Comparison of Perceptions of Borderland Communities: A Case Study of Pak-Afghan & Indo-Pak Border

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Article Info

Abstract

People living in borderlands are influenced by a multitude of factors that impact their social capital value in comparison to people living in the hinterlands. Opportunities for development for people living on the borderlands are limited, due to migration, war, displacement, social evils such as smuggling of goods, and illegal trafficking across the border. This highlights the gap between both communities and the state's value of treating them as social capital. In this study, the perception of people living on the border of Indo-Pak and Pak-Afghan borders and their value towards the state's measure in social capital will be highlighted. This study aims to explore the impact of the perceptions of borderland communities living near and on the border of India-Pakistan and Pakistan-Afghanistan. As these two borders vary in nature of hostility, a comparison can be drafted in the value of social capital. The methodology adopted for this study is based on qualitative analysis using a stratified sampling technique. Twenty in-depth interviews ten of which from each borderland (Indo-Pak and Pak-Afghan border), are conducted for this research to highlight the gaps. The findings of this research conclude that Media, the varying level of governance and administration, security and community development opportunities are of a different dimension for the people living on borders. The impact of culture, religion, ethnicity, and national identities becomes very complex to describe. Social capital requires the social inclusivity of communities from both the borderland and the hinterland.

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Introduction

People who live on the borderlands experience different social and economic challenges in their daily lives. These challenges are further complicated by the location in which these communities are located. People living on the borderlands of the South Asian region hold immense social value. The communities located on the borders of the South Asian region might have a variety of skills. People from the South Asian region have a rich history of culture and traditions that are worth hundreds of generations. Thus, you can find any borderland resident in South Asia who can speak multiple languages and is familiar with various ethnicities, associated with varying cultural & regional norms and values. These people have superior skills in survival, trading, and socializing. It is crucial to understand that these communities do not have it as easy as people living in the cities. Trauma is a key impetus that contributes to the development of their vast skill set, norms, and values. Trauma for this research is defined as the impacts of war on these communities, displacement challenges and during the atrocities of war, the possibility of struggle to protect their families, and basic reserve necessities. The difference in the level of governance also affects the human capital development in these regions. Mostly borderland communities are neglected in matters of justice, regulations, government facilities, and much more.¹ It is why the people of small communities living on the borderlands have created their justice systems and rules of survival and judgment. Incidents such as the war on a border, mass migration, drone attacks, territorial conquests (in history), etc., have impacted the lives of the people living near and on the border, differently. Damage is usually beyond repair in these regions. Their recovery depends on the category of the borderland.

Mainly there are two kinds of borders:

1. Hard- Border
2. Soft- Border

As addressed above, borders are classified into “thick” and “thin” borders. Implying looking at their formative influences and impacts on the development of the adjacent border region(s) as the way they continue to impede the conditions of the people living in these areas. A thick border would have more rigidity and would be based on pure political disputes among the states. The existence of the Berlin Wall, the demarcation between North and South Korea, and the boundary separating Pakistan and India are all illustrations of what can be described as "thick" borders. Thin borders are permeable for certain kinds of flows. This does not mean that a thin border is open for everything and everyone, as this would make the border itself

redundant. On the contrary, while a thin border demarcates a political and administrative space, it allows, at the same time, different forms of coexistence to emerge and flourish irrespective of the underlying state border. The border between the United States and Canada serves as a good example of a thin border. Thus, one may observe the complexity of the borders varies as per their connection with the center of the state.² The table below defines the categories of examples of each border as addressed above:

Figure 1: Border related Relational Geographies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Border category</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geopolitical</td>
<td>Political &amp; Administrative</td>
<td>Hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social cultural</td>
<td>Functional Spaces</td>
<td>Soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Functional Spaces</td>
<td>Soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biophysical</td>
<td>Environmental Space</td>
<td>Fuzzy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fuzzy spaces are difficult to administer as realms of power on either side hold responsibility in managing the space.

Source: ³

The table shows that geopolitical boundaries belong to the political and administrative spaces, and they usually form hard border spaces. Such borders are usually between hostile states. The socio-cultural boundaries are flexible and belong to the functional spaces and are considered soft with some exchange over these boundaries. The economic boundaries also fit in functional spaces and are also considered soft spaces. Lastly, the biophysical boundaries belong to environmental spaces and are constantly shifting as nature takes its course. As such, these boundaries are difficult to control.⁴ This study focuses on two borders surrounding Pakistan. The first being Indo-Pakistan border and its borderland residents’ perceptions and the second is the borderland between Pakistan and Afghanistan communities’ perceptions.

