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## **Fostering Community Resilience through the Lived Experience of Terrorist Incidents**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Understanding community resilience and collective efficacy is essential in terrorist-ridden areas. This study aims to investigate the role of communities in fostering collective resilience in response to violent acts of terrorism. It utilizes social capital and collective efficacy theories to explore the relationship between community resilience and self-efficacy in terrorist-ridden areas.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This study employs an interpretive methodology and conducted thematic data analysis. It documented insights and lessons learned from diverse perspectives of community stakeholders through semi-structured interviews with 21 participants residing in Quetta, Pakistan. Interviews took place in March and April 2023.

**Findings:** The study demonstrates that community resilience contributes significantly to the violent acts of terrorism. After carefully going through data exploration, four intriguing themes appear. The first theme pertained to participants experiencing stress due to terrorism incidents, highlighting the frequency of such stressful events. The second theme examined the escalating backdrop of terrorism which perpetually looms, prompting communities to fortify their resilience against this persistent threat. The third theme, community resilience during terrorist violence and active participation, revealing active participation in activities aimed at enhancing community

quality of life. The fourth theme emphasized the challenges associated with community engagement in resilience building efforts.

**Originality:** This study advances the understanding of community resilience in terrorist-ridden areas. In addition, it furthers discourse and provides ways to implementation of strategies aimed at strengthening community resilience following terrorist incidents.

**Keywords:** Collective resilience, engagement, community research, terrorist-ridden areas, violence, qualitative study.

## **Introduction**

In today's connected world, we confront a dynamic landscape of security challenges. Among these challenges, acts of terrorism is paramount in terrorist-ridden areas. Terrorism is characterized by violence and intimidation aimed at instilling fear (Soomro, 2023; Haghani, 2024). Terrorism has become a pervasive threat that transcends borders affecting communities around the globe (Alexander, 1976; Chemli, Toanoglou and Valeri, 2024). These threats not only endanger personal safety but also cast long shadows over the strength and resilience of communities. Communities often find themselves unprepared for unforeseen events and rapid changes. Natural disasters disrupt supply chains (Soomro, Roques and Kundi, 2022), terrorist violence directly threaten public safety and wellbeing (Bader and Manke, 2018). When a terrorist incident occurs, it sends shockwaves to a community, impacting its physical surroundings and the social bonds that tie its members together (Koubová and Kimhi, 2024). Such events demonstrate community resilience as individuals come together to confront psychological and physical consequences and cooperate to repair what has been disrupted. So, this study expands our understanding of community dynamics with the goal of promoting collective resilience in regions affected by terrorism.

The literature on community resilience demonstrates communities react differently to unforeseen incidents across various contexts (Jain and Cohen, 2013; Ellis and Abdi, 2017). Community's capabilities to anticipate emergencies and respond effectively significantly influence their reactions to such occurrences. There is an increasing focus on tailored interventions aimed at strengthening community resilience in the face of discontinuous terrorist incidents. Over the period of time, communities have been recognized as pivotal agents in violence prevention (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008; Jørgensen *et al.*, 2021). In the context of this research, we refer community resilience as a community's capacity to utilize its resources to enhance physical and

social wellbeing and to endure, adapt and recover from violence (Arnold *et al.*, 2014). So, understanding how communities draw on their experiences in the aftermath of terrorist incidents can shed light on the mechanisms they use to recover, heal and ultimately become more resilient in the face of adversity.

Similarly, this study investigates how communities build resilience amidst challenges. It examines how communities respond to terrorist attacks with proactive engagement. We argue in the light of previous literature that community members collaborate, leveraging their diverse and useful skills, knowledge and social networks to overcome adversity collectively in these challenging times (Soomro *et al.*, 2023). This entails people playing different roles based on their skills. We believe that understanding the community response to terrorism is crucial since it affects well-being, although the specific mechanisms remain unclear in the literature (Ellis and Abdi, 2017; Koubová and Kimhi, 2024). Researchers realize they need more research on terrorism consequences on terrorist-ridden communities, particularly against the backdrop of global events (Bader, Schuster and Dickmann, 2015).

This research builds on earlier studies (Soomro, 2023) which emphasized the significance of close social connections in reducing aggression and the risk of terrorism. According to social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1985), strong social bonds can serve as a valuable resource, they are vital for preventing terrorism events. These bonds contribute to the acquisition and growth of human capital. For instance, within a stable society these connections can facilitate the acquisition of highly esteemed skills and credentials. Sampson *et al.* (1997) introduced collective efficacy, which combines social solidarity with a collective willingness to act for the greater good of the community. We argue communities play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions, which can influence the likelihood of terrorism. They also serve as inspirations and act as a

deterrent to terrorist incidents. This study investigates community strengths that deter extremism by fostering self-organized community efforts. These communities coalesce around shared interests, exhibiting a remarkable capacity for cooperation and collaboration without centralized authority (Berkes & Ross, 2013). Consequently, resilience within self-organized communities in the face of terrorism assumes paramount (Soomro, Roques and Ali, 2020). It provides a conceptual underpinnings for promoting mutual comprehension of the difficulties encountered by community members impacted by these incidents.

