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Gender & Violence in Urban Pakistan

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Some facts

- Pakistan has the highest rate of urbanization in South Asia: annual urbanization rate of 3.06%.

- Present 185 million population projected to grow to 335 million by 2050

- In 2005, more than half of the total urban population of Pakistan lived in 8 cities.

- Our project has focused on two such cities: Karachi (21 million) & twin-cities of Rawalpindi-Islamabad (5 million).

- Three key challenges of rapid urbanization: urban governance, urban poverty, urban services delivery

- Another challenge: a society in transition.

- Young men and especially women who are of reproductive age and are not married. According to GOP (1998a; 1998b; 1998c), the marriage age for women in Karachi has gone from 18 years, (1982 Census) to 26 in early 2000s.

- Women are transgressing traditional boundaries of sexuality and married life, often in the face of intense violence and confinement at worst, and disapproving resignation at best. Old stories about Pakistani society are no longer working.

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G & V project (2013 – 2016)

- Project focused on the <u>material</u> and <u>discursive</u> drivers of gender roles and their relevance to configuring violent geographies.

- 12 low-income neighborhoods of the cities (rural-urban continuum).

- Primary objective: how the infrastructure/service environment shapes the way men and women interact with each other, sometimes resulting in violence.

- Social capital and vulnerability being key drivers of violence.

- We also investigated how different types of violence might be tackled.

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- Baseline survey of 2445 households (25 questions, 70 subquestions, mixture quantitative (inc Likert Scale) and qualitative questions

- Men and women 18 – 55 years

- Household-level vulnerability & capacity analysis (VCI)

