Rethinking Empowerment and Gender: A Case Study of Domestic Violence in Peru

Joseph Svec, University of Minnesota
Tanja Andic, University of Minnesota

Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV), particularly violence against women by male partners, has gained a considerable amount of attention in academic and development research given its far-reaching effects on a person's well-being. Violence against women not only "impedes women's economic and social development and capacity for self-determination" (Koenig et al., 2003) but also has consequences for women's sexual health (Dude 2007), mental health (Umberson, Anderson, Glick, & Shapiro 1998), and social and economic outcomes for households (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Villarreal, 2007). While most fundamental studies on the causes and effects of domestic violence center in Western industrial nations, a new wave of literature has expanded the scope of study to the global south due to this form of violence's perceived impediment to the broader development agenda. This new wave of research in domestic violence has yielded a broad set of "risk factors" embedded in an ecological framework that explores individual, household and community level factors.

Theoretical understandings of the mechanisms leading to heightened risk of domestic violence draw on a wealth of literature on notions of women's empowerment and more nuanced discussions of power within the household. All these literature point to the notion that intimate partner violence is an outcome of dynamic processes of interactions among levels of a woman status as an individual, as a partner, and a member of a community. The role of women's status, such as heightened individual employment and education, having more final say on decisions in the household, and representation in the community, as important impetuses to reductions to domestic violence makes sense from a theoretical standpoint, specifically when framed as factors that let women "bargain out" of domestic violence. However, many empirical findings in Latin America produce contradictory conclusions (Friedeman-Sanchez and Lovaton, 2012; Flake & Forste, 2006).

Feminist scholars have critiqued the conflation of empowerment with individualized status in studying domestic violence and other topics for placing the burden on women as both agents of development and social change, and for the use of women's bodies to promote the global North's interests in developing countries (Luttrell, Quiroz, Scrutton, and Bird, 2009; Agarwal, 1997). Much of the critical work has come from qualitative contemporary and historical researchers (for examples, see Schuler, Hashemi, and Badal 1998; Butcher and Oldfield, 2009) and has subsequently been ignored in demography and quantitative sociology circles.

Using the Peru Demographic and Health Surveys (PDHS) from 2003 to 2012, our paper engages these feminist critiques of development and empowerment policy and theory and seeks to show quantitatively how the conflation of empowerment and status not only poses theoretical

and methodological challenges but, in the case of domestic violence, actual physical risk to women in the implementation of policy interventions.

We find that in the Peruvian context, joint decision-making in households, rather than women or men having final say on decisions, lowered the risk of experiencing domestic violence. Higher occupational and earning status for women, conversely, can pose a heightened risk of violence for women when relational dynamics may pose a challenge to existing norms of a male-breadwinner model of the family. Further, our findings show that district context matters in risk to IPV, indicating that IPV does not operate at a purely individual level. However, this context effect can be mediated by more egalitarian household structures, pointing to the potential for smaller groups of men and women to change their own equalizing dynamics within a larger context of masculine domination.

Domestic Violence in Peru

Relational violence in Peru has gained a considerable amount of attention in national and international research circles, largely due to the high prevalence and severity of the violence. In 2008 alone, the Department of Internal Affairs recorded 91,929 complaints of family violence, over 60 percent of which occurred in Lima, Arequipa, and Cuzco (UNHCR, 2010). In 2010, the Peruvian Department of Women and Social Development (MIMDES) reported that nearly 4 out of 10 women in Peru have been victims of domestic violence. Moreover, a WHO study finds in a multi-country study that Peru boasts one of the highest rates of severe partner violence[1] (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2006). In Lima alone, MIMDES estimates that 9 women are killed by their spouse or partner every month (UNHCR, 2010).

The high rates of intimate partner violence are often explained through the dynamics of historical and cultural factors. According to Messing (1999), areas in which political and social violence are high are also prone to have higher rates of domestic violence. In 2008 alone, the Department of Internal Affairs recorded 91,929 complaints of family violence of which over 60 percent occurred in Lima, Arequipa, and Cuzco (UNHCR, 2010). In the Peruvian context, such historical factors can date back at least as far as the introduction of Spanish law which enforced a patriarchal family structure which remains evident in contemporary times. In an analysis of official records of domestic violence from Arequipa from 1780 to 1850, Sarah Chambers (2010) suggests that "[v]iolence erupted out of the tension between disparate views of marital duties as either reciprocal or absolute. If women failed to meet husbands' expectations, men felt entitled to "correct" them through physical punishment." More recently, Peru continues its recovery from perpetual conflict between the government and the Shining Path guerrilla movement, a conflict which is argued to have "naturalised" violence (Boesten, 2012; Mitchell, 2013). Thus, the above studies point to a Peruvian historical context that contributed to both a normalization and "naturalization" of intimate partner violence.