People living in the cities perceive phenomena of war, migration, displacement differently from communities living on the borderlands. This notion is perceived by the difference in knowledge, attitudes and comprehension of people living in cities and on the borderlands. Borderland communities are neglected not

³Ibid. 151.
only as human capital for national development but denied in value of social capital as well. These communities are neglected not only as human capital for national development but denied in value of social capital as well. To understand the value of social capital of borderlands communities’ perception, we need to list definitions of human capital and social capital for this study.

**Human Capital**

Human capital refers to the knowledge, skills, and capabilities embodied within individuals that contribute to their productive potential and economic value. It encompasses a wide range of attributes, including formal education, training, work experience, cognitive abilities, creativity, and health. Human capital is an essential resource that individuals accumulate over time through investments in education, training, and other forms of skill development. It plays a critical role in economic growth, productivity, and overall societal advancement.”

Human capital recognizes the intangible assets and qualities that improve worker performance and benefit the economy. These characteristics are inseparable from the individuals who acquire or possess them.

**Social Capital**

Social capital is fundamentally about how people interact with each other. It is about: 1) The nature of our social connections and 2) The norms and shared understandings that influence our action and interaction. Scholars such as Robert Putnam, James Coleman and many others agree that social capital is multidimensional and is an umbrella term for a range of social factors such as networks, norms, trust, social identity, belonging, and many more. Social capital is about knowing a lot of people well, but it is more than that. It refers to the presence

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6 Ibid. 70.

7 Robert Putnam is a political scientist who has extensively studied social capital. He argues that social capital has three dimensions: bonding social capital (strong ties within homogenous groups), bridging social capital (weaker ties between different groups), and linking social capital (connections between individuals and institutions in positions of power).

8 James Coleman, a renowned sociologist, proposed a multidimensional view of social capital. He argued that social capital consists of not only the resources available in social networks but also the norms, values, and trust that facilitate cooperation and collective action.
of robust and favorable social connections within constructive social frameworks that include diverse individuals from different backgrounds and positions.\textsuperscript{9}

This research paper investigates the concept of social capital and its correlation with the perception of individuals residing in the borderlands of India and Pakistan. The study sheds light on the prevalent marginalization and neglect experienced by these populations, emphasizing the impact of both governments on the lives of borderland residents. Factors such as war, migration, cross-border movements, and border security measures significantly disrupt their livelihoods and hinder social and economic development. Through a detailed examination of these challenges, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics surrounding social capital in this context. Same is the case for the Pakistan and Afghanistan borderland communities’ perception. The people living on the border on Pakistan and Afghanistan are more vulnerable to activities such as smuggling and illegal trafficking across the border. Due to these issues, they are valued differently as to people living in the cities.

This argument is supported by Yuk Wah Chan and Brantly Womack in their study titled “\textit{Not merely a border: borderland governance, development and trans-border relations in Asia}” take on borders from an anthropologic view and define the capacities of the functioning of both “government” and “governance” on the border. Borderlands have always been a neglected area in research, but anthropologists have taken a deep interest in studying the borders not only because of the lack of research but also because several groups and communities residing on the border are stereotyped and marginalized. These groups may be refugees or minorities or tribal, intriguing cross-border state relations, human interactions, and identities. People living on the borderlands provide a different outlook on the conditions than what is portrayed by the state.

Yuk Wah Chan and Brantly Womack inform about the difference between governance and government in several ways. The primal difference seen is that government’s authority is unitary, while governance involves different levels and venues of authority. And although governance implies instrumentality toward given goals, it requires interaction with civil society and local populations for its effectiveness. While administration is rarely straightforward, borderland administration is more than the national government at its fringe. A borderland is a position of contact. Its real factors on the ground are not just results of national strategies on each side, and rather innovatively collaborate with circumstances and

