

Chapter 10

Violence Against Women and Sustainable Cities



Arístides Vara-Horna

Abstract Sustainable cities pose challenges that go beyond the environmental dimension. By definition, a sustainable city is “a safe, healthy, attractive, orderly city, with respect to the environment and its historical and cultural heritage, governable, competitive, efficient in its operation and development, so that its inhabitants can live in a comfortable environment, promoting increased productivity, and that can be bequeathed to future generations”. In this regard, safety, health, respect for historical and cultural heritage, comfortable habitat, productivity, and intergenerational legacy are elements that transcend the environmental.

Keywords Violence against women · Violence · Gender · Sustainable cities · VAW

10.1 Can Sustainable Cities Be Achieved Without Preventing Violence Against Women?

Peaceful coexistence in cities, for example, requires contexts where all its citizens can fully exercise their rights. Citizen security is usually an important driver within local policies; however, this usually lacks a gender approach. As in most cities, women represent approximately 50% of the population; and although they legally have the same rights and duties, in practice they have serious restrictions based on gender, mainly in the domestic sphere, with serious public repercussions.

Violence against women is a serious chronic and persistent problem in almost all latitudes. WHO estimates that at least 1 in 3 women has been physically and/or sexually assaulted by their partner, bringing enormous impacts on the lives of women, their families, and also for their communities. Is it possible to talk about sustainable societies when half of its citizens—because of the violence suffered—are limited in their resources and capacities for citizen exercise? Can we talk about sustainable societies when women suffer from both public and private insecurity, as

A. Vara-Horna (✉)
Universidad de San Martín de Porres, Lima, Peru
e-mail: avarah@usmp.pe

well as damage to their health consequences of violence? Can we talk about sustainable cities when within their historical and cultural heritage there are misogynist historical-cultural patterns that despise women and justify violence towards them? Can we talk about sustainable cities when the economic productivity of cities is reduced as a result of violence against women? Can we talk about sustainable cities when the product of violence is perpetuated from generation to generation? A review of the main effects of violence against women, so far documented, will show that thinking of sustainable cities, not including comprehensive prevention of violence against women, is a major mistake.

10.2 Limit Women's Mobility

Violence against women takes many forms. One of the most frequent in the public sphere is sexual violence, which in its most overlapping form is “street sexual harassment” and in its bloodiest form is rape. In this regard, several investigations have shown that sexual violence against women is a very prevalent phenomenon, where 1 in 4 women has been the victim of this type of abuse (WHO).

In 2017, the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru conducted a National Specialized Survey on Victimization (ENEVIC in Spanish), finding that 29.4% of the population aged 15 and over in Metropolitan Lima was victim of a criminal act; Villa El Salvador being the district with the highest percentage of victimization (38.3%). Analyzing this data, it is found that although insecurity for economic reasons (insecurity in ATMs, banks) is the second reason for insecurity, these do not have significant differences by sex, since both men and women share the same perception. However, analyzing non-institutionalized public spaces, there are significant differences due to gender. Thus, women feel more insecure than men in public spaces (street, markets, and parks), on public transport, and when they walk at night in their neighborhood (see Fig. 10.1a). It should be noted that gender-based violence, in public spaces, rests on the fear of sexual violence. Indeed, as seen in Fig. 10.1b, the fear of sexual violence (harassment, abuse, rape, etc.) is only significantly higher in women. And although, in general, citizen insecurity is a central concern in men and women, it only restricts public activities and women's mobilization. In fact, according to ENEVIC data, a higher percentage of women in Villa El Salvador, unlike men, have stopped going outside, avoid being late home, and avoid taking taxis to get around (Fig. 10.1c).

10.3 Limit Political Participation

The political participation of women is an unavoidable necessity of democratic countries. However, the literature is consistently finding various levels of prevalence of sexism and violence against women in politics. Some studies have found that

