



THE PERFECT STORM

A review of the global evidence on
natural disasters and violence
against women and girls

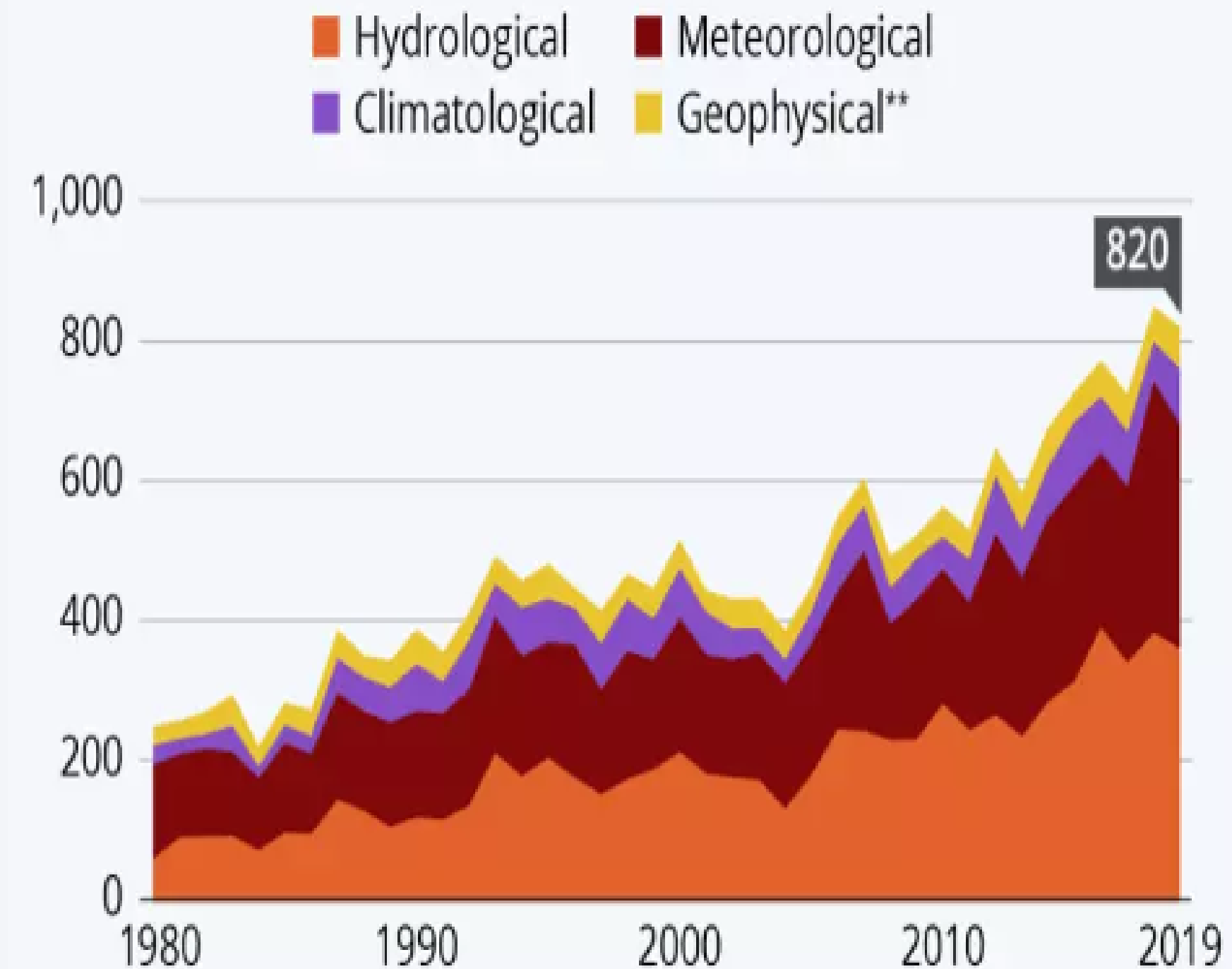
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'Natural disasters' are on the rise around the world

Over the past 2 decades, more than 7,000 disasters were recorded – increasingly climate and weather related.¹

Climate change, complex crises, and structural challenges heighten our vulnerabilities.^{2,3}



Gendered impacts of disasters



- During the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, **4 women** died for **every 1 man** that died in affected Indonesian villages⁴
- **61% of fatalities** in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis were women⁵
- Women & girls disproportionately affected by loss of livelihoods; reduced access to humanitarian assistance, healthcare and education⁶

Disaster-related VAWG

Over the years, reports and empirical evidence have emerged on disasters triggering VAWG across various contexts

- Widespread reports of rape after the 2010 Haiti earthquake⁷
- Intimate partner violence increased by 40% in some areas after the Christchurch earthquake⁸



Systematic review - Objectives

- To synthesise the current quantitative and qualitative evidence on the exposure to disasters caused by natural hazards on the outcome of VAWG;
- To examine the scope and quality of the evidence; and
- To identify gaps in the evidence for research and practice.



