

CALL FOR DEMOCRATIC POLICING: AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON CRIME CONTROL IN URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS OF LAHORE, PAKISTAN*

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ABSTRACT

The preponderance of violence in metropolises has been a persistent concern for successive governments of Pakistan. However, it is pertinent to remark that there are often significant variations in the occurrence of violence between physically and socially similar neighborhoods in a single city. This paper sets out to study one highly violent and one mildly violent neighborhood in Lahore, Pakistan, to try to understand how community organizations, physical characteristics and the residents' strategies for crime prevention and control are related to different levels of criminal violence. A qualitative approach was used for this research paper (in-depth interviews were conducted with community residents in each neighborhood). It was found that population heterogeneity, spatial dynamics and a general lack of parochial social control were important predictors of criminal violence. It was noted that both the neighborhoods had customary mechanisms for crime prevention and control but these mechanisms were less employed contemporarily. Notwithstanding the structural conditions, it was also found that social distance between the police and public was also responsible for this decline. Policing in both neighborhoods was largely reactive and residents considered police as part of the crime problem. Consequently, they were not willing to intervene in situations where police was likely to be involved. Based on the case study research the paper concludes that in order to harness community control mechanisms, institutional reforms are required to alter the way in which police functions at operational level.

INTRODUCTION

Violence in cities has become a major security challenge for the State of Pakistan. Despite academic disagreements

on the definitions of violence and insecurity, there is a general consensus that violence, in its different manifestations, is both predictable and preventable. Even so, an estimated 1.5 billion people in the world live in conflict-affected areas (World Bank, 2011). An overwhelming proportion of these people live in middle or low-income countries (World Bank, 2011). In addition to the loss of human life, violence has numerous social costs, including poverty and a detrimental impact on health and education. Violence and conflict-ridden countries have only moved slowly towards benchmarks in development indicators.

It is commonly argued that large slums and clusters of poor neighborhoods lead to crime and violence in cities. Nonetheless, the equation is not linear. There is empirical evidence to suggest that, within a city, some neighborhoods are remarkably less violent than others (regardless of local help or foreign intervention). Similarly, not all the cities with large slums experience proportionate levels of violence. Cities are complex 'created environments' and questions relating to urban violence cannot be adequately answered without considering the spatial and social dynamics of their neighborhoods, as these are the concrete places where people live and interact. The micro planning initiatives can help resolve a number of chronic urban issues including crime and violence, however, such initiatives have scarcely been given due consideration.

The macro-perspective on crime and violence is well justified when we analyze national institutions, policies or laws. Notwithstanding the significance of the macro approach, it is difficult to ignore the fact that violence often occurs during the process of social interaction. At the micro level, certain communities or neighborhoods suffer from more violence than others. The variation between the levels of violence,

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in certain areas of an urban system, is interesting because the macro structures influencing these areas are virtually identical. Drawing on a micro-sociological perspective, it may be asserted that community characteristics may be responsible for violence or the absence of it.

In view of this, it has been attempted to delineate neighborhood strategies of crime prevention and control in a more violent and a less violent neighborhood of Lahore, Pakistan. Lahore is an important study area for this research because of the significant variations in criminal violence in its different neighborhoods. What's more, Lahore is rapidly urbanizing and migrants from virtually all parts of the country have settled here mainly to seek better economic opportunities. In this study, a qualitative approach has been used in which narrative interviews have been conducted with interviewees to understand their perceptions and experiences on the research topic described above.

The purpose of this explorative study was to answer the following questions. (1) Which community-level factors are considered relevant to crime and violence in a more violent and a less violent urban neighborhood of Lahore? (2) What are people's perceptions of violence, fear of crime and neighborhood responses? (3) Which specific questions can be asked to benefit further studies on neighborhood violence around the world?

