Does Domestic Violence Law Shift Gender Attitudes and Female Labor Force Participation in Kyrgyzstan?

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Table of Contents

Overview of This Study

- **RQ:** Did the 2017 Domestic Violence (DV) Law promote norm and FLFP in Kyrgyzstan?
- **Data:** Life in Kyrgyzstan (LiK) Panel Survey, (2013-)2016–2019
- **Estimation Strategy:**
  Intensity Difference-in-Difference-in-Difference (DDD) model

$$Y_{iot} = \cdots + \beta_4(\text{Post}_t \times \text{DVrate}_o^c \times \text{Female}_i) + \ldots$$

- **Main Findings:**
  The DV Law improved gender norms and women's bargaining power but limited FLFP

My Background

By the way...

- Affiliation:
  The University of Tokyo
- Field:
  Development Economics, Disability and Economics
- Research Interests:
  how hidden structures create inequality?
  Social mechanisms such as norms, stigma, bias, discrimination
- Using microdata and causal inference methods

Background

- In Kyrgyzstan, female education is high but FLFP is low.
  - Lower secondary completion: 94.4% for girls, 95.7% for boys.
  - LFP: 53.5% for women, 79% for men
- Education $\not\rightarrow$ Employment

$\rightarrow$ What is needed?

Role of Social Norms

- In economics, firm-side policy...but focused on how **social norms** affect women's participation in the labor market
- Traditional gender-role norms lower FLFP.
- Key studies:
  - Bertrand et al. (2015): Gender identity and relative income.
  - Alesina et al. (2013): Historical roots of gender division in plough agriculture.
  - Lundberg (2024): Laws as instruments to alter norms.

Role of Social Norms

Social norms are really key to understanding why women's labor participation hasn't been improving much.

Policy: 2 approaches to overcome the norm (Jayachandran 2021).

- 1: Work around the norm (WFH)
- 2: **Change norms** (Law)

So...

Laws to challenge gender biased norms

- A gender-related legal reform was introduced:
  - 2017: Adoption of the Domestic Violence (DV) Law.

Theoretical Background: Dual Effects of the DV Law

Key idea:
DV affects intra-household bargaining power (Heath, 2014; Anderberg et al., 2016).

Mechanism:
DV Law $\Rightarrow$ Women's bargaining powe $\uparrow \Rightarrow$ Risk of violence $\downarrow \Rightarrow$ Opportunity cost of working$\downarrow$
$\Rightarrow$ Labor participation becomes economically rational

Implication:
DV Law may shape both norms and behaviors.

Research Question

Did the 2017 Domestic Violence Law in Kyrgyzstan
→ Norm?
→ women's decision making?
→ FLFP?

- Does law function as a catalyst for normative change?
- How does it affect women's autonomy and bargaining power?
- Are changes reflected in labor participation?

Conceptual Summary Diagram

DV Law $\Rightarrow$ (1) Normative Shift $\uparrow \Rightarrow$ Gender attitudes $\uparrow \Rightarrow$ FLFP $\uparrow$
DV Law $\Rightarrow$ (2) Fallback & Bargaining Power $\uparrow \Rightarrow$ Decision-making $\uparrow$
$\Rightarrow$ FLFP $\uparrow$

Contribution

- Extends literature on social norms and female labor supply:
- Provides the first empirical analysis of this DV Law
- Highlights the gap between attitudinal and behavioral change.
- Legal reform alone may not achieve full empowerment.

3.1 Data Source: Overview

- **Data**: Life in Kyrgyzstan (LiK) Study, Individuals aged 18+
- **Waves used**: 2013, 2016, 2019.
- **Balanced panel**: 6,874 individual-year observations (2016–2019).
- **Treatment**: 2017 Domestic Violence Law.

