

How the Great Recession increased domestic abuse

By Karen Weise, Bloomberg

Almost seven years have passed since the Great Recession was finally, technically, over, and only recently have social scientists had enough long-term data to calculate how the crisis affected American families beyond economics.

A paper published in the journal *Demography*, goes deep inside relationships to show that hardship and uncertainty increased rates of intimate partner violence, defined as abuse through violent or controlling means.

The paper is based in part on data from an ongoing longitudinal study that surveys thousands of mothers who first gave birth from 1998 to 2000. The survey asks the women questions that indicate “economic hardship,” such as whether they’ve been able to make rent or afford food. It also looks for controlling or violent behavior by their partners, asking about whether a woman’s partner prevents her from seeing friends and family, for example, or slap and kick her.

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