THE CONTEXT

During the last two decades, there has been unprecedented infrastructural development in Lahore. The expansion of city's geographical boundaries and inflow of migrants from rural areas has significantly influenced the social organization of the city. The old city area, which dates back to the Mughal Era – also known as the Walled City of Lahore – is now merely a small sub-section of Lahore, with a population of around 200,000 (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). Like most of the urban centers of Pakistan, development activities in the city have not kept pace with the urban expansion and there are significant disparities between different metropolitan centers of Lahore.

Crime data available from local police stations shows significant variations between criminal violence committed in different neighborhoods of Lahore. However, the city as a whole has been relatively less affected by the current upsurge of terrorist violence in the country (Tables 1, 2).

For the purpose of this study, two neighborhoods – Dharampura and Baghbanpura –were selected (Figure 1).

Table-1: Crime statistics (Lahore) by category
Source: Lahore Police, 2014

Cases registered	2012	2013
All reported crimes	772.7	741.5
Crime against persons	77.7	67.6
Crime against property	272.1	253.6
Local and special laws	205.4	197.5
Miscellaneous	217.5	222.7

Crime rates in Lahore per 100,000 of the general population.

Table-2: Crime statistics (Lahore) by offence
Source: Lahore Police, 2014

Offence	2012	2013
Murder	6.6	5.6
Robbery with murder	0.4	0.4
Kidnapping for ransom	0.5	0.4
Robbery	39.2	37.2

Crime rates in Lahore per 100,000 of the general population.



Figure-1: Map of Lahore showing location of the selected neighborhoods.
Source: www.googlemaps.com accessed 23/2/2016

Due to very limited published data on these neighborhoods, a short interview was conducted with a historian to verify local information about these neighborhoods. A brief profile of these neighborhoods follows.

Dharampura

Situated alongside the canal of Lahore, Dharampura was inhabited mostly by Sikhs before partition of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947. After the creation of Pakistan, a large number of Muslim migrants from the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh moved to the areas vacated by Hindus and Sikhs, including Dharampura. Today, the population in Dharampura is overwhelmingly Muslim. Since a significant proportion of the residents in Dharampura are migrants, they do not have any inherited land in the province of Punjab. Consequently, most residents are engaged in employment and small business enterprises. Over the past few decades, a number of educational institutions have established in Dharampura and there is a high tendency of sending children to schools. Dharampura is famous for its variety of traditional food stalls and vibrant community gatherings. In common perception, Dharampura is a relatively peaceful area in Lahore and very few significant crime incidents have been reported in the past few years.

Baghbanpura

Baghbanpura (literally, the town of gardeners) is a culturally significant neighborhood of Lahore. Known for its historical Shalimar Gardens, Baghbanpura is a locality that has been inhabited since the Mughal Era, well before the partition of the Indian Subcontinent. The population of Baghbanpura was relatively less affected by the partition and there are only a few migrants from India. Several residents of Baghbanpura are agricultural landowners and the rest are mostly associated with labor and small businesses. A significant number of residents in Baghbanpura belong to a caste called 'Arain', members of which have traditionally been engaged in agriculture-related professions. Caste dynamics are perceived to play a vital role in the political and cultural dynamics of this neighborhood. Another important spatial feature of Baghbanpura is its proximity with Great Trunk (GT) Road, which connects Lahore with other parts of the country. Moreover, it is situated near the Lahore Ring Road, an orbital motorway around the city, which is in turn connected to the National Highway. Baghbanpura has the reputation of being a relatively more violent neighborhood in Lahore.

Despite the historical and socio-cultural importance of these neighborhoods, there was a lack of scientific studies designed

to understand their community dynamics. This study provides baseline information regarding the general characteristics of these two neighborhoods and highlights various aspects of criminal violence.

