Improving Access to Justice for Victims of Intimate Partner Violence: Specialized Domestic Violence Courts in Puerto Rico *

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Abstract

We study the large-scale implementation of a system of specialized domestic violence courts (SDVCs), an innovation in access to justice programs for potential victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) and offenders. Using individual-level administrative data from the universe of civil domestic violence cases in Puerto Rico during the period 2014-2021, we leverage the staggered opening of SDVCs across judicial regions to examine the consequences for victims' judicial protection as well as offender recidivism. Access to SDVCs leads to a considerable 8 percentage points increase in the probability that judges issue a protection order and a 1.7 percentage point (15 percent) decrease in victim and offender reappearance rates within one year of the start of the case. Effects are more pronounced for cases in which parties have children in common and in which access to SDVCs is more limited. Linking the case data to administrative and survey data on judges, we show that the priorities of judges assigned to SDVCs play a prominent role in explaining these outcomes.

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1 Introduction

Violence against women, particularly that perpetrated by intimate partners, constitutes a serious public health concern and a violation of women's human rights. Intimate partner violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women worldwide, with approximately 30% women experiencing it at some point in their lives (WHO, 2021). This form of violence has been internationally condemned as a critical human rights, public health, and personal security issue (Devries et al., 2013). Among the numerous detrimental consequences of IPV are the negative impacts on survivors' physical and mental health, as well as the fact that it is the leading cause of homicide-related deaths among women globally (Devries et al., 2013; Ellsberg et al., 2008; Kapiga et al., 2017). Despite the severity of this problem, most assaults are not reported to authorities (Morgan and Thompson, 2021). Victims' reluctance to report is often attributed to limited trust in both law enforcement and the judicial system (e.g. Jubb et al., 2010). Consequently, low reporting rates underscore unequal access to law and justice for these individuals, who are overwhelmingly women. In addition, the persistent underrepresentation of women in law enforcement and the judiciary may exacerbate existing inequalities in access to justice (Miller and Segal, 2019).

In response to this global issue, a growing number of national and local governments, including those in the United States, Canada, Spain, and the United Kingdom, have introduced specialized domestic violence courts (SDVCs). These courts represent an innovation in access to justice programs for domestic violence cases, relying on trained judicial officers and providing enhanced safety and support services (Dawson and Dinovitzer, 2001; Gutierrez et al., 2016; Cissner et al., 2013; Pinchevsky, 2017). Despite these efforts, the causal impacts and consequences of such access to justice programs for addressing IPV remain understudied. SDVCs may be more effective at promoting access to justice because they (a) include the improved selection and training of judicial officials on IPV-related issues, and/or (b) offer additional social, psychological, and legal support to IPV survivors (e.g., Cissner et al. (2013)).

In this paper, we examine the effects of establishing SDVCs on judicial outcomes for individuals involved in domestic violence cases in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, a U.S. territorial jurisdiction with high levels of intimate partner violence, has emerged as a global leader in implementing these specialized courts.[1] The SDVC system has been operational since 2007 and is now implemented

[1]The 1989 Law No. 54 of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has been recognized as a pioneering statute, making Puerto Rico one of the first jurisdictions to enact special legislation to address this social issue. See various domestic violence laws available in Domestic Violence Laws of the World at https://cyber.harvard.edu/population/domesticviolence/domesticviolence.htm (last accessed February 25, 2021).

in most judicial regions of the territory. We use private, confidential administrative micro-data on the universe of civil domestic violence cases handled through the PR Judicial Branch during the period 2014 to 2021, which allows us to examine the consequences of the establishment and implementation of SDVCs on access to justice for IPV victims, including effects on case management, sentencing, the judicial protection of parties, and the accountability of offenders. We leverage the staggered introduction of SDVCs across judicial regions of the territory over this period to implement a differences-in-differences design to estimate the causal effects of interest. In addition, we use granular geo-referenced data on the residential location of each petitioner for judicial protection to implement a geographic discontinuity design, which helps us provide evidence of strong heterogeneity in terms of access to courts.

Our study provides rigorous evidence suggesting an important link between access to such specialized courts and changes in the judicial protection of IPV victims. The opening of an SDVC in a victim's judicial region increases the likelihood that they are granted a protection order by the courts by 8.3 percentage points, a substantial increase of 19 percent. Furthermore, we observe analogous effects among women whose cases are handled in SDVCs as a result of the system's expansion: an increase in the issuance of judicial protection by 9.4 percentage points, a substantial increase of 22 percent. Protection orders are the primary tool civil courts use to safeguard victims from potential violence. Consistent with this, we observe a 2.4 percentage point reduction in the reappearance of offenders in subsequent cases over the ensuing 12-month period, which amounts to a substantial decrease of 18.8 percent in proportional terms. Similarly, we observe a 1.7 percentage point reduction in the court reappearance of petitioners of judicial protection over the same period, a 15.2 percent decrease. In terms of heterogeneity, the effects tend to be more pronounced for cases in which the woman and the offender have borne children together and among those in which the petitioner resides in more remote locations, where judicial and police services are less accessible.

Additional analyses allow us to point towards the important role that judges play in explaining these results. The role of the judge could be crucial in access to protection for the petitioning parties, given that they are in charge of evaluating the evidence presented, determining the level of risk of the parties involved, and make decisions that can have a significant impact on the safety and well-being of the parties. In the context of SDVCs, one of the innovations introduced is a greater emphasis on specialized training for judges in the complexities of IPV experiences, as these can improve the management of and judicial decisions in such cases. Furthermore, greater specialization of judges assigned to these courts could improve compliance with established judicial protocols for

the evaluation of IPV cases, which could have a positive impact on judicial decisions (Oficina de Administración de los Tribunales, 2022).

To improve our understanding of the role that judges may play, we combine two additional data sources: administrative data on the universe of the judges handling cases of domestic violence, and data from a survey of active judges who had presided over such cases. Linking these data allows us to provide a more detailed picture of the attributes of judges that might influence such case decisions. First, we perform a decomposition analysis extending our difference-in-differences design to distinguish (a) the effects of specialized courts through the role of judges from (b) the broader impact of specialized courts independent of judge assignment. We estimate that approximately 82 percent of the overall increase in judicial protection can be attributed to the assignment of judges to SDVCs. Furthermore, a mediation analysis reveals that judges' preferences for judicial determinations that prioritize the protection and rights of the victim—rather than the punishment of the perpetrator—account for about half of the variation in judge fixed effects. This victim-centered approach is also positively correlated with the judges' level of training and knowledge about domestic violence.

This paper contributes to a growing literature on how innovation in the judiciary can help address and prevent violence against women and IPV. Previous studies have examined the role of SDVCs in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom (Dawson and Dinovitzer, 2001; Gutierrez et al., 2016; Cissner et al., 2013; Pinchevsky, 2017). Although earlier work is primarily descriptive, more recent research on SDVCs is based on quasi-experimental studies that aim to identify causal effects of these judicial interventions. For instance, Golestani et al. (2024) evaluate the impact of SDVCs on the reporting of IPV as well as conviction and incarceration in criminal cases in Tennessee. Examining the staggered rollout of specialized courts across Spain, García-Hombrados et al. (2024) show that SDVCs improve judicial efficiency and increase the reporting of IPV. Ours is the first study to evaluate the effects of domestic violence courts on both victim and offender reappearance—key objectives of these judicial innovations. We show that by increasing the granting rates of protection orders, SDVCs successfully reduced subsequent instances of violence. These effects are driven in large part by the role of judges, whose prioritization of victim protection over offender punishment shapes judicial outcomes. Understanding this mechanism is crucial for the successful replication of the model in other settings.

This line of research also relates to studies on specialized policing, which highlight the potential for improved access to justice through differentiated programming. For example, Miller and Segal

(2019) and Amaral et al. (2021) show that incorporating female police officers and establishing female police stations increases IPV reporting rates and reduces the incidence of female homicides by intimate partners in the United States and India, respectively. Similarly, Sviatschi and Trako (2022) analyze the impact of All Women's Justice Centers in Peru, which employ primarily female officers and offer both police and legal services to victims of gender-based violence. Their findings suggest that these centers substantially decrease IPV, improve women's mental health, and positively affect children's school enrollment and attendance. We contribute to this growing body of literature by providing evidence from specialized courts, demonstrating that differentiated services can be an effective tool for addressing IPV.

Finally, the study contributes to one of the core research agendas in global development: the study of how judicial systems can address gender inequalities as well as enhance women's rights and wellbeing (see, for example, Heise 2011; Duflo 2012; Doepke et al. 2011; Anderson 2018; Doyle and Aizer 2018). As a result of concerns regarding barriers to justice for IPV victims, the organizational innovation of SDVCs is important from both academic and policy standpoints. Our study informs a nascent literature that points to potential gains from understanding the quality and organization of the judiciary — one of the state's most important institutions — and the consequences for improved societal-level human development (Finan et al. 2017).

The article is organized as follows: Section 2 provides contextual information of the study population and describes the system of SDVCs. Section 3 describes the main data used in the analysis, whereas Section 4 discusses the research designs and empirical methodology. Section 5 presents the main empirical results. Section 6 considers potential mechanisms for our findings, and Section 7 concludes with a discussion and broader implications.

2 Context and Background

2.1 IPV in Puerto Rico and the Introduction of SDVCs

Intimate partner violence poses a significant challenge to both public health and human rights worldwide. Latin American countries are no exception, as underscored by a recent report from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/CEPAL). According to the CEPAL (2022) report, at least 4,050 women were victims of femicide across 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022 alone. Furthermore, the region ranks second globally in female homicide rates perpetrated by intimate partners or relatives, with a reported figure of

1.5 per 100,000 women (UNODC and UN Women, 2023). Although Puerto Rico has reduced its overall femicide rate in relative terms, intimate partner violence remains a critical issue within the territory: Puerto Rico ranks second in Latin America and the Caribbean-after Chile-in the proportion of femicides committed by intimate partners (CEPAL, 2022). Notably, at least eight out of every ten women murdered on the island were killed by their current or former partners.

To address this challenge, numerous countries in the LAC region have implemented laws aimed at criminalizing violence against women. Specifically, 18 countries have taken significant steps to criminalize such violence. In the Caribbean, Puerto Rico stands out as the jurisdiction that has achieved the most substantial advancements in this area. The enactment of Law No. 54 in 1989 marked a groundbreaking legislative effort for the prevention and intervention of domestic violence, positioning the island among the global pioneers in judicial innovation of this kind. The law recognizes that while both men and women can experience IPV, women comprise the majority of victims. Consequently, IPV is identified as one of the most significant manifestations of the adverse consequences of gender inequality (Oficina de Administración de los Tribunales, 2022).

The Puerto Rico Judicial Branch has carried out a series of assessments accompanied by various judicial evaluations aimed at introducing new initiatives to enhance both the efficiency and effectiveness of case management, while improving the level of protection provided to victims and all parties involved. In particular, an assessment in 2006 examined the PR judicial system's handling of the full spectrum of criminal and civil cases involving domestic violence and offered recommendations for improving case management (Sack, 2006).[2] The report's findings and recommendations were crucially instrumental for the introduction of specialized domestic violence courts in Puerto Rico, beginning in 2007. As Figure 1 illustrates, the implementation began with a pilot project in the San Juan judicial region in 2007 and gradually expanded across the territory's judicial regions. By the end of the study's coverage period (February 2020), ten of Puerto Rico's thirteen judicial regions had established SDVCs.[3]

Specialized domestic violence courtrooms (SDVCs) differ from traditional family and investiga-

[2]More broadly recognizing the persistent challenges of dismantling gender stereotypes that shape case adjudication, the Puerto Rico Judicial Branch has conducted systematic evaluations, such as (Comisión Judicial Especial para Investigar el Discrimen por Razón de Género en los Tribunales de Puerto Rico , 1995), (Oficina de Administración de los Tribunales, 2022), and (Sack, 2006).

[3]The judicial regions with SDVCs are: Arecibo, Aguadilla, Bayamón, Caguas, Carolina, Fajardo, Guayama, Ponce, San Juan, and Utuado. To enable access to specialized judicial services given resource constraints, the Judiciary created the Project for Specialized Services in Domestic Violence Cases ("Proyecto de Especialización de Servicios en Casos de Violencia Doméstica", or PESVD), which offers a more limited range of services compared to fully specialized courtrooms. This has been implemented in two judicial regions: Aguadilla and Guayama.

tive courts in staffing, infrastructure, and services.[4] These courtrooms employ specially trained personnel—such as municipal and/or superior court judges, courtroom coordinators, and bailiffs—to address the legal and psychosocial complexities of IPV cases. Specifically, the judiciary places greater emphasis on specialized training of judges in the complexities of IPV experiences, as these can improve the management of and judicial decisions in such cases.[5] Furthermore, greater specialization of judges assigned to these courts can improve compliance with established judicial protocols for the evaluation of IPV cases, which could have a positive impact on judicial decisions (Oficina de Administración de los Tribunales, 2022).

SDVCs also implement specialized procedures, including exclusive hearing schedules, separate entrances and waiting areas for petitioners and petitioned parties, restricted public access, and dedicated spaces for hearings. These features aim to enhance both privacy and safety for all parties.[6] Additionally, an SDVC court coordinator oversees case progress and the administrative enforcement of judicial decisions, and manages administrative tasks. Finally, the Judiciary coordinates with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide legal advocates who guide petitioners through the judicial process, and some courts partner with civil society organizations to offer counseling, social work, and psychological services to petitioning parties.[7]

2.2 Judicial Procedures and Judicial Protection Orders

One of the fundamental principles of the territory's law for the prevention of and intervention in cases of domestic violence ("Ley para la Prevención e Intervención con la Violencia Doméstica", Law No. 54, 15th August 1989) lies in its recognition of the need to protect victims of domestic violence and the empowerement of authorities to issue judicial protection or restraint orders for this purpose.[8] A judicial protection or restraint order (PO), issued by a court, safeguards individuals by

[4] For a detailed description of the specialized domestic violence courtroom project, see Oficina de Administración de los Tribunales (2022) and Bobonis et al. (2025).

[5] While judges typically receive general training on the handling of IPV cases, those assigned to SDVCs undergo additional training tailored to their specialization in these cases. These are trained to have a (a) deeper understanding of the dimensions and causes of IPV, (b) the naturalization of violence, the victim's idealization of and dependence on the aggressor, (c) psychosocial aspects of IPV, and (d) evidenciary aspects in IPV cases; see Section 6 for details.

[6] Recognizing the unique needs of children in domestic violence cases, many SDVCs provide dedicated areas for minors accompanying petitioners, fostering a more supportive environment within the judicial setting.

[7] In judicial regions lacking fully designated SDVCs, the Projects for Specialized Services in IPV Cases (PESVD) incorporates many of the same elements. The primary distinctions include the absence of certain key SDVC features—such as designated spaces for minors and exclusive court facilities—although standard personnel (judges, coordinators, bailiffs, legal advocates) remain in place. Despite these limitations, the PESVD model aims to enhance case management efficiency and improve the level of protection afforded to those involved in IPV proceedings.

[8] The types of intimate relationships covered under Law No. 54 include relationships between spouses, ex-spouses, individuals who cohabit or have cohabited, those who have maintained or previously maintained a consensual relationship, and individuals who have procreated a child together, regardless of sex, marital status, sexual orientation,

imposing restrictions on the behavior of offenders. The law defines offenses, prescribes sanctions, and authorizes courts to issue such orders promptly. Consequently, the court's authority to grant a PO stands out as one of the most significant instruments of this legislation. IPV victims can petition the courts for POs against their aggressors. If granted, these orders impose limitations on physical contact and communication between the offender and the victim. Any judge in a state court has the authority to issue a PO. The process for obtaining a PO does not require the filing of a formal complaint or the existence of a criminal charge. Additionally, the petition can be initiated by a third party to protect an employee, parent, or child. The order may include additional precautionary measures, such as the removal of child custody or the revocation of a firearm license. Notably, the law also permits the issuance of an *ex parte* PO, which can be executed without the petitioned party's court appearance and typically requires only one hearing to provide temporary protection to the petitioner.

An offender is legally obligated to comply with the terms of a PO; any PO violation constitutes a criminal offense, leading to the offender's potential arrest and prosecution. Law No. 54 also recognizes that the most severe cases—those involving evidence of serious harm, physical force, or sexual abuse—fall under the purview of criminal proceedings. In addition to the civil procedures described earlier, victims can file complaints against alleged offenders, who may then face criminal prosecution by the state. Although the criminal justice system offers protection for victims of domestic violence, these processes are often more time-consuming. As a result, court-issued protection orders remain the most prevalent judicial intervention in cases of intimate partner violence. These orders require a lower burden of proof and grant victims more expedient access to protective measures.[9]

Civil IPV cases begin with the filing of a PO request by a petitioner in their court of choice. During the initial hearing, a judge reviews the grounds for the petitioner's request and determines whether the case meets the criteria for granting an *ex parte* PO. These provisional orders are granted in approximately 65 percent of cases and are typically valid for approximately one month. Within twenty (20) days of the initial hearing, a second hearing is scheduled in a court located within the petitioner party's judicial region of residence. In 20.3 percent of cases in our sample, there is only one hearing, which takes place in the judicial courtroom where the petitioner initially

gender identity, or immigration status of any person involved in the relationship.

[9]For example, in fiscal year 2014-15, the courts received approximately 14,000 requests for protection orders, compared to only 3,000 criminal cases initiated. Even when criminal charges are filed, victims often seek additional protection through civil proceedings.

submits the PO request. For the remaining 79.7 percent of cases with two or more hearings, subsequent hearings are assigned to a courtroom in the judicial region of the petitioner's residence. If the petitioner's region has an SDVC, the judiciary typically assigns these hearings to the SDVC courtroom. Petitioners residing in regions with SDVCs have greater access to these specialized courtrooms: 38.5 percent of initial hearings and 71.1 percent of second hearings are conducted in SDVCs.

Unlike the first hearing, the respondent is required to be present at the second hearing.[10] At this subsequent hearing, both parties present their arguments and evidence before the judge. Based on a more thorough examination of the case, the court may decide to issue a final PO, or extend, modify, or terminate the *ex parte* order. Final protection orders are issued in 41 percent of cases and have an average duration of 234 days. Most final protection orders remain in effect for a period ranging between three and twelve months. Although less common, courts can also make additional decisions regarding POs. For instance, either petitioners or respondents may request the annulment or dismissal of a petition of an existing order. 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.

