature of the crises in Africa (Jezequel, 2006).

Studies show that in Ivory Coast, youth violence is linked to internal political issues (Akindès 2007, Kirwin 2006). The nature of the political system is at the heart of conflict and juvenile violence. Young people have been recruited and enlisted into the ranks of fighters of all forces. Many young people have participated in the rebellion unleashed since 2002. Moreover, during the post-electoral crisis of 2010-2011, several young people and adolescents took part in the armed conflicts in the Abidjan district on the basis of political promises. The politicians used them during the hot hours when it was necessary to find the means to make leave or maintain the power of then. A group of young people were burning the tires and were taking part in the dead city operations. They paralyzed the whole system in the communes of Adjamé, Attécoubé and Abobo (Diaby, 2014).

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At the end of the post-election crisis, a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (ADDR) structure was set up in Côte d'Ivoire. It was supposed to take care of all the young people who had actively participated in the rebellion and the crisis. But the inclusion criteria established by this structure have hurt a large part of this population. The aggrieved young people then organized themselves among peers and set up a system of claims based on violence. Thus, urban violence began to grow among the population of Abidjan with a new social phenomenon. This is a group of teenagers and young people called "microbes" who commit assaults and killings in Abidjan neighborhoods and particularly in Abobo commune. According to statistics from the Ivorian Catholic Child Bureau (BICE) in 2011, more than 648 juvenile offenders were arrested for committing aggressive acts on the population. Of these, 246 were recovered by the Protection of Minors Brigade and 402 were taken to the Abidjan Detention and Correctional Facility (BICE, 2014).

The municipality of Abobo located in the city of Abidjan is very famous for the frequency of attacks organized by young people and gangs of young people, but also recognized as one of the communes housing a large number of precarious neighborhoods. In addition, it remains the municipality with the highest prevalence of violence in the city of Abidjan. According to an interview with Radio France Internationale (broadcast 7 billion from Radio France Internationale (RFI) on May 15, 2015), in this municipality, multiple attacks are reported day by day. Youth gangs attack passersby after dark. Despite the intervention of the authority, the police and a mixed force composed of soldiers, gendarmes and police called the Coordination Center of Operational Decisions (CCDO), the situation has hardly changed and arouses more and more anxiety within the population. Thus, in the face of renewed aggressive acts in the behavior of young people in the municipality of Abobo, we conducted this study whose objective was to determine the factors associated with the resurgence of aggressive behavior among young people in precarious situations. In the Kennedy district in Abobo.

Methodological device

This study was conducted from November 19, 2016 to February 28, 2017, in the Kennedy district of Abobo (Abidjan). It is a descriptive qualitative study based on data collection by observation and immersion in the environment of aggressive youth, approached through established contacts with their leaders (snowball sample). The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 60 empirically saturated boys. Indeed, empirical saturation refers to the phenomenon by which the researcher judges that the latest documents, interviews or observations no longer provide new or different information to justify an argumentation of the empirical material (Pires, 1997). With the agreement of the participants, all interviews were recorded and anonymized. The questions asked were about the environmental factors and internal factors related to the expression of aggressive behaviors among young people. All data from interviews were manually transcribed. Each transcript has been subjected to thematic content analysis in the sense defined by N'da (2015, p.134). This analysis consisted of identifying the underlying meaning of the information given by our respondents in order to explain the sense (s) that are contained and / or the ways in

which they manage to make sense. This phase made it possible to code elements of the analyzed content into various categories, with the intention of identifying the various characteristics and understanding the precise meaning.

Results of the study

The analysis of the data collected during the interviews with the respondents revealed that the non-respect of the promises (not taken into account by the ADDR), the conditions of idleness and precariousness, the psychological states (violence and child maltreatment) and drug and alcohol use are factors associated with aggressive behavior among precarious youth in Abobo's Kennedy neighborhood.

Mesological factors associated with the expression of aggressive behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy neighborhood of Abobo

We were able to identify in the context of our study that the non-inclusion of young people in the ADDR programs, the situation of idleness of the respondents, as well as their precarious situation (number of regular meals per day) influence the expression of their aggressive behavior. In fact, the failure to respect the promises made during the enlistment of young people in the Ivorian conflict, the difficult socio-economic conditions and the parental negligence among young people often associate themselves with more stressors for them, leading them to states of depression, isolation and violence. These factors can lead young people to use violence. Our study reveals that the majority of respondents have no daily occupation, they are idle and must take care of themselves. In addition, the socio-economic situation of parents is not favorable to them. In fact, these young people are known by residents as having no daily occupation and making daily use of violence in their behavior. Some of the interviewees illustrate this state of affairs.

