Improving Access to Justice:
Specialized Domestic Violence Courts in Puerto Rico

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Motivation

- Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence against women
  - 30% of women experience IPV during their lifetimes (WHO, 2021)
  - IPV has long-term negative consequence for women and their families
    Devries et al. 2013; Ellsberg et al. 2008; Kapiga et al. 2017, Aizer 2011; Carrell and Hoekstra 2010; Carrell et al., 2018

- Incidents of IPV are oftentimes not reported to legal authorities
  - Victims cite lack of knowledge of & trust in the process & institutions
    Jubb et al. 2010; NVAWS 2010

- Specialized domestic violence courts → response to improve justice access

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This Paper: What are the Effects of the Introduction of SDVCs?

- Use administrative micro-data on the universe of civil domestic violence cases

- Exploit the rollout of SDVCs in Puerto Rico (2014–2019) to find:

  1. No change in the number of cases that appear in court
  2. SDVCs change judicial outcomes & victim safety
     - 9.4 p.p. increase in probability of a protection order (22%)
     - 2.4 p.p. reduction in offender recidivism within 12 months (19%)
     - 1.7 p.p. reduction in victim reappearance within 12 months (15%)

  3. What drives the results? Where are the effects strongest?
     - 82% of PO increase explained by judge assignment to SDVCs. Judge priorities: Victim protection over perpetrator punishment
     - Undeserved areas, shared children, lower severity

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SDVCs Start in 2007, in San Juan & expand over time

- Trained judges & staff with IPV-specific expertise
- Physical design for survivor safety (e.g., separate entrances, play rooms)
- Legal counselor and support services
- Collaboration with NGOs and government agencies

Map

Data

- Universe of civil IPV cases from January 2014 to February 2020
  - Registered through PRJB's Automated Protection Order System (APOS)
  - 88,600 cases, approx. (11k cases per year)
  - Petitioner & petitioned party IDs and socio-demographic characteristics
  - Petitioner's residential address
  - Court IDs; hearing date and time; hearing duration
  - Judge IDs and determinations
  - Types of allegations/aggravating factors (cases with *ex parte*/final POs)

- Administrative and survey data for all judges
  - Socio-demographic characteristics (admin) (i.e., gender, age, occupational background)
  - IPV training, decision-making preferences, and IPV knowledge (survey)

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Judicial Protection Orders in Civil IPV Proceedings

- IPV incidents may result in both civil and criminal cases
- Civil POs impose behavioral restrictions on the alleged offender:
  - Can be granted without criminal prosecution (lower burden of proof)
  - May include limits on contact, child custody, or firearm access
  - Violating a PO constitutes a criminal offense

- Proceedings typically involve two hearings: ▸ Details
  - **Hearing 1:** Protection request; *ex parte* PO granted 65% of cases (up to 30 days)
  - **Hearing 2:** Both parties present; final PO 41% of cases; avg. duration = 234 days

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Empirical Strategy — Differences in Differences

Reduced Form / ITT Estimation

$$y_{irt} = \delta_1 \text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt} + \beta \mathbf{X_{irt}} + \gamma_r + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt}$$

where:

- y_{irt} is the outcome variable of interest for ind i, in region r at time t,
- $\text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt} = 1$ if region r has an open SDVC at time t; 0 otherwise,
- $\mathbf{X_{irt}}$ vector of controls (i.e., petitioner's age, gender),
- γ_r and γ_t are region and time fixed effects, respectively.
- $\delta_1 = $ Intent-to-Treat (ITT) effect estimate

- We estimate δ using counterfactual estimator from Borusyak et al., 2024

Empirical Strategy — Differences in Differences

2SLS / LATE Estimation

- To estimate the effect SDVC treatment:

$$y_{irt} = \delta_2 \text{Case}_{SDVC,irt} + \beta \mathbf{X_{irt}} + \gamma_r + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt}$$

- Use $\text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt}$ as IV for whether the case was handled in an SDVC ($\text{Case}_{SDVC,irt}$)
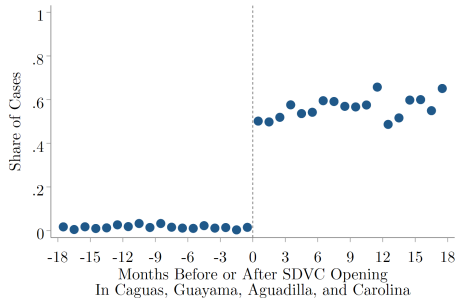
Inference

- Setting with a small number of clusters; we implement:
    - **Reduced Form:** t-stat randomization inference (MacKinnon and Webb, 2020)
    - **2SLS:** WCRE bootstrap-t (Finlay and Magnussen, 2019)

First Stage Evidence:
Opening SDVCs lead to cases been seen and refer to the region's SDVC

Hearing 1 in SDVC

Hearing 2 in SDVC
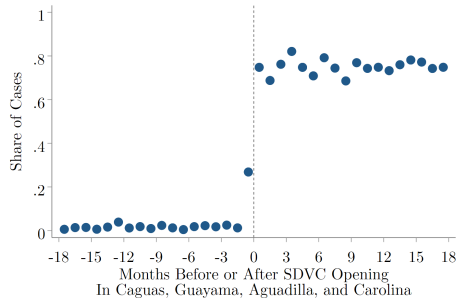
SDVC Openings Do Not Lead to an Increase in Court Caseloads

	Female Petitioners	Male Petitioners	All Petitioners
	(1)	(2)	(3)
SDVC Region × Post	2.098	2.702	4.799
	[0.653]	[0.133]	[0.436]
Observations	502	502	502
Mean of Dep. Var.	47.25	11.91	59.16