3 Data

3.1 Administrative Data on Protection Order Cases

The main data source for the study is administrative data from the Automated Protection Order System (APOS), managed by the Puerto Rico Judicial Branch's Office of Court Administration (OAT). The database is used to systematically and uniformly record detailed information regarding each civil domestic violence case across the territory. The data include specific details about each hearing and case, such as the socio-demographic information of the petitioner and petitioned parties (e.g., age, gender, and the number of children borne to the parties), the petitioner's residential address at the time of the protection order request, the courtroom, the date and time of each hearing, the presiding judge, the duration of each hearing, and the judge's decision, including whether an *ex-parte* or final PO was issued. Additionally, for cases in which an *ex-parte* or final protection

[10] In general, judges do not issue final POs *in absentia*, though they are not prohibited from doing so. If the respondent is absent during the second hearing, judges often extend the validity of the previously issued *ex parte* PO and reschedule the hearing.

order is granted, the system records the allegations made by the petitioner in the protection order request, as well as any aggravating factors noted in the form.

A critical aspect of this database, both for the purposes of this study and for tracking individuals within the system over time, is the use of unique numeric identifiers for each individual involved, whether as a petitioner or petitioned party, in one or multiple civil cases handled by the court. This allows for the identification of parties involved in cases over time, enabling researchers to determine whether a party reappears (and how many times) in subsequent cases, whether involving the same or a different opposing party. Additionally, the database includes a unique identifier for each judge presiding over each hearing.

The APOS database contains information on approximately 88,600 civil cases involving PO requests during the period between January 2014 and June 2021. We impose a number of sample restrictions for purposes of the analysis. First, we limit the sample to cases in which the petitioner was requesting a PO for the first time.[11] This restriction allows us to focus on the experiences of individuals exposed for the first time as petitioners. Second, we restrict the sample to cases handled by the court through February 2020, thereby excluding PO requests filed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The management of cases during the period of state-imposed mobility restrictions may have significantly altered patterns observed relative to those in the period prior to the start of the pandemic.[12] These restrictions resulted in a final analytical sample of approximately 52,202 cases.

To conduct the empirical analysis, we constructed several key variables. First, we created an indicator to identify whether a case was assigned to an SDVC, either in the first hearing or in subsequent hearings (for cases with more than one hearing). Second, we generated a variable to measure the number of hearings per case, allowing us to evaluate the speed at which protection order requests are resolved.

Regarding judicial decisions, we generated an indicator to identify whether the judge issued a final PO for the petitioner as the case's outcome.[13] Additionally, we created an indicator to identify whether the judge issued an *ex-parte* protection order at any point during the judicial process to provide temporary protection for the petitioner while the case was being resolved. Finally, we

[11] This is determined as follows: for each case, the database is analyzed to check whether the petitioner had previously filed a request for a PO, either against the same petitioned party or against another individual, as indicated in the records or the PO application.

[12] Movement restrictions during the pandemic likely influenced patterns of petitioner recurrence and offender recidivism compared to pre-pandemic periods. This impacts recidivism metrics and the analysis of SEVD access effects.

[13] This PO may include provisions such as prohibiting the respondent from contacting the petitioner, approaching their residence, or engaging in any form of harassment. The variable does not differentiate between these provisions.

constructed variables to measure the duration of the *ex-parte* PO (including any extensions), the duration of the final PO, and the total protection period for the petitioner (summing the durations of both types of POs).

To analyze the effects of access to SDVCs on respondent recidivism and petitioner recurrence, we developed metrics linking the administrative records of these cases. Specifically, we identified whether the petitioner returned to court to request a new PO within 12 months following the first hearing of the initial case under review. This analysis is limited to initial cases that began before March 2019 to allow a full 12-month observation window prior to the start of the pandemic. Similarly, we constructed a variable to measure offender or petitioned parties' recidivism within the same 12-month time frame, and whether the same petitioner and respondent were involved in a subsequent case.[14]

In cases where the court grants an *ex-parte* or final PO, the APOS system includes variables documenting the petitioner's allegations and the case's aggravating factors.[15] The allegations recorded include whether the petitioner reported being a victim of (a) fear of physical harm caused by the respondent, (b) attempted to or caused physical harm, (c) emotional or psychological harm, (d) forced sexual relations, (e) deprivation of adequate sleep and rest, and (f) the deprivation of freedom of movement, among other actions. Using this information, we construct a case severity index, which we employed to analyze heterogeneity in effects based on case severity (discussed in Section 5).

Finally, we geo-referenced the residential addresses of petitioners using ESRI ArcGIS World Geolocating services. This allows us to calculate the Euclidean distance between a petitioner's address and the judicial region boundary, allowing the implementation of a geographic discontinuity design.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

In this section, we present descriptive statistics that provide an overview of the data on parties and cases used in our analysis (Table 1). These statistics are presented by grouping cases into three judicial region categories based on the presence and timing of opening of SDVCs: (i) "always

[14] The 12-month time frame provides a sufficiently broad window for measuring short- or medium-term recurrence and recidivism while minimizing bias due to censoring as our data extend only to February 2020, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic mobility restrictions. Results remain qualitatively similar when using alternative time frames.

[15] This detailed allegation information is entered into the APOS system by a court administrative officer. To reduce the administrative data entry burden, the OAT retains this information digitally only for cases where an *ex-parte* or final PO is granted.

treated", meaning regions with an SDVC established prior to the evaluation period (2007–2013); (ii) "switchers", regions that introduced an SDVC during the evaluation period (2014–2019); and (iii) "never treated," regions without an SDVC during the evaluation period (with courts introduced in 2020 or later). The sample includes a total of 19,922 cases involving only female petitioners residing in judicial regions where specialized courts were established before the evaluation period (column 1). Petitioners in these regions—San Juan, Bayamón, Utuado, Arecibo, and Fajardo—had access to SDVC throughout the entire period of analysis. Second, the dataset comprises 7,285 cases from judicial regions where SDVCs were introduced during the evaluation period, specifically in Caguas (2014), Guayama (2016), Aguadilla (2017), and Carolina (2018). Notably, to ensure a proper comparison of baseline characteristics of individuals and cases relative to the control group, we restrict this sample to cases that took place before the introduction of the SDVCs in these regions (column 2). Finally, the sample includes 11,917 cases from judicial regions in which petitioners did not have access to an SDVC during the evaluation period, specifically in Aibonito, Humacao, Mayagüez, and Ponce (column 3).

To assess the validity of our methodology, we compare parties and case characteristics across groups. Column 4 reports the average difference between cases in the always treated regions and those in the never treated regions (column 1 vs. column 3), adjusting for time trends in all cases.[16] Since these cases may systematically differ—since the SDVC program initially targeted the judicial regions with a greater need to handle these cases—we refrain from drawing causal conclusions from these observed differences. Similarly, column 5 presents the average difference between cases in switchers regions and cases in 'never treated' regions (column 2 vs. column 3), again adjusting for time trends. Since our difference-in-differences analysis relies on comparing changes in patterns across these groups, this serves as a balance test between the treatment and control groups. Demonstrating that there are no significant baseline differences strengthens the credibility of our findings by supporting the assumption that post-introduction differences reflect causal effects of SDVC implementation. For both comparisons, we report the p-values computed using the randomization inference procedure described in Section 4 below.

We begin by characterizing the socio-demographic characteristics of both petitioners and petitioned parties in the study, reporting the mean and standard deviation for each key variable. The average age of female petitioners is approximately 33 years; approximately 6 percent of female petitioners are over the age of 55, with the majority in the 15 to 34 age range. In contrast, pe-

[16] Differences are estimated using a linear regression model with period fixed effects to control for time trends.

titioned parties are predominantly male (roughly only 3 percent of these are female), with most falling within the 15 to 44 age range. In particular, petitioners and petitioned parties have borne children in over one-third of cases (42 percent). The socio-demographic profiles of the parties are highly similar across judicial regions with and without specialized courts. Differences between these groups are statistically insignificant, indicating that any observed variations in case outcomes are unlikely to be driven by observable demographic differences between petitioners and petitioned parties across judicial regions.

The table also presents key characteristics of the judicial cases. Looking at the number of hearings, our analysis indicates that the average number of hearings per case is higher in 'always treated' regions, with an average of 2.46 hearings per case, compared to 2.09 hearings in 'never treated' regions. This difference of 0.38 appearances is statistically significant ($p = 0.04$). However, when comparing the number of court appearances between the 'switchers' and control regions, we do not observe a systematic difference; the estimated difference of 0.17 appearances is small and not statistically distinguishable from zero.

When looking at the share of cases in which the first and second hearings are conducted in SDVCs, the table shows how this varies significantly across cases in treated and control regions. In 'always treated' regions, 35 percent of first hearings take place in an SDVC, whereas in 'never treated 'regions, this figure is essentially zero (0.1 percent). Note that in 'switchers' regions—where SDVCs were introduced at a later stage—the likelihood of a first hearing occurring in an SDVC is minimal, at just 0.01 percent. The pattern becomes even more pronounced for second hearings. In 'always treated' regions, 71 percent of cases have their second hearing in an SDVC, compared to only 0.2 percent in 'switchers' regions and 0.1 percent in 'never treated' regions. This evidence strongly suggests that once an SDVC is introduced, the probability of subsequent hearings taking place in these specialized courts increases substantially.

In terms of judicial protection, an *ex-parte* PO is issued in 72.3 percent of cases in regions with an SDVC, compared to 65.8 percent in control regions. The adjusted difference of 6.5 percentage points suggests a possible variation, but this difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.21$). With regards to final POs, approximately 42 percent of cases result in such an order being granted to the petitioner, with no systematic variation between cases in regions with and without SDVC. These findings indicate that for both *ex-parte* and final POs, the differences between treatment and control groups are small and not statistically significant. When they are awarded, the average duration of *ex-parte* POs is 28 days, while final POs last an average of 224 days, including any

extensions determined by the presiding judge. Overall, petitioners receive an average of 144 days of judicial protection. Notably, *ex-parte* orders last 9 days longer in regions with SDVCs compared to those without ($p = 0.04$). Additionally, 22 percent of *ex-parte* orders in regions with SDVCs exceed six weeks in duration, which is 9 percentage points higher than in regions without an SDVC ($p = 0.04$).

Finally, we compare differences in petitioner reappearance and offender recidivism. Approximately 12.4 percent of petitioned parties reappear in court in a new civil case within a 12-month period. Similarly, around 10.5 percent of petitioners return to court seeking a new protective order. However, we do not find statistically significant differences in reappearance and recidivism rates across the three regional groups under analysis. These findings suggest that while SDVCs may influence case outcomes, including the number of court hearings and the duration of POs, any differences in longer-term reappearance and recidivism remain inconclusive.

4 Empirical Strategy

4.1 Differences in Differences Design

To estimate causal effects of access to SDVCs, we leverage the staggered introduction of SDVCs across judicial regions to implement a differences-in-differences design. Staggered treatment settings, such as the one we study, pose unique challenges for traditional differences-in-differences estimators. In particular, dynamic and heterogeneous treatment effects may introduce bias in canonical Two-Way Fixed Effects (TWFE) models, when already treated units serve as controls (Goodman-Bacon, 2021; Callaway and Sant'Anna, 2021; Borusyak et al., 2024).

To address these concerns, we use the fixed effect counterfactual (FECt) estimator proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024), which is specifically designed for staggered differences-in-differences designs. This approach leverages imputation-based methods to construct potential untreated outcomes for treated units using the comparison group's outcomes and trends. The imputed potential untreated outcomes are then compared to the observed outcomes of treated units, allowing for the estimation of a treatment effect for each treated unit and time period. Finally, these region-level treatment effects are aggregated to provide an overall estimate of the Intent-to-Treat (ITT) treatment effect. Note that the ITT effects estimates using the TWFE methodology are remarkably similar to those computed using the preferred FECt approach, indicating that any bias arising from dynamic or heterogeneous treatment effects in the TWFE model is minimal in our context (see Figure 2). To

examine heterogeneous treatment effects based on individual and case characteristics, we stratify samples and use the framework above to generate ITT effects by these characteristics. Note that based on this estimation procedure, although we are able to report estimates of heterogeneous average effects along those dimensions, we are unable to formally test for significant differences in these heterogeneous effects.

To estimate the Average Treatment Effect among the Compliers (ATEC) for cases that were handled in SDVCs, we implement an instrumental variable approach. Using a TWFE model as the first stage, we use the exogenous variation in the opening of SDVCs across judicial regions over time as an instrument for whether an individual case is handled in an SDVC.[17] In particular, we estimate the following first stage:

$$\text{Case}_{SDVC,irt} = \pi \text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt} + X_{irt}\beta + \gamma_r + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt} \tag{1}$$

where $\text{SDVC}_r \times \text{POST}_{rt}$ is the standard differences-in-differences interaction term, which takes value 1 if a region r has an SDVC in time t and 0 otherwise. $\text{Case}_{SDVC,irt}$ is an indicator for a case having been handled in an SDVC.[18] The second stage we estimate is thus:

$$y_{irt} = \delta_2 \widehat{\text{Case}}_{SDVC,irt} + \beta \mathbf{X_{irt}} + \gamma_r + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt} \tag{2}$$

where $\widehat{\text{Case}}_{SDVC,irt}$ is the predicted SDVC status of a case. δ_2 is the ATEC/LATE estimate of interest for the complier population –parties whose cases were handled in an SDVC, but would not have done so in the counterfactual.

One challenge we face for inference is that our analysis is based in a setting with few clusters of heterogeneous size. At the level of treatment, the judicial region, we have 4 treatment and 4 control units. To mitigate the poor asymptotic properties of standard cluster robust variance estimators with few clusters, we follow recommendations of MacKinnon and Webb (2020) and rely on a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure to compute p-vlaues for our reduced form (ITT) results. For our 2SLS estimates, we compute p-values using a wild cluster WCRE bootstrap-t procedure, as proposed by MacKinnon (2019).

[17] While the Borusyak et al. (2024) methodology is well-suited for estimating treatment effects in staggered DiD settings, it is not directly applicable for use in the first stage of a 2SLS/IV framework. Unlike standard TWFE or DiD-based first-stage estimators, it does not provide a fitted treatment probability that can serve as an instrument to identify the ATE among compliers.

[18] In our estimation, we consider a case to be seen in an SDVC if Hearing 2 of the case is in a specialized court. For cases with only one hearing we use the court assignment of the first hearing.

4.2 Geographic Discontinuity Design

The introduction of SDVCs in select judicial regions provides an opportunity to hone in on the identification of local treatment effects for individuals in more dispersed locations using a geographic discontinuity design (GDD). This design leverages the fact that judicial regions vary in their access to SDVCs, creating plausibly exogenous variation in treatment exposure for individuals residing near regional boundaries. Specifically, we compare outcomes for petitioners residing on either side of borders of judicial regions, under the assumption that individuals in close geographic proximity are similar in all respects except for their belonging to a jurisdiction with and SDVCs or one without.

To implement the GDD, we define treatment status based on whether a petitioner's residence falls within a judicial region with an SDVC. We then estimate the following local average treatment effect:

$$y_{irt} = \delta_3 SDVC_{rt} + f(Distance_{irt}) + \gamma_b + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irt} \tag{3}$$

where $f(Distance_{irt})$ is a flexible function of the petitioner's distance to the nearest judicial boundary, and the other variable have the same definitions as above. In our analysis, we include border-segment fixed effects γ_b to ensure that the comparisons are made between observations lying along the same border, rather than across different border segments of judicial regions. Further, we control for time fixed effects, γ_t. Following Calonico et al. (2014), we employ a local linear regression framework with optimal bandwidth selection and bias correction to estimate δ_3.[19]

Identification in this setting relies on the assumption that outcomes would evolve smoothly across judicial boundaries, but for differences in access to SDVCs. To evaluate the plausibility of this assumption, we focus our analysis on the subset of borders where SDVCs were introduced during our analysis period. This allows us to estimate discontinuities in petitioner, petitioned parties, and case characteristics along identical boundaries, but prior to the onset of treatment. We report results from this pre-treatment balance exercise in Appendix Table A10, finding no significant differences in demographics or case outcomes across judicial region borders prior to the introduction of SDVCs.

[19] In particular, we follow the optimal bandwidth selection procedure to pin down the optimal bandwidth for our estimated effects of SDVC access on reappearances of female petitioners and use this same bandwidth of 5.266 km for all other outcomes to ensure a stable analysis sample.

5 Results

5.1 Effects on Access to SDVCs

We begin by examining the effects of introducing SDVCs in a region on the likelihood that cases are processed in these specialized courts rather than traditional ones. Figure 2 provides graphical evidence of these changes. We aggregate cases at the monthly level, centered around the time of an SDVC opening, and examine the share processed in these specialized courts. The figure reveals a sharp increase at the time of these openings: for initial hearings, the share rises from nearly zero to 55 percent, while for second hearings it reaches almost 80 percent.

Table 2 presents the regression results for all petitioners and breaks them down by petitioner's gender. We find that the opening of an SDVC increases the probability of a first hearing being held in an SDVC by 57 percentage points ($p < 0.001$) among female petitioners, with similar effects observed for male petitioners (60.7 percentage points; $p < 0.001$) (columns 1 and 4). For second hearings, where most final determinations occur, the estimated effects are larger. The opening of an SDVC increases the probability of a second hearing taking place in a specialized court by 79.4 percentage points for female petitioners, with nearly identical increases among cases with male petitioners (77.9 percentage points) (columns 2 and 5). Not surprisingly, the estimates of the pooled effects are very simliar in magnitude and precision (columns 7-9). For both hearings, the baseline probability in the control group of having a case seen in an SDVC is 1.0-1.4 percentage points.

5.2 Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection

We next examine the impact of increased access to SDVCs on judicial protection, beginning with the likelihood of receiving a final PO. These orders, typically decided during the second or final hearing, represent the most powerful tool available to civil courts for protecting petitioners from future violence. Table 3 presents these findings: Panel A reports the reduced-form results, showing the estimated Intent-to-Treat (ITT) effects of SDVCs, while Panel B shows the average treatment effects among the compliers obtained from the 2SLS estimates.

We estimate that access to an SDVC increases the probability of receiving a final PO for women by 8.3 percentage points ($p = 0.056$), representing a 19.3 percent increase relative to the baseline mean. To estimate the average treatment effect for compliers, we refer to the 2SLS analysis presented in Panel B. The results indicate that for cases among the compliers handled in an SDVC increases the probability of receiving a final PO by 9.4 percentage points, which corresponds to a

21.8 percent increase ($p = 0.047$).

When we examine the results for male petitioners, we find effects of similar magnitude. In the reduced form, the estimate of the increase in the probability of receiving a final PO is 7.5 percentage points. The average effect among the compliers in this case is 10.2 percentage points. Given the lower baseline probability of receiving a final PO among men in the control group , these effects are proportionally larger, representing increases of 23.1 and 31 percent, respectively. While the reduced-form ITT effect estimate for men is not statistically significant at conventional confidence levels, the average effect among the compliers is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. In overall terms, we find that access to an SDVC increases the probability of receiving a final PO for both men and women by 7.9 percentage points, representing a 19.4 percent increase relative to the baseline mean ($p = 0.030$). Among the compliers, the results indicate that the overall probability of receiving a final PO increased by 9.3 percentage points, which corresponds to a 22.8 percent increase. Both estimates are statistically significant at the 5 percent level.