A compounding factor in the rates of domestic violence and normalization of violence in Peru has been theorized through the notion of *machismo*. Machismo defines gendered behaviors,

emphasizing "masculine roles of aggression, misogyny, hyper-sexuality, domination, and control, including the subordination of women" and is central to gender norms in Peru (Mitchell, 2013). Mitchell (2013) notes that as Peruvian women account for a growing share of the formal labor force, "[w]omen have typically reported that their husbands object to their wives' absences from home, and feel threatened by their wives' new sense of self-esteem, seeing changes in the power dynamics in the relationship."

In addition to historic and symbolic meanings of male-female relational dynamics in Peru, there are institutional factors which contribute to the perpetuation of violence. Despite legislative progress in identifying and addressing the problem, the current legal system is characterized as ill-equipped to efficiently process complaints. The Law for Protection from Family Violence was first adopted in 1993 and strengthened in 1997, attempting to codify intimate partner violence as a criminal offense while producing a distinct and expedited procedure for victims to lodge complaints (UNHCR, 2010). However, the system in place has proven to be fraught with bias, unresponsive, inadequate, and marginalize the injuries women have sustained. In short, "many women do not bother to file complaints because the legal system is too slow to act" (UNHCR, 2010).

The particularities of domestic violence in Peru suggest that a major contributor to violence is a deeply embedded inequality of gender roles and status. The current gender and development (GAD) paradigm which guides much of today's development scholarship tends to emphasize women's empowerment to social and financial autonomy as a near panacea to family poverty and violence. In the GAD model, domestic violence is a clear sign of a woman's disempowerment (Mosedale, 2005), and it is through the enhancement of one's available options, human capital and resources that women are given the ability to avoid abusive relationships (Kabeer, 2005; Sen, 1999). Hence, the power to decide and bargain within an intimate partnership has gained prominence in the domestic violence and development literatures in which there is a mutual emphasis on enhancing women's access to "empowering" factors. The GAD approach subsequently typically treats women as primary agents of social and economic change through increases in these "empowering" factors.

However, recent research has observed that in many contexts increased autonomy and women's entry into the formal labor market is often associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing violence in Colombia (Friedman-Sanchez and Lovaton 2012), Bangladesh (Lane, 2003; Rahman, Hoque, and Makinoda, 2011), and other areas (Eswaran, Mukesh, and Malhorta, 2011;). These findings highlight an existing tension in domestic violence research in Peru as greater socioeconomic status comes with more resources for women to use as leverage in an abusive relationship; yet, those very same resources are often associated with a heightened risk of violence.

This paper argues that the tension between theory and empirics occurs as a result of a decontextualized measurement of women's economic and social empowerment that places an overemphasis on women's bargaining power while failing to capture for critical notions of gender equality in relationships, communities and structural context.

Framework

Much past and current research on domestic violence seeks to identify particular characteristics that heighten the risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Violence and its occurrence within a relationship may be a response to one's historic exposure to violence (Dube et al., 2002), economic factors (Mogford, 2011; Sambisa et al., 2010; Yount, 2010; Friedeman-Sanchez and Lovaton, 2012), and normative expectations of gendered roles and behaviors (Mogford, 2011; Sambisa, 2010). An important basis for such studies is a widespread acknowledgement that all such characteristics do not exist in isolation but are located within an ecology of factors. Heise's (1998) proposal of an "ecological perspective" on domestic violence asserts that it is a phenomenon grounded in "an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors." Thus, the factors that heighten the risk of abuse are not only nested within levels of individual and contextual traits but the meaning of those factors is at least partially a dynamic outcome of interacting levels.

Within the literature, some factors have been shown to be consistent in heightening risk of experiencing violence. The individual level generally refers to characteristics of each member of the household which include low self-esteem, low socioeconomic status, unemployment, and a history of abuse by a parent or previous partner. While the list of individual level risk factors is considerably more comprehensive, there is a common theme in that people with low capacity or fewer opportunities for financial and social independence are more likely to experience abuse (Mogford 2011). For example, Kabeer (1994) argues that poorer women are "most exposed to the risk of violence and least able to remove themselves from violent situations." Furthermore, numerous studies (Fantuzzo and Mohr, 1999; Gage, 2005; Panda and Agarwal, 2005) have also shown that those who have been abused in the past are at higher risk of abuse in future relationships.

At the relationship or family level, international scholarship on domestic violence has focused on family economic stress (Friedman-Sanchez and Lovaton 2012; Mogford 2011; Fox and Benson 2006; Yount 2010; MacMillan and Gartner 1999) and dominance of one partner over another (Flake and Froste 2006; Mogford 2011) as particular risk factors. Yount (2010) points out that lack of resources may increase stress in households, which can lead to higher rates of physical and psychological violence. Friedman-Sanchez and Lovaton (2012) and Mogford (2011) find that people in higher wealth quintiles are less likely to experience violence than poorer quintiles in Colombia and India respectively. Renzetti (2009) also notes that "higher socioeconomic status is associated with lower risk of domestic violence" though the causal relationship is mixed.