« The old mogos [in Ivorian slang this word means the authorities] have the hogwash, we have given our breasts and our life for them. We fought to remove GBAGBO. They made us promises. But when they came to power, they no longer managed us. So we brobro like that to show them our discontent. These are malots ».

« I do not bara, (the word bara means to work or to have an occupation) I do not do anything I am in the district here only, there is no work; my parents also do not have the means, when I know that, I have to attack to have something on me »;

« I do not do anything like bara I'm still in the ghetto I smoke my movements, it's my bara who is there, when I need token I go on the ground to lead my movements ».

Subsequently, the results of our study indicate that the number of regular meals per day has an impact on the expression of aggressive behavior in young people. In fact, since parents can not afford daily meals, most of these young people are forced to feed themselves. Without means, they engage in acts of vandalism to ensure their livelihood. In addition, many young people who prefer to stay permanently out of family to be comfortable. In these circumstances, when they do not have regular meals a day, nervousness, anguish and anger overwhelm them. They become irritable and nervous about not

having regular food and living in precarious situations. The following testimony provides some information.

« Me when I'm hungry I see it more clearly, because I smoke a lot, so when I finish smoking like that, I'm very hungry and when I do not win to eat like that, it annoys me and that makes me very nervous, I become violent, I can fight with anyone and I can easily attack to be able to feed myself ».

Consumption of drugs (drugs, adulterated alcohol) and expression of aggressive behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy district of Abobo

The results of our study reveal that drug use (drugs and alcohol) significantly influences the expression of aggressive behavior among young people. All of our respondents are drug users and adulterated alcohol. Indeed, the living environment in Kennedy is very favorable to the consumption of narcotics with the presence of drug smokers (ghettos) scattered throughout the neighborhood. The aggressive behaviors used by Kennedy youth are the result of heavy drug use. Some testimonies of the respondents give us information on this situation.

« Often when I'm awake (to say when it's under the influence of drugs) it motivates me to be violent and to take with people (to say physically attack) ».

« The day I take Rivo (tablet drug (amphetamine)), really it's not good, I can easily attack people and fight at any time ».

It is also important to note that the consumption of drugs leads to a change in the state of mind of young people.

« Pao (the heroine) makes me clear to do my operations. When I take the thing, I am no longer myself and puff I can all djinziin (djinziin means destroy, or spoil in the slang Ivorian (nouchi) ».

These testimonies allow us to affirm that the consumption of drugs considerably influences the expression of aggressive behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy district of Abobo.

Real-life events and aggression behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy neighborhood of Abobo

The decryption of the testimonies shows us that the aggressiveness behaviors of the young people emanate not only from their belonging to self-defense groups during the post-election crisis of 2010, but also from the mistreatment of which they were the object during their childhood. Indeed, the post-election crisis was a major and founding element of violence in youth behavior in Abobo, to which Kennedy youth strongly adhered. This testimony refers to this situation.

« When it was hot during the crisis where people were looking for me, I fought too, we were given weapons, the FRCI first asked us who wanted to fight and they began to distribute the kalaches, like me I am someone who is not afraid, I took kalache too and then we had the gris-gris (amulets) to protect ourselves. So right now, I'm not afraid of anything, if I fought against the militia and then nothing happened to me, there is not something that can scare me right now. So when I attack or when I do machete palavers, even the police do not dare approach because they themselves seek, they are afraid of machetes ».

The violence that young people have experienced during their childhood has also left psychological scars in the minds of some and plays a great role in their relationships with others. This testimony reveals the abuse experienced by a young person during his childhood.

« Me my dad was too hard on us when we were little. Every time we made a small mistake, he beat us instead of telling us not to do this thing again. And then he was not the only one to hit us, my uncles also beat me each time with electric wire until I hit myself said nothing more. So now that I'm here, when I think of all that they did to me when I was little it makes me angry not possible, that's why often when we do our machete palaver there I do not I'm not scared because punch does not tell me anything anymore I cashed that too much. And because of all that, I can easily machete (machetter means to give machetes blows) or stung someone ».