Research by Haghani (2024) has shown that communities with significant connections and relationships are better able to recover from terrorist attacks due to their improved resilience after terrorist occurrences (Ellis and Abdi, 2017). This suggests that efforts to improve social connections and prevent violence should prioritize strengthening community resilience, while ensuring that no harm is caused. In order to lessen the factors that lead to violent extremism within and between groups, social bonding and relationships are vital (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008). We define social bonding as, when people in a group come together and they establish social roles and their places in the group with identities. Similarly, social bridging takes place when people from diverse origins unite around a common sense of community (Elkady *et al.*, 2024). In line with these concepts, strategies that foster community social connections serve as societal forces countering various challenges in communities, establishing the foundation for interventions aimed at vulnerable individuals, who are prone to terrorism incidents. The emphasis on this collective resilience approach highlights the significance of involving the community and making efforts to enhance social connections in response to terrorist incidents. So, the ultimate objective is to foster resilient communities that are capable of enduring and rebounding from such challenges.

Our study makes following contributions to community resilience literature: First, it enriches the current literature and enhances our understanding of the relationship between community capabilities and adversity by combining streams of literature on resilience and crisis management (Delladio *et al.*, 2023). It assesses how resilience can be achieved during a terrorist event. Second, our thematic analysis examines the role of community resilience in disruptive crises, such as terrorist incidents. This study helps explain why some communities respond better to uncertainty and identifies the key ingredients for fostering resilience. Finally, our findings have practical implications, suggesting that even in extremely uncertain conditions i.e. terrorist incidents, communities can develop strategies to recover and survive. The study provides community members with concrete solutions to recover from crises, thus offering actionable insights for enhancing community resilience.

The paper is organized as follows. First, the introduction and theoretical frameworks are outlined, followed by a review of literature. Next, methods section details the research context, design and approach, along with participants and procedures used in the analysis. Subsequently, the findings and discussion are presented. The paper concludes with practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study employs conceptual underpinnings from social capital (Bourdieu, 1985) and collective efficacy theories (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997) to investigate the ways in which networks of relationships, collective efficacy, effectiveness and community engagement contribute to efficient functioning of a society.

#### ***Social capital theory***

Social capital theory offers a conceptual understanding in which social ties and connections serve as valuable resources and valued assets, enhancing and contributing to the development of human capital. Social capital theory assumptions underscores and highlight the significance of efficient functioning of social groups by emphasizing the role of interpersonal connections, a collective and shared sense of identity, mutual understanding, common norms, shared values, trust, cooperation and mutual exchange. Soomro *et al.*, (2023) contend that applying a social capital theory can provide new insights into deterrents to terrorist incidents. Researchers propose that the fear of losing connections can encourage deviant or criminal behavior, while social bonds and relationships closely linked to reproductive success in society are particularly effective in deterring deviance and crime.

We argue that the social connections must be cultivated through investment strategies aimed at institutionalizing group dynamics, which serve as dependable sources of advantages (de Camargo Fiorini *et al.*, 2018). The social capital can be divided into two components: (a) the actual social bond, enabling individuals to access resources held by their connections, and (b) the quality of those resources that are embedded within the network (Bourdieu, 1985).

This theory has been utilized across various research domains. While there has been limited exploration of social capital theory in the context of terrorism and resilience. Soomro *et al.*, (2023). suggest that a connection can be established with community resilience. Within the realm of SCT in societies, interactions among members foster the widespread acceptance of network norms and values, facilitating the sharing of information, data, to enhance overall performance (Chiu, Hsu and Wang, 2006).

Building upon this, Soomro (2023) advocate for the application of social capital theory in examining community resilience and collective efficacy in terrorist-ridden context. Accordingly,

further research is needed to explore how networks of relationships, collective efficacy, and community engagement contribute to effective functioning of a society amidst terrorist incidents, contributing to overall resilience of a society.