This study aims to examine the contrasting perceptions of individuals residing on the borders of India and Afghanistan, which share borders with Pakistan. It sheds light on the disparity between these communities and the government's recognition of them as social assets. By focusing on the border regions of Sialkot (Indo-Pak border) and Chaman (Pak-Afghan border), the research emphasizes the value attributed by these communities to the state's efforts in promoting social capital.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory contends that social relationships are resources that can lead to the development and accumulation of human capital. For example, a stable family environment can support educational attainment and support the development of highly valued and rewarded skills and credentials. In evolutionary terms, social capital can be defined as any feature of a social relationship that yields reproductive benefits. According to Bourdieu, “conceptualization of social capital is based on the recognition that capital is not only economic and that social exchanges are not purely self-interested and need to encompass ‘capital and profit in all their forms.’” His conceptualization is based on concepts of symbolic power and social reproduction theories. His work emphasizes structural constraints and unequal access to institutional resources based on class, gender, and race. In accordance with the proposed framework, the people living on the borderlands of Pakistan-India and Pakistan-Afghanistan fall into this elaboration of social capital. The residents of border regions feel that they are not considered to have social capital worth as proposed by the state power.

Implications of the Border

David Newman in his study analyzed the concept of a borderless world which still baffles theorists today. The concept seems impossible as the world is one entity, and every individual is responsible for his/her actions if there was not an entity to limit the control of functioning and governance for people. The theory of “border-
lessness” has given rise to globalists who believed that cross border economic activities might be more convenient if borders had not existed. However, many geographers, historians, political scientists, and anthropologists do not agree and contend that borders exist to create order and without borders, there is no territorial control.¹⁴

Newman argues that history has given us various justifications for borders to exist as the lack of borders had only made the political, economic, environmental, geographical, and cultural domains complex. The author highlights that there has been a significant growth in border studies over the past decade or so. Numerous geographers claim that traditionally the concept of boundaries is of constituting the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social, and economic spaces. Still, the definition of borders varies from place to place and time to time as borders are in flux. It is in their nature to change depending upon political, social, economic, and geographical changes in the region. The focus on border studies was not present until the 1950s. As time passed and the consciousness of having a secure territory for existing became more crucial, the field took rise. The author has explained the evolution and the importance of having a physical demarcation for identity, culture, and language. The study by David Newman focuses on the historical emergence of borders and its necessity created to manage regions. A borderless world is difficult to imagine practically as it would create a mess in governance of the entire world. The study lays a proper framework to look and understand borders which is needed to elaborate the existing study.

Beatrix Haselsberger in her study decodes the border in terms of its impacts on people and space surrounding the border. She discussed the historical evolution of the border. Such as Austria which borders constantly changed with time and geographical adjustment. The categorization of boundaries was discussed based on the geopolitical, cultural, social, and biophysical connections. The study primarily focuses on examining the impact of borders on the surrounding community, which is a crucial dimension requiring thorough analysis. However, it is important to acknowledge that a framework to systematically address the question of this impact is currently absent, posing a gap in the existing literature and research.¹⁵

Experiences and Struggles of People in Peripheries

Laura Velasco Ortiz and Óscar F. Contreras described in their study the life experiences and struggle of the people living on the border of Mexico and the United States of America. The study is based on primary research collected in the form of interviews of 60 candidates living on the border of Mexico City. This article analyzes the distinguishing effect of the geopolitical border, addressing the life experience of crossing borders as an analytical core. The Mexico–United States border is identified as “the largest known structure of inequality in the contemporary world” since there is no other border in the world with greater inequality in terms of power, economic development, and social conditions. The inequalities have increased with the displacement and deporting of Mexican immigrants from the United States. The constant hostility towards the Mexicans living on the borders demonstrates that the politics of a state plays a massive role in the disruption of border polices and the shift of relations between various states. The people who were interviewed gave their views about perspectives of living on the border. The majority was now immune to the hostility that they had seen in the beginning, while the rest provided remarks about their experiences of crossing the border and getting caught. The complexities of people’s relationship with borders are astounding. Similarly, a study of Pakistan and Indian borders can be done given the shared history between Pakistan and India and the mass migration that has left confusion and complexity, thus affecting every social political and cultural aspect for the people living on the borders, raising the question of their identities and their differences from the people living in the hinterlands. The framework mentioned does not support the current research as it is only a factor that covers the issue of borderland communities.16

**Border and Indigenous Realities**

Giacomo Orsini et al. states in their work that there are multiple concepts attached to borders. These borders function differently based on their regional politics. These regional political affects the nature of the border as they are either fixed or rigid in matters related to the cross-bordering community. Permeant as demarcated by history and lastly fall in the category of international borders where the line exists to divide regions and communities but is not visible to the naked eye. These international borders have a historical background associated with post-war conflicts. Initially, they served as demarcations that separated regions, but due to historical expansions following the wars, these borders underwent changes. The concept of othering is related to the community directly living on the border seeing the other side their neighbors who they see every day, yet experience alienation when crossing the border to their side.

