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# Weak civil society and ineffective government: the role of micro enterprises in generating social capital for vulnerable religious minorities in Pakistan

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## Résumé

This paper seeks to explore the role of micro enterprises in generating social capital for vulnerable religious minorities in Pakistan. The paper argues that micro enterprises offer community resilience to vulnerable communities with implications for local governance and service delivery. The paper draws on qualitative case-study of the Sikh community of Pakistan that has largely been displaced due to conflict in the federally administered tribal areas of Pakistan that are now merged in to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the members of Sikh communities in the cities of Peshawar and Nankana Sahib which are the largest concentrations of Sikh communities in Pakistan. The findings of this paper demonstrate that in the context of Pakistan, where government is ineffective and civil society weak, some small religious minorities turn to self-help solutions to substitute poor governance of service delivery. Micro enterprises in the informal sector offer sustainability to these self-help endeavours of marginalised communities in the contexts characterised by conflict and governance fragility. In this way, this paper makes two important empirical contributions. First, this is the first academic endeavour to understand local responses of marginalised religious minorities to the weakness of government and civil society organisations. Second, in Pakistan's context, this is the first research of its kind to explore the role of micro enterprises in the informal sector in underpinning resilience of marginalised religious minorities.

**Mots-Clés:** social capital, micro enterprise, religious minorities, resilience, Pakistan

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