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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION IN COMBATING DRUG CRIMES AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNITY SECURITY

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Abstract. The study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of national legislation in combating drug-related crimes and its impact on community security in Wasit Governorate, with a focus on the role of community policing. The study used a questionnaire as the primary tool for collecting data from a sample of 100 individuals, and the data were analyzed using SPSS. The results indicate that national legislation is perceived as clear and strict and as having a positive impact on community safety; community policing plays an important role in awareness and early detection; and the effectiveness of legislation is strongly associated with the level of community safety. The study recommends strengthening law enforcement, expanding community-policing activities, increasing public awareness, and improving rehabilitation programs for drug users.

Keywords: drugs, national legislation, community safety, community policing, Wasit Governorate

Introduction

Drug abuse and trafficking are among the most serious problems of modern-day societies with direct influences on undermining security and social stability, as well as negative impacts on health, psychological health, social life and economy. This phenomenon has been evolving in recent years, in terms of both method and means - no longer local, but now transnational, benefiting from technological advances and new modes of communication [1]. The National Workshop on Reducing Drug Use also emphasized collective responsibility for protecting young people from drugs [2].

Given this situation, the states want to pass deterrent national laws to discourage the use and promotion of drugs and to ensure harsh punishment for the offenders, from the users to the traffickers. The enactment of such legislation is essential and an integral element of a state's criminal policy, since it provides the legal platform for fighting narcotics and clarifies the duties of security and judicial institutions in this domain [3]. The effectiveness of this legislation, however, is not only judged based on its presence, but also how far it is translated to the ground, whether it is effective in general deterrence, as well as community prevention. In this context, the importance of community policing becomes evident as a bridge between the police and the community, as it helps increase awareness and trust in the community and to detect negative phenomena such as drug-related crimes early [4].

In this context, the objective of this study is to throw some light on whether national legislation is effective in combating drug-related crimes, and to analyse its effect on the achievement of community security and on the implementation of this legislation on the ground with special reference to the role of community policing.

The study is significant because it connects the legal and social dimensions of drug control, provides field evidence relevant to community-policing practice, and examines whether the enforcement of national legislation is associated with perceived community security in Wasit Governorate.

The research problem is summarized in the following question: To what extent are national laws effective in combating drug crimes, and what impact does this have on achieving community safety? The study further examines whether current laws have contributed to curbing drug spread, how effectively they are enforced, and what role community policing plays in strengthening implementation.

Accordingly, the study aims to analyze national legislation related to drug crimes, assess its effectiveness in reducing crime, identify its impact on community safety, examine the role of community policing in law enforcement, and provide practical recommendations. The hypotheses propose a statistically significant relationship between law enforcement and reduced drug-related crime, a positive contribution of strict legislation to community safety, and a supportive role for community policing in enhancing legislative effectiveness.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework of Drug Crimes

Alcohol and Intoxicating Beverages

Each linguistic has words that indicate an intoxicating drink. They are called 'khamr' for they intoxicate i.e., they cloud the mind of a person rendering him/her unconscious. Most of the scholars are of the view that the meaning of the word khamr is anything that causes intoxication. This is based on what is stated in the Quran honourable, the statements of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family), and their consensus. Likewise, the consensus of the Companions and what is reported from the eloquent Arabs. They said, "Every intoxicant is khamr." According to the law, the Prophet may Allah bless him and grant him peace and his family - prohibited any drink or substance that causes the mind to become inebriated or causes the drinker to take pleasure. Likewise any drink or substance that causes loss of consciousness, sedation, and/or alteration of consciousness. Because it harms the faith, mind and behavior of the individual, in accordance with the wisdom of Islamic Law in preserving the five essential elements, especially to preserve the mind [5]. Drug-related offences are considered to be an offence of special nature that has a legal, social and health impact. This is because their impact is not just limited to the individual drug user but extends to the family, society and the state. Drug offenses are those acts that are made criminal by legislation related to growing, producing, possessing, transporting, trafficking, and consuming narcotics without a medical purpose [1]. According to the definitions; "They are defined, from the legal point of view, as any conduct that is contrary to those provisions of the act, which relate to

narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and which is punishable with the imposition of a term of imprisonment, or with fine, or with both, with the object of protecting the public health and the social order," [3]. From this definition, it is clear that the aim of the legislature is not only to punish the offender but also deterrence and prevention. Drug crime is deemed deviant behaviour revealing a range of psychological, economic cultural factors including unemployment, family breakdown, lack of awareness, and pressurizing life situations. These have direct as well as a proportionate link with one another, and are the result of society, as well as drug policies. These must be carefully examined by a comprehensive system, not just a legal one [4]. In this way, it seems that drug-related crime is a multi-faceted threat which can only be curtailed through legislative, security and community measures.

B- Types of Drug Crimes

Drug offenses can be broken down by the type of drug crime and fall into one of the following categories:

First: Drug Abuse Crimes

These are the use of drugs of dependence or psychotropic drugs without prescription or for non-medical reasons. This is one of the most common offences committed and can be a gateway to other crimes, including violence and theft, as a consequence of the effect drugs have on behaviour [1].

Second: Possession offenses

These include possession of narcotics drugs without permission, for use or trafficking. Depending on the intention, the penalty will be different, with stricter punishment for possession with the intent to distribute.

Third: Trafficking and Distribution Offenses

They are regarded as among the more serious offenses committed with drugs because they play a direct role in the spread of drugs in society. These encompass sales, distribution, and transportation, and frequently are associated with transnational organized criminal networks [1].

Fourth: Manufacturing and Cultivation Offenses

These are related to the production of narcotic substances through cultivation of narcotic plants or the manufacture of chemical substances. Such offenses are serious crimes for which laws have prescribed them stern punishments.

C- Causes of the Spread of Drug-Related Crimes

These reasons can be summarized by a number of important factors:

1. Economic factors

As in poverty and unemployment, some people are compelled to engage in drug trafficking in order to make quick money, or drug use as a way to escape from bad economic conditions [3].

2. Social factors

The social environment can greatly affect an individual's behavior, such as when a family breaks down or when parents are not able to provide strong supervision, or when a person is surrounded by bad company.

3. Psychological factors

For instance, anxiety, depression and psychological stress are factors that can make people seek drugs for a way to escape from their issues.

4. Cultural and media factors

Other factors such as low community awareness and some cultural norms that implicitly encourage drug use.

D- The Consequences of Drug-Related Crimes

First: Health Consequences

Drugs lead to the deterioration of physical and mental health and may cause serious illnesses or death in some cases [1].

Second: Social Consequences

These result in family breakdown, crime rates and behavioral deviance.

Third: Economic Consequences

High treatment and law enforcement costs, and lost productivity, are a heavy burden on the state.

Fourth: Security Consequences

Drug crimes are a direct threat to community security, and are correlated with increases in other crimes, including theft and violence [4].

Fifth: The Link between Drug Crimes and Community Security

Drug related crimes are intertwined with community security because they generate instability and endanger the security of people. The more there are drugs in the system, the less there is in the way of security. In combating drug related-crime, many researchers have noted that one of the key elements of community security is the achievement of:

- a. Reducing related crimes
- b. Strengthening family stability
- c. Raising awareness in the community [4].

National Legislation on Combating Drug Crimes in Iraq

National laws form the backbone of the state's efforts in the fight against drug crimes, as they seek to control the use of narcotics, outlawing related activities, and providing strong punishment for those involved in its use. The Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law No. (50) of 2017 is the foundation in this aspect in Iraq. This law was adopted because of the fast changes in the patterns of drug crimes and to reinforce the law in line with international conventions [6].

This law contains provisions regarding different aspects of the phenomenon, from establishing a definition of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to establishing the criminal responsibility for their use, to determining the penalties for such acts and to legal procedures to combat them. The law also provided wide powers to the security agencies, including the community police, for enforcement, investigation and public awareness [7].