- Ethnographies

- Participatory photography

- Focus Groups

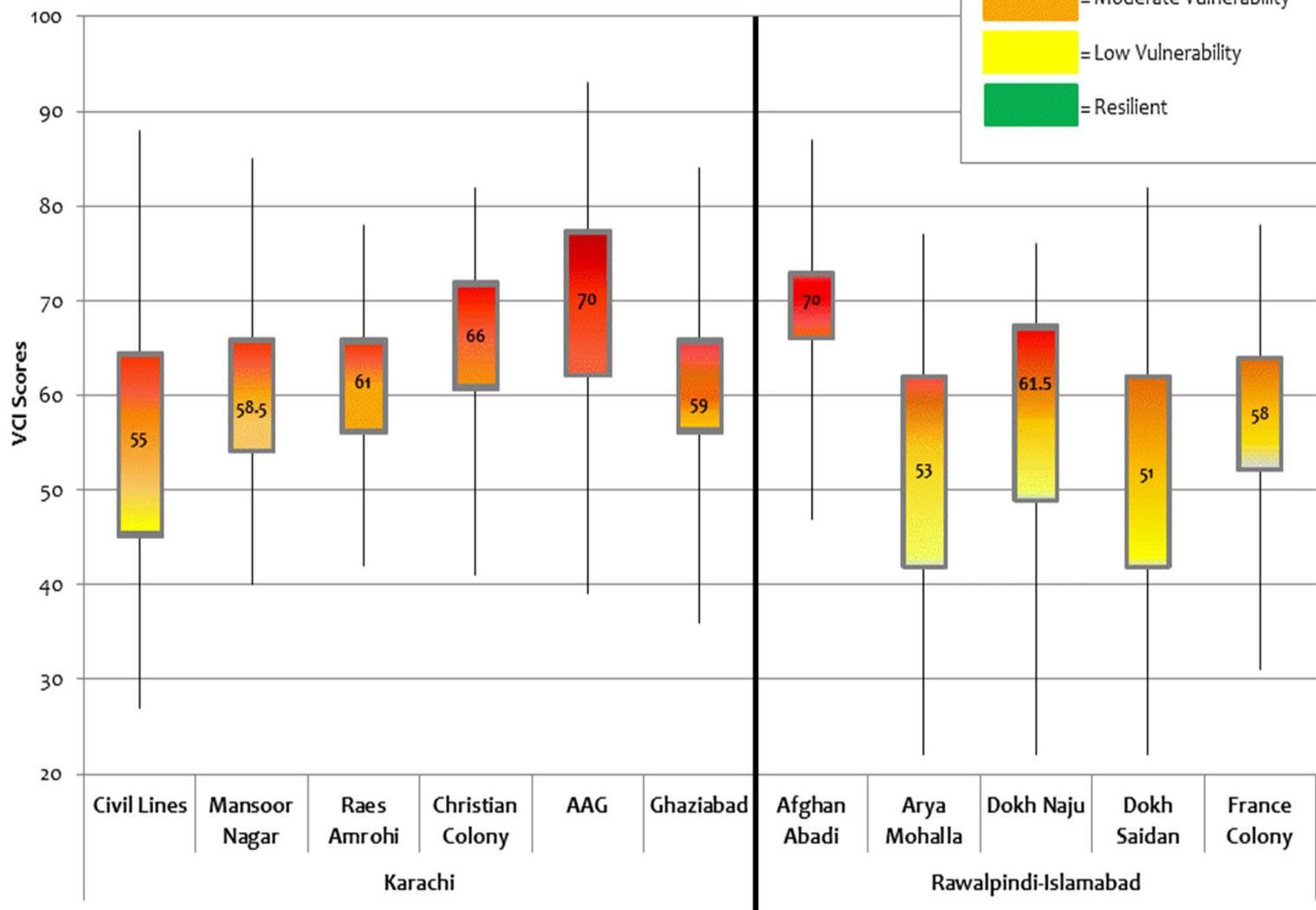- Media Monitoring

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Vulnerability + VCI

- What is vulnerability? Chronic state of being; susceptibility to suffer damage from an environmental extreme or a social hazard and the relative inability to recover from that damage. Recovery is mediated by intersectionality.

- A key feature of our findings: how social vulnerability intersects with access to infrastructure services and exposure to environmental and social hazards given political-economic contexts.

- We used quantitative VCI to undertake a quantitative assessment of household level vulnerability.

- We link gendered social vulnerability profiles with the incidence of violence in given neighborhoods and at the household and community levels, and with key drivers of vulnerability, e.g. infrastructure.

- Gendered social vulnerability produces conditions that perpetuate violence.

- **VCI is a good predictor of violence incidence**: the higher the vulnerability, the greater the incidence of violence.

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VCI – A practical tool

	Category of Vulnerability	Score (100)
Material Vulnerability		35
1	Income source	10
2	Educational Attainment	5
3	Assets	8
4	Exposure	10
Institutional Vulnerability		50
5	Social networks	10
6	Extra-local kinship ties	5
7	Infrastructure	16
8	Warning systems	4
9	Earning members in the household	5
10	Membership of a disadvantaged group (caste, ethnicity, religion)	5
Attitudinal Vulnerability		
11	Sense of empowerment	10
12	Knowledge (of the hazard)	5

Vulnerabilities and Capacities Index (VCI) Scores by Neighbourhood

- VCI Frequencies – Final Report (hardcopy) July 2017

- Institutional vulnerability appears to be higher for Karachi.

- Institutional vulnerability = Social capital + infrastructure component.

- In Karachi, infrastructure visibly inferior in poorer neighborhoods.

- Social networks embedded in dynamics of city's political-economy (local strongmen, political patronage, vote bank politics, claustrophobic game)

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Water + vulnerability + gendered violence

- Some of the biggest problems in people's lives are regarding water.

- Nearly 30% of average household income goes toward purchasing water.

- Correlation between access to infrastructures (water supply + solid waste) and experience of violence in 7/12 neighbourhoods.

- Those who report poorer access to water supply are more likely to report being victims of violence.

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Key findings re water

- In cities, securing water is a male role; expected to find and fund informal sources.

- Service gap capitalized upon by violent state and non-state actors.

- Pressure on males to pay dual cost of government bill and private tanker bill: "we have been crippled because of this"

- Women who leave home have their public, 'moral', reputations challenged; can expose them to violence from males who feel it is their role to police the streets.

- How can female headed households source water securely? Children are often left to do that work.

- Male-Male and Female-Female conflicts erupt between neighbors over communal water solutions in informal settlements.

- Male-male conflicts have sig. potential to scale-up.

- Males often express their frustrations through domestic violence against women.

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Key findings re transport/mobility

- Statistically significant evidence that, respondents who perceive poorer access to transportation, also tend to report being victims of violence

- Urban expansion, literally no service/access in peripheral settlements.

- Average commute for working class b/w 20 – 40 km.

- For working class women, access to the city is made possible by public transport.

- But accessing that facility is impossible to do, without exposure to sexual harassment, intimidation or the threat of violence.

- Problem >>> assumed that gender-based violence is normal and women's job to navigate it.

- Women's coping strategies not merely shaped by the threat of violence itself, but also by the gender narratives that promote it.

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Amna, 24 years, explained that women would feel less vulnerable if they hung out and travelled in groups when negotiating the city.

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Key recommendations

- Vulnerability and lack of access to infrastructure services such as water supply, are associated with higher violence levels.

- So the idea is that there are material drivers to violence, which if addressed could mitigate it.

- This finding is complementary to our documentation of gender discourses, which have to intersect with the material conditions to spawn violence.

- But even addressing just the material part could help break the coupling.

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- Vulnerability assessments as a routinized form of data collection could yield benefits for disaster risk management and response and resource targeting as well as help in understanding the geography of violence and its drivers.

- Equitable transport, solid waste disposal and domestic water supply for the poor are priority sectors.

- Gender 'empowerment' programs have to take into account the new realities of masculinity, femininity and aspirations of urban Pakistanis. They must be designed by or with these stakeholders in order to understand their needs and aspirations.

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THANK YOU!

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