The analysis of these testimonies shows us that the aggressive behaviors of young people in precarious situations are the result of abuse and belonging to a self-defense group during the post-election crisis of 2010.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The analysis of the results of the study allowed us to know that the aggressive behaviors of the youths of the Kennedy district of Abobo are associated with the non-inclusion of young people in the ADDR programs, idleness, the use of psychoactive substances and events experienced during childhood.

Mesological factors associated with aggression behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy district of Abobo

Our results show that the young people in our study are idle and that this situation influences their aggressive behavior. In fact, the influence of idleness on the adoption of aggressive behavior by young people has been demonstrated by previous work on the topic of aggression among young people. Kaufman (cited by De Grace and Joshi, 1986) in his study of youth aggression, has developed a theoretical model to understand the phenomenon of aggressive behavior among young people. He argues that in their state or situation of idleness, young people go through several periods including that of doubt and aggression. This period of doubt is characterized by a decline in self-esteem, the manifestation of depressive feelings capable of developing their physical aggression behavior. In this context, difficult socio-economic conditions and parental neglect are associated with more stressors for young people leading to states of depression, isolation and violence. These factors can lead young people to use violence.

Beyond the existing relationship between idleness and aggression among youth, several studies have examined the factors associated with the onset of aggressive behavior among youth. Tremblay, Nagin and Seguin Zoooodilo, Zelazo and Boivin (2004) show that the low socio-economic status of the family is a factor likely to present a trajectory of physical aggression among children from this family. For these authors, with the exception of family factors such as exposure to domestic violence, parental separation, personality disorders and psychoactive substance dependence of parents, the precariousness of the environment illustrated by low socio-

economic income parents is an important indicator in the expression of aggressive behavior in adolescents. In addition, Stouthamer and Loober (2002) argue that poverty is associated with high-risk neighborhoods in the expression of aggressive behaviors in adolescents. To this end, they studied the effects of neighborhoods in the persistence of aggressive and delinquent behavior among youth. They conclude that aggression and severe delinquency are persistent in households with low socioeconomic status and in poor neighborhoods. For each additional risk factor, the low economic status of the neighborhood increases the likelihood of persistent delinquent behavior.

In the Ivorian context, since the socio-economic situation has gradually deteriorated since the 1980, the economic crisis and its effects on employment and, in the long term, on the precariousness of income due to massive unemployment, have fueled the economic and social frustrations. gradually engendered the use of increasingly criminal violence, both among educated young people facing various forms of deprivation (loss of scholarships, difficulties of socio-occupational integration) and among young people in situations of social invisibility. The logic that structures protest violence in the student environment is better studied (Akindès 2000 and 2009, Konaté 2003 and Vidal 2003). The dynamics that favored the transformation of these movements into political militias and the role they played, taking advantage of the political demand of paramilitary forces in the political arena between 2002 and 2010, have also been widely documented (Akindès and Fofana, 2011, Fofana 2011, Koné 2011, McGovern 2011, Koné 2014). The emergence of the violence of these young people is part of the political and economic trajectory of Côte d'Ivoire over the last twenty years in terms of the degradation of the living conditions of the populations (Grimm, Guenard *et al* 2001) but also of brutalization of social and economic life (Le Pape 2003, Vidal 2003).

The results of our study have also shown that the number of regular meals per day has an impact on the expression of aggressive behavior in young people. As indicated, most of our respondents do not have regular meals a day. In these circumstances, they are overwhelmed by nervousness, anguish and anger and stress. They become irritable and nervous about not having regular food and living in precarious situations. In these conditions, young people are becoming more and more apt to use violence in their behavior. This state of affairs is supported by Brockhaus (Brockhaus quoted by Kouamé and Tia, 2016). According to Brockhaus, large amounts of hormones are released whenever the sympathetic nervous system reacts to intense emotions, such as stress, anguish, or anger. This phenomenon can trigger a "fight or flight" reaction during which blood pressure rises, and blood is directed primarily to vital organs and skeletal muscles. The heart is also stimulated and the subject is likely to react violently to an external stimulus (Brockhaus, op.cit).