STATE OF THE ART

The pioneer studies of urban phenomena were conducted by members of the Chicago School, who emphasized the ecological aspects of life in cities (Lutters and Ackerman, 1996). In order to study the decay of cities amidst crime, homelessness, and other adverse conditions, members of the Chicago School presented a model of "twilight neighborhoods". According to this model, population decline and deviant activities were shown to affect the economic structure of cities. Another important contribution of the Chicago School to urban studies was the application of the concept of 'disorganization' to the cities. This approach suggested that in order to adapt to the urban environment, the migrants need to significantly alter or abandon their normative structure. The central theme of disorganization theory was stressful experiences of migrants while settling in an alien environment of the city. What's more, the later currents in Chicago School focused on social order in rapidly evolving urban environments. It discussed that stabilizing factors such as church, community local practices, and communal spaces mitigated the effects of social disorganization (Whyte, 1993; Thomas and Znaniecki, 1919).

As a refinement to their earlier question regarding social decay, the members of the Chicago School also considered the factors which may facilitate disorder and crime. They argued that anonymity, mobility, and individuation are some of the factors which could contribute to social unrest in urban settings. While many concerns of Chicago School may not be scientifically intriguing today, it can be credited with introducing cities and neighborhoods as units of investigation and highlighting the importance of qualitative methods in understanding urban environments (Lutters and Ackerman, 1996).

Inspired from the ecological framework initially posited by the Chicago School, research on intra-societal violence has focused on neighborhoods with specific characteristics such as poor socio-economic conditions (Bellair, 1997), communal or racial segregations (Blau and Blau, 1982), and large concentration of poverty (Morenoff and Sampson, 1997). The sociological explanation for these more violent neighborhoods lies in the weak informal social control exercised by their residents, (Bellair, 2000).

The systemic model of neighborhood crime assumes that social networking and informal control are positively associated and that these are instrumental in reducing crime and violence. Inspired by this model, a number of research has focused on various indicators of social networks such as participation in activities, social cohesion, and local networks (Greenberg, et. al., 1982; Warner and Rountree, 1997) with respect to their influence in enforcing social control. On the contrary, researchers have also shown that strong social ties among people may negatively affect social control. In addition, simultaneity bias has been a classical dilemma in neighborhood research, which further complicates the relationship between social ties and social control (Tuncan and Raudenbush, 1999). A possible reason for these ambiguities is that most studies focused on specific dimensions of social networking and informal control while leaving out the collective dynamics of neighborhood settings.

Empirical studies on neighborhood violence have generally been grounded in the theoretical frameworks for social disorganization (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Bursik, 1988), social capital (Messner, et al., 2004; Forrest and Kearns, 2001), and collective efficacy. More often than not, deductive approaches were employed in these studies, whereby different dimensions of the aforementioned theoretical constructs were tested.

Robert Putnam's seminal work, *Making Democracy Work*, is based on the central idea that social capital significantly influences community problems including criminal violence. Nonetheless, an empirical study of 40 geographic areas in the US found that several forms of social capital are not associated with homicide rates. Rather in some cases, a positive association has been found and some forms of social capital have been shown to be both causes and effects of homicide. A cross-sectional study of American States examining the association between measures of social capital and homicide rates between 1974 and 1993 found significant associations (Galea, et al., 2002). Nonetheless, the study also asserted that this association is not linear and that more complex analytical frameworks are required to determine causal relationships (Galea, et al., 2002).

In this paper, I argue, that an inductive approach to neighborhood violence may reveal the specific mechanisms through which neighborhoods maintain social control. Participatory appraisal has been found to be successful in revealing the dynamics of neighborhood violence, which supports the idea of qualitative endeavors in this field of study (Moser and McIlwaine, 2000). Moreover, micro-level comparative analysis of structurally similar neighborhoods

may also help to establish benchmark for comparison across other neighborhoods, which is an important methodological concern in contemporary neighborhood related research. In addition to the relative lack of qualitative and comparative research on violence, there are even fewer studies that consider the proactive strategies of social actors within neighborhoods which could account for variations in violence. This study is an attempt to fill the substantial gap in literature by considering the issue of violence and non-violence in two neighborhoods in the context of a developing country.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This section outlines the methodological approach taken in this study and the rationale for the selection of the approach.

