

Peer Group and Neighborhood Violence Among the Youth: A Case Study of Slum Areas in Islamabad (Pakistan)

Shahid Hussain¹, Mudasar Ali Nadeem², Kiran Ikram³ and Muhammad Umar Zafar⁴

Abstract

Peer groups play an important role in youth behavioral outcomes. Pro-social and anti-social behaviors are determined mainly by the company of peers. The current study aims to find out the part of peer groups in violent tendencies among youth in a risky urban neighborhood of Islamabad. This qualitative study has opted for the "code of the street" theory approach and conducted data from slum areas of Islamabad. Overall data suggests that respondents face aggression and violence in their younger years, from 15 to 20 years. The nature of violence is common, like harassment in the street or slapping a punch at an opponent if he disobeys. Then, the victim tries to take revenge and make a group, along with their peer group, commit a crime because no one stops them at this age. Due to a lack of resources, they have no formal education, skills, or well-paid jobs. So, they choose to work low-paid jobs in the city and experience negative feelings from upper-class people towards them. They spend most of their time in the street with their peers, participate in playing cards for bets, experience aggression and reactions from opponents, and also use drugs because gang members do it all proudly. They consider themselves alienated from the rest of society.

Keywords: Neighborhood Violence, Juvenile Delinquency

Introduction

It has been a century since sociologists have endeavored to ascertain the underlying causes and determinants of adolescent violence. In recent years, there has been a significant surge in the recognition of this phenomenon within the United States, as an increasing body of research has demonstrated that individuals in their youth are responsible for a significant amount of violent criminal activities (Snyder, 2000). Additionally, empirical data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2001) has indicated that young people are more vulnerable to being victims of crime compared to individuals in other age groups. Moreover, empirical evidence from arrests, victimization surveys, and self-report studies consistently demonstrates that the distribution of violence is not random across geographical areas. Conversely, it is mainly concentrated within specific neighborhoods characterized by particular structural attributes, such as elevated poverty levels and housing instability (Markowitz, 2003). It is not unexpected that contemporary endeavors to ascertain the underlying factors contributing to adolescent violence are increasingly directing their attention toward the local context. In 2003, it is unsurprising that contemporary endeavors to

¹M.Phil Scholar, School of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. Email: shahid@soc.qau.edu.pk

²Lecturer in Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad, Chiniot Campus.
Email: mudasaralinadeem@gcuf.edu.pk

³Lecturer in Sociology, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore.

⁴Lecturer in Sociology, Government College University Faisalabad, Chiniot Campus

comprehend the origins of adolescent violence progressively incorporate the community as a pivotal contextual factor (Sampson et al., 2002).

Despite the rising number of studies demonstrating the connection between communities and crime, researchers still lack a thorough understanding of how neighborhoods affect violence. In order to address this oversight, we examine a process that has garnered much attention but has received limited scholarly investigation: engagement within peer networks. It is hypothesized that this mechanism serves as a connection between community structure and the occurrence of teenage violence. This study aims to examine the proposition that adolescents residing in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods are more prone to engaging in violent behavior due to their increased likelihood of associating with violent peer networks. Wilson's influential 1987 research, which established a significant connection between concentrated urban disadvantage and various social issues, is the basis for this hypothesis.

Integrating structural and cultural rationales is necessary to comprehensively explicate the impact of peer influence on neighborhood impacts (Groves & Lynch, 1990; Warner, 2003). Pattillo-McCoy's (1999) study contributes to the findings of Bellair (1997), suggesting that it would need to be more accurate to consider the presence and density of social networks as the primary factor for understanding the variations in crime rates among different neighborhoods. The strengthening of social links between law-abiding residents and individuals inclined towards criminal behavior can be attributed to highly organized neighborhood networks (Wilson, 1987). It implies that a dense population in a particular region does not guarantee reduced criminal behavior. However, the cultural content that these network users display plays a significant role in the emergence of criminal behavior, acting as a notable ecological element. According to Anderson (1990), it is evident that understanding teenage violence requires considering the significant influence of peer-network behavioral characteristics, which surpasses the capacity of local adult networks to maintain social control over young individuals.

