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YOUTH VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN: THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

Abstract

Pakistan has been facing a high level of violence over the decades. Although a paucity of knowledge on this issue in Pakistan is observed, this essay nonetheless outlines the documented patterns of street-youth violence: its causes, perpetrators and the socio-cultural and political constructs of the phenomenon. The wide gap in both the empirical and theoretical knowledge of the 'North and South' of the intellectual global world impedes the researchers of the indigenous social problems to construct a comprehensive sociological perspective on the street-youth violence that exists in this region.

Keywords: Youth violence, social structure, culture of violence, Pakistan

Przemoc wśród młodzieży w Pakistanie: struktura społeczna a kultura przemocy Streszczenie

W Pakistanie od dziesięcioleci odnotowuje się wysokie wskaźniki przemocy. Brak dostatecznej wiedzy na temat tego zjawiska w Pakistanie. Niemniej jednak niniejsze opracowanie stara się pokazać udokumentowane schematy przemocy ulicznej wśród

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młodych: jej przyczyny, sprawców a także konstrukty społeczno-kulturowe oraz polityczne tego zjawiska. Głęboki rozdział między wiedzą empiryczną i teoretyczną „Północy i Południa” w zglobalizowanym świecie intelektu stanowi dla badaczy miejscowych problemów społecznych przeszkodę w budowaniu kompleksowego socjologicznego spojrzenia na przemoc uliczną wśród młodych w tym regionie.

Słowa kluczowe: przemoc wśród młodzieży, struktura społeczna, kultura przemocy, Pakistan

1. Background

Pakistan is considered to be one of the most multi-cultural and polarized societies due to its geo-political position and participation in proxy wars and as a potentially fertile land for violent youth (Haleem 2003, Marri et al. 2006). Medico-legal studies highlight the plight of the violence in Pakistan. In Peshawar, 62% of violent acts are committed by male youths between the ages 20–39 years (Marri et al. 2006). Some reports indicate a higher level of violence of 74% among males between 20–40 years of age in Karachi, according to the incidents which were reported in selected hospitals of Karachi (Chotani, Razzak, and Luby 2002). A study (Farooq et al 2010) portrays the situation as being even worse, where the victims were between ages 16–45 years (in 77% incidents) that were reported in Rawalpindi hospitals. The male youths involved in these violent acts were aged between 16–20 years (41%). Geo T.V. (electronic media) reports indicate that the male suicide bombers in Pakistan were aged between 16–24 years. They were trained by the extremist elements and indiscriminately used against the security forces.

There are studies available on the issue of youth violence in the developing and developed world (Imbusch, Misse and Carrión 2011 and Zdun 2012). For instance Imbusch, Misse and Carrión (2011) documented the trends of youth violence in Latin America. The youth have a specific culture and associate themselves with the local gangs. These gangs are involved in drug trafficking, smuggling and are art of the local culture. The literature on violence reveals global patterns of this phenomenon: poverty, urbanization and inequalities.

Anderson's (1998) work on the Chicago gangs and Zdun's (2012) studies in Germany and Russia are examples of the de-

veloped-world youth violence where the youth has a specific culture. So far, the research team was unable to develop any linkage of the youth with the political parties and violence among members of the youth. While looking at the on-going situation in the country, one may term Pakistan as a violent country that may have an equal level and intensity of violence as there is in Latin America. However, there are no detailed studies on the issue of the youth violence in South Asia (Wilke, Hippler and Zakar 2011).

Violence carried out by youths is all the more alarming because the country has one of the highest youth populations in the world. Pakistan has 36 million youths (ages 20–24 years) and 58 million below 15 years of age, which counts for 60% youth of the whole population (Yusuf 2008). Among them, almost 70,000 children are ‘on the streets’ (Iqbal 2008), and about an equal number of them are ‘off the streets’, but are vulnerable to joining the violent youth in the near future due to ever-deteriorating socio-economic and political conditions in Pakistan.

Although Pakistan is one of the most strict, family-controlled societies, it shares a high level of different kinds of violence. Collective or group violence is common due to political, ethnic, religious and sectarian segregation. The major precursors for violence among youth are poverty, illiteracy, inequality and limited opportunities of positive, social interaction (such as education, employment and sports). Concentrated urbanization has further deteriorated the situation in the society. Structural conditions and normative structures breed the violence (Lindholm 1981). Altogether, these factors lead towards the ‘violent culture’, not only among youths, but adults as well. This violent culture generates a vicious cycle of problems that victimizes almost everyone in Pakistani society, either directly or indirectly. In particular, the youths become prone to accelerating the violence for the benefit of the handlers sitting behind the scenes who control them through various means to meet their vested interests.

