CSSF Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

Understanding Gendered Implications of Serious and Organised Crime in Pakistan

Submitted: 01/12/22

Assignment Code: WPS008

WPS Women, Peace & Security Helpdesk

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Direct Audience:
CSSF Pakistan

Suggested Internal Distribution:
CSSF Teams

Confidentiality Status:
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Findings and Analysis

Introduction

The UK government defines serious and organised crime (SOC) as planned and co-ordinated criminal behaviour and conduct by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. They do not recognise national borders or national interests, and are deemed to pose a serious threat.[1] Organised crime includes drug trafficking, human trafficking and organised illegal immigration, high value fraud and other financial crimes, counterfeiting, organised acquisitive crime and cybercrime, and serious crime such as child sexual exploitation.[2]

SOC in Pakistan is largely controlled by mafia-style groups and criminal networks.[3] Many of these groups engage in criminality as a source of revenue, especially in regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Karachi, and are linked to corrupt government officials or political parties, and as such wield significant power over the democratic process.[4] In some areas, criminal groups exert much stronger control over security and justice systems than formal actors such as the police and courts.[5]

Many SOC groups have diversified criminal enterprises, encompassing all of the types of crime discussed in this paper, and more. The vast profits accrued, the political influence that they wield, and the ready access to weapons and willingness to use violence make these SOC networks hugely important and influential conflict actors in Pakistan, and in the wider region. The impact of SOC is highly gendered: the networks, and their corrosive impact on security and developmental outcomes, are sustained by patriarchal and regressive gender norms prevalent in the country.

This paper seeks to provide empirical information that would enable CSSF Pakistan to find key entry points to understand the gendered implications of SOC and enhance ongoing discussions around gender-sensitive SOC programming in-country. It is based on a review of publicly available literature on gender and organised crime from within Pakistan and outside, complemented by consultation from Pakistani context experts. While research on SOC is extensive, there is very little in the way of dedicated literature focused on the linkage between gender and SOC, particularly on Pakistan and as a result, the secondary literature reviewed includes statistical findings that are useful but several years old.

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[1] Crown Prosecution Service, UK government (2013). Archived on 30 May 2022: https://www.cps.gov.uk/organised-crime-strategy.

[2] Her Majesty's Government (2013), '*Serious and Organised Crime Strategy*', The Stationery Office Limited, United Kingdom.

[3] Global Organised Crime Index Pakistan. Archived on 30 May 2022 from: https://ocindex.net/country/pakistan.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Gendered analysis of types of SOC in Pakistan

Pakistan has the second lowest ranking out of 144 countries, and the lowest in South Asia, for gender equality, according to the Global Gender Gap report.[6] Deeply rooted patriarchal norms that encourage violent masculinities prevent progress on addressing persistent gender inequalities and violence against women and girls. While rights for women and girls are enshrined in Pakistan's constitution, they continue to face high levels of systematic violence and are frequently unable to access these rights in practice. Women are often unable to access formal security and justice institutions due to deeply embedded patriarchal norms. For instance, in a country where women make up only 1.8 per cent of the police force, a senior-ranking woman police officer from Pakistan stated that, *"*the biggest challenge we face is that women do not report cases of violence because of victim-blaming attitudes by police officers".[7] Women often do not have the financial independence to pursue a case within a complicated and expensive criminal justice system that already favours men.[8]

Rates of unpunished rights violations are particularly high in the federally administered tribal areas (FATA), where women are subjected to state-sanctioned discrimination, militant violence, religious extremism and sexual violence, and where women's rights activists, political leaders and development workers from marginalised groups are targeted with impunity.[9] In many areas, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA, informal justice mechanisms remain the dominant providers of justice for most people. However, these are, in most cases, also highly discriminatory against women. Frequently women are punished despite being the victims of violence. Therefore, unsurprisingly, many women and their families choose not to report cases at all.

The Global Organised Crimes Index (2021) characterises Pakistan as a country with 'high criminality' and 'low resilience' to manage the impacts of organised crime.[10] It is ranked 29th out of 193 countries in terms of prevalence and power of criminal enterprises, and 133rd out of 193 countries in terms of its institutional ability to manage the impacts of SOC networks.[11] It is difficult to disaggregate different types of criminal actors and activities in Pakistan, given the deeply intertwined nature of criminal enterprises and their close linkages to terrorist groups.[12] SOC groups involved in the drugs trade, for example, also drive arms and human smuggling networks. They carry out extortion and kidnapping as well as illicit timber logging. Nonetheless, the available evidence points to the following areas as being the most prevalent forms of SOC in Pakistan. Each of these areas of SOC enterprise have potential gendered implications.

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[6] https://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf.

[7] https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2021/06/pakistan-police-address-barriers-to-womens-access-to-criminal-justice.

[8] Ibid.

[9] International Crisis Group (2015), '*Women, Violence and Conflict in Pakistan*', Crisis Group Asia Report No 265; International Crisis Group; Brussels.

[10] Global Initiatives against Transnational Organized Crime, 2021.

[11] Ibid.

[12] F. Zahid (2018), '*Crime-Terror Nexus in Pakistan'*, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, Vol 10, No. 9: pp 18 – 23, International Centre of Political Violence and Terrorism Research; https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26487541.pdf.

The illicit drugs trade

The Golden Crescent of South Asia – a region comprising Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan – is a principal site for the production and distribution of opium and heroin. Over the past few decades, war, terrorism and a shifting political landscape have facilitated an active heroin trade throughout the region.[13] Pakistan is a major node in this trade. While itself it is not a major producer of opium, it is estimated that nearly half of the opium produced in Afghanistan transits through Pakistan on its way to international markets in Central Asia, Russia and Europe. According to the UN World Drug Report 2012, Pakistan provides a vital transit route for the smuggling of drugs worth up to US$30 billion from neighbouring Afghanistan.[14] Rates of heroin addiction in Pakistan are also high compared to the regional average, with significant negative social impacts for addicts, their families and their wider communities.[15]

Pakistan is a significant producer of cannabis, primarily grown in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which is used for both domestic consumption as well as export to markets in Southwest Asia and the Middle East.[16] It is also increasingly a site of production, transit and consumption of synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine and K-tablets.[17] The trade is largely controlled by the same groups engaged in the transit of opium.

