



TITLE: Coercive control and economic abuse of women, post-separation

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The past decade has seen a strengthening recognition of the multiple dimensions of domestic violence in post-separation relationships. However, there are relatively few studies that explore the existence and impact of economic abuse post-separation, and none that have applied the concept of economic abuse as a tool for analyzing the reasons for and impacts of high levels of child support non-compliance and debt in Australia. In this paper I use economic abuse to reconceptualize payers' deliberate withholding of child support as a strategy of coercive control. I present case studies from an interview study with 37 separated mothers to argue that in these contexts, economic abuse reflects interpersonal and institutionalized power dynamics as individual men's strategies of coercion are buttressed by the current practices of Centrelink and the Department of Human Services – Child Support. I conclude that the effectiveness of any strategy to address single mothers' poverty generally and child support non-compliance specifically is dependent on first taking seriously the dynamics, impacts and institutional facilitation of postseparation economic abuse.