

# Economic Empowerment and VAW: Unemployment and Economic Opportunities

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Evidence: **Context** and **culture** matter, **no overall consistency**.

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### Coercive Control

**Economic abuse** – forcing financial dependence - a **core tactic** by VAW perpetrators for **establishing power** in relationships.

# Unemployment and VAW

NEWS POLITICS FOOTBALL CELEBS TV SHOPPING ROYALS

## Recession blamed for domestic violence increase

ATTACKS on women in the home have soared by more than 2,000 a week since the start of the recession.

By [Mirror.co.uk](#)  
00:00, 28 Jul 2011 | UPDATED 20:41, 7 FEB 2012

 | [BOOKMARK](#) 

UK -

The Guardian

## Growth in violence against women feared as recession hits

Amelia Gentleman

Wed 4 Mar 2009 00:01 GMT

A government booklet offering advice to women on how to deal with recession-related domestic violence and discrimination from employers will be issued today, reflecting concern that women are to be worst hit by the economic crisis.

## The Two Effects of Unemployment

- Some individuals / h-holds experience job loss.





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**Question:** Impact of unemployment on VAW at **population level** or in households **affected by job loss**?

→ Different **data requirements** and different **policy implications**!

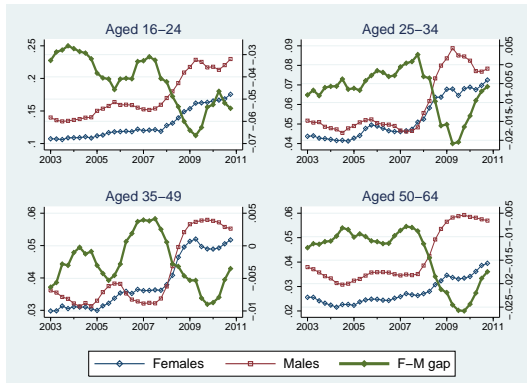
## The UK Experience in the Great Recession

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**Figure 1:** Unemployment rates by gender and age-group 2004-2011.





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**Figure 2:** Change in unemployment rate 2004-2011 by PFA.



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Evidence at the **population level** (using the British Crime Survey) supported the **bargaining/empowerment** hypothesis.

**Table 1:** Impact of Unemployment Gender (F-M) Gap on Abuse

<i>Age Group</i>			
<u>16-24</u>	<u>25-34</u>	<u>35-49</u>	<u>50-59</u>
0.082** (0.030)	0.122** (0.044)	0.128* (0.063)	-0.047 (0.096)
<i>Own Qualification</i>		<i>Female LFP in Cell</i>	
<u>“Low”</u>	<u>“High”</u>	<u>“Low”</u>	<u>“High”</u>
0.114* (0.053)	0.089** (0.024)	0.075** (0.025)	0.137** (0.045)
Obs.		86,731	

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## Job Displacement, Unemployment Benefits and Domestic Violence

*Sonia Bhalotra, Diogo G. C. Britto, Paolo Pinotti, Breno Sampaio*

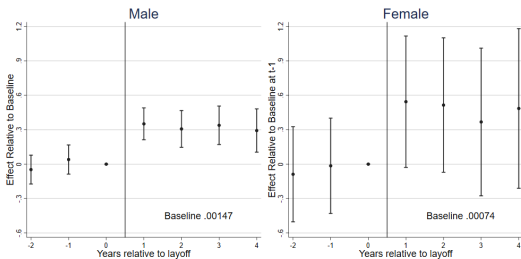
## The Effect of Job Loss on Affected Households

**Bhalotra et al. [2021]** merge Brazilian **employer-employee** and **social welfare registers** with data on **VAW cases brought to criminal courts**, 2009-2018, and job losses due to “mass layoffs”.

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**Figure 3:** The effect of male and female job loss on domestic violence, judicial suits

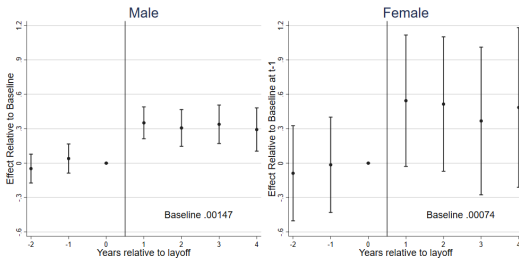




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Attribute to job losses → negative income shocks and “exposure”.

## Unemployment and VAW - So Far...

### Policy Implications

Should be more **concerned specifically for households that experience job losses** than VAW incidence effects in the wider population.

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### Where Data Can Help

But we would **need more data and evidence** – more countries, alt. VAW measures – on the **VAW effect in households affected by job losses**.

# Bargaining, Backlash, Coercive Control?

## Bargaining/Empowerment: Support in a Variety of Contexts

**Aizer [2010]**: Relative wages in US; **Bobonis et al. [2013]** / **Hidrobo et al.**

**[2016]**: Conditional cash transfers in Mexico/Ecuador; **Sanin [2024]**: Coffee mills  
opps for women in Rwanda;...

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**Bulte and Lensink [2019]**: Entrepreneurship training in Vietnam   **Guarnieri and**

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## Coercive Control: Difficult to Empirically Demonstrate

Adams et al. [2024]: Women who later on *will* report VAW the policy reduce their labour supply/earnings right *from the relationship's start* (Finland).

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