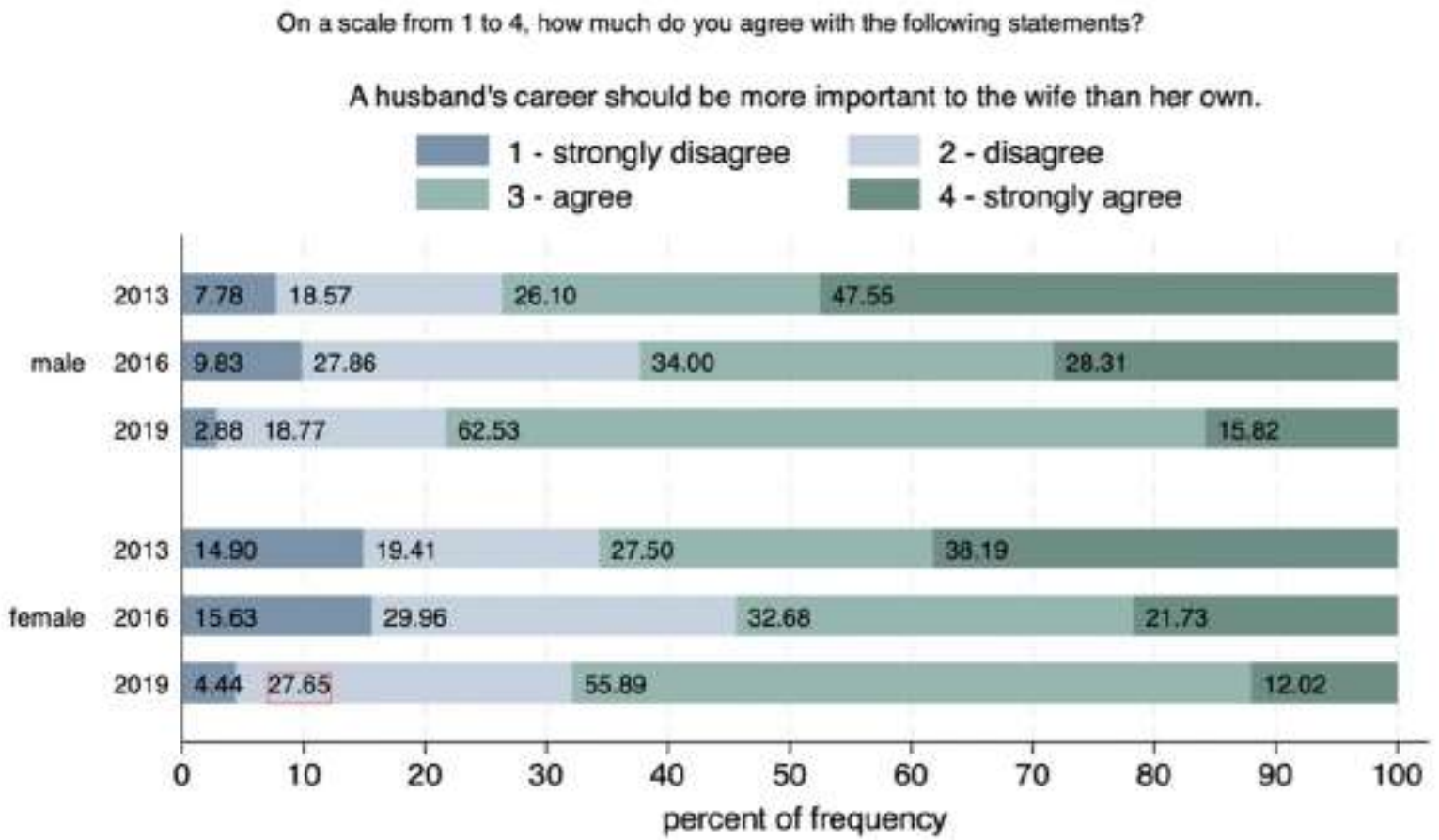
3.2 Key Variables: Overview

Outcome Categories

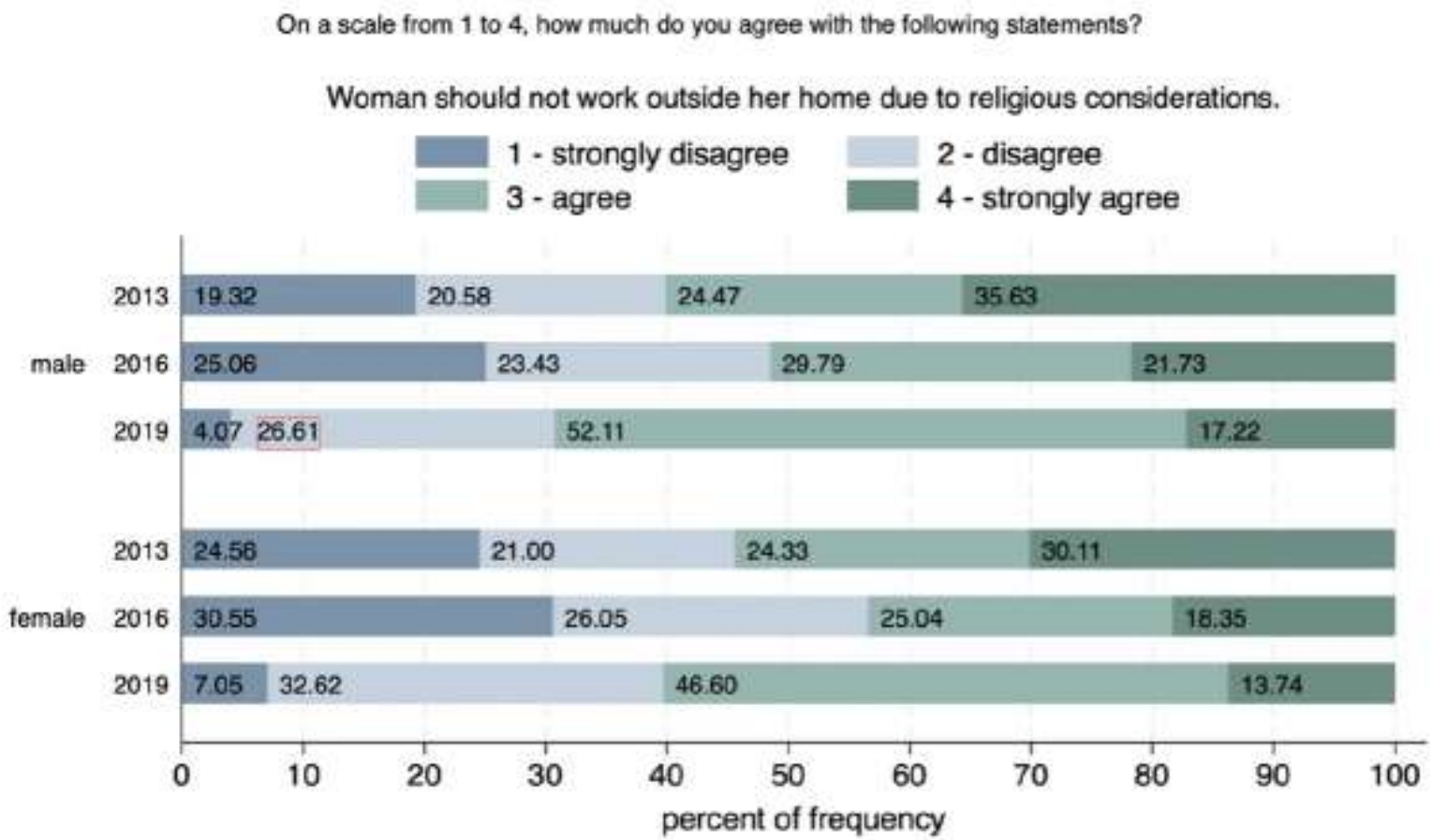
- Outcome 1: Gender Attitudes
- Outcome 2: Labor Force Participation (Past 7 days)
- Outcome 3: Decision-Making Power

Oblast-level baseline DV prevalence (2016)

Changes in Gender Attitudes Over Time



Changes in Gender Attitudes Over Time



Motivation for Empirical Design

- Goal: Estimate causal effect of Kyrgyzstan's 2017 DV Law on gender attitudes and FLFP.
- Challenge: Law implemented **nationwide** — no explicit control group.
- Strategy: Use **variation in baseline DV prevalence** across oblasts (2016) as proxy for treatment intensity.
- Apply an **intensiry Difference-in-Difference-in-Differences (DDD)** framework with individual panel data.