Given that the objective of POs is to safeguard petitioners from further instances of violence and to deter offenders from committing future acts of aggression, in Table 4 we investigate whether access to SDVCs and the increased likelihood of receiving POs result in reduced levels of recidivism and court reappearance of petitioners. We estimate that access to an SDVC in the female petitioners' region of residence leads to a 1.7 percentage points (15.5 percent; $p = 0.033$) decrease in the probability of court reappearance among these (column 1). The estimate of the average effect among the compliers is 2.2 percentage points, a 19.3 percent decrease in proportional terms ($p = 0.008$). Regarding offender reappearance, we observe similar reductions. Access to an SDVC causes a 2.4 percentage points decrease in the probability that offenders are petitioned in a new case within the subsequent 12-month period ($p = 0.028$), a 18.5 percent decrease relative to the mean for the control group (column 2). The estimated impacts for cases among the complier population show a similar reduction of 2.3 percentage points or 17.7 percent.

Examining results among male petitioners reveals a more nuanced pattern. In contrast to the findings for women described above, the estimates are positive and statistically indistinguishable from zero (columns 3 and 4). The point estimates suggest there is an increase in the court reappearance of both male petitioners and female offenders, with an increase of 4.1 percentage points (57 percent; $p = 0.050$) among the latter (column 4). Although male petitioners represent a small minority of the overall number of cases (approximately 20 percent), this suggests the patterns of judicial protection and recidivism are distinct for this population. We reiterate that due to sample

size limitations, we are unable to confidently state that these differences in patterns are considerable.[20] In any case, we find in overall terms that the access to SDVCs in the petitioner's region of residence tends to decrease both the court reappearance of petitioners and the recidivism of petitioned parties, particularly among the subpopulation of cases induced to be seen in a specialized court. The estimates indicate a 1.5 and 1.6 percentage points reduction in reappearance of petitioners and petitioned parties, respectively (columns 5-6).

5.3 Heterogeneous Effects

To gain deeper insight into the mechanisms driving the observed increases in protection and the subsequent declines on reappearance, we conduct a series of heterogeneity analyses. Specifically, we stratify the sample based on whether the parties have borne children together, the petitioner's distance from the judicial branch's Regional Judicial Center (the main courthouse in the judicial region, where SDVCs are located), and the predicted severity of the case. This permits an assessment as to whether the potential risk of contact between the parties, heterogeneity in the access to the SDVCs within judicial regions, and the severity of the IPV case, are relevant dimensions for differential improved access to justice effects among potential IPV victims.

These analyses focus exclusively on the sample of female petitioners, as the sample of male petitioners is too small and lacks the statistical power to carry out heterogeneity analyses. Nonetheless, the results for cases with female petitioners and those among the pooled sample among petitioners of both genders are qualitatively and quantitatively similar; the latter results are reported in the online appendix. Finally, recall that since we estimate heterogeneous treatment effects based on sample stratification, although we are able to report estimates of such heterogeneous effects along these dimensions we are unable to formally test for statistically significant differences in these heterogeneous effects.

5.3.1 Heterogeneity by Family Composition

A first important margin of heterogeneity in cases, is whether the parties involved have borne children together. This is the case in 41 percent of the cases in our sample. The presence of

[20] Among a small subset of cases, there is a phenomenon in which both parties make requests for judicial protection on the same calendar day, arguably as a tool for judicial negotiation in a related case (e.g., divorce proceedings). We evaluate our results among the sample of cases in which we remove from these cases from the analysis sample and show the results described above are quantitatively similar in the case of the issuance of final POs and even more pronounced for the reappearance of female and all petitioners; see effect estimates in Appendix Tables A15 and A16.

dependent children may require extra arrangements, such as custody and visitation rights, and pose additional challenges for the court when considering no-contact orders as part of the PO. Given this added complexity to the interactions between parties, it is important to account for this potential heterogeneity in how cases are handled in SDVCs compared to traditional courts.

In Table 5, we present the results of this heterogeneity analysis. The point estimates suggest that SDVCs have strong effects among cases in which parties have with dependent children. Specifically, the average ITT effects on the probability of receiving a final PO are 11.2 percentage points in such cases ($p = 0.051$) compared to 5.4 percentage points for cases in which parties do not have children in common ($p = 0.114$) (columns 1 and 4). We find similar patterns for estimates of the average effect among the compliers: a 13.7 percentage points increase in the probability of a final PO issuance among the former group ($p = 0.047$) versus 5.2 percentage points among the latter ($p = 0.078$). Similarly, the estimated effects on the reduction in reappearance rates for both petitioners and petitioned parties are stronger in cases where the parties have children together. For petitioners, the declines in court reappearance are 2.5 percentage points among the former group ($p = 0.068$) compared to 1.1 percentage points among the latter ($p = 0.290$) in the reduced-form ITT results, and 3.7 percentage points ($p = 0.020$) versus 0.87 percentage points ($p = 0.625$) among the complier population (columns 2 and 5). We find similar patterns in the case of petitioners' recidivism (columns 3 and 6).

5.3.2 Heterogeneity by Access to Regional Judicial Center (RJC)

Second, we are interested in understanding possible heterogeneity in the petitioning party residence's distance to the SDVC, as it may reflect heterogeneity in access to legal protection and local judicial institutions. Specifically, individuals who reside relatively near the judicial region's RJC would typically attend such court for their legal proceedings, which, depending on the region, could be an SDVC or a traditional court. However, those in more peripheral areas are more likely to go to a local municipal or superior court. When an SDVC is opened in a judicial region, the judicial protocols require that such cases be handled in a specialized court (following the first hearing). As a result, for petitioners in more peripheral areas, the opening of an SDVC might have a compounded effect, as their cases are now being handled in an SDVC in the RJC. Figure 3 provides empirical evidence consistent with this pattern. These figures illustrate how the probability of a case being handled in the RJC varies before and after the opening of an SDVC as a function of distance to the court. While the difference in the share of cases handled in the RJC for their second

hearing is under 10 percentage points for cases within a 3 km radius of the court, this gap increase systematically to approximately 40-50 percentage points among cases in which petitioners reside farther away.

This motivates stratifying our sample into two groups: cases where petitioners reside below vs. above the median distance to the RJC. In Table 6, we show the estimates of average effects for these two sub-samples. The point estimates suggest that the effects are marginally larger for cases in which the petitioning party resides further away from the RJC. The ITT effects estimates suggest an increase in the probability of receiving judicial protection (final PO) of 10.8 percentage points among cases where the distance from the petitioner's residence to the RJC is above the median ($p = 0.069$), compared to 5.9 percentage points among cases whose residents live closer to the RJC ($p = 0.078$) (columns 1 and 4). However, this can be partly explained by differences in the compliance rates to have cases handled in SDVCs, as the average effects among the compliers are quantitatively more similar – 11.0 percentage points ($p = 0.074$) and 8.2 percentage points ($p = 0.039$), respectively.

In terms of court reappearance, we observe a similar pattern. The point estimates of the ITT effects suggest the decline in petitioner reappearance is twice as large for petitioners residing further from the RJC (2.5 percentage points) compared to those residing closer to the court (1.2 percentage points); the latter estimate is not statistically distinguishable from zero (columns 2 and 5). An even stronger pattern appears for the reappearance of petitioned parties: cases above the median distance show a decline of 3.5 percentage points ($p = 0.049$), while those below show only a 1.4 percentage points decline ($p = 0.153$), with this last estimate not statistically different from zero (columns 3 and 6). The patterns of estimated effects among the compliers confirm these results. Overall, the heterogeneity analyses highlight how effects are more pronounced among cases where the petitioner resides farther away from the SDVC, and may entail a greater change in exposure to the RJC and an SDVC. In the following subsection, we further study the spatial heterogeneity, exploiting the discontinuous change in access that occurs at the border of the treated regions.

5.3.3 Effects at the Border (Geographic Discontinuity Design)

Figure 4 presents evidence of a sharp discontinuity in SDVC access at judicial region boundaries, providing support for the validity of the design. Panel A reports the proportion of cases with an initial hearing in an SDVC, while Panel B extends this analysis to include subsequent hearings. In both cases, we observe a discrete increase in the likelihood of SDVC assignment at the boundary,

consistent with a first-stage effect of approximately 30 percentage points for initial hearings and 50 percentage points for subsequent hearings.[21]

In Figure 5 we show graphical evidence of the GDD estimates of effects on judicial protection. The figures shows a clear discontinuity at the border. Specifically, cases originating near the border of a region where an SDVC has been introduced exhibit higher rates of final POs being granted (Panel b) and also a considerable increase in the total duration of judicial protection (Panel c). In terms of the point estimates of these changes, Table 7 shows that the discontinuity in the issuance of final POs is 10.8 percentage points. We also estimate a discontinuity of 7.1 percentage points in the probability of issuance of an ex parte PO, and an increase in overall protection of 30.8 days, on average. The stark discontinuities in SDVC access also result in substantial declines in petitioner and petitioend partyies' court reappearance rates of 10.3 and 7.5 percentage points, respectively; we confirm these patterns via graphical evidence in Figure 6. This further provides support to the argument that the improvements in judicial protection and the declines in recidivism are concentrated among cases in which petitioner parties reside in more peripheral locations, for whom the establishment of an SDVC represents a more pronounced change in terms of access to judicial resources and institutions. It also underscores the importance of addressing the unequal access to justice faced by peripheral communities.

5.3.4 Heterogeneity by Case Severity

Finally, we examine possible heterogeneity in how access to and handling of cases in SDVCs may affect their resolution and the court reappearance of parties for cases with different levels of severity of the allegations of the petitioning party. Although it is not obvious ex-ante that the effects may vary for these different groups of cases, it is plausible that these would be heterogeneity in judicial decisions given the varying risk of violence. On one hand, the granting of a final PO should be more justified among higher severity cases. The parties require very effective evaluations and these must be done quickly; SDVC structures could recognize the need for prioritization. On the other hand, cases that on paper suggest to be less severe may be those that require a higher level of training and knowledge of the dynamics of IPV to appropriately establish the level of risk and the

[21] Appendix Figure A1 shows estimates of the density of cases around the cutoff, estimated using the local polynomial density estimator from Cattaneo et al. (2018). The test fails to reject the null hypothesis of a discontinuity ($p = 0.13$). Similar results hold for density tests using the population of cases including both female and male petitioners (See Appendix Figure A2). We also report estimates of border discontinuities in observable covariates for cases from such border regions in the period preceding the opening of SDVCs (See Appendix Table A10). We fail to reject the null hypothesis of continuity in covariates for 37 of 39 tests.

necessary judicial protection. Therefore, we do this exercise to seek to identify possible differences.

To construct a measure of the severity of a case, we use detailed data on case allegations and aggravating factors. Examples of these are whether the petitioner has been a victim of violence due to the offender having: caused the petitioner to fear physical harm (67.5% of cases), attempted to cause or caused physical harm to the petitioner (53.7% of cases), caused emotional or psychological harm to the petitioner (82.3% of cases), forced the petitioner into a sexual relationship (6.8% of cases), deprived the petitioner of adequate rest (37.8% of cases), or restricted the petitioner's freedom of movement (24.5% of cases), among other possible actions. There is also the possibility of adding aggravating factors, such as whether minors were present (5.8%), whether the respondent used a weapon (firearm or otherwise) (1.5%), whether medical attention was required (1.4%), or whether a protection order had previously been issued against the respondent (2.8%), among others.[22] We use these data to train a logit model that predicts the probability of final protection order being issued in the control group, and we split cases above or below the median of severity using these predictions. By estimating our differences-in-differences model for these groups separately, we can evaluate treatment effects at different regions of the case severity distribution.

We present the results of this analysis in Table 8. The findings suggest that the effects of SDVCs are primarily concentrated in cases with severity below the median. For these lower-severity cases, we estimate a 9.5 pp ($p = 0.167$) increase in the probability of final protection order issuance in the reduced-form analysis, and a 14.2pp ($p = 0.090$) increase in the 2SLS results. These effects are substantially larger compared to those observed for high-severity cases, where the corresponding increases are 6.5pp ($p = 0.052$) and 4.6pp ($p = 0.387$), respectively.

Similarly, when examining petitioner reappearance, we find that most of the reduction is driven by low-severity cases. For those cases, being seen in an SDVC leads to a 2.4 pp statistically significant decline (22.6%) in reappearance in the reduced-form analysis, compared to a smaller 0.9pp decrease (8.7%) in high-severity cases. In the 2SLS, the decline in the low severity cases is 3.4pp (32%) compared to 1.0pp (9.5%). In contrast, offender reappearance does not exhibit such pronounced differences between low- and high-severity cases. In general, these findings support the notion that judicial interventions have the greatest potential to improve outcomes in less severe or more marginal cases, as the risks associated with them may need a deeper understanding of the complexity and multidimensionality of intimate partner violence.

[22] Such allegations data is only recorded for cases where a judge considers awarding a final protection order - we thus restrict to those cases.

6 Mechanisms

We next explore the mechanisms behind the observed effects, focusing on the role of judges. Judges are central to the adjudication of protection for petitioning parties, as they evaluate evidence, assess risk levels, and make decisions that directly impact the safety and well-being of those involved. A key innovation of SDVCs is their emphasis on judicial training in the complexities of domestic violence. Such training is designed to immprove judges' understanding of the issue and may result in more consistent case management and informed decision-making. Increased judicial specialization within these courts may also enhance compliance with established protocols and promote learning about the dynamics of domestic violence, ultimately shaping case outcomes.

6.1 Decomposition Analysis

To assess the role of judge assignment in driving the effects of SDVCs, we conduct a decomposition analysis that aims to isolate the effects of individual judges from the broader institutional impact of the courts, independent of judge identity. This exercise is possible because the OAT assigns judges to operate in both SDVCs and traditional courts, allowing us to estimate a model that includes judge fixed effects. Operating in both types of courts is common — 43.6 % of judges in our sample hear cases under both regimes. More specifically, we estimate the following model:

$$y_{irkt} = \delta_1 \text{SEVD}r \times \text{POST}rt + \delta_{\mathbf{k}}\mathbf{I_k} + \beta\mathbf{X_{irt}} + \gamma_r + \gamma_t + \varepsilon_{irkt} \tag{4}$$

where y_{irkt} represents the outcome variables of interest — final protection orders or petitioner reappearance, for case i, in region r, handled by judge k, with the first hearing held in period t. $\delta_{\mathbf{k}}\mathbf{I_k}$ captures judges' fixed effects, and the rest of the regression follows the notation of Equation 1. We estimate this specific set of TWFE models via OLS, and compare the δ_1 estimates from these TWFE models with and without the judge fixed effects. When judge fixed effects are included, δ_1 reflects the institutional effect of SDVCs, net of judge-specific tendencies. We interpret the difference in δ_1 between the two models as the portion of the SDVC effect that operates through judge identity — i.e., the component attributable to judge assignment.

Figure 7 displays the decomposition results. We estimate that approximately 85 percent (6.5 percentage points) of the overall increase in protection orders can be statistically attributed to the assignment of judges to SDVCs. For recidivism, 55 percent of the total effect—a 1.0 percentage point decrease—can be explained by judge assignment. These findings highlight judges as key

drivers of the observed improvements and motivate a deeper analysis of the judicial attributes behind these effects.

6.2 Backgrounds, Characteristics, Perspectives, and Priorities of Judges

To better understand judges' influence on domestic violence case outcomes, we draw on two data sources. The first is administrative data from the OAT, covering the universe of judges active in Puerto Rico in 2019, covering 85.4 percent of the cases analyzed. The administrative records include socio-demographic and professional background information, such as judges' age, gender, education, and occupational backgrounds preceding their judicial appointments.

The second source is a survey conducted in collaboration with the OAT and administered to a large sample of active judges between July and August 2019. The survey includes information regarding their take-up of standard/managerial and specialized trainings regarding IPV cases and case procedures, their knowledge and views regarding the dimensions of IPV, and their judicial priorities in their handling of IPV cases and their decisions.

The survey was administered to judges who presided over domestic violence cases (civil or criminal) in either SDVC or traditional courts between January 2014 and November 2018. Eligibility was limited to judges who handled more than 15 cases and were active as of January 2, 2019, resulting in a target population of 167 judges (covering 85.4 percent of cases in our sample). It was administered via *SurveyMonkey*, with follow-ups by email and phone in July 2019.[23] The survey was completed by 102 judges; in overall terms, we are able to link 61.9 percent of civil cases to a judge with survey responses. The responses provide valuable insights into the judges' perspectives and experiences in handling domestic violence cases, enriching the administrative data with qualitative perspectives often unavailable from such public servants.

6.2.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Judges

We begin by describing the sociodemographic profiles of judges presiding over domestic violence cases. Appendix A17 reports summary descriptive statistics from administrative records linked to the case-level dataset for a total of 20,218. Note that these comparisons are observational as we are comparing cases handled in SDVCs and non-SDVCs, not those in regions with and without access to an SDVC. Female judges handle 59 percent of cases in SDVCs, compared to 58 percent in traditional courts. SDVC judges are, on average, older (48.7 vs. 46.6 years). Nearly a third fall

[23] See Appendix A for the questionnaire.

within each of the under 45, 45–54, and 55-64 age groups. In contrast, 40 percent of judges handling cases in traditional courts are in the under 45 age group and 44 percent are in the 45-54 age group; only 16 percent are in the 55-64 age group. The educational attainment of judges is similar in cases across court types, although a slightly larger share of judges in SDVCs hold a master's degree (18 percent vs. 16 percent). Notably, judges handling cases in SDVCs are less likely to have experience in both the public (37 percent vs. 55 percent) and the private sector (7 percent vs. 31 percent), and are more likely to have worked in the NGO/third sector (32 percent vs. 2 percent).[24] Although we do not have precision to detect statistically significant differences along most of these dimensions, these patterns suggest that SDVC judges differ not only in demographic characteristics but also in occupational backgrounds; whether these differences could potentially shape their orientation toward adjudication of IPV cases is an open question.

6.2.2 Judges' Training, Perspectives, and Views/Priorities

The survey data allows us to complement the judges' sociodemographic profiles available through the administrative data. The data focuses on three main types of judge attributes: (i) judges' specialized trainings in the understanding of and handling of IPV cases; (ii) judges' perspectives regarding the different modalities of IPV; and (iii) judicial priorities in their handling of IPV cases and their decisions.

IPV Specialized Training

Appendix Table A18 reports summary descriptive statistics regarding training patterns on various dimensions of domestic violence and its case management that judges have received, comparing those assigned to SDVCs with their counterparts in traditional courts. Recall that these comparisons are observational as we are comparing cases handled in SDVCs and non-SDVCs, not those in regions with and without access to an SDVC.

