

ECONOMIC ABUSE AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY: LITHUANIAN CASE LAW ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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JAKŠTIENĖ, Ramunė. Economic Abuse and Criminal Responsibility: Lithuanian Case Law on Domestic Violence. *International and Comparative Law Review*, 2022, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 215–237. DOI: 10.2478/iclr-2022-0023

Summary: Though economic abuse is under researched in Lithuania it is not less widespread nor less serious as physical or sexual violence. The objective of this article is to determine the scope of prosecuting economic abuse in context of domestic violence. Desk research methodology based on case study is used: qualitative content research of Lithuanian case law. The findings of the research suggest that prosecution of economic abuse as a specific form of domestic violence is rather limited in Lithuania: i.e., criminalization is only partial; law enforcement faces difficulties in recognizing and evidencing it; the case law is not adequate (e. g., prosecution mostly focuses on physical violence, it is incident-based, ignores the specifics of domestic violence and economic abuse is commonly interpreted as context of systemic violence but not an independent basis for prosecution). Accordingly, there is a need to enhance criminal law response to economic abuse and explore for the optimal alternative to ensure this in Lithuania.

Keywords: economic abuse; domestic violence.

1 Introduction

Domestic violence is an interdisciplinary socio-legal phenomenon. Economic issues have multidimensional correlation to this kind of violence. Economic factors are strongly related to the essential causes of domestic violence. On the systemic level historically generated structure of society (hegemonic masculinity, power imbalance, social roles, gender inequality) perpetuated by legal norms warrants male dominance, power, and control over women, and violence against them¹. Such a framework is referred to “the political economy of violence against women”². Despite huge progress ensuring gender equality, according to the

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- 1 KOVACS, Roxanne J. The macro-level drivers of intimate partner violence: New evidence from a multilevel dataset. *Global Public Health*, 2018, vol. 13, iss. 7, pp. 944–956; BARZILAY, Arianne, Renan. Power in the age of in/equality: economic abuse, masculinities, and the long road to marriage equality. *Akron Law Review*, 2017, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 323–366.; WENDT, S. Domestic violence and feminism. In S. Wendt, & N. Moulding, (Eds.). *Contemporary feminisms in social work practice*. New York: Routledge, 2016, pp. 209–219.
 - 2 ADELMAN, Madelaine. *Battering states: The politics of domestic violence in Israel*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2017.

results of the study by the World Bank, on average around the world, women still have only three-fourths the legal economic rights of men regarding mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, and pension³. On the other hand, economic factors such as economic inequality, instability, dependence, insecurity, or similar disadvantages disproportionately experienced by women are supplementary individual risk factors that increase the vulnerability to other forms of domestic violence repeat victimization⁴. Moreover, the literature suggests that financial crisis (e. g. in 2007/08) possibly generates increased situational vulnerability to domestic violent crimes⁵. This thesis is supported by the experience of the new COVID 19 pandemic crisis having undisputed extensive impact on economies. Although some authors cast doubts on pandemic's long-term impact on domestic violence rates⁶, but prevailing studies witness that larger drop in female employment⁷, financial pressures, and victims dependence on perpetrators during COVID-19 pandemic, intensified by social isolation and reduced accessibility of legal help and support services, were factors escalating intimate partner violence⁸. According to the message of Lithuanian Police, the numbers of registered crimes in close environment has increased significantly, especially homicide. The literature argues that the impact of pandemic on domestic violence is severe enough to indirectly drive another social and economic crisis⁹.

- 3 WBG. *Women, business and the law 2021*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021.
- 4 STYLIANOU, Amanda M. Economic abuse within intimate partner violence: a review of the literature. *Violence and Victims*, 2018, vol. 33, iss. 1, pp. 3–22.
- 5 WALBY, Sylvia, TOWERS, Jude, FRANCIS, Brian. Is violent crime increasing or decreasing? A new methodology to measure repeat attacks making visible the significance of gender and domestic relations. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 2016, vol. 56, iss. 6, pp. 1203–1234.
- 6 PIQUERO, Alex R., RIDDELL, Jordan R., BISHOPP, Stephen A., NARVEY, Chelsey, REID, Joan A., PIQUERO, Nicole, Leeper. Staying home, staying safe? A short-term analysis of COVID-19 on Dallas domestic violence. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 2020, vol. 45, iss. 4, pp. 601–635.
- 7 WBG, *supra* note 3.
- 8 LYONS, Minna, BREWER, Gayle. Experiences of intimate partner violence during lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Family Violence*, 2022, vol. 37, pp. 969–977; VIERO, A., BARBARA, G., M., K., CATTANEO. Violence against women in the Covid-19 pandemic: A review of the literature and a call for shared strategies to tackle health and social emergencies. *Forensic Science International*, 2021, vol. 319, 110650; NNAWULEZI, Nikiru, HACSKAYLO, Margaret. Identifying and responding to the complex needs of domestic violence housing practitioners at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Family Violence*, 2022, vol. 37, iss. 6, pp. 915–925; KAUKINEN, Catherine. When stay-at-home orders leave victims unsafe at home: exploring the risk and consequences of intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 2020, vol. 45, iss. 4, pp. 668–679.
- 9 SHARMA, Amalesh, BORAH, Sourav, Bikash. Covid-19 and domestic violence: an indirect path to social and economic crisis. *Journal of Family Violence*, 2022, vol. 37, pp. 759–765.