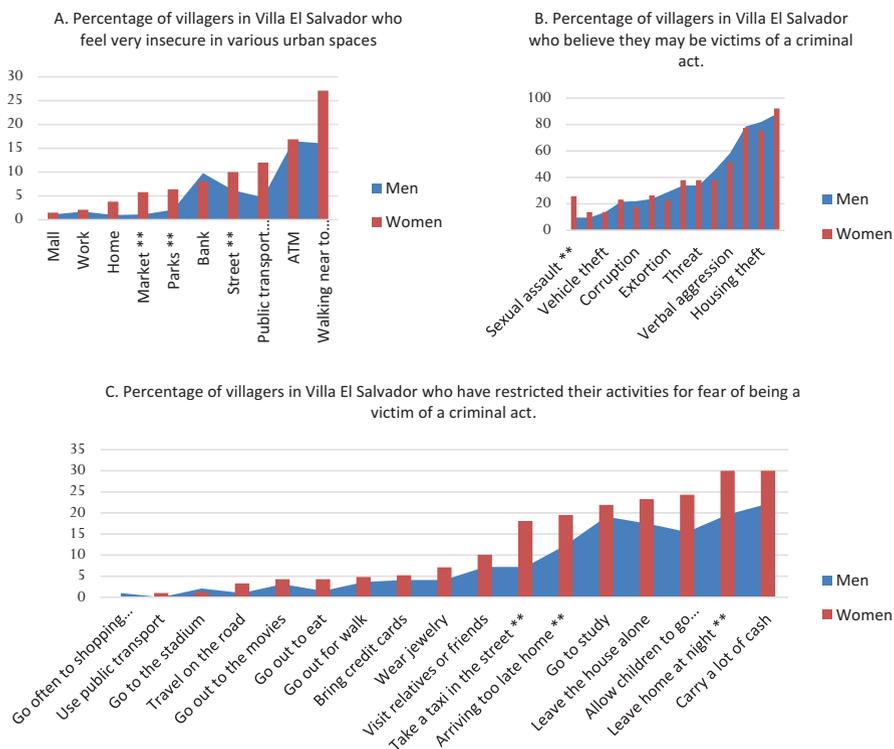


Fig. 10.1 Citizen security indicators with a gender approach in Villa El Salvador. Note: $n = 404$ inhabitants aged 18–65, 48% men, 52% women. (**) Significant differences at 95%. Fig. 10.1b: (**) Only significant difference in sexual assault ($X^2 = 16,274$; $g1 = 1$; $p < 0.001$). Source: INEI—ENEVIC 2017. Elaboration: Arístides Vara-Horna (2019)

both sexism and violence can deter women from participating in politics, because it is a very high cost associated with gender (Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2019; Huang, 2018; UN Women, 2018). Other studies have found that traditional gender norms can be a serious obstacle for women themselves to participate in politics (Kage, Rosenbluth, & Tanaka, 2018).

In a study conducted in Peru by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (Vara-Horna 2019), it has been found that violence against women in politics is an instrumental means that harms physically and emotionally to restrict the political rights of women. In fact, 7.1% of women attacked report having stopped participating in meetings of their community, women’s associations, and political parties. The picture is even more depressing in the case of violence against women perpetrated by their partners. 10.6% of women assaulted by their partners reported having stopped participating in meetings of their community, women’s associations, and political parties, and the variables that explain it most fall into serious sexual and physical violence: “it has forced her to have sex through blackmail, threats, use of force, weapons, alcohol or drugs” ($r = 0.258$, $p \leq 0.01$), “Has physically forced

her to have sex” ($r = 0.287$, $p \leq 0.01$) and “has tried to hang her” ($r = 0.279$, $p \leq 0.01$).

The full exercise of women’s political rights should not be an illusion, but should be a guarantee within sustainable cities. However, these results show that women in politics are a very vulnerable group to violence, and that prevention actions, in this case, require special measures, because not only the attacked women cease to participate in politics, but also discourage other women who for fear of suffering the same decline (Campbell & Lovenduski, 2015; National Democratic Institute, 2018; Torres, 2017). Finally, if our political participation is affected, less room is left for positions of political representation occupied by women.

10.4 Limit Your Financial Resources

At the individual level, gender-based violence (GBV) impacts negatively on women’s health, increasing their physical and mental morbidity (Cerulli et al., 2012; Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Constantino, Sekula, Rabin, & Stone, 2000; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2011; Golding, 1999; Humphreys, & Absler 2011; Nixon et al., 2004; Pico-Alfonso et al., 2006; Plichta, 2004; Sutherland et al., 2002; Vung et al., 2009). Consequently, it causes them double damage: (a) the decrease in their income because their productive capacities and work opportunities are reduced (Adams, 2009; Arias & Corso, 2005; Díaz & Miranda, 2010; Franzway, 2008; IDB, 1997; Karpeles, 2004; Laing & Director, 2001; Laing & Bobic, 2002; Morrison & Orlando, 2004; O’Leary, 2009; Ribero & Sánchez, 2005; Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2005; Tennessee Economic Council on Women, 2006; Tolman, 2011) and (b) increase in your out-of-pocket expenses to access health care, justice, and personal protection services (Bonomi et al., 2009; Coker et al., 2000; Fishman et al., 2010; Kruse et al., 2011; Lisboa, Barros, & Cerejo, 2008; Rivera et al., 2007; Vara-Horna, 2015b).