According to Agarwal (1997), households are a site of contestation among its members in which "decision making over the allocation of resources (e.g., income, health, education, time use) are conditioned by gender-based power differentials" (Friedeman-Sanchez and Lovaton, 2012). Thus, households are a place in which normative contexts and expectations collide with individual status and behaviors, while at the same time different actions and characteristics carry

multiple levels of meaning and power depending on context. Thus, using classic GAD constructs, women may be able to leverage their resources, including income, education, or social power, to "bargain out" of violence. Yet, using an ecological perspective grounded in a context of masculine domination, such perceived characteristics of power can be rendered moot or even a risk factor in itself if nested within a context that legitimizes violence against women who represent a challenge to patriarchal household power dynamics. Studies of power differentials in household decision-making have shown that households in egalitarian decision-making structures are less likely to experience violence than those who divide power between partners or one partner makes all decisions (Flake & Forste, 2006; Friedman-Sanchez & Lovaton 2012; Hindin and Adair, 2002). Subsequently, we posit that a broader measurement of "empowerment" in the case of domestic violence depends on collective decision-making rather than in separate spheres:

H1: ***Households with more egalitarian decision-making structures are less likely to experience violence than those with divided or single-partner dominated decision-making structures***.

Following the same logic, "traditional" regions based on male bread-winners may consider women's greater financial autonomy as a significant threat to the status quo, resulting in violent responses. For example, several studies have shown that women with higher individual status in the form of financial autonomy and educational attainment are associated with lower likelihoods of experiencing violence. Kim et al. (2007) find that greater financial autonomy through micro-finance community interventions "can contribute to reductions in intimate partner violence." Yet, Friedeman-Sanchez and Lovaton (2012) find contradictory evidence, showing that women who work outside the home in Colombia are more likely to be abused. These mixed findings can be understood by noting that the impact of advancements in women's status is also context-specific. Koenig et al. (2003) find in their study of domestic violence in rural Bangladesh that women with greater financial autonomy in culturally conservative areas are associated with significantly higher exposure to violence compared to more progressive areas, where financial autonomy decreased risk of violence. Perceived progress for women at the individual level in these circumstances does not necessarily lead to enhancements to their status in society (Koenig et al., 2003). Thus, improvements for one's status when nested in a context of normative violence may prove to be a risk factor.

H2: Women earning more than their partners will face a higher risk of violence than women earning less or the same.

Koenig et al. (2003) find that "specific contextual and normative factors that influence women's risk of violence" can increase the risk of violence even in households with few other risk factors. What constitutes normative behaviors between partners may include violence, particularly in areas defined as male-dominated. This raises the important issue of how domestic

violence is defined. According to the World Health Organization, there are four major categories of domestic violence: moderate violence, severe violence, sexual violence and emotional violence. It is plausible that some forms of violence between partners as defined by predominantly Western organizations are not considered "violent" in local contexts. As physical violence may be a "normalized" behavior in areas with long histories of conflict (Mitchell, 2013), certain acts may be considered appropriate. However, since some individual and household factors have consistently been found to lower the risk of violence, there is room for individual agency and characteristics in mediating the influence of "normalized" behavior.

H3A: Women living in districts where the population is more likely to justify violence are at a higher risk of experiencing violence.
H3B: Higher normative violence contexts have a lower effect on households with more equal power dynamics.

The above hypotheses are thus designed to not only test existing knowledge of factors and characteristics associated with domestic violence risk but also explore the dynamic impact of women's empowerment when nested in various contexts.

Data and Methods

For the analysis, we use the Peru Demographic Health Survey (PDHS) for which data was collected over the years 2003 to 2012. These surveys are designed to be representative at the national and regional (second administrative) levels. In addition to the standard survey which includes demographic and socioeconomic instruments, the PDHS survey also includes a domestic violence module which asks eligible respondents[1] if they had ever experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse ever or in the last 12 months. As we are primarily interested in intimate partner violence against women by male partners, we use the women-only sample which includes all women in randomly selected households ages 15 to 49. The full sample consists of N = 135,212 respondents over the ten year data collection period; however, that sample is reduced to 20,623 for two reasons. First, we only include partnered women who are eligible for the domestic violence module. Second, a number of relevant measures were not included in some survey years.

The Demographic Health Surveys employs a stratified random cluster sampling procedure in which the country is broken into several primary sampling units (in this case, the second administrative level or districts) and clusters of households are randomly selected. While all eligible women between the ages of 15 to 49 are asked to participate in the standard survey, only one woman was randomly selected in each household to complete the domestic violence module. To produce estimates that are nationally and regionally representative in Peru, all tables and analyses utilize the population weights generated by ICF International.

[1] Eligible women are those who have ever been married or partnered.