### ***Collective efficacy theory***

The collective efficacy theory (Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls, 1997; Sampson, 2017) refers to the process of mobilizing and leveraging social bonds within a neighborhood to achieve common objectives, such as maintaining order and reducing crime. The collective efficacy theory assumptions are often measured as a combination of shared expectations for social control together with a degree of social cohesion and trust among citizens. Additionally, it adds to and helps explain criminological and violent activities. Like criminal and terrorist incidents and actions have a non-random pattern distribution of crime across various locations. Moreover, collective efficacy shed light and provide insight into the correction between certain neighborhoods having characteristics such as higher unemployment, low education, higher poverty are positively associated with crime levels. Sampson (2017) posits that disparities and variations in the ability to engage in collective action exist among communities, which accounts for disparities and differences in crime and violence levels observed across different communities. .

Concerning theoretical understanding of Sampson collective efficacy theory (2017), this study aims to elucidate the foundational concepts of the theory. This theory is deeply rooted in social organization tradition of sociology and expands upon this model in significant ways. The social organization model says that community neighborhood is influenced by the social networks and previous literature indicates that having strong social ties and links among neighbors consistently result in crime control and foster positive behavior. While, Carbone and McMillin (2019) suggests that weak social ties may hold greater importance for individuals than strong cohesive

relationships. Collective efficacy in this regard addresses apparent contradictions regarding disorganization of communities and the role of social networks by showing that while strong neighborhood links and associations may facilitate crime control, we posit that these kind of relationships and social ties are not necessarily essential. Therefore, this study analyzes networks of relationships that effectively contribute to effective functioning of a society.

## **Literature review**

### ***Collective Efficacy and Community Resilience***

The concept of community resilience can be understood through the lens of collective efficacy concept, it sheds light on what it means for a community to be resilient in terrorist-ridden areas. In the light this theory, a community's ability to successfully counter terrorist threats heavily depend on the collective confidence of community members and their capabilities to attain shared objectives and address shared challenges effectively. It further offers insights into how communities come together, self-organize and develop shared conviction regarding their competence to confront and rebound from terrorist acts in terrorist-ridden areas (Zaccaro et al., 1995).

The collective efficacy theoretical concepts assume that everyone in a community shares a belief in the group's ability to achieve its goals and overcome its obstacles (Beck and Solansky, 2011). These beliefs are crucial for developing and fostering a sense of collective efficacy which suggests that within a community, there are common beliefs about the community's capacity to attain objectives and surmount challenges (Berry, 1987; James, 2008). Communities have the inherent ability to independently pool their social and material resources to address common issues (Carbone & McMillin, 2019). This self-mobilization is underpinned by the belief that collaborative efforts yield constructive transformations.

A hallmark of communities with high levels of collective efficacy is a more proactive approach to problem-solving. These communities tend to engage in preventive or remedial actions rather than merely reacting to problems as they arise (Hipp & Wo, 2015). Collective efficacy also correlates with a robust sense of community cohesion and mutual trust among its members. It emphasizes the value of social bridging which involves relationships that span different social groups, thereby enhancing the community's ability to address systemic issues (Ohmer, 2010). Furthermore, Communities marked by heightened collective efficacy tend to have closely-knit social networks (Carroll et al., 2005). They are better equipped to withstand adversity, having confidence in their collective ability to overcome challenges. This enhances their resilience and capacity to recover from difficulties (Pecukonis and Wenocur, 1994).

In the context of terrorist incidents and its prevention, the theory has been applied to explain how communities with strong collective efficacy are more effective in reducing terrorism violence. Community members are more likely to intervene in terrorist incidents and maintain social control. Literature indicates high collective efficacy is associated with positive outcomes in various studies, i-e. Organizations, health, education, and community development (Pecukonis and Wencour, 1994; Carroll, Rosson and Zhou, 2005; Soomro, 2023) . When communities believe in their ability to effect change, they are more likely to achieve desired outcomes.

Previous literature on terrorism suggests that effective community leadership influences and strengthens collective efficacy (Arnold et al., 2014; Gearhart, 2019). Leaders play a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing the collective power of a community. Additionally, communities with strong collective efficacy often have social norms that promote teamwork and encourage everyone to work together and take responsibility (Lough, 2021). This theory is dynamic because

it acknowledges the reality of threats and violence and demonstrates how communities can unite to prevent them.

In the context of this study, communities with strong collective power and shared beliefs are more cohesive and resilient when faced with terrorist threats and violence. This study suggests that communities with robust social links and a sense of collective efficacy are more capable of dealing with and surviving acts of terrorism and violence. Collective efficacy theory provides insights into how communities come together during challenging times, believe in their collective power, and engage in proactive problem-solving to improve their well-being and build strong and resilient communities (Norris et al., 2008; Ohmer, 2010; McKnight and Linnenluecke, 2016).