Universe of the Study

A qualitative cross-sectional design has been employed to address the research questions. The population in this study included the residents of two neighborhoods in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. The basic idea was to draw a comparison between a more violent and a less violent but otherwise similar neighborhood in the city to explore the extent and forms of informal social control exercised in those neighborhoods.

Sampling

In the sampling process, the foremost issue was to operationalize the concept of neighborhood. Neighborhood is defined as 'a district or community within a town or city' (Oxford Dictionary, 2014). In view of this definition, characterizing an area as a neighborhood is largely subjective. The issue was addressed by relying on the public perception of different areas as distinct localities or neighborhoods. Many areas in Lahore have been established for decades or even centuries. These areas are considered to have distinct sub-cultures and social environment. Thus, the long-standing identity of certain geographical areas as neighborhoods was the basis for operationalizing the concept of neighborhood in this study.

The task of selecting neighborhoods was made easier by the existing administrative division of Lahore by the local police. The Lahore police has divided the city into six divisions and each has an elaborate administrative system. Of these six divisions, the Cantonment Division was randomly selected for this study. Within this division, there are fifteen police stations. Generally, different socio-economic classes in Lahore are aggregated in different regions. Thus, any two

adjoining areas were likely to share similar structural characteristics. In this context, crime statistics for all police stations within the Cantonment Division were obtained and these were scrutinized to ascertain whether two adjacent police stations had recorded significant variations in crime rate in recent years. The crime data with police indicated that the area of Baghbanpura had witnessed consistently more crime than the area of Dharampura in the last three years.

Despite significant variation in crime rates, both of these neighborhoods shared many similar characteristics. Firstly, they were only separated by a neighborhood called Mughalpura and a link road which joined Mughalpura with Baghbanpura. Secondly, both these neighborhoods were known to have both lower middle class and upper lower class populations. Thirdly, both areas were established centuries ago, whereas each had shrines of famous saints (Mian Mir and Shah Hussain), who lived in the 16th century (Kalra, et al., 2013; Wolf, 2006). Finally, these neighborhoods were characterized by narrow streets, small houses, and a high population density.

Once the neighborhoods were identified, interviewees were chosen. The sampling criterion for the interviewees included the criterion that they must be permanent residents of neighborhood and must have been living or working there for at least five years. The sampling approach for this study was developed together with Sebastian Huhn, Noam Lopez, José Salguero and Princess Hammanobels. This sampling method provided with an opportunity to choose interviewees who were likely to yield rich and in-depth information about the dynamics of violence in their neighborhoods. Ten interviewees were chosen from each neighborhood. The list is as follows:

- i) Community organization representative
- ii) Local politician
- iii) Barber
- iv) Imam (religious leader)
- v) The police officer
- vi) Private employee
- vii) Private security guard
- viii) Rickshaw driver
- ix) NGO/ union representative
- x) Youth representative

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected from two neighborhoods through twenty in-depth interviews comprising 31 open-ended questions.

The questions were drafted on the basis of available literature on the subject. However, an attempt was also made to allow the interviewees to narrate their experiences and perceptions of neighborhood violence.

After each interview, semi-verbatim transcripts were drafted from the recorded data. The transcripts were later translated into English and edited transcripts were coded and then analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. Nonetheless, thematic analysis was not purely inductive. Given the substantial amount of literature on the topic under study, certain categories and concepts were specifically sought in the data. The findings of the study were presented under themes derived from the coding.

FINDINGS

This section outlines the themes generated through data analysis and those that were specifically sought in the data.

Social Bonding in Transformation

The findings of this study reveal that patterns of interaction among neighbors have undergone significant change over time. Several interviewees in the more violent neighborhood (Baghbanpura) said that the social ties among neighbors have weakened. More often, the reason cited for this change was competition for resources. Interviewees realized that community members were preoccupied with their individual quest for better living, and traditional ties among neighbors were limited to ceremonial activities and greetings when they met. Moreover, some interviewees perceived that people no longer liked to share their problems with others.