Use of Psychoactive Substances and Aggressive Behavior among Abobo Kennedy Youth

The results of our study show a high consumption of narcotics by young people. This situation clearly influences aggressive behaviors among young people. Indeed, aggressive behavior and narcotics use are two closely related phenomena. Brochu

(2006) states that drug use can increase the likelihood that a person will engage in aggressive events in general. An increase in drug and alcohol use frequently results in an increase in aggressive behavior. In this perspective, the consumption of narcotics causes young people overflowing behaviors causing deviant behavior. This consumption modifies their behavior, leading them to show aggressive and violent behavior. Also under the influence of drugs and alcohol, the individual has difficulty controlling himself and can easily be aggressive to satisfy his desires and needs.

Kodjo, Auinger & Ryan (2004), for its part states that under the influence of alcohol, a significant number of young people express aggressive and violent behavior. In addition, the effects of youth use of these drugs have the potential to induce various forms of aggressive behavior. In this context, young people would consume alcohol to give themselves the courage to commit scenes of aggression and to express their aggressiveness. These results are similar to that of Kouamé (2013) in a study of suicide attempts among Abidjan adolescents. Indeed, according to the author, in adolescence, boys are often more aggressive and impulsive because they are frequently under the influence of alcohol and other narcotics. Alcohol consumed in uncontrolled mode leads to sensitivomotor excitement and numbness responsible successively for violence, delinquency, irresponsibility and incest. The numbness of consciousness with underestimation of risks will be the bed of risky behavior. The living environment in Kennedy is very favorable to the consumption of narcotics with the presence of ghettos scattered throughout the neighborhood. The aggressive behaviors used by Kennedy's youth are the result of heavy alcohol and drug use by them.

Events experienced during childhood and manifestation of aggressive behavior among the youth of Abobo Kennedy

The study found that childhood events such as abuse and belonging to a self-defense group during the 2010 post-election crisis are associated with aggressive behavior among Kennedy youth. The majority of young people said they were militias. In addition, many of them reported being abused during their childhood. Indeed, the problem of youth violence can not be considered separately from other behavioral problems. Violent youth tend to commit various offenses. They often have other problems, such as absenteeism, dropping out of school and addiction, lying constantly, driving dangerously, and high percentages of sexually transmitted diseases. However, not all violent youth have significant problems outside of their violence, and not all problem youth are necessarily violent. There are strong links between youth violence and other forms of violence. The works of Fangan and Browne (1994) corroborate these claims. For these authors, children or adolescents who witness family violence or are victims of physical violence, for example, may consider it acceptable to resort to violence to solve problems. Thus in their further development, these children will frequently use violent practices that have constantly accompanied their experiences. Gartner (1990) notes that prolonged exposure to armed conflict can also contribute to a culture of terror that increases the incidence of youth violence.

Adolescents who have been exposed to wars for a long time, to arguments, or who have learned to use weapons, may later

develop deviant tendencies among which we can note aggression, delinquency and theft. Parental behavior and family background play a key role in the development of violent behavior among youth. Poor supervision and supervision and severe corporal punishment for children are important predictors of violence during adolescence and the early years of adulthood. This is what McCord (1979) demonstrated in his study on a few antecedents of criminal behavior in adults. In his study of 250 boys in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, the author concludes that poor parental supervision, parental aggression, and harsh discipline at the age of 10 significantly increase the risk of subsequent convictions. For violence until the age of 45.

Eron, Huesmann and Zelli (1991) corroborate these claims. These authors have indeed followed nearly 900 children in New York (United States). They concluded that severe corporal punishment by parents at the age of 8 predicted not only violent arrests up to the age of 30, but also the severity of the punishments they would inflict on boys. To their own children and the violence they would inflict on their wives. Widom's (1984) study of more than 900 abused children and nearly 700 witnesses is part of this same vision. In this study, Widom demonstrated that childhood physical abuse and neglect predicted subsequent arrests for violence independently of other predictors such as gender, ethnicity, and age.

CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, it is important to note that the majority of the young people surveyed were militia or members of a self-defense group during the post-election crisis of 2010. Many of them are idle and are consumers of drugs and adulterated alcohol. The data analysis also allowed us to know that most of them were abused during their childhood. In view of all the above, we can say that the aggressive behavior among young people in precarious situations in the Kennedy district of Abobo is associated with the failure to respect the promises when they join the ranks of militia, the idleness, the use of psychoactive substances (drugs, adulterated alcohol) and events during childhood, including abuse and exposure to domestic violence. Therefore, the creation of care structures and real employment opportunities for young people in precarious environments seems necessary.

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