Despite drug trafficking being a serious crime in Pakistan,[18] with amongst the highest legal penalties globally, it has remained a key security concern for several decades. Under the Narcotics Substances Act, 1997, the minimum penalty for anyone found in possession of more than 10 kilograms of illicit drugs is a life sentence, with a death sentence as the maximum penalty.[19] While these severe penalties should have served as a strong deterrent, the challenge continues to remain with the courts. Seventy per cent of death sentences handed down by the country's lower judiciary on drug smuggling charges are later quashed by the higher courts, according to Interior Ministry statistics from March 2014.[20] This trend continues to date as the judiciary is poorly resourced.

Gendered implications: A 2013 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) survey of drug use prevalence in Pakistan reports that "drug use in Pakistan is highly differential by gender".[21] It reports that while men are significantly more likely to use most types of drugs, women are more likely to misuse tranquilisers, sedatives and amphetamines. The report stresses that data on illicit drug use by women are likely to be a significant underestimation. The access to different drugs based on gender could be as a result of women having access to tranquilisers and sedatives through prescription, while men are able to purchase illicit drugs, such as cocaine, more easily due to access to cash and increased mobility within insecure locations. Women are also much less likely to be able to access treatment for drug abuse compared to men. In addition, drug dependence is reportedly very high amongst the transgender and the *khwaja sira* community,[22] with most

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[13] https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/pakistans-drug-habit-is-endangering-the-region.

[14] UNODC (2012), UN World Drug Report 2012, United Nations. A more recent data can be found here: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-social-sciences/government-society/publications/narcotics-smuggling-briefing.pdf

[15] J.T. Quigley (2014), 'Pakistan: The Most Heroin-Addicted Country in the World', 24 March 2014: The Diplomat; Raesa Fatima (2021), 'Drug Abuse: Unstated Challenge to the Progress of Pakistan', 4 December 2021: Daily Times, Pakistan.

[16] UNODC (2020), UN World Drug Report 2020, United Nations.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Aside from other national legislation, Pakistan signed the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime in 2000.

[19] Hands off Cain (2015), *"2015 Report on the death penalty worldwide",* UN OHCHR. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/DrugProblem/HandsOffCain.docx.

[20] Ibid.

[21] UNODC (2013) archived om 27 May 2022 from: https://www.unodc.org/pakistan/en/drug-use-in-pakistan-2013-survey-reveals-high-levels-of-drug-use-and-dependency.html.

[22] Members of the *khwaja sira (hijra*) subculture in South Asia, born as males but identifying as third-gender, two-spirit, bi-gender, or transgender women. The *hijra* sub-culture has its own indigenous language known as *faarsi kalaam*, and their own

having no access to any kind of professional help due to a lack of societal acceptance and ostracisation.[23] However, there is a lack of official data on drug use within gender minority groups.[24]

While it is difficult to find specific data for Pakistan, evidence from other contexts indicates that in countries with high levels of social and gender inequalities, women are at greater risk of becoming dependent on drugs.[25] In countries with large gender disparities in access to healthcare, for example, women are more likely to self-medicate with illicit drugs such as hashish, marijuana and opium (especially when they are prevalent in the context) than men. This is a pattern observed in Pakistan and elsewhere in South Asia.[26]

Traditional gender norms may also make it difficult for men and women who use drugs to seek help and break out of destructive patterns – potentially making them more vulnerable to other harms. Drug use by women, for example, is often seen as contravening their traditional roles as mothers and care givers.[27] This is likely to create strong barriers to many women admitting to being drug users and seeking treatment as the fear of stigma attached to their families prevents them from seeking help via treatment facilities, even if they are keen to access them. Women who use drugs may also be more likely to suffer from intimate partner violence and other forms of gender based violence, as well as being at higher risk of infectious disease.[28] Gender norms may also prevent men from seeking support, given the centrality of strength, self-reliance and upholding the 'protector' role in conceptions of masculinity.

At the global level, there is evidence that women often play an active role in the international drug trade.[29] The factors that influence the types of roles, levels and prevalence of women's participation and leadership of drug trafficking networks is, however, poorly understood. It is likely to be highly context specific, with socio-economic, political and organisational factors playing a role. Gendered perceptions of women as being 'care givers' and SOC 'victims' may also lead to assumptions that SOC is primarily the domain of men and that women either do not have a role in carrying out SOC or have few opportunities to attain mid to senior level roles within drug trafficking networks. Such assumptions may be simplistic, and research into this topic may be needed.

Trafficking in people, kidnapping and extortion[30]

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mores, norms and traditions. Aurat Foundation (2016), 'Silent no More: Transgender community in Pakistan: A research Study; Faris A. Khan, "Translucent Citizenship: *Khwaja Sira* Activism and Alternatives to Dissent in Pakistan", *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* [Online], 20 | 2019, Online since 12 March 2019, connection on 28 May 2022. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/samaj/5034; DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/samaj.5034.

[23] Aurat Foundation (2016) 'Silent no More: Transgender community in Pakistan: A research Study', Islamabad, Pakistan.

[24] Ibid.

[25] World Drug Report 2018 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.XI.9).

[26] Ibid.

[27] Kensy et al., (2012), "Drug policy and women: addressing the negative consequences of harmful drug control", Briefing Paper (London, International Drug Policy Consortium, 2012).

[28] World Drug Report 2018 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.XI.9).

[29] UNODC (2022), 'Women in the cocaine supply chain: Cocaine insights3', UNODC, Vienna: March 2022.

[30] Trafficking is defined by a supplementary protocol to the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as "Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use by force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving and receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or

Pakistan is a source, destination and transit country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced begging, child labour and organ removal.[31] While most cases of human trafficking are internal, there is evidence of Pakistanis also being trafficked abroad and subject to forced labour, primarily in the Middle East and Europe.[32] Figure 1 illustrates the main transit routes starting in or passing through Pakistan. Estimates of the numbers of people trafficked are hard to verify, with most analysts agreeing that it is a very substantial number, which sustains an economy worth many millions of dollars per year to SOC groups.[33]

Demand for the 'services' of human smuggling networks in Pakistan has increased in recent years, as ever greater numbers of people have sought refuge from persecution or access to improved standards of life in western countries. Refugees from across the South and South East Asia region, including Afghanistan, often transit through Pakistan on their way to other countries. Trafficking networks are most prevalent in Balochistan province, and the income generated plays an important role in the broader political economy of the province.[34]

Pakistan was placed on the Tier 2 watchlist in the US State Department's 2019 report into Trafficking in People (TIP). If it slips to Tier 3, the consequences of a ban on foreign assistance, restriction on loans, and trade restrictions with the US and the European Union will be implemented, including the removal of Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP++) status for Pakistan and further Financial Action Task Force (FATF) restrictions. Therefore, Pakistan is making all efforts to enact and enforce the Prevention Trafficking of Person Act, 2018.