A private teacher from Baghbanpura said:

“In the past, people used to sit at Chaudhary’s (community notable) place and discuss their matters. Now everyone is a Chaudhary. How will one visit the other?”

In addition, some interviewees from Baghbanpura pointed out that one reason for less interaction among people was the absence of traditional places where people could meet. With a growing population, housing structures have undergone change. Moreover, housing units have been built over vacant areas. Spatial congestion has resulted in fewer opportunities for community gathering.

A civil society representative from Baghbanpura said:

“Here are no places available for public gathering such as

parks and grounds. Young people can gather at snooker clubs but these are infested with gambling, which results in feuds among the guys."

Although the interviewees thought that social interaction has weakened, they could only present evidence which referred to changes in patterns or avenues of interactions, rather than the interactions themselves. It was noted that interviewees of all age groups referred to the previous generation as having been more interactive. This finding was consistent with most of the interviewees' views and they referred to a locally popular phrase, "the old times were the best times". Nonetheless, their understanding about the "old times" and the "best times" was rather obscure. It was also significant to note that almost all the interviewees in Baghbanpura were of the opinion that, despite changes, interaction among people was still better as compared to other areas of the city.

On the other hand, the situation was not very different in Dharampura. Interviewees were concerned with the lesser interactions among neighbors. A number of interviewees were of the view that people-to-people interaction has decreased. Generally, the reason cited for this was opportunities for in-house entertainment and the different priorities of the younger generation.

A rickshaw driver from Dharampura said:

"We (our generation) were very gregarious. Nowadays, boys are obsessed with cable (satellite television channels), computers and mobile texting."

Despite a general decline in the level of social networking, it was found to be a significant predictor of non-violence in neighborhood settings. Generally, the less violent neighborhood (Dharampura) had more opportunities for social networking compared with the more violent neighborhood (Baghbanpura). However, this finding needs to be explored in more detail. It was also noted that several interviewees from both neighborhoods were skeptical about social and technical change. They referred to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a reason for lower cohesion among neighborhood residents. Moreover, they considered sitting in a park to be socially viable, but playing snooker in indoor clubs was seen as a deviant activity. It was felt that their views about reduced social interaction were rooted in their apprehension about modernization and virtual communication technologies.

Community Organizations as Avenues of Social Control

A significant number of interviewees in Baghbanpura said that there were only a few community organizations in the neighborhood and they were not very effective in addressing community needs. Moreover, some interviewees were of the view that community organizations were run by politically motivated people for their own vested interests. Generally, the office bearers of these organizations did not enjoy a good reputation within the neighborhood and they were thought to be mostly visible at the time of local or national elections.

A civil society representative from Baghbanpura said:

"The main committees or organizations have members who are mostly 'badmaash' (hooligans). Gentle people have nothing to do with these organizations."

A local police officer from Baghbanpura said:

"Traders' organizations dominate the landscape of community organizations in this area. They mostly advocate issues relating to markets and trade disputes. They rarely interfere in community-level issues."

The efficacy of community organizations was perceived to be better in Dharampura. Several interviewees were of the view that community organizations make a significant contribution to addressing the needs of the marginalized segments of neighborhood. Some interviewees mentioned organizations that were working for education, vocational training of women, and the management of religious festivities.

A barber from Dharampura said:

"We run an organization which was set up to support poor people when they are in need of our help. We have crockery and utensils, which we provide free of cost to poor people at events such as marriages and funerals of their family members."

In addition, there were also some organizations which worked to achieve settlement of disputes and to prevent violence in the community as a latent function. The members of these organizations were community notables, who had some influence over other neighborhood residents.

A NGO representative from Dharampura said:

“Our organization strives to draw people towards religion. Once they start loving God, we believe that violence will subside. Secondly, our organization has settled a lot of family disputes as well as quarrels between people over property or other practical issues.”