As of now, there has been a dearth of studies examining the potential causal relationship between neighborhood structure and adolescent violence, specifically about the influence of exposure to peer network behavior. The categorization of ecological theories into distinct domains, namely structure (e.g., poverty, mobility, and racial composition) and culture (e.g., norms, values, and beliefs), has posed challenges in conducting such assessments. According to Kornhauser (1978), this distinction is articulated most prominently. According to her, the theoretical framework of the structural approach, which emphasizes macro-level causal forces that operate independently of individual actions, contradicts the fundamental principle of the cultural approach, which asserts that individuals' subjective interpretations significantly influence their behavior, even when considering the structural context. It is posited that communities characterized by structural disadvantages, wherein teenagers encounter opportunities to associate with peers involved in violent behavior, exhibit a greater incidence of adolescent violence. It is argued that the presence of a relatively large number of juvenile teenagers in economically disadvantaged communities contributes to the establishment and enforcement of informal street norms that might encourage violent behavior. Meanwhile, adolescents residing in economic zones exhibit a reduced likelihood of encountering peers who display aggression and lack academic motivation. Consequently, they have fewer opportunities to embrace these social norms, attitudes, and actions.

Problem Statement

Difficulties arose in defining a relationship between youth violence and unsafe urban environments. In different countries, juvenile offenders tend to start their criminal careers at

significantly varying ages. An in-depth investigation of juvenile violence and dangerous urban districts is required for the Pakistani study (Hasan & Adil, 2020). It was also essential to look at the values and beliefs that have an impact on the everyday actions and choices of young people who are involved in criminal behavior. Due to the lack of law and order in the country, the urban neighborhood in Pakistan is home to marginalized groups of residents who are subjected to severe living circumstances and constant threats (Kausar & Pinquart, 2016). The main objective of the research was to examine the characteristics that lead youth who are part of violent gangs to settle in vulnerable urban areas.

Knowing how expected criminal behavior is among local youth is crucial because of the severe consequences that might result from it. The phenomenon above has a noticeable effect on the neighborhood, especially in urban areas with a higher crime rate than other parts of the city. These gangs have recruited the remaining population of low-income youth (Higginson et al., 2018). While it may seem fundamental to grasp the notion at hand, conducting in-depth research into the topic of youth gangs and their illegal activities in urban slums is essential to gaining a complete picture of the issue (Spergel, 2007). Although previous research has concentrated on urban street children, the population of slums, with their unique cultural settings and lack of resources, is the subject of this study. The objective of this strategy is to learn more about the causes and conditions that contribute to criminal activity. The purpose of this research is to analyze Anderson's theoretical framework, "The Code of the Street," in depth.

Objectives of the Study

There are the following objectives of the study:

1. To assess causes and motivations behind youth violence in risky urban neighborhoods.
2. To explore what significant determinants play a role in youth violence.
3. To find incentives to crime or join youth crime gangs/groups.

Literature review

According to Anderson's (1999), the prevalence of violence within urban areas can be attributed to the emergence of conflicting societal values. Based on Anderson's firsthand experience in the underprivileged districts of Philadelphia, he argued that the "code of the street" instructs individuals from disadvantaged neighborhoods on alternative methods of acquiring respect. Due to the street code's emphasis on the trait of toughness as a means of gaining and maintaining respect and the recognition that failure to uphold this norm may result in instances of physical aggression, it is particularly significant in the context of this study. In order to demonstrate one's abilities and resilience, it is necessary to engage in assertive displays, even when confronted with slight threats. Anderson's research mainly examined impoverished neighborhoods in Philadelphia. However, other scholars have discovered compelling evidence of comparable subcultural norms in several contexts, including middle-class suburbs and European rural areas. According to Henricksen and Miller (2012), it is evident that ethnographers have identified various subcultural factions within the United Kingdom that endorse the use of violence as a strategy for enhancing one's social status. To the best of our understanding, there needs to be more quantitative research utilizing European populations to examine Anderson's concepts of crime and victimization.

According to Heimer (1997) and McNulty and Bellair (2003), the body of literature suggests a connection between criminal behavior and support for a pro-violence worldview. Scholars have shown a correlation between aggressive or violent conduct and particular notions associated with

the code of the street. These notions include the endorsement of violence as a means to attain respect or ensure personal safety (Berg et al., 2012; Mastuda et al., 2013).

Academic researchers have recently begun to engage in theoretical discussions regarding the association between adopting values associated with a specific code and victimhood. Furthermore, these scholars have undertaken empirical investigations to substantiate these theoretical frameworks using quantitative data. According to McNeeley and Wilcox (2015) and Henson et al. (2010), discussion of target congruence has the potential to influence target congruence, which can have both positive and negative consequences for instances of assault. The implementation of the code of the street may serve to decrease the vulnerability of potential targets, thereby reducing the likelihood of falling victim to criminal activities. The findings of a qualitative investigation indicate that individuals who adhere to street norms perceive such behavior as a means of safeguarding themselves, as it prevents them from being perceived as vulnerable and susceptible to victimization (Anderson, 1999; Brookman et al., 2011). The findings of ethnographic research conducted in South Africa support the notion that the code of the street can serve as a protective mechanism for adolescents, particularly within communities where its use is culturally accepted and anticipated (Lindegaard et al., 2013). According to Baron, Kennedy, and Forde's (2001) study, male street children who had more positive attitudes toward violence also reported experiencing lower levels of victimization.