Domestic violence is complex and multifaceted, it may take different forms. Typical patterns and tactics of systemic violence involve not only physical, psychological, or sexual, but also economic abuse (also referred to as a financial abuse) to exercise power and gain control over victim¹⁰. Economic abuse is no less prevalent¹¹, nor less harmful as other forms of domestic violence. The literature associates to it the range of short-term and long-term negative consequences, foremost physical and mental health effects¹², lower quality of life¹³, but also unfavourable economic impact such as economic dependency on the perpetrator and material hardship. In addition, the research comes up with the methodologies to evaluate not only individual economic impact, but also the population economic burden. The estimated costs of domestic violence are unbelievable and include medical costs, state support, criminal justice activities, property loss or damage, damages of third parties, loss of economic benefit, labor market costs, non-pecuniary damages, and other costs¹⁴.

Economic factors in the context of domestic violence may also be a mean to prevent or reduce victimization or mitigate negative consequences of abuse. The research argues that economic interventions on individual, communication, and community levels, in conjunction with others, may effectively reduce risk

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- 10 JOHNSON, Michael P. Gender and types of intimate partner violence: A response to an anti-feminist literature review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2011, vol. 16, iss. 4, pp. 289–296; STARK, Evan *Coercive control: The entrapment of women in personal life*. New York, Oxford University Press, Inc., 2007.
 - 11 STYLIANOU, Amanda M. Economic abuse experiences and depressive symptoms among victims of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 2018, vol. 33, pp. 381–392; POSTMUS, Judy L., PLUMMER, Sara-Beth, STYLIANOU, Amanda M. Measuring economic abuse in the lives of survivors: revising the scale of economic abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 2016, vol. 22, iss. 6, pp. 692–703.
 - 12 STYLIANOU, Amanda M., *supra* note 11; SAUBER, Elisabeth W., O'BRIEN, Karen. M. Multiple losses: The psychological and economic well-being of survivors of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2020, vol. 35, iss. 15–16, pp. 3054–3078.
 - 13 ADAMS, Adrienne E., BEEBLE, Marisa L., GREGORY, Katie A. Evidence of the Construct Validity of the Scale of Economic Abuse. *Violence and Victims*, 2015, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 363–76; STYLIANOU, Amanda M., *supra* note 4.
 - 14 PETERSON, Cora, KEARNS, Megan C., MCINTOSH, Wendy, LiKamWa, ESTEFAN, Lianne, Fuino, NICOLAIDIS, Chistina, MCCOLLISTER, Kathryn E., GORDON, Amy, FLORENCE, Curtis. Lifetime economic burden of intimate partner violence among U. S. adults. *Am J Prev Med.*, 2018, vol. 55, iss. 4, pp. 433–444; COUNCIL OF EUROPE EQUALITY DIVISION DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF DEMOCRACY. *Overview of Studies on the Costs of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (Strasbourg, 26 October 2012, updated, 14 October 2014); CHAN, Ko, Ling, CHO, Esther, Yin-Nei. A review of cost measures for the economic impact of domestic violence. *Trauma, violence & abuse*, 2010, vol., 11, iss. 3, pp. 129–143.

of domestic violence¹⁵ or improve victims' financial well-being¹⁶. The literature provides a variety of tools economically empowering women¹⁷. These activities are on the agenda of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, i.e., to ensure gender equality and empower all women and girls (*inter alia* at economic level) as well as eliminate all forms of violence against women¹⁸. Gendered economic dimensions are prerequisites of smart economics¹⁹.

There is no provision in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania²⁰ aimed at prosecuting economic abuse against intimate partner specifically. So to judge on the effectiveness and adequacy of this framework there is a need to study the existing criminal case law. To the moment this topic is practically unexplored in Lithuania. The objective of this article is to determine the scope of prosecuting economic abuse in context of domestic violence. Desk research methodology based on case study is used for a qualitative content research of Lithuanian case law.

The paper introduces the review of scholarly and criminal justice developments regarding economic abuse first and then describes the methodology, provides results of the research that are followed by broader comments and final conclusions.

2 Literature review

In its broadest conceptualizations, economic abuse involves a variety of intentional behaviours to control a person's ability to acquire, use, and maintain economic resources and to harm his/her financial self-efficacy²¹. There is a grow-

- 15 KIANI, Zahra, SIMBAR, Masoumeh, FAKARI, Farzaneh Rashidi, KAZEMI, Samiyeh, GHASEMI, Vida, AZIMI, Nasrin, MOKHTARIYAN, Tahereh, BAZAZIAN, Shahin. A systematic review: Empowerment interventions to reduce domestic violence? *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2021, vol. 58, 101585.
- 16 POSTMUS, Judy L., HETLING, Andrea, HOGE, Gretchen L. Evaluating a financial education curriculum as an intervention to improve financial behaviors and financial well-being of survivors of domestic violence: Results from a longitudinal randomized control. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 2015, vol. 49, iss. 1, pp. 250–266.
- 17 See reviews in STYLIANOU, Amanda M., *supra* note 4; TANKARD, Margaret E., IYENGAR, Radha. Economic policies and intimate partner violence prevention: emerging complexities in the literature. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2018, vol. 33, iss. 21, pp. 3367–3387.
- 18 United Nations General Assembly resolution. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 25 September 2015 (A/70/L.1), goals 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5a, 5c.
- 19 WBG, *supra* note 3.
- 20 *Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania*, 2000. [online]. Available at <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/28b18041843311e89188e16a6495e98c?jfwid=-g0zrz3g06> Accessed: 26.03.2021.
- 21 HARTLEY, Carolyn, Copps, RENNER, Lynette M., WARD, Caitlin. A new factor solution for the domestic violence-related financial issues scale (DV-FI). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 2021, vol. 36, iss. 17–18, pp. NP9959–NP9981; POSTMUS, Judy L., PLUMMER, Sara-Beth, STYLIANOU, Amanda M. Measuring economic abuse in the lives of survivors:

ing clarity and consistency in defining economic abuse as focusing on economic control, economic exploitation, and employment sabotage²². Most usually inflicted strategies of economic abuse are restriction, monitoring, or complete control of financial resources, isolation from household financial information, limited purchasing decisions, denying the right of joint ownership of assets, exploiting women's resources²³, financial dependence, prevention or disruption of employment and education²⁴, exploitation of domestic labor²⁵, coerced debt²⁶, etc.

The criminalization of domestic violence was the result of a long period of joint efforts by feminist movements, women rights and anti-violence advocacy as well as policy makers²⁷. But it is still controversial in general and in the case of national legislation as well. Besides of symbolic effect, criminal law response facilitates greater accountability for non-physical violence, more effective police intervention. On the other hand, critics point at overcriminalization and over-reliance on criminal system, challenging implementation, adverse effect on victims, limited deterrent effect²⁸ and call for holistic approach in response²⁹.

The number of jurisdictions where national domestic violence laws recognize economic abuse as a form of domestic violence is substantial³⁰, not excluding Lithuania. Nonetheless, the response to economic abuse by many legal systems

revising the scale of economic abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 2016, vol. 22, iss. 6, pp. 692–703; WEAVER, Terri L., SANDERS, Cynthia K., CAMPBELL, Carole L., SCHNABEL Meg. Development and preliminary psychometric evaluation of the domestic violence-related financial issues scale (DV-FI). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2009, vol. 24, iss. 4, pp. 569–585.

22 POSTMUS, Judy L., HOGE, Gretchen L., BRECKENRIDGE, Jan, SHARP-JEFFS, Nicola, CHUNG, Donna. Economic abuse as an invisible form of domestic violence: a multicountry review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 2020, vol. 21, iss. 2, pp. 261–283.

23 See review in STYLIANOU, Amanda M., *supra* note 4.

24 SANDERS, Cynthia K. Economic abuse in the lives of women abused by an intimate partner: a qualitative study. *Violence Against Women*, 2015, vol. 21, iss. 1, pp. 3–29.

25 ANITHA, Sundari. Understanding economic abuse through an intersectional lens: financial abuse, control, and exploitation of women's productive and reproductive labor. *Violence Against Women*, 2019, vol. 25, iss. 15, pp. 1863–1868.

26 LITWIN, Angela. Coerced debt: the role of consumer credit in domestic violence. *California Law Review*, 2012, vol. 100, iss. 4, pp. 951–1026.

27 See review in GARCIA, Venessa, MCMANIMON, Patrick. *Gendered justice: Intimate partner violence and the criminal justice system*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011.

28 GOODMARK, Leigh. Reimagining VAWA: Why criminalization is a failed policy and what a non-carceral VAWA could look like. *Violence against women*, 2021, vol. 27, iss. 1, pp. 84–101; KILLEAN, Rachel. 'A leap forward'? Critiquing the criminalization of domestic abuse in Northern Ireland. *Northern Ireland Law Quarterly*, 2020, vol. 71, iss. 4, pp. 595–617; RICHIE, Beth E., EIFE, Erin. Black bodies at the dangerous intersection of gender violence and mass criminalization. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 2021, vol. 30, iss. 7, pp. 877–888.

29 GOODMARK, Leigh. Should domestic violence be decriminalized? *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender*, 2017, vol. 53, pp. 53–113.

30 WBG. *Women, business and the law 2018*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018.

is still inadequate regarding its nature, severity, and impact³¹. As a consequence, perpetrators go unpunished for certain violent behaviours, victims leave not sufficiently protected. Abusers sometimes instrumentalise this gap in laws and change their tactics from physical abuse (that may result in legal responsibility) to economical one (no risk for liability)³². To close this gap, criminalization of a new offense of coercive and controlling behaviour or amendments toward more comprehensive provision (capturing *inter alia* financial abuse) in some jurisdictions followed (e. g., England, Scotland, Irish Republic, Northern Ireland, Tasmania, and Australia), but it opened legal disputes regarding intangible nature of concepts, difficulties in evidencing, adverse effect on victims, the need for additional competencies of law enforcement officers, or reluctance of criminal justice system to take systemic shifts from conventional legal³³ and socio-cultural approaches³⁴. To eliminate these deficiencies an alternative to domestic violence crime is offered as a sub-set of violent crime, but not a separate type of crime. This concept is based on the theory that all violence is coercive and controlling by definition³⁵.

Criminalisation of economic abuse by specific norm also receives criticism, e. g., the case of Tasmanian legislation is determined as overcriminalisation because of procedural limitations, uncertain description of the elements of the crime, similarity to other crimes (e. g., stalking, emotional abuse). Only one case dealing the specific norm on economic abuse was filed³⁶.