Iraqi parliament has enacted a criminal policy that is both deterrent and treatment, which does not only penalize drug users but also gives a chance to them to receive treatment and rehabilitation as part of the modern trend in criminal legislation [8].

B- Forms of Criminalization in Iraqi Legislation

Iraqi law defines a set of acts that constitute drug offenses, which can be outlined as follows:

First: The Crime of Drug Use

The law proscribes narcotic use outside of a medical setting and accounts it as a punishable offense; in certain instances, it may refer the user to treatment centres rather than prison [6]. Any person who imports narcotic substances or psychotropic substances, produces them, manufactures them, possesses them, acquires them or purchases them shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of not less than one (1) year and not more than three (3) years, and a fine of not less than five million (5,000,000) dinars and not more than ten million (10,000,000) dinars shall be imposed on such person by imprisonment for a term of not less than one (1) year and not more than three (3) years. The following shall be liable to the penalty provided herein: anyone who imports, produces, manufactures, possesses, acquires or purchases narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances [6]

Second: The Crime of Possession

Possession of narcotic substance without a licence is a criminal offence and the punishment varies depending on the intention behind the possession, namely for personal use or trafficking, with the latter receiving more severe punishment [7].

Third: The Crime of Trafficking and Distribution

This is regarded as one of the most serious crimes and Iraqi law has given it harsher punishments up to life imprisonment or even death in some cases, particularly when associated with organised groups [7].

Fourth: The Crime of Manufacturing and Cultivation

The law prohibits the cultivation or manufacture of narcotic plants and imposes severe penalties on those who commit these acts, given their threat to national security [6].

C- Penalties Prescribed in Iraqi Legislation

Penalties under the Iraqi Narcotics Law are characterized by severity and a graduated scale,

and can be classified as follows:

1. Custodial penalties

such as imprisonment, temporary detention, and life imprisonment, which are imposed according to the severity of the offense.

2. Financial penalties

such as fines imposed in addition to custodial sentences.

3. Aggravated penalties

in certain cases, such as:

- a. committing the crime as part of an organized gang
- b. exploitation of minors
- c. repeat offenses [7]

4. Treatment measures

The law permits the referral of drug users to treatment centers, in lieu of punishment, as part of a rehabilitative policy aimed at reintegrating them into society [8].

C- Assessing the Effectiveness of Iraqi Legislation

The effectiveness of legislation depends on several factors, the most notable of which are:

First: Clarity of Legal Provisions

Iraqi law is characterized by relative clarity in defining criminal acts and penalties, which helps reduce legal ambiguity.

Second: Severity of Penalties

Harsh penalties have contributed to deterrence, particularly in trafficking offenses.

Third: Practical Implementation

Although the laws are robust, the implementation is where the true struggle is, with some studies showing a disconnect between the laws and implementation, be it because of limited resources or corruption, as noted in the literature [9].

Fourth: The Preventive Dimension

Improvements are needed in preventive and awareness-raising activities, a responsibility that falls to community policing.

Fifth: A Brief Comparison with Some Arab Legislations

From the comparison of the Iraqi legislation with some of the Arab legislations, we find:

- a. Likewise, similarities were found regarding the criminalization of the core offenses of use, possession and trafficking.
 - b. differences in the severity of penalties, as Iraq is among the countries that impose harsh penalties.
 - c. Advances in the treatment component in a few countries that focus on rehabilitation over punishment.
- [1]

Impact of National Legislation on Community Security

A- The Concept of Community Security

One of the basic principles which states would like to realize is community security, which is the sense of safety and tranquility experienced by society's members because they are protected by an efficient legal system from a number of dangers such as crime of all sorts. Community security goes beyond the security aspect and includes social, economic and psychological aspects (Al-Shumari, 2021, p. 55).

The definition of community security is that community has a balance and stability situation, that the law is applied fairly and effectively, and that the individual and his property are protected and there is trust for the official institutions [4]. The need to have strong legislation with effective implementation for getting security therefore becomes apparent.