Notably, the vast majority of judges, approximately 91 percent, report having received some form of training, a pattern that holds for both groups (94 vs. 89 percent across judges in SDVCs vs. non-SDVCs). Judges in SDVCs reported participating in an average of 9.9 training sessions, compared to 8.5 sessions for those presiding over cases in traditional courtrooms; however, this difference is not statistically significant. Although we observe similar overall participation in training for managing domestic violence cases, we further investigate whether differences exist in the

[24] Occupational background is missing for judges assigned to 14.7 percent of the cases.

types of training received by these judges. More pronounced differences emerge in this comparison. For example, in approximately 75-78 percent of SDVC cases, judges report having received training on (a) psychosocial aspects of DV, (b) manifestations and causes of domestic violence, (c) the normalization of violence, including the idealization of and dependency on the aggressor, and (d) emotional bonds between victim and agressor. In contrast, only 46-62 percent of judges in traditional courts report receiving this type of training. Smaller differences are estimated for training on other specialized topics.[25]

In contrast to the pronounced differences observed in specialized trainings on the various dimensions of domestic violence, variations in training related to case management and the administration of domestic violence courts are less pronounced. Specifically, approximately 78 (71) percent of cases in SDVC (traditional) courts have judges with training on the conceptual framework of Law 54-1989. 53 (63) percent in handling domestic ciolence cases, 38 (45) percent in the management of domestic violence courtrooms, and 17 (31) percent in new trends in handling domestic violence cases. In summary, cases handled in SDVC tend to be presided over by judges with a higher degree of specialization in their training for understanding and managing IPV cases.

IPV Perspectives / Knowledge

To assess judges' perspectives and/or knowledge regarding the different modalities of IPV, we asked judges whether they agreed that various behaviors constitute forms of IPV. These behaviors were drawn from the Conflict Tactics Scale framework (Straus, 1979; Straus et al., 1996) and included physical violence, sexual violence and coercion, psychological violence, and controlling behaviors. The judges were asked to evaluate each item individually and to respond using a Likert scale—with options ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"—for each of these items. We aggregate and standardize these responses by modality of IPV and compare judge responses in cases assigned to SDVCs relative to those assigned to traditional courts (see Appendix Table A19).

In overall terms, we find no significant differences in judges' recognition of physical violence or sexual violence as modalities of IPV. We find that judges assigned to SDVCs are more likely than their counterparts in traditional courts to recognize psychological violence and controlling behaviors as important modalities of IPV; the gap in the indices respectively represent 0.24 and 0.45 standard deviations of the variation across judges. This analysis suggests that there are some

[25]These topics are (e) domestic violence and gender perspective; (f) domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault; (g) evidentiary aspects in domestic violence cases, among other topics.

differences in judges' perspectives and/or knowledge regarding specific dimensions of IPV.

Judicial Priorities in Handling IPV Cases

To capture heterogeneity in the priorities that judges assign to various aspects of domestic violence case management in SDVCs versus traditional courts, our questionnaire includes a series of questions designed to capture the level of importance judges attribute to a diverse range of factors, based on the National Survey of Domestic Violence Courts (Labriola et al., 2009). Judges responded using a Likert scale—with options ranging from "not at all important," "somewhat important," "very important," to "extremely important"—for each of the following aspects when presiding over a domestic violence case: (a) holding the aggressor accountable for their actions; (b) achieving the re-education of the aggressor; (c) discouraging recidivism by the aggressor; (d) penalizing the aggressor if they fail to comply with court orders; (e) increasing the efficiency in processing domestic violence cases; (f) improving the consistency of rulings and sentences in domestic violence cases with similar circumstances; (g) raising community awareness of domestic violence as a social problem; (h) achieving a coordinated response to domestic violence; (i) enhancing the victim's safety; (j) facilitating the victim's access to support services; (k) promoting judicial expertise in handling domestic violence cases; (l) improving the victim's perception of the impartiality of the judicial process; and (m) enforcing the laws correctly and consistently.

We construct indices to capture latent traits we refer to as *justice orientation*. This approach allows us to summarize judicial priorities in a parsimonious way that aligns with theoretical distinctions between petitioner-focused and punitive models of justice. The petitioner-oriented index reflects the emphasis judges place on victim-centered goals – such as safety, support, and procedural trust – versus punitive or administrative aims like deterrence, punishment, and offender accountability. To construct the index, we first categorize survey items, standardize the Likert-scale responses, assign negative values to the punitive items to reflect opposing orientations, and then compute the mean across all items. The resulting score is standardized to facilitate comparison across judges and institutional settings, with positive values indicating that a judge prioritizes petitioner-oriented justice. We report summary statistics for the answers to each question, as well as the aggregated and standardized indices, in Appendix Table A19. We find that judges handling cases in SDVCs report higher values of the petitioner-oriented justice index relative to those handling cases in traditional courts; the average gap is 46 percent of a standard deviation. Similarly, those judges give less priority to the petitioned party-oriented / punitive dimensions of justice; the

average gap is 68 percent of a standard deviation. These descriptive patterns suggest that there are considerable differences in the judicial priorities of judges handling cases in SDVCs and traditional courts.

6.3 Mediation Analysis

The decomposition analysis we present in Section 6.1 establishes the central role that judge assignment plays in explaining the effects of SDVCs on case outcomes. While this strategy is effective in identifying the importance of judge assignment, it does not pinpoint which characteristics of judges are most consequential. Leveraging rich survey data collected from judges, we conduct a mediation analysis to better understand the mechanisms at play. By sequentially adding measures of specialized training, perspectives on IPV, and judicial priorities, we assess whether these characteristics help explain the effects of SDVCs on the issuance of final protection orders. This approach allows us to unpack which specific attributes are most closely associated with the observed improvements and whether differences in these judge attributes can statistically account for the institutional impact of SDVCs.

To implement this mediation analysis, we augment the baseline differences-in-differences model (Equation 1) to include standardized indices capturing these judge-level attributes. The estimating equation is:

$$y_{irkt} = \delta_1 \text{SEVD}r \times \text{POST}rt + \alpha \mathbf{Index_k} + \beta \mathbf{X_{irt}} + \gamma_\mathbf{r} + \gamma_\mathbf{t} + \varepsilon_\mathbf{irkt} \tag{5}$$

where $\mathbf{Index}_k$ represents a vector of judge k's standardized scores in the specialized training, perspectives, and judicial priorities indices, as well as their socio-demographic characteristics. All other variables are defined as above. We estimate such TWFE models via OLS and cluster standard errors at the judge level. We also report randomization inference-based p-values for the estimates of δ_1 in each specification to compare the precision of the residual SDVC effect estimates to our baseline results. Table 9 shows the estimates from these series of models.

Column 1 reports the baseline result estimated via this TWFE model: SDVC access leads to a 6.3 percentage point increase in the probability of issuance of a final PO ($p = 0.053$). This estimate is somewhat muted relative to the preferred imputation-based counterfactual estimator reported as our main results. In Column 2 we introduce judge fixed effects, replicating results from the decomposition analysis reported in Section 6.1. Inclusion of judge fixed effects reduces

the estimated effect of SDVC access to a statistically insignificant 1.2 percentage points, suggesting that judge heterogeneity accounts for the majority of the overall effect. Recall that we are able to link 61.9% of cases to judges' survey responses — in Columns 3 and 4 we repeat the decomposition analysis on this subsample, which serves as the basis for the mediation analysis that follows. Results are similar: judge assignment accounts for the bulk of the SDVC access effect.

In Column 5, we introduce the petitioner-oriented justice index, which captures the degree to which a judge emphasizes victim-centered goals over punitive or administrative ones. After including this mediator, the estimated effect of SDVC access on the issuance of final protection orders falls by 33.9% to 3.8 percentage points and becomes statistically insignificant ($p = 0.373$). This attenuation suggests that variation in judges' justice orientations may partially mediate the observed institutional impact of SDVCs. By contrast, the inclusion of indices capturing judges' training and knowledge of IPV (Columns 6 and 7) does not produce a meaningful change in the estimated treatment effect, which remains virtually unchanged at 5.6 and 5.4 percentage points, respectively, compared to 5.7 in the baseline. These results indicate that these attributes are unlikely to account for the institutional effects of SDVCs.

Finally, in Column 8, we include all three indices simultaneously. The estimated effect of SDVC access remains at 3.8 percentage points — identical to the estimate in Column 5, where only the petitioner-oriented justice index is included. This consistency reinforce the interpretation that judicial orientation is the primary mediating factor among the observed judge attributes. Even after accounting for two additional indices correlated with both the treatment and outcome, the attenuation of the SDVC effect persists, indicating that assignment of cases to judges who prioritize victim-centered goals accounts for a substantial share of the overall institutional impact.

These findings help unpack the role of judge heterogeneity and point to a specific attribute — judicial priorities — as central to SDVC effectiveness. Assignment of cases to judges who prioritize victim safety, support, and procedural trust explains a substantial 33.9% of the overall effect of SDVC access and accounts for about half of the variation in judge fixed effects. These results suggest that variation in judicial orientation is an important pathway through which institutional design translates into improved case outcomes, underscoring the value of aligning judge priorities with the core mission of domestic violence courts.

7 Conclusion

Intimate partner violence remains a significant global issue – experienced by 1 in 3 women, IPV leads to detrimental effects on women's physical and mental health, as well as their overall well-being. Addressing this pervasive problem requires effective policies and interventions that promote access to justice for IPV victims. In this paper we study the large-scale implementation of a system of specialized domestic violence courts in Puerto Rico, an innovation in access to justice programs for potential victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) and offenders. Using data from the universe of civil domestic violence cases in Puerto Rico during the period 2014-2021, we leverage the staggered opening of SDVCs across judicial regions to examine the consequences for victims' judicial protection as well as offender recidivism. Access to SDVCs leads to a considerable 8 percentage points increase in the probability that judges issue judicial protection via a protection order and a 1.7 percentage point (15 percent) decrease in victim and offender reappearance rates within one year of the start of the case. Effects are more pronounced for cases in which parties have children in common and in which access to SDVCs is more limited.

Linking the case data to administrative and survey data on judges handling these cases, we show that the judges assigned to SDVCs play a prominent role in explaining these outcomes. Specifically, we conduct analyses to elucidate and quantify the role of judges in adjudicating cases in SDVCs. First, our findings indicate that the assignment of judges to these cases accounts for a significant portion of both the increased protection afforded to petitioning parties and the reduced recidivism among petitioned parties — a consequence attributed to the establishment of specialized courts. Second, we investigate the attributes and perspectives of judges that correlate with judicial decision-making favoring the issuance of protection orders. Our analysis provides evidence that judges' orientations toward victim-centered justice — reflected in their emphasis on restorative justice principles and prioritization of victim protection — play a key role in explaining the success of SDVCs in providing improved access to judicial protection. These findings underscore the importance of considering not only the training of judges, but also their selection and assignment to courts, ensuring that such decisions reflect a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in domestic violence experiences and case management. Such strategic assignment is likely to enhance the implementation of judicial protocols and increase the likelihood that effective protection is provided to petitioning parties.

These results have important implications and suggest avenues for future research. One key

question involves the multifaceted ways in which this reform may affect victim's well-being. We show that this judicial innovation substantially increases judicial protection, at least in the short and middle run. Whether judicial protection is effective at protecting victims both physically and psychologically in this context and more broadly are important directions for future research.

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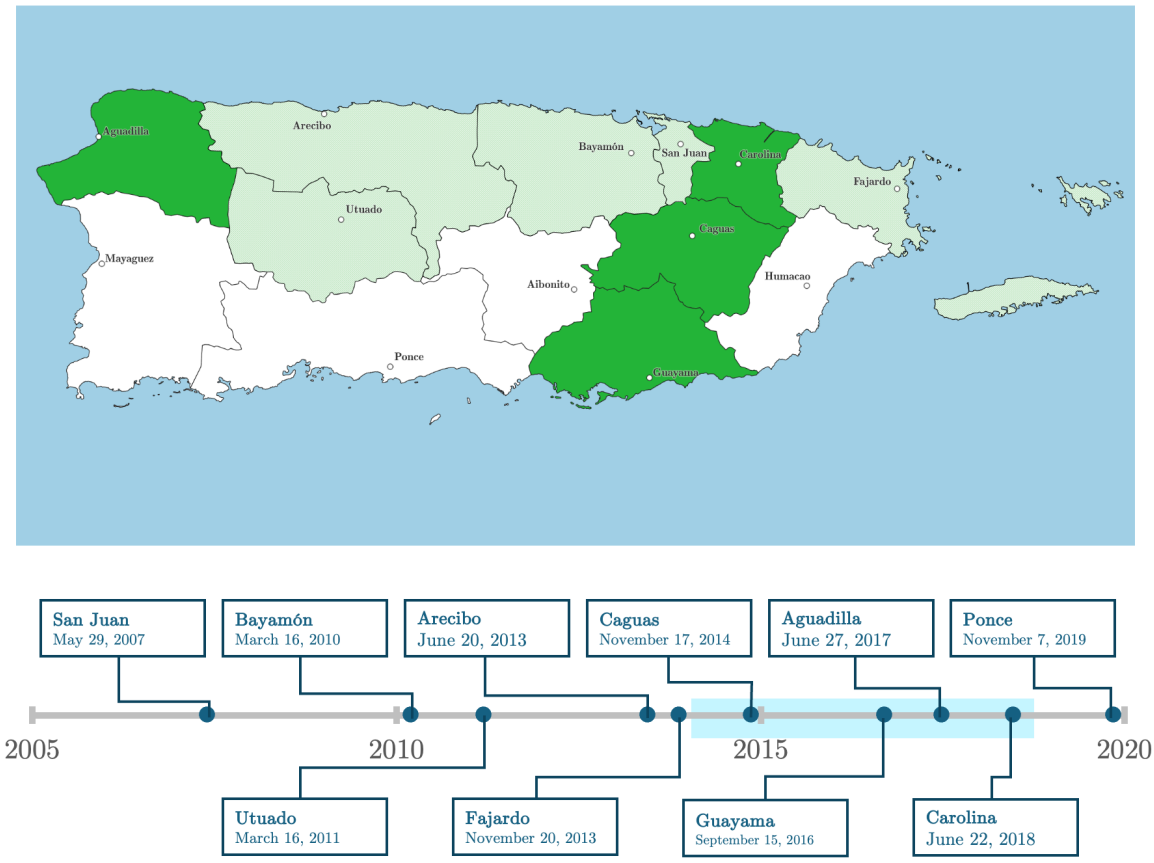
8 Figures and Tables

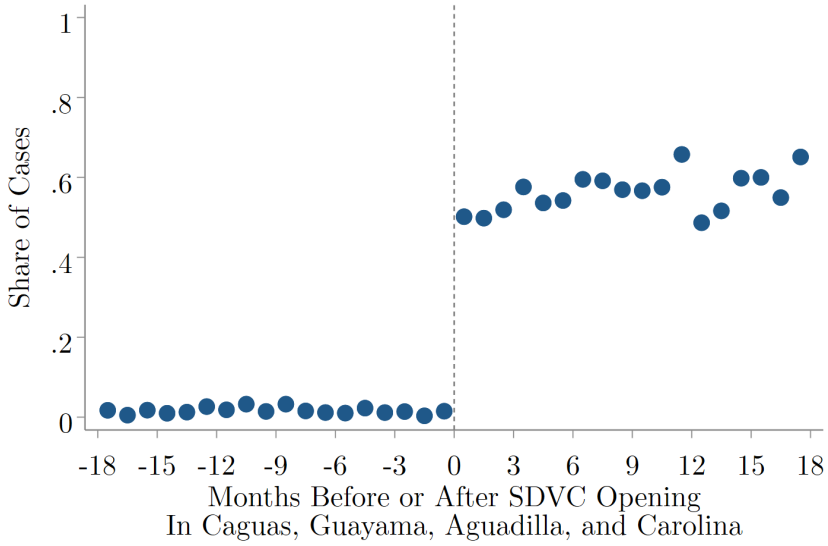
Figure 1: Map and Timeline of Opening of SDVCs across Judicial Regions



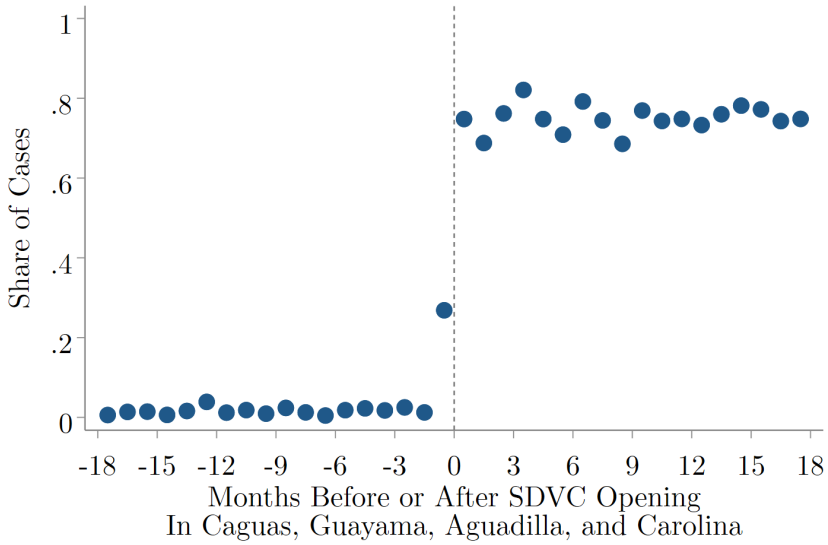
Note: The figures depict the gradual expansion of the system of Specialized Domestic Violence Courts across judicial regions in Puerto Rico. The SDVCs in the judicial regions depicted in light green opened preceding the study's time period (San Juan, Bayamon, Utuado, Arecibo, and Fajardo). During our study period, SDVCs were opened in four (4) judicial regions, depicted in dark green: Caguas, Guayama, Aguadilla, and Carolina. The region of Ponce opened its SDVC in Nov. 2019; see reasons for its exclusion from analysis in the text. Points on the map indicate locations of Regional Judicial Centers.