The existing body of scholarly work has predominantly focused on community engagement within conventional circumstances, lacking substantial applicability to contexts marked by terrorist violence, which inherently involve collective resilience challenges (Holloway and Fullerton, 1994; Bader, Schuster and Dickmann, 2015; Soomro, Roques and Ali, 2018). In such situations, many communities lack the capacity to effectively address the complexities of terrorist threats, often possessing a limited understanding of these issues. Given that terrorist threats can disrupt community cohesion precisely when it is most vital, the study of collective relationships assumes heightened significance during these critical junctures (Arnold *et al.*, 2014; Freeman, Phillips and Sisodia, 2020). The literature underscores the necessity for researchers to confront a central question: how can the concept of collective resilience be tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals confronted with a crisis of terrorist violence?

### ***Terrorist Threats and Community Resilience***

Terrorism, characterized by acts of violence and intimidation aimed at instilling fear, has emerged as a pervasive phenomenon, transcending geographic boundaries and affecting communities (Howie, 2007). These threats pose a direct menace to individual safety and security, and also cast long shadows over the social fabric of communities (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008). Terrorist threats manifest in diverse forms, from large-scale acts of terror, such as bombings and armed assaults, to more subtle yet equally impactful strategies involving radicalization, recruitment, and cyber warfare (Aly and Balnaves, 2007; Soomro, 2019). The motives behind these threats are multifaceted, making them challenging to predict and mitigate. In the face of such threats, communities find themselves at the forefront, grappling with the immediate consequences and enduring repercussions (Hobfoll and Lilly, 1993; Hobfoll *et al.*, 2007). The intricate relationship between terrorist threats and community resilience, illuminate the multifaceted nature of this dynamic. It explores how communities are not merely passive recipients of the shockwaves generated by terrorist incidents but are active agents in shaping their responses and outcomes (Williams, 2004). Understanding the interplay between terrorist threats and community resilience is not only academically pertinent but also essential for devising effective strategies to bolster security, mitigate risks, and promote societal wellbeing.

The literature pertaining to collective resilience provides insights into the mechanisms by which communities or organizations can cultivate collective resilience in the face of violent acts of terrorism (Carbone & McMillin, 2019; Soomro, 2023). Existing scholarship underscores the notion that communities significantly contribute to the collective-level resilience against violent acts of terrorism (Carroll, Rosson and Zhou, 2005; Aisenberg and Herrenkohl, 2008). This contribution is pivotal as it enables organizations to absorb external shocks through the implementation of redundancy and adaptability strategies. However, there has been a historical

dearth of attention given to the reciprocal relationship between community resilience and its role in bolstering the resilience against violent acts of terrorism at the community level (Bader, Schuster and Dickmann, 2015). Empirical investigations into resilience concerning violent acts of terrorism within communities emphasize the imperative of a collective approach. Yet, previous research has inadequately explored the intricate interplay between these two constructs. Nonetheless, both community and collective-level resilience emerge as crucial elements in the establishment of resilience at the community level, specifically in the context of terrorist violence. People residing in regions plagued by terrorism contend with severe resource deficits, encompassing personal, physical, psychological, and social resources, among others. Consequently, communities, drawing upon their capacity, engage in the post-terrorist violence recovery process at various levels, striving to overcome the multifaceted challenges posed by such incidents.

## **Methods**

### ***Research Context***

Pakistan, as a key ally in the global effort to combat terrorism, has faced challenges in the aftermath of 9/11 events. The nation has incurred significant human casualties in its commitment to eradicating violence, with more than 70,000 lives lost in various incidents during 'The War on Terror.' The acts of terrorism frequently target innocent civilians. Among the manifold consequences arising from these incidents, the effects on health and well-being emerge as particularly distressing and consequential.

The existing literature addressing resilience in communities affected by violent acts of terrorism is subject to several limitations. Prior investigations have often failed to provide a clear understanding of the impact of terrorism on community well-being, with a predominant focus on large-scale events, such as 9/11 (Pyszczynski, Solomon and Greenberg, 2003; Crawford, 2017, p.

9). This study addresses gaps by conducting thematic analysis of how communities respond to acts of terrorism at domestic level and significant effects of community resilience on the affected communities. So, we aim to shed light on the intricate dynamics between terrorism and community resilience, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this critical issue.

This study was conducted in Quetta, located in the Balochistan province of Pakistan. This region has a dispersed population. Like many other parts of the country, this area faces significant social and economic challenges, including high unemployment and limited opportunities for entrepreneurial endeavors. The local economy heavily relies on agriculture and retail businesses. In times of terrorist violence, communities in Pakistan's rural areas often look to organizations operating in their regions for development initiatives. Consequently, companies allocate contingency budgets for community development projects in these critical times, however these measures are not sufficient. While these initiatives play a vital role in sustaining resilience within these communities over an extended period. However, operating in areas prone to terrorist violence presents a considerable challenge for firms. The impact of such violence extends to their human resources, causing distress among employees.

