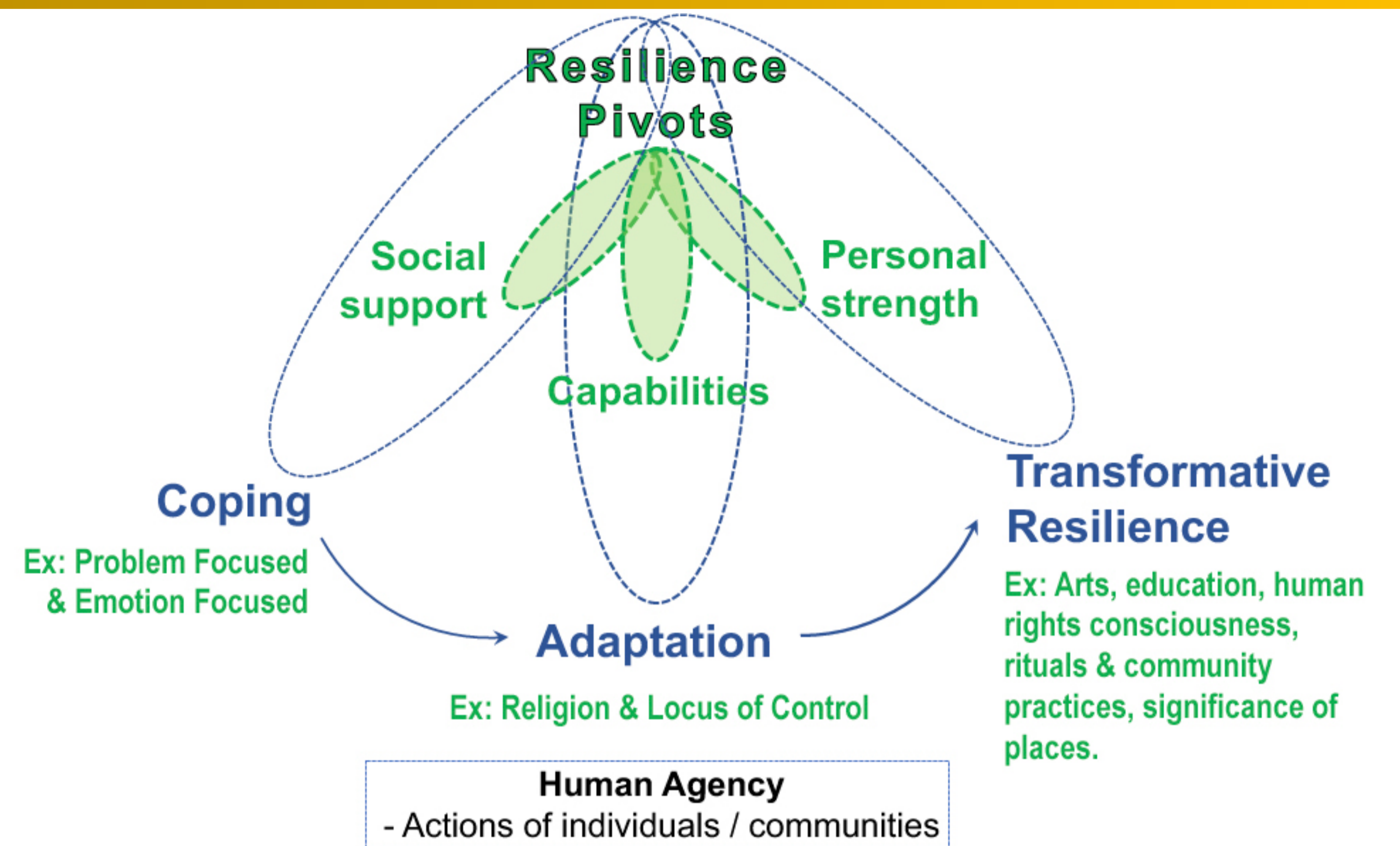
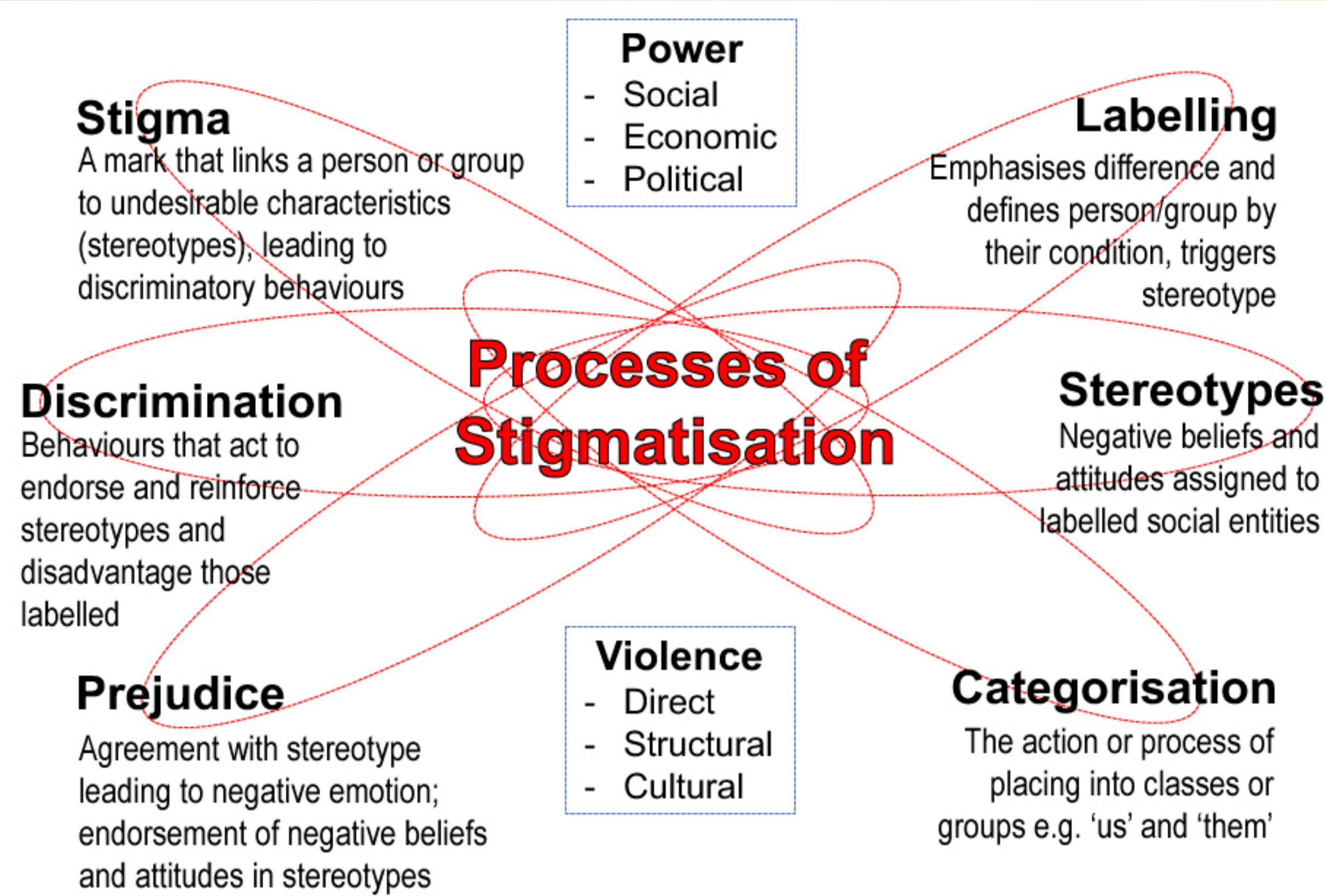