Institutionalized mechanisms for community interaction are likely to result in greater capacity for collective actions on mutual issues. As such, the efficacy of existing community organizations in a neighborhood is important in terms of crime prevention and control. The relatively high effectiveness of community organizations in Dharampura compared with Baghbanpura confirmed this proposition. However, perceived perpetrators of crime were also found to be involved in community organizations in Baghbanpura. Apparently these perpetrators used the social capital generated from these organizations to pursue their vested interests. These platforms may also increase bonding between perpetrators of crime as noted in some previous studies also (Moser and McIlwaine, 2004; Rubio, 1997).

Blaming the Outsiders: Community Perceptions Regarding Perpetrators of Violence

The study findings revealed that a lack of education and unemployment are largely seen as factors leading to violence in both neighborhoods. Additionally, in Baghbanpura, it transpired that unfavorable working conditions in the adjoining industrial area were perceived to be contributing to violence. Baghbanpura also had a highway close by which was perceived by some interviewees as an easy escape route for the perpetrators of violence. Moreover, some interviewees considered migrants to be largely responsible for crime in the neighborhood. Only a couple of interviewees hinted that there might be organized criminal violence headed by influential political groups.

A local politician from Baghbanpura said:

“People from Narowal and Shakargarh (cities in Punjab) have settled here during the last 10 years. Their identity is relatively anonymous. Some of them have a criminal history. Their relatives come here to visit them and commit crimes.”

A local police officer from Baghbanpura said:

“A large number of people here are involved in the steel industry. They are forced to work in inhuman conditions. These workers are mostly drug addicts. Whenever they are

out of job, they get involved in crime to buy drugs.”

A union leader from Baghbanpura said:

“Informal settlements have increased significantly during last decade or so. The police surveillance in these areas is weak. Residents of these settlements commit crimes in settled areas and then go back to their slums.”

The interviewees from Dharampura were of the view that young boys involved in drug abuse and other immoral activities are the main perpetrators of crime and violence. Moreover, some interviewees complained about a lack of street lighting and prolonged load shedding in some areas which, according to them, have facilitated crime.

The findings from the study revealed a perception that there are more actors involved in perpetrating violence in Baghbanpura compared to Dharampura. Most perceived perpetrators in Dharampura were deviant individuals or groups within the neighborhood. On the other hand, perceived perpetrators of violence in Baghbanpura hailed from outside areas. Moreover, there were hints of organized violence in Baghbanpura, whereas no such evidence was found in Dharampura. It was interesting to note that interviewees from both neighborhoods were aware of the structural causes of violence and emphasized good governance as the ultimate solution to deviant behavior.

Consistent with social disorganization theory, it was found that residential instability and heterogeneity positively influenced criminal violence in the neighborhoods. This was specifically true for Baghbanpura where an influx of new residents was perceived as a risk factor for violent behaviors. This finding was consistent with most of the classical studies on neighborhood violence, which took social disorganization as their fundamental analytical frame (Sampson and Groves, 1989; Bursik, 1988). Similarly, earlier studies conducted by the Chicago School also hinted about adjustment problems which migrants faced in urban environments.

In addition to residential instability and population heterogeneity, the spatial characteristics of Baghbanpura were perceived to be an important factor in escalating criminal violence. Moreover, a lack of public spaces for community interaction was found to have weakened social control in both Baghbanpura and Dharampura. Previous studies on urban crimes and informal territorial control also had similar results where difference in spatial characteristics

between neighborhoods accounted for variations in violence among them (Greenberg, et al., 1982; Morenoff and Sampson, 1997; Morenoff, et al., 2001).

Neighborhoods' Capacity of Social Control

Although level of interaction among the community residents had undergone change in both neighborhoods: the ability to act collectively in order to prevent violence was found to be high. People in Dharampura were mostly native residents of their area and they enjoyed a high level of mutual trust. Social capital in Baghbanpura was also high, but the spatial dynamics of the area and other factors such as rural-urban migrants seemed to hamper the residents' ability to control violence. Baghbanpura was perceived to have undergone extensive expansion and many new housing schemes had been developed. The reason cited for this expansion was the increasing population in which the younger generation was not able to live in the small houses of their parents. Furthermore, the establishment of new industrial units along the boundary of Baghbanpura had attracted people from other areas to settle there. On the other hand, Dharampura was not reported to have expanded geographically to a similar extent.