Variables and definitions

EXPOSURE - DISASTERS

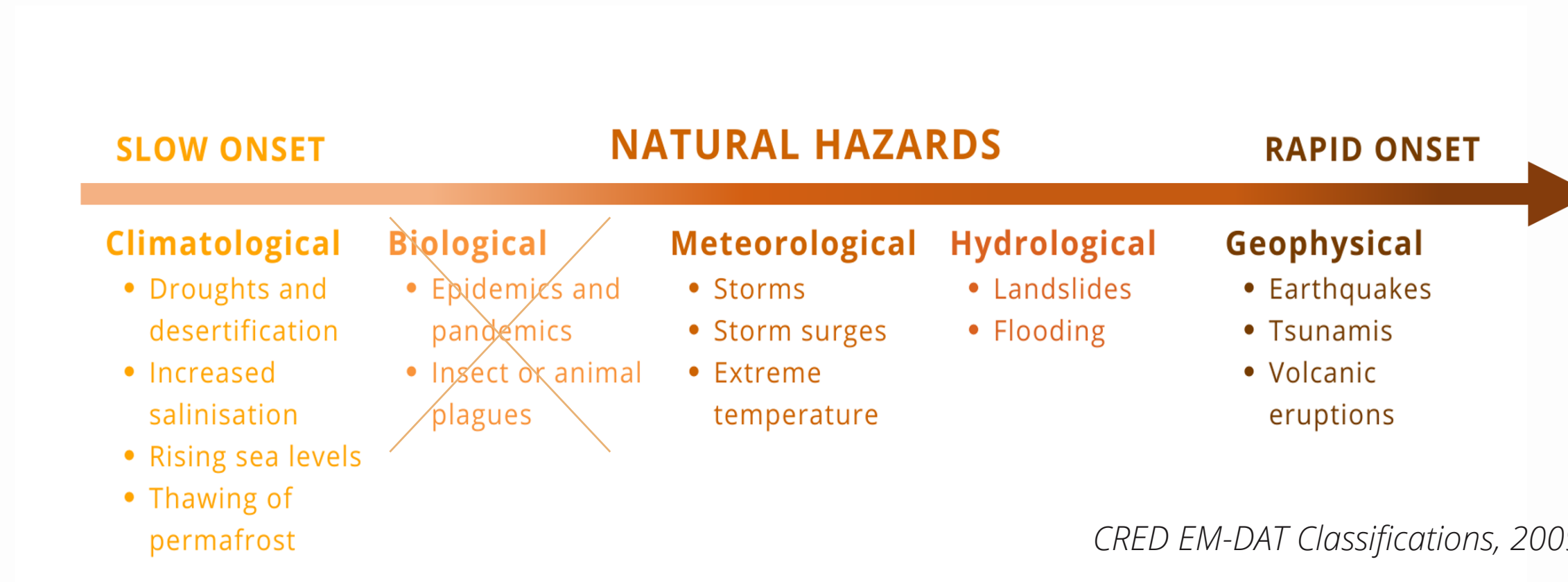
"A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts."

UNDRR, 2009⁹

OUTCOME - VAWG

- Psychological (including emotional and verbal abuse)
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial (economic) violence

WHO, 2005¹⁰



Study characteristics

37 studies included in the review:

- 20 quantitative
- 16 qualitative
- 1 mixed-methods

Assessed exposure to disasters caused by 9 hazard types, most frequently:

- earthquakes (40%)
- hurricanes (20%)
- tsunamis (13%)

Violence outcomes were primarily **physical, psychological** and **sexual violence**.