In the scope of this research, we define community resilience as the collective efforts of communities to mobilize, coordinate, manage, and leverage resources for the purpose of self-preparation, response, and recovery in the aftermath of terrorist incidents. This definition underscores the significance of cultivating a culture of preparedness among vulnerable populations and acknowledges the imperative of harnessing the capacities of individuals and communities. By fostering such preparedness, the available assets, encompassing resources, knowledge, skills, abilities, and networks, can be deployed promptly and efficiently in the event of terrorist occurrences, facilitating a more agile and effective response.

Resilience is considered a shared responsibility, especially considering the persistent threat of terrorist incidents. It encompasses the collective efforts of individuals and communities to ensure their safety and ability to bounce back from adversity. In the study, we observed that community organizations and members have voluntarily assumed this responsibility. They view it as a societal duty to work together cohesively in addressing and mitigating the impact of terrorism.

### ***Research design and approach***

Qualitative exploratory design under the interpretive assumption was deemed appropriate for study. This approach was chosen to explore and understand community resilience and collective efficacy (Ellis and Abdi, 2017), and facilitated an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of communities affected by violent acts of terrorism (Lough, 2021). The study involved conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews with twenty-one participants during March and April 2023. They had lived experience of terrorist-incidents in their areas, specifically selected from Quetta, where such incidents occur discontinuously. In addition, participants were selected for their emergency planning and response experience in emergencies. This criterion was adopted to ensure that they could provide insights concerning resilience-building process after emergency took place. Community leaders also helped us find participants, ensuring that the sample represented a variety of community opinions.

We applied purposive sampling to ensure representation across various backgrounds and experiences related to terrorist incidents. The occurrence of violent incidents often prompts the formation of community resilience and collective efficacy among the affected population.

We asked the following questions and repeated this process to gather our data.

- Why is it essential to develop resilience within communities to counteract the impacts of terrorism, and how does this contribute to broader community resilience efforts?

- What support and assistance can community leaders and organizations offer to improve the well-being of community members?
- In what manners can local communities proactively contribute to the enhancement of community resilience?
- How does individual resilience empower persons to effectively navigate the adversities and challenges induced by acts of terrorism?

### ***Participants and procedure***

The study used Cresswell and Poth (2011) semi-structured interviews to investigate employee experiences within the context of terrorist incidents. We used this method since it provides more flexibility and depth in probing study participants' experiences and viewpoints. Accordingly, through semi-structured interviews, we explored participants perspectives regarding community resilience in terrorism-affected areas. A comprehensive Interview Protocol Refinement Framework was used to create an interview guide. Each interview provided vital information and data was carefully evaluated to add and modify questions. The main question in the study examines how do networks of relationships, collective efficacy, and community engagement contribute to effective functioning of a society in terrorist-ridden areas. Therefore, studying diverse participants experiences in these areas helps us to comprehend community resilience in these dynamics.

This phase aimed to comprehensively comprehend the constituents of resilience within communities impacted by acts of terrorism (Smith et al., 2019). Engaging with diverse community stakeholders, we sought their perspectives on the intricate dynamics of resilience. Our inquiries delved into motivations, levels of awareness, and contributions towards fortifying community resilience. Furthermore, we examined their active involvement in community initiatives aimed at

enhancing resilience. Through these in-depth interviews, our objective was to construct a holistic depiction of how community members perceive the concept of resilience within their respective communities (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

It's important to note that conducting research in terrorism-ridden areas poses significant challenges due to ongoing threats (Bader, 2015). Safety concerns not only endanger the communities but also make it difficult for researchers to access and work. Despite these hindrances, our research was motivated by the imperative to contribute positively to understanding how communities can cultivate resilience in the face of terrorism. It is essential to acknowledge that engaging with community members in affected areas may present challenges with safety considerations necessitating purposive sampling to ensure the well-being of participants (Lee and Reade, 2015).

This study recruited individuals using purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling helps identify and choose information-rich contexts to maximize resource usage. It allows researchers to target participants from diverse backgrounds, it is ideal for studying terrorism violence and resilience in community dynamics (Carbone and McMillin, 2019; Soomro, 2023). Purposive sampling ensured that participants had firsthand experience and possessed knowledge of terrorism violence. These participants delved deep into violence, exploring their effects and implications for resilience and self-efficacy. Moreover, snowball sampling (participant-driven sampling) was used to collect data from participants to find future volunteers (Heckathorn, 2011). By using networks of participants who have experienced terrorism related incidents, researchers tapped into participants' unique perspectives.