Despite this variation, both neighborhoods' residents were able to perform collective action in emergency situations, despite the low frequency of regular ties. It was also noted that the role of community elders in conflict resolution had decreased over time but it still remained an important aspect of peace building in neighborhoods.

A security guard from Baghbanpura said:

"People interrogate any stranger coming into our area. Our community is very conservative and does not allow outsiders to roam in our neighborhoods. This strategy is very useful in controlling crime and I support it."

Compared with Baghbanpura, social capital in Dharampura was perceived to be higher. A significant majority of the interviewees assured that they had trust in their neighbors and they were always ready to help each other in difficult situations. Several interviewees in Dharampura referred to the significance of informal strategies for crime control. Moreover, it was found that social networking between residents of Dharampura was high and people generally knew other residents.

A barber from Dharampura said:

"Elders in the community intervene in the event of a quarrel between the neighborhood's residents. With their intervention, many conflicts are readily resolved since people respect the elderly and their decision is considered binding over conflicting parties."

It was noted that reporting to the police was not common in either neighborhood. Only heinous crimes were reported to the police, whereas routine conflicts were resolved at the local level. Thus, informal means of social control were central to crime prevention in these neighborhoods. Vigilance of neighborhoods by the residents was common but in Baghbanpura, the rapid expansion of the area and the arrival of new immigrants reduced its effectiveness. On the other hand, the population in Dharampura was relatively static, which facilitated a high level of informal social control. Nonetheless, most of the interviewees from both neighborhoods expressed concern about the depletion of cultural resources that could prevent violence.

A local police officer from Baghbanpura said:

"The community policing concept could not be implemented properly in Lahore. The way our communities are integrated through cultural ties, I believe that institutionalizing community vigilance through community policing can prove to be very effective for crime control."

Although the patterns of interaction between the community members have changed, social capital remains an important element of life in these neighborhoods. Since residents have lived in these neighbourhoods for generations, they have established networks and there is a high level of trust amongst them. Nonetheless, due to lower day-to-day social interaction among residents, the ability to form groups is perceived to be low. In this study, the interviewees attributed low social cohesion to broader lifestyle changes occurring across the country.

The findings of this research suggest that although social cohesion is low, neighborhood residents share trust and values to act on behalf of community in cases of crime. Previous studies have referred this capacity of community as 'collective efficacy' in which collective action is performed by residents despite weak social ties. In this study, however, such collective actions were unorganized and perceived to be in decline. Some instances were recorded in this study where collective action by residents was found to discriminate against minority members in the neighborhood. This aspect

of social capital has been dealt with in a study where the negative effects of social networking have been denoted as 'perverse social capital'.

Vigilantism as a Product of Ineffectiveness of Legal Institutions

The findings revealed that interviewees from both neighborhoods approved of violence in situations where someone was caught committing a crime. An overwhelming majority of interviewees said that they would support public thrashing of criminals so that people would witness the incident and the moral standards of society would be reinforced. When asked whether handing over the accused to the police was a better option, several interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction with the police. They felt that Pakistani legal processes were expensive and time consuming. That was why people were reluctant to report crime and violence to the police.

Interviewees were of the view that criminals were usually not convicted and were often released due to legal lacunas, and sometimes due to a lack of appropriate legislation for certain offences. Some of the interviewees also talked about the rampant corruption in police departments, due to which people no longer trusted the law enforcement agencies to deliver justice. The behavior of police personnel was also criticized by the interviewees as unfriendly, and sometimes insulting. No significant difference was observed in the opinions of people regarding 'street justice' in the two neighborhoods, which suggests increasing legitimization of violence in society as a whole.