Annual Trend of DV Incidence Rates Among Women

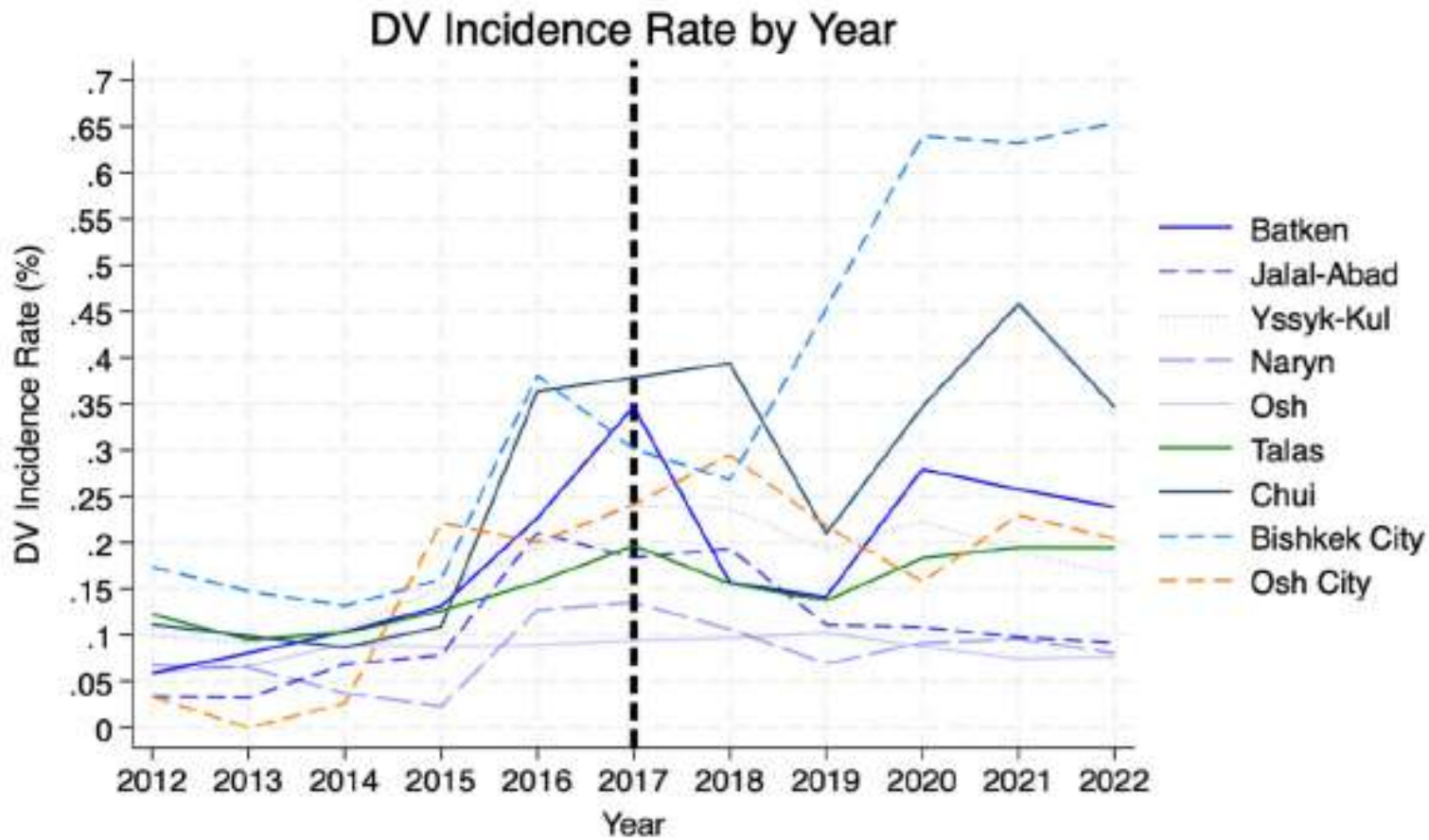


Figure: The annual trend of DV incidence rates among women by oblast.

Measurement Considerations

- DV data come from administrative reports (National Statistical Committee).
- Reflect **reported cases**, not true prevalence.
- Urban oblasts (e.g., Bishkek) $\rightarrow$ easier reporting, higher recorded incidence.
- Rural oblasts $\rightarrow$ stigma and access barriers $\rightarrow$ likely underreporting.
- Interpretation: proxy for **reporting intensity / institutional capacity**.

Empirical Model

$$Y_{iot} = \alpha + \beta_1 Post_t + \beta_2(Post_t \times DV_o^c) + \beta_3(Post_t \times Female_i) + \beta_4(Post_t \times DV_o^c \times Female_i) + Post_t X'_{i,16}\gamma + \gamma_i + \epsilon_{iot}$$

- Y_{iot}: Outcome for individual i in oblast o at time t
- DV_o^c: Mean-centered DV rate (2016)
- $Post_t$: 1 if 2019 (after law), 0 if 2016
- $Female_i$: 1 for women, 0 for men
- $X_{i,16}$: Baseline covariates (age, marital status, children, consumption)

Interpretation of Coefficients

- β_1: Post-reform effect for **men** in oblast with average DV rate.
- β_2: How post-reform change varies for men across in higher-DV oblasts.
- β_3: Additional post-reform effect for women (vs. men) in average-DV oblast.
- β_4: **Key parameter (DDD)** – extra post-reform change for women in higher-DV oblasts.

Female dummy allow estimation of gender-differentiated effects.
Interpretation: Does the DV Law have a stronger impact where baseline DV was higher?

Concept of Intensity DDD

Key idea

Compare differential changes:

- Time: Pre vs. Post (2016 vs. 2019)
- Region: Higher vs. Lower average DV rate
- Gender: Female vs. Male

Identification Strategy (recap)