But, Access to SDVCs Improves Court Outcomes: More Protection Orders Granted"

	Final PO Issued		
	Female (1)	Male (2)	All (3)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects			
SDVC Region × Post	0.083 [0.059]*	0.075 [0.157]	0.079 [0.030]**
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)			
Case in SDVC	0.094 [0.047]**	0.102 [0.008]***	0.093 [0.016]**
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.418	0.311	0.396
Observations	23,615	5,899	29,514

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

SDVCs reduced reappearance and recidivism for female cases

	Female Petitioners		Male Petitioners		All Petitioners	
	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	-0.017	-0.024	0.030	0.041	-0.010	-0.013
	[0.033]**	[0.028]**	[0.207]	[0.050]*	[0.146]	[0.114]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	-0.022	-0.023	0.020	0.022	-0.015	-0.016
	[0.008]***	[0.016]**	[0.359]	[0.375]	[0.078]*	[0.023]**
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.115	0.130	0.0715	0.0715	0.106	0.118
Observations	23,615	23,615	5,899	5,899	29,514	29,514

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
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▸ No Tit-for-Tat

Stronger effects observed when:

- **Parties share children** ▸ Details

  (e.g., custody/visitation arrangements, no-contact orders)

- **Petitioner resides in remote area** ▸ Details

  (limited access to services/remediation)

- **Lower predicted case severity** ▸ Details

  (requires greater judicial discretion and understanding of IPV dynamics)

What drives the changes in SDVCs? The role of judges

1. Decomposition analysis
2. Mediation analysis
   - Priorities regarding IPV case management
   - Training
   - Knowledge
   - Socio-demographic characteristics

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection – the Role of Judges

(a) Final Protection Order

(b) Reduction in Petitioner Reappearance

Share of ATE Explained by Judge FE   Other Factors

▸ Specification

Survey judges working on IPV cases in PR (July 2019; response rate – 102 of 165 judges)

Conduct mediation analysis using three standardized indices:

1. DV Training Index ▸ Questions

2. DV Knowledge Index ▸ Questions

3. **Victim Oriented Justice Priorities Index** ▸ Questions

▸ Correlation of Indices

The Role of Judges in SDVC Outcomes: Which attributes of judges matter?

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1. DV Training Index ▸ Questions
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3. **Victim Oriented Justice Priorities Index** ▸ Questions

▸ Correlation of Indices

	Final PO Issued (1)	Final PO Issued (2)	Final PO Issued (3)	Final PO Issued (4)	Final PO Issued (5)	Final PO Issued (6)	Final PO Issued (7)	Final PO Issued (8)
SDVC Region × Post	0.0630	0.0115	0.0568	0.0112	0.0375	0.0558	0.0539	0.0376
	(0.020)***	(0.016)	(0.021)***	(0.017)	(0.019)*	(0.021)***	(0.021)**	(0.019)*
	[0.053]*	[0.509]	[0.229]	[0.669]	[0.373]	[0.239]	[0.238]	[0.382]
Victim Oriented Justice Index					0.0190			0.0176
					(0.004)***			(0.006)***
DV Knowledge Index						0.0163		0.0114
						(0.012)		(0.012)
DV Training Index							0.0110	0.00284
							(0.007)	(0.011)
Victim Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calendar Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judge FE	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Observations	23,615	23,572	14,626	14,618	14,626	14,626	14,626	14,626
Sample	Full	Full	Judge Survey	Judge Survey	Judge Survey	Judge Survey	Judge Survey	Judge Survey

P-values reported in brackets. p-values are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. Standard Errors in parentheses are clustered at the judge level.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Conclusion

- We evaluate an increasingly common judicial innovation aimed at addressing IPV
- SDVCs did not lead to increased reporting, but improved protection for women
- The improvements were especially notable in more complex or less clear-cut cases.
- Effects are driven by trainable attributes of judges
  - Targeted training can enhance judicial responses to IPV.

Thank You!

Expansion of System of Specialized Domestic Violence Courts (SDVCs)

San Juan — May 29, 2007
Bayamón — March 16, 2010
Arecibo — June 20, 2013
Caguas — November 17, 2014
Aguadilla — June 27, 2017
Ponce — November 7, 2019

Utuado — March 16, 2011
Fajardo — November 20, 2013
Guayama — September 15, 2016
Carolina — June 22, 2018

2005   2010   2015   2020
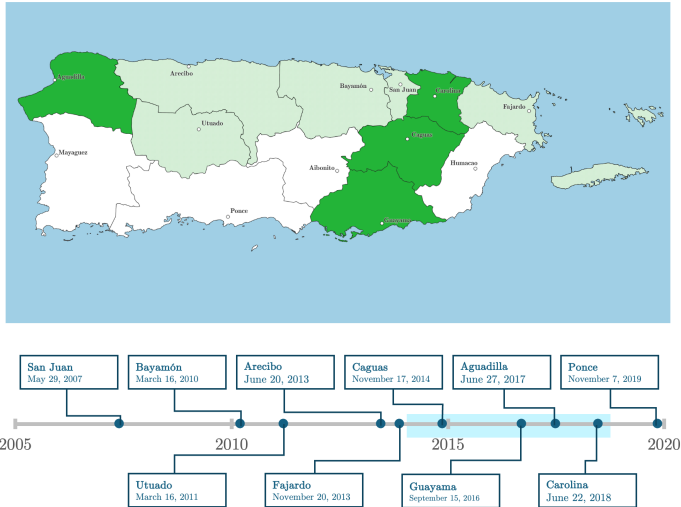
Relationship between Final PO and Petitioner Reappearance

