



Designing a Model of Strategic Resilience: The Case of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 12-Day War

Asadollah Kordanaj: Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management and Economics, Faculty member of Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

naeij@modares.ac.ir | 0000-0003-0540-6141

Abstract

Purpose: This study develops an operational and empirically grounded model of strategic resilience for the Islamic Republic of Iran in the context of a short-term, high-intensity military crisis. Focusing on the 12-day war, it examines how resilience was constructed and exercised at the nation-state level and seeks to clarify whether resilience functioned merely as a capacity for endurance or as a proactive, leadership-driven strategic capability.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research adopts a qualitative approach based on Thematic Analysis. A total of 37 official statements and documents issued by senior political, military, and cultural-social actors during the crisis were systematically analyzed. Using an inductive, multi-stage coding process—including open coding, thematic categorization, and synthesis—382 semantic units were identified and organized into 17 basic themes, 6 organizing themes, and 3 overarching dimensions of strategic resilience.

Findings: The analysis reveals that strategic resilience in this case is neither static nor reactive, but dynamic, hierarchical, and centered on strategic agency. The resulting model comprises three interrelated dimensions: Socio-Political Resilience (25.9%), which provides the enabling foundation through integrated leadership, unity of command, and national cohesion; Resilience in Strategic Agency (54.7%), identified as the core dimension, highlighting active deterrence, demonstration of response capability, strategic justification, and narrative management through public diplomacy; and Resilience in Foundational Dimensions (19.4%), which supports resilience through continuity of critical governmental and economic functions, support for affected populations, and the mobilization of semantic and psychological capital. Overall, resilience emerges as a capability activated by a central strategic actor that aligns leadership, hard power, soft power, and social capital into a coherent crisis response.

Practical Implications: The findings suggest that effective national resilience in military crises depends on leadership-centered coordination, credible deterrence signaling, narrative control, and the maintenance of public trust and service continuity.

Originality/Value: By deriving a strategic resilience model directly from real-time crisis discourse, this study offers a context-sensitive and empirically grounded contribution to resilience research, advancing analysis beyond abstract frameworks and organization-level perspectives. **Keywords:** Strategic Resilience, National Security, Strategic Leadership, Military Crisis Management, Strategic Agency, Discourse Analysis, Deterrence.

Keywords

Strategic Resilience National Security Strategic Leadership Military Crisis Management Strategic Agency Discourse Analysis Deterrence.

Introduction

In the contemporary strategic environment, characterized by escalating geopolitical risks and deep uncertainty, traditional crisis management approaches focused solely on prediction and response have lost their efficacy (Kitsing, 2022). In such conditions, "Strategic Resilience" has emerged as a high-level capability that ensures the survival and effective agency of nation-states in a turbulent world. The 12-day military conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel in 2025 provided a prominent example of a short-term, high-intensity crisis that demonstrated the importance of this strategic capacity. This crisis offers an opportunity for an in-depth study of a political system's ability to maintain cohesion and respond effectively to a major shock, particularly as the resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran against sustained external pressures has consistently been a subject of contentious debate (Mahmoudi Kia, 1401).

The concept of resilience, in its foundational definition, refers to a society that "absorbs temporary or permanent risks and rapidly adapts itself to changing conditions without losing its stability and functionality" (Ghiasvand, 1393, p. 1). However, the theoretical literature has moved beyond this static view, which considered resilience merely as the "ability to return to the initial state," and now focuses on a dynamic approach based on learning, adaptation, and strategic transformation after a crisis (Golvardi, 1396; Hepfer & Lawrence, 2022). In this evolved perspective, strategic resilience transforms a crisis from a paralyzing threat into an opportunity for regeneration and to "Bounce Back Better" (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). This transformation is achieved through processes such as innovation and "Metamorphosis," whereby a political system reinvents its structures and mental models to succeed in the post-crisis world (Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim, 2018). Therefore, the concept is not limited to mere survival but is an active, forward-looking, and proactive approach to confronting uncertainties (Ahangari et al., 1401), describing a system that can maintain its required operations before, during, and after unexpected events (De Galizia et al., 2016) or return to its pre-crisis state (Woods, 2015).