Economic abuse is underexplored topic in Lithuania. Psychological or sociological texts prevail over the legal ones. The research mostly examines economic abuse in the context of other forms of domestic violence and is focused on the prevalence of intimate partner violence, the main patterns, and the intercon-

31 GOODMARK, Leigh. *A troubled marriage: Domestic violence and the legal system*. New York: NYU Press, 2011; STARK, Evan, *supra* note 10.

32 KRIGEL, Karni, BENJAMIN, Orly. From physical violence to intensified economic abuse: Transitions between the types of IPV over survivors' life courses. *Violence Against Women*, 2021, vol. 27, iss. 9, pp. 1211–1231.

33 Review in TOLMIE, Julia. R. Coercive control: To criminalize or not to criminalize? *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 2018, vol. 18, iss. 1, pp. 50–66; STARK, Evan, HESTER, Marianne. Coercive Control: Update and Review. *Violence Against Women*, 2019, vol. 25, iss. 1, pp. 82–88; WALKLATE, Sandra, FITZ-GIBBON, Kate, MCCULLOCH, Jude. Is more law the answer? Seeking justice for victims of intimate partner violence through the reform of legal categories. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 2018, vol. 18, iss. 1, pp. 115–131.

34 BARZILAY, Arianne, Renan. Power in the age of in/equality: economic abuse, masculinities, and the long road to marriage equality. *Akron Law Review*, 2017, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 323–366.

35 WALBY, Sylvia, TOWERS, Jude. Untangling the concept of coercive control: Theorizing domestic violent crime. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 2018, vol. 18, iss. 1, pp. 7–28.

36 MCMAHON, Marilyn, MCGORRERY, Paul. Criminalising emotional abuse, intimidation and economic abuse in the context of family violence: the Tasmanian experience, *University of Tasmania Law Review*, 2016, vol. 35, iss. 2, pp. 1–22.

nections with socio-demographic characteristics³⁷, mental effect³⁸, role of victim social support³⁹, and help seeking behaviours⁴⁰. Some aspects of criminal legislation and practice of domestic violence in general are covered by V. Pilinkaite Sotirovic⁴¹, L. Vaigė⁴², I. Michailovič, Giedraitytė-Mačiulienė⁴³, Z. Vasiliauskaite⁴⁴. Favoring the development of criminal justice, they still point at deficiencies in responding to domestic violence and criminalization gaps. Critical and more detailed examination of prosecution for domestic violence is provided in the doctoral research of the author, but again with no specific focus on economic abuse. The main findings of this research provide a basis to conclude that protection of domestic violence victims during criminal proceedings is not sufficiently effective nor adequate⁴⁵.

The author acknowledges definite merits of criminal law interventions to domestic violence, and the main objective of this article is not to question the benefits of criminalization nor substantiate one of the presented alternatives of criminal law response to economic abuse, but rather to determine the scope of criminal responsibility for this form of violence with reference to established Lithuanian case law.

- 37 ŽUKAUSKIENĖ, Rita, KANIUŠONYTĖ, Goda, BAKAITYTĖ, Aistė, TRUSKAUSKAITĖ-KUNEVIČIENĖ, Inga. Prevalence and patterns of intimate partner violence in a nationally representative sample in Lithuania. *Journal of Family Violence*, 2021, vol. 36, pp. 117–130.
- 38 BAKAITYTĖ, Aistė, KANIUŠONYTĖ, Goda, TRUSKAUSKAITĖ-KUNEVIČIENĖ, Inga, ŽUKAUSKIENĖ, Rita. (2020). Longitudinal investigation of posttraumatic growth in female survivors of intimate partner violence: The role of event centrality and identity exploration. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 2022, vol. 37, iss. 1–2, pp. NP1058–NP1076.
- 39 ŽUKAUSKIENĖ, Rita, KANIUŠONYTĖ, Goda, BERGMAN, Lars R., BAKAITYTĖ, Aistė, TRUSKAUSKAITĖ-KUNEVIČIENĖ, Inga. The Role of social support in identity processes and posttraumatic growth: A study of victims of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2021, vol. 36, iss. 15–16, pp. 7599–7624.
- 40 VASILIAUSKAITĖ, Zuzana, GEFFNER, Robert. Eight forms of abuse: the validation and reliability of two multidimensional instruments of intimate partner violence. *Psichologija*, 2020, vol. 62, pp. 56–68; VASILIAUSKAITĖ, Zuzana, GEFFNER, Robert. Reasons that keep women from disclosing intimate partner violence. *Socialinis darbas*, 2020, vol. 18, iss. 2, pp. 65–80.
- 41 PILINKAITE SOTIROVIC, Vilana, VAIGĖ, Laima. Challenges for preventing violence against women in Lithuania. *Filosofija. Sociologija*, 2017, vol. 28, iss. 4, pp. 268–276.
- 42 VAIGĖ, Laima. *Violence against women under international law: Filling the gaps at international, regional and national levels*. Doctoral thesis, Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, 2016.
- 43 MICHAİLOVIČ, Ilona, GIEDRYTĖ-MAČIULIENĖ, Renata. Policy and practice dealing with domestic violence cases in Lithuania. *Administratīvā un kriminālā justīcija*, 2016, vol. 3, iss. 76, pp. 13–22.
- 44 VASILIAUSKAITE, Zuzana. Help-seeking and perceived helpfulness of formal help sources for victims of domestic violence: An exploratory study. *European Scientific Journal*, 2015, vol. 11, iss. 26, pp. 32–55.
- 45 See JAKŠTIENĖ, Ramunė. *Smurtas artimoje aplinkoje prieš moteris: baudžiamoji teisinė apsauga [Domestic violence against women: protection by criminal law]*. Doktoro disertacija [doctoral thesis], Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, 2019.