- Although law applied nationwide, regions differ in:
  - Pre-law DV prevalence (reporting intensity)
  - Institutional capacity and exposure
- These regional differences are **plausibly exogenous**, reflecting administrative infrastructure rather than individual choices.
- DV rate (2016) used as treatment intensity, fixed before reform.

Assumptions and Validation

Key Assumption

Parallel trends: Absent the reform, oblasts with different baseline DV prevalence would have evolved similarly in outcomes.

- Checked using **pre-trend (placebo) test** with 2013–2016 data.
- No significant DDD interactions $\rightarrow$ supports parallel trends.
- Go to Appendix

Inference and Robustness

- Small number of clusters: 9 oblasts.
- Use **Wild Cluster Bootstrap p**
  - 10,000 bootstrap replications.
  - Webb weights (robust for < 10 clusters).
- Provides more reliable p-values for small-cluster settings.

Summary Statistics (Outcomes & Treatment)

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Outcomes				
Work (past 7 days)	0.506	0.500	0	1
No WWOH	2.564	0.962	1	4
Husband career importance	2.756	0.860	1	4
Risk attitude (std., 2016=0)	-0.219	1.124	-1.890	2.099
Female decision-making index	0.574	0.365	0	1
Treatment and demographics				
DV rate (2016)	0.206	0.099	.0895	0.381
DV rate mean-centered (2016)	0.000	0.099	-0.116	0.175
Female	0.562	0.496	0	1
Post year(=2019)	0.500	0.500	0	1
Average sample size per oblast	764	539.7	266	1,675

Summary of Empirical Design

- DDD model captures heterogeneity in exposure intensity to the DV Law.
- Key variable: **Post × DV rate × Female**.
- Allows us to identify:
  - How effects differ by gender.
  - How those effects vary by pre-reform DV prevalence.
- Robust inference using wild cluster bootstrap.