	Petitioner Reappearance (1)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance (2)	Petitioner Reappearance (3)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance (4)
Final PO Issued	-0.0455***	-0.0429***		
	(0.00617)	(0.00569)		
Total Protection ($\times$ 100 Days)			-0.0195***	-0.0193***
			(0.00185)	(0.00201)
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.124	0.135		
Observations	14714	14714	10762	10762

*

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‹ Back

Civil IPV Case Proceedings — Timeline

Hearing 1

- Submission of a PO request by petitioner party ("victim")
- Can take place in either an SDVC or a traditional court (non-SDVC)
- The petitioned party is not necessarily in attendance
- Following Article 2.5, judges may issue an *ex-parte* PO (temporary protection)
  - Granted in approx. 65% of cases
  - Valid for 20-30 days (until the second hearing)
- Only one hearing in 20.3% of cases

Hearing 2

- Scheduled up to 20 days following hearing 1
- Held in a court in the petitioner's judicial region of residence
    - Cases are directed to SDVCs (if there is one present in the region)
    - 57% of initial hearings and 80% of second hearings are conducted in SDVCs
- The petitioned party is required to be present - both present arguments/evidence before the judge
- Judge may decide to issue a final PO, or to extend, modify, or terminate the *ex parte* PO
- Judicial decision on Final PO
    - Granted in 41% of cases
    - Duration of typically 3-12 months (mean = 234 days)

NB: Courts also hold the authority to extend existing orders; however, these extensions are not granted for violations of the order or for new acts of violence occurring after the expiration of a PO. Such incidents would require the initiation of a new case.

◄ Back

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‹ Back

Summary Statistics — Petitioners and Petitioned Parties (Female Petitioners)

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated	Switchers	Never Treated	AT - NT	S - NT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Petitioner Age	33.41	33.64	33.83	-0.39	0.14
	(11.55)	(11.60)	(11.79)	[0.190]	[0.757]
Petitioned/Offender Gender – Female	0.029	0.027	0.027	0.002	0.001
	(0.169)	(0.161)	(0.163)	[0.825]	[0.829]
Petitioned/Offender Age	36.00	36.10	36.22	-0.19	0.22
	(12.41)	(17.29)	(13.74)	[0.437]	[0.814]
Number of Children	0.65	0.71	0.68	-0.03	0.00
	(0.93)	(0.97)	(0.99)	[0.500]	[0.857]
Observations	19,922	7,285	11,917	31,839	19,235

Columns 1-3 report means and standard deviations in parentheses. Columns 4-5 report regressions adjusted differences that include
time fixed effects. P-values reported in columns 4-5, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Summary Statistics — Case Characteristics (Female Petitioners)

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated	Switchers	Never Treated	AT - NT	S - NT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Hearings	2.46	2.19	2.09	0.38**	0.17
	(1.66)	(1.34)	(1.07)	[0.040]	[0.143]
Hearing 1 in SDVC	0.35	0.01	0.01	0.35***	0.01
	(0.48)	(0.11)	(0.08)	[0.008]	[0.100]
Hearing 2 in SDVC	0.71	0.02	0.01	0.71***	0.02*
	(0.45)	(0.14)	(0.08)	[0.008]	[0.071]
Ex-Parte PO Issued	0.723	0.700	0.658	0.065	0.044
	(0.447)	(0.458)	(0.474)	[0.206]	[0.443]
Final PO Issued	0.419	0.420	0.419	-0.000	-0.004
	(0.493)	(0.494)	(0.493)	[0.976]	[0.857]
Ex-Parte PO Duration	35.4	31.3	26.4	9.0**	6.0
	(41.1)	(36.1)	(24.4)	[0.040]	[0.186]
Final PO Duration	247.9	231.1	213.8	34.2	17.5
	(165.7)	(147.7)	(154.5)	[0.254]	[0.543]
Petitioner Reappearance	0.105	0.113	0.114	-0.009	-0.002
	(0.307)	(0.317)	(0.318)	[0.143]	[0.643]
Petitioned/Offender Reappearance	0.124	0.128	0.130	-0.005	-0.001
	(0.330)	(0.334)	(0.336)	[0.413]	[0.886]
Observations	19,922	7,285	11,917	31,839	19,235

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Summary Statistics — Petitioners and Defendants (All Petitioners)

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated (1)	Switchers (2)	Never Treated (3)	AT - NT (4)	S - NT (5)
Petitioner Gender – Female	0.795	0.794	0.802	-0.007	-0.006
	(0.404)	(0.404)	(0.399)	[0.508]	[0.800]
Petitioner Age	34.28	34.35	34.61	-0.31	0.07
	(11.86)	(11.85)	(12.03)	[0.278]	[0.857]
Petitioned/Offender Gender – Female	0.210	0.214	0.206	0.004	0.007
	(0.408)	(0.410)	(0.404)	[0.611]	[0.700]
Petitioned/Offender Age	35.61	35.61	35.90	-0.28	0.04
	(12.22)	(16.37)	(13.31)	[0.365]	[0.986]
Number of Children	0.60	0.66	0.63	-0.04	0.00
	(0.91)	(0.95)	(0.96)	[0.452]	[0.857]
Observations	25,066	9,170	14,864	39,930	24,073

Columns 1-3 report means and standard deviations in parentheses. Columns 4-5 report regressions adjusted differences that include time fixed effects. P-values reported in columns 4-5, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure.
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◄ Back

