

**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.