The study used Braun and Clarke (2015) thematic method. It includes finding, identification, and in-depth studying of specific themes. This method helped identifying themes

present in the collected data (Terry *et al.*, 2017), so once a theme developed, we asked further probing questions to gain a better understanding of its subtleties. Eventually, some sub-themes became visible, although they were not always entirely new. The initial interviews lasted 45–50 minutes. We took notes and recorded audio, it allowed to capture both verbal responses of participants and our observations of non-verbal cues, contributing to a comprehensive dataset.

During thematic analysis, one must ensure that answers are aligned with the study's objectives without bias (Terry *et al.*, 2017). In other words, what participants are experiencing and telling must be recorded without researchers' own emotions and feelings. So, anyone who reads the data can decide for themselves if this is something they can apply to their context (Soomro, 2023). By employing a thematic approach, we aimed to highlight the precise patterns and themes within the data, we obtained a better understanding of the effects of terrorism on community resilience in Pakistani setting.

## **Findings and discussion**

### ***Theme 1: Terrorist threats and stress***

Participants described their thoughts concerning violent incidents and the resulting fear that pervades their communities. Data exploration revealed detailed depictions of these attacks, indicating profound repercussions they produce. This included a pervasive sense of vulnerability and anxiety, culminating in heightened stress levels experienced not only by the individuals themselves but also extending to their families, thereby compromising their overall health and well-being. These emotional and physical threats have endured over an extended period due to the recurrent nature of these attacks, resulting in the cumulative impact of the affected population.

Participants shared the considerable burden of terrorism-induced stress, shedding light on its multifaceted consequences on their well-being. They vividly recounted the considerable

repercussions of the persistently stressful environment, offering poignant insights into how it has negatively affected their overall quality of life. These testimonies underscore the enduring and far-reaching implications of terrorism stress, substantiating the imperative for comprehensive strategies aimed at addressing not only the immediate aftermath of attacks but also the protracted psychological and physiological distress that ensues.

An interviewee (male, 30, Quetta): “I live in Quetta, residing in regions plagued by terrorism is difficult ordeal. Terrorist attacks pose a substantially more significant threat, particularly when individuals perceive a lack of support or security from their government.”

An interviewee (female, 37, Quetta): “Each day unfolds as a delicate balance between survival and looming threat of terror. This frightening reality underscores the necessity of understanding and addressing psychological impact of living amidst constant danger.”

An interviewee (male, 38, Quetta) stated that when his brother fell victim to a suicide attack, their family was engulfed in profound isolation. Despite distressing circumstances, they received significant support from their community who actively rallied to aid them.

An interviewee (female, 37, Quetta) The prevalent terrorist threats in the city impact psychological wellbeing of its citizens. It is a difficult task to cope with the chronic stress caused by these threats, which is a major challenge to all the people here.

Survivors of terrorist incidents often describe an initial period of adaptation to their new reality, one marked by the absence of their loved ones. As mentioned earlier, they receive support from their communities, which helps them gradually rebuild their lives. It is crucial for society to understand the profound impact of being a victim of terrorism. When someone becomes a victim, they are essentially manipulated as a weapon to target society.

This manipulation can influence their response, potentially leading them to harbor feelings of resentment or anger towards the state. Consequently, the values and beliefs they held can be upended and lost. It becomes essential for individuals to rediscover their values and reestablish trust and faith in the state.

An interviewee (male, 32, Quetta) there is a significant threat, and I cannot think properly and feel physical and emotional shock all the time.

The insights garnered from the interviews shed light on the psychological states of the participants, revealing a pronounced state of distress that has led to a decline in their overall well-being. The findings underscore the profound impact of terrorism as a stressor, exerting a detrimental influence on the health and well-being of individuals, thereby significantly disrupting their lives. A comprehensive examination of the data reveals that the stressor, in this context, is primarily rooted in encounters with terrorist attacks within their vicinity or loss of family members due to such incidents. Furthermore, individuals have also indirectly experienced distress, manifesting in heightened anxiety in crowded settings, coupled with the enduring psychological repercussions of witnessing traumatic scenes. Consequently, this study aligns with the thematic elements that emerged during our preliminary analysis, encompassing themes of loss, fear, the threat to one's life and the lives of family members, as well as the burden of daily stressors.

Furthermore, study participants revealed a pervasive sense of vulnerability from looming threat of terror, significantly impacting the quality of their lives, both within the boundaries of their homes and various places in city. This pervasive fear of terror is identified as a prevailing source of misery, casting a profound shadow over the daily existence of these individuals.