Despite this conceptual richness, a significant research gap persists regarding the operational mechanisms of strategic resilience within a real, short-term, and high-intensity military crisis. The absence of a systematic study that qualitatively extracts and models Iran's operational pattern of resilience from textual data during such a crisis is clearly evident. Most existing analyses have concentrated on technical-military aspects, paying less attention to the complex social, psychological, and managerial dimensions that form the bedrock of national resistance. Furthermore, the

current theoretical background, both domestically and internationally, has predominantly focused on presenting macro-level conceptual models (Neumann, 2024) or examining resilience at the level of firms and organizations. Without a comprehensive model that demonstrates which components were prioritized at the nation-state level during a short-term military crisis and how they interrelate, our understanding of Iran's strategic logic in managing this crisis would remain incomplete. This research endeavors to fill this gap by focusing on the direct analysis of the discourse of key actors on the scene of the crisis.

Accordingly, the primary objective of this research is to design a comprehensive, data-driven model of the strategic resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 12-day war. This model seeks to identify the key dimensions and components of resilience and to illustrate the hierarchical relationships among them, ultimately aiming to answer the central research question: What are the dimensions and components of the strategic resilience model of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the face of the 12-day.

1. Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

1-1. The Concept of Resilience

The concept of resilience, which in recent decades has become a key term in the social and strategic sciences, has its roots in the natural and engineering sciences. In its classic form, resilience referred to the ability of a system to return to its original state of equilibrium after enduring a shock or disruption. This engineering-centric perspective was focused on robustness and rapid recovery (Mentges et al., 2023). However, as the concept entered more complex domains, this static definition gave way to more dynamic viewpoints that emphasized learning, adaptation, and evolution (Koronis & Ponis, 2018).

This conceptual evolution aligns with a paradigm shift in the security domain. Given the unavoidable vulnerabilities in modern open and networked societies, the pursuit of "absolute defense" is not a realistic option. Consequently, the security paradigm has shifted from the ideal of "complete invulnerability" toward risk acceptance and strengthening the ability to cope with shocks. In such a context, resilience emerges as a central approach for managing uncertainty (Neumann, 2024).

1-2. National Resilience and Societal Resilience

At the macro level, resilience has been conceptualized as a national capacity for confronting major crises. This concept, known as national resilience or societal resilience, is based on a "whole-of-society" approach. This

perspective posits that resistance to modern crises requires the integrated participation of all pillars of the nation. This active participation elevates the populace from the status of potential victims to that of an equal partner and supporter for emergency response forces, creating a "force-multiplier effect" (Neumann, 2024).

One of the most comprehensive operational frameworks in this field is the "Rings of Resilience Model," designed by Neumann (2024) to build, strengthen, and sustain strategic resilience against deliberate threats (Figure 1). This model describes resilience not as a list of static dimensions, but as a dynamic, multi-layered system.

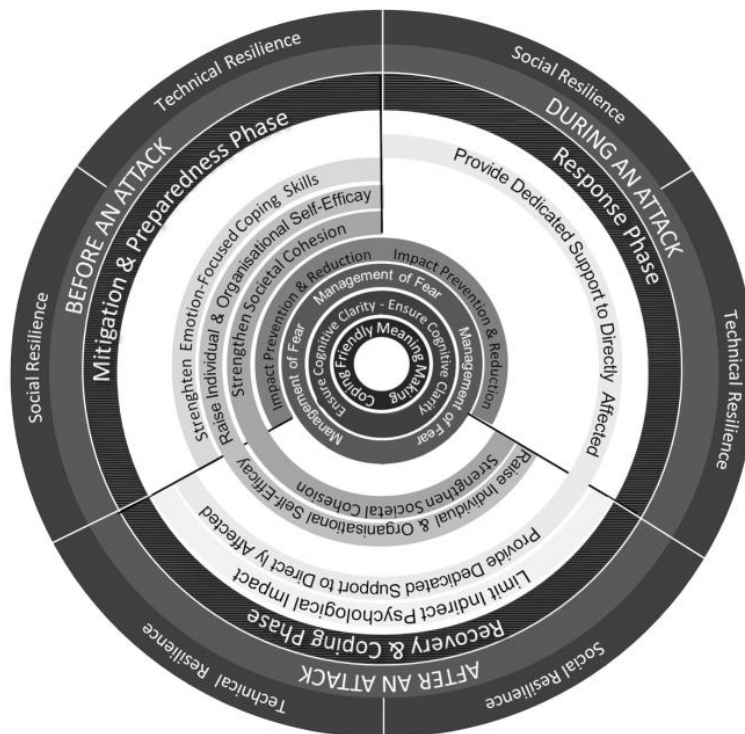


Figure 1: Resilience Loops Model (Neumann, 2024)