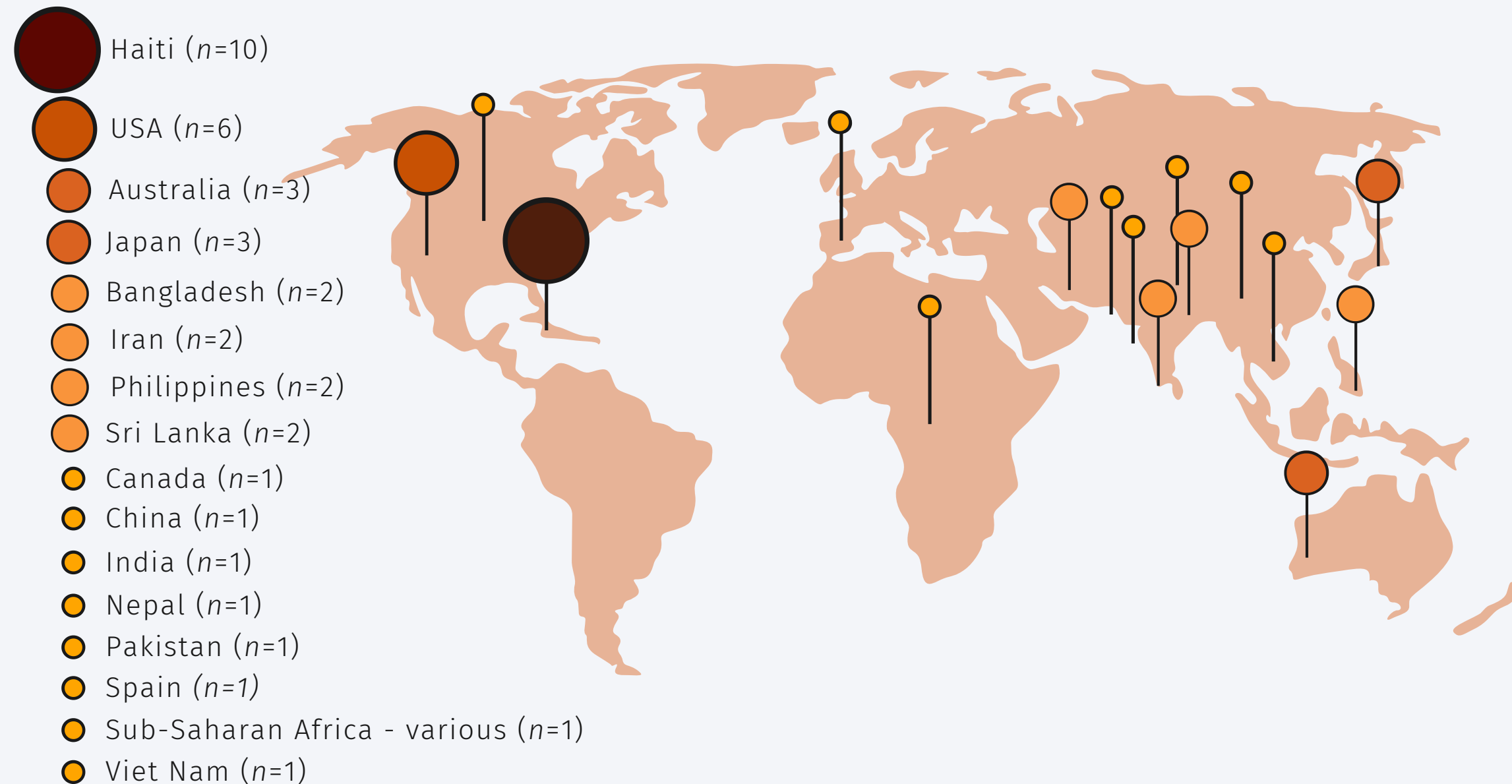


Figure 1. Geographic distribution of included studies

Quantitative findings

Of the 20 quantitative studies and 1 mixed-method study, 12 found a positive association between disaster exposure and at least one of their measured violence outcome.

- Exposure associated with increased VAWG (n=8)
- Exposure associated with mixed effects on VAWG (n=4)
- Exposure associated with no effect on VAWG (n=5)
- Exposure associated with decreased VAWG (n=0)
- ★ Cannot determine relationship (n=4)



Figure 2. Associations found by quantitative studies by geographic distribution

Qualitative findings

16 qualitative studies and 1 mixed-methods study all described increased VAWG after disaster exposure.

01

Stressors like housing & economic insecurity, mental health issues

“

When the earthquake just happened, all the time they are raping somebody or commit a violent act. Because there is no security in the tents. You may be in a tent and they set it on fire. There are no jobs

[Key respondent; Logie et al. (2017), Haiti]

”

02

Increase of enabling environments and failures of law enforcement

“

So much has been justified as a result of the fires ... so much has been fobbed off. So many women have gone to police and been told by police, 'Things will settle down again'. The responsibility is back on the women.

[Health professional; Parkinson & Zara (2013), Australia]

”

03

Exacerbation of underlying drivers of VAWG

“

When we men came home after a night of drinking alcohol, we often lost our temper. Imagine a wife is complaining about financial issues and blaming one for being lazy. This made us men very frustrated and we often responded with violence.