The DHS provides instruments for four different types of domestic violence: moderate physical violence, severe physical violence, sexual violence, and emotional violence. Here we only examine the two types of physical abuse: moderate and severe[2]. While the original DHS instruments measure whether a respondent has ever experienced any of the four types of violence, we reconstruct the variables to measure whether such events occurred in the past 12 months. This seemed the most appropriate outcome measurement as we attempt to analyze the impact of current characteristics of household decision-making dynamics on abuse. Table 1 provides a list of the DHS instruments associated with each type of violence.

Table 1: Instruments for Constructed Dependent Variables

		Percent Ever	Percent in Last 12 Months
Moderate Violence	Spouse ever pushed, shook or threw something at respondent	33%	13%
	Spouse ever slapped respondent	25%	9%
	Spouse ever punched respondent with fist or something harmful	21%	7%
	Spouse ever kicked or dragged respondent	14	5
Severe Violence	Spouse ever tried to strangle or burn respondent	3%	1%
	Spouse ever threatened respondent with knife, gun or other weapon	2%	1%
	Spouse ever attacked respondent with knife, gun or other weapon	1%	1%

As mentioned earlier, research on domestic violence tends to emphasize three levels of risk factors at the individual, relationship/family, and community. Throughout these analyses, we include commonly known risk factors at the individual and relational levels as controls. These controls include the respondent's age, respondent's education level, whether the respondent's mother was abused by the father, whether the respondent's partner drinks, the marital status of the respondent and partner, urban residence, and the household's relative wealth.

Community level measures include the percentage of women in each district who justify beatings for a variety of reasons (goes out without telling partner, neglects the children, argues with partner, refuses to have sex with partner, burns the food). If a respondent answered yes to any one of the above reasons to justify abuse, then she is coded "yes" to the overall binary construction of abuse justification. Similarly, we use the same procedure to construct a variable for the percentage of women who work as professional laborers to measure the "normativity" of women working in the formal labor market. Both aggregate variables are based on averages of the sample year as such contexts may have changed over the ten year data collection period. Table 2 provides the full list of individual, relational and community level covariates with the sample distribution.

[2] In an earlier version, we examine all four types of violence and find that results are similar across all four violence measures. We focus on the two types of physical violence due to space constraints.

Table 2: Known Risk Factors for Domestic Violence

	Mean/Percent	Observations
Experienced Moderate Violence in Last 12 Months	15%	20623
Experienced Severe Violence in Last 12 Months	2%	20623
Experienced Emotional Violence in Last 12 Months	19%	20623
Experienced Sexual Violence in Last 12 Months	4%	20623
Age (in single years)	34.6	20623
Education (in single years)	4	20623
Respondent's Father Hit Mother	50%	20623
Partner Drinks	77%	20623
Marital Status		
Married	44%	9093
Cohabiting	56%	11530
Lives in Urban Area	73%	20623
Wealth Quintiles		
Poorest	8%	1716
Poor	21%	4374
Middle	29%	5952
Rich	23%	4726
Richest	19%	3855
Percent Justify Beating in District	5%	20623
Percent Women in Professional Work	35%	20623

Central to the analysis of this paper is the relationship between household decision-making power and domestic violence conditional on particular contexts. Among PDHS survey instruments, respondents are asked who makes decisions on a variety of household issues. For example, a respondent is asked "who makes the final decision on your own health care?" Responses include: respondent only, jointly with partner, and partner only. From these instruments, we construct a measure of equal decision-making by counting the number of times a respondent makes decisions jointly with her partner (ranging from 0 to 6)[3]. In addition to decision-making, we also include a binary variable for the respondent's occupation relative to the partner's. There are four possible outcomes: both partners have non-professional occupations, the respondent has a professional occupation and the partner has non-professional, the partner has a professional occupation while the respondent has non-professional, and both have professional occupations. Lastly, we also include a measure of the type of earnings a respondent receives. While the relative occupational status may have implications for behavioral patterns within a relationship, the type of earnings (cash or in-kind) a person contributes to the household

[3] We also produced an index score based on a factor analysis of these measures and found that the factor index scores were comparable to the basic count. For ease of interpretation, we chose to use the count measure of equal decision-making.

can also have a unique impact on relational behaviors. Table 3 provides a summary of the instruments used to measure these decision-making and bargaining power structures within a relationship.

Table 3: Decision-Making and Bargaining Power

	Mean/Proportion	Observations
Joint Decision-Making Score (0 – 6)	2.4	20623
Relative Job Status		
Both Non-Professional	0.61	7277
Both Professional	0.08	3215
Woman Only Professional	0.26	9414
Man Only Professional	0.05	717
Earnings Status		
Woman Earns Less	0.68	14013
Woman Earns Same	0.19	3924
Woman Earns More	0.13	2686