Gender Attitudes toward FLFP

Sample restricted to respondents who strongly agreed with the statements in 2016.

	(1) No.WWOH_reli	(2) Huscareer	(3) No.WWOH_reli	(4) Huscareer
Post (2019 = 1)	-1.052***	-1.044***	-1.017	-0.124
	(0.003)	(0.000)	(0.574)	(0.912)
Post × DV rate	-1.716	-0.760	-1.689**	-0.684
	(0.120)	(0.348)	(0.048)	(0.513)
Post × Female	-0.256***	-0.164***	-0.273***	-0.169***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Post × DV rate × Female	-1.175*	-1.602*	-0.964*	-1.566*
	(0.095)	(0.060)	(0.074)	(0.081)
Baseline covariates included	No	No	Yes	Yes
N	1346	1686	1306	1616
Clusters	9	9	9	9
Reps (Bootstrap)	10000	10000	10000	10000

Norm ↑ for women overall + high DV prevalence regions

Gender Attitudes toward FLFP

- **Post × Female:** Women became less likely than men to endorse traditional gender norms after the reform.
- **Post × DV rate × Female:** Larger decline among women in oblasts with higher pre-reform DV prevalence, relative to men in the same oblasts and to low-DV regions.
- **Post:** Negative and significant in baseline model, but becomes insignificant once controlling for demographics.

Interpretation

Women who initially held conservative gender views showed the largest normative improvements. They became less likely to agree that "Women should not work outside the home (No WWOH reli)" and "A husband's career should be prioritized (Huscareer)"
Overall, the DV Law fostered **broad-based improvement in gender attitudes**, especially among women in high-DV oblasts.

FLFP

	(1) Work	(2) Work
Post (2019 = 1)	0.024	0.305
	(0.703)	(0.637)
Post × DV rate	-0.911	-0.961
	(0.304)	(0.344)
Post × Female	0.036*	0.039**
	(0.070)	(0.040)
Post × DV rate × Female	0.511	0.572
	(0.160)	(0.160)
Baseline covariates included	No	Yes
Obs	6,874	6,734
Clusters	9	9
Reps (Bootstrap)	10,000	10,000

- no significant effect

Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP)

Interpretation

FLFP increased modestly after the 2017 DV Law relative to men. However, this rise cannot be directly attributed to the DV Law's heterogeneous effects, since DDD terms are insignificant, implying that macroeconomic or family-support factors likely drove the overall improvement.

Decision Making

Measured as share of household decisions involving a female member (proxy for bargaining power)

	(1) Fem dm index	(2) Fem dm index (with controls)
Post (2019 = 1)	-0.019	1.088**
	(0.876)	(0.022)
Post × DV rate	0.228	0.298
	(0.183)	(0.159)
Post × Female	0.043**	0.039*
	(0.029)	(0.056)
Post × DV rate × Female (DDD)	0.168	0.192**
	(0.161)	(0.027)
Baseline covariates included	No	Yes
Obs	6,874	6,734
Clusters	9	9
Reps (Bootstrap)	10,000	10,000

- significant DDD $\rightarrow$ women in high-DV oblasts show gains.

Results Summary

- **Gender attitudes:** Women—especially in high-DV oblasts—became less supportive of restrictive gender atitude after the DV Law.
- **FLFP:** Female labor participation rose relative to men, but no heterogeneous effect by DV prevalence.
- **Decision-making:** Women gained greater household bargaining power, strongest in high-DV oblasts.

Overall Interpretation

The DV Law fostered **normative and empowerment effects**, but only limited behavioral (FLFP) changes.