However, there is evidence from many quantitative studies (Schreck et al., 2012) that contradicts this claim, indicating that possessing such sentiments may increase an individual's susceptibility to becoming a victim of violent crime. According to Stewart et al. (2006), the expression of aggressive principles gives rise to animosity towards individuals and incites revengeful actions from others, hence rendering individuals more susceptible. It is why the code of the street is believed to heighten vulnerability. According to McNeeley and Wilcox (2015b), a correlation exists between adherence to the code of the street and a reduced probability of experiencing burglary or vandalism.

Adolescents residing in urban regions with high crime rates depend on their peer networks as a source of emotional assistance and protection (Anderson, 1999). According to Harding (2009), adolescents who possess robust social networks are less susceptible to adverse consequences stemming from local-level challenges, such as exposure to violence and trauma. Peer relationships can play a crucial role in facilitating young guys' perceptions of their future selves and the strategies required to achieve their goals. It is achieved through providing valuable insights into social cues, guidance on adhering to street "codes," and exposure to various forms of mentorship. The scholarly literature on neighborhood effects commonly categorizes the consequences of peer networks as either positive or negative. There is a prevailing belief that social connections can yield positive outcomes when they are formed with a fellow student who actively engages in school activities and has less attachment to the local community.

According to James & Schulz (2001), establishing friendships with those who have achieved success can serve as a means to access valuable resources and opportunities that can enhance one's immediate and future possibilities. When individuals are immersed in relationships with peers who are perceived as "positive," the presence of social capital, characterized by trust and a sense of shared identity, can be a motivating factor for engaging in positive behavior. According to Portes' (1998) conceptualization, spreading "downward leveling norms" within the same social group is one example of adverse social capital. The presence of peers who exhibit deviant behavior and are affiliated with detrimental social organizations, such as juvenile gangs, can exacerbate the difficulties faced by a kid during their formative years in a socioeconomically deprived locality.

According to specific research, identifying clear boundaries between "positive" and "negative" peer networks can be a challenging task. According to Harding's (2009) research, peer networks commonly consist of individuals who can be classified as both "positive" and "deviant" friends. According to Smith (2008), it is argued that specific individuals throughout their youth maintain distinct social circles due to various factors. Through a case study centered around a young man of Mexican heritage residing in New York, it becomes evident that he adeptly manages to traverse two distinct social and physical environments through the social connections he has cultivated with "deviant" peers from his neighborhood as well as his fellow students at college. Although there is evidence indicating that the association of young men with "deviant" peers can provide a certain level of safeguard against neighborhood violence (Harding, 2009), there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the specific conditions under which young males in Pakistani neighborhoods establish such connections. What is the impact of these ties on their achievements in social and academic environments?

Research Methodology

The examination of epistemological and ontological concerns holds significant importance in the conduct of any study (Creswell, 2012). The theoretical framework of this study is rooted in nominalism, an ontological perspective arguing that human beings construct reality and lack an objective, universally applicable existence. In order to comprehend the construction of reality, it is essential for a researcher to initially grasp the intended significance behind individuals' actions and behaviors (Bryman, 2008). This study employs an anti-positivist interpretive approach in order to comprehend the researchers' acquisition of information. The researchers showed a greater inclination towards exploring the youth encounters with violence as opposed to focusing just on the statistical data about violence within these communities.

Qualitative research techniques were employed to collect and analyze data to investigate youth violence in risky urban neighborhoods. For data collection, semi-structured interviews were taken with youth ages 15 and 24. The selection of these communities was based on their characteristics of being densely populated urban areas with high levels of violent crime, a prevalence of unemployed young individuals, and a state of social disorder. According to the 2017 Crime Statistics Report, there is a notable increase in the incidence of criminal activities inside disadvantaged urban regions, exemplified by Liyari, Bari Imam, and the slum neighborhoods of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Another reason for contributing to the selecting of these neighborhoods was their relatively lower levels of social control, characterized by reduced community monitoring and regulation. Furthermore, these areas had narrower streets, a higher concentration of unemployed youth, and a pronounced prevalence of drug misuse.

