



**ECOVIO**

# **Economic gender violence: A hidden problem**

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# ECOVIO

**Economic violence:  
opening pathways across an unexplored gender-based  
violence issue for guaranteeing the women and  
children's fundamental rights**

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# 1. Starting point

Much research has been done on psychological violence, sexual violence, and physical violence. But the same has not happened with **economic violence**. Some **definitions of economic violence** are the following:

**Olamendi (2008)** describes the economic violence as *“the action or omission of the aggressor that affects the economic survival of the victim, manifests itself through limitations aimed at controlling income and the free disposal of economic resources.”*.

According to **Fawole (2008)**, economic violence includes *“limited access to funds and credit; control access to health care, employment, education, including agricultural resources; excluding from financial decision making;*

*as well as discriminatory traditional laws on inheritance, property rights and the use of communal land ”*.

Furthermore, *“at home, some men forbid their women to work, while other men completely abandoned the family maintenance, leaving it in charge of the women (...)”*.

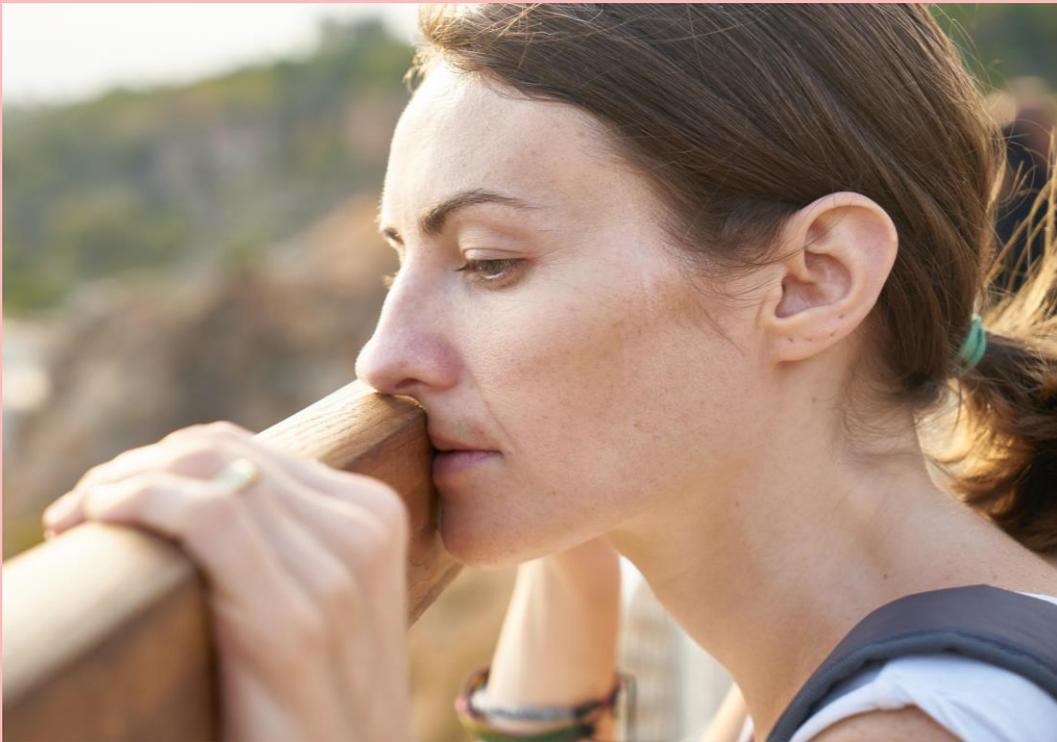


Even after the woman has left the relationship, the economic violence can continue.

In Spain or in the vast majority of the European member states, the economic violence **is not specifically considered as abuse.**



After separating or divorcing, **economic violence appears to be a mere formality and disagreement between parties**, as long as the woman has not reported a previous situation of gender violence during the coexistence.



## 2. Life experiences in economic violence



16 women life stories of have been collected showing **how economic violence is suffered.**

Eight women who reported physical violence during their relationship were interviewed, as well as another 8 who did not suffer this type of violence during their relationship.

The profiles of the women correspond to the following **criteria:**

- ▶ **Age** (less or greater / equal to 50 years)
- ▶ **Employment status** (working or not working)
- ▶ **Educational level** (with or without college or university education)

The following table shows the different profiles of the women interviewed, in each of the two groups.

	Age (years)	Employment situation	Educational level
	≥ 50	Works	Higher education
	≥ 50	Does not work	Higher education
	≥ 50	Works	No higher education
	≥ 50	Does not work	No higher education
	< 50	Works	Higher education
	< 50	Does not work	Higher education
	< 50	Works	No higher education
	< 50	Does not work	No higher education



# Economic Control:

- ▶ **During cohabitation**, it can be considered as the abuser behavior to control and limit the access and use of the woman economic resources.
- ▶ **After cohabitation**, through continuous defaults or delays in paying child support costs or other common debts. With this, the woman is forced to ask him for money continuously, both through judicial processes and by other means.





