

Building Community Resilience Through Collective Action to Overcome Social Fragmentation in Diverse Societies: A Sociological Perspective

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Introduction

Social fragmentation is one of the most vibrant concepts among the diverse societies in the world. As a result of social fragmentation, it leads to a breakdown of social bonds and unity. In urban sociology, this term describes the absence or underdevelopment of relationships between a society and specific groups within it, often based on differences in culture, nationality, race, language, occupation, religion, or income (Bradley 2015). Such fragmentation can result in diminished community ties, reduced trust, and a weakened sense of belonging among individuals. To address these challenges, building community resilience is essential. Community resilience refers to the ability of a community to effectively utilize its resources—such as energy, communication, transportation, and food—to respond to, withstand, and recover from challenges. In diverse societies, where social fragmentation often occurs due to differences in ethnicity, religion, or economic status, this resilience can be weakened as divisions hinder the ability of community members to work together. Collective action, where individuals collaborate towards shared goals, is one of the most effective ways to strengthen resilience, as it fosters unity and shared responsibility. From a sociological perspective, overcoming social fragmentation requires understanding the social dynamics that create barriers to cooperation. By addressing these divides and encouraging collaboration, communities can enhance their ability to collectively respond to and recover from adversity, thereby building stronger resilience (Ratner 2013).

Community resilience refers to the ability of a community to effectively use its resources—such as energy, communication, transportation, and food—to respond to, withstand, and recover from challenges. In diverse societies, social fragmentation can weaken this resilience, as divisions based on ethnicity, religion, or economic status hinder collaboration. One of the most effective ways to strengthen resilience is through collective action, where individuals work together toward shared goals. This collaboration not only enhances the community's

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ability to address problems but also fosters stronger social connections, which are key to overcoming the negative effects of fragmentation. By building trust and mutual support, communities can bridge divides, making them more capable of responding to adversity. From a sociological perspective, understanding the social dynamics that create these divisions and finding ways to promote unity are essential for fostering resilience and ensuring the community's long-term well-being.

Through the literature review, the research focuses on investigating the relationship between social fragmentation and community resilience in diverse societies. A systems approach will be employed to analyze how various interconnected factors, such as cultural traditions, economic conditions, and institutional policies, contribute to both the emergence of social fragmentation and the development of community resilience. The systems approach in this research will be used to analyze the complex interactions between different elements that contribute to both social fragmentation and community resilience. This method involves viewing the community as an interconnected system where cultural, economic, and institutional factors do not operate in isolation but influence each other. For example, cultural divisions might exacerbate economic inequality, which, in turn, could weaken institutional support for certain groups, leading to greater social fragmentation. By taking a systems approach, the research will look at how these factors interact as part of a larger social system rather than examining them separately.

The study aims to identify the most effective forms of collective action that can enhance community resilience by fostering cooperation and social cohesion. Furthermore, the research will examine specific case studies where collective action has successfully mitigated the effects of social fragmentation, providing practical examples of how communities can overcome these challenges. This will help to better understand the processes at play in strengthening community bonds and promoting long-term resilience.

This research is important because it helps to understand how social fragmentation affects communities and how resilience can be built in diverse societies. By using a systems approach, the study reveals how different factors are connected and how they influence each other. Identifying effective collective actions and examining successful case studies provide valuable insights into practical strategies for strengthening community bonds and overcoming fragmentation. This knowledge can guide policymakers, community leaders, and organizations in creating more effective solutions to build stronger, more connected communities. One limitation of the research is that it may not capture every factor affecting social fragmentation and resilience, as some elements might

be overlooked or not fully addressed. Case studies and data collected might be specific to certain regions or communities, which could limit the generalizability of the findings.

Methodology

The study adopts a systems approach to explore the interconnected relationships between society and specific groups, aiming to understand how these interactions influence community resilience in the face of social fragmentation. This approach treats society as a network of interrelated parts, where changes in one element—such as cultural, economic, or institutional factors—can affect others, thereby highlighting how different groups within a community influence one another. Initially, the study reviews existing literature on social fragmentation and community resilience to establish a solid theoretical foundation, identifying key themes relevant to understanding how fragmentation weakens resilience and how collective action can strengthen it. Subsequently, it incorporates qualitative case studies of diverse communities that have faced social fragmentation, providing real-world examples of responses to these challenges. The systems approach allows for a holistic analysis of these communities, examining how factors like cultural diversity, economic inequality, and institutional support interact to influence resilience. The data from these case studies is analyzed to identify patterns and key factors contributing to successful resilience-building, revealing that communities with strong institutional backing and active collective action initiatives are often better equipped to overcome fragmentation.

Results and Discussion

In today's diverse societies, social fragmentation is a growing problem. This happens when the connections that hold communities together start to break down, leading to weaker social bonds and less unity (Bruhn 2011). Fragmentation often occurs due to differences in culture, nationality, race, language, occupation, religion, or income, causing some groups to become isolated or marginalized (Lichter 2013). As these connections weaken, communities may experience reduced trust, fewer strong relationships, and a loss of belonging among individuals. To tackle social fragmentation effectively, it's important to use a systems approach. This approach looks at communities as networks of interconnected parts—cultural, economic, institutional, and social—that influence each other. By understanding these connections, we can better identify the causes of fragmentation and find ways to address them as a whole. Building community resilience, which is the ability of a community to use its resources to respond to and recover from challenges, is key to overcoming fragmentation. A systems approach helps to see how different resources and social structures work together,

giving a clearer picture of how to strengthen resilience. One of the best ways to build resilience is through collective action, where community members come together to achieve shared goals. Working together not only helps the community solve problems but also rebuilds the connections that have been weakened by fragmentation. This cooperation can restore trust, increase teamwork, and help people feel more connected to their community.

Conclusion

This research highlights the vital role of collective action in building community resilience and addressing social fragmentation. It shows that resilience is strengthened through proactive collaboration among diverse groups, supported by institutions, inclusive cultural practices, and collective initiatives. Tailored strategies that consider local contexts are essential for enhancing resilience, advocating for a cooperative framework that promotes dialogue and cooperation within communities.

Keywords: Collective Action, Resilience, Social Fragmentation, System Approach

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