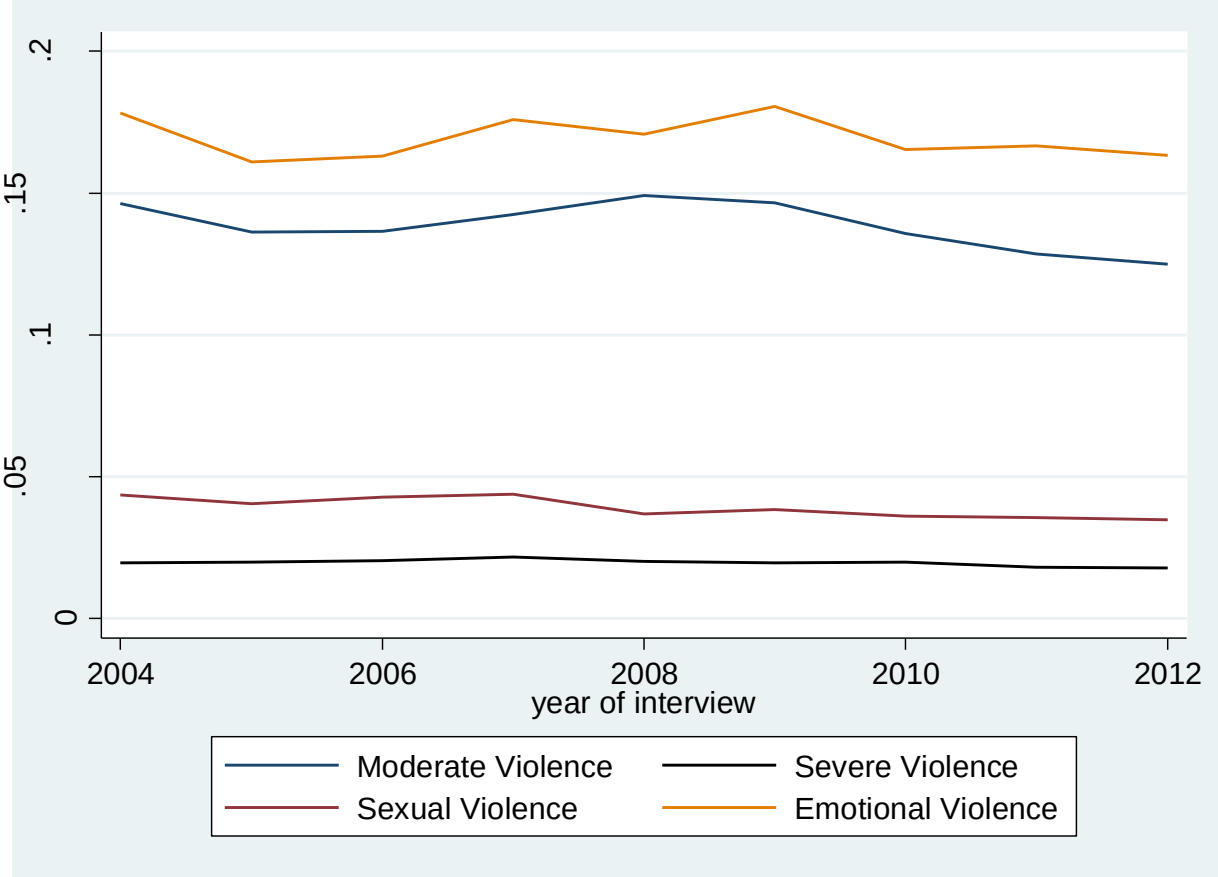
Analytic Strategy

To test our hypotheses we employ a set of logistic regressions with the occurrence of abuse (moderate, severe, and both) as the dependent variable. As one fundamental assumption of logit models is observational independence, we adjust the standard errors to account for clustering at regional and urban/rural levels. In addition to testing for the additive effects of our primary covariates, we include interaction terms for decision-making and categories of district averages of justified abuse and women in professional occupations.

Results

The following analyses assess the relationship between decision-making power structures and each of the four types of domestic violence. For the sake of space, controls for age, education, respondent's historic exposure to violence, partner drinking, marital status, urban residence, and the household wealth are not displayed but shown in the appendix. Before examining these associations, we consider the possibility that domestic violence rates may have changed over time in Peru. Figure 1 shows that within these DHS data that were collected over almost a decade, the percent experiencing each type of violence has remained relatively consistent though there appears to be a downward trend in the report of moderate violence since 2009.

Figure 1: Trends in Violence by Type



Moderate Violence

Table 4 presents the logistic regression results with the dependent variable for having experienced moderate violence. Models 1 and 3 show that relationships with higher equal decision-making scores have a lower likelihood of experiencing violence as do households in which both or the male partner have professional occupations relative to non-professional household contexts. While the odds of a woman reporting moderate violence are the same for those who earn less or the same as their partners, those who earn more are 28 percent more likely to report moderate abuse. In the case of moderate violence, the two district context measures (justification of violence and percent of women with professional occupations) are shown to have mixed results. While the level of women in professional occupations are not significantly distinct from the reference category (districts with the lowest levels of female professional labor), there is a net increased risk for women living in districts with higher levels of justified abuse. Relative to districts with the lowest justification levels (generally less than 3 percent of responses), women living in the middle range (3 to 6.2 percent) are 28 percent more likely to experience moderate abuse and women living in the highest range (6.3 to 17 percent) are approximately 60 percent more likely.