The selection of interviewees was utterly random, and the researcher used the snowball sampling technique to gather people for interviews. Since semi-structured interviews were taken, the interviewees were given total freedom to lead the discussion around the problems and issues that they would find relevant to study. Before the interviews, a proper briefing about the research, its possible impacts, and research interview ethics was given. The interviewees were given consent to share their answers for research. The research universe of the study was the slum areas of F-6 and G-8 Islamabad. Sixteen in-depth interviews were conducted with the voluntary participants to get their insights to understand the meanings they attached to their street violence activities. The duration of interviews varies between 30 and 50 minutes each. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis. The researcher followed every research ethics during the research process.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Code of Street Theory

Cities have different parts, and their masses vary accordingly. Inner cities are called cores, and their peripheries develop. So, the masses living styles also vary according to area. Differential lifestyles lead to inequality, and crime is one of the leading perspectives that take shape under specific circumstances. Lack of jobs, stigma of race, drug use, and trafficking factors developed a new identity of risky urban neighborhoods that were considered "no-go areas" or slums in the cities (Anderson, 1999).

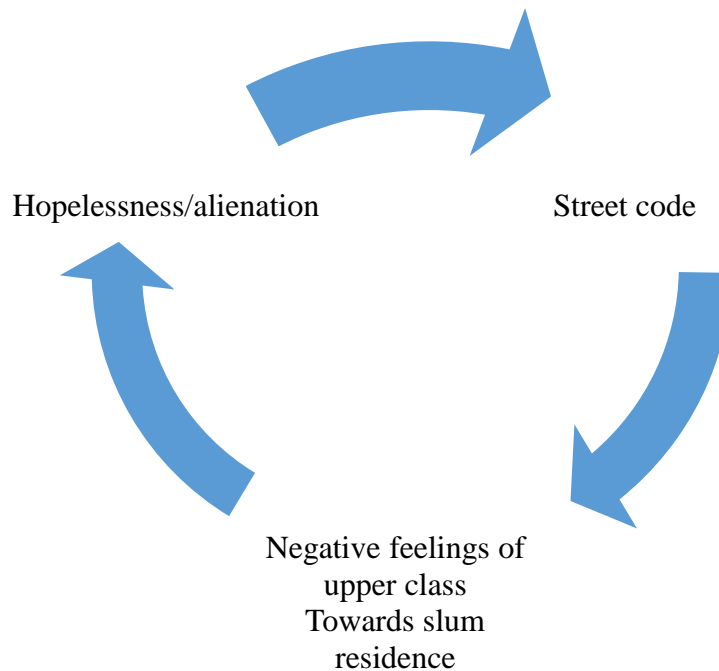
The theoretical framework known as the Code of the Street, which Anderson first proposed in 1999, is the foundation for the study's conceptual framework and analytical approach. Two slang terms were proposed: "decent" and "street." The embodiment of the middle-class ethos of decency is demonstrated by individuals who diligently labor, prioritize the well-being of their families, and impart upon their offspring the necessary proficiencies for prosperous integration into the labor force. However, the informal norms, confrontational conduct, and lack of confidence prevalent in metropolitan street environments stand in stark opposition to this aspirational standard. Individuals experiencing homelessness exhibit a restricted understanding of the principles of respecting authority and adhering to legal regulations in comparison to individuals who are considered reputable members of society. Based on existing scholarly sources, the street is characterized by a lack of adherence to legal norms, a disregard for social conventions, and a hostile environment. Both social structures have implications for urban residents and the broader community, albeit with unique consequences.

Based on the theory, individuals who identify as part of "the street" perceive themselves as morally upright and believe others possess similar qualities. Conversely, those considered decent by societal standards perceive the same individuals as part of "the street" and express disapproval towards them. The two surveys exhibited stark dissimilarities in their inherent traits and manner of existence. Due to how they were conditioned, the dissimilarity was pronounced. Both subjects had vertical orientations, although their paths diverged due to distinct priorities about decency, respect, and financial resources. Consequently, the homeless children were instructed to respond to and imitate the behaviors of their peers, thereby acquiring a sense of self-worth during this endeavor. Younger toddlers commonly observe and imitate the use of offensive language and impolite gestures exhibited by older children engaged in conflicts.