[Male respondent, Nguyen & Rydstrom (2018), Viet Nam]

”

Conceptual Framework

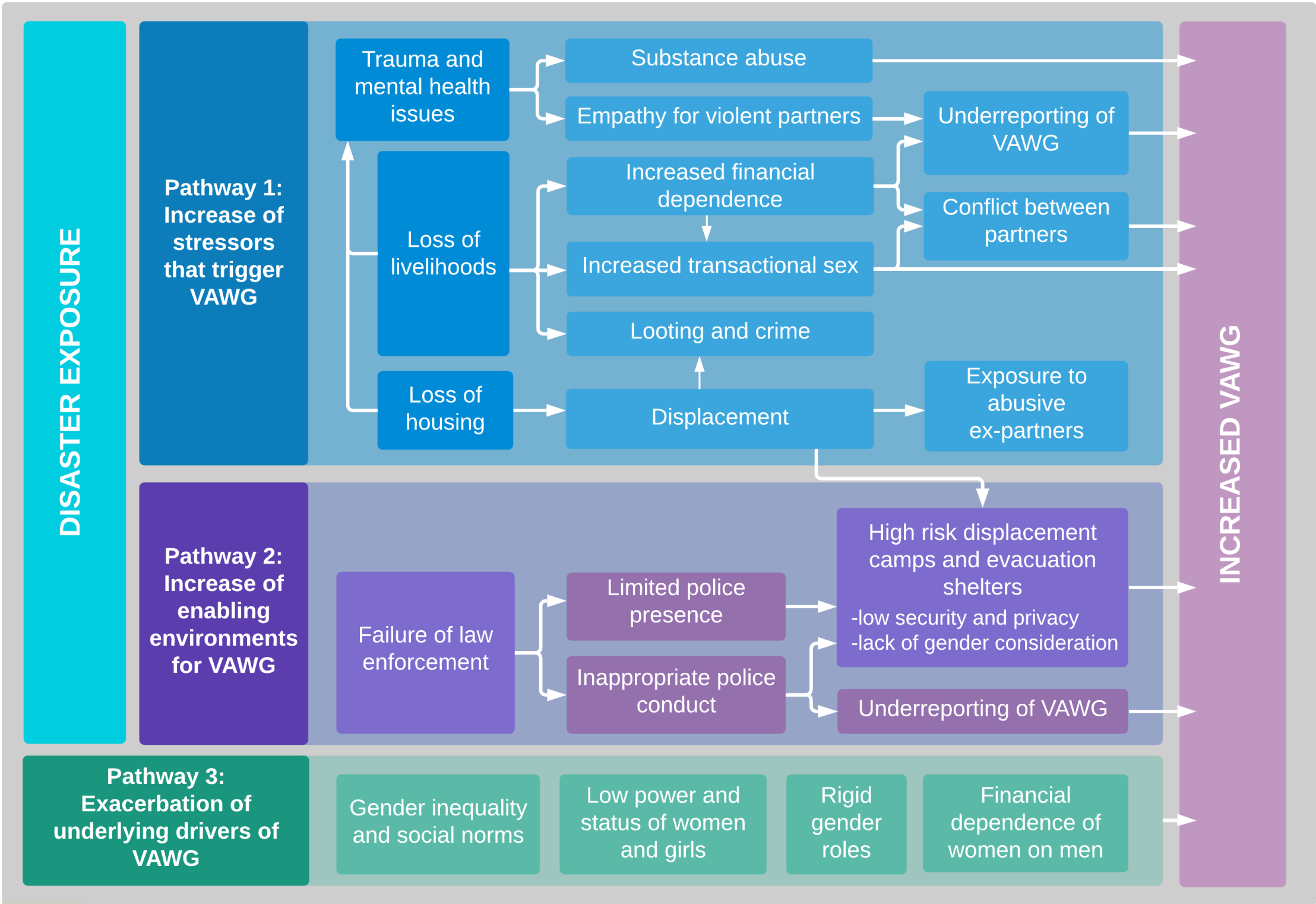


Figure 3. Conceptual framework of hypothesised pathways from disaster exposure to increased VAWG from all included studies.

Recommendations

"Natural hazards are gender neutral - but their impacts are not."

World Bank & GFDRR 2021¹²

Research

- More mixed-methods studies on the linkages with improved exposure and outcome measures and greater examination of pathways to risk; including longitudinal design
- More evidence needed from Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia-Pacific and LAC regions
- Development and testing of interventions that integrate violence prevention with local climate adaptation programmes to test out the mutual benefits on women's lives and the environment

Practice

- Engage women and girls as key advocates for climate adaptation and DRR
- Establish locally accepted and accessible reporting mechanisms for post-disaster VAWG
- Prioritise survivor-centred approaches for disaster response
- Focus on local solutions that address the underlying drivers of VAWG

Policy

- Greater awareness and advocacy for gender-sensitive DRR policies
- Greater inclusion of women in disaster response and management at all levels
- Strengthen collaborations between disaster management, law enforcement and health authorities



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THANK YOU!

KEEP IN TOUCH

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