### ***Theme 2: Resilience***

Amidst the backdrop of mounting terrorism that continues to cast a pervasive shadow over individuals, the imperative to show resilience against threat becomes substantial. The study data collection witness to a series of terrorist attacks in Quetta, a dire indication to relentless challenges faced by natives and its community. These incidents took a toll, claiming lives of individuals while leaving others injured. It becomes paramount to see mechanisms through which communities enhance their resilience in the face of incidents. Consequently, study findings revealed multifaceted dimensions of resilience to violent acts of terrorism. Furthermore, findings suggest strategies for societal development that promote not a culture of fear, but rather one rooted in resilience. In the ensuing discourse, we see into the narratives and perspectives articulated by interviewees, wherein they expound upon their conceptualizations of "resilience."

An interviewee (female, 35, Quetta), "Resilience is the product of a complex interaction between a person's individual characteristics and the community in which that person has developed".

An interviewee (male, 32, Quetta), "Resilience, in my opinion is the ability to counterbalance the negative aspects of one's life with positive aspects. It takes place within the family and can contribute to positive outcomes in the community".

An interviewee (female, 36, Quetta), "resilience is something unexpected that happens or something goes wrong or circumstances change, a person has the ability to recover from these setbacks". Resilience is the ability to become strong again after something bad happens. For example, trees have it, they bend in strong winds but then back to their original shape. Our body suffers from a virus, we feel terrible, and then our energy and strength return because our internal system is designed like a resilient system.

The insights from these participants are poised to significantly influence our conceptualization of strategies pertaining to community resilience in the face of violent acts of terrorism. The community members, being intimately acquainted with their surroundings, harbor valuable knowledge on how to rebuild and safeguard their localities against terrorist attacks. These insights serve as instructive lessons that can benefit others facing similar challenges. Consequently, our investigation shifts its focus to examining the interactions to broader community in this context.

### ***Theme 3: Community resilience during terrorist violence***

Communities in various localities typically aren't directly engaged in building resilience against violent acts of terrorism. Instead, they often participate in a range of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. For instance, in Quetta, communities organize CSR activities aimed at improving people's quality of life. These activities are indirectly related to resilience and how public responds to violence. Within these communities, specific groups of stakeholders, known as community members, oversee resilience efforts. They strategize and provide assistance to local communities as part of their role in managing resilience-building initiatives.

All participants articulated their active engagement with the local communities, emphasizing development of bonds and maintaining a courteous character towards neighborhoods. They expressed a sense of obligation to safeguard one another in times of adversity. This commitment to mutual support during challenging circumstances was rooted in their cultural values, deeply embedded in their belief system. Moreover, interviewees conveyed a prevailing sense of belonging within the rural landscape, underscoring the necessity for self-reliance in such settings. This deep unity among community members highlights the existence of robust social cohesion, emblematic of what scholars refer to as "social capital."

One participant explicitly linked their involvement in the local resilience group to assisting fellow community members. They held the belief that in rural regions, there remains a strong sense of community and solidarity that might not be as pronounced in urban areas. Their engagement in resilience initiatives was initiated by direct impact of terrorist violence. In such scenarios, motivations came from a combination of self-interest, a deep understanding of the adverse effects of terrorist violence and genuine empathy for those who had suffered harm. Moreover, interviewees were cognizant of how their communities were perceived due to their active participation in various events. They recognized the potential long-term benefits that such involvement could yield for their communities.

#### ***Theme 4: Community engagement challenges***

The study participants did not have a complete understanding of obstacles to community involvement. This happened because we grouped them based on whether they were preparing for or responding to incidents. However, they did express various concerns that they saw as barriers to participating in these activities. Two interviewees pointed out that certain influential individuals in their communities were not actively supporting their efforts to make community more resilient against terrorism. Instead, these figures were mainly focused on protecting their own interests. While one person called this behavior "selfish," others wondered if these individuals should be required to take responsibility for others.

Although study participants were well-informed about consequences of decreased public sector funding, they also expressed increasing doubt regarding what had conventionally been viewed as duty of municipal authorities. For example, in one instance, the suggested rise in market prices was pointed out as a factor that might heighten stress on small enterprises, potentially impeding their capacity to engage in voluntary programs:

To play devil's advocate, I believe it is the government's duty to protect us. That is something for which we are already paying them.

It was also noticed that many firms in areas and towns were small or "one man bands", making it difficult for owners or managers to devote time away from their businesses to volunteer.

Apart from economic factors, governance issues emerged as potential impediments to active engagement in community resilience efforts. This manifested in various ways. Many stakeholders we interviewed were enthusiastic about offering their support but encountered practical challenges. They questioned whether their contributions would be valued or not, which is a common concern in some communities, it is a challenge that people worry about their contributions being valued in the study context. Additionally, one participant stated that public-sector had limited resources and capacity to promote and engage in community resilience programs due to funding cuts to local governments. There was also concerns expressed and described by one respondent that formal involvement might deter individuals from making informal donations of their time and resources.