Another aspect of the unspoken norms within urban environments pertained to how individuals conveyed their identities through nonverbal cues and the presence of defensive paraphernalia. Girls' behavior differs from that of boys due to their desire to make a favorable impression on their male partners. As a result, the general public gave much significance to appearances and hearsay. According to prevailing beliefs, individuals in the subject group exhibited infrequent utilization of firearms. They placed a high emphasis on their protection, akin to the behavior commonly associated with urban youth. Ultimately, they managed to curtail their actions and egotism by establishing a dissent-driven cultural framework. The slums of Islamabad exhibit a comparable depiction from diverse perspectives. Despite having a shared moral compass and facing similar environmental and social forces, they made the deliberate choice to cultivate unique civilizations while simultaneously upholding inadequate standards of living. The lack of street etiquette and decorum was evident in the F7 neighborhood of Islamabad and its surrounding slums. Adolescents were increasingly turning to acts of violence as a strategy to enhance their socioeconomic status. The subsequent cyclic pattern exemplifies the theoretical foundations of the research, as it has been

modified to suit the circumstances in Pakistan, particularly inside the city of Islamabad and its impoverished residential areas.

Figure 1 Code of the Street Theory Framework



From the above theoretical discussion, the vicious cycle describes how the code of the street influences street children who feel pessimistic about the upper class, consider themselves alienated from society, and become victims of hopelessness. First, there is the subject orientation in the street, and there are different ways of respecting and being decent to the street. They behave and react differently; they even answer their elders or young children with violent and aggressive informal values. It is fundamental for the street to protect themselves from the opposite class as they vary from area to area and region to region worldwide. In Pakistan, there is a caste-based class structure. In Islamabad, specifically, there is a differential between the middle- or high-paid class and the low-paid jobs working group. These low-paid working-class people live in miserable conditions in slum areas of the city that emerged rapidly within a few years in the core and peripheries of the city.

They reside in slums because of their unaffordability and low-paying jobs. They use drugs because of their different religion from the majority in the city and country, and they are also involved in drug trafficking to increase their living standards and achieve their luxury goals in life. Their shortsightedness and luxury, for a moment, make them violent and different.

Results and Analysis

Risky Urban Neighborhood Environment: Paths of Hopelessness

It is said that “where people live, they fit there, and their needs are according to their life standard.” Data revealed that life in slum areas was not as good as life in urban areas. Findings showed that

people lived in miserable conditions because they had no clean water to drink, no clothes to wear, and no pillow to keep their heads in a soothing place. Keeping all this in mind, they were happy because they believed their Lord had assigned them that place to live, and they had no issue, but their problem should be tackled in an actual sense.

Security was one of the primary ingredients needed to keep peace in society. Based on the findings, there needed to be a sense of security. People have made their own rules and laws. Whatever they want, they do it without any hindrance. In cases where police get involved in their clashes, they are dealt out of the system because they believe that the police regard them as not actual members of society. So that thing did not create fear about law enforcement agencies, and they did whatever they wanted. The residents of the slum areas had no property rights. They considered illegal residents in the town.

“I filed the case in the court regarding the rights of national identity card, but the court refused my request and issued the judgment that as we are living illegally in the slum, we have no rights for identity” (Respondent A).

Data explains that in slum areas, children are away from education because their parents compel them to beg and earn money for their recreation and household expenses. These beggars have been found on running roads, at signal spots, or knocking on doors. The earnings were wasted by their male parents on bats because their parents wanted to earn easy money this way.

All problems happened in slum areas due to a lack of education. During data collection, it was found that many children were not going to school because there were a smaller number of schools available. That is why children are deprived of these blessings. They needed more resources in this regard.

According to the data, there was no drainage system in slum areas; people excreted their flash openly, or they made holes in which they released their flesh, which was the cause of the smell and very heinous diseases in the slum areas. According to the findings, health issues were one of the most significant issues in the slum areas. Most of the respondents complained that they had no facilities in those areas in order to maintain health issues. They had to cover miles of distance; some of them had the potential to reach such expensive health facilities, and some of them were poor, whose income was only hand-to-mouth. So, they could not afford expensive treatments in private and distant areas. Data revealed that HIV and hepatitis are common diseases among the people in slum areas; it was because people were addicted to drugs that caused various diseases among them.

In the slum areas, there was no proper electric system. Data revealed that they did not have an electricity facility. So, anyone pays heed to this issue. In slum areas, there was no proper wiring channel; wires were scattered on the roads. People stole those wires and sold them in urban areas to fill their material needs. According to the data, corrupt police officers paid much attention to these areas and tried to use the people of slum areas because they were beneficial in order to make money. Police officers were persuading them to sell drugs and engage in illegal activities like mobile snatching. These people were regarded as neglected. Data showed these areas were used as sex trading areas, and drugs were freely available because the state and police were not in this sense. In these areas, prostitution was at its peak, and police officers received money to let it be as they were doing. Data revealed that police arrest people from slum areas for tiny crimes such as drug addiction and keeping illegal weapons and charge them a high penalty for those who indulge in the worst forms of crime and illegal acts.