Despite these worldwide borders are not boundaries in essence as they work to both disturb and encourage contact and trade across people and networks living on either side. As it were, the static idea of outskirt fences and checks is offset adaptable and changing methods of overseeing fringe crossing. All things considered, the irresolute idea of a border—both static and in consistent change—pervasively affects how cross-border networks, for example, the ones broke down here, see themselves and develop the "others." Sociocultural, financial, and etymological ties that have truly bound together individuals living on inverse sides of a given backwoods can be upgraded or eradicated inside the space of a couple of years relying upon explicit border administrations.

Borderlands are in this way the most loved spaces to consider the procedures through which ethnic and gathering personalities create and are characterized. The role of international borders in shaping social life and defining group and ethnic identities is highly contested and subject to ongoing discussions. This is exemplified by the cases of Melilla, Gibraltar, and Lampedusa, which demonstrate the ongoing processes of defining and redefining ethnic boundaries through notions of otherness and equality. Benedict Anderson famously argued that countries were "envisioned networks”, and the limit of that creative mind is unavoidably the fringe. "Genuine" people group, be that as it may, regularly rise above fringe and national minds.

Networks dependent on shared interests, connection, and impact can exist across universal outskirts and evident divisions of language, religion, and culture. Our models show that these networks existed previously, however the envisioned network of the country can effectively reclassify these associations and burst network ties in a surprisingly short space of time. With social, political, and monetary life being very reliant on cross-border relations, the likelihood for people, merchandise, capitals, culture to cross the fringe profoundly affects the methods for connection among various ethnic gatherings—similar to the situation when the fringe among Gibraltar and Spain was shut somewhere between 1969 and 1982, or when the Ley Orgánica de Extranjería presented by Spain in 1985 obliged numerous Moroccan nationals to leave Melilla.

However, at the same time, the amount and nature of cross-outskirt collaborations can thus impact the working of the fringe itself—for example during the last phases of the 2011 transient emergency in Lampedusa, when Lampedusa cordiality oversaw strains and specialists to keep vagrants on the island. Our investigation affirms that, given the numerous manners by which outskirts canalize

public activity in Melilla, Lampedusa, and Gibraltar, "ethnic qualifications do not rely upon a nonattendance of versatility, contact or data, but instead involve social procedures of avoidance and joining" as they adjust contingent upon the changing methods of fringe crossing. By and by, our examination shows that, pace Barth, there is a steady pressure in borderlands between the envisioned network of the country which is thrown in sharp alleviation at the outskirt, and the living network of trans-border communication where lived connections, regardless of whether they exist as recollections, offer a counter-account to the talks of othering.  

Borders in the Subcontinent

Sandeep Hazare Singh stated that Borders are a formation of human beings followed by conflicts between States and communities. The author in his article described the scenario of the partition of the Sub-continent. The political scenario that built up to divide the British ruled Indian sub-continent. The mobilization of Muslims in the sub-continent via Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the leader of the Muslim League, the result of the general election 1946 that panned out in success for Jinnah. The demand for Pakistan as a separate state was put forward. Considering that of all majority populated areas of Muslims to be included in Pakistan. The mass migration of 1947 which lead to several violent deaths, loss of property, family and division among various communities took place due to forced eviction from their ancestral area which was followed by the physical demarcation of the boundaries which resulted in partition of the subcontinent.