The structure of this model is based on organizing actions across three phases of a crisis: the mitigation and preparedness phase (before an attack), the response phase (during an attack), and the recovery and coping phase (after an attack). Within each of these phases, two key dimensions are distinguished: social resilience, which pertains to the social, psychological,

and cultural capital of the society, and technical resilience, which relates to physical infrastructure and management systems. The heart of the model consists of three central rings that define the primary objectives from the inside out: the central core is "Coping-Friendly Meaning Making," which is the ability of a society to make sense of a catastrophe through a powerful national narrative to neutralize the enemy's objective; the second ring is the "Management of Fear and Cognitive Clarity," which counters the enemy's psychological warfare by controlling emotions and providing accurate information; and the third ring is "Impact Prevention and Reduction," which focuses on practical measures to minimize damages. This model, particularly with its emphasis on the "meaning-making" core, provides a suitable framework for analyzing the findings of this research, which highlights the role of leadership and semantic dimensions (Neumann, 2024).

1-3. Strategic Resilience

At its most fundamental level, strategic resilience is defined as "the resilience of a society to premeditated disruptions and shocks through the acceptance of uncertainty," and it stands in opposition to "strategic vulnerability" (Neumann, 2024). While national resilience focuses on underlying capacities, strategic resilience pertains to the high-level capabilities of a system to lead and manage those capacities in crisis conditions. This perspective, moving beyond a defensive reaction, emphasizes proactive and forward-looking agency.

Modern literature conceives of strategic resilience not as a reaction to crisis, but as a dynamic and emergent property that is defined by the rate and continuity of innovations leading to value-creating strategic metamorphoses (Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim, 2018). In this view, the environment is assumed to be perpetually turbulent and unpredictable; therefore, resilience is defined by how an organization behaves under the constant assumption of these conditions, emphasizing action over reaction (Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim, 2018). From this perspective, crises are seen as "strategic inflection points" that create entrepreneurial opportunities for renewal and value creation. Thus, strategic resilience is inherently transformative and growth-oriented (Mafimisebi et al., 2025).

Recent research indicates that strategic resilience follows a configurational logic, meaning that the effectiveness of its constituent factors depends on how they are combined, rather than being the mere algebraic sum of their individual effects (Mafimisebi et al., 2025). This perspective challenges the idea of a single path to resilience, suggesting that multiple pathways exist. However, in all successful pathways, organizational slack

plays a vital role by creating a flexible safety margin that allows an organization to experiment with new options and alter its structure during a crisis (Mafimisebi et al., 2025). These configurational capabilities can encompass various practical dimensions. At the level of an organization or a system, these dimensions include efforts to maintain financial stability, operational stability, organizational stability, reputational stability, and business model stability (Rubakha et al., 2024). In specific circumstances, such as war, other dimensions like physical security and enhanced cybersecurity are also added to this set (Rubakha et al., 2024).

These practical and strategic capabilities are built upon four pillars or primary drivers: Preparedness, Responsiveness, Adaptability, and Learning (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). These four drivers, in turn, are grounded in a cultural and social capital foundation composed of three key attributes: the existence of Trust within the system, a strong and shared Organizational Identity, and an Open and Error-Tolerant Culture where mistakes are treated as learning opportunities (Koronis & Ponis, 2018). This demonstrates that strategic resilience is not merely a technical or functional skill, but a deeply social capacity.

Ultimately, a primary function of this proactive approach is to serve as a deterrence tool through a "benefit-denial" strategy. A resilient society, by credibly refusing to panic and by returning to normalcy quickly, denies the adversary their strategic success (i.e., inducing fear), thereby eroding their motivation for future attacks by rendering their tool ineffective (Neumann, 2024).

1-4. Literature Review

To review the existing literature pertinent to the research topic, similar titles were examined in reputable domestic and international information sources, from which the following articles were extracted.