10.5 Perpetuates the Intergenerational Exercise of Violence

Gender-based violence not only affects women, it also impacts their homes, mainly their children or minors in their care. Research has consistently found that violence against women can increase the antisocial behavior of children, decrease their school performance, and affect their health (Agüero, 2013; Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Franklin & Kercher, 2012; Lee et al., 2013; Whitfield et al., 2003; Widom et al., 2014). Vara-Horna (2018, 2019), for example, has found that, in Paraguay and Peru, the children of women attacked by their partners lose school days a year, have higher levels of morbidity, and mothers lose days of domestic care.

School failure and performance problems resulting from violence triple the amount that women must allocate for psychological or pedagogical treatment of their children. The assaulted women are more likely to have to attend school citations for misconduct, and pay more expense as well. The mediate effects of violence on the behavior of children generate opportunity costs for women. In addition, violence also triples the probability of women lending money to address these contingencies, or five times the probability of leaving their home without their care (Vara-Horna, 2019).

On the other hand, violence against women also increases the morbidity of children up to five times as a result of accidents with medical effects (sprains, dislocations, fractures, burns, or severe cuts). Child morbidity increases the likelihood that children will miss school, women will have to ask for permission or be absent from work, or that they will have to borrow money to pay for health expenses (Vara-Horna, 2019).

10.6 Destroy the Productivity of Organizations

In recent years, significant progress has been made in several countries in South America in measuring the costs of violence for large- and medium-sized enterprises (Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015, 2015b, 2018), microenterprises (Vara-Horna, 2015a, 2018), basic education schools (Vara et al., 2017), and universities (Vara-Horna, 2016).

It is now known that violence against women significantly affects the business sector, generating absenteeism, tardiness, increasing staff turnover, decreasing work performance (presenteeism), and producing a negative impact on the entire organization (Henderson, 2000; Hoel, Sparks, & Cooper, 2001; Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015; Vara-Horna, et al., 2015; Yodanis, Godenzi, & Stanko, 2000). Latin American surveys find that between 23.1 and 54.8% of collaborators of large and medium enterprises have been attacked during the last twelve months by their partners or ex-partners (ComVoMujer, 2015; Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015), values similar to which have been reported in international literature (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006; Cruz & Klinger, 2011; Philbrick, Sparks, Hass, & Arsenault, 2003; Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007; Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2009; Vara-Horna, 2013). From the above, it is inevitable that within companies there are cases of women assaulted by their partners (Vara-Horna, 2015). But in the companies there are not only assaulted, there are also collaborators who attack their partners or ex-partners and staff that attests to situations of VcM in their colleagues. For each of them, companies assume significant invisible costs that have an impact on labor productivity and added value (Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015).

Indeed, when women workers are attacked by their partners, companies assume invisible costs, since productivity is affected by delays, absences, decreased performance (presentism), increased staff turnover, and deterioration of staff organizational climate (Brown, 2008; Franzway, 2008; Henderson, 2000; O’Leary, 2009;

Patel & Taylor, 2011; Potter & Banyard, 2011; Rothman, Hathaway, Stidsen, & De Vries, 2007; Soroptimist International of the Americas, 2011; Swanberg et al., 2005; Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015; Yodanis et al., 2000). The judicial restraining orders (in the case of the aggressors), the appointments in the courts, the health care of the assaulted (or accompanying them to avoid being reported, in the case of the aggressors), among other reasons, increase the absence of work from both assaulted women and aggressors (Arias & Corso, 2005; CDC, 2003; Karpeles, 2004; Tennessee Economic Council on Women, 2006; Vara-Horna, 2013). Personnel turnover costs due to the VcM (recruitment, selection, induction, and training costs) are significant depending on the type of employment and industry (Hoel et al., 2001). It has been found that assaulted women are twice as likely to be fired (Adams, 2009; Franzway, 2008; Lisboa et al., 2008; Tolman, 2011). Work performance also decreases significantly, as a result of the distractions and concerns generated by the VcM. The reduction of efficiency and quality of work are frequent indicators of “presentism,” which means attending the workplace, but without working at real capacity (Al-Modallal, Hall, & Andreson, 2008; Braaf & Barret-Meyering, 2011; Campbell, 2011; ComVoMujer, 2015; Moe & Myrtle, 2004; O’Leary, 2009; Patel & Taylor, 2011; Swanberg et al., 2005; ; Tolman, 2011; Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015; Vara-Horna et al., 2015a). This makes sense because between 60 and 70% of violent women have had difficulties in their work performance and have received sanctions or reprimands at work (Brown, 2008; Potter & Banyard, 2011; Soroptimist International of the Americas, 2011; Swanberg et al., 2005; Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015).