3 Prosecution of economic abuse in Lithuania

3.1 Research methodology

The literature review provides a basis for a hypothesis that the existing criminal case law in Lithuania does not ensure an adequate scope of prosecution in cases of economic domestic abuse and effective victim protection. The research methodology is based on qualitative content research of Lithuanian criminal cases in the context of economic domestic violence. The subject has not been studied using this method yet. One of the most popular Lithuanian case law databases “Infollex” was used for textual search and selection of cases. The data was gathered during the period January – March 2021. Criminal cases and specific norms of Criminal Code addressed in the motivating part of court decisions as well as the keywords *domestic violence* were an inclusion criterion. The author acknowledges the definite gendered nature of this phenomenon but opted for this notion (instead of e. g., *intimate partner violence*) as it is common in Lithuanian legal system, besides more types of relationships can be captured. As it was mentioned, there is no special norm criminalizing economic abuse against intimate partner violence in Lithuania. No official statistical data capturing this form of violence are gathered. Under these circumstances the norms addressed in cases of domestic violence mostly were chosen. With reference to official statistical data for the year 2020 it was identified that the biggest numbers of registered crimes are referred to the provisions imposing criminal sanctions for causing physical pain or a negligible health impairment (Art. 140.3), threatening to murder or cause a severe health impairment to a person or terrorisation of a person (Art. 145), non-severe health impairment (Art. 138.2(3)), and severe health impairment (Art. 135.2(3))⁴⁶. The same result is obtained while comparing the records for the last few years⁴⁷. Although, as a general rule, the Constitutional Court and Supreme Court of Lithuania have the discretion to establish consistent case law, but to expand the volume of the data, the search also covered the judgements of lower courts. The keywords *economic*, *job/work*, and *money* were used to search for relevant cases. Then the received primary data set was checked case by case excluding judgements where economic issues were addressed not for qualifying a crime, but deciding on type and severity of sanctions, conditional suspension of a penalty or exempting from criminal liability. The extent of data accumulation has been defined with reference to the critical and approving or disapproving scope. The targeted selection of material was closed when the data became exhausted (i.e., no new or inconsistent data was obtained). The results of the search were used to identify thematic categories as a basis for systemic interpretation of the phenomenon. Theoretical approach of economic

46 *Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania*, *supra* note 20.

47 *Information Technology and Communication Department under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania*. [online]. Available at: <https://ird.lt/en/> Accessed: 01.02.2021.

abuse conceptualized by Adams, *et al.*⁴⁸ definitions and classification) was used as a methodological source for data analysis.

3.2 Results

After the mentioned data selection procedure 16 cases were sorted out for a detailed analysis. They were randomly encoded with numbers for convenience. Referring to the abusive behaviors, the cases were categorized qualifying as an economic control (EC), employment sabotage (ES), or economic exploitation (EE). Then relevant thematic parameters were determined: gender of victim and perpetrator, type of relationship between victim and perpetrator and its status, victim's employment, history of domestic violence (repeat victimization, previous convictions, or other legal proceedings), victim's legal representation by professional during criminal proceedings, measures of victim's protection applied, legal qualification of a crime, and final court judgement.

All three categories of economic abuse were discovered in analyzed documents, albeit in different proportions: 3EC, 11ES, and 3EE, respectively. Each case falls under one category except for one case where the tactics of abuse involved both EC and ES (#3). Most common abusive behaviours that were mentioned in literature review, were also discovered in analyzed documents, except those regarding ownership rights, property management, and coercing debts. All these cases were prosecuted as physical (Arts.129, 135, 138, 140), or/and mental violence (Arts. 145, 154) except one case of physical violence and property crime (Arts.178, 302). There are slightly more cases prosecuted as mental abuse only (8), than in conjunction with physical violence (5), and significantly more than physical violence only (3)/in conjunction with property crime (1). ES was predominantly prosecuted as mental abuse, while EC and EE as physical violence. Perpetrators were male in all cases and primary victims were female except for one case. See all the results in the Table on the following pages.

48 ADAMS, Adrienne E., BEEBLE, Marisa L., GREGORY, Katie A., *supra* note 13.

Tactic of economic abuse	Gender of victim/perpetrator	Relationship	Relationship status	Employment yes/no	Legal representation of victim yes/no	Criminal Code Art.	History of violence	Court judgement	Protection measures	Case code and no.
EC	f/m	spouse	divorcing	not specified	yes	140.2; 145.2	alleged systemic physical violence, intimidation, threatening	acquittal; non-pecuniary damages awarded during civil proceeding	order to evict from joint residency and not to approach victim	#1 1A-46-350/2017
	f/m	partner	ongoing relationship	not specified	no	140.2	not specified	conviction; no claim for damages	temporary detention	#2 1A-119-1020/2018
ES	f/m	spouse and her daughter	divorcing	no	yes	140.2; 138.2(3) 145.2	previous reconciliation with the victim	conviction under Art 140.2 (2 episodes); acquittal under 138.2(3); 145.2; non-pecuniary damages awarded	temporary detention, anti-violence program; request for protection measures rejected	#3 1A-331-898/2020
	f/m	ex-partner	separated	no	no	145.2	violation of prohibition not to approach	conviction; non-pecuniary damages awarded	prohibition to approach victim; intensive supervision	#4 1A-39-493/2020