Figure 2: Cases Handled in SDVCs Before and After Opening of Courts

(a) First Hearing

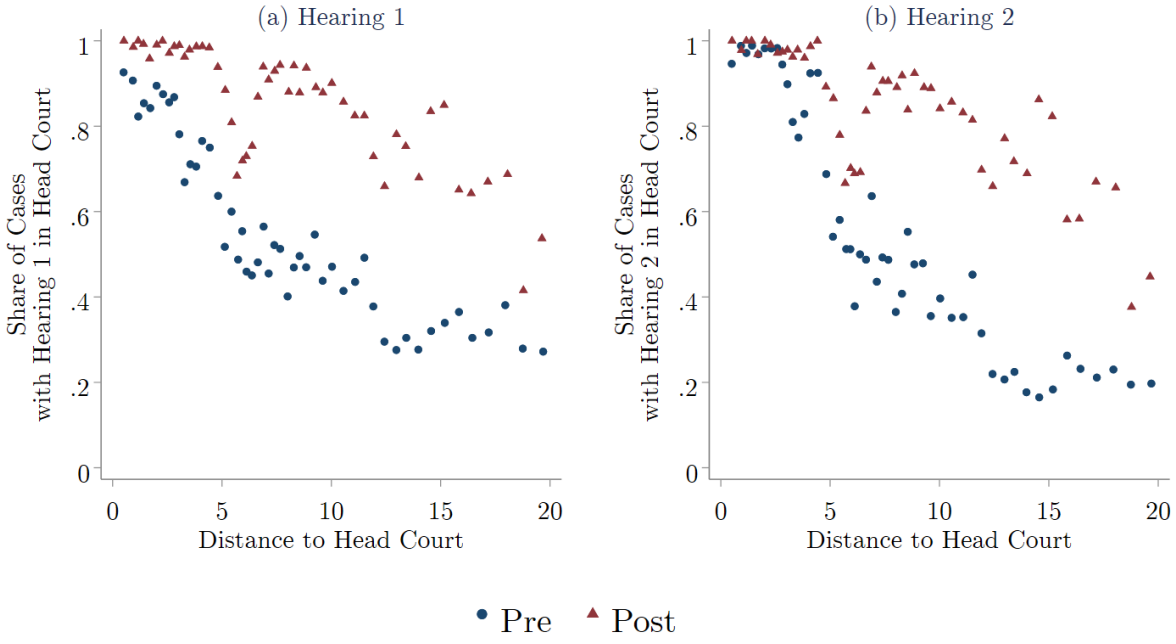


(b) Second Hearing



Notes: The figures show trends in the share of cases handled in SDVCs by petitioners who reside in the region with access to an SDVC, during the period up to 18 months before and after the opening of said court. For each case, the reference date is the date of the first hearing. Panel A reports the share of cases with the first hearing handled in an SDVC, while Panel B shows the share with second hearing handled in an SDVC.

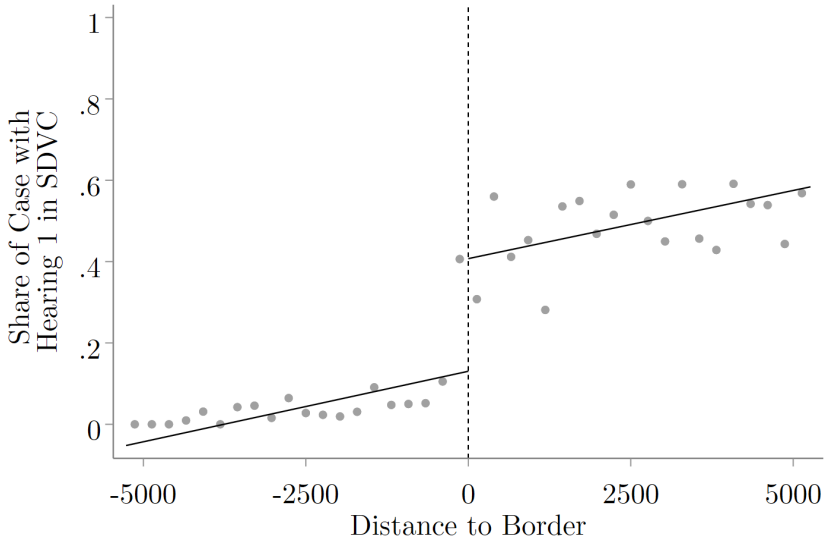
Figure 3: Share of Case Handled in Regional Judicial Center - Judicial Regions with SDVC



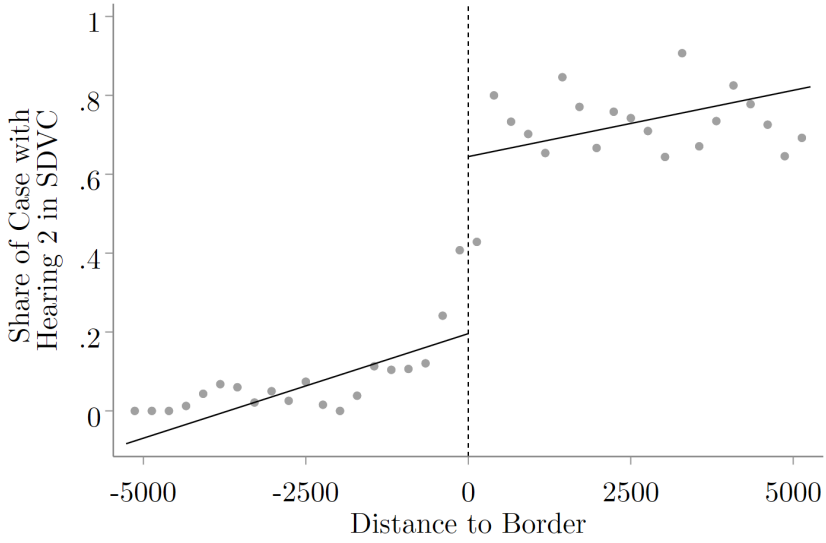
Notes: Sample restricted to cases in regions with an establishment of an SDVC. The figures show the share of cases handled in the Regional Judicial Center (RJC) as a function of the petitioner's residence distance to such center, before and after the opening of the SDVC. The horizontal axes of each panel represents the distance (in meters) from the residence of the female petitioner to the RJC. Panel A reports the share of cases with the first hearing handled in the RJC, while Panel B shows the share with the first or subsequent hearing handled in the RJC. The dots represent binscatter plots of the shares for cases at different distance ranges of the RJC. The cases taking place before the establishment of the regional SDVC are shown in (blue) cirlces while those taking place after the establishment of such court are shown as (red) triangles.

Figure 4: Cases by Female Petitioners Handled in SDVCs after Opening of Courts – Geographic Discontinuity Design

(a) First Hearing



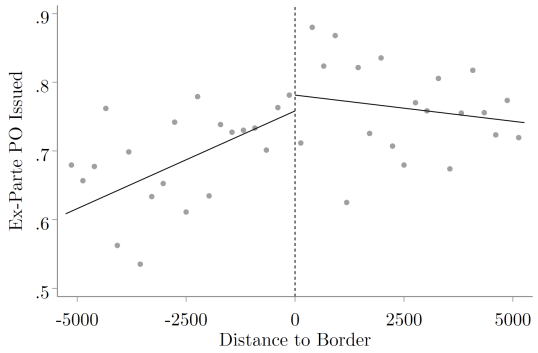
(b) Second Hearing



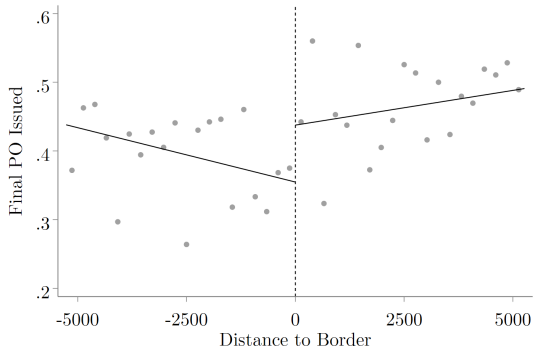
Notes: The figures show RD plots that illustrate the geographic discontinuity design. The horizontal axes of each panel represents the distance (in meters) from the residence of the female petitioner to the border of the judicial region with an SDVC; the border (threshold) is represented by the vertical line. The petitioners residing within the border of the judicial region with an SDVC are depicted to the right of the threshold while those residing outside of the judicial region are depicted to the left of the threshold. Panel A reports the share of cases with the first hearing handled in an SDVC, while Panel B shows the share with the second hearing handled in an SDVC. The dots represent binscatter plots of the shares for cases at different distance ranges of the threshold. The figures are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Figure 5: Effects of Access to SDVCs on the Judicial Protection of Female Petitioners

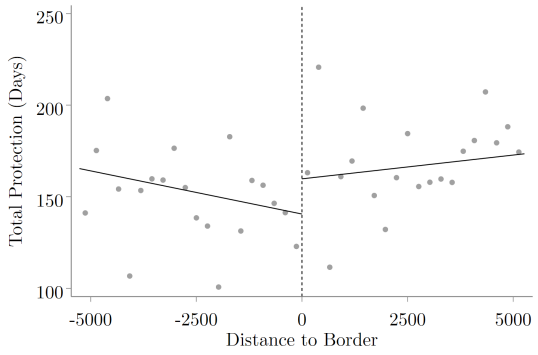
(a) Issuance of Ex-Parte PO



(b) Issuance of Final PO



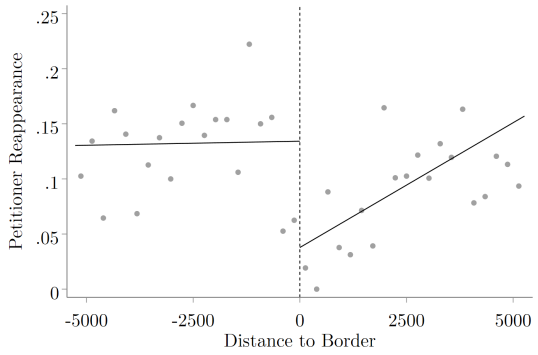
(c) Duration of Protection



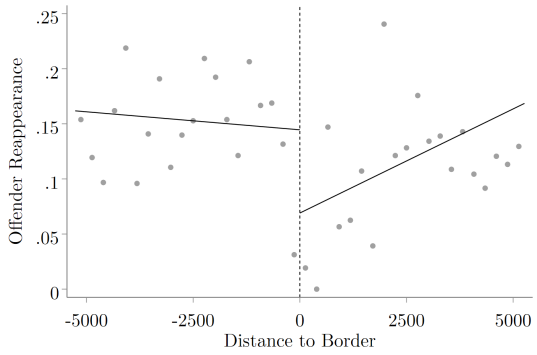
Notes: The figures show RD plots that illustrate the geographic discontinuity design (GDD) effects. The horizontal axes of each panel represents the distance (in meters) from the residence of the female petitioner to the border of the judicial region with an SDVC; the border (threshold) is represented by the vertical line. The petitioners residing within the border of the judicial region with an SDVC are depicted to the right of the threshold while those residing outside of the judicial region are depicted to the left of the threshold. Panel A reports the share of cases for which a judge issues a temporary *ex-parte* protection order, while Panel B shows the share of cases for which a judge issues a final protection order. Panel C reports effects on the duration of protection among cases that receive protection orders. The dots represent binscatter plots of the shares for cases at different distance ranges of the threshold. The figures are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Figure 6: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Petitioner and Petitioned/Offender Reappearance Among Cases with Female Petitioners

(a) Petitioner Reappearance

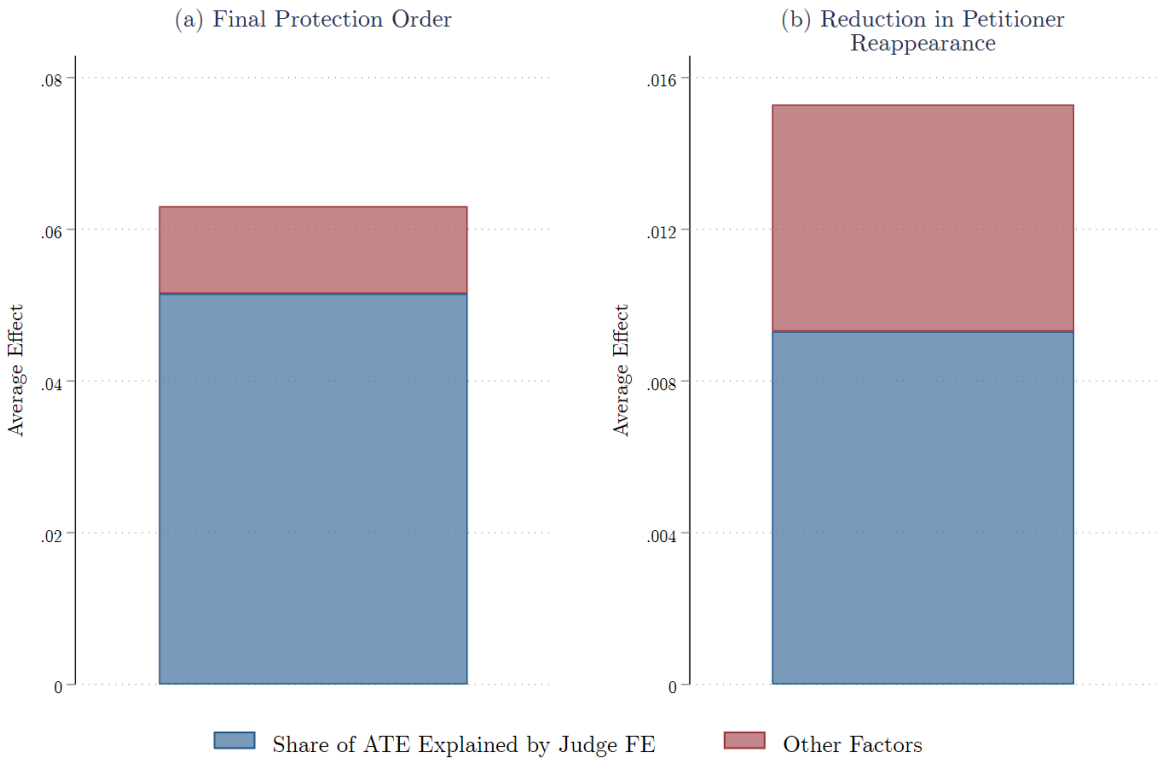


(b) Petitioned/Offender Reappearance



Notes: The figures show RD plots that illustrate the geographic discontinuity design (GDD) effects. The horizontal axes of each panel represents the distance (in meters) from the residence of the female petitioner to the border of the judicial region with an SDVC; the border (threshold) is represented by the vertical line. The petitioners residing within the border of the judicial region with an SDVC are depicted to the right of the threshold while those residing outside of the judicial region are depicted to the left of the threshold. Panel A shows the share of cases for which the petitioner reappears in a subsequent case within 12 months of the start of the first case, while Panel B shows shares of cases where the petitioned/offender reappeared in a subsequent case. The dots represent binscatter plots of the shares for cases at different distance ranges of the threshold. The figures are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Figure 7: Share of Treatment Effect Attributable to Judge Assignment



Notes: This figure presents results from the decomposition analysis of the estimated effects of SDVCs, as described in subsection 6.1. The left panel (Panel A) reports the average effect of access to SDVC on the share of cases resulting in a final protection order. The right panel (Panel B) shows the average reduction in petitioner reappearance due to access to SDVC. The portion of the average effect attributed to judge assignment is shown in blue, while the remaining effect, independent of judge assignment, is shown in red.

Table 1: Summary Statistics and Balance Tests – Cases with 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]
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]
$<$ 2 weeks	0.12	0.13	0.14	-0.02	-0.02
	(0.33)	(0.34)	(0.35)	[0.675]	[0.629]
2 – 3 weeks	0.31	0.39	0.44	-0.12	-0.06
	(0.46)	(0.49)	(0.50)	[0.254]	[0.486]
3 – 6 weeks	0.34	0.31	0.28	0.05	0.03
	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.45)	[0.238]	[0.586]
$>$ 6 weeks	0.22	0.17	0.13	0.09**	0.05
	(0.42)	(0.38)	(0.33)	[0.040]	[0.171]
Final PO Duration	247.9	231.1	213.8	34.2	17.5
	(165.7)	(147.7)	(154.5)	[0.254]	[0.543]
$<$ 3 months	0.08	0.08	0.14	-0.06*	-0.06*
	(0.26)	(0.27)	(0.35)	[0.063]	[0.086]
3 – 6 months	0.49	0.54	0.53	-0.04	0.01
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	[0.524]	[0.857]
6 – 12 months	0.38	0.35	0.29	0.09	0.06
	(0.49)	(0.48)	(0.45)	[0.103]	[0.500]
$>$ 12 months	0.05	0.03	0.05	0.01	-0.02
	(0.22)	(0.17)	(0.21)	[0.690]	[0.529]
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

Notes: Columns 1-3 report the average (and the standard deviation, in parentheses) of the characteristics of the cases for the three groups of judicial regions: those where SDVCs are introduced in the period 2007-2013 (Always Treated); those where SDVCs were introduced in 2014-2019, our study period (Switcher Regions); and those where SDVCs were not introduced before the end of our study period (Never Treated Regions). For Switcher Regions in column 2, we report means from their pre-treatment period. Column 4 presents the average difference between cases in Always Treated and Never Treated regions (col. 1 - col. 3). Column 5 presents the average difference for cases in Switcher Regions (prior to the introduction of SDVCs) and Never Treated Regions. Both columns 4 and 5 report differences adjusted for time trends (regressions including fixed effects for each month and year). The p-values, reported in columns 4-5 in brackets, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 2: 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 x 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

Notes: This table reports estimated effects of SDVC openings in a region on assignment of case hearings to specialized courts. In Panel A, these effects are estimated using the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). In Panel B, the analogous estimates from a canonical TWFE model are reported. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. P-values are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table 3: Average Effect of Access to SDVCs on Issuance of Final Protection Orders

	Final PO Issued		
	Female	Male	All
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects			
SDVC Region × Post	0.083	0.075	0.079
	[0.059]*	[0.157]	[0.030]**
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)			
Case in SDVC	0.094	0.102	0.093
	[0.047]**	[0.008]***	[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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table 4: Average Effect of Access to SDVCs on Court Reappearance

	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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table 5: 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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table 6: 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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table 7: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – Female Petitioners [GD Design]

	GDD/RDD Estimate (1)	Control Mean (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)
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	

Notes: Column 1 reports GDD/RDD estimates of the discontinuity in each of the outcome variables of interest; each coefficient and standard error is generated from a separate regression. Column 2 reports the mean for the control group in the estimation sample. The running variable is the distance (in meters) from the residence of the female petitioner to the border of the judicial region with an SDVC. The estimates are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Table 8: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Case Severity (Female Petitioners)

	Low Severity			High Severity		
	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	0.095	-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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