In this socio-cultural milieu, ‘honour violence’ (Nasrullah, Haqqi and Cummings 2009), a conservative approach, the ‘Very Important Persons’ (VIPs) culture, traditional, authoritarian dominance, egalitarianism and the threat of ethnic dominance are factors that

have all generated different layers of violence. As well, egalitarian traditions are deep-rooted in the society. These triggering factors exacerbate the political, ethnic and sectarian violence (Wright Jr. 1991, Rahman 1995, Haleem 2003 and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Report 1999). Furthermore, the multiple sectarian interpretations of religion fuel violent behaviour among youth. Feudalism, the political elite (politicians who maintain only their vested interests), the clergy, vehement bureaucratic structures, drug mafias, external interventions and the 'cold war' have also contributed to accelerating the violence that occurs in Pakistan.

Many historical aspects also add to the list of factors that breed violence. The independence of the country itself is based on violent incidents (Tambiah 1990). In 1947, refugees from the 'Indian part' of the subcontinent experienced a great deal of violence. Three regular wars with India and on-going proxy wars between the two neighbours (India and Pakistan) have contributed to the violence (Wright, Jr. 1991). Proxy groups among neighbouring countries (who use youth through different tactics) are a permanent threat.

Additionally, the 'cold war' of the 1980's that was waged in the name of Jihad brought the Kalashnikov culture, drugs, mafias and religious fanaticism to Pakistan and generated sectarian divisions within the country. Furthermore, the 4 to 6 million Afghan refugees who have taken up residence here have also created many problems since 1980. Recently, the 'war on terror' fuelled the current wave of intolerant and extremist behaviour in Pakistan (Yusuf 2008). As a result, the 3 million internally-displaced refugees who fled due to 'Talibanization' added to the miseries of the people in 2009 in the north-western parts of Pakistan. Virtually, no one escapes either from domestic violence or violence on or off the streets. This is just a glimpse of the violence which has been spreading on a large scale throughout Pakistan.

In the following paragraphs, a brief but broader profile of youth violence will be presented in an attempt to understand why things are the way they are. Nonetheless, there is no profound research available on the issue of youth violence in Pakistan (Wilke, Hippler and Zakar 2011).

2. Research Question

Since the ‘birth’ of Pakistan, it has been society that has been the victim of violence. What is the role of colonialism, trans-national politics and the ‘cold war’ in promoting the violence in Pakistan? Particularly, it is interesting to know the dynamics and structure of the youth violence in Pakistan. Is youth violence breeding a culture of violence (see Imbusch, Misse and Carrión 2011: 94)?

3. Colonialism, Trans-National Politics, the ‘Cold War’ and Violence in Pakistan

3.1. Violence in Pakistan: Historical Residues

Inter-related historical, political and cultural factors have created the culture of the violence in Pakistan. Historical factors, beginning with the long struggle of indigenous natives against the colonial power for liberation and the division of the subcontinent into two separate, autonomous nations (Pakistan and India) was a deliberate act of mollification on behalf of the British that left behind the territory of Kashmir as a bone of contention and marked the beginning of a long period of brutality that has lasted for generations among the people of the subcontinent. The British even used their power to fuel communal violence before the independence of the two neighbours in order to maintain Britain’s colonial legacy which was labelled as a ‘divide and rule’ policy. However, it was unable to maintain its regime. Following independence in 1947, the liberation movement of Kashmir turned into Jihadi extremism in the 1980’s. The interplay of Pakistan’s power elite, American neo-colonialism and the UN’s inability to solve the Kashmir issue, even after many decades, have all fuelled the constant violence. The majority of the people brought up in the region were presented with violent extremism under the guise of the so-called ‘noble cause of Jihad’ and it is the youth who, due to strong ties of kinship, are more vulnerable practically carrying out the fascinating idea of righteousness by saving and protecting their relatives in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

The youths were mobilized, motivated and trained by Pakistan, under the direction of the U.S.A. and western allies, especially for the Jihad against the U.S.S.R. in the 1980's. The trained soldiers were called "Mujahedeen", the freedom fighters and the 'soldiers of Islam', fighting against the communist regimes in Afghanistan and in central Asia. Nonetheless, the intentions of the Pak-U.S. proprietors of war made access to weapons so easy that one could find these killing machines on almost every street corner near the border of Afghanistan. The mushrooming of *Madrasshas* (religious schools) was encouraged to provide a nursery for the so-called freedom fighters along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Those who misused the youth for political purposes could never realized that they were preparing a 'volcano of violence' which would erupt some years later.