B- The Role of National Legislation in Achieving Community Security

The government has a key role in ensuring community security and has five basic functions:

First: Achieving General and Specific Deterrence

The legal consequences serve to discourage people from committing drug-related offences, either by means of inducing fear in the community as a whole (general deterrence) or by keeping the offender from committing a second offence (specific deterrence) [7].

Second: Regulating social behavior

Laws constitute what is allowed and what is forbidden, and they help to control people's behaviour in society and limit chaos and deviance [7].

Third: Protection of public health

Drug legislation plays a role in minimizing drug spreading and the associated health risks, thereby contributing to the betterment of society [1].

Fourth: Strengthening Trust in Security Institutions

If citizens think that the law is applied evenly, they will have more trust in the security institutions, thereby improving the cooperation between the two parties [4].

C- The Impact of Drug Crimes on Community Security

Drug-related crimes directly affect community security, as illustrated by the following:

Increased crime rates

Drug-related crimes are linked to other crimes, such as theft, homicide, and violence, due to the impact of drugs on behavior [9]

Family breakdown

Drug use weakens family ties and increases rates of divorce and delinquency [7].

Threat to Economic Stability

Drugs affect productivity and increase the financial burden on the state [1].

- **Widespread Fear**

The spread of drugs leads to a general sense of insecurity within society.

D- The Relationship Between the Effectiveness of Legislation and the Level of Community Security

Research indicates that the effectiveness of legislation is directly related to the level of community security in that:

The more transparent and more rigid the laws → the less crime there is.

- **The more effective the enforcement → the higher the level of security**

Prior legal analysis indicates that the effectiveness of the legislation in fulfilling its goals is largely reliant on the efficiency of the law enforcement agencies in executing the legislation [7]. Also, international studies validate that countries that implement integrated policies (legal + preventive) have better results in combating drugs [1].

E- Challenges to the Effectiveness of Legislation

Despite the existence of strong legislation, there are a number of challenges that limit its effectiveness, including:

First: Weak enforcement

A lack of resources or inadequate training may reduce the efficiency of law enforcement [9].

Second: Administrative corruption

Corruption hinders law enforcement, thereby reducing its effectiveness.

Third: Low public awareness

Citizens' lack of awareness of the dangers of drugs limits the impact of legislation.

Fourth: Evolving criminal methods

Drug networks use modern methods that are difficult to track, posing a challenge to security agencies [1].

Community Policing in Combating Drug Crimes

A- The Concept of Community Policing

Community policing is a modern concept in law enforcement that is based on building an effective

partnership between security agencies and the community, with the aim of preventing crime before it occurs, rather than merely addressing it after the fact. This concept is based on cooperation and continuous communication between the police and citizens, thereby strengthening trust and contributing to the achievement of comprehensive security [4].

In Iraq, the Community Police is a division of the Ministry of the Interior and plays a vital role in addressing negative social phenomena including drug-related crimes through awareness campaigns, guidance, and preventive intervention [9].

B- The Objectives of Community Policing in Combating Drug-Related Crimes

Community policing aims to accomplish certain goals in the fight to address drug-related crime, most prominent among which is:

- a. Prevention of crime - educating people to prevent crime.
- b. Enhancing citizens' trust in law enforcement.
- c. Early detection of drug use and trafficking.
- d. Controlling the phenomenon in society.
- e. Helping to rehabilitate drug users and re-integrate them into the social fabric of society. [7]

D- Community Policing Mechanisms in Combating Drug Crimes

The principles of community policing involve a range of practical tools that can help to reduce the spread of drugs, such as:

First: Community Awareness

Police conduct Drug Awareness Campaigns in schools, universities and residential areas to spread awareness in the community about the dangers of drugs and their ill effects. This is one of the most crucial preventive measures that decrease the risk of drug use [7].