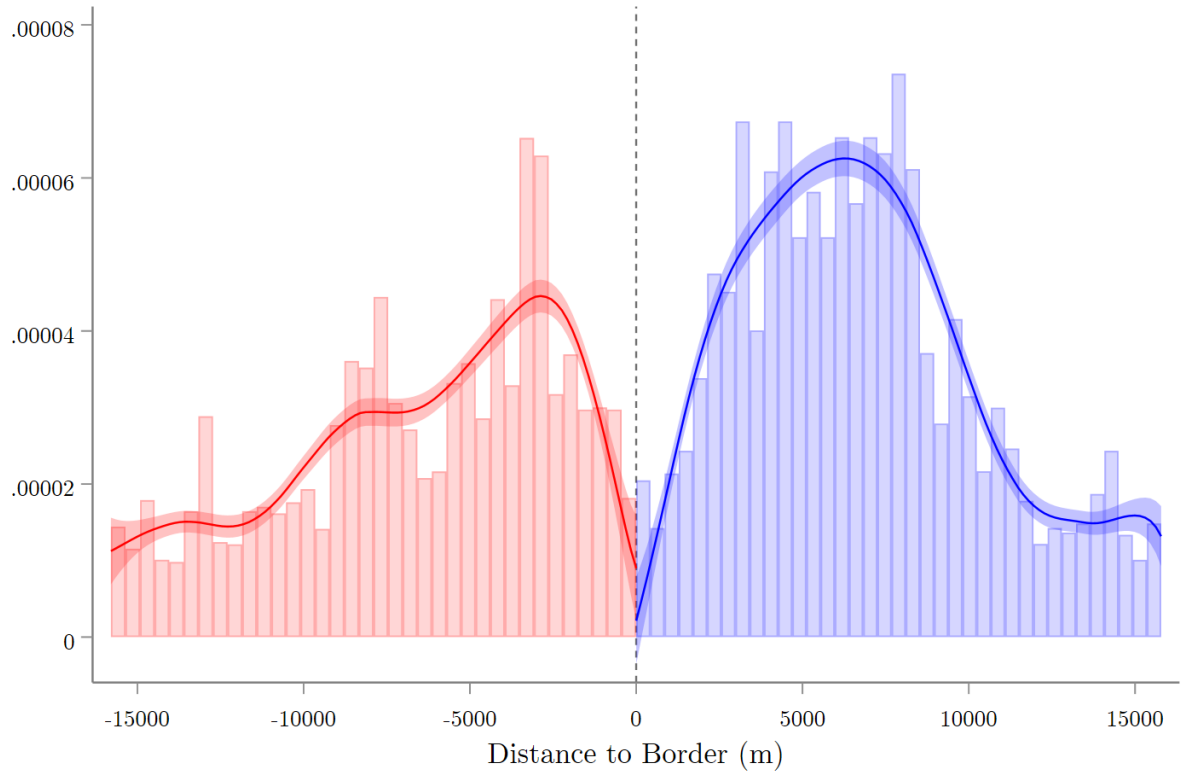
Table 9: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection – The Role of Judges (Female Petitioners)

	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

Notes: This table presents reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access, controlling for characteristics of judges presiding over cases. These coefficients are estimated using a canonical Two-Way Fixed Effects model on the sample of cases with female petitioners. Column 1 and 2 present results among cases in our primary estimation sample, while Columns 3-8 restrict to the sample of cases for which the presiding judge responded to our survey of judges. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region and are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. Standard Errors reported in parentheses are clustered at the judge level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

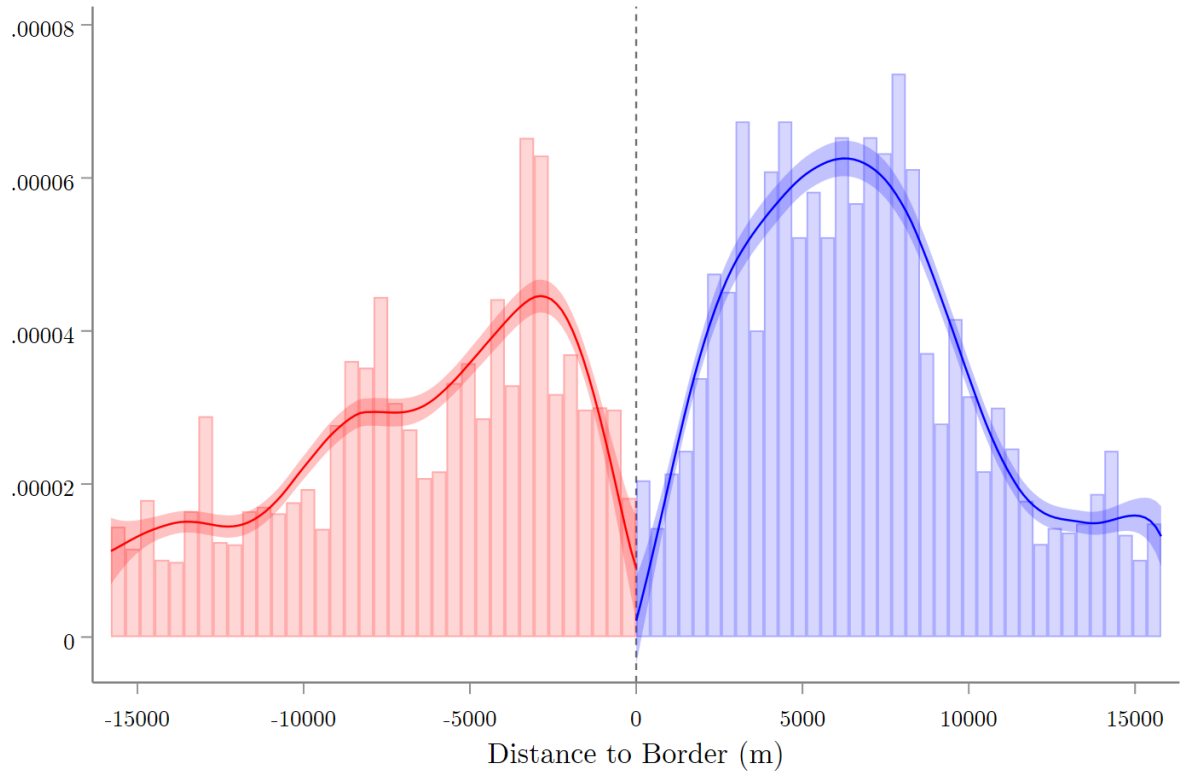
A Appendix Figures and Tables

Figure A1: Regression Discontinuity Manipulation – Female Victims



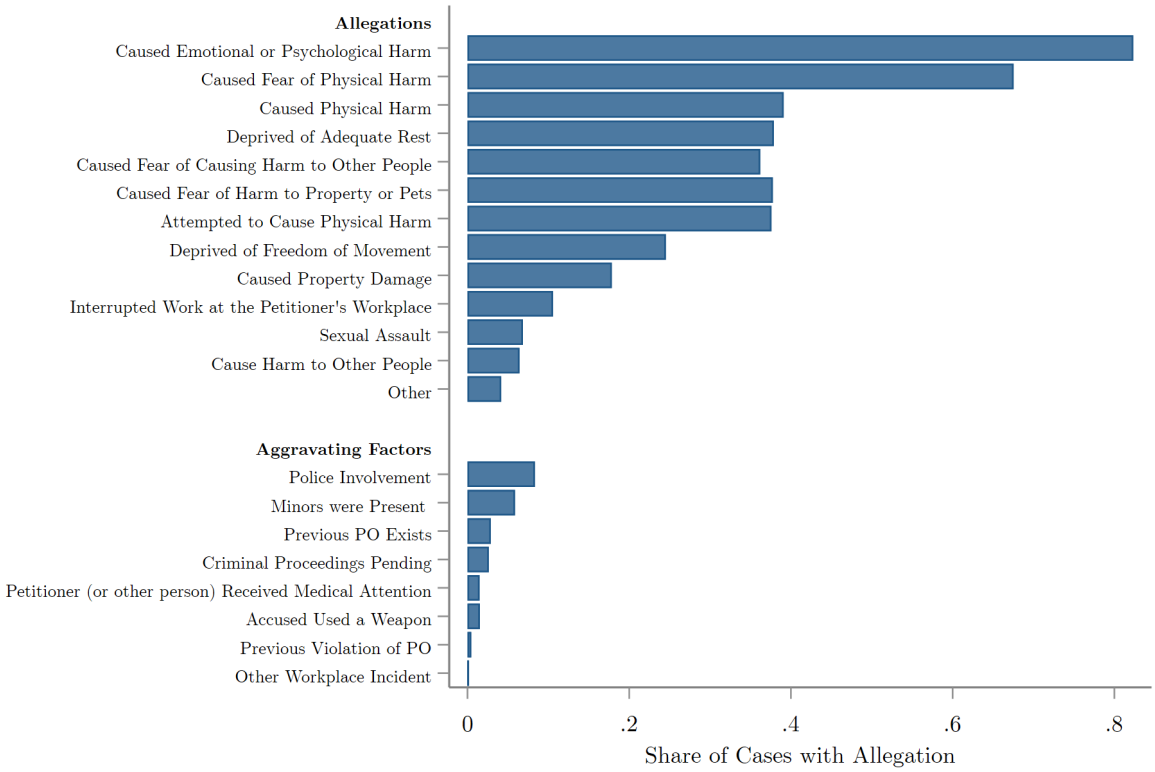
Notes: This figure presents the density of the running variable around the cutoff, estimated using the local polynomial density estimator from Cattaneo et al. (2018). The histogram represents the empirical distribution of the running variable, the distance to judicial border where an SDVC operates. The solid lines depict local polynomial estimates of the density on either side of the threshold. Shaded regions indicate 95% confidence intervals. The vertical dashed line marks the judicial region border, with SDVCs present to the right of the cut-off.

Figure A2: Regression Discontinuity Manipulation – All Victims



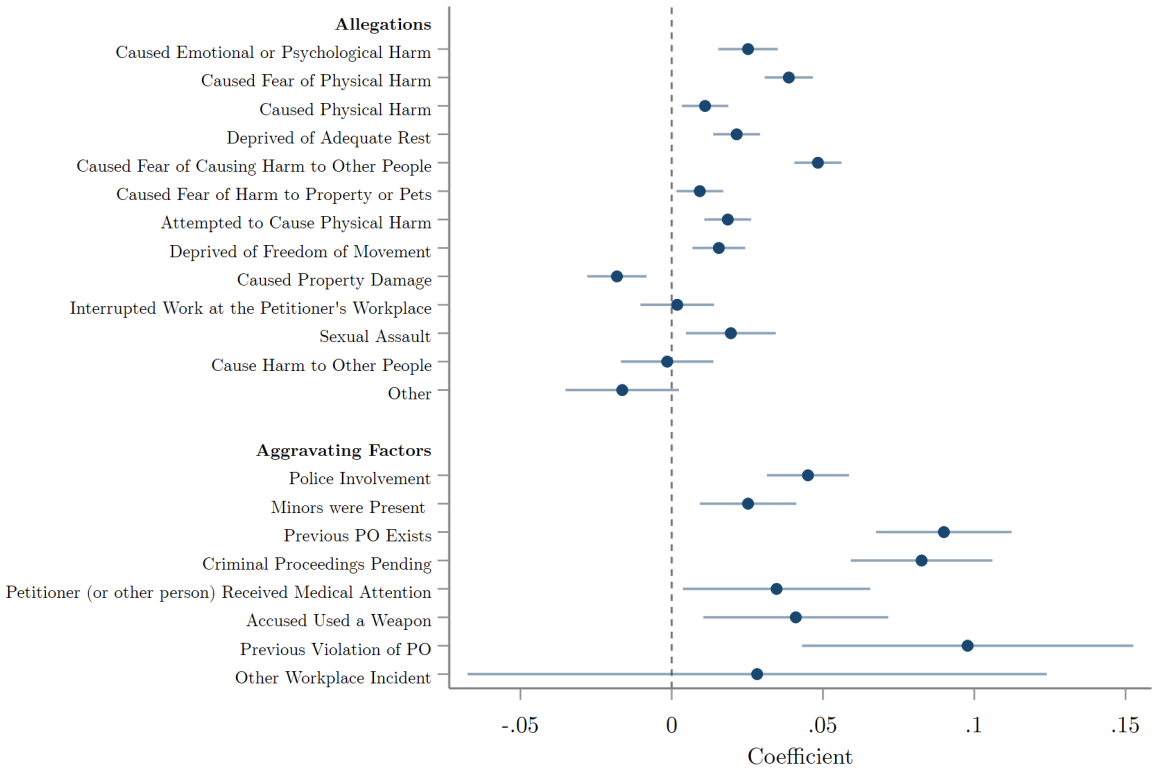
Notes: This figure presents the density of the running variable around the cutoff, estimated using the local polynomial density estimator from Cattaneo et al. (2018). The histogram represents the empirical distribution of the running variable, the distance to judicial border where an SDVC operates. The solid lines depict local polynomial estimates of the density on either side of the threshold. Shaded regions indicate 95% confidence intervals. The vertical dashed line marks the judicial region border, with SDVCs present to the right of the cut-off.

Figure A3: Share of Cases with Allegations and Aggravating Factors



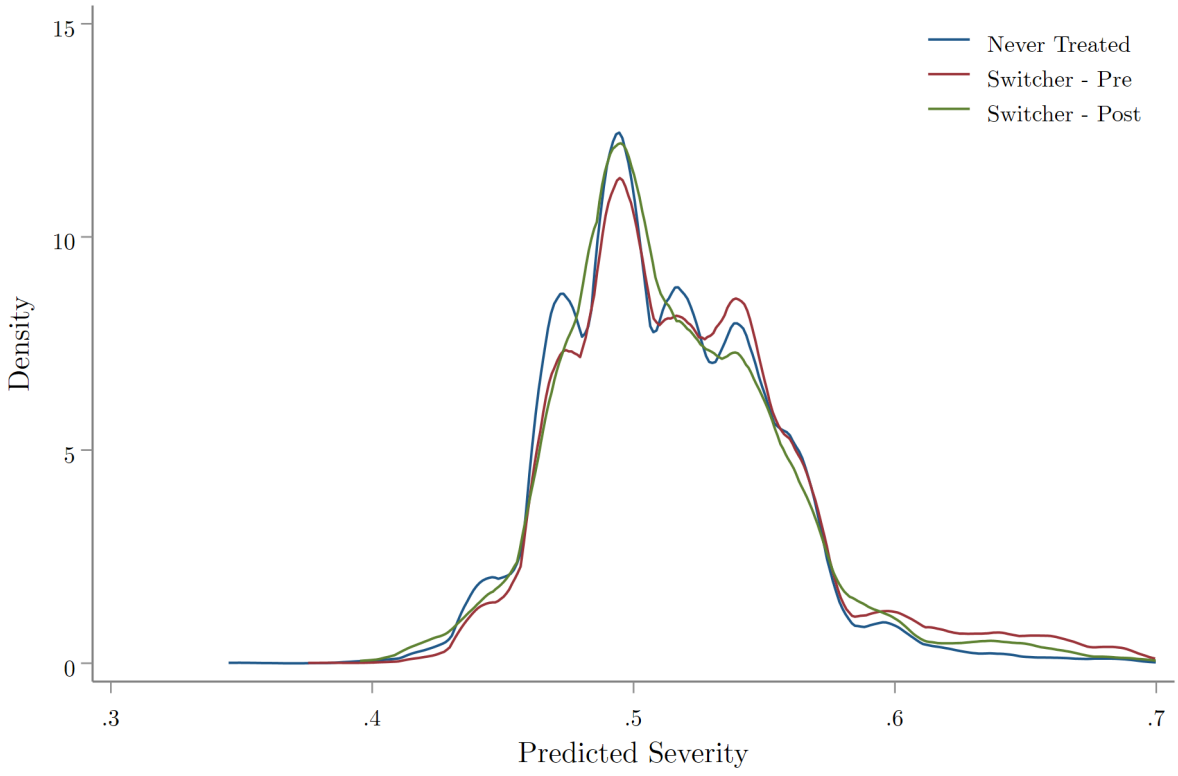
Notes: This figure depicts prevalence of allegations made by petitioners and aggravating factors. These case attributes are used for construction of the predicted severity index used in our analysis.

Figure A4: Predictive Power of Allegations and Aggravating Factors



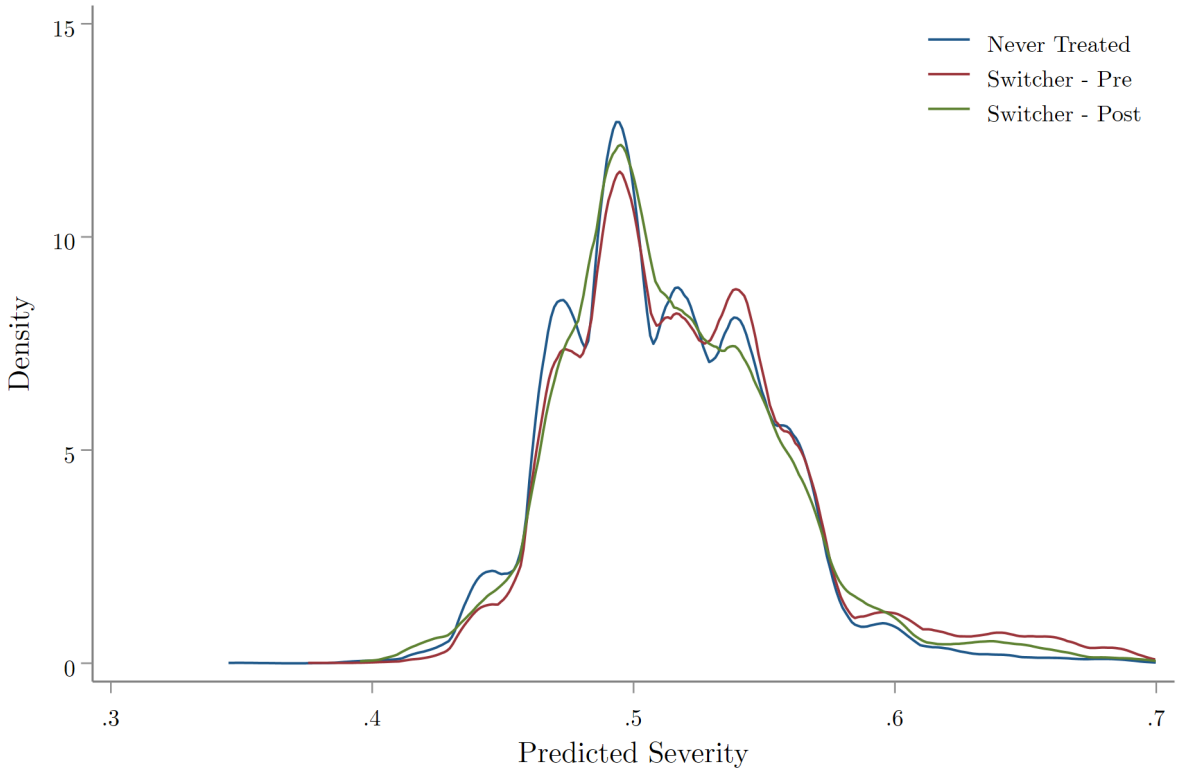
Notes: This figure illustrates the predictive power of allegations and aggravating factors. Each plotted point represents the β coefficient from a bivariate regression of Final PO Issuance on the specified allegation or aggravating factor. 95% confidence intervals are shown.