# Economic Exploitation:

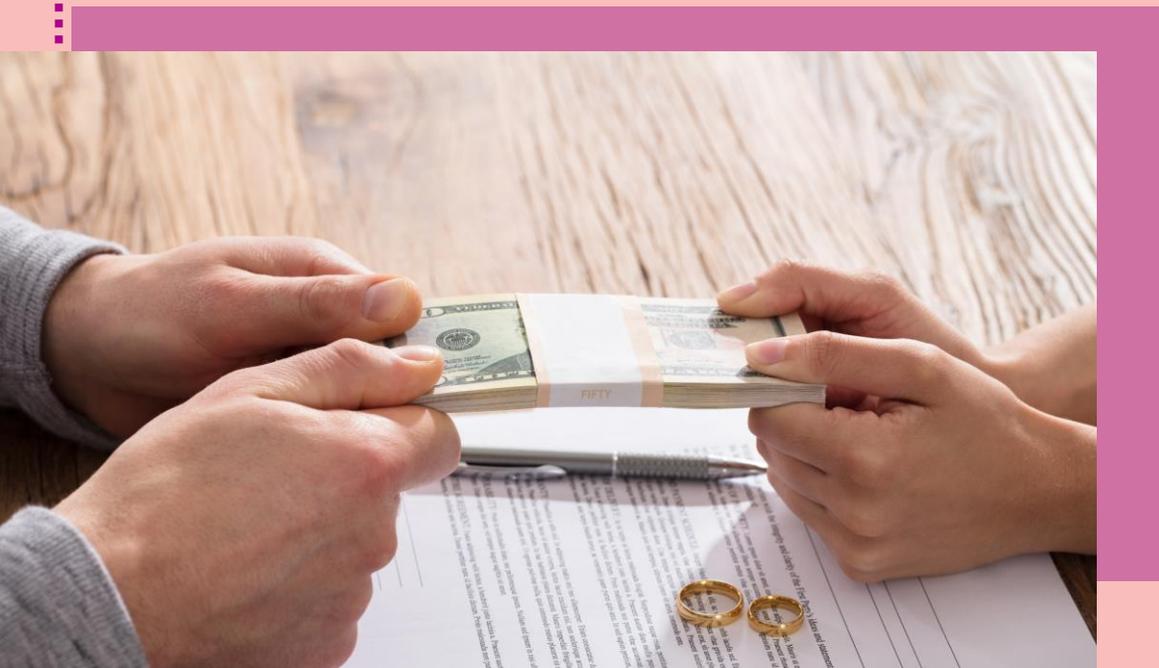
- ▶ **During cohabitation**, it consists of reducing the existing family unit resources. In some cases, with their actions they get into debt and compromise the family and / or women economic resources.
- ▶ **After the cohabitation**, it occurs when the ex-partner demands that the woman release him from difficult financial situations. It is also exercised by falling behind in the payment of the family home mortgage. When there is common debt, the non-payment of the ex-partner causes problems for the woman; even when she pays her part of her debt.





# Labor sabotage:

- ▶ **During cohabitation**, it includes behaviors and attitudes that limit and restrict women's access to work. It also happens when women's access to training is limited. That would allow them to improve their working conditions..
- ▶ **After cohabitation**, these are actions that prevent woman from accessing or develop her work (phone calls while she is working, harassment in the workplace, not collaborating with custodians and childcare, etc.).



# 3. What have we observed?

Regarding **economic control**, it has been observed that:

- ▶ Economic control is exercised mostly during the relationship.
- ▶ Economic control is totally different when the couple is no longer living together. At that moment, it focuses on the non-payment or delay of the ex-partner's commitments.
- ▶ Women who suffered gender-based violence claim to have also suffered economic control when they lived together, in most cases.
- ▶ Women who did not suffer gender violence indicate that they did not suffer financial control from their ex-partners either.
- ▶ Women suffer financial control after separation, even though they had not previously suffered it.



# Economic Control

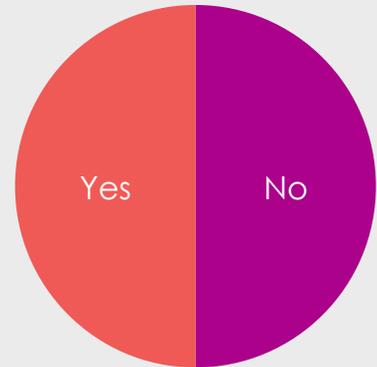
## With Gender Violence



All the women who had suffered gender-based violence said that when they lived together, their partners made important financial decisions without consulting them.



That only happened to half of the women who did not experience physical violence.



## Without Gender Violence

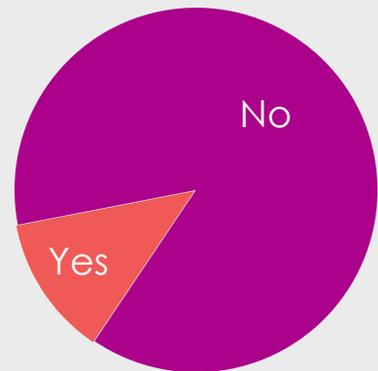
## With Gender Violence



When they lived together, almost all the women who suffered gender violence were required to hand over change or receipts for the purchases they made.