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated (1)	Switchers (2)	Never Treated (3)	AT - NT (4)	S - NT (5)
Petitioner Age	37.71	37.14	37.79	-0.11	-0.32
	(12.43)	(12.38)	(12.51)	[0.802]	[0.743]
Petitioned/Offender Gender – Female	0.912	0.937	0.928	-0.016	0.007
	(0.284)	(0.243)	(0.258)	[0.667]	[0.571]
Petitioned/Offender Age	34.08	33.73	34.61	-0.53	-0.65
	(11.34)	(12.04)	(11.36)	[0.238]	[0.657]
Number of Children	0.38	0.47	0.44	-0.06	0.01
	(0.76)	(0.85)	(0.83)	[0.214]	[0.700]
Observations	5,144	1,885	2,947	8,091	4,838

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◄ Back

Summary Statistics — Case Characteristics (All Petitioners)

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated	Switchers	Never Treated	AT - NT	S - NT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Hearings	2.39	2.13	2.05	0.34**	0.15
	(1.58)	(1.29)	(1.05)	[0.040]	[0.186]
Hearing 1 in SDVC	0.35	0.01	0.01	0.35***	0.01**
	(0.48)	(0.12)	(0.08)	[0.008]	[0.043]
Hearing 2 in SDVC	0.71	0.02	0.01	0.70***	0.02**
	(0.46)	(0.14)	(0.08)	[0.000]	[0.029]
Ex-Parte PO Issued	0.674	0.646	0.613	0.060	0.035
	(0.469)	(0.478)	(0.487)	[0.238]	[0.557]
Final PO Issued	0.394	0.396	0.399	-0.005	-0.008
	(0.489)	(0.489)	(0.490)	[0.746]	[0.700]
Ex-Parte PO Duration	34.6	30.7	26.1	8.5**	5.7
	(39.6)	(34.9)	(23.8)	[0.048]	[0.157]
Final PO Duration	242.5	227.4	208.6	34.2	19.2
	(163.0)	(146.2)	(152.8)	[0.262]	[0.486]
Petitioner Reappearance	0.098	0.104	0.106	-0.008	-0.003
	(0.298)	(0.306)	(0.308)	[0.151]	[0.500]
Petitioned/Offender Reappearance	0.115	0.117	0.118	-0.003	-0.001
	(0.319)	(0.322)	(0.323)	[0.500]	[0.843]
Observations	25,066	9,170	14,864	39,930	24,073

Columns 1-3 report means and standard deviations in parentheses. Columns 4-5 report regressions adjusted differences that include time fixed effects. P-values reported in columns 4-5, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Summary Statistics — Case Characteristics (Male Petitioners)

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated	Switchers	Never Treated	AT - NT	S - NT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Number of Hearings	2.09	1.89	1.90	0.18*	0.04
	(1.13)	(1.04)	(0.92)	[0.063]	[0.757]
Hearing 1 in SDVC	0.36	0.02	0.01	0.35***	0.02*
	(0.48)	(0.14)	(0.09)	[0.000]	[0.057]
Hearing 2 in SDVC	0.68	0.02	0.01	0.68***	0.02*
	(0.47)	(0.14)	(0.08)	[0.000]	[0.071]
Ex-Parte PO Issued	0.481	0.437	0.431	0.049	0.003
	(0.500)	(0.496)	(0.495)	[0.452]	[0.914]
Final PO Issued	0.298	0.301	0.320	-0.020	-0.021
	(0.457)	(0.459)	(0.466)	[0.151]	[0.543]
Ex-Parte PO Duration	30.0	26.8	23.9	6.0*	3.6
	(28.6)	(25.7)	(19.3)	[0.071]	[0.214]
Final PO Duration	212.7	207.1	180.3	33.7	26.3
Petitioner Reappearance	0.071	0.069	0.073	-0.002	-0.006
	(0.257)	(0.254)	(0.261)	[0.825]	[0.486]
Petitioned/Offender Reappearance	0.078	0.074	0.073	0.004	0.000
	(0.268)	(0.262)	(0.260)	[0.437]	[0.914]
Observations	5,144	1,885	2,947	8,091	4,838

Columns 1-3 report means and standard deviations in parentheses. Columns 4-5 report regressions adjusted differences that include time fixed effects. P-values reported in columns 4-5, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

◄ Back

Effect of SDVCs Opening on Access to Specialized Courts

	Female Petitioners			Male Petitioners			All Petitioners		
	Hearing 1 in SDVC	Hearing 2 in SDVC	Hearing 1 or 2 in SDVC	Hearing 1 in SDVC	Hearing 2 in SDVC	Hearing 1 or 2 in SDVC	Hearing 1 in SDVC	Hearing 2 in SDVC	Hearing 1 or 2 in SDVC
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Panel A: First Stage Results – Borusyak et al. (2024)									
SDVC Region × Post	0.570	0.794	0.781	0.607	0.779	0.762	0.577	0.792	0.777
	[0.000]***	[0.000]***	[0.001]***	[0.000]***	[0.001]***	[0.000]***	[0.000]***	[0.000]***	[0.001]***
Panel B: First Stage Results – TWFE Estimator									
SDVC × POST	0.512	0.653	0.671	0.536	0.646	0.660	0.517	0.652	0.669
	[0.000]***	[0.004]***	[0.000]***	[0.000]***	[0.000]***	[0.000]***	[0.004]***	[0.000]***	[0.004]***
Victim Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.00949	0.0140	0.0158	0.0139	0.0133	0.0183	0.0104	0.0139	0.0163
Observations	23615	18145	23615	5899	4014	5899	29514	22159	29514