	f/m	spouse and children	divorcing	no	yes	140.1, 140.2, 129.2(3)	established systemic physical and psychological violence; failure to take anti-violence program	conviction; material and non-pecuniary damages awarded	arrest	#5 1A-503/2014
	f/m	partner	separated	yes	yes	140.2; 145.2	administrative liability for child abuse; alleged systemic psychological and economic violence	conviction (2 episodes of physical violence); material and non-pecuniary damages awarded	prohibition to approach victim; anti-violence program	#6 1A-27-574/2020
	f/m	ex-spouse	divorced	yes	no	145.2	2 convictions for threatening to kill; alleged physical violence	conviction	-	#71 A-131-719/2017
	f/m	spouse	not specified	yes	no	140.1; 140.2; 145.1	not specified	exempted from criminal liability; non-pecuniary damages awarded	-	#81 A-744-954/2019
	f/m	ex-partner	separated	yes	yes	145.2	-	conviction	prohibition to approach victim and to visit certain places; anti-violence program	#9 2K-232-976/2019

	f/m	spouse	divorcing	yes	yes	145.2	alleged on-job harassment; psychological violence	conviction; non-pecuniary damages awarded	prohibition to approach victim	#10 1A-132-360/2020
	f/m	ex-partner	separated	yes	no	145.2; 151.1; 154.2	not specified	conviction for 2 episodes of terrorizing and 2 episodes of defamation; non-pecuniary damages awarded	-	#11 2K-269-303/2020
	f/m	ex daughter-in-law and grand daughter	-	yes	no	145.2	alleged psychological violence (intimidation, threatening)	conviction	temporary detention, arrest	#12 1A-343-478/2020
	m/m	ex father-in-law	-	yes	yes	154.1	false accusations	conviction; non-pecuniary damages awarded	-	#13 2K-253-458/2020
EE	f/m	partner	ongoing relationship	yes	yes	260.3	established physical violence, alleged terrorizing	alleged violence and terrorizing to engage in criminal activities was not established as mitigating factor	-	#14 1A-322-318/2020

	f/m	partner and daughter	ongoing relationship	no	yes	135. 2(3); 140.1, 2; 178.1; 302.1		conviction under Arts. 135, 2(3); 140.1, 2; acquittal under Art. 178.1; 302.1; material damages awarded, non-pecuniary damages referred to civil proceedings	arrest	#15 1S-134/2011
	f/m	spouse	divorcing	yes	yes	140.2	alleged systemic abuse against all family members; threatening to kill; exempted from criminal liability for physical violence	conviction; non-pecuniary damages awarded	temporary detention; order to evict from joint residency and not to approach victim; anti-violence program	#161 A-221-810/2018

3.3 Discussion

Not surprisingly, the findings of this research confirm the theoretical framework of economic abuse in the context of domestic violence: its gendered nature, intimacy of victim vs. perpetrator relationship, and main abusive tactics. Though the aim of this research was to capture as many types of family relationships, as possible, however, most cases were dealing male abuse against their intimate female partner. Consistent to statistical data⁴⁹, violence was found similarly prevalent both in formal (against spouses) and informal relationships (partners living together and having joint household). The results of the research confirm theoretical indications that economic abuse has a long-term harmful impact on the victims, it does not cease with the end of abusive relationship and is kind of additional tactic of violence to extend it⁵⁰. This characteristic is very strongly expressed in the findings of this research as in most cases violence was inflicted after relationship was ended or while trying to terminate it. Some evidence confirming adverse impact on victims' employment⁵¹ was also detected: due to systemic violence effect on mental health and ability to perform professional duties women lost their jobs (#2), or their business was disrupted (#3), or they left job to stay at home ensuring children's safety from violence (#5). Besides of specific incriminated behavior, the ongoing repetitive multiform violence was established in almost all cases: as threatening, intimidation, physical violence, controlling behaviours. And some perpetrators already had a history of prior legal proceedings for serious domestic violence against same victim, e. g., termination of pre-trial investigation on the ground of reconciliation (#3), violation of prohibition not to approach (#4), failure to take anti-violence program (#5), administrative liability for child abuse (#6), 2 convictions for threatening to kill (#7), exemption from criminal liability for physical violence (#16). These findings confirm the results of other research regarding multidimensional and systemic nature of intimate partner violence⁵².

The moderate number of cases obtained during search procedure may be referred to sparse jurisprudence regarding economic abuse in the context of domestic violence. According to the official statistical data over the last few years, the numbers of registered cases of non-physical domestic violence are constantly and disproportionally decreasing, reaching approximately only 1/10 of physical violence rates⁵³. And that is to the contrary to national and international research findings on its high prevalence. Žukauskienė, *et al.* found that at least half of

49 *Information Technology and Communication Department under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania*, *supra* note 47.

50 ERIKSSON, Marie, ULMESTIG, Rickard. "It's not all about money": toward a more comprehensive understanding of financial abuse in the context of VAW. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2021, vol. 36, iss. 3–4, pp. NP1625-1651NP.

51 See review in STYLIANOU, Amanda M., *supra* note 4.

52 STARK, Evan, *supra* note 10.

53 *Information Technology and Communication Department under the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania*, *supra* note 47.