Once the U.S.S.R. was dismantled, these prepared 'soldiers of Islam' and 'saviours' of Afghanistan spread around the country, providing themselves as easy targets for different manipulators. This army of Islamic soldiers was split into different groups, attracted by different 'lollipops of noble missions'—some to fight against heresies against their belief systems and some to fight for their ethnic identity. Western patrons of these soldiers left them and their training camps alone in Pakistan along the Pak-Afghan border. These armies of soldiers recruited the youth in order to extend their agenda of Jihad. However, these militants started fighting amongst each other in a bid to control resources and were divided along the lines of ethnic and religious factions. This scenario generated a culture of intolerance and extremism in Pakistan.

After '9/11', Pakistan turned against the 'extremist forces' by joining the global alliance against the 'war on terror'. This u-turn in the state policy of Pakistan generated a never-ending new wave of violence. Those who were once called "mujahedeen" were termed as "terrorists" and Pakistan and the U.S.A. began to arrest, kill or extradite them from Pakistan. Consequently, they had to hide within the mainstream society. Peshawar, Karachi and other metropolitan cities have been on the receiving end of this wave of violence from 2001 until today.

Thus, colonialism, trans-national politics and the 'cold war' have shaped the culture of violence in Pakistan and sown the seed of violence. The youth of the contemporary period is the victim of the

above-mentioned factors. The Pakistani youth has no choice to avoid the wave of intolerance and extremism but has to face the hard-core reality. The stated socio-historical conditions have shaped the fate of the local youth and developed the local violent culture of Pakistan.

3.2. Violence in Pakistan: A Latent Function

Extremist ideas have spread to a proportional segment of the society since the 1980's and now they seem to be a 'latent function' (Merton 1957) of the society. This segment of society started youth-training programmes to protect their religion and sect (Haleem 2003 and the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Report 1999). Elders and the clergy 'advise' the youth on how they can protect their sect or religion. Some sectarian organizations operate special sessions to 'show off' their power to the opponents. In reciprocity, the opponent groups also mobilize their militant forces (especially youth) to display their own power (the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Report 1999). Sometimes, consequences are severe, leading to a series of waves of violence, not only among the youth but also among the adults. Ethnic and even mainstream political parties have also adopted similar strategies in order to 'show off' their power to the opposition and to achieve their political goals.

On the other hand, a shortage of educational institutions and widespread poverty bring the remaining youth and children 'on the street' or 'off the street' to earn money for their families. In urban localities, the majority of these children become vagabonds while earning or searching for employment in a labour market that is not youth-friendly (Ali et al 2004 and Iqbal 2008). Poor labour-market conditions put them (the youth) into the hands of the mafia. These mafias utilize the youth for their own benefit through different ways. The mafias use them as child-soldiers, drug traffickers, prostitutes or for other related violent crimes. They became the nursery for militancy, depending upon the given social conditions and the specific region (SPARC Report 2009). As a result, sizeable portions of the youth became part of youth gangs or part of the extremist forces.

Owing to mounting 'Talibanization', an overwhelming majority of the youth has had to leave the Sawat (Northern Pakistan) and Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) regions (near Afghanistan)

for the metropolitan cities, especially Karachi, Peshawar and Lahore. They are without educational qualifications and do not have access to the basic necessities of life. They are vulnerable to violence among youth groups and some of them have become the active part of the Taliban movement back at home in order to ensure their survival. Others have become victims and have been killed, extradited or remain displaced and in the hands of the internal or external law-enforcement agencies (SPARC Report 2009). Pakistan's operation against the Taliban in the Sawat region killed even more people in 2009 and later. Violence among youths depends upon the existing conditions of the society. New situations create a new role for the youth—some of them turn to violence while others remain vulnerable or victims of the unfavourable social conditions.