A rickshaw driver from Dharampura said:

"If you go to the police station to file a complaint, they will start interrogating you. Sometimes, they declare the complainant as accused. Whatever the case may be, a poor person cannot get relief from our police."

Contrary to general approval of violence as a way to punish criminals, some interviewees, including police officers in both neighborhoods, disapproved of this practice (by the public). However, these interviewees also had mixed opinions when asked about the violence committed by police against criminals.

A local police officer from Dharampura said:

"We (generally) employ scientific methods of investigation...Even if some thrashing is done to extract

evidence, we should not object to a criminal getting deserved treatment."

There have been numerous studies of this phenomenon, which is referred to as 'vigilante justice' or 'vigilante behavior' (Neapolitan, 1987; Asfura-Heim and Espach, 2013; Stan, 2011). More often than not, such behaviors are attributed to the ineffectiveness of law enforcement agencies. In this study poor performance of police was also perceived as a justification for vigilantism by the interviewees.

CONCLUSION

Neighborhood violence is an endemic concern for local governments and societies all over the world. The case of Pakistan is no exception in this regard. Despite strong community structures in Pakistani society, crime statistics show that levels of criminal violence have remained high in recent years. Rapid urbanization and changes in labor market dynamics have also resulted in population heterogeneity; consequently, individual anonymity has increased. If these challenges are not dealt with through effective urban planning and management, they may have serious implications for the proliferation of conflict and violence.

The aim of this study was to understand people's perception of violence, fear of crime, and neighborhood responses. Given the perceived maleficence of the police, local strategies of informal social control were found to be important factors in controlling criminal violence. However, these activities were limited to random vigilance, settlement of disputes within community settings, and surveillance of children's activities. It was noted that the traditional role of community elders in mitigating conflict has also declined. Whether this was due to modernization or other related changes, it was observed that it was more of a transformation in control mechanisms than the actual voidance of them. The effectiveness of these evolving control mechanisms was limited because the state institutions were not able to exploit the community potential in terms of crime and violence prevention. While the government's resolve to maintain law and order is widely questioned, it is important that communities' strategies to prevent violence are streamlined. In this regard, the policing strategies might benefit from being "indigenized" to conform to local cultural values.

Mistrust of law enforcement agencies was reflected in perceived low reporting of crime to the police. Comprehensive reforms within the police are required to restore the confidence of residents. The weakening of

community capital – coupled with the perceived ineffectiveness of the police – may well result in a vacuum in which criminal violence can flourish. It was found that community vigilantism in the target study areas was high, whereas violent behavior also enjoys a considerable degree of legitimacy in certain situations. It was found that the behavior of the police and cumbersome legal procedures were at least partly responsible for vigilantism. It was noticed that fear of crime go hand in hand with the fear of police especially among the vulnerable segments of the society.

In Pakistan, several legislative and administrative measures have been undertaken designed to empower communities to manage their local affairs. Although these measures have been downplayed for a number of political reasons, they would not have produced optimum results even if they were operational. One reason for their ineffectiveness is that the people who became beneficiaries of these measures were perceived as perpetrators of crime by the community. A lack of local ownership of these broadly based measures was thus one of the key factors that contributed to their relative failure. A sense of collective ownership cannot prevail until

community members' interpretation of reality and their subjective opinions about neighborhood dynamics are taken into account.

When investigating the dynamics of metropolitan cities such as Lahore, we should not underestimate the complexity of socio-economic relations and the multiplicity of opportunity structures in which people's lives unfold. Community-level factors and residents' experiences reflect the intricate realities that are most likely to be ignored in mainstream policy agendas. Even comparing two similar neighborhoods in a city, it is concluded that substantial variations in policing strategies are required for effective law enforcement in each neighborhood. A one-off incident in a particular time and space may have a significant bearing on the fear of crime and local perceptions of levels of criminal violence. Contrary to these observations, I found that policing in both the neighborhoods was highly centralized, monotonous and reactive. In order to revitalize a community's sense of safety and to reinforce its confidence in law, police needs to engage with local residents in a democratic manner.

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