Lithuanian women have experienced non-physical violence, and economic abuse reached second highest rate just after the psychological violence⁵⁴. According to the findings of EU-wide survey, the number of Lithuanian women experiencing economic violence exceeds the EU average⁵⁵. Similar numbers of physical and psychological cases obtained for this research are determined by the targeted selection. There are some explanations why so little cases of economic violence are prosecuted. First, the author agrees, that economic abuse is rarely recognised as a form of illegal behaviour by the victims themselves as well as law enforcement officers, e. g., economic exploitation survivors tend to think that violence was not serious enough to be disclosed and victims of employment sabotage are concerned about not being believed⁵⁶.

Secondly, small numbers of cases may be associated with limited criminalization. There is no special norm on domestic violence nor economic abuse against intimate partner in the Criminal Code. But we have a specific provision in case of some form of economic abuse against one's own child, i.e., evading the obligation to provide maintenance for the child (Art. 164). In comparison to other interpersonal violence, more severe criminal sanctions for domestic violence are faced only in some cases of physical violence against family member or close relative where this type of relationship is a qualifying element of a crime: e. g., causing physical pain or a negligible health impairment (Art. 140.3), non-severe health impairment (Art. 138.2(3)), severe health impairment (Art. 135.2(3)), murder (Art. 129.2(3)). Analogical aggravating circumstances can be established only in cases of some forms of sexual violence against children (Art. 60.1(14)).

The very notion of *family member* and *close relative* in Lithuanian criminal law is also of limited scope, i.e., it covers only inlisted relationships: grand/adoptive/parents, grand/adoptive/children, siblings and their spouses living together with him, also the spouse of the perpetrator or the person living with him in common law/partnership, and parents of the spouse (Art. 248). Accordingly, the criminal legal concept in Lithuania is based on the model of equal protection against domestic and non-domestic violence. And this is where the limitations of criminal response derive.

To enhance criminal law response to psychological domestic violence, a specific provision that criminalizes stalking was introduced in Criminal Code of Lithuania just last year (Art. 148-1). Stalking is a very typical, prevalent, and harmful tactic of intimate partner violence that often involves economic abuse⁵⁷.

54 ŽUKAUSKIENĖ, Rita, KANIUŠONYTĖ, Goda, BAKAITYTĖ, Aistė, TRUSKAUSKAITĖ-KUNEVIČIENĖ, Inga, *supra* note 37.

55 EU AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. Violence against Women: An EU-wide Survey: Main Results. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015.

56 VASILIAUSKAITĖ, Zuzana, GEFFNER, Robert, *supra* note 40.

57 LOGAN, T., WALKER, Robert. The Impact of Stalking-Related Fear and Gender on Personal Safety Outcomes. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2021, vol. 36, iss. 13–14, pp. NP7465–NP7487.

The new norm may be helpful in some cases of financial abuse, e. g., on-the-job harassment; however, its scope and effect are still not clear. According to the preexisting Lithuanian case law, some forms of stalking fall under Art. 145.2 as terrorizing or intimidating a person, i.e., as a type of mental abuse. According to the Supreme Court's interpretation, to qualify as a crime threatening or intimidation must be realistic, systemic, and continuous (i.e., episodes must be related in terms of time and perpetrator's intentions, e. g., #4; #11; #9). However, this practice does not adequately respond to the very nature of domestic violence as even single episode of non-physical abuse may be very dangerous (e. g., causing car accident in #4), especially when cumulated with other forms of violence. For example, in #3 threatening to damage professional reputation, disruption of family business, and subsequent loss of job, as well as threatening to kill, stalking, and terrorizing were alleged, but the court rejected charges on psychological violence and based its reasoning only on the assessment of discrete episodes of physical violence. The tendency to tackle isolated situations is noticed even determining the systemacy of violent behaviour and even in cases of physical violence where non-physical abuse is established just as motivating, evidencing, or contextualizing physical violence. Subsequently, the criminal responsibility is exceptionally based on the aftereffects of physical violence, and it covers not all violent behaviours or not in full. Unfavourable economic impact on victims (e. g., loss of job) does not fall under the scope of the court (#4). However, some examples of good practice, when the court expressly calls for the need to interpret the specific context of abusive behaviour as a chain of events, are promising (#4; #6). Referring to these findings, the author supports arguments that focusing on physical violence and discrete incidents is not an adequate practice to judge on abusive behaviours⁵⁸. Ignoring special characteristics of domestic violence is inappropriate approach as well, since it is well-established that this type of violence is *per se* a pattern of tactics that is extended over time and inspired of overall intention to exert power and control over the victim. Distinct forms of domestic violence need differentiated response⁵⁹. Moreover, episode-based approach does not respond to victims experiences when they are assaulted with range of abusive behaviors as it happened in all cases under review. By dissolving them, the scope of protection is limited. And this effect is enhanced with the absence of true civil protection orders in Lithuania⁶⁰ and inconsistent case law regarding procedural protection measures⁶¹. As for the cases analyzed during this research, there was a tendency to place perpetrators under the obligation not to approach the victim in case of severe mental abuse and temporary detain after physical violence.

58 KRIGEL, Karni, BENJAMIN, Orly. From physical violence to intensified economic abuse: Transitions between the types of IPV over survivors' life courses. *Violence Against Women*, 2021, vol. 27, iss. 9, pp. 1211–1231.

59 JOHNSON, Michael P., *supra* note 10; STARK, Evan, *supra* note 10.

60 The relevant amendment of the Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence comes into force just from 1 July 2023.