4. The Dynamics of the Violence in Pakistan

4.1. Youth Violence in Pakistan: Institutionalization of the Violent Behaviour

In domestic political affairs, some of the political, ethnic and sectarian parties have a 'militant wing' in Pakistan (Supreme Court of Pakistan Verdict 2011) due to the culture of intolerance which was promoted in the 1980's under the auspices of western allies. They recruit youth at the college/ university level and during or after their pursuit of higher education, this youth becomes part of the 'youth wing' of these parties and are perceived as assets for the parties. These political parties provide weapons, money and a relatively comfortable life to these 'youth wings' in order to safeguard their vested interests within the political power structures. These parties enhance their social and economic status through such youth groups. The more an individual resorts to violence, the higher the chances are of his upward social mobility in the social ladder. Youth groups organize not only political events, but also look after the militant activities of political, ethnic and sectarian parties.

A new trend is emerging in which some of the political and ethnic parties are using the youth in order to obtain '*bhatah*' (illegal revenue/extortionists) for their party (Haq 1995). It is widely reported and

believed in the Pakistani media that the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Karachi possesses a trained youth violent group, which looks after the regular flow of '*bhatah*' as well as militant activities, in order to safeguard the interests of their leader sitting in the U.K. as a refugee (Dawn³ 2011). This has encouraged rival political parties (Awami National Party—ANP and Pakistan Peoples Party—PPP) to recruit their own '*bhatah*' wings. These '*bhatah*' groups are also trained to cope with all situations and to hide from the local law-enforcement agencies (Haq 1995).

Similarly, some businessmen also employ militant youth or take them on board in order to secure their business interests in major towns. They are given a nominal amount of money to protect the person and their business in one way or the other. A number of the entrepreneurs utilize violent youth elements in order to protect their businesses.

Some of the youth have joined the drug mafia. They supply drugs to relevant persons or groups. They are trained in order to protect the drugs and the business. Sometimes, they have encounters with the police and some of them are killed without any charges brought or proof produced in the court (the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Report 1999). In other cases, some of the youth become victims of the enmity of different groups. A person may give some money to a police officer who may kill the other person in the name of '*police-muqabla*' (police encounter) or vice-versa. These incidents are hardly brought before, or reported to, the local courts.

4.2. The Means and Range of the Violence in Pakistan

The violent youth usually stick to modern weapons depending upon the given social conditions. They use knives, axes, guns, pistols, revolvers and Kalashnikovs. Some of the terrorist groups are used to operating the stinger missiles provided by the U.S.A. and the western allied forces during the 1980's for fighting against the U.S.S.R. Many

³See the Dawn Daily: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/01/25/the-90s-at-odds-with-each-other.html>

of these weapons and locally-copied versions are available near the Afghan-Pak border.

There can be different reasons for fighting depending on the existing conditions:

- Ethnic violence among youth is common in Karachi and Quetta. There are indiscriminate target killings of members of the different ethnicities and these violent incidents are carried out by the youth. For example, the MQM, the Awami National Party (ANP), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), students' wings and the Sindh nationalists fight in Karachi and in interior Sindh. In Baluchistan, Baluch nationalist students and youth wings of the nationalist political parties target the non-Baluch population. These incidents (especially in Baluchistan) have been on the increase over the past five years.
- Suicide bombers (aged 16–24 years) target the security forces, and Pakistani and American installations in Pakistan due to the 'war on terror'. They are fighting for the so-called 'Jihad'.
- Poverty is another reason which makes the youth population violent and pushes them into joining the mafia or gang groups. They are without education, have no access to basic living necessities and, without any aim to their lives, they thus join the violent youth on the street.
- "Honour killings" are a strong reason to fight with relatives, neighbours and rival groups. Youths in particular are encouraged to 'protect' the family honour.
- According to local belief, one must always be ready to fight when needed. People teach the youth to how to use a firearm and treat it like '*ziver*' (jewellery). It is perceived as necessary to take up arms so that no group can be allowed to dominate. According to Marri et al. (2006), the high rate of gun possession is a major cause of violence in Peshawar. A second reason, according to the study, is that people do not have confidence in the judicial system.

Levels of violence in Pakistan differ across regions and social classes. Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta have high levels of violence in urban localities among street youths. Peshawar is ranked highest in Pakistan and second in the World in terms of violence (Marri et al. 2006). However, Lahore has a low level of violence amongst the metropolitan areas of Pakistan. As a whole, the Punjab province has

low levels of violence. However, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (near Afghanistan) is the most violent region. One major reason for this is that weapons and firearms are openly available to anybody in this region.