It was seen that not only the Muslim community faced displacement but the Indians who lived in Pakistan part of the sub-continent faced the same scenario of loss. The issues related to territory and changes in boundaries dates to Sir Radcliffe. The today’s known to be and accepted borders were created by Cyril Radcliffe, a British judge, who arrived in India in July 1947. Demarcation of borders at that time was a very extensive exercise that required a lot of attention and was legally drafted on pen and paper for mapping. The author traces back the history of the demarcation of the South Asian border between India and Pakistan. The article states the nature of the border which is very conflictual and has led to many territorial disputes even today. The British colonial rule and its decision-making power in the sub-continent has created never ending border disputes for Pakistan, Massive consequences such as the territorial dispute over Kashmir with India is still

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faced with headed backlash on the border. The study is a conceptual explanation of the emergence and process of the demarcation of the borders between the two countries. It points towards the history of conflict between the countries because of territorial disputes and the existence of Pakistan to the other side as flawed. There is no theoretical framework that supports the existence and functioning of the border from the authors point of view.19

Perceptions from the Middle Eastern Peripheries

Lisa Lenz in her study described the conditions and perceptions built by the communities between the people of Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The study entails a sociological approach in understanding people’s point of view on how they judge themselves and people across the border that separates them based on identities. The case study area taken is between the still relatively new recognized border region between Saudi Arabia and Yemen and the phases of its transition. Lenz defined the historical conflict of the region as, in 1934, the territory of Khawlānbi‘Āmir, one of the three major tribal confederations in Northern Yemen, which Ahmed’s (concerned primary data source) tribe belongs, has been bisected by the international borderline.

Four major phases were discussed in her paper in defining Saudi-Yemeni relationships through the years and the formation of the border and its aftereffects. These phases can be described as “The establishment of the border’s boundaries”, the second as “Saudi Arabia’s patronage policy”, the third phase as “The implementation of the boundary” that was carried out post the year 2000 and lastly the fourth phase as “The fortification of the border.”

The Yemeni-Saudi border from 1934 onwards has developed through several stages and subsequently for all time changed the relationship between the limit and its borderland tribes. The starting close co-relation between the Saudi government and the border tribes, which were conceded selective rights and integration into border negotiations, has been increasingly described by monitoring and control of border crossing exercises from the Saudi side. Furthermore, as of late, the pivotal rights of the borderland residents have been disregarded by the fortification of the boundary—a condition that has incited a few clans to effectively stand up to. As this evaluation has appeared, the advancement of the Yemeni-Saudi boundary is affected by the changed relationship between the Saudi state and the borderland inhabitants. The more tribal interests and participation were remembered for Saudi approaches, the more the common borderline has been acknowledged and supported by the

borderland clans. With the successive pushback of the border clans from securing the border and along these lines the rejection from the neighboring cycle, the border dispute has become considerably more perplexing. Lisa in her study defined all these elaborate phases of the border and the attitude developed of the people between the borders. The study is a historical analysis of the border with a sociological understanding which does not support any theoretical framework for the concern research.20

Data Analysis and Findings

The following section discusses the findings and their analyses of the perception of the borderland communities.

Response Rate

In-depth interviews were conducted residing in the borderlands of Pakistan-India and Pakistan and Afghanistan were approached. While some interviewees from areas that were unapproachable geographically near the border of Afghanistan were interviewed via zoom. These sample population comprised of adult males and Females ranging from the ages of 20 to 80. Ten individuals from each border were approached. The closest proximity recorded of the respondents from the border region was 6-7 kilometers in depth. The data was collected through stratified sampling using age, gender, and income groups to get a balanced response.

Distance from the Border

Distance from the borderlands is important in developing and understanding the lifestyle and choices made by the communities living near and away from the border. The proximity from the border determines the behavioral, cultural, governance level, and military impact on the communities and how these people perceive things around them. The people interviewed from the border of Pakistan and India fall about 10-12 kilometers from the border/International Border. While the people interviewed from the Pakistan and Afghanistan border live approximately 10-15 kilometers away from the borderland.

Awareness of the Meaning of Social Capital

When interviewed on the meaning and understanding of social capital many of the respondents knew the meaning of social and capital separately. After discussing with them along with the detailed definition, it was seen that most of the people defined social capital linked to development. The residents of the borderland community defined social capital as “Working together to achieve economic development”, “Development of community through skills used to generate money” & “Mutual growth through community opportunities”. The residents of the borderland community however perceived that there was so much value of them being treated as social capital by the state due to either the hostility of the borderland or the lack of resources for development in the region.