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

◄ Back

Average Effect of Access to SDVCs on Issuance of Final Protection Orders – Excluding Tit-for-Tat cases

	Final PO Issued		
	Female	Male	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects			
SDVC Region × Post	0.0848	0.0567	0.0783
	[0.062]*	[0.254]	[0.049]**
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)			
Case in SDVC	0.0992	0.0757	0.0930
	[0.035]**	[0.113]	[0.023]**
Victim Age	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.420	0.291	0.402
Observations	20929	3326	24255

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

◄ Back

Average Effect of Access to SDVCs on Court Reappearance – Excluding Tit-for-Tat cases

	Female Petitioners		Male Petitioners		All Petitioners	
	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned Party Reappeaance	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned Party Reappearance	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned Party Reappeaance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	-0.0270	-0.0354	0.0321	0.0368	-0.0199	-0.0270
	[0.035]**	[0.024]**	[0.248]	[0.125]	[0.038]**	[0.024]**
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	-0.0269	-0.0301	0.0258	0.0192	-0.0202	-0.0244
	[0.027]**	[0.055]*	[0.203]	[0.371]	[0.188]	[0.086]*
Victim Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.106	0.122	0.0559	0.0562	0.0988	0.113
Observations	20929	20929	3326	3326	24255	24255

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

◂ Back

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Family Comp. (Female Petitioners)

	Have Children			Do Not Have Children		
	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.112	-0.025	-0.037	0.054	-0.012	-0.013
	[0.051]*	[0.068]*	[0.008]***	[0.114]	[0.290]	[0.251]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.137	-0.037	-0.039	0.052	-0.009	-0.009
	[0.047]**	[0.020]**	[0.199]	[0.078]*	[0.625]	[0.496]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.504	0.116	0.128	0.357	0.114	0.130
Observations	9,789	9,789	9,789	13,826	13,826	13,826

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Family Comp. (All Petitioners)

	Have Children			Do Not Have Children		
	Final PO Issued (1)	Petitioner Reappearance (2)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (3)	Final PO Issued (4)	Petitioner Reappearance (5)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.118	-0.0160	-0.0247	0.0496	-0.00520	-0.00443
	[0.033]**	[0.214]	[0.071]*	[0.102]	[0.654]	[0.586]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.133	-0.0278	-0.0318	0.0586	-0.00390	-0.00314
	[0.027]**	[0.074]*	[0.164]	[0.016]**	[0.770]	[0.773]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.511	0.109	0.119	0.324	0.104	0.117
Observations	11,431	11,431	11,431	18,083	18,083	18,083

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
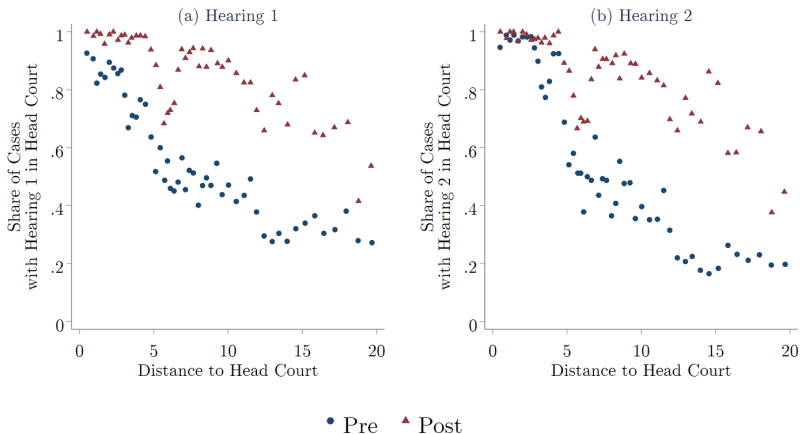* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Family Comp. (Male Petitioners)

	Have Children			Do Not Have Children		
	Final PO Issued (1)	Petitioner Reappearance (2)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance (3)	Final PO Issued (4)	Petitioner Reappearance (5)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.170	0.0388	0.0491	0.0558	0.0293	0.0385
	[0.014]**	[0.179]	[0.139]	[0.299]	[0.307]	[0.078]*
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.119	0.0259	0.0117	0.101	0.0219	0.0277
	[0.012]**	[0.285]	[0.723]	[0.035]**	[0.340]	[0.246]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.550	0.0641	0.0649	0.219	0.0744	0.0741
Observations	1,642	1,642	1,642	4,257	4,257	4,257

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Share of Case Handled in Regional Judicial Center - Judicial Regions with SDVC

(a) Hearing 1   (b) Hearing 2

• Pre   ▲ Post

◄ Back

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Distance to Regional Judicial Center [RJC] (Female Petitioners)

	Below Median Distance to RJC			Above Median Distance to RJC		
	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.060	-0.012	-0.014	0.108	-0.025	-0.035
	[0.078]*	[0.155]	[0.153]	[0.069]*	[0.080]*	[0.049]**
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.082	-0.013	-0.016	0.110	-0.030	-0.029
	[0.039]**	[0.426]	[0.051]*	[0.074]*	[0.066]*	[0.313]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.426	0.114	0.129	0.410	0.116	0.132
Observations	11,444	11,444	11,444	11,588	11,588	11,588

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Empirical Strategy — Geographic Discontinuity Design

Geographic/Border Discontinuity Design

$$y_{irt} = \delta_3 \text{SDVC}_{rt} + f(Distance_{irt}) + \gamma_{br} + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt}$$

where:

- y_{irt} is the outcome variable of interest for ind i, in region r at time t,
- $\text{SDVC}_{rt} = 1$ if region r has an open SDVC at time t; 0 otherwise,
- γ_{br} and γ_t are border-region segments and time fixed effects, respectively.
- δ_3 = Intent-to-Treat (ITT) effect at the discontinuity estimate

- We estimate δ_3 using the local linear regression and optimal bandwidth procedure
  (Calonico, Cattaneo & Titiunik 2014)

Cases by Female Petitioners Handled in SDVCs after Opening of Courts (GDD)
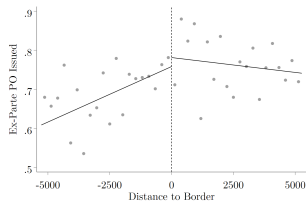

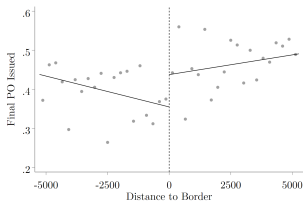**(a)** First Hearing
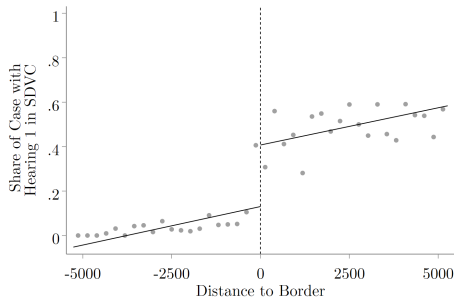
(b) Second Hearing
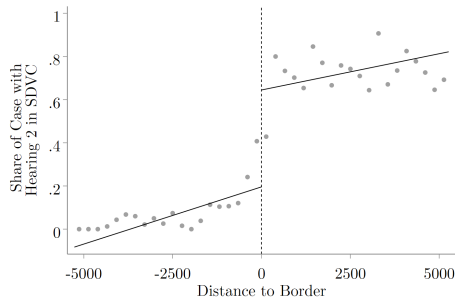
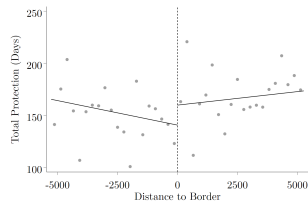# Effects of Access to SDVCs on the Judicial Protection of Female Petitioners

(a) Issuance of Ex-Parte PO

(b) Issuance of Final PO

(c) Duration of Protection

	GDD/RDD Estimate	Control Mean
	(1)	(2)
Number of Hearings	-0.05	2.32
	(0.12)	(1.42)
Ex-Parte PO Issued	0.071**	0.685
	(0.028)	(0.465)
Final PO Issued	0.108**	0.397
	(0.047)	(0.489)
Total Protection (Days)	30.8*	153.4
	(16.0)	(179.7)
Total Ex-Parte Protection (Days)	-7.0	34.4
	(5.4)	(38.6)
Total Final Protection (Days)	28.6	247.4
	(18.9)	(178.7)
Eff. Obs (L)	1,503	
Eff. Obs (R)	1,660	
(p) Order Loc. Poly.	1	
(q) Order Bias	2	
(h) BW Loc. Poly.	5,266	
(b) BW Bias	12,281	

Estimates are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014)
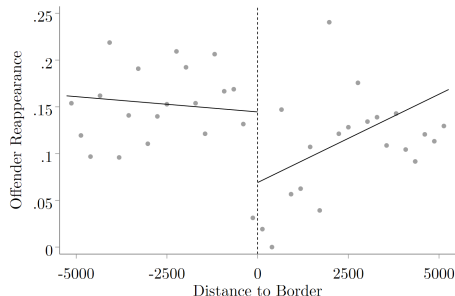* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Petitioner and Petitioned/Offender Reappearance Among Cases with Female Petitioners

(a) Petitioner Reappearance
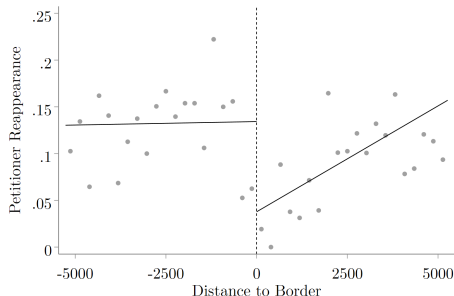
(b) Petitioned/Offender Reappearance

SDVC Access Effects on Petitioner Reappearance & Offender Recidivism - Female Petitioners (GDD)

	GDD/RDD Estimate (1)	Control Mean (2)
Petitioner Reappearance	-0.103***	0.129
	(0.022)	(0.335)
Petitioned/Offender Reappearance	-0.075***	0.150
	(0.027)	(0.357)
Eff. Obs (L)	1,503	
Eff. Obs (R)	1,660	
(p) Order Loc. Poly.	1	
(q) Order Bias	2	
(h) BW Loc. Poly.	5,266	
(b) BW Bias	12,281	

Estimates are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014)

* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Distance to Regional Judicial Center [RJC] (All Petitioners)

	Below Median Distance to RJC			Above Median Distance to RJC		
	Final PO Issued (1)	Petitioner Reappearance (2)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (3)	Final PO Issued (4)	Petitioner Reappearance (5)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.0607	0.00172	0.00449	0.101	-0.0237	-0.0316
	[0.043]**	[0.732]	[0.585]	[0.051]*	[0.130]	[0.071]*
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.0804	-0.00249	-0.00215	0.111	-0.0304	-0.0297
	[0.012]**	[0.699]	[0.668]	[0.031]**	[0.094]*	[0.234]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.404	0.104	0.114	0.389	0.109	0.123
Observations	14,341	14,341	14,341	14,342	14,342	14,342