The existence of violence between rich and poor youths is difficult to observe in Pakistan. Feudal classes suppress the low economic social classes and have different schools, colleges and universities. They hardly mix with the lower classes. The elite class and their children enjoy privileges, while the lower classes are put to their service and are victimized. Such incidents are hardly ever reported to the police.

5. The Social Structure and Culture of Violence

Different interpretations are given of the phenomenon. One interpretation is that the violence is deep-rooted in the social structure of the society (Lindholm 1981). An individual (especially a male) learns about violent behaviour in the early days of his life. Soon after the birth of a child, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North Western region), the birth is celebrated by firing in the air. When a little older, a child is trained in how to use a weapon in order to protect family and personal honour. Since rivalries between different clans, castes and ethnicities are common, they are passed on from one generation to the next. Therefore, the youth is trained to protect and safeguard family honour. This kind of group-focused violence generates a violent culture in Pakistan. Differing from the West, enmity, based on caste or kinship, is common in Pakistan. Such enmity goes on from one generation to the next. The youth learn from their elders and they maintain the enmity throughout their lives and then pass it on to the next generation. They kill each other in the name of 'revenge' and enjoy being enemies (Lindholm 1981). The essence of life, in some parts of the country, is to take revenge and maintain the honour.

Keeping in view the above facts, it could be argued that the historical and socio-political factors generate the societal norms and values that are responsible for the protection, promotion and acceleration of youth violence in Pakistan. The major norms that enhance violence are listed below.

5.1.1. Social Norms: Honour, Respect and *Khandani* (Pure Family)

Women, wealth and land are considered to be the most precious possessions and to protect them often results in violence. A woman especially is considered as representing the honour of a family (Hussain 2005). The youth in Pakistan is trained to protect the family honour from their childhood onwards. Youths (male) are the guardians of the women. Any person who abuses, hurts or tries to harm a girl physically or sexually, will suffer at the hands of her family. A family is considered as *Khandani* (pure family) if a person maintains its honour. Physical and verbal abuse is common in cities. In rural areas, such kinds of disputes are a source of continuous enmity passing from one generation to the next. People fight for respect and honour in Pakistan.

5.1.2. Political Norms: Power, Authority, Instrumental Violence

Political parties utilize elements of youth violence in their favour in order to maintain their power, authority and dominance over the opposition. Political parties use their resources to protect the violent youth so that they will protect them in return. Sometimes, feudal and political classes use the youth in order to humiliate, harm and kill their political opponents or rival groups, in order to maintain their hegemony in the political structure. Everybody feels proud to be part of this violent business.

5.1.3. Cultural Norms: The VIP Culture & the Firing of Weapons at a Child's Birth

The VIP culture is dominant everywhere in the country, especially in urban localities. This VIP culture is a state of mind in Pakistan (psychological construct), and one can find some of its proportional trends in the culture. The feudal, political classes, the civil-military bureaucracy, judges, journalists, showbiz personalities, police, sports personalities and foreigners (especially from the West and the Arab states) are perceived as VIPs (Zaman 2011).

In Pakistan, the VIP classes are knitted into a close network of relationships and some of them through a web of marriages. They protect each other in different kinds of illegal activities. Mostly, the so-called VIPs (at the local level) use youth violent elements in order to maintain and enhance their social status. Some of the youths are given money in order to raise slogans, show off with weapons and look after the VIP personalities in public places. VIPs perceive themselves as very special. They exploit the rest of the population through different tactics. They harm others but escape from the law. They break the law, but are forgiven. Moreover, law and law-enforcement agencies seem to be the 'slaves' of the VIPs. One example is the American spy (Raymond A. Davis) who, despite his killing two Pakistani civilians in a public place in Lahore, escaped from being charged and/or sentenced due to his status⁴.

Moreover, in Peshawar, the birth of a male child is celebrated by firing in the air in order to show symbolically to the opponents that a son has been born to fight in the future. Thus, such a culture nurtures violent behaviour among the youth from birth.

5.1.4. Economic Norms: Land, Money, Resources and Poverty

Economics is one of the key reasons for violence. With the expansion of the free-market economy in the 1960's in Pakistan, segments of society run after wealth, resources and property ownership and sometimes without legitimate means. Some people do not differentiate between legal means and their personal goals. The concentration of wealth into a few hands is increasing the existing divide in society between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. The elite class considers the labour class as *kami* (worker) with a low social status. Workers serve the elite for no reasonable salary. With increasing awareness of their rights, the working class is turning against the elite class and is becoming more violent than the first class. Youths are especially aggressive in this regard.