Models 2 and 3 include the interaction effects of the decision-making equality scores and both district context measures. In model 2, each unit increase of the professional labor context is associated with a 29 percent higher risk of moderate violence though the equality score is no longer significant. However, the interaction of professional labor context and equal decision-making score is significantly and negatively associated. This suggests that although there is a higher risk of violence for women in higher female professional occupation contexts, those contextual effect decreases for each unit increase in the equality score. In other words, the broader context poses as a risk factor but that broader impact can also be mitigated at the relationship level when decisions are more often made jointly. Model 3 assesses the interaction of higher abuse justification at the district level and equal decision-making scores. While the context itself is non-significant in this model, each unit increase in the equality score is associated with a 23 percent decreased odds in moderate violence. However, the significant and positive interaction suggests that women in more equal decision-making households are at higher risk of abuse when in districts with higher levels of justified abuse.

Table 4: Logistic Regression Moderate Violence on Covariates

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Joint Decision-Making Score (0 to 6)	0.833***	0.938	0.772***
	(0.015)	(0.032)	(0.026)
Earns Less than Partner (Omitted)			
Earns Same as Partner	0.880	0.881	0.881
	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.069)
Earns More than Partner	1.279***	1.279***	1.276***
	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Both Non-Professional (Omitted)			
Both Professional	0.636***	0.636***	0.638***
	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.066)
Only Respondent Professional	0.893	0.893	0.893
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)
Only Partner Professional	0.615***	0.614***	0.617***
	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.105)
Lowest Level of Women Professional Labor in Region (Omitted)			
Middle Level	1.019		1.027
	(0.088)		(0.087)
Highest Level	1.142		1.145
	(0.101)		(0.100)
Lowest Level of Justified Beating for Any Reason (Omitted)			
Middle Level	1.293***	1.281***	
	(0.088)	(0.087)	
Highest Level	1.612***	1.600***	
Professional Labor Level (Ordinal)		1.287***	
		(0.084)	
Interaction: Professional Labor Level + Joint Decision-Making Score		0.920***	
		(0.023)	
Justified Beating Level (Ordinal)			1.074
			(0.059)
Interaction: Justified Beating Level + Joint Decision-Making			1.086***
			(0.024)
Constant	0.116***	0.088***	0.138***
	(0.029)	(0.022)	(0.035)
Observations	20,623	20,623	20,623

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05

Severe Violence

These next set of analyses show the associations of the same covariates from the above models with the dependent variable: experienced severe violence in the last 12 months. The results from Table 5 show similar results from what was observed for moderate violence. Again, we find that higher equality scores are negatively associated with severe violence while earning more than one's partner relative to earning less has a higher odds of abuse. Interestingly, women who have a higher status occupation than her partner, relative to both partners having lower status occupations, are approximately 28 percent less likely to experience severe violence. Moreover, households in which the male partner has a higher status occupation are nearly 78 percent less likely to experience severe violence. As in the previous model, women's relatively higher income contribution appears to pose as a risk factor to violence while higher occupational status seems to be a protective factor. While these results seemingly provide a mixed narrative, it is important to note that there is a negligible correlation in the data between women's relatively higher earnings and whether she alone is employed in a professional occupation (correlation coefficient = 0.0687). Moreover, the households in the highest wealth quintiles are 50 to 60 percent less likely to experience severe violence (in appendix). These associations are suggestive of the notion that higher levels of poverty may increase the risk of severe violence (with similar but less notable findings for moderate violence). Yet, even after controlling for household wealth, a woman with higher earnings are almost 80 percent more likely to experience severe violence.

The models including interactions (models 5 and 6) show results similar to what is observed for moderate violence. Higher levels of women in professional labor are associated with higher risk but less so for women in households with equal decision-making power. Model 6 shows that the protective effect of living in a more egalitarian household is somewhat mitigated in districts with higher levels of women who justify abuse for any reason. Again, these interaction effects behave similarly for both moderate and severe violence.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Severe Violence on Covariates

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Joint Decision-Making Score (0 to 6)	0.731***	0.886	0.608***
	(0.039)	(0.078)	(0.060)
Earns Less than Partner (Omitted)			
Earns Same as Partner	0.976	0.970	0.980
	(0.203)	(0.202)	(0.204)
Earns More than Partner	1.790***	1.797***	1.779***
	(0.356)	(0.356)	(0.353)
Both Non-Professional (Omitted)			
Both Professional	0.537	0.541	0.541
	(0.173)	(0.175)	(0.175)
Only Respondent Professional	0.715**	0.716**	0.716**
	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.112)
Only Partner Professional	0.217***	0.220***	0.219***
	(0.121)	(0.122)	(0.122)
Lowest Level of Women Professional Labor in Region (Omitted)			
Middle Level	1.672**		1.692**
	(0.352)		(0.347)
Highest Level	1.382		1.360
	(0.310)		(0.306)
Lowest Level of Justified Beating for Any Reason (Omitted)			
Middle Level	1.153	1.370	
	(0.239)	(0.259)	
Highest Level	1.202	1.333	
	(0.226)	(0.247)	
Professional Labor Level (Ordinal)		1.376**	
		(0.200)	
Interaction: Professional Labor Level + Joint Decision-Making Score		0.868**	
		(0.056)	
Justified Beating Level (Ordinal)			0.829
			(0.113)
Interaction: Justified Beating Level + Joint Decision-Making			1.193***
			(0.076)
Constant	0.007***	0.006***	0.010***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.006)
	20,623	20,623	20,623