Discussion: Why Norm Change Alone Is Not Enough

- **Puzzle**:
  Law $\Rightarrow$ Norms$\uparrow$, Bargaining $\uparrow$, but FLFP $\times$
- **Key Insight**:
  Sustainable FLFP = Norm Change × Structural Change
- **Reasons**:
  - Norms improved, but structural barriers remain
  - Low-wage jobs, childcare burden, and limited options may block the causal link from attitude to behavior
  - Norms may create structures, and structures may reproduce norms $\rightarrow$feedback loop
- **Conclusion**:
  Even with progressive attitudes, women still face restricted choices

Conclusion

- **Institutional Support Needed:** Legal rights must be accompanied by practical supports, accessible childcare or fair employment, and protection against discrimination, to change labor allocation and household power dynamics.
- **Identification Scope:** Estimates capture regional (not national) impacts, based on variation in pre-reform DV prevalence. Reported effects should be interpreted conservatively as upper bounds, admitting potential upward bias due to concurrent policies and social developments.
- **Data Limitations:** Relationship diversity (cohabitation, divorce, dating) not observed $\rightarrow$ potential unobserved heterogeneity. Married individuals more directly exposed; singles face lower DV risk.
- **Structural Barriers:** Women remain concentrated in low-wage, female-dominated sectors. Informal work and employer bias persist despite reforms.

Further research

- Still unclear what was **reallocated** after women's bargaining power increased (e.g., housework, consumption, leisure).
  If data on **women's consumption or housework hours** were available, can test the **bargaining model** more structurally.
- Examine the **dual-norm** mechanism

My paper and replication code are available on GitHub.

Tnank you so much!

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How I made Female Decision-Making Power

- Constructed as the share of household decisions (out of 17) involving at least one female.
- Excludes items where “parents” jointly decide (gender unidentifiable).
- Range: 0–1; interpreted as a proxy for bargaining power.
- Reflects empowerment through household participation.

Treatment Variable: DV Rate (2016)

- **DV rate by oblast (2016):**

$$DV\ rate_{o,2016} = \frac{\text{Reported female DV victims}}{\text{Female population in oblast}}$$

- Mean-centered for interpretation:

$$DV\ rate^{c}_{o,2016} = DV\ rate_{o,2016} - \overline{DV\ rate_{2016}}$$

- Allows Post dummy to represent effects for an oblast with average DV prevalence.

Sample Construction and Restrictions

- Exclude individuals who changed oblast between 2016–2019.
- Ensures that each person remains in a single treatment unit (oblast).
- Only 29 individuals dropped and negligible sample loss.

Detail of Descriptive analysis

	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max
Outcomes				
Work (past 7 days)	0.506	0.500	0	1
No WWOH	2.564	0.962	1	4
Husband career importance	2.756	0.860	1	4
Risk attitude (std., 2016=0)	-0.219	1.124	-1.890	2.099
Female decision-making index	0.574	0.365	0	1
Treatment and demographics				
DV rate (2016)	0.206	0.099	.0895	0.381
DV rate mean-centered (2016)	0.000	0.099	-0.116	0.175
Female	0.562	0.496	0	1
Post year(=2019)	0.500	0.500	0	1
Average sample size per oblast	764	539.7	266	1,675
Baseline covariates (2016)				
Number of children (<18)	2.134	1.653	0	9
Age	43.031	15.384	18	92
Log food consumption	11.553	0.446	9.989	13.703
Log non-food consumption	13.355	0.806	10.086	16.203
Married	0.780	0.414	0	1
Restrictions(=1 if strongly agree in 2016)				
No WWOH (2016)	0.196	0.397	0	1
Husband career importance (2016)	0.245	0.430	0	1
Observations	6,874 (6,778 for consumption variables)			