Table 16: Literature Review

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
1	Master of Uncertainty: How Strategic Resilient Organizations Navigate Crisis	2025	Mafimisebi et al.	The results of the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) show that there are three distinct and sufficient configurational paths to achieving high strategic resilience in small and medium-sized enterprises. A key finding is

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				that "organizational slack" is a critical enabling factor in all successful paths but is not sufficient on its own. The research concludes that resilience emerges from complementary and interdependent combinations of capabilities, rather than a single factor.
2	Can national industrial investment funds enhance enterprise resilience?	2025	Wang, Niu, & Kang	The results specifically indicate that China's "National Integrated Circuit Industry Investment Fund (NICIIF)" significantly increases enterprise resilience. This enhancement is achieved through two primary mechanisms: improving access to financial resources and strengthening research and development (R&D) capacity. Furthermore, this positive effect is more pronounced in companies with weaker corporate governance and more intense market competition.
3	Factor analysis of financial performance and formation of strategic resilience in Ukrainian IT companies	2024	Rubakha et al.	The results of the factor analysis show that indicators such as profitability, asset turnover, financial stability, and cost structure have a significant impact on the net profit and revenue of Ukrainian IT companies during wartime. The research concludes that to maintain financial performance and achieve strategic resilience, companies must focus on developing long-term strategies centered on

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				financial, operational, organizational, and physical security.
4	A resilience glossary shaped by context: Reviewing resilience-related terms for critical infrastructures	2023	Mentges et al.	By reviewing 93 definitions related to resilience, this study shows that the concept is highly context-dependent and, for critical infrastructures, should focus on capacities such as shock absorption, adaptation, and recovery.
5	Exploring the intricacies of social intelligence, entrepreneurial orientation, and organizational resilience	2023	Taneja et al.	The research findings indicate that Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) has a direct, positive, and significant impact on Organizational Resilience (OR). Another key finding is that Social Intelligence (SI) plays a partial mediating role in this relationship. Therefore, organizations with a high degree of EO can further enhance their resilience by strengthening their social intelligence.
6	Geopolitical risk and uncertainty: how transnational corporations can use scenario planning for strategic resilience	2022	Kitsing	Strategic resilience is introduced as a key capability for confronting geopolitical risks, and scenario planning is proposed as a tool to strengthen it.
7	The Heterogeneity of Organizational Resilience: Exploring functional, operational and strategic resilience	2022	Hepfer & Lawrence	The main result of this paper is the conceptual redefinition of organizational resilience as a heterogeneous phenomenon divided into three distinct forms: functional, operational, and strategic resilience. Each of these three forms has its own unique foundations, dynamics, and outcomes. The

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				research concludes that future studies should target these distinct forms instead of a general concept.
8	Better than before: the resilient organization in crisis mode	2018	Koronis & Ponis	The result of this research is the presentation of a framework that views resilience as being beyond mere recovery. This framework is based on four key factors or "drivers" of resilience: preparedness, responsiveness, adaptability, and learning. The research concludes that these drivers require a cultural foundation based on trust, a strong organizational identity, and an open, error-tolerant culture to be effectively activated.
9	Innovation and metamorphosis towards strategic resilience	2018	Morais-Storz, Platou, & Norheim	This conceptual paper concludes that strategic resilience is a dynamic and emergent characteristic of organizations, defined by the "rate and consistency with which innovation leads to value-creating strategic metamorphoses." Achieving this type of resilience depends on a recursive cycle of problem formulation, innovation, and metamorphosis, which is itself influenced by organizational legacy and senior management.
10	Providing a Strategic Model for Measuring National Resilience	1401	Shahmohammadi et al.	The final result of this research is the presentation of an indigenous strategic model for measuring Iran's national resilience, which has eight dimensions (economic, social,

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
				cultural, political, defense, security, environmental, and science and technology), 23 components, and 83 indicators. This model is introduced as a tool for policymaking and improving governance.
11	An analysis of the effective factors in the resilience of the Islamic Republic of Iran against international economic sanctions	1401	Mahmoudikia	The results show that Iran's resilience against sanctions is based on three main components: 1. Discursive factors (such as the discourse of resistance), 2. Iran's domestic actions (such as strengthening good governance and economic diplomacy), and 3. Characteristics of the international system (such as multilateralism). The research concludes that policymakers should focus on strengthening constructive aspects and weakening destructive ones (such as corruption).
12	Providing a policy model for dealing with emerging epidemic diseases with a national resilience approach	1401	Ahangeri et al.	The result of this research is the presentation of a proposed policy model for confronting pandemics based on a national resilience approach. The research concludes that Iran was weak in the stages of prediction, foresight, and preparedness during the COVID-19 crisis and needs to strengthen these areas for future crises.
13	Designing a model for entrepreneurship development planning with a strategic resilience	1400	Zaheri et al.	The result of the research is the presentation of a conceptual model for resilient entrepreneurship development in tourism. The results show that factors such as an