10.7 It Implies Invisible Community Costs

Violence against women generates costs and expenses that many assaulted women cannot bear. Then an invisible subsidy emerges from the social capital of women: Family members, neighbors, and acquaintances provide time, work, and money to cover those needs.

The first measurement of family social support was carried out by Nata Duvvury et al. (2016) in Egypt, when she estimated the costs that family members assume when sheltering women attacked in their homes when they flee from their partners. Duvvury found that many women attacked in Egypt received support and assistance from their relatives and acquaintances, and warned that this is representing a huge invisible social cost. In the investigations carried out with companies, it has been found, in the same way, that knowing assaulted colleagues generates a cost of working time, since the personnel close to them usually comfort and assist them (Al-Modallal et al., 2008; Brandwein & Filiano, 2000; Moe & Myrtle, 2004; O’Leary, 2009; Schmidt & Barnett, 2012; Swanberg et al., 2005; Swanberg, Macke, & Logan, 2006, 2007; Tennessee Economic Council on Women, 2006; Tolman, 2011; Vara-Horna, 2013, 2015, 2018; Zachary et al., 2002).

Vara-Horna (2019) has found for Peru that 1 in 10 women assaulted by their partners or ex-partners has taken refuge in the homes of their relatives or acquaintances.

tances, about 29 nights per year, and spending \$ 10 the last time. However, he has found that the costs assumed by the community go far beyond the shelter. In the Peruvian district of Villa El Salvador, 2 out of every 7 women attacked report having received, together during the last year, 2.7 million dollars in loans and time equivalent to 5.5 million dollars. These data show the power of sorority and community solidarity. However, we must not forget that this money and time received are debt; that is, at some point they will have to be returned. Many may, but it is unlikely, because violence against women is chronic and maintains an intensity that grows over time. Emergencies will not cease, but social capital is likely to run out and women will lose support from the community. Indeed, a woman may ask the same person for help one or sometimes; and this can help you. But what at first was compassion, will eventually become “guilty,” because by ignoring the complex dynamics of violence, the supporter will not understand how difficult it is to break the violent cycle and/or separate from the aggressor, and will tend to blame the woman for her “lack of will, determination or neglect.” In other cases, the attacked women will not be able to return the loans granted, so they will tend to isolate themselves voluntarily to avoid the embarrassment of late payment. Consequently, the social network will be weakened.

10.8 Maintains Macho and Misogynist Cultures

There are social norms that favor tolerance towards violence against women. These patterns are attitudes, beliefs, and imaginary prejudices present in the population, which justify and therefore tolerate violence. For example, according to the Peruvian survey of Social Relations called ENARES (INEI, 2015), it finds that 44.3% of people justify the woman being assaulted by her partner if they neglect their children, realizing that these beliefs are still internalized in Peruvian society. These figures should not surprise, sexist social norms are still very valid in the culture of cities.

The most visible expressions of violence against women are femicide and physical violence; however, this phenomenon has many other manifestations equally harmful to society, such as symbolic violence, understood not as a type of violence, but as a way he continues to think and act that naturalizes and reproduces subordination and abuse, especially towards women. It is a violence normalized in society by customs and customs, and is expressed in different ways, including economic control, control of sociability, mobility, moral contempt, aesthetic contempt, sexual contempt, intellectual disqualification, and disqualification professional. Some living examples that can still be seen in cities are, for example, unrealistic and deteriorated image of the Andean woman, use of the image of women as a sexual object, women as the sole responsible for domestic work, toys that reproduce gender stereotypes, news that justify or relativize violence against women, social pages that reproduce and extol male chauvinism.

Closing Remarks

Violence against women is not only a violation of human rights, it is also a serious obstacle to the development of sustainable cities, causing large economic and social costs. For many centuries, violence against women has been underestimated by society, considering it an inevitable and normal aspect in relations between men and women (Vara-Horna, 2014). The truth is that this is not an inevitable problem, but that it can be eliminated through prevention. A prevention policy can reduce the levels of violence and its effects in the medium and long term, as well as establish efficient paths for development through the full exercise of rights.

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