Peer Group, Drugs and Violence on Street

Data reveals that most of the youth in slum areas were drug addicts. It was because there were no recreational places or activities that reduced their boredom or laziness after spending the whole day at work in the evening. Exposure to addicted peers is also a significant reason for the higher rate of drug abuse. They bought drugs from their day jobs and used them as agents of recreation. Sometimes, this recreation turned to clashes because, in that situation, people were not in a state of mind to think better. In this situation, people in slums always kept negative ideas and thoughts that caused clashes.

“I was impressed by movie heroes and street gangs who live in a stylish way and enjoy the luxuries of life, as they had their girlfriends and access to drugs easily, and this is a pleasure for me. So that’s why I started to use drugs” (Respondent B)

Data demonstrated that in slum areas, male household members mainly did not earn, and they depended on the rest of their family earnings. Their children and women earned, and they handed over that earning amount to their male-dominated member of the house, and he spent that money on foolish things like drugs.

Social Network: Linkages

According to the findings, there were two groups in every slum area: one supported a sense of togetherness, and the other supported rebellious feelings. Mostly, they could have been better at showing behavior, and in these areas, behavior was a private thing, and people were very reluctant to show it to any foreigner. It was limited at the family level; they showed only positive behavior to their family members; to others, it was odd for them. In slum areas, most youngsters spent their time on the streets because the situation of their homes was not satisfactory. Many of the youngsters worked outside the slum area; some of them were conductors, drivers, cooks in restaurants, sweepers, and vehicle cleaners. That is why the upper class neglected them by not making them sit with them or eating something with them. After their work, they turned to their respective homes in slum areas. The reason, according to the findings of spending time on the streets, is that society does not take them as regular members of a healthy society. They loved to spend their time in the streets. Spending their time in the streets caused many problems, some of the reasons are here according to the data. According to the respondent:

“Drug addiction and playing cards are the most common activities on our street that contribute to our personality development, and we use abusive language and show anger that give us respect among our community members. In my experience, we have made mistakes, and our generation must not repeat them, and they must get education and the opportunity to work in nice places like our rest of the city areas are doing.” (Respondent AQ).

Data revealed that most of the people in the streets in slum areas were jobless, and they almost spent their time in the streets. When those who worked outside returned to their homes after a dull time, they enjoyed the streets, talking about the women they saw the whole day. They feel pleasure when they talk about women, and they include all the gossip in their experience, which they do all day. People in slum areas behaved poorly while sitting in the streets; they engaged in mischievous activities that irritated their surroundings. One thing that the respondent emphasized was that they sit in groups and put an eye on every passing girl by them. They sang songs in the streets that

irritated others. These things sometimes create clashes between groups. “Workless hands find work for idle hands.” So, the people who had nothing to do almost fell victim to those activities, which did not apply to a healthy society, so this was leisure time in slum areas. According to the data, people in slum areas have maintained groups, and in their leisure time, they walk in the streets, and their groups look like gangs. In this way, they created harassment among people.

Peer Groups: The Appearance of Gangs

Our findings suggest that most of the street or town groups, whom we called gangs, purely emerged from slum areas. Teenagers who remain absent from school become part of the gangs. That was an alarming situation for a healthy society. In the slums of Islamabad, the emergence of gangs was widespread. When someone was not going to school, there were more chances he would become part of a gang in the town. Many boys were excited to be part of the gang, but ultimately, they faced prison. Residents of slum areas have many problems; poverty is one of them, which leads them to join gangs and commit crimes. These sorts of things like gangs, crime, and drugs were on the peripheries of slums, not in the central part of the slums, as we can observe.

“I was looking for work in my childhood at a workshop, but no one was ready to offer me a job. The gang of “BABA” knew the situation, so he offered me to join the gang, but I refused the offer because I knew they would use me and I would not be able to earn money. They tortured me physically and used abusive language all the time when I passed them in the street because gang members always remain present in the street. Ultimately, I joined the group and started dealing with drugs. Therefore, I also became drug addicted at that time and spent most of the time in the streets or going into neighborhood for drug trafficking. I have earned the money from drugs and spend it on making girlfriends” (Respondent C).