No.	Research Title	Year	Researchers	Research Findings
	approach in tourism businesses			entrepreneurial mindset and institutional support, through specific strategies, lead to outcomes like sustainability, robustness, flexibility of businesses, and the flourishing of local economies.
14	Designing a strategic resilience model for active ecotourism businesses in border areas	1400	Zaheri et al.	The result of this research is the design of a paradigmatic model for the resilience of ecotourism businesses. Based on the results, strategies such as skill enhancement, branding, and creating a competitive advantage can lead to outcomes like sustainable security in border regions, social welfare, and the prosperity of the local economy.
15	Bureauphobia and Perceived National Resilience	1398	Molavi et al.	The results showed a significant and inverse relationship between bureauphobia and the perception of national resilience; that is, individuals with a negative view of bureaucracy assess national resilience at a lower level. It was also found that 31% of respondents were bureauphobics.
16	National Resilience: A Review of the Research Literature	1396	Gol-Vardi	This review research concludes that there is a significant gap in theoretical and empirical studies on national resilience in Iran. The review of global literature also showed that the concept of resilience is often broadly defined and its measurement tools lack sufficient validation.

Domestic research on resilience has primarily focused on the national level and in response to long-term and structural challenges. A significant portion of these studies has been dedicated to presenting conceptual and normative models for measuring or enhancing national resilience. For instance, Shahmohammadi and Khezri (1401/2022), with a comprehensive approach, have provided a strategic model with eight dimensions for assessing Iran's national resilience. In the same vein, studies like that of Mahmoudikia (1401/2022) have analyzed Iran's resilience against persistent pressures such as economic sanctions, identifying discursive factors and domestic actions as pillars of resistance.

International research on resilience, theoretically rich and extensive, primarily focuses on the enterprise and organizational levels. These studies view resilience as a dynamic capability that evolves through learning and adaptation. Koronis & Ponis (2018) consider it the ability to "bounce forward" after a crisis, based on four pillars: preparedness, responsiveness, adaptability, and learning. Morais-Storz et al. (2018) also define it as the result of "innovation and metamorphosis" for strategic reinvention.

More recent studies challenge the idea of a single pathway to resilience. Mafimisebi et al. (2025) show that multiple configurational paths exist, in which "organizational slack" plays a vital role. Hepfer & Lawrence (2022) also emphasize the heterogeneity of the concept by distinguishing resilience into three levels: functional, operational, and strategic. Although some studies have addressed the macro level, their focus is often on economic aspects (such as the impact of government investment on enterprise resilience by Wang et al., 2025) or managing geopolitical risks through scenario planning (Kitsing, 2022).

Ultimately, by reviewing the domestic and international literature, the distinction of this research becomes apparent in several areas. First, domestic research has primarily offered macro-level, normative conceptual models developed through elite interviews or the analysis of official documents. In contrast, the present study provides an operational model derived from the data of an actual crisis. Second, while the international literature is theoretically rich, its case studies often focus on resilience at the enterprise level or in the context of specific threats (like terrorism) or long-term crises (like pandemics). This research helps fill a significant gap by analyzing resilience at the nation-state level during a short-term, conventional military crisis.

Finally, this paper, through the direct discourse analysis of key actors on the crisis stage (senior political and military officials), instead of interviews

or surveys, demonstrates how various dimensions of strategic resilience are applied in practice and with what priorities. This methodological approach offers a direct and profound understanding of the logic governing crisis management at the highest strategic levels and constitutes the primary innovation of this research.

2. Materials & Methods

The present study is applied in its purpose and qualitative in its approach, employing a Thematic Analysis strategy to identify and design a model of strategic resilience for the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thematic analysis is a flexible yet systematic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), allowing the researcher to achieve a deep, multi-layered understanding of the phenomenon under study through immersion in the data. Generally, this method is utilized for purposes such as in-depth textual analysis, proper understanding of seemingly unrelated information, systematic analysis of qualitative data, and the transformation of qualitative data into a conceptual model (Boyatzis, 1998).

The data analysis process in this research was conducted using an inductive approach (from specific to general) and followed a systematic three-stage process:

1. **Open Coding (Text Decomposition):** In the first stage, each document was meticulously studied, and key concepts related to resilience were extracted. These concepts were recorded as descriptive initial labels (Open Codes) that were close to the original text.
2. **Developing Organizing Themes (Description and Interpretation):** In the second stage, the initial codes were grouped into broader conceptual categories based on semantic similarity. This process led to the formation of Organizing Themes, each representing a primary dimension of resilience.
3. **Designing the Final Model (Text Integration):** In the final stage, the organizing themes were compared, and logical connections between them were established. Through the synthesis and integration of these themes, a Global Theme, titled "The Strategic Resilience Model of the I.R. of Iran," emerged as the main dimension and core of the model.