### **Practical implications and limitations**

To comprehend how communities withstand terrorist acts, we investigated stakeholder involvement in enhancing community resilience. Stakeholder theory (2018) underscores the interconnectedness between organizational responses and community resilience during emergencies. It emphasizes the need for organizations to create value not only for shareholders but also for diverse stakeholders including communities. The theory encompasses a set of organizational management principles designed to explain business ethics and navigate moral and value-based considerations inherent in management. Adaptive leadership emerges as pivotal in

aligning organizational interests with stakeholder needs in terrorism-affected regions, facilitating community involvement and resilience-building initiatives. Adaptive leaders navigate complex situations, organize resources and empower communities, tailoring resilience programs to local contexts. Through strong stakeholder relationships, organizations address the multifaceted needs of terrorism-affected communities.

Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of considering the interests of various groups. It expands by recognizing the presence of stakeholders, including employees, customers (Mu, Xu and Chen, 2024), suppliers, and broader community entities such as local communities, government agencies and political organizations (Hörisch, Freeman and Schaltegger, 2014; Freeman, Harrison and Zyglidopoulos, 2018). Moreover, Stakeholder theory (2018) underscores the importance of organizations creating value not only for shareholders but also for a broader range of stakeholders including communities.

The study findings highlight stakeholders' crucial role in advancing resilience initiatives aligned with community priorities. They actively participate in and financially support resilience-building programs, contributing to community well-being amidst violence. The stakeholder perspective offers a valuable framework for analyzing firms' contributions to resilience amid terrorist violence (Elkady *et al.*, 2024). Various stakeholders including government and private firms allocate resources to enhance security, build advanced digital infrastructure and support programs thus fostering community resilience. Moreover, they provide ongoing psychological support and training for affected individuals, enhancing community well-being in these areas.

This research provides essential indicators for assessing community stakeholder resilience to terrorism, particularly in the context of emergency preparedness. It aligns with the framework developed by Cutter *et al.*, (2010). In this study authors identified 49 key indicators for evaluating

community resilience which are categorized into five distinct domains: social, economic, structural, infrastructure and community competence domains. It offers a comprehensive tool for evaluating and enhancing community preparedness. In the presence of social resilience, these indicators include demographic aspects of a community, such as physical and mental well-being of its members, their connectivity and mobility within the area. Economic resilience considerations revolve around factors like employment opportunities, wage levels, housing conditions, diversity and socioeconomic equity. The concept of collective community resilience extends to topics such as the effectiveness of risk transfer mechanisms, the implementation of mitigation strategies and presence of policy safeguards within community. Meanwhile, infrastructural resilience evaluates the efficiency and physical capacity of housing infrastructures to endure and recover from adverse events. Lastly, community competence as a vital dimension, evaluates the active participation and engagement of community members. This dimension encompasses various factors that influence the community's cohesion and readiness, ultimately affecting the collective goodwill and resilience of residents. By offering these indicators, this study offers a comprehensive tool for evaluating and enhancing community preparedness in terrorism hit areas.

Given the limited number of participants, it is appropriate to classify this study as exploratory pilot nature rather than a comprehensive one. Nevertheless, we anticipate that the insights we have gathered will serve as a foundation for future research in this field. While the small sample size places constraints on the scope of our conclusions. This opens up the possibility for widespread research that includes similar communities. A comprehensive "case study" approach, centered on areas that have experienced terrorist incidents with active community resilience initiatives, may yield further insights, exploring the complex interplay between organizations, communities and resilience. This approach aligns with recent studies on overall

resilience, exploring the intricate relationships between organizations and various stakeholders (Lough, 2021; Delladio *et al.*, 2023; Soomro, 2023).

The study has some limitations. This research is limited by its qualitative approach. We recognize its limited applicability and also generalizability outside Pakistan's heterogenous context. We collected data from Balochistan province of Pakistan which is severely affected by terrorist-attacks. It is important to note that experiences of 21 participants may not reflect those of other individuals in other diverse contexts. This work also admits data collection and analysis bias. This limitation may limit and impact findings inclusivity and generalizability. Keeping in mind these limitation, future scholarships should include distinct contexts and incorporate its scope and use qualitative and quantitative methodologies to better understand community resilience and collective efficacy in terrorist-ridden areas. By broadening this work with diverse contexts and utilizing a combinational method, future studies can contribute to a more robust and multifaceted understanding of how communities can effectively respond to and recover from the impacts of terrorism. Future research will not only address the limitations in this study but also contribute to the existing literature by offering a more comprehensive understanding of how communities can withstand and recover from violence.

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