61 JAKŠTIENĖ, Ramunė, *supra* note 45.

As the findings of this research show, on-the-job harassment was a dominant form of ES and prevailing other types of economic abuse. And that is rather predictable, because this tactic is one of most visible, most public as not only intimate partners, but also other persons (e. g., colleagues, clients) are victimized (#11; #7). The findings of this research reveal sufficiently consistent case law to prosecute these behaviors under Art. 145.2 as terrorizing. However, the reasoning is differentiated: sometimes it is qualified as mental abuse in general (#10), but sometimes – as its strategies such as stalking (#10; #12; #4) or intimidation (#7) or form of intimidation such as creating a frightening atmosphere (#9). No clear delimitation criteria are expressly provided neither they can be clearly identified. All cases of on-the-job harassment were extremely severe, intense, involving multiple episodes and tactics of mental abuse (e. g., aggressive intimidation, threatening, restriction of liberty, actions, movement, controlling behaviors, stalking). Conviction based exceptionally on harassment at workplace was found only in one case. So, the question remains what legal interpretation would be invoked in case of moderate or minor level of harassment. Another alternative to respond to on-the-job harassment was to file a charge under Art. 154 (libel) as a sole basis for criminal responsibility or in conjunction with Art. 145. But this qualification was referred only in cases of false accusations of illegal activities while performing professional duties and intense defamation (#13; #11). One case was prosecuted as a property crime (Art. 178 (theft) and 302 (seizure of document)) in conjunction with physical violence, but it failed as lacking evidence (#15). Evidencing in these cases is in principle complicated since legal status of partners property is a joint ownership. This supports earlier determination that women generally do not have evidence to prove that they were abused and may also lack the financial means to hire lawyers for legal representation⁶². The findings of this research confirm that better defense of victim interests (e. g., claiming and evidencing non-pecuniary damages) was related to their professional legal representation during criminal proceedings (#13; #3).

According to the findings of this research economic abuse was usually prosecuted as mental abuse. Because of its complex and complicated characteristics, and lack of full understanding it is often correlated to other forms of violence⁶³, but the literature provides evidence for conceptualizing economic abuse as a unique form of abuse⁶⁴. In this respect Lithuanian case law does not meet the

62 USTA, Jinan, MAKAREM, Nisrine N., HABIB, Rima R. Economic abuse in Lebanon: experiences and perceptions. *Violence Against Women*, 2013, vol. 9, iss. 3, pp. 356–375.

63 E. g., VOTH SCHRAG, Rachel J., ROBINSON, Sarah R., RAVI, Kristen. Understanding pathways within intimate partner violence: Economic abuse, economic hardship, and mental health. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & trauma*, 2019, vol. 28, iss. 2, pp. 222–242.

64 STYLIANOU, Amanda M., *supra* note 4; STYLIANOU, Amanda M., POSTMUS, Judy L., McMahon Sarah. Measuring abusive behaviors: is economic abuse a unique form of abuse? *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 2013, vol. 28, iss. 16, pp. 3186–3204; UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION. Report on the Meeting of the friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on Statistical Indicators on violence against women of February 2010, ESA/STAT/AC.193/L.3, §35–40.

theoretical insights of economic abuse in the context of domestic violence. Consequently, the criminal law response to this abuse is limited.

Referring to the findings above, we declare an appearant need to enhance criminal law response to economic abuse as a form of domestic violence and invite to explore for the optimal alternative.

4 Conclusions

The findings of this research confirm theoretical conceptualization of the phenomenon as regards its gendered nature, harmful effects on victims, main tactics, and forms.

Criminal legal system in Lithuania is based on the model of equal protection against domestic and non-domestic violence. Criminalization of economic abuse as a specific form of domestic violence is very limited in Lithuania and application of existing laws is controversial. The case law on economic abuse in the context of domestic violence is sparse. According to the findings of this research, employment sabotage was the most common category of economic abuse that mainly took form as on-the-job harassment. These behaviors were mostly prosecuted as mental abuse in form of threatening, intimidation, and stalking, but only when it reached high level of intensity and severity. In this respect Lithuanian case law does not meet the theoretical insights of economic abuse as separate form of domestic violence. The jurisprudence in Lithuania is focused on physical violence and discrete episodes of abuse and ignores the specifics of domestic violence. Subsequently, prosecution covers not all violent behaviours or not in full. Economic abuse is mostly established as motivating and evidencing physical violence or contextualizing systemic domestic violence but not as an independent basis for prosecution.

Accordingly, prosecution of financial abuse in the context of domestic violence is rather limited due to incomplete criminalization, difficulties to detect and evidence it, and defective case law. This outcome potentially contributes to the state's failure to protect against certain violent behaviors and prevent repeat victimization.

The author acknowledges the limitations of this research regarding to its methodology. First, targeted selection of criminal cases was used, so the findings may not provide the whole context of prosecuting economic abuse. Moreover, some forms of economic abuse and their legal interpretation may be revealed in cases under generic norms that were not covered by this research, especially Art. 148 (restriction of freedom of a person's actions) or property crimes. Accordingly, elaboration of research and wide scope verification of theoretical concepts is needed to identify optimal means of criminal law response. The findings of the research provide support for the extension of criminalization and prosecution of economic abuse against intimate partner in Lithuania.

Acknowledgments

This research was funded by the European Social Fund under the No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712 “Development of Competences of Scientists, other Researchers and Students through Practical Research Activities” measure.

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