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, the coding and categorization process at each stage was reviewed by a second researcher, and the results were cross-validated.

The statistical population of this research comprised all official texts, documents, and statements published by key political, military, and elite actors of the Islamic Republic of Iran within the 12-day crisis period. Given the nature of the research, purposeful sampling was employed to select sources that had the highest relevance to the topic and reflected the strategic perspectives of the state. The primary data collection tool was Document Mining from credible sources and the official portals of the relevant institutions. In total, 37 key documents were analyzed, the specifics of which are presented in Table 2.

Table 17: Profile of Analyzed Documents

No.	Name	Position (Title)	Number of Documents
1	Ayatollah Khamenei	Leader of the Islamic Revolution	4
2	Masoud Pezeshkian	President	5
3	Seyed Abbas Araghchi	Minister of Foreign Affairs	3
4	Ali Larijani	Advisor to the Leader of the Revolution	3
5	Major General Pakpour	Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC	6
6	Major General Hatami	Commander-in-Chief of the Army	5
7	Major General Mousavi	Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces	3
8	(A group of artists and writers)	Elites and Cultural-Social Actors	8
Total			37

3. Research Findings

This section presents the findings derived from the qualitative analysis of the documents. The process of thematic analysis began with the review of 37 key documents, and in the open coding stage, it led to the extraction of 382 unique semantic phrases. The significant overlap of concepts across various documents indicated that theoretical saturation had been achieved, thereby reinforcing the validity of the findings. Table 3 shows a sample of this process.

Table 18: Sample of the Open Coding Process

Code	Key Phrase from Text	Semantic Phrase
D0101	"It revealed its malicious nature... more than ever before."	Revealing the enemy's nature
D0102	"Striking residential centers."	Crossing red lines
D0214	"Life will become bitter for them, without a doubt."	Promising attrition and continuous punishment
D0505	"They thought a military collapse had occurred in Iran and that it lacked defensive power."	Narrating the enemy's miscalculation
D0610	"I assure the people that the government... will continue serving the nation."	Government's commitment to service continuity
D0710	"The Zionist regime is incapable of any action without America's permission."	Describing Israel as a non-independent actor
D0902	"If the people are with us, no problem will endanger the country."	Defining public support as a guarantor of national security
D1902	"He was the voice of Iran; the voice of Zaynab who does not let 'Karbala remain in Karbala'."	Framing media resistance within the Karbala narrative

In the subsequent stages of analysis, the semantic phrases were classified into 17 basic themes. Finally, these basic themes were categorized into 6 organizing themes and 3 global themes, which constitute the main dimensions and components of the "Strategic Resilience Model of the Islamic Republic of Iran." Table 4 displays the complete network of themes extracted from the documents.

Table 19, Network of Themes Extracted from Documents

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme	Frequency of Semantic Phrases
Socio-Political Resilience	Unity of Command and Integrated Leadership	Maintaining Structural Cohesion and Functional Continuity	27
		Narrative Management and Social Capital	14
	Social Cohesion and	Strengthening National	27

Global Theme	Organizing Theme	Basic Theme	Frequency of Semantic Phrases
	National Mobilization	Solidarity	
		Social Activism and Civil Resistance	8
		The Role of Intellectual and Cultural Authorities	2
Resilience in Strategic Agency	Active Deterrence and Symmetrical Response	Declarative Stance and Deterrent Warning	15
		Demonstration of Will and Response Capability	68
		Command and Control of the Operational Theater	2
		Strategic Justification and Legitimization	17
	Public Diplomacy and Narrative Management	Crisis Framing and Narration	59
		Activation of Diplomatic Capacities	28
		Persuading Public Opinion and Media Warfare	9
Resilience in Foundational Dimensions	Resilience in Economic Infrastructure	Continuity of Critical Government & Economic Functions	8
		Attending to and Providing Services for the Affected	2
	Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital	Honoring and Attributing Meaning to Martyrdom	20
		Reliance on Value-Based and Ideological Foundations	17
		Management of Emotions and Mobilization of National Sentiments	8
Total			382

3-1. Explanation of the Dimensions of Strategic Resilience

Hereafter, the three global themes that form the final model are explained in detail.