Second: Communication with Families

Community policing to reinforce role of family members in the supervision of children and to give guidance to them regarding how to deal with suspicious situations.

Third: Partnerships with Institutions

Community police collaborate with:

- a. Schools
- b. Religious institutions
- c. civil society organizations

To reinforce the cooperation in combating drugs.

Fourth: Receiving Confidential Reports

Community policing enables safe ways for citizens to pass on information and this aids early detection of crimes.

Fifth: Early Intervention

Any incidents of drug use is dealt with in a humane and legal way, and cases are referred to the relevant authorities for treatment.

D- The Role of Community Policing in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Legislation

Community policing is a key component of national legislation enforcement with the following:

- a. It helps in the effective implementation of the law, by working with the community to facilitate the implementation of laws.
- b. It bridges gap between citizens and the law, it renders the law more acceptable by public awareness campaigns.
- c. Enhancing indirect deterrence, by fostering an attitude of the rule of law, thereby lowering the chance of crime.
- d. Promoting preventive measures which cannot be brought about by legislation alone.
- e. Previous security research stresses that "the success of anti-drug legislation relies heavily on the efficacy of community agencies, notably the community police." [9]

E- Challenges Facing Community Policing

Despite the importance of its role, community policing faces several challenges, including:

First: Limited Capabilities

A shortage of human and technical resources may limit its ability to operate effectively.

Second: Low Community Awareness

A lack of cooperation from some community members hinders its efforts.

Third: Social Sensitivities

Some families are reluctant to report cases of drug use.

Fourth: Evolving Methods of Crime

The use of modern methods in drug trafficking makes it difficult to track. [7].

F- Ways to Strengthen the Role of Community Policing

The effectiveness of community policing can be enhanced through the following measures.

- a. Offering funding and technical assistance.
- b. Continually training of persons.
- c. Building collaboration with educational and religious institutions.
- d. Commencing rigorous media initiatives
- e. Developing treatments and rehabilitation for drug users [8].

International Policy and Prevention Context

Recent international evidence shows that the global drug market continues to expand and diversify, reinforcing the need for integrated legal, prevention, health, and security responses [10].

The World Health Organization likewise emphasizes prevention and treatment capacity for substance use disorders as a core component of public-health policy [11].

International prevention standards recommend evidence-based and developmentally appropriate interventions across family, school, and community settings [12].

The international drug-control framework is grounded in coordinated action under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol [13].

International treatment standards also support accessible, evidence-based, ethical, and rights-oriented services for people with drug use disorders [14].

Methods

The study used descriptive-analytical, statistical, and comparative approaches. Legal texts and social phenomena were analyzed descriptively, quantitative data were examined statistically, and selected legal experiences were considered comparatively.

A- Type of Study

This research was conducted with exploratory field research, the use of questionnaires as the data collection tool. This approach reflects the opinion of citizens in Wasit Governorate and the effectiveness of the national legislation in combating drug-related crimes in the presence of community policing.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was scientifically designed and consisted of three main sections:

The effect of national legislation on the effectiveness of national legislation

- a. Section on the Effectiveness of National Legislation.
- b. Number of items: 10
- c. Measures citizens' perception of the strength of the legislation and clarity of penalties
- d. How Legislation affects Community Safety
- e. Number of items: 8
- f. Measures citizens' sense of safety due to the enforcement of laws.
- g. The role of community policing.
- h. Number of items: 7

- i. Records the citizens' understanding of community policing's role in raising awareness and early detection of drug related crimes.

All items were scored on a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) to enable statistical analysis.

Study Population and Sample

- a. Target Population: Wasit Governorate residents.
- b. Sample size: 100 people.
- c. Sampling method:
- d. Simple random sampling to assure representation of various age and social group.
- e. Questionnaires were sent to residential areas, markets and educational centers, with regard to diversity based on gender and age group (18-60 years).

Data Collection Procedures

- a. The selected locations were visited personally to give out the questionnaires and provide an explanation of the study.
- b. The questionnaires were taken right after they filled out or by email from some participants.
- c. The questionnaires were checked before they were fed into the statistical software for completeness and accuracy.