**Difference between Indo-Pak border and Pak-Afghan Border**

The border between India and Pakistan has always been categorized as a Hard border. The border between India and Pakistan has military-appointed on the border. The Line of Control (LOC) between India and Pakistan always has military troops covering the border from each side. These high-security parameters have made cross-border movements difficult. The Muslim respondents living near the borders collectively were of the view that the Indo-Pakistan border of the Sialkot and Narowal district has always been a war zone. Thus, the military conditions on the borderland are always hostile and active in combat. While the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan can be considered as a soft-border where cross-border movements and trade are easy and illegal, the porosity of the Pakistan and Afghanistan border makes the issue of Afghan refugees in the country uncontrollable. The respondents shared their collective views on both borders to be different because of different conditions and levels of governance and military control.

**Role of Media in Creating a Non-inclusive Perception**

From the interviews conducted at the borderlands of each case study region. The role of media and its recognition of borderland communities was dismal. There is no representation of activities or developments of the residents of the community in the media. According to the respondents of the study, there is little to no news on borderland community residents. One of the respondents stated that “The people living in the cities and their business is given more recognition as compared to our little village. People do not want to know about what we are up to; the village life does not interest these city folks.”

Another respondent living on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan border stated that “The media displays Afghan refugees

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21 Author interview with a local near the border of Narowal, Punjab, In Person, 18 November (2021).
to be a menace especially those who are stuck between the borders trying to get back.

They treat them as criminals.”\textsuperscript{22} While another stated: “The role of media is disappointing they have no interest in us and our problems. If we run out of livestock, we will not survive. The media will not say that we need help but blame the communities across the border that they killed us and run it in the new.”\textsuperscript{23} One respondent stated, “All we see on media is the war mongering or the headlines about various operations going on the borders” so this phenomenon compels the people living at the borders to think that they are not considered to be the part of the social capital by the state.\textsuperscript{24} Respondents are in an agreement that the media do not properly represent them, or show/discuss their issues. People living in the borderlands as displayed in the media are backward and the region lacks development in any form. The media portrays the borderland communities as marginalized and offers very less coverage to matters that are important to the communities. Thus, generation of social capital out of these borderlands is not even considered.

\textbf{Role of Government}

From the interviews conducted, people living on the borderlands perceive the role of state as subpar. People living on the borderlands of India and Afghanistan identify the role of government lacking in administration for them to be consider value of social capital as compared to people living in the cities. Residents of the borderlands of India and Pakistan define the border governance to be rigid. One respondent stated that: “The hostility between the border of Pakistan and India leaves very little room for change and developments. Every issue turns into a territorial dispute that can lead to more damage to the border and the borderland community.”\textsuperscript{25}

While another stated that: “People who live on the borderland of India and Pakistan know the realities’ of war and mass migration more closely and are impacted more deeply. If any of these incidents arise people living on the borders will be primarily affected. Their livestock, their homes, their lands, their means of

\textsuperscript{22}Author interview with a local near the border of Chaman Border, In Person, 22 November (2021).
\textsuperscript{23}Author Interview with a local near the border of Narowal, Punjab, In Person, 22 November (2021).
\textsuperscript{24}Author interview with a local near the border of Narowal, Punjab, In Person, 18 November (2021).
\textsuperscript{25}Author interview with a local merchant near the border of Punjab, In Person, 16 September (2021).
survival all will be compromised as compared to people living in the cities.”

On the case of Pakistan and Afghanistan border, one respondent spoke furiously: “The government will never prioritize us we are just extra people for them, what happens to us remains with us no one cares what we must suffer and how we will survive if a war arises. The Taliban’s will have no mercy.”

While another from the Pakistan and India border stated: “The people living on the borderlands here are something out of this world as compared to people living in the cities. It is already seen that there is a huge difference in treatment of the city people and the borderland people. We are rarely considered a priority to the government, if there are huge sums of money coming in as donations then maybe the state might give us a few peanuts for it.”

The respondents from the borderlands mutually share the sentiment that People living on the Indian and Afghan border both think that due to lack of governance and government outreach model to the peripheries are not considered as social capital by the state which reflects a non-inclusive approach at peripheries.