1. The First Dimension: Socio-Political Resilience (The Enabling Dimension) This dimension, accounting for 25.9% of all codes, focuses on the capacity of the political and social system to maintain internal cohesion, mobilize national resources, and manage the crisis in an integrated manner, serving as the enabling foundation and prerequisite for proactive agency. This dimension consists of two main components:
 - Unity of Command and Integrated Leadership: This component refers to the central role of leadership in creating coordination, maintaining structural stability, and managing the macro-narrative of the crisis. The data shows that one of the first actions in the crisis was to demonstrate the continuity of the system's functions and prevent a power vacuum. Actions such as the immediate appointment of successors for the martyrs (*"Their successors and colleagues will immediately resume their duties"*) are a clear example of maintaining structural cohesion at the highest levels, which prevents confusion within the country's managerial and social body.
 - Social Cohesion and National Mobilization: This component, which had a high frequency in the data, indicates the actors' emphasis on the role of the people as a key source of power. Concepts like the call for unity (*"The country's officials and all segments of the population stand behind the armed forces"*) and the highlighting of civil activism (*"The action of... the female TV presenter... chanting takbir..."*) show that national resilience in Iran is deeply intertwined with the activation of social capital and popular mobilization.
2. The Second Dimension: Resilience in Strategic Agency (The Core Dimension) This dimension, accounting for 54.7% of all codes, was the most central and prominent dimension of resilience in this crisis. This finding indicates that the dominant discourse during the war was agentic, based on counter-action, and focused on shaping the operational environment.
 - Active Deterrence and Symmetrical Response: This component, which has the highest frequency of all components (68 codes), focuses on demonstrating the will and capability for a military response. Statements guaranteeing a decisive response (*"The powerful hand of the armed forces... will not let them go"*) and justifying the legitimacy of military action (*"The Iranian nation..."*

also stands firm against an imposed peace") reveal a dual strategy: on one hand, reassuring domestic public opinion, and on the other, sending a deterrent message to the enemy.

- Public Diplomacy and Narrative Management: This component, also with a very high frequency, highlights the importance of the narrative war. The data analysis shows that a large part of the efforts was directed towards framing the crisis to one's advantage (*"It revealed its malicious nature... more than ever before"*), activating diplomatic capacities (*"It occurred while officials... were engaged in negotiations"*), and engaging in media warfare to counter enemy propaganda.
3. The Third Dimension: Resilience in Foundational Dimensions (The Supporting Dimension) This global theme, accounting for 19.4% of the codes, addresses the deeper underpinnings that make the other two dimensions possible and sustainable.
- Resilience in Economic Infrastructure: This component serves as the material foundation of national resistance and plays a vital role. This dimension focuses on "Maintaining Stability and Continuity of Critical Functions"; where the emphasis on the continuity of government services (*"I assure the people that the government... will continue serving the nation"*) shows that preventing disruption in public services and maintaining economic stability are considered key factors in supporting national resilience and public trust. Alongside this stability-oriented approach, the second component, "Resource Management and Support for the Affected," reveals the social and agentic aspect of this dimension. With an explicit directive for rapid aid (*"Officials... should be careful to... quickly attend to their situation and address all their needs."*), it highlights social responsibility and the strengthening of social capital in times of crisis.
 - Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital: This component addresses the intangible sources of national power that play a crucial role in a crisis. Attributing meaning to martyrdom (*"Several commanders and scientists were martyred."*), reliance on value-based foundations (*"Our cultural and civilizational wealth is hundreds of times greater than that of America and the like"*), and management of national emotions (*"This war... is full of lessons... that can create a new capacity for Iran's future"*) are

all strategies for strengthening the psychological capital and internal cohesion of society against the shock of the crisis.

Ultimately, the synthesis and integration of these three dimensions and their internal components form the final model of the Islamic Republic of Iran's strategic resilience, as visually depicted in Figure 2. This model indicates that resilience is not a singular attribute but a system in which socio-political cohesion provides the foundation, strategic agency seizes the initiative, and the foundational dimensions ensure its long-term sustainability and meaning.