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05

Conclusion

One core principle of this research is the importance of contextualizing the empowering factors that shield partners from physical abuse. The assertion that enhancements to women's income contribution, and by extension their household power, does not entirely hold up in these data. Women with greater income contribution to the household are shown to be at a higher risk of violence. However, households in which decision-making are more often equally distributed between partners are also far less likely to experience violence. Taken together, these results suggest that it is parity within a relationship rather than empowerment as defined through GAD focus on individual agency alone that mitigates risk of violence. Moreover, the social contexts can not only influence the risk of violence but can also shape the symbolic meaning of relational factors. As shown from the analyses, areas with increasing levels of women in professional labor pose a higher risk of violence but that contextual effect is somewhat mitigated by equality in the household. Yet, areas that tend to have higher levels of tolerance may also diminish the protective effect of relational equality.

While the data provide some evidence for our hypothesis that gendered equality rather than women's empowerment more effectively protect against domestic violence, there are several limitations to this study which should be taken into account. First, there is little information for male partners beyond what is reported by female respondents. While we are able to measure differences in professional occupation status and decision-making dynamics, men's responses are absent from the data. Thus, the relational power that we measure only takes women's perspectives and characteristics into account with little information on the men's. Second, while the DHS provides numerous measures of decision-making, there is a strong possibility that the instruments do not capture for additionally relevant decision issues that are associated with domestic violence. Friedemann-Sanchez (2012) had also noted that there is a lack of data regarding individual and joint asset ownership despite numerous studies showing the importance of asset ownership in bargaining power. Third, it is important to stress that the cross-sectional nature of these data prevent any type of causal argument though we imply that socio-structural and relational power changes can increase or decrease the risk of violence.

Moving forward we contend that all factors associated with domestic violence are best understood within the lived social realities of both victims and perpetrators. The contexts, constraints, and opportunities all have important implications for the symbolic and functional meaning of "empowerment." Overly universalistic languages of women's empowerment, and their protective capacities, can just as easily become the frame for their isolation with an imposition of Western-centric standards of empowerment and autonomy. Ascribing women's empowerment as a standalone solution to domestic violence presses for social change through individualized progress. One implication from our data is the reduction of domestic violence is an equally shared process, involving both partners and structural change, and not simply women's work through an isolated empowerment.

References

Agarwal, Bina. ""Bargaining"and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household." *Feminist economics* 3, no. 1 (1997): 1-51.

Boesten, Jelke. "The state and violence against women in Peru: intersecting inequalities and patriarchal rule." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 19, no. 3 (2012): 361-382.

Butcher, Sian, and Sophie Oldfield. "De facto v/s de jure home ownership: Women's everyday negotiations in Lusaka and Cape Town." *Feminist Africa* 13 (2009).

Chambers, Sarah C. *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780-1854*. Penn State Press, 2010.

Dube, Shanta R., Robert F. Anda, Vincent J. Felitti, Valerie J. Edwards, and David F. Williamson. "Exposure to abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction among adults who witnessed intimate partner violence as children: implications for health and social services." *Violence and victims* 17, no. 1 (2002): 3-17.

Dude, Annie. "Intimate partner violence and increased lifetime risk of sexually transmitted infection among women in Ukraine." *Studies in family planning* 38, no. 2 (2007): 89-100.

Eswaran, Mukesh, and Nisha Malhotra. "Domestic violence and women's autonomy in developing countries: theory and evidence." *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue canadienne d'économique* 44, no. 4 (2011): 1222-1263.

Fantuzzo, John W., and Wanda K. Mohr. "Prevalence and effects of child exposure to domestic violence." *The future of children* (1999): 21-32.

Flake, Dallan F. "Individual, family, and community risk markers for domestic violence in Peru." *Violence against women* 11, no. 3 (2005): 353-373.

Fox, Greer Litton, and Michael L. Benson. "Household and neighborhood contexts of intimate partner violence." *Public Health Reports* 121, no. 4 (2006): 419.

Friedemann-Sánchez, Greta, and Rodrigo Lovatón. "Intimate Partner Violence in Colombia: Who Is at Risk?." *Social forces* 91, no. 2 (2012): 663-688.