**Lack of Security and Community Development Initiatives at the Border**

From the interviews conducted it seems that the residents of the borderland community are deeply affected by the role of government and its administration at the borders. The borderland between India and Pakistan is a highly hostile region thus development or small changes such as installation of a tube-well being administered near proximity of the border can change it in a war zone. Disputes can arise between the communities residing in proximity to the borderland. The border between Pakistan and India (Sialkot) experiences high military activity making people, residing on the borderland, immune to uncertainty and chaos. The borderland community perceives themselves to be neglected in the form of any protection or developments due to the nature of the border.

One respondent from the Pakistan India border stated: “If war takes place on the border the cities dwellers won’t be as bothered as we are. Why? Because our income, movement and trade will be disseminated that less to survive on and feed our families”. While the borderland community residing near the Pakistan and Afghanistan (Chaman) border identify the role of government to be subpar in resolving matters relevant to development and facilitation. Despite the fencing of the borderland between Pakistan and Afghanistan the community falls under the refugees and migrant’s category. Pakistan has no official refugee policy that will

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26 Author interview with a local near the border of Narowal, Punjab, In Person, 18 November (2021).
27 Author interview with a local near the border of Narowal, Punjab, In Person, In Person, 18 November (2021).
28 Author interview with a local near the border of Narowal, Punjab, In Person, 18 November (2021).
cater to social and economic developments in the region of the borderland. Due to lack of security and community development initiatives at the border, the likes of which are rampant in the centers reflects that periphery are not the focal point of the state. The ongoing smuggling, human trafficking, threat to life, zero skill development and nonexistence of the community involvement when initiating various models of development clearly reduces the peripheral people to be subjects rather than active citizens. One respondent stated that “Once the war was started here, we had to leave our homes, land, and people with no remedies to be provided by the state let alone the other complimentary models for the citizens like education, health, and skill development. We feel like the 3rd class subjects of the state.”

Thus, the community believes that they have no value regarding the measure of social capital for the state.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this research conclude that the perceptions of the borderland communities from the regions of Pakistan – Afghanistan and Pakistan- India are impacted by the trifecta of media, role of government & lacking security and community initiatives. The respondents of the study have highlighted the role of each factor in the value of the community as a social capital. Value in social capital can be added to the community if these impact factors are resolved. The already marginalized border residents have been facing the constant trauma of war and displacement and have been bearing the huge influx of mass migration from across the border. This phenomenon further impacts their already deteriorated social capital value in comparison to people living in the hinterlands. It is important to understand that both borders of India and Afghanistan vary in definition/ category. The border between India and Pakistan is categorized as a hard border considering the hostility between the two neighboring countries. While the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a soft/ porous border due to the influx of people, refugees, and migrants across the border. The importance of social capital for borderland communities might be life changing if accurate measures are taken.

- According to the study, the formation of perception is influenced by a trilateral interplay involving government officials, media channels, and the security context of a specific region. The impact of changing political and military conditions is particularly profound on individuals residing in borderland areas, leading to perceptions that frequently diverge from those held by individuals residing in the hinterlands. To address the prevalence

29 Author interview with a local villager near the border of Chaman, In Person, 20 January (2022).
of unbalanced perceptions, it is crucial for these sources to establish effective collaboration and work together in a coordinated fashion.

- To counter the negative role of media in peripheries, more access to social media must be made possible. This can be achieved by simply giving access to the internet to borderland communities which will enhance better communication and popping out of various sources of info from the border. Furthermore, this tool will play a revolutionary role in enhancing skill development among the impoverished communities of the border.

- To ensure an inclusive approach to the peripheries, if the state does not have the capacity to be able to spend much, then the state must support private models to reach the peripheries. For instance, to alleviate poverty from the peripheral areas and spur reconnaissance growth and entrepreneurship, “Akhuwat” model of micro finance based on Al Karz e husna must be followed. The success rate of the Akhuwat reflects a hope that this model will show extraordinary results at the peripheries.

- To ensure a security and community development at the peripheries, state must not go towards the pre-packaged and imported models rather focus on the indigenous models of growth. Considering the peripheries are mostly based on agrarian economy, various technology sharing initiatives which are mostly inclusive of border communities could be initiated which will ensure a better yield for those communities plus will act as a trickle-down effect and spur growth in other sectors as well.

- To ensure a better outreach of governance model at the peripheries, state must introduce and implement effective and capable local government systems which can focus on the development and growth of local people.