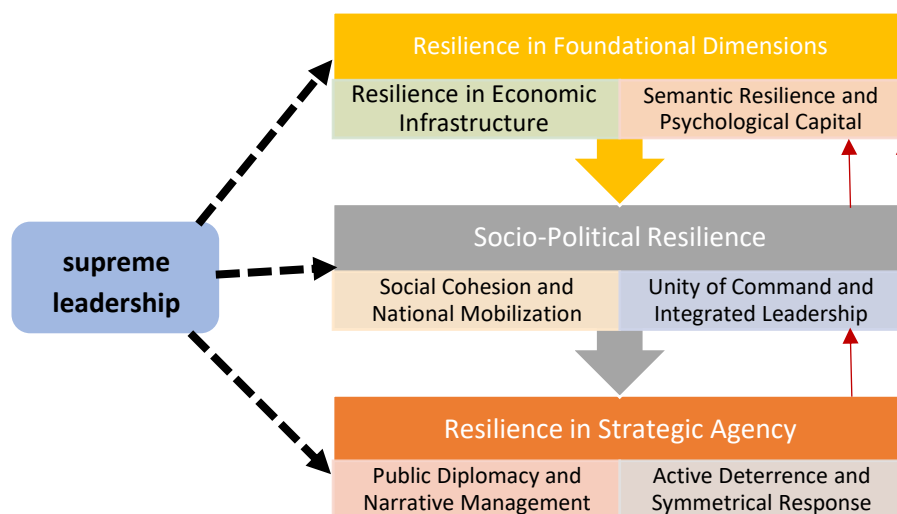


Figure 2: Final Model of Strategic Resilience in the Islamic Republic of Iran

4. Discussion & Conclusion

The research findings indicate that Iran's resilience model is a dynamic and hierarchical system that, contrary to passive approaches, is founded on proactive agency. The frequency analysis of the codes revealed that the "Resilience in Strategic Agency" dimension (54.7%) was significantly the most central dimension of the model, built upon the foundation of "Socio-Political Resilience" (25.9%) and supported by "Resilience in Foundational Dimensions" (19.4%). This structure is not merely descriptive but reveals a causal logic that constitutes the primary innovation of this research.

The model that emerged from this research establishes a deep dialogue with theoretical literature, complementing and operationalizing it. At the domestic level, studies such as Gol-Vardi (1396/2017) and Shahmohammadi & Khezri (1401/2022) have correctly emphasized the multi-faceted nature of national resilience. Our findings confirm this multi-dimensionality but go a

step further by revealing a causal and hierarchical relationship among these dimensions. While the existing literature presents these dimensions in parallel, our analysis demonstrates that it is the supreme leadership (part of the socio-political dimension) that activates popular cohesion, making this dimension a prerequisite and an enabling foundation for strategic agency.

At the international level, this model also corresponds well with theoretical frameworks. Neumann's (2024) "Rings of Resilience" model becomes effective when a "central core" links and aligns these rings; our findings show that the role of leadership is precisely to perform the function of that central core. Indeed, it is this "strategic leader" who plays the role of the "Master of Uncertainty," as described by Mafisebi et al. (2025) at the enterprise level, but in this case at the nation-state level, shaping the macro-orientation of the system in the face of geopolitical risks (Kitsing, 2022). Furthermore, the three-tiered model of Hepfer & Lawrence (2022) (functional, operational, and strategic) is clearly observable in our findings; infrastructural resilience (functional level) and military response (operational level) were both guided by macro-level leadership and semantic framing (strategic level). The innovation of our research lies in demonstrating that it is this strategic level (leadership) that directs and enables the other two levels, rather than merely existing alongside them. Finally, the "Semantic Resilience and Psychological Capital" dimension in our model is the practical translation of the concepts of "becoming better than before" (Koronis & Ponis, 2018) and "metamorphosis" (Morais-Storz et al., 2018). Our findings indicate that this "learning" and "post-crisis growth" does not occur automatically; rather, it is the supreme leadership that, by attributing meaning to the crisis (turning a threat into an opportunity), transforms it into a strategic asset for the future.

The key conclusion of this research is that the strategic resilience model of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a dynamic and causal system that is activated and directed by a central strategic actor, namely the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. It is this integrated leadership that provides the foundation for national cohesion and gives legitimacy and direction to strategic agency in its military and diplomatic dimensions. Therefore, resilience in this model is not a static attribute but a dynamic capacity that, in times of crisis, is activated by the supreme leadership and is formed through the constructive interaction of hard power, soft power, and social capital, which are mobilized by this leadership. This model represents a link between realities (agency), ideals (values), and leadership (the linking factor).

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