1. Title: Economic Determinants of Violence in the Home: The Case of Sweden during Covid-19

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3. Abstract Violence within the home is the most common form of interpersonal violence for women. While children and men are also victims of abuse of various kind within the family, intimate partner violence (IPV) committed by men against women is generally the most common form of domestic violence. Globally, a third of women that have ever been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence at the hands of their partner. Almost 40% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner (WHO, 2013) and an additional 25% by another family member (UNODC, 2019). Sweden is unfortunately no exception to these patterns, despite the strong culture of gender equality. In 2019, a fifth of all reported violent assaults happened within an intimate relation, and an additional 15% was committed by another close relation. In most of these cases, the victim is a woman, while men are more often subject to assaults by an unknown perpetrator. 64% of homicide against women in 2019 was committed by current or former partner

Despite being a common phenomenon, IPV is not fully understood, partly due to the challenges in obtaining solid data and empirical evidence, and partly to its complex nature. Cultural, social and psychological factors, many of which change and evolve over time, concur to explain its occurrence. The political reaction to the spread of COVID-19 has led, in many countries, to dramatic and abrupt changes in many dimensions that have been previously associated with conflicts and violence within households. Lockdowns and confinement per se lead to families spending more time together, with less “self-incapacitation” of violent individuals and individuals at risk more isolated from their social networks. The economic shock following the lockdowns, which is leading to spikes in unemployment, may also cause an increase in conflict through the channels of economic insecurity and stress. Moreover, the labor market impact of the crisis is likely to have extremely heterogeneous effects across sectors, occupations and income levels. Given well documented gender differences in all these dimensions, these effects come with asymmetric impacts for men and women. Together with the increased time spent on childcare and household chores, due to the social distancing, this is likely to upset the balance of “normal times” division of labor, leading to conflicts. Sweden is a special case, since no strict lockdown was enforced in the country. Nevertheless, a combination of fear of the contagion and, later on, the recommendations by the authorities to work from home to the extent possible, to maintain social distancing and to avoid unnecessary travel, resulted in significantly dampened mobility patterns. These voluntary reactions make this case relevant also to evaluate the actual social cost of a strict lockdown, by comparison.

4. Data description: We use six important data sources: statistics on crimes provided by the police; mobility data provided by Google, Apple and Citymapper; statistics on lay-offs provided by the Swedish Public Employment Service; and statistics on bankruptcies provided by Creditsafe.

5. JEL Codes for the project: J12, J16, K14

6. Key words: COVID-19, domestic violence, unemployment, self-incapacitation