Statistical Software Used

The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26 to facilitate:

- a. Descriptive statistics: frequencies, means, and standard deviations.
- b. Correlation and analysis: measuring the relationship between the effectiveness of legislation and the level of community safety.
- c. Hypothesis testing: Use of the Pearson correlation test to measure the strength of the relationship between variables.

The statistical procedures were implemented in SPSS Version 26 and followed standard quantitative-analysis principles for descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hypothesis testing [15].

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the main study variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Range
Effectiveness of Legislation	4.12	0.68	2–5
The Impact of Legislation on Security	3.95	0.72	2–5
The Role of Community Policing	4.05	0.70	2–5

- a. The table shows that citizens' assessment of the effectiveness of legislation and the role of community policing is relatively high (more than 4 on a 5-point scale).
- b. The standard deviation is low, indicating relative agreement among sample members regarding their assessment of these variables.

Relationships Between Variables

Table 2. Pearson correlations between legislation, community policing, and community safety.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance (p-value)
Effectiveness of Legislation – Community Safety	0.74	0.000

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Significance (p-value)
The Role of Community Policing – Community Safety	0.68	0.000

The Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between the effectiveness of national legislation and the level of community safety, as well as the role of community policing.

There appears to be a strong positive correlation between the effectiveness of legislation and the level of community safety ($r = 0.74$).

Furthermore, the role of community policing is positively associated with community safety ($r = 0.68$).

The p-values are < 0.05 , which means the results are statistically significant.

Hypothesis Testing and Interpretation

- First Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between the enforcement of national legislation and a decrease in drug-related crimes.
- Result: Confirmed, $r = 0.74$, $p = 0.000$
- Second Hypothesis: Strict legislation contributes to enhancing community safety.
- Result: Confirmed, based on the high average score for community safety (3.95) and its correlation with the legislative variable.
- Third Hypothesis: Community policing plays an important role in increasing the effectiveness of legislation.
- Result: Confirmed, $r = 0.68$, $p = 0.000$

Fourth: Interpretation of the Results

- The results showed the effectiveness of the national legislation in reducing drug-related crimes in Wasit Governorate and the citizens were aware of the penalties they will face for committing drug-related crimes.
- Many other activities of community policing serve as an important support such as awareness creation and early detection of drug use.
- The level of consensus among citizens is high on the need for legislation and the preventive role of the police in contributing to the security of the community is tangible.

Taken together, the findings support the study framework: perceptions of legislative effectiveness are strongly associated with community safety ($r = 0.74$), while community policing is also positively associated with community safety ($r = 0.68$). These results reinforce the literature emphasizing that legal rules alone are insufficient without effective implementation, public awareness, early detection, and treatment-oriented responses [10].

The findings also align with international guidance that drug-control strategies should integrate prevention and treatment rather than rely solely on punitive measures [11]. Community awareness activities are consistent with evidence-based prevention principles [12], while the national legal framework operates within the broader international drug-control architecture [13]. The recommendation to strengthen rehabilitation services is likewise compatible with international standards for treatment of drug use disorders [14].

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that Iraq has a clear and relatively strict national anti-drug framework with graduated penalties covering use, possession, trafficking, manufacturing, and cultivation. In the Wasit Governorate sample, perceived legislative effectiveness is strongly and positively associated with community safety ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.01$), and community policing is positively associated with community safety ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). The findings indicate that legal clarity and enforcement are most effective when accompanied by prevention, public awareness, early detection, institutional cooperation, and rehabilitation.

The study recommends supporting law-enforcement agencies with equipment and continuous training;

expanding awareness campaigns in schools, universities, and residential areas; maintaining media campaigns on drug risks and reporting mechanisms; strengthening treatment and rehabilitation centers; using modern technology to detect trafficking and distribution networks; and designing targeted prevention programs for vulnerable groups, particularly young people aged 18-35.

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