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Distance to Regional Judicial Center [RJC] (Male Petitioners)

	Below Median Distance to RJC			Above Median Distance to RJC		
	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.0707	0.0663	0.0888	0.0785	-0.0187	-0.0162
	[0.297]	[0.026]**	[0.023]**	[0.057]*	[0.588]	[0.521]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.0863	0.0459	0.0589	0.122	-0.0278	-0.0343
	[0.176]	[0.070]*	[0.113]	[0.008]***	[0.566]	[0.324]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.317	0.0642	0.0590	0.303	0.0788	0.0841
Observations	2,897	2,897	2,897	2,754	2,754	2,754

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Heterogeneity by Case Severity

Why does case severity matter?

- *Higher risk/severity cases:* granting a PO may be more justified
- *Lower risk/severity cases:*
    - may require better knowledge of the dynamics of IPV,
    - to establish the level of risk and the necessary judicial protection

Operationalization of Case Severity:

- Use allegations made by petitioners and aggravating factors in cases w/info
- Procedure:
    1. Logit model to predict granting of final PO among cases in control group regions
    2. Out-of-sample prediction to generate estimates of case severity in treatment regions

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Case Severity (Female Petitioners)

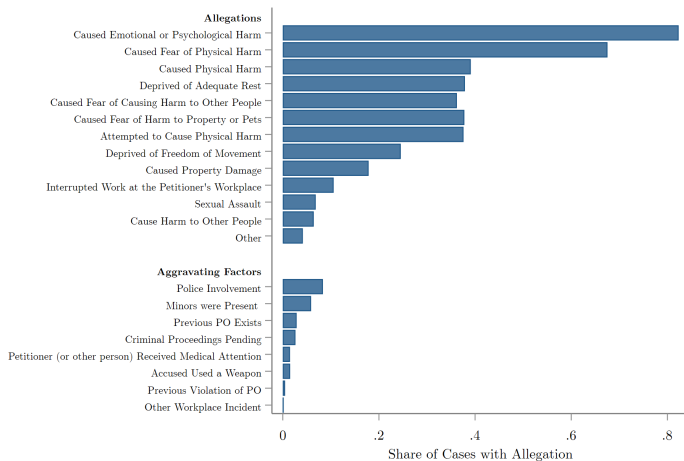|	Low Severity			High Severity		
	Final PO Issued (1)	Petitioner Reappearance (2)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance (3)	Final PO Issued (4)	Petitioner Reappearance (5)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappearance (6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.095	-0.024	-0.022	0.065	-0.009	-0.025
	[0.167]	[0.010]**	[0.007]***	[0.052]*	[0.559]	[0.095]*
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.142	-0.034	-0.015	0.047	-0.010	-0.026
	[0.090]*	[0.004]***	[0.059]*	[0.387]	[0.438]	[0.074]*
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.487	0.108	0.124	0.542	0.109	0.126
Observations	8,897	8,897	8,897	8,826	8,826	8,826

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
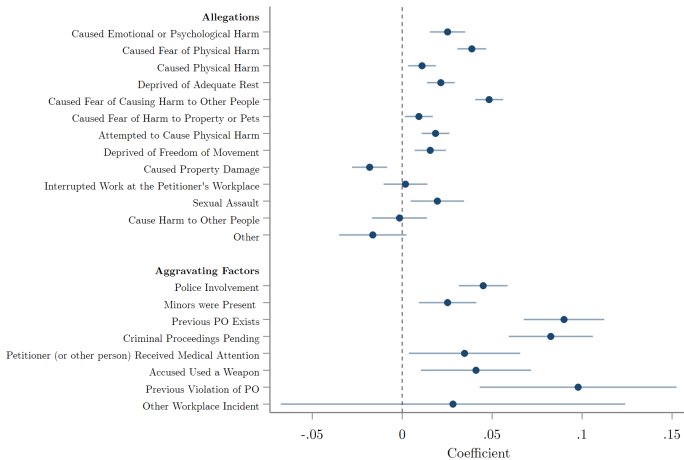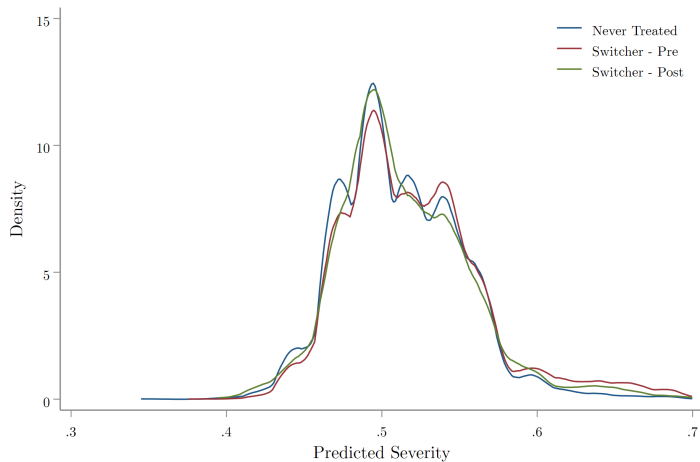* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Heterogeneity — Allegation Severity

Allegations

- Caused Emotional or Psychological Harm
- Caused Fear of Physical Harm
- Caused Physical Harm
- Deprived of Adequate Rest
- Caused Fear of Causing Harm to Other People
- Caused Fear of Harm to Property or Pets
- Attempted to Cause Physical Harm
- Deprived of Freedom of Movement
- Caused Property Damage
- Interrupted Work at the Petitioner's Workplace
- Sexual Assault
- Cause Harm to Other People
- Other