That only happened to one of the women who had not suffered gender violence.



## Without Gender Violence

Regarding **Economic Exploitation**, it has been observed:

- ▶ Economic exploitation is exercised both during and after the relationship.
- ▶ Economic exploitation occurs both in the case of coexistence in which there are no other forms of gender violence and in those that did exist.

These results are highly relevant, because they represent a **constant in the behavior** of economic violence: **it is not conditioned** by the existence or not of other forms of **gender violence**, nor is it eliminated at the end of the relationship. Moreover, **in some circumstances it increases**.



# Economic Exploitation

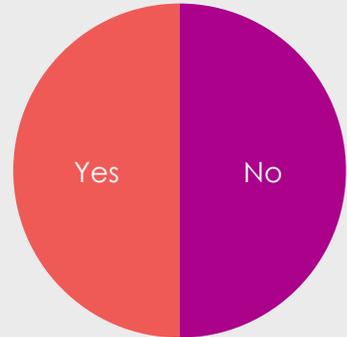
## With Gender Violence



During the coexistence, both women who had suffered other gender violence and those who had not, reported that their partners spent the money they needed for rent and other bills.

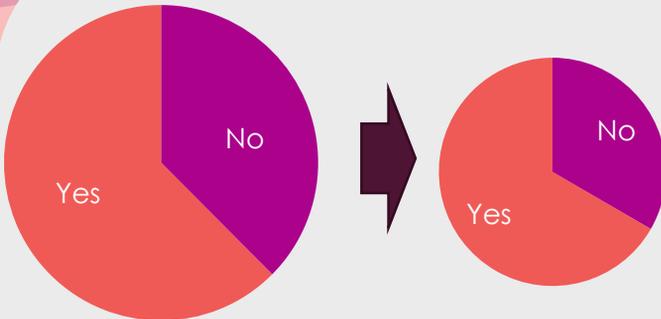


This behavior was more frequent in couples in which there was gender violence.



## Without Gender Violence

### With Gender Violence

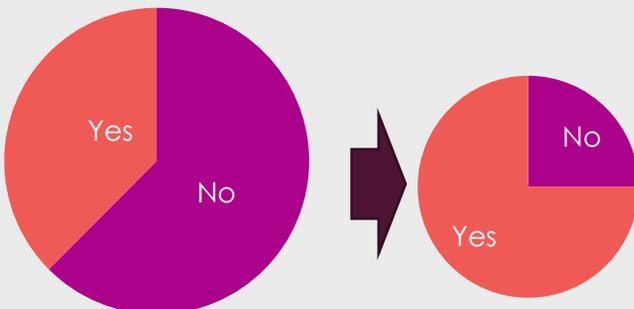


During the relationship

After separation

Women who had not suffered gender-based violence suffered impayments and / or delays in common receipts, more frequently than those who had not suffered it.

### Without Gender Violence



During the relationship

After separation

This behavior was maintained after the separation, in both cases in which there was gender –based violence and in which not



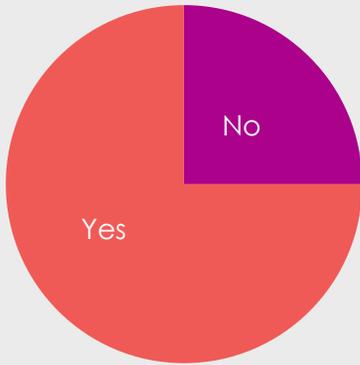
Regarding **Labor Sabotage**, it has been observed that:

- ▶ Labor sabotage occurs **to a greater extent during the relationship**.
- ▶ There is **greater evidence** of labor sabotage when there is **physical violence**.
- ▶ **Breaches** in custody periods **are the main examples of labor sabotage** when the relationship ends.



# Labor sabotage

## With Gender Violence



The ex-partners, who physically abused during the relationship, were the ones who asked women to quit their jobs the most.



These women also suffered more frequent harassment and interference in their work after the relationship ended.



## Without Gender Violence

## With Gender Violence



Women who suffered gender violence in many cases were also prevented from going to work.



The impediment to going to work was less in those who did not exercise gender violence



## Without Gender Violence

# 4. General recommendations

While abuses related to workplace sabotage are very important signs, these are aspects of economic violence that are reduced or eliminated once the relationship ends.

Economic control is exercised differently during cohabitation than when it ends. There are many cases in which economic control, through defaults, is perpetuated after the separation.

The economic exploitation part is aggravated when the relationship ends. Economic violence occurs even when there is no physical violence.

## General Proposals

Measures **that reinforce the empowerment of women**, which will imply that abuses related to economic control and labor sabotage during the relationship are reduced.

**Explicit and effective measures** that focus on economic exploitation.



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