In the slum areas, some sort of activity still happened in the town, like smoking, drug usage, and sexual harassment within the peer groups.

“I was also a victim of sexual harassment. I was really addicted to movies and tried to find some place where I could enjoy them with friends. Once I was invited by some friends of the town to watch a movie at one of the friend’s places where they insisted I drink alcohol, which ended up being sexual harassment.” (Respondent CA).

Resentment Towards Upper Social Mobility

During the course of data collection, it was also discovered that, despite having ambitions of social mobility, many of the residents of these slums have an inner resentment towards the class hierarchies that are placed above them.

“When I was young, I always wanted to get out of this place. I wanted to have a home away from this, but later, when I grew up, I realized I was unable to get out of here. This is my life.” (Respondent D)

“I fancy big houses and big cars. I hate the people who live in those big houses and drive those big cars. It makes me feel very angry when I see them.” (Respondent DK)

It shows an apparent resentment towards any upper-class structure or the person belonging to that class structure. The reason behind this can be derived from the circumstances of the slums and comparing them with the rest of society. Anderson (1999), in his theory, also focused on this. According to Anderson, the resentment towards class is later turned into hopelessness. It is this similar anger that is channeled into criminal attitudes and behaviors. Such anger and rage towards a decent member of society makes one want to hurt it and commit a crime. Such behaviors can also be triggered and justified using drugs, in which the sense of self-judgment of a person is already impaired.

Discussion

During this research, many problems came under observation and were analyzed. The gang structure in these slums is not that simple. It is built by not one individual who may or may not have any actual criminal motive, but the street structure and life surrounded by slums are the major causes of such violence and crime. Different factors, like peer pressure in the form of gang structures, social capital in the form of violent attitudes and behaviors, and resentment for the upper class, are the significant causes of violence and youth problems in the slums of Islamabad under study. Street life is different from the outer world because there were no facilities in the town due to illegal settlement and land disputes with authorities and residents, so the government did not entertain the households as the rest of the city residents were enjoying basic facilities. Poverty was the main factor in living in miserable conditions, so they became criminals at a young age and tried to live their lives with their own rules, which sometimes hurt neighborhood residents (Shong et al., 2018). They were choosing to work as gang members and commit crimes like mobile snatching, ransoming, and threatening the residents for money to meet their basic needs in daily life.

The nature of violence was almost common in all case studies. Jones et al. (2012) illustrated that abusive language, the exchange of harsh words, the use of knives during fights, showing guns, slaps and punches by gangs, and harassment in the streets were the most common ways in the streets. People reacted with aggression and tried to take revenge in cases of violence in the streets. There was a smaller number of people who preferred to have guns for enjoyment but did not intend to use them for crime. The primary purpose of having a gun is enjoyment and luxury. Some were also claimed to have guns, which gave encouragement and dominance in the town over the rest of their fellows and friends. People in slum areas think negatively about the neighborhoods because they are affluent, have administrative power, and enjoy all facilities. This difference in perception gave different directions, but now, thinking has changed among the new generation because of media advocacy about fundamental rights. They were sending children to school, but they could not compete due to a lack of skills as their neighborhood residents were enjoying better facilities. The current study has followed the Code of the Street Theory (Anderson, 1999) to observe respondents in a slum area of Islamabad in the central part of the city. The slum was an encroachment, but due to political reasons, they have not evacuated the town yet from the central area of the city. Youths experienced violence at an early age because they observed their young mates in the streets and were trying to adopt their way of communicating and their behaviors as well (Baron, 2004). The attitude of youth developed under the norms of their fellows, which became the code of the street, opposite to that of the middle class, who followed their dreams to be successful in their lives with a positive attitude. The theory also suggested that youth developed and followed the codes, and their codes differed from those of other segments of the population. The difference in daily life with perspectives of their codes created a negative attitude between

two opposite groups because "being positive" means favorable for the middle-class population. At the same time, it harmed other groups in the same geographical settlement, those who lived in slums. So, this difference was creating negativity for each other, and theory suggests the same thing. Under this miserable condition, hopelessness and poverty were the fundamental factors that created separation between two social groups, as it was the fact that slum residents were poorer than the rest of the population that created socioeconomic differences and ultimately had an impact on their daily lives.