Aggravating Factors

- Police Involvement
- Minors were Present
- Previous PO Exists
- Criminal Proceedings Pending
- Petitioner (or other person) Received Medical Attention
- Accused Used a Weapon
- Previous Violation of PO
- Other Workplace Incident

Share of Cases with Allegation

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Case Severity (All Petitioners)

	Low Severity			High Severity		
	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance	Final PO Issued	Petitioner Reappearance	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.107	-0.0177	-0.0158	0.0586	-0.000763	-0.0137
	[0.062]*	[0.002]***	[0.001]***	[0.063]*	[0.949]	[0.315]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.159	-0.0232	-0.0108	0.0377	-0.00511	-0.0201
	[0.074]*	[0.023]**	[0.074]*	[0.414]	[0.527]	[0.070]*
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.487	0.102	0.115	0.544	0.102	0.117
Observations	10,490	10,490	10,490	10,537	10,537	10,537

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Case Severity (Male Petitioners)

	Low Severity			High Severity		
	Final PO Issued (1)	Petitioner Reappearance (2)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (3)	Final PO Issued (4)	Petitioner Reappearance (5)	Petitioned/ Offender Reappeaance (6)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects						
SDVC Region × Post	0.195	0.0159	0.0152	0.0159	0.0452	0.0585
	[0.015]**	[0.768]	[0.369]	[0.746]	[0.143]	[0.076]*
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)						
Case in SDVC	0.263	0.0392	0.0146	-0.0194	0.0160	0.0124
	[0.031]**	[0.309]	[0.699]	[0.688]	[0.785]	[0.844]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.488	0.0649	0.0641	0.553	0.0653	0.0705
Observations	1,593	1,593	1,593	1,711	1,711	1,711

P-values reported in brackets. p-values in reduced form estimates are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. p-values in the 2SLS estimation are computed using a WCRE bootstrap-t procedure.
* $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Empirical Strategy — Decomposition Analysis

Empirical Model:

$$y_{irt} = \delta_1 \text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt} + \delta_k + \beta \mathbf{X_{irt}} + \gamma_r + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt}$$

where:

- y_{irt} is the outcome variable of interest for ind i, in region r at time t,
- $\text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt} = 1$ if region r has an open SDVC at time t; 0 otherwise,
- $\mathbf{X_{irt}}$ vector of controls (i.e., petitioner's age, gender),
- γ_r and γ_t are region and time fixed effects, respectively.
- δ_1 = residual SDVC effect estimate
- δ_k = judge fixed effects

- We estimate the model parameters via a two-way fixed effects estimator (TWFE)

◂ Back

DV Training Index Questions

Which of the following topics did you attend training for?

1. Naturalization of Violence, Idealization, and Dependency on the Aggressor
2. Psychosocial Aspects of Domestic Violence
3. Evidentiary Aspects in Domestic Violence Cases
4. Domestic Violence and Abuse of the Elderly
5. Manifestations and Causes of Domestic Violence
6. Affective Bonds Between the Victim and the Aggressor
7. Domestic Violence, Culture, and Migration
8. Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Sexual Assault
9. Domestic Violence and Gender Perspective

Do each of the following constitute DV (Strongly agree/Agree/Neither agree nor disagree/Disagree/Strongly disagree/ Don't Know)

1. Make decisions without consulting your partner
2. Ignore your partner frequently or for long periods of time
3. Not allow your partner to work outside the home
4. Insist on knowing where your partner is at all times
5. Control the way your partner dresses
6. Not allow your partner to socialize (with family or friends)
7. Accuse your partner of cheating
8. Force your partner to share the passwords of their electronic accounts
9. Not trust how your partner uses money, or take the couple's salary/income
10. Treat your partner as inferior
11. Humiliate or make fun of your partner
12. Yell at your partner
13. Verbally threaten to hurt your partner or someone close to them
14. Threaten your partner with a weapon (e.g., knife, pistol) or other forceful object
15. Push or shove your partner
16. Hit your partner with your hands (e.g., slap, punch, choke) or kick them
17. Hit your partner with a blunt object
18. Force your partner to have sex or perform a sexual act they do not want
19. Force your partner to drop domestic violence charges

DV Knowledge Index Questions

What importance do you give to the following aspects when working in a case of domestic violence? (Not important at all / Somewhat important/ Very important / Extremely important)

Victim Oriented

1. Increase the speed of processing domestic violence cases
2. Raise community awareness of domestic violence as a social problem
3. Achieve a coordinated response to domestic violence
4. Improve victim safety
5. Facilitate victim access to support services
6. Promote expertise among judges handling domestic violence cases
7. Improve the victim's perception of the fairness of the judicial process

Offender Oriented

1. Hold the offender accountable for their actions
2. Achieve the re-education of the offender
3. Discourage recidivism
4. Penalize the offender if they fail to comply with court orders
5. Improve consistency in rulings and sentences in similar domestic violence cases
6. Apply laws correctly and consistently

◂ Back

Relationship between Judge Indices

	DV Knowledge Index	Victim Oriented Justice Index	Victim Oriented Justice Index
	(1)	(2)	(3)
DV Training Index	0.307***	0.509	
	(0.0645)	(0.321)	
DV Knowledge Index			0.477
			(0.352)
Observations	18273	18273	18273

Standard Errors in parentheses are clustered at the judge level.
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$