BEING A RESEARCHER IN STIGMATISED COMMUNITIES: INSIDER AND OUTSIDER REFLECTIONS

AIMS and OBJECTIVES

- Identify and assess forms and processes of stigmatisation and populations' responses in a multi-site case study: The Hazaras in Quetta, Pakistan, and Afro-descendants in Cartagena, Colombia at micro and meso levels
- Investigate how coping, adaptive and transformative resilience strategies are put in place through oral traditions and other cultural manifestations

Theoretical background: The dimensions of STIGMATISATION and RESILIENCE



Insider in Quetta

vs

Outsider in Cartagena

CONTEXT

- From the **Hazara** community; Quetta **home-city**
- First-hand knowledge of the **language, habits and customs**

- Lack of knowledge of **types of Afro-descendant** populations
- **Language** barrier

ASSUMPTIONS & EXPECTATIONS

- Fieldwork expected be relatively **straight-forward**
- Participants mostly assumed that I **knew what they were talking about** without giving precise details
- Most elders / leaders **expected to be interviewed** due to my family's connections
- Expectation to be introduced as the **daughter of my 'well-known' parents** rather than as a researcher

- Initially assumed to be a **white researcher**
- Expected to **write about the Nelson Mandela community** that is resilient against everything they have faced from displacement, assassinations to the constant stigma the neighbourhood faces
- Expected to be **mindful of narration** to avoid misunderstanding and **misrepresentation in research** and the continuation of stereotyping their rituals and customs

REALITY

- Had to obtain a **No Objection Certificate (NOC)** for the university and the Foreign Office
- Since my parents are politicians, I became **more visible in the field**, which meant more considerations towards:
 - ✓ How and where to conduct **interviews**
 - ✓ No possibility of a **daily routine and travel plan**
 - ✓ to protect myself as a **researcher** and the **participants** every step of the way
- More '**familiarity**' meant greater risk of '**repercussion**' on my family and its reputation
- Need to be more cautious so as to not **disrespect elders**
- More **open and less restrictive responses** when introduced as the daughter of a Hazara community member
- Perceived as an '**outsider**' on religious grounds since I was only maternally a Hazara Shi'a, while paternally a Punjabi Sunni

- Year-long process of **contacting** experts in the field, finding **gatekeepers, interpreters and referral points**
- Contacting them in advance helped in understanding the **context, and current realities**
- **Good relationship** with them meant that their presence in all the interviews to help with translation
- Participants felt necessary to educate me about their specific regions of **displacement**, their experiences of **forced migration**, their **rituals and traditions**
- Access possible only with the help of **community leaders**, which helped participants **trust** in me as a researcher
- Perceived as an '**insider**' through **shared experiences** of being from an ethnic minority group, from a tribal region whose ancestors have experienced forced migration, persecution and target killings, which **broke barriers** and interviews took place in their homes.

Blurred Boundaries

- Participants maintained contacts and *shared* regular updates post fieldwork to keep me informed and answer any queries
- The boundaries of an 'outsider' and 'insider' became somewhat *blurred*:
 - (1) in Cartagena due to shared experiences, such as forced migration and belonging to ethnic group, and
 - (2) in Quetta due to mix of Hazara (Shia) and Punjabi (Sunni)
- To ensure better learning process, fair data collation and analysis, and not to miss the object by being too far or ignoring it by being too close :
 - As an insider in Pakistan, I had to *distance myself*
 - As an outsider in Colombia, I had to *embed myself* in the community.
- Do the positionalities of the researcher have to be within the set boundaries of an *insider* and an *outsider* or is there a space between that is blurred? Is it influencing the way I am looking at the data today? Or because of the blurred boundaries, now I look at both data the same way, simply as a researcher and not as an insider or an outsider.