Figure A5: Distribution of Predicted Severity Among Cases with Female Petitioners



Notes: This figure illustrates the distribution of predicted severity among cases with female petitioners. In our analysis, we use predicted probability of a final protection order being issued as the measure of predicted severity. The plot shows Never Treated regions in blue. The distributions in Switcher regions before and after the introduction of SDVCs are depicted in red and green respectively.

Figure A6: Distribution of Predicted Severity Among All Cases



Notes: This figure illustrates the distribution of predicted severity. In our analysis, we use predicted probability of a final protection order being issued as the measure of predicted severity. The plot shows Never Treated regions in blue. The distributions in Switcher regions before and after the introduction of SDVCs are depicted in red and green respectively.

Table A1: Summary Statistics and Balance Tests – All Cases

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated	Switchers	Never Treated	AT - NT	S - NT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(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]
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]
$<$ 2 weeks	0.13	0.13	0.15	-0.02	-0.03
	(0.33)	(0.33)	(0.36)	[0.635]	[0.586]
2 – 3 weeks	0.31	0.39	0.44	-0.12	-0.05
	(0.46)	(0.49)	(0.50)	[0.254]	[0.514]
3 – 6 weeks	0.34	0.31	0.28	0.05	0.03
	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.45)	[0.222]	[0.557]
$>$ 6 weeks	0.22	0.16	0.13	0.09**	0.05
	(0.41)	(0.37)	(0.33)	[0.040]	[0.186]
Final PO Duration	242.5	227.4	208.6	34.2	19.2
	(163.0)	(146.2)	(152.8)	[0.262]	[0.486]
$<$ 3 months	0.08	0.09	0.15	-0.07*	-0.06
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.36)	[0.071]	[0.143]
3 – 6 months	0.50	0.55	0.53	-0.03	0.01
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	[0.540]	[0.829]
6 – 12 months	0.37	0.34	0.28	0.09*	0.06
	(0.48)	(0.47)	(0.45)	[0.071]	[0.486]
$>$ 12 months	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.01	-0.01
	(0.22)	(0.16)	(0.20)	[0.659]	[0.586]
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

Notes: Columns 1-3 report the average (and the standard deviation, in parentheses) of the characteristics of the cases for the three groups of judicial regions: those where SDVCs are introduced in the period 2007-2013 (Always Treated); those where SDVCs were introduced in 2014-2019, our study period (Switcher Regions); and those where SDVCs were not introduced before the end of our study period (Never Treated Regions). For Switcher Regions in column 2, we report means from their pre-treatment period. Column 4 presents the average difference between cases in Always Treated and Never Treated regions (col. 1 - col. 3). Column 5 presents the average difference for cases in Switcher Regions (prior to the introduction of SDVCs) and Never Treated Regions. Both columns 4 and 5 report differences adjusted for time trends (regressions including fixed effects for each month and year). The p-values, reported in columns 4-5 in brackets, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A2: Summary Statistics and Balance Tests – Cases with Male Petitioners

	Regions			Differences (Adjusted)	
	Always Treated	Switchers	Never Treated	AT - NT	S - NT
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(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]
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]
$<$ 2 weeks	0.15	0.12	0.19	-0.03	-0.07
	(0.36)	(0.33)	(0.39)	[0.595]	[0.186]
2 – 3 weeks	0.32	0.44	0.44	-0.11	-0.00
	(0.47)	(0.50)	(0.50)	[0.246]	[1.000]
3 – 6 weeks	0.34	0.30	0.26	0.07	0.04
	(0.47)	(0.46)	(0.44)	[0.190]	[0.514]
$>$ 6 weeks	0.17	0.12	0.10	0.07*	0.03
	(0.38)	(0.33)	(0.30)	[0.063]	[0.286]
Final PO Duration	212.7	207.1	180.3	33.7	26.3
	(143.7)	(136.4)	(140.1)	[0.103]	[0.243]
$<$ 3 months	0.09	0.12	0.20	-0.10*	-0.08
	(0.29)	(0.32)	(0.40)	[0.079]	[0.186]
3 – 6 months	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.01	0.02
	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.50)	[0.921]	[0.843]
6 – 12 months	0.30	0.28	0.21	0.09	0.07
	(0.46)	(0.45)	(0.41)	[0.151]	[0.500]
$>$ 12 months	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.00
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.14)	[0.310]	[0.814]
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

Notes: Columns 1-3 report the average (and the standard deviation, in parentheses) of the characteristics of the cases for the three groups of judicial regions: those where SDVCs are introduced in the period 2007-2013 (Always Treated); those where SDVCs were introduced in 2014-2019, our study period (Switcher Regions); and those where SDVCs were not introduced before the end of our study period (Never Treated Regions). For Switcher Regions in column 2, we report means from their pre-treatment period. Column 4 presents the average difference between cases in Always Treated and Never Treated regions (col. 1 - col. 3). Column 5 presents the average difference for cases in Switcher Regions (prior to the introduction of SDVCs) and Never Treated Regions. Both columns 4 and 5 report differences adjusted for time trends (regressions including fixed effects for each month and year). The p-values, reported in columns 4-5 in brackets, are estimated using a randomization inference procedure. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Table A3: Relationship Between Judicial Protection and Court 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 (× 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

Notes: This table presents the relationship between judicial protection and court reappearance in Never Treated regions. Standard errors are clustered at the judge level. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$

Table A4: 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	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	0.170	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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A5: 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	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	0.118	-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

Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A6: 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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A7: 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	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	0.0607	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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A8: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Additional Case Outcomes – Among Female Petitioners Residing Below Median Distance to the Regional Judicial Center

	Ex-Parte PO Issued	Num. of Hearings	Ex-Parte PO Duration	Final PO Duration	Total PO Duration
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects					
SDVC Region × Post	0.0372	0.0373	-2.004	19.11	18.45
	[0.505]	[0.829]	[0.649]	[0.296]	[0.301]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)					
Case in SDVC	0.0287	0.102	0.0873	15.67	24.94
	[0.684]	[0.313]	[0.980]	[0.277]	[0.230]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.682	2.127	29.18	219.1	140.3
Observations	11,444	11,444	7,797	5,010	9,281

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A9: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Additional Case Outcomes – Among Female Petitioners Residing Above Median Distance to the Regional Judicial Center

	Ex-Parte PO Issued	Num. of Hearings	Ex-Parte PO Duration	Final PO Duration	Total PO Duration
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Panel A: Intent to Treat Effects					
SDVC Region × Post	0.0260	0.0208	-2.654	4.128	23.30
	[0.473]	[0.873]	[0.415]	[0.781]	[0.323]
Panel B: Average Treatment Effect Among Compliers (2SLS)					
Case in SDVC	0.0363	0.0742	-3.045	-12.32	19.07
	[0.469]	[0.652]	[0.711]	[0.801]	[0.465]
Petitioner Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.663	2.117	27.41	221.2	139.9
Observations	11588	11588	7734	4892	9137

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A10: Summary Statistics and Balance Test in GDD Sample (Pre-Treatment Period)

	Female Petitioners		Male Petitioners		All Petitioners	
	RDD Estimate (1)	Control Mean (2)	RDD Estimate (3)	Control Mean (4)	RDD Estimate (5)	Control Mean (6)
Petitioner Sex – Female	-0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	-0.031	0.782
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.035)	(0.413)
Petitioner Age	0.46	33.26	-2.21	37.00	-0.29	34.08
	(1.21)	(11.78)	(2.66)	(12.98)	(1.05)	(12.15)
Petitioned Party Sex – Female	-0.002	0.027	-0.018	0.936	0.022	0.225
	(0.015)	(0.163)	(0.050)	(0.245)	(0.038)	(0.418)
Petitioned Party Age	0.57	35.73	-0.99	33.34	0.02	35.21
	(1.67)	(12.68)	(2.15)	(10.85)	(1.30)	(12.34)
Number of Children	0.03	0.79	0.23*	0.45	0.09	0.71
	(0.08)	(0.99)	(0.13)	(0.78)	(0.07)	(0.96)
Number of Hearings	0.09	2.04	0.11	1.81	0.07	1.99
	(0.10)	(1.19)	(0.14)	(0.95)	(0.09)	(1.14)
Ex-Parte PO Issued	-0.005	0.702	0.033	0.468	-0.015	0.651
	(0.046)	(0.458)	(0.089)	(0.500)	(0.040)	(0.477)
Final PO Issued	0.026	0.428	-0.206***	0.330	-0.009	0.407
	(0.045)	(0.495)	(0.070)	(0.471)	(0.038)	(0.491)
Total Protection (Days)	19.4	142.9	-32.7	112.7	16.0	137.9
	(13.2)	(163.1)	(21.4)	(123.6)	(13.2)	(157.5)
Total Ex-Parte Protection (Days)	1.8	26.8	-7.6	22.5	0.2	26.2
	(4.0)	(32.9)	(5.8)	(19.7)	(3.8)	(31.2)
Total Final Protection (Days)	12.0	235.4	42.6	175.6	19.3	224.9
	(14.7)	(154.3)	(34.8)	(122.8)	(14.2)	(150.9)
Petitioner Reappearance	-0.025	0.113	0.105	0.090	-0.004	0.108
	(0.031)	(0.317)	(0.066)	(0.287)	(0.028)	(0.310)
Petitioned Party Reappeaance	-0.047	0.122	0.126**	0.094	-0.017	0.116
	(0.031)	(0.328)	(0.058)	(0.292)	(0.028)	(0.320)
Eff. Obs (L)	957		267		1224	
Eff. Obs (R)	1109		217		1326	
(p) Order Loc. Poly.	1		1		1	
(q) Order Bias	2		2		2	
(h) BW Loc. Poly.	5266		5266		5266	
(b) BW Bias	12281		12281		12281	

Notes: This table reports estimates of a balancing test of covariates across judicial region borders. For this exercise, we use cases residing within the optimal bandwidth distance (5266m) of the border, prior to the opening of an SDVC. Columns 1, 3, and 5 report GDD/RDD estimates of the discontinuity in each of the outcome variables of interest; each coefficient and standard error is generated from a separate regression. Column 2, 4, and 6 report the mean for the control group in the estimation sample. The running variable is the distance (in meters) from the residence of the petitioner to the border of the judicial region where an SDVC will open. The estimates are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Table A11: RDD – Results (All)

	RDD Estimate (1)	Control Mean (2)
Number of Hearings	0.03	2.27
	(0.13)	(1.37)
Ex-Parte PO Issued	0.065**	0.637
	(0.033)	(0.481)
Final PO Issued	0.063	0.382
	(0.051)	(0.486)
Total Protection (Days)	25.7	150.5
	(18.0)	(174.6)
Total Ex-Parte Protection (Days)	-4.0	33.7
	(5.321)	(37.5)
Total Final Protection (Days)	31.2*	241.2
	(18.4)	(173.9)
Petitioner Reappearance	-0.084***	0.116
	(0.023)	(0.321)
Petitioned Party Reappearance	-0.064**	0.134
	(0.028)	(0.341)
Eff. Obs (L)	1887	
Eff. Obs (R)	2027	
(p) Order Loc. Poly.	1	
(q) Order Bias	2	
(h) BW Loc. Poly.	5266	
(b) BW Bias	12281	

Notes: Column 1 reports GDD/RDD estimates of the discontinuity in each of the outcome variables of interest; each coefficient and standard error is generated from a separate regression. Column 2 reports the mean for the control group in the estimation sample. The running variable is the distance (in meters) from the residence of the petitioner to the border of the judicial region with an SDVC. The estimates are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Table A12: RDD – Results (Male)

	RDD Estimate (1)	Control Mean (2)
Number of Hearings	0.25	2.05
	(0.16)	(1.14)
Ex-Parte PO Issued	0.060	0.448
	(0.071)	(0.498)
Final PO Issued	-0.093	0.325
	(0.086)	(0.469)
Total Protection (Days)	-3.2	135.3
	(41.0)	(145.1)
Total Ex-Parte Protection (Days)	6.0	29.3
	(6.1)	(29.6)
Total Final Protection (Days)	5.7	211.0
	(37.2)	(144.9)
Petitioner Reappearance	0.013	0.066
	(0.039)	(0.249)
Petitioned Party Reappearance	0.007	0.072
	(0.036)	(0.258)
Eff. Obs (L)	384	
Eff. Obs (R)	367	
(p) Order Loc. Poly.	1	
(q) Order Bias	2	
(h) BW Loc. Poly.	5266	
(b) BW Bias	12281	

Notes: Column 1 reports GDD/RDD estimates of the discontinuity in each of the outcome variables of interest; each coefficient and standard error is generated from a separate regression. Column 2 reports the mean for the control group in the estimation sample. The running variable is the distance (in meters) from the residence of the petitioner to the border of the judicial region with an SDVC. The estimates are generated using the optimal bandwidth and estimation procedure proposed by Calonico et al. (2014).

Table A13: Effects of Access to SDVCs on Judicial Protection and Court Reappearance – by Case Severity (Male 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	0.195	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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A14: 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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A15: 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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A16: 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 Reappeaance	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

Notes: Panel A of the table reports reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access(δ_1 in Equation 1) The reported coefficients are computed following the imputation-based differences-in-differences procedure proposed by Borusyak et al. (2024). Panel B reports IV estimates of the average effect for parties who, as a result of greater access to SDVC services, have their cases handled in one of these courts (δ_2 from Equation 2) – the Average Effect among the Compliers. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region. 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. * $p < 0.10$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < 0.01$.

Table A17: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Judges Presiding over Domestic Violence Cases – Administrative data

	(1) SDVC	(2) Traditional Court	(3) Difference
Sex (Female)	0.59	0.57	0.02
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.23)
Age (Years)	48.65	46.61	2.05
	(10.75)	(7.60)	(4.96)
< 45	0.35	0.40	-0.05
	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.18)
45 – 54	0.29	0.44	-0.14
	(0.45)	(0.50)	(0.19)
55 – 64	0.36	0.16	0.20
	(0.48)	(0.37)	(0.23)
≥ 65	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.00)
LLM or other Master's Degree	0.18	0.16	0.02
	(0.38)	(0.37)	(0.16)
Professional Experience:			
Public Sector	0.37	0.55	-0.18
	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.19)
Private Sector	0.07	0.31	-0.24***
	(0.26)	(0.46)	(0.07)
NGO	0.32	0.02	0.30
	(0.47)	(0.14)	(0.23)
Observations	4,022	16,196	20,218

Notes: Columns 1 and 2 of this table report the share of cases in which the presiding judge falls within the indicated socio-demographic group; standard deviations are reported in parentheses. To classify cases as being handled in SDVCs versus traditional courts, we use administrative records from the judiciary on judge assignments, linked to the APO administrative database of civil cases, allowing us to identify the court type in which each case was processed. The sample is restricted to cases used in our main analysis, with female petitioners. Column 3 reports differences, with standard errors reported in parentheses.

Table A18: Training of Judges on the Dimensions of Domestic Violence

	SDVC (1)	Traditional Court (2)	Difference (3)
Judge has Received Training Specifically Designed to Handle Domestic Violence Cases	0.94	0.89	0.05
	(0.24)	(0.31)	(0.06)
Number of Trainings (Mean)	9.92	8.49	1.43
	(2.88)	(4.00)	(1.42)
Types of Training:			
Specialized Trainings regarding IPV:			
IPV Training Index	0.71	0.21	0.50
	(1.07)	(1.05)	(0.52)
Psychosocial Aspects of Domestic Violence	0.78	0.62	0.16
	(0.41)	(0.49)	(0.18)
Manifestations and Causes of Domestic Violence	0.77	0.53	0.24
	(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.19)
Normalization of Violence, Idealization, and Dependence on the Aggressor	0.77	0.46	0.31*
	(0.42)	(0.50)	(0.19)
Emotional Bonds Between Victim and Aggressor	0.75	0.47	0.28
	(0.43)	(0.50)	(0.19)
Domestic Violence and Gender Perspective	0.51	0.46	0.05
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.24)
Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Sexual Assault	0.49	0.38	0.12
	(0.50)	(0.48)	(0.24)
Evidentiary Aspects in Domestic Violence Cases	0.48	0.25	0.23
	(0.50)	(0.43)	(0.24)
Domestic Violence, Culture, and Migration	0.43	0.32	0.11
	(0.49)	(0.47)	(0.25)
Domestic Violence and Abuse of the Elderly	0.43	0.28	0.15
	(0.50)	(0.45)	(0.24)
Case Management and Administration of DV Courts:			
Management Training Index	0.06	0.22	-0.16
	(0.73)	(0.97)	(0.28)
Handling Domestic Violence Cases	0.53	0.63	-0.10
	(0.50)	(0.48)	(0.23)
Conceptual Framework of Law 54-1989	0.78	0.71	0.06
	(0.42)	(0.45)	(0.18)
New Trends in Handling Domestic Violence Cases	0.17	0.31	-0.14
	(0.37)	(0.46)	(0.11)
Management of Domestic Violence Courtrooms	0.38	0.45	-0.07
	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.22)
Observations	3,679	11,007	14,686

Notes: Columns 1 and 2 report responses from judges to the following three questions: [1] Have you received training specifically designed to handle domestic violence cases? [2] How many such trainings have you received? [3]What type of training did you take on each of these occasions? The table shows the proportion of cases in which the presiding judge gave each type of response, or the average response among judges; standard deviations are reported in parentheses. To classify cases as being handled in SDVCs versus traditional courts, we link survey responses from the judiciary to the APO administrative database of civil cases. The sample is restricted to cases used in our main analysis, with female petitioners. Column 3 reports differences, with standard errors reported in parentheses.

Table A19: Judicial Priorities and Knowledge of Domestic Violence

	SDVC (1)	Traditional Court (2)	Difference (3)
Judicial Priorities			
Petitioner-Oriented Index (Difference)	1.22	-0.08	1.30
	(1.83)	(0.62)	(0.97)
Petitioner-Oriented Sub-Index	0.22	-0.23	0.46
	(0.52)	(1.27)	(0.39)
Improve Victim Safety	4.00	3.66	0.34
	(0.07)	(0.82)	(0.22)
Facilitate Victim Access to Support Services	3.94	3.62	0.32
	(0.24)	(0.83)	(0.22)
Increase Efficiency in Processing Domestic Violence Cases	3.63	3.42	0.21
	(0.49)	(0.90)	(0.32)
Improve the Victim's Perception of Fairness in the Judicial Process	3.59	3.37	0.22
	(0.49)	(0.85)	(0.31)
Achieve a Coordinated Response to Domestic Violence	3.59	3.37	0.22
	(0.49)	(0.83)	(0.32)
Promote Expertise Among Judges Who Handle Domestic Violence Cases	3.57	3.30	0.27
	(0.50)	(0.83)	(0.32)
Raise Community Awareness of Domestic Violence as a Social Issue	3.55	2.98	0.58
	(0.51)	(1.04)	(0.35)
Petitioned-Oriented Sub-Index	-0.87	-0.20	-0.68
	(1.21)	(1.21)	(0.67)
Ensure Laws Are Applied Correctly and Consistently	3.90	3.58	0.31
	(0.30)	(0.84)	(0.22)
Deter Repeat Offenses by the Aggressor	3.63	3.68	-0.05
	(0.48)	(0.82)	(0.31)
Achieve the Re-education of the Aggressor	2.76	3.14	-0.39
	(0.74)	(0.94)	(0.40)
Hold the Aggressor Accountable for Their Actions	2.50	3.24	-0.75
	(1.34)	(0.88)	(0.78)
Penalize the Aggressor for Failing to Comply with Court Orders	2.51	3.42	-0.91
	(1.41)	(0.85)	(0.82)
Improve Consistency in Rulings and Sentences for Similar Domestic Violence Cases	2.09	3.02	-0.93
	(1.02)	(0.77)	(0.58)
Judges Perspectives and Knowledge of IPV			
IPV Knowledge Index	0.53	0.20	0.33*
	(0.36)	(0.72)	(0.17)
IPV Knowledge Subindices:			
Physical Aggression	0.31	0.13	0.18
	(0.08)	(0.78)	(0.12)
Sexual Coersion	0.29	0.12	0.17
	(0.07)	(0.78)	(0.12)
Psychosocial Abuse	0.48	0.24	0.24**
	(0.11)	(0.75)	(0.12)
Controlling Behaviour	0.65	0.21	0.45***
	(0.52)	(0.83)	(0.16)
Observations	3,679	11,007	14,686

Notes: Columns 1 and 2 report responses from judges on their priorities when working on cases of domestic violence and their knowledge of IPV. The table shows the proportion of cases in which the presiding judge gave each type of response, or the average response among judges; standard deviations are reported in parentheses. To classify cases as being handled in SDVCs versus traditional courts, we link survey responses from the judiciary to the APO administrative database of civil cases. The sample is restricted to cases used in our main analysis, with female petitioners. Column 3 reports differences, with standard errors reported in parentheses.

Table A20: Mediation Analysis using Judge Demographics — Judge Survey Sample

	Final PO Issued						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
SDVC × Post	0.057	0.011	0.056	0.045	0.045	0.052	0.050
	(0.021)***	(0.017)	(0.021)**	(0.021)**	(0.021)**	(0.022)**	(0.022)**
	[0.229]	[0.669]	[0.191]	[0.302]	[0.290]	[0.223]	[0.231]
Sex — Female			-0.049	-0.034	-0.034	-0.041	-0.042
			(0.012)***	(0.014)**	(0.014)**	(0.014)***	(0.018)**
Age < 45				-0.012	-0.014	-0.024	-0.023
				(0.019)	(0.025)	(0.026)	(0.025)
Age ≥ 55				0.056	0.061	0.081	0.089
				(0.026)**	(0.027)**	(0.035)**	(0.037)**
Tenure					-0.000	-0.000	-0.001
					(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Prof. Experience — Public Sector						0.029	0.016
						(0.024)	(0.026)
Prof. Experience — Private Sector						0.034	0.021
						(0.026)	(0.026)
Prof. Experience — NGO Sector						-0.039	-0.067
						(0.034)	(0.048)
LLM or other Master's Degree						-0.017	-0.014
						(0.021)	(0.023)
Petitioner Oriented Justice Index							0.006
							(0.011)
IPV Training Index							0.006
							(0.009)
IPV Knowledge Index							0.001
							(0.014)
Victim Age	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year-Month FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Day of Week FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judge FE	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.421	0.420	0.421	0.421	0.421	0.421	0.421
Observations	14,626	14,618	14,626	14,626	14,626	14,626	14,626

Notes: This table presents reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access, controlling for characteristics of judges presiding over cases. These coefficients are estimated using a canonical Two-Way Fixed Effects model on the sample of cases with female petitioners. We restrict to cases where the presiding judge responded to our survey of judges. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region and are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. Standard Errors reported in parentheses are clustered at the judge level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table A21: Mediation Analysis using Judge Demographics — Administrative Data Sample

	Final PO Issued					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
SDVC × Post	0.060	0.011	0.060	0.056	0.051	0.054
	(0.021)***	(0.017)	(0.022)***	(0.023)**	(0.023)**	(0.023)**
	[0.090]*	[0.579]	[0.117]	[0.160]	[0.180]	[0.170]
Sex — Female			-0.047	-0.036	-0.027	-0.030
			(0.012)***	(0.015)**	(0.015)*	(0.015)*
Age < 45				-0.006	0.016	0.016
				(0.016)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Age ≥ 55				0.031	0.005	0.004
				(0.024)	(0.021)	(0.023)
Tenure					0.004	0.005
					(0.001)***	(0.001)***
Prof. Experience — Public Sector						0.017
						(0.017)
Prof. Experience — Private Sector						0.022
						(0.022)
Prof. Experience — NGO Sector						-0.011
						(0.023)
LLM or other Master's Degree						-0.012
						(0.018)
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
Judge FE	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Control Mean of Dep. Var.	0.412	0.412	0.412	0.412	0.412	0.412
Observations	20,130	20,113	20,130	20,130	20,130	20,130

Notes: This table presents reduced form estimates of the Intent to Treat Effect (ITT) of SDVC access, controlling for characteristics of judges presiding over cases. These coefficients are estimated using a canonical Two-Way Fixed Effects model on the sample of cases with female petitioners. We restrict to cases where we observe the presiding judge's profile in administrative records. The p-values reported in brackets account for the possibility that model errors are correlated within each judicial region and are computed using a t-statistic based randomization inference procedure. Standard Errors reported in parentheses are clustered at the judge level. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

A Judge Survey

Appendix A includes the following:

- A description of the survey implementation process, along with a brief summary of the questionnaire content;
- The original English version of the questionnaire;
- The original Spanish version of the questionnaire.

Description of the Survey

The survey was administered by the OAT to a sample of judges during July–August 2019. It delves into multifaceted aspects that may contribute to shaping the judicial approaches of judges. Specifically, it was designed to collect information on the background, preferences, priorities, and perceptions of judges regarding the handling of domestic violence cases. By integrating both the survey responses and background information obtained from administrative data, the study aims to understand the role of potential mediating factors in case determinations. This includes examining whether the characteristics of judicial personnel influence case outcomes. Additionally, the study explores whether there are significant differences in judges' assignments to specialized versus traditional courts, as well as the decision-making environments in which they carry out their work.

The survey was distributed to all judges who presided over civil or criminal domestic violence cases between January 2014 and November 2018. From a total population of 325 judges, two inclusion criteria were applied: judges must have handled more than 15 cases (civil or criminal), and must have been actively serving as of January 2, 2019. Based on these criteria, the eligible population consisted of 167 judges, of whom 102 responded (for the questionnaire, see Appendix 18 of the OAT report). The survey was administered using the SurveyMonkey platform, with follow-ups conducted via email and phone during the same period.

This Judge Survey is a comprehensive instrument designed to capture the experiences, perspectives, and practices of judges in Puerto Rico who oversee domestic violence cases. The questionnaire is structured around several key thematic areas, each aimed at understanding different dimensions

of judicial engagement with domestic violence.

The survey begins by collecting demographic and professional background information from respondents. This includes data on their age, gender, academic and legal education, judicial experience, and the regions and types of courts in which they have served. Judges are also asked about their previous roles in the legal field—such as prosecutors, legal advisors, or attorneys in different practice settings—providing important context for interpreting their perspectives on domestic violence adjudication.

Subsequently, the survey turns to the courtroom context, asking judges about the organization of their current courtroom, the extent to which domestic violence cases are handled through specialized calendars, and the resources available in their judicial regions, such as legal aids, coordinators, or support staff. This section also captures whether judges in their region receive targeted training and whether specialized processes are in place for monitoring offenders under diversion programs.

A central module of the survey addresses the training judges have received on domestic violence. Respondents report the number of trainings completed, the format of those sessions (e.g., talks, workshops, conferences), and the specific topics covered, such as legal frameworks (e.g., Law 54), gender dynamics, psychosocial aspects, and emerging trends in domestic violence management. Judges are also asked whether these trainings were part of the official judicial curriculum, how much independent study they have undertaken, and what additional training they would like to receive in the future.

The questionnaire then explores judicial priorities in domestic violence case management. Judges are asked to assess the importance they place on a range of goals, including holding offenders accountable, promoting rehabilitation, reducing recidivism, protecting victims, ensuring legal consistency, and increasing the visibility of domestic violence as a societal issue.

Further, the survey investigates judges' sentencing practices and preferences. It examines how often they impose various dispositions in criminal cases, such as diversion programs, probation, incarceration, restraining orders, or community service. The survey also inquires into what they consider to be appropriate durations and structures for rehabilitation programs and how satisfied

they are with existing programs' compliance with Law 54.

In the section on supervision and compliance, judges are asked about their practices related to follow-up hearings for offenders enrolled in diversion programs. This includes the frequency of such hearings, the types of monitoring activities performed (such as reviewing reports, communicating directly with offenders, or imposing sanctions), and their responses to violations of court-ordered program requirements.

The survey also explores measures judges take to safeguard victims within the courtroom environment, such as physical separation in waiting areas or court escorts before and after hearings. It then shifts to assess judicial attitudes toward domestic violence, asking respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements describing controlling, coercive, or violent behaviors in intimate relationships.

Finally, the questionnaire concludes with a set of evaluative modules focused on institutional performance. Judges are asked to rate the functioning of various entities involved in domestic violence case management, including the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, the Puerto Rico Police, the Department of Justice, and the Court of First Instance, across domains such as collaboration, training adequacy, procedural efficiency, and victim services. The survey ends with an open-ended section inviting judges to suggest improvements in the handling of domestic violence cases within their regions.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASE MANAGEMENT ASSESMENT

JUDGE SURVEY

Introduction:

The following survey is part of an evaluation carried out by the Judicial Programs Directorate (DPJ) of the Office of Court Administration (OAT) to understand the perspective of different sectors regarding the administration of the various options put in place to address domestic violence in the District Courts; namely, the specialized domestic violence courts, the specialization of services and the conventional or traditional model.

We are interested in surveying all judges who handled civil or criminal cases of domestic violence during **the last twelve months**, to know their assessment of different operational aspects of these intervention models, as well as their recommendations for proposal to improve these.

Your participation in the survey, which we appreciate and thank in advance, will be voluntary, confidential, brief, and essential for the reliability of the study. It will be confidential, since the data collected will be reported as aggregates of the set of participating judges; that is, no particular person or judicial process will be referred to in the academic reports or articles derived from this investigation. It will be voluntary, since you can choose not to participate, or to suspend your participation in the survey at any time; and if after answering the survey you want to withdraw any information that has been provided in it, you only have to contact the principal investigator of the study to do so (contact information is available in the background). It will be brief, since the questionnaire takes **less than half an hour** to complete. And it will be essential for the reliability of the study since it will contribute to a higher participation rate and, therefore, to a lower sampling error. It will also allow us to expand the diversity of views on judicial and administrative policies and practices.

The data from this survey will be linked to those that will be obtained from the examination of administrative files in order to identify factors that contribute to the success of the different intervention models. This data linkage will help us obtain a more complete picture of the functioning of the different strategies and of the possibilities to further develop these.

We would appreciate if you answer this survey no later than **Wednesday, July 3, 2019**. Any questions you have regarding this survey or about the study itself, please do not hesitate to contact Jo Marie González or Betzaida Muriel, at (787) 641-6600, ext. 5741/5709 or via email at jomarie.gonzalez@ramajudicial.pr and betzaida.muriel@ramajudicial.pr.

ACCEPT

QUESTIONS

1. ¿What is your age group?
   - ○ 34 years old or younger
   - ○ 35 to 44 years
   - ○ 45 to 54 years
   - ○ 55 to 64 years
   - ○ 65 years old or older

2. ¿What is your gender?
   - ○ Male
   - ○ Female
   - ○ Other

3. What judicial position(s) have you exercised in the judicial region where you currently work?
   - ○ Municipal Judge
   - ○ Superior Judge
   - ○ Both positions

4. In which judicial region do you currently hold your position?
   - ○ Aguadilla
   - ○ Aibonito
   - ○ Arecibo
   - ○ Bayamón
   - ○ Caguas
   - ○ Carolina
   - ○ Fajardo
   - ○ Guayama
   - ○ Humacao
   - ○ Mayagüez
   - ○ Ponce
   - ○ San Juan
   - ○ Utuado

5. In what type of court is your currently assigned?

(***Select all that apply***)

- ○ Municipal Court
- ○ Investigations Court
- ○ Preliminary Assessment Court
- ○ Penal Proceedings Court (Criminal)
- ○ Civil Proceedings Court
- ○ Family and Minors Court
- ○ Other (specify): _____

6. In what type(s) of facility(s) have you practiced as judge in the judicial region where you currently work?

- ○ Judicial Center
- ○ Courts outside the Judicial Center
- ○ Both

7. In which month and year did you begin to practice as judge in the judicial region where you currently work?

Month: _____ Year: _____

8. Indicate in which academic institution you graduated from Juris Doctor and Master of Law, if applicable.

	Juris Doctor	Master of Law
a. University of Puerto Rico		
b. Inter-American University		
c. Catholic University of Puerto Rico		
d. Faculty of Law Eugenio María de Hostos		
Other, please specify _____		

9. ¿In what academic discipline(s) did you graduated from University? (Bachelor's degree)

_____

10. Indicate if you have ever worked as ... (Check all the options that apply)

- ○ Prosecutor
- ○ Child Advocate Attorney
- ○ Legal Assistance Attorney
- ○ Legal Services Attorney for Puerto Rico
- ○ Attorney who worked as self-employed
- ○ Attorney in a law firm with 2 to 4 attorney, (you included)
- ○ Attorney in a law firm with 5 to 9 attorney, (you included)
- ○ Attorney in a law firm with 10 or more attorneys, (you included)
- ○ Legal advisor
- ○ Legal officer

Now we will ask you questions about the courtroom where you currently serve as judge:

ACCEPT

11. Are you an administrative judge or a regional administrative judge?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

12. Does the courtroom where you work at handles cases of domestic violence in a separate calendar?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Don't know

13. How many judges are dedicated to cases of domestic violence in your judicial region today?

[1 to 10, none]

14. How many of the following resources does the judicial region have in order to work on cases of domestic violence?

[1 to 10 or more, Don't know, Do not want to answer]

- ○ Project coordinators / administrators
- ○ Legal aids
- ○ Police officers
- ○ Secretaries/Assistants
- ○ Private courtroom secretaries
- ○ Other (please specify their roles): _____

15. Have the judges who are currently assigned to cases of domestic violence in your judicial region received training for this topic?

- ○ Yes
- ○ Some
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure

16. Do the domestic violence courtrooms have a separate calendar to attend the follow-up visits for offenders under a diversion program?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure
- ○ Do not want to answer

17. Have you received training specifically designed to address domestic violence cases?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure

18. How many trainings of this type have you received?

[1 to 10, 11 or more]

19. When was the last time, the second to last time and the third to last time that you took a training that addresses domestic violence cases? (Choose the date on the calendar icon for each occasion that applies. If you do not remember the exact day, choose the last day of the month in which it happened)

○ Last time year: _____ Month: _____

○ Second to last one year: _____ Month: _____

○ Third to last one year: _____ Month: _____

20. What type of training did you take on each of these occasions? (Check all that apply)

	Talk	Workshop	Conference	Other
Last time				
Second to last time				
Third to last time				
If you checked Other, please specify _____				

21. What topic(s) was (were) covered on each occasion? (Mark all the topics covered for each of the occasions that apply

	Last time	Second to last time	Third to last time
a. Handling domestic violence cases			
b. Psychosocial Aspects of Domestic Violence			
c. Conceptual Framework of Law 54 of August 15, 1989 (Law 54-1989, Law for the Prevention and Intervention of Domestic Violence)			
d. Evidence in Cases of Domestic Violence			
e. Domestic Violence, Culture and Migration			
f. Domestic Violence and Gender Perspective (Femininity and Masculinity)			
g. New Trends in the Management of Cases of Domestic Violence			
h. Domestic Violence, Stalking and Sexual Assault			
i. Domestic Violence and Abuse of Elderly People			
j. Manifestations and Causes of Domestic Violence			
k. Affective Links between the Victim and the Aggressor			
l. Normalization of the Violence, Idealization and Dependence of the Aggressive Person			
m. Management of Domestic Violence Rooms			

22. Were the training activities part of the specialized domestic violence curriculum of the Puerto Rican Judicial Academy (AJP)?

	Yes	No	Do not remember	Do not know	Do not want to answer
Last time					
Second to last time					
Third to last time					

23. In the past twelve (12) months, how much of your own time did you spend studying domestic violence (e.g., reading jurisprudence, legal journal articles, books, among others)?

- ○ Less than 12 hours
- ○ Twelve hours or more but less than 20 hours
- ○ Twenty hours or more but less than 40 hours
- ○ Forty hours or more but less than 60 hours
- ○ Sixty hours or more but less than 100 hours
- ○ One hundred hours or more but less than 140 hours
- ○ One hundred and forty hours or more but less than 180 hours
- ○ One hundred and eighty or more

24. What type of training to address domestic violence cases would you like to receive, regardless of whether you already took it?

- ○ Handling domestic violence cases
- ○ Psychosocial Aspects of Domestic Violence
- ○ Conceptual Framework of Law 54 of August 15, 1989
- ○ Impact of Domestic Violence on Minors
- ○ Evidence in Cases of Domestic Violence
- ○ Domestic Violence, Culture and Migration
- ○ Minors, Migration and Domestic Violence
- ○ Domestic Violence and Gender Perspective
- ○ New Trends in the Management of Cases of Domestic Violence
- ○ Domestic Violence, Stalking and Sexual Assault
- ○ Domestic Violence and Abuse of Elderly People
- ○ Manifestations and Causes of Domestic Violence
- ○ Affective Links between the Victim and the Aggressor
- ○ Normalization of the Violence, Idealization and Dependence of the Aggressive Person
- ○ Management of Domestic Violence Rooms
- ○ Other (specify) _____

Priorities

25. What importance do you give to the following aspects when working in a case of domestic violence?

	Not important at all	Somewhat important	Vert important	Extremely important
a. Hold offenders accountable for criminal behavior				
b. Rehabilitate offender				
c. Reduce recidivism				
d. Penalize offenders who are noncompliant with court orders				
e. Increase efficiency of Domestic Violence case processing				
f. Increase consistency of DV cases and sentences				
g. Increase community visibility of domestic violence as a social problem				
h. Achieve a coordinated response to domestic violence				
i. Increase victim safety				
j. Facilitate victim access to services				
k. Foster expertise in prosecutors who handle domestic violence cases				
l. Improve victim perception of the fairness of the court process