Gage, Anastasia J. "Women's experience of intimate partner violence in Haiti."*Social science & medicine* 61, no. 2 (2005): 343-364.

Garcia-Moreno, Claudia, Henrica AFM Jansen, Mary Ellsberg, Lori Heise, and Charlotte H. Watts. "Prevalence of intimate partner violence: findings from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence." *The Lancet* 368, no. 9543 (2006): 1260-1269.

Heise, Lori L. "Violence against women an integrated, ecological framework."*Violence against women* 4, no. 3 (1998): 262-290.

Hindin, Michelle J., and Linda S. Adair. "Who's at risk? Factors associated with intimate partner violence in the Philippines." *Social Science & Medicine* 55, no. 8 (2002): 1385-1399.

Johnson, Michael P., and Kathleen J. Ferraro. "Research on domestic violence in the 1990s: Making distinctions." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62, no. 4 (2000): 948-963.

Kabeer, Naila. "Gender equality and women's empowerment: A critical analysis of the third millennium development goal 1." *Gender & Development* 13, no. 1 (2005): 13-24.

Kabeer, Naila. *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. Verso, 1994.

Kim, Julia C., Charlotte H. Watts, James R. Hargreaves, Luceth X. Ndhlovu, Godfrey Phetla, Linda A. Morison, Joanna Busza, John DH Porter, and Paul Pronyk. "Understanding the impact of a microfinance-based intervention on women's empowerment and the reduction of intimate partner violence in South Africa." *Journal Information* 97, no. 10 (2007).

Koenig, Michael A., Saifuddin Ahmed, Mian Bazle Hossain, and ABM Khorshed Alam Mozumder. "Women's status and domestic violence in rural Bangladesh: individual-and community-level effects." *Demography* 40, no. 2 (2003): 269-288.

Lane, Trevor. "In Bangladesh, women's risk of domestic violence is linked to their status." *International family planning perspectives* 29, no. 3 (2003): online-online.

Luttrell, Cecilia, Sitna Quiroz, Claire Scrutton, and Kate Bird. *Understanding and operationalising empowerment*. London, UK: Overseas Development Institute, 2009.

Macmillan, Ross, and Rosemary Gartner. "When she brings home the bacon: Labor-force participation and the risk of spousal violence against women."*Journal of Marriage and the Family* (1999): 947-958.

Messing, U. (1999). Introduction. Morrison, A. R., and Biehl, M. L. (eds.), *Too Close to Home: Domestic Violence in the Americas*, Inter-American Development Bank, John Hopkins University Press, Washington D.C., pp. xi–xiii.

Mitchell, Rhoda. "Domestic violence prevention through the Constructing Violence-free Masculinities programme: an experience from Peru." *Gender & Development* 21, no. 1 (2013): 97-109.

Mogford, Elizabeth. "When Status Hurts: Dimensions of Women's Status and Domestic Abuse in Rural Northern India." *Violence against women* 17, no. 7 (2011): 835-857.

Mosedale, Sarah. "Assessing women's empowerment: towards a conceptual framework." *Journal of International Development* 17, no. 2 (2005): 243-257.

Panda, Pradeep, and Bina Agarwal. "Marital violence, human development and women's property status in India." *World Development* 33, no. 5 (2005): 823-850.

Rahman, Mosfequr, Md Aminul Hoque, and Satoru Makinoda. "Intimate Partner Violence Against Women: Is Women Empowerment a Reducing Factor? A Study from a National Bangladeshi Sample." *Journal of Family Violence* 26, no. 5 (2011): 411-420.

Renzetti, Claire M. "Economic stress and domestic violence." *National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women Applied Research Paper* (2009).

Sambisa, William, Gustavo Angeles, Peter M. Lance, Ruchira T. Naved, and Siân L. Curtis. "Physical and sexual abuse of wives in urban Bangladesh: husbands' reports." *Studies in Family Planning* 41, no. 3 (2010): 165-178.

Schuler, Sidney Ruth, Syed M. Hashemi, and Shamsul Huda Badal. "Men's violence against women in rural Bangladesh: undermined or exacerbated by microcredit programmes?." *Development in Practice* 8, no. 2 (1998): 148-157.

Sen, Purna. "Enhancing women's choices in responding to domestic violence in Calcutta: a comparison of employment and education." *The European Journal of Development Research* 11, no. 2 (1999): 65-86.

Umberson, Debra, Kristin Anderson, Jennifer Glick, and Adam Shapiro. "Domestic violence, personal control, and gender." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* (1998): 442-452.

UNHCR. "Peru: Domestic Violence, State Protection and Support Services Available." *Refworld*. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (2010): Web. 21 Sept. 2013

Villarreal, Andres. "Women's employment status, coercive control, and intimate partner violence in Mexico." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 69, no. 2 (2007): 418-434.

Yount, Kathryn M., and Li Li. "Domestic violence against married women in Egypt." *Sex roles* 63, no. 5-6 (2010): 332-347.