Similarly, the findings of the current study were based on the existing literature, as Stoddard et al. (2011) wrote in their article, that poverty and the element of hopelessness were the core issues that gave rise to violence and intolerance in society. Poverty compels a person to commit an offense. During data collection, it was found out during interviews that the attitude of street boys was observed in the streets when they were getting together daily to play cards. The available literature reviewed also concurred with the findings that they discussed the rest of the boys and their worth in the town and sometimes raised voices behind the girls on the corners of the street and harassed them. There was a significant use of hashish cigarettes in the streets among young people and elders. That was considered a good thing while playing cards with bets as standard. Middle-class families discouraged those activities and prohibited smoking or betting on cards. Not only young or younger boys but elders, middle-aged people, and drug addicts also spent their whole day in the street. Street areas became their central part of activities. So, they used the area like a regular city market, but the difference is that it needed to be more populated and developed. Similarly, the findings of the current study were based on the existing literature (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994).

Insecurity of settlement, having no equal opportunities, and low-paid jobs resulted in different lifestyles with different norms. These factors were pushing a specific population towards violence and crime to meet necessities and for pleasure as well. Therefore, slum residents developed their living style with different norms and a hateful mindset. Results suggested that youth crime or their criminal attitude is influenced by their street gangs, movies, and friends in the street. According to the sample population in the case studies, the majority of them faced violence in younger age groups from 15–20 years, while their reactions developed as they observed the rest of the street fellows in the town. The main reason behind attitudinal change was survival in the street. Otherwise, they become victims of violence. As per the rule "survival of the fittest," they joined the gangs in the streets at their younger ages. They started smoking openly without hesitating, as observed in middle-class families, playing cards the whole day near the market area and harassing pedestrians by using abusive language.

Conclusion

This study tried to find the causal link between violence among youth (15–29 years of age), peer pressure, social capital, and their neighborhood. Through the course of many interviews and their analysis, it was found that the living conditions of the slums have a direct impact on how a young person can get caught up in a violent act or series of acts. The already-present social structure allows gangs to not only hire people to have an identity but also cause violence in any case of retaliation from them. The social structure is formed to have social pressure where drugs and violence have become the norm of life. Despite any personal effort to stay away from it (as mentioned by the interviewee), peer pressure may instigate violence in oneself to get involved in a gang just to have social capital. The sociological structuration of these slums supports any escape from the lives of people living in them. It may be in the form of drug abuse, which not only instigates violence but is also the cause of many other criminal activities and unhealthy lifestyles.

It also shields them from resentment towards the decent class of society and brings feelings of hopelessness and alienation.

Overall, respondents faced aggression and violence in their younger ages, from 15 to 29 years old. The nature of violence was familiar, like harassment in the street, slapping punches to the opponent if he disobeyed the powerful. Then, the victim tried to take revenge and become part of the group and commit crimes at younger ages because no one stopped them at this age. Due to a lack of resources, they had no formal education, skills, or well-paid jobs, so they chose to work low-paid jobs in the city, and they were experiencing negative feelings from upper-class residents towards them. They spent almost all their time in the street and participated in play-card bets, experienced aggression and reactions from their opponents, and also used drugs because the gang's members did it all proudly. They considered themselves alienated from the rest of society but were excited to compete if the government would provide all facilities. Uneducated people and unemployment are the leading causes of this living style, which is why slum residents were helpless in miserable conditions. Lack of ownership from the government side was also a reason for not accessing the facilities and being forced to commit crimes in town and urban neighborhoods for their necessities and short-term luxury. The influence of media content, such as Bollywood movies, because street code is also followed. Youths were impressed by filmy heroes and tried to act like them. The glamorous life of a hero influenced emotions, and boys were trying to harass girls sexually. While heroic fighting was also a dream for youth, sometimes they tried in real life during the fight with their fellows by using the same tricks. There is a dire need for time to uplift the structure of the necessities of life in these slums and provide the youth with alternatives about how to spend their leisure time. It is also essential for these people to have primary education and health facilities readily available to them so they may have a chance to live in peace.

Nevertheless, there are certain limitations associated with this research. Initially, the study did not investigate the instances of violence experienced by women residing in poorer neighborhoods due to cultural and societal obstacles. More research needs to be done on how gender affects how people experience violence in these places because most of the victims are women. Furthermore, the findings presented below are derived from in-depth interviews and evidence provided by individuals who actively participated in acts of violence within their communities. A future study could also include the thoughts of people who live in the area, work at the school, are community leaders, and are police officers to get a complete picture of the setting. This study's scope was constrained since it exclusively examined regions near Pakistan's primary urban center. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the patterns and trends of juvenile delinquency within many cultural contexts and urban neighborhoods, doing a comparative analysis proves to be a more advantageous approach.

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