DDD Results of Pre-Trend Placebo Test

	(1) No.WWOH_reli	(2) Huscareer	(3) Risk std	(4) Fem DM	(5) Work index
Post (=1)	-1.324**	-1.027***	-0.006	0.008**	0.081*
	(0.012)	(0.004)	(0.956)	(0.011)	(0.084)
Post × DV rate	10.672	8.060	-4.675	0.008	-2.841
	(0.318)	(0.625)	(0.701)	(0.917)	(0.214)
Post × Female	-0.123	-0.228*	-0.019	0.015***	-0.030
	(0.334)	(0.050)	(0.832)	(0.000)	(0.169)
Post × DV rate × Female	-6.117	-5.164	4.930	0.049	1.075
	(0.111)	(0.245)	(0.182)	(0.570)	(0.237)
Obs	2,176	2,786	7,168	7,636	7,168
Clusters	9	9	9	9	9
Reps (Bootstrap)	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

$\Rightarrow$ The parallel trends assumption holds.

Return

FLFP with controls

	(1) No_WWOH_reli	(2) Huscareer	(3) No_WWOH_reli	(4) Huscareer
Post (2019 = 1)	-1.052***	-1.044***	-1.017	-0.124
	(0.003)	(0.000)	(0.574)	(0.912)
Post × DV rate	-1.716	-0.760	-1.689**	-0.684
	(0.120)	(0.348)	(0.048)	(0.513)
Post × Female	-0.256***	-0.164***	-0.273***	-0.169***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Post × DV rate × Female	-1.175*	-1.602*	-0.964*	-1.566*
	(0.095)	(0.060)	(0.074)	(0.081)
Num children (baseline) × Post			-0.032***	-0.007
			(0.008)	(0.586)
Age (baseline) × Post			0.016**	0.007
			(0.018)	(0.354)
Age^2 (baseline) × Post			-0.000	-0.000
			(0.133)	(0.394)
Log food cons. (baseline) × Post			0.017	0.022
			(0.912)	(0.825)
Log non-food cons. (baseline) × Post			-0.041	0.043
			(0.562)	(0.306)
Married (baseline) × Post			0.020	-0.041
			(0.709)	(0.638)
N	1346	1686	1306	1616
clusters	9	9	9	9
reps	10000	10000	10000	10000

The Collective Household Model and Implications for FLFP

Utility Maximization under the Collective Model:

$$\max_{c_f, c_m, l_f, l_m} \lambda U_f(c_f, l_f) + (1 - \lambda) U_m(c_m, l_m)$$

- λ: bargaining weight of the wife.
- DV Law $\Rightarrow \lambda \uparrow$ (improved fallback position).
- $\Rightarrow$ Wife's decision power $\uparrow$

Standard Theoretical Prediction:

- $\lambda \uparrow \Rightarrow$ Wife's consumption $\uparrow$, leisure $\uparrow \Rightarrow$ Labor supply $\downarrow$
- Because it is assumed that the wife prefers more leisure.

Cont'd

In this Context (Kyrgyzstan):

- Case1: "Freedom to work"
  - fallback position ↑
  - housework hours ↓ due to reallocation
  - bargaining power $\lambda \uparrow \uparrow \Rightarrow$ FLFP ↑
- Case 2: "Freedom not to work" / strong social constraints
  - DV Law $\Rightarrow$ bargaining power↑ but norms still restrictive
  - Women can now choose not to work
  - it never show the FLFP
  - $\lambda \uparrow \Rightarrow$ FLFP $\rightarrow$ or ↓

$\rightarrow$ The direction of FLFP depends on women's underlying preferences and social norms. As Udry (1996) shows, in many developing contexts, the collective model may not hold due to limited cooperation within households.

Why analyzed separately?

- why don't you check **DV Law** $\rightarrow$ **Gender Norms** $\rightarrow$ **FLFP** ?
- Limitation of reduced form
- Making the theory model

From an econometric perspective, it is appropriate to first estimate the **total effect** of the law:

1. DV Law $\rightarrow$ FLFP (total effect)
2. Then examine partial channels:
   DV Law $\rightarrow$ Norms
   DV Law $\rightarrow$ FLFP