⁴See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12757244>

The display of wealth in different ways, such as through wedding ceremonies or other social events, has idealized the acquisition of wealth for youths. They want to become like the members of the elite class and in their pursuit of this goal, they fight. Thus, economic lust encourages the youth to become violent.

Poverty is another significant problem in Pakistan. Poverty not only refers to the scarcity of economic resources, but is also a mental state in which a person fights with others even on minor issues. In Pakistan, a young male is encouraged to look after his family: socially, economically and physically, but poor conditions inevitably force him to turn to violence.

5.2.1. Violent Attitudes: The Appreciation of Violence

Superiority, especially over opponents, is an important part of life in Pakistan and it is maintained through violence. In some cases, authority is acquired through violent means. People maintain an aggressive behaviour so that they may show their authority over others. This way thinking is penetrated within the social stratum. A youth follows and adopts this pattern of behaviour. He shows aggression in order to dominate others. Pakistani society encourages this kind of behaviour among the youth, particularly aggressive behaviour towards the opponent party. Keeping in mind low literacy levels, such behaviour is conceived as an important social value.

5.2.2. A Strong Sense of Discrimination: Alienation, Radicalization and Polarization

Alienation is increasing among the classes in different parts of the country and conflicting attitudes towards violence can be found among youths. On the one hand, the youth is critical about the existence of the violence. On the other hand, the youth is also a perpetrator of the violence. They justify their actions by saying that they have no alternative way of maintaining a living. They have to live according to the 'law of the jungle'.

5.3.1. Ideological Construct: Religious Ideology

Islam, in principle, prohibits violence—especially towards women and children. The Qur'an forbids violence in these words: "Whoever kills another person is as if he killed the whole humanity (human race)" (Surah Al Maida, Verse 32).

However, people also feel a religious duty to protect their religion and its ideology. This belief is playing an important role in mobilizing the youth who wish to protect their sect and religion in Pakistan (Blom 2008). They get motivation from their elders and the local clergy to protect their own version of the religion. Without a second opinion, or comparative education in religions or ideologies, they are fed one single view of religion. The youth feel that it is their utmost responsibility to protect their sect. In this way, the youth become violent in the name of religion, which is actually contradictory to the original message of the religion that they believe they are protecting.

5.3.2. Vendetta: Conflict, Resistance to Violence, Collective Violence

A violent incident must be reciprocated (Lindholm 1981). Reactionary behaviour on behalf of the second party is especially looked down upon. An individual feels his duty is to take revenge on the second party. Revenge is taken because the youth neither has resources, nor have they the know-how that is necessary to obtain social justice from the local courts. Some of the youth is only familiar with the 'tit-for-tat' strategy. They feel a responsibility to take revenge from the second party. Furthermore, there is no trust in social justice or the judicial system of the country. In some rural areas, a person even feels ashamed of filing a case in a local court. If a person is not able to take revenge and he/she files a case in a local court, he/she is perceived as weak and shameful (*buzdil* and *behaya*) in rural parts of the country. Family and relatives will also support an individual in taking revenge for violent incidents. In this strategy, revenge will be taken indiscriminately. A family and tribe are either victims or perpetrators of collective violence in the rural parts of the country.

6. Conclusion

Historical and existent socio-political conditions have generated an environment where youth street violence has emerged as a unique phenomenon in Pakistan. International actors invested in violent activities during the ‘cold war’ era, the local political elite catch any opportunity to manifest their control of power and authority. They did not visualize what would happen to the coming generations. The members of the political elite promoted the war economy. They also maintained their due share in the weapon industry and related businesses. The youth who were motivated and became part of the Jihadi forces were encouraged to do so. The poor people have no work but are living with the extremist elements. They were deprived of education, employment and ultimately were on the verge of the poverty. They felt empowered whenever they got respect as a member of the extremist forces.

The perpetrators of the violence are not only the local elite, but also international actors (as investors) who play a crucial role in generating a ‘culture of violence’, as well as a culture of intolerance and extremism, in Pakistan. In this way, a new social culture is emerging where violence is an integral part of social life. Sometimes, it is hard to understand whether an incident qualifies as ‘violence’ or if it is merely the result of a ‘fight for right’ and/or the right of self-defence of a person.

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