Kidnapping and extortion are also rife in Pakistan. In some cases, state security actors and officials (e.g. from law enforcement and local customs/taxation departments) have been implicated in kidnapping and extortion activities, further undermining confidence in the formal governance system.[35]

Gendered implications: Patriarchal gender norms and inequalities create major barriers for women, girls and men from marginalised groups to engage in political, economic and social processes in Pakistan.[36] This creates both push and pull factors that mean people become victims of, or active participants in, trafficking networks, and in some cases both.

Factors pulling vulnerable groups towards SOC: Poverty, marginalisation and socio-economic inequality within Pakistan contribute to gender-differentiated impacts of SOC, with women, girls, boys and young men from marginalised groups and ultra-poor populations required to navigate complex conflict risks, putting them in danger of getting trapped in SOC networks. SOC networks are known to target vulnerable women and girls from marginalised communities in Pakistan, particularly with the promise of employment and paid labour. UNODC estimate that 59 per cent of Pakistani victims of TIP are women or girls.[37] Many have been trapped into bonded labour in the agriculture and micro-enterprise sectors,[38] with many also subjected to sexual abuse. Most receive meagre or no wages at all, despite making a significant contribution to Pakistan's rural economy.[39] Meanwhile, most women in Pakistan do not possess a national

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other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs." (United Nations, 2000; Reynolds and McKee, 2010).

[31] UNODC (2021) GLO.ACT report.

[32] GITOC (2021),'Global Organised Crime Index 2021', Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime

[33] A World Bank study places the numbers at roughly 300,000 people per year (World Bank, 2018, A migrants journey for better opportunities; the case of Pakistan), although UNODC and other sources refrain from citing numbers given the challenges and vast degree of error inherent in such assessments.

[34] Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (2020), '*National Initiative against Organised Crime in Pakistan, Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Pakistan*'.

[35] Global Organised Crime Index Pakistan. Archived on 30 May 2022 from: https://ocindex.net/country/pakistan.

[36] UNODC (2018), 'Global Report on Trafficking in Person', United Nations.

[37] UNODC (2018), 'Global Report on Trafficking in Person', United Nations.

[38] HRCP (2022), '*Modern Slavery Trafficking in Women and Girls in Pakistan*'; CAMP (2009), '*Trends and Causes of Women Trafficking in NWFP*', archived from: http://www.camp.org.pk/wp- content/uploads/2016/08/Trends-Causes-of-Women-Trafficking-in-NWFP-Pakistan.pdf.

[39] UNDP, Pakistan National Human Development Report, 2020.

identity card, which limits their ability to access formal employment and many social services, making them more vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking with the promise of employment.[40]

Economic opportunities elsewhere in Pakistan or abroad attract many young and older men facing poverty and economic hardship seeking a better life.[41] Men and boys may also become victims of trafficking and smuggling networks as they may face particular pressure to engage with TIP networks as a means of allowing them to live up to the masculine conception of being the 'breadwinner'. Pressure to provide for the family or even to be able to hold down a job play an important role in asserting economic power within families and in the community, and this can put ultra-poor and disenfranchised young men at risk of either participating in crime or trapped as victims of SOC. An EU-funded analysis of referral pathways, for example, notes that "trafficking for labour exploitation is of particular concern and may be linked with emerging trends of international trafficking of Pakistani men for labour exploitation".[42]

Factors pushing vulnerable groups to SOC*:* Harmful socio-cultural norms and unequal gender practices perpetuate violent masculine behaviours. For instance, the practice of child marriage, and abducting young girls for marriage, is being used by SOC networks, whereby 'clients' from within the country or abroad purchase young girls from impoverished areas and marginalised communities; this is a key driver of TIP in Pakistan.[43] Harmful but prevalent attitudes, such as the belief that younger brides make more obedient and compliant wives, increase demand for child brides, and the networks that can provide them. Hundreds of Pakistani Christian girls have been sold as brides and trafficked to China and elsewhere in recent years.[44] Within Pakistan, girls and young women have been kidnapped and abducted and forced into marriage.[45] Some evidence suggests that SOC networks also target children whose parents are separated as they are seen as being more easily influenced, and then they are trapped in abusive relationships.[46] Meanwhile, SOC networks in Punjab reportedly service a market for young boys (aged between 2 and 11 years old) to act as jockeys in the camel racing industry in Gulf states, although international pressure has resulted in a marked decline in recent years.[47] Despite evidence on women, children and men being trafficked and/or women and young girls being forced into marriage being widely available, statistical data on how women are working as organisers in trafficking was not available for Pakistan, and nor was a desegregation of statistical data. Further research and analysis on this is required.

Members of the *khwaja sira* community (intersex, transgender and gender-nonconforming people) may be particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking and begging mafias within Pakistan. Pervasive socio-economic exclusion of the *khwaja sira* community pushes them to take risks for survival, often leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. A study by Aurat Foundation found that sex work, dancing and begging were the three biggest sources of income for transgender women, for example, particularly in the cities. Many transgender individuals in Pakistan have been ostracised by their families and much of wider society, and lack access to justice via formal mechanisms.[48] With the justice system already overloaded and

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[40] 42 in UNODC (2018) report cited above.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings and Organised Crime – Phase 2 (THB/IFS/2).

Overview of the Referral, Assistance and Protection Systems for Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Pakistan.

[43] Noor Education Trust (2008), '*Brides for sale: Internal trafficking nexus at a glance'*.

[44] AP News, "*Pakistani Christian girls trafficked to China as brides*", May 7, 2019; The News, 629 Pak women sold as brides to Chinese in 18 months, 5 December 2019. ; Human Trafficking (Editorial) Dawn Aug 30 2019, https://www.dawn.com/news/1502550.

[45] S. Hossain and Turner (2001), '*Abduction for Forced Marriage: Rights and Remedies in Bangladesh and Pakistan'*, InterRights;

A. Qaisrani, S. Liaquat and E. Khokhar (2016), '*Socio-Economic and Cultural Factors of Violence against Women in Pakistan'*,

Working Paper.158: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Pakistan.

[46] Ali, Syed Rashid, and Niaz Muhammad. (2014), '*Child Trafficking: Analysis of the Leading Familial Determinants*', FWU Journal of Social Sciences 8, no. 1: 36., cited in UNODC GLO.ACT.

[47] A 2013 report by Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid reported that as many as 19,000 boys had been trafficked to the Gulf as a result of this trade. Cited in National Initiative against Organised Crime Pakistan: Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Pakistan (pg. 6).

[48] Aurat Foundation (2016).

inefficient, women and marginalised groups such as the *khwaja sira* are often left behind. For instance, just over 3,000 judges in Pakistan are responsible for handling over 1.7 million pending court cases. There appears to be little research focused on the links between gender minority groups and SOC in Pakistan, however.

Evidence from other countries points to the role that gender has in driving participation in TIP networks. Women are recognised as having a more prominent role within this area than other types of SOC, fulfilling roles such as recruiting other women into sex work, overseeing brothels or playing 'support' roles.[49] Some evidence suggests that women may be more likely to rise to 'leadership' roles in TIP networks (although this is not clearcut). It seems likely that women do have opportunities to fill these roles in the Pakistani context, although there is little research to draw upon.

Arms trafficking

Illicit weapons are widely available in and often trafficked out of Pakistan to neighbouring countries. Large quantities of weapons are produced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (most notably Darra Adam Khel and Peshawar), many of which have been used in domestic and regional violent acts, including crime, political violence and acts of terror.[50]The vast stockpile of weapons generated by the conflict in Afghanistan, including many provided to Afghan forces by US and NATO allies, may also provide opportunities for Pakistani based arms traffickers.[51] It is important to highlight that efforts to contain domestic insecurity in recent years have resulted in a decrease in the volume of arms trafficking in Pakistan. However, the Global Initiative on Transnational Organised Crime still assesses that the illicit arms trade poses a "significant threat to the country's stability".[52]

Gendered implications**:** The availability of firearms increases vulnerability to violence for all groups in society; however, the nature of these impacts is often gendered. At the global level, most homicide victims and perpetrators are men, especially when firearms are used. When considering the killing of intimate partners and family members, in which most victims are women, men were more likely than women to use a firearm.[53] In one study carried out in Pakistan, it was found that women felt they were in danger not only because of gun violence but also because of physical abuse. It was found that guns are used to threaten women within the family more frequently than they are used to kill.[54] Firearms may also be involved in femicides as well as to intimidate or coerce women and girls to act against their wish; such cases are severely under reported, particularly in conflict contexts with harmful patriarchal norms.[55]

An Aurat Foundation gender analysis[56] found that the possession of firearms is intimately connected to broader conceptions of masculinity in Pakistan. For many men, masculinity is associated with the concepts of aggression, dominance, strength and control, and closely tied to a man's ability to defend the honour of his family, tribe or community, including through violence. Access and a willingness and ability to use weapons is therefore considered to be a marker of masculinity for many.[57]

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[49] See K4D report referenced in the ToR.

[50] GITOC (2021), 'Global Organised Crime Index 2021', Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime

[51] https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-s-abandoned-weapons-cache-lucrative-business-smugglers-trouble.

[52] GITOC (2021), 'Global Organised Crime Index 2021', Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime.

[53] UNODC (2020), 'Global Study of Firearms Trafficking' United Nations, New York.

[54] Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. 2013. Chapter 2: Too close to home – Everyday dangers, small arms survey 2013. Cambridge University Press. Archived from WILPF, 4 May 2016, 'The Impact of Firearms on Women', https://www.wilpf.org/the-impact-of-firearms-on-women/.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Aurat Foundation and Information Services Foundation (2016), 'Masculinity in Pakistan: A Formative research Study', Islamabad: Pakistan.

[57] Ibid.

Money laundering

The possible social and political costs of money laundering, if left unchecked or dealt with ineffectively, are serious.[58] According to research conducted by the Asian Development Bank, organised criminal organisations can infiltrate financial institutions, acquire control of large sectors of the economy through investment, or offer bribes to public officials and governments. The economic and political influence of these criminal organisations can weaken the social fabric, collective ethical standards and, ultimately, the democratic institutions of society. This criminal influence can undermine countries undergoing a transition to democratic systems as well as those with functioning democratic systems. Most fundamentally, money laundering is inextricably linked to the underlying criminal activity that generated it; laundering enables criminal activity to thrive.

Pakistan is ranked 28 out of 110 countries on the Basel AML Index, indicating very high rates of money laundering and risks of terror financing.[59] It is estimated that up to US$10 billion is laundered in Pakistan each year, in an industry that involves thousands of people.[60] Many of the profits generated by SOC networks in Pakistan are laundered through the real estate sector, both in Pakistan and abroad.[61] In 2018, the government of Pakistan identified more than 10,000 properties owned by Pakistanis in the UK and Dubai with potentially criminal money. Foreign exchange companies also provide a significant channel for laundering money.[62]

Recent efforts, largely driven by international pressure, to tighten up regulation have resulted in gradual progress. But rather than pursuing illicit profits, recent policies have largely sought to redirect these back into the domestic economy as a means of stimulating economic growth in what has been a largely stagnant economy.[63]

Gendered implications: The scale of money laundering in Pakistan, and the broader corrosive effects that it has on governance, the tax base and investor confidence, mean it is a significant barrier to economic development and poverty reduction efforts in the country. In Pakistan, women and children are disproportionately impacted by poverty, and show worse developmental outcomes when compared to men across almost all indicators (economic, political, education and health).[64] Although there are no specific studies on the gendered impact of money laundering in Pakistan (to our knowledge through secondary data review), it is reasonable to infer that the corrosive impacts it has on economic development are likely to impact on women and children from already economic disadvantaged communities more than men.

Studies from elsewhere indicate that the vast majority of criminals convicted for 'white collar crimes', including money laundering, are men. According to a research report exploring gender and money laundering, statistics show that women

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[58] ADB (2003), '*Manual on Countering Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism*', Regional Technical Assistance No. 5967: Countering Money Laundering in the Asian and Pacific Region.

[59] Basel AML Governance Index, 2021 https://index.baselgovernance.org/ranking.

[60] Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2001), 'Money Laundering and Financial Crimes', Narcotics Control Reports: 2000 INCSR, 01 March 2001, US Department of State.

[61] Center for Governance Research (2021), 'National Internal Security Policy: Annual Report 2021', Pakistan.

[62] SOC groups purchase foreign currency in the open market, much of which is sent abroad through Hawala/Hundi system. The same amount is sent back to Pakistan through Telegraphic Transfer, allowing groups to avoid formal banking channels, thus saving tax and earning maximum profit.

[63] Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2001), '*Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*', Narcotics Control Reports: 2000 INCSR, 01 March 2001, US Department of State.

[64] Hafiz A. Pasha. (2020), 'Pakistan National Human Development Report 2020', UNDP Pakistan.

pose a significantly lower crime risk than men.[65] In Pakistan, few women hold leadership or 'mid-level' positions in key sectors implicated in money laundering (e.g. real estate), and may therefore be assumed to not play a leading role in facilitating money laundering. However, this is an assumption that should be tested and interrogated carefully. Existing research into this could not be found.

Cybercrime

Pakistan has experienced an 'IT revolution' since 2013.[66] There are now more than 188 million mobile phone subscribers, more than 100 million of whom have access to 3G or 4G networks, and over 110 million broadband subscribers.[67] The exponential growth of internet use has not only improved quality of life for many but also opened up new opportunities for SOC networks operating out of the country. Incidents of cybercrime, such as online financial crimes, harassment and child pornography, have reportedly increased in Pakistan.[68] SOC networks have also made use of increased internet penetration to expand existing markets, for example, selling drugs online, extortion, pornography and child sexual abuse, as well as setting internet-based traps to attract people into human trafficking schemes. Criminals are also increasingly making use of electronic money for laundering services, including through the use of cryptocurrencies, similar to global patterns of money laundering. Hackers based in Pakistan have been responsible for bringing down official websites in Pakistan and India, as well as recruiting vulnerable young men and channelling resources to 'extremist' groups.[69] While the overall value of cybercrime in Pakistan probably remains relatively low compared with other SOC categories explored here, this is likely to become more significant as the digital economy grows.

Gendered implications: According to the Digital Rights Foundation, a Pakistani civil society organisation, "even when women do have access to technologies, they are subjected to online violence that is markedly different from the experience of men. Online violence against women includes an array of behaviour, such as and not limited to, blackmailing, non-consensual access to and distribution of personal information, impersonation, defamation, threats and gender-based bullying. While there are several motivations behind online violence, gender is the primary one and women are often the main target of it."[70]

Cybercrime opens up new avenues for trapping vulnerable people, particularly young women and men into TIP networks, abusing, harassing or blackmailing people based on gender identity or sexual orientation, and attacking women's rights organisations, activists, journalists and civil society organisations. Online harassment against women and girls is a serious problem in Pakistan,[71] targeting women leaders, activists and political actors, as well as fomenting hate speech directed towards marginalised and ethnic groups. While it is not certain whether a majority or any of the online hate speech is systematically being perpetrated by organised groups, there is a likely link given the proximity of organised criminal groups

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[65] AFI Global Standards Proportionality Working Group (2018), '*Gender Considerations in Balancing Financial Inclusion and Anti-Money Laundering and Countering The Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT)*', Guideline Note No. 31:November, Alliance for Financial Inclusion and UN Capital Development Fund.

[66] A. Majid (2018), '*Pakistan's digital revolution is happening faster than you think*', 22 November 2018: World Economic Forum.

[67] Internet Society '*Combining Revolutionary Technologies to Grow a Better Future*', Digital Dera: Sowing the Seeds of Connectivity CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, Geneva.

[68] https://cgr.com.pk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PB-Cyber-Crime-in-Pakistan.pdf.

[69] A. Matthew (2017), 'India-Pak Cyber War is no longer funny', National Herald India, 27 April 2017; IANS (2022), 'Meta says it has cracked down on Pakistani hackers targeting Indian officials', CNBC, 5 Augsut 2022; UNODC and UN Counter-Terrorism Task Force (2012), 'The Use of Internet for Terrorist Purposes', United Nations, Vienna.

[70] Digital Rights Foundation (2017), '*Online Violence Against Women in Pakistan: Submission to UNSCR on Violence Against Women*', Pakistan.

[71] M. Mohsin (2016), '*The Cyber Harassment of Women in Pakistan*', The Diplomat: 16 April 2016.

to political stakeholders and the proclivity of criminal groups to attack journalists and activists that either advocate or report against SOC, corruption and human rights violations.

Serious and organised crime as a driver of conflict

The corrosive impact of SOC in Pakistan on the quality of governance, the health of the economy and the lived security of the population risks exacerbating many of the core drivers of conflict in Pakistan today. Despite the wealth of literature on gender and violence in conflict and 'post-conflict' settings, the gendered root causes of serious organised crime, links between it and gender-based violence, and women's roles and participation in violent criminal and proscribed groups have not been sufficiently scrutinised.[72]

Political and criminal actors have developed deep and often mutually dependent relationships with each other in Pakistan. Political leaders have become adept at using criminal groups as a means of furthering their domestic or international agendas. Political parties in Karachi, for example, have not only regularly employed violent gangs to intimidate or attack opponents and extort residents but also to deliver services, guarantee 'security' and establish legitimacy.[73] The state has also shown an unwillingness to address this, and at times has provided support to, criminal groups that are felt to align with broader foreign policy objectives, especially those that are regarded as working to counter Indian interests and influence in the region.[74] The leaders of SOC groups, meanwhile, often benefit from political patronage and effective impunity. In practice, political and criminal groups have become so interconnected that distinguishing between them becomes fraught.[75] Women and men from marginalised communities are not represented and heard in political decision-making while they are the most affected in terms of unequal access to resource and opportunity. The impact of insecurity, violence and crime are therefore exacerbated for them and, as mentioned above, often contribute to the push and pull factors of SOC. While at the same time, it is mostly women and men from poorer backgrounds who are the most vulnerable when it comes to the push factors of organised crime and are easily fallible when apprehended by the state security.

The scale of the profits accrued by SOC networks, and their ability and willingness to use violence, has had a significant impact on the Pakistani economy, helping to entrench poverty and economic inequality between groups and regions in the country, negatively affecting women and men from marginalised and disenfranchised groups. Insecurity and economic volatility have acted to deter Foreign Direct Investment into the country, contributing to a sustained period of economic stagnation and persistently high unemployment. An inability – and unwillingness to rein in SOC in Pakistan could result in the country losing preferential access to EU markets, while the implications of downgrading Pakistan's FATF rating could be significant for the economy. Meanwhile, many jihadi and anti-state 'terrorist' networks generate significant income through their close alignment with SOC networks (e.g. by taxing and regulating the production of drugs). Within a context of a high level of economic disparity, it is not unreasonable to infer that it will be mostly the political and military elite (and mostly men) that stand to profit from instability and insecurity, while the already vulnerable women, men and children that have faced systemic economic and political exclusion continue to suffer the negative impacts of economic fragility and instability. For instance, the negative impacts of price inflation on disenfranchised and marginalised women and men are much worse compared to those for privileged, educated women and men from urban city centres and those who are more resilient to economic crisis.

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[72] Louisa W. and Zahbia Y. (2022), 'Organised Crime and Conflict: Implications for Peacebuilding', Saferworld, London

[73] Hussain and Shelley (2016) Karachi: Organised Crime in a Key Megacity.

[74] GITOC (2021), 'Global Organised Crime Index 2021', Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime.

[75] Hussain and Shelley (2016) point to the case of the People's Aman Committee (PAC), a Baluch drug gang, employed by the PPP to act as its enforcer in Karachi, and to challenge the hegemony of MQM supporting gangs. In time, however, PAC stood its own candidates in legislative elections. In PAC controlled seats, crime rates plummeted and the proceeds of drug money were invested into local services. Hussain and Shelley (2016) Karachi: Organised Crime in a Key Megacity.

SOC in Pakistan also has a significant impact on regional and international peace and conflict dynamics. The flow of drugs, people and arms through Pakistan, for example, are having serious impacts on the security and wellbeing of communities all across the region and the world.[76] Equally, the power and prevalence of SOC in Pakistan is also in large part the result of the persistent demand for illicit goods including tax-evasive luxury items, primarily from western countries, that emanate from or transit through Pakistan. Secondary evidence on gender-differentiated demand for these goods from western markets was not available to analyse how women and men participate or are affected by this, but it can be inferred that this demand might be from within families that have increased purchasing capacity and higher income.

Gender inequality, sustained by regressive and patriarchal gender norms, is a key driver of conflict in Pakistan.[77] The analysis presented here demonstrates that SOC impacts are themselves highly gendered, with women, children and marginalised and ultra-poor communities being most vulnerable to the negative impacts of SOC activities. SOC networks are also sustained by and benefit from these norms, creating a self-perpetuating cycle that works to entrench conflict. The lack of gender-responsive security and justice systems serves the same political elite, leaving the disenfranchised and women, marginalised men, children and *khwaja sira* unheard and their concerns unaddressed. Developmental outcomes will continue to be skewed/unequal? for these groups unless insecurity and instability are addressed in an inclusive manner.

[76] The 2011 World Development Report identifies drugs as one of the main "drivers of conflict at the global level", World Bank (2012) World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development.

[77] See WPS helpdesk (2022) Gender and Conflict Analysis at the National Level (Pakistan) for detailed analysis of gender and conflict.

National and international efforts to address SOC in Pakistan

The recently published Pakistan National Security Policy (NSP 2022–2026) and the National Internal Security Policy (NISP 2018–2023) for the first time recognise and lay out a co-ordinated approach to addressing the diverse threats presented by SOC. These have led to a national framework to fight SOC, composed of four objectives:

- Preparing policy and legislative instruments and proper resource allocation to fight SOC;
- Reducing the conducive environment and opportunity to operation SOC through legal enforcement;
- Pursuing intelligence-based mapping of SOC criminal networks and their operation linkages; and
- Protecting individuals, society, businesses and other groups from exploitation by SOC criminal networks.

The NSP builds on and is supported by a range of sectoral policies that focus on countering threats posed by different types of crime. These include the National Anti-Narcotics Policy, 2010; the National Action Plan, 2016, for counter-terrorism; the National Internal Security Policy; and the National Policy on Countering Violent Extremism, 2021. There are subsequently many legislative frameworks and bodies in place, but their capacity and effectiveness in combating SOC in a coherent and complementary manner remains questionable.

Gender considerations are included in the NSP. It places a strong emphasis on ensuring the Women, Peace and Security agenda is translated into action and is committed to ensuring the "integration of gender equity into national security narratives through full and meaningful participation of women in decision-making, law enforcement, justice sector, and peacekeeping".[78]

Relevant laws and regulations aimed at criminalising action in each of the SOC include:

A. **Legislation and bodies focused on countering the drugs trade**: The Anti-Narcotics Force, established in 1994, which polices the application of the Control of Narcotics Substance Act, 1997, and the Control of Narcotic Substances (Amendment) Act, 2020, as well as other drugs-related legislation. In 2000, special narcotics courts were also established in all provinces, and Islamabad aimed at ensuring the quick prosecution of drug cases in the country. A brief review of these did not unearth evidence that gender considerations have been integrated.[79]

B. **TIP legislation**: The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018, and The Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018. These laws empower law enforcement agencies to prosecute the organised gangs perpetrating and benefitting from these crimes, while providing safeguards to the rights of victims of human trafficking and smuggled migrants.[80] The Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act does not have any gender

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[78] National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022–2026, https://onsa.gov.pk/assets/documents/polisy.pdf - cited in WPS Helpdesk (2022) Gender and Conflict Analysis at national level (Pakistan).

[79] It is possible that a more comprehensive and targeted review of the legislation would identify gender specific provisions. However, this is beyond the scope of this analysis.

[80] UNODC country page for Pakistan.

specific provisions, but The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act does include special provisions for trafficking women and children, including provision of harsher punishments for perpetrators.[81]

C. Anti-money laundering bills: Pakistan has been designated a 'grey list' country under FATF. This has created impetus for the government to pass several far-reaching pieces of legislation focused on money-laundering, corruption and preventing illicit financial flows out of the country.[82] This includes the Anti-Money Laundering Law Act, 2010 (amended in 2020); Criminal Laws (Amended) Bill, 2021; The Financial Institutions (Secured Transactions) (Amendment) Bill, 2021; The Mutual Legal Assistance (Criminal Matters) (Amendment) Bill, 2021; The Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2021; and The Foreign Exchange Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2020. A brief review of relevant legislation did not unearth evidence that gender considerations have been integrated.[83]

D. Cybercrime legislation: The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016, is the main legislative tool targeting cybercrime. It is broad in scope and includes provisions for enabling international cooperation.[84] Recent efforts to amend the act were struck down by the High Court on account of its potential impact on the right to freedom of expression.[85] This act does not include any gender specific provisions.[86]

At the international level, Pakistan is party to most relevant treaties related to SOC, including the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (including the Palermo Protocol on TIP[87]), UN Convention against Corruption, the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, and each of the relevant UN conventions focused on tackling the global trade in illicit drugs. Pakistan is a signatory to the 2001 Convention to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, but not to the Arms Trade Treaty. Pakistan has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, 2000. It has co-operation agreements with most relevant international bodies tasked with tackling transnational SOC, including INTERPOL and FATF, and has extradition treaties with numerous countries in North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

While the national and international legal frameworks are quite comprehensive, and some progress has been made (e.g., in arms trafficking and arguably in certain types of money laundering),[88] overall implementation has been weak. Efforts to enact legislation have been hindered by both institutional frailties within the criminal justice and security system, as well as high levels of political corruption and the vested interests of power brokers in the country. Too often, anti-corruption measures have been aimed at political opponents, and do little to address the drivers of corruption.[89] Geo-political

[81] https://senate.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1533270017_228.pdf.

[82] https://na.gov.pk/en/bills.php?status=pass.

[83] It is possible that a more comprehensive and targeted review of the legislation would identify gender specific provisions. However, this is beyond the scope of this analysis.

[84] Centre for Governance Research (2022) Cybercrime: a new frontier of Organised Crime.

[85] International Federation of Journalists (2022) Pakistan: PECA ordinance overruled by Islamabad High Court.

[86] https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1462252100_756.pdf.

[87] According to UNHCR, the Palermo Protocol is "the most important international instrument to combat trafficking" UNHCR (2014) International Instruments Concerning Trafficking in Persons.

[88] APG (2021), 'Mutual Evaluation of Pakistan: 3rd Follow up Report', Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering, Australia.

[89] GITOC (2021), 'Global Organised Crime Index 2021', Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime.

incentives are also at play, most notably the Pakistani government's tolerance of anti-Indian criminal groups operating from Pakistani territory, where they are seen as serving the security interests of the state.[90]

Furthermore, the Pakistani government's approach to addressing SOC has been driven primarily by a deterrence-based strategy.[91] There is very little focus on crime prevention policies and strategies. The prison system, for example, is focused on a punitive rather than a rehabilitative approach, and social and economic development efforts are not targeted at addressing drivers of SOC at the community level. Law enforcement and social support mechanisms aimed at helping victims of crime are generally of poor quality. The Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime reports, for example, that "Pakistan is one of the countries doing the least to aid victims of modern slavery in the Asia-Pacific region".[92] It has been argued that state policy is, in fact, more focused on diverting criminals into political militia or 'jihadi' groups that can be used to further Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy objectives, rather than preventing and rehabilitating people engaged in criminal activity.[93]

Some efforts have been made to integrate a gender-sensitive approach into elements of the criminal justice system. Provincial governments across all regions of Pakistan have launched dedicated 'gender protection units' and gender desks within police stations, aimed at improving women's access to and trust in the police. However, criminal justice and police services continue to be dominated by patriarchal norms, and gender inequality remains extreme.[94] The UN, for example, reports that less than two per cent of women in Pakistan who experience violence seek help from the police.[95] Members of the *khwaja sira* community, meanwhile, often face abuse and harassment by police, and very rarely report crimes to the police.[96] Urgent action is needed to tackle gender inequality within the criminal justice system if the gendered impacts of SOC are to begin to be addressed.

[90] T. Midgley (2016) Strained neighbours: The impact of Afghanistan's transition processes on conflict in Pakistan, Saferworld.

[91] According to the National Institute of Justice, "Focused deterrence strategies are problem-oriented policing strategies that follow the core principles of deterrence theory." See Midgley et al (2014) Identifying approaches and measuring impacts of programmes focused on Transnational Organised Crime.

[92] GITOC (2021), 'Global Organised Crime Index 2021', Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime.

[93] Ibid.

[94] A report by RSIL cites Superintendent of Police and former Director of the National Police Academy, Maria Mahmood, who reveals that the most serious challenge she faces as a female officer is that "women do not report cases of violence because of victim-blaming attitudes by police officers". RSIL (2022) The case for effective, gender-responsive policing in Pakistan.

[95] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2016) The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics.

[96] Aurat Foundation (2016) (transgender research).

Conclusion

It is clear that there are many major gaps in available research focused on the gendered implications of SOC in Pakistan. These gaps reflect the challenges that researchers into SOC face in other contexts, such as the inherent lack of transparency about financial flows, social dynamics and political factors that drive and sustain SOC networks (and which are necessary for SOC to flourish). The gaps are magnified when considering the gendered implications of SOC. Most studies on SOC focus on the experiences of men, by men, and tend to explore their role as leaders or bosses in hierarchical SOC networks. Meanwhile, widely held perceptions that research into criminal activities is too dangerous for women further limit the space for women to participate fully in organised crime scholarship.[97] These global dynamics are highlighted further in the context of a deeply patriarchal society such as Pakistan. There are very few women working as researchers in this space today in Pakistan, and it is likely that those who are face significantly greater barriers to being published than their men counterparts.

Sexual and gender minorities, including the *khwaja sira* community and other gender minority groups such as women and men from different ethnic groups and religious groups, are largely absent from the research into SOC in Pakistan. This again reflects global dynamics in this research field. The social stigma and prevailing gender norms make it likely that these communities are particularly vulnerable to being pulled into the criminal economy in Pakistan. How and what the implications for policy and programming might be is an area worthy of further study.

Notwithstanding these challenges, some common themes do seem to emerge. It does seem clear, for example, that women and girls from economically and socially marginalised communities are amongst the most vulnerable to becoming direct or indirect victims of SOC in Pakistan. Gender is, however, only one of several identity markers that influence how vulnerable people are to the effects to SOC in Pakistan. Other factors that may be as important include social class, ethnic background, and whether the person is a member of a minority religious group.

A closer interrogation of existing data and statistics related to crime might shed more light on some of the issues and gaps identified here.[98] It may, for example, allow for identification of whether women, girls or boys from certain communities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of or likely to be engaged in SOC activities. However, it is important to consider how gendered dynamics are likely to distort data sets. Conservative gender norms, for example, can play a role in obscuring the true scale and scope of SOC in Pakistan, by discouraging both women and men from reporting crimes or seeking help.

It is also apparent that not enough is known about the roles that women play in SOC groups within Pakistan. There is little evidence to indicate that they hold many leadership positions, but it is simplistic to assume that they do not, and cannot, in the Pakistani context. They may play influential but hidden roles in the recruitment, maintenance or establishment of networks, for example. Again, this is where the CSSF team might benefit from inferring from criminal data patterns and trends, despite the fact that many cases might go unreported in Pakistan.

It does seem likely that toxic and militarised notions of masculinity play a significant role in the recruitment of young men into armed criminal groups in the country. There is a large body of evidence (primarily from the Americas and Africa) that masculine identities play a powerful role in the recruitment of disenfranchised young men into violent criminal networks.[99] It follows that membership of armed networks in Pakistan, including SOC, may allow some men to assert their masculinity

[97] See UNODC (2021) University Module Series 15- Gender and Organised Crime.

[98] Detailed analysis of crime statistics was beyond the scope of this report due to timeframe, the methodology relied on publicly available secondary literature.

[99] H. Wright (2015), '*Masculinities and the women, peace and security agenda: strengthening or watering down*?', Blog: 19 March 2015, Saferworld, London.

and attain status that might otherwise be difficult to attain. It is likely that such notions are reinforced by the expectations placed on men by women also within a patriarchal context. With men usually the bearers of guns, power imbalances between men and women are further distorted. The threat that firearms represent to women both within the household and on the streets, to their lives, to their physical integrity and to their freedom is closely linked to the impositions of patriarchy.[100]

It is, however, important to avoid simplistic assumptions about how conceptions of masculinity drive recruitment of armed groups. The vast majority of men in Pakistan, for example, do not feel the need to engage in violent criminal activity. While recognising that conceptions of masculinity are likely an important factor, more research is needed to understand how this intersects with other factors in the Pakistani context.

Finally, it is clear that SOC is having a corrosive impact on peace and security dynamics in Pakistan, and that this is in significant part underpinned by gender norms. SOC networks are wrapped up with political and economic dynamics and leaders in the country (most of whom are men). The profits from SOC are often used to further the political and geo-strategic aims of powerful political stakeholders in the country, while allowing criminal groups to exert major influence over democratic processes. Both SOC and political groups, therefore, benefit from the maintenance of the current socio-political environment in Pakistan. This includes the current gender norms and dynamics which underpin them.

Recommendations for CSSF Pakistan

This section attempts to highlight key entry points for CSSF Pakistan when undertaking a review of their SOC programme.

1. As the first step going forward, the CSSF Pakistan team could start by **ensuring that gendered analysis is included in the design** of all programmes that look at how men and women from different ethnic and identity groups experience current security and justice provisions, including the ongoing status of organised crime in-country. The conceptual framework for this analysis would benefit from a **gender and power framework** that dispels gender binaries and instead takes an intersectional approach to understand barriers and opportunities for women, men and LGBTQI individuals to access a more gender-responsive service.

2. Undertake a **gender audit of existing law enforcement agencies** in Pakistan, particularly the Pakistan police and the department that leads the work on combatting SOC. Often, security concerns are prioritised by senior men officers, and they undermine the security needs of women, children and marginalised groups whose voices do not reach the decision-making table.

3. Unpack **gendered drivers of SOC in Pakistan**. Research on gendered drivers of conflict within Pakistan can be found readily, but the literature and evidence on linkages between gender and SOC were nominal, besides the obvious link to trafficking in persons and forced sex trafficking. Even within human trafficking, understanding criminal patterns and trends could inform which groups of women, girls, men and members of the LGBTQI community are most affected and who mostly are involved in carrying it out. Integrating a

[100] WILPF (2016), 'The impact of firearms on women', Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Latest news, 4 May 2016.

gendered lens while tracking and recording statistical data related to SOC in Pakistan would be an important step, if the opportunity to do so exists.

4. Understand the **'push' and 'pull' factors of crime in Pakistan**. When crime becomes syndicated with strong linkages to political actors, the lines can get blurred for young men and women aspiring to earn a livelihood in a context marred with economic, social and political vulnerabilities. It would be useful for the team to undertake or commission research that looks explicitly at the causal factors and relationship between organised crime and its sustained network of operations in Pakistan, focusing on the factors that contribute to people joining in SOC. This underscores the need to **explore notions of masculinities among different men and young boys** from different ethnic and identity-based groups and its impact on criminality and violence in Pakistan. An Institute of Development Studies report presents a conceptual framework[101] to understand and assess the factors that risk a person being drawn to SOC, which might be a useful starting point.

5. Finally, it could be useful to **take into account patterns of poverty and marginalisation** that are intrinsically linked to various socio-economic vulnerabilities and push people towards violence, either by adopting it or being deeply impacted by it. While security strategies and tactics help in deterring crime, including organised crime, perhaps CSSF Pakistan could use this opportunity to revisit a securitised approach and instead **integrate a people-centred approach to security**, essentially partnering with inclusive public stakeholders to identify gender-sensitive security and justice needs and reprioritise based on public dialogue and consultations.

[101] IDS Knowledge, evidence and learning for Development (K4D helpdesk) (2019), '*Gender and Serious Organised Crime*', pp. 6 – Framework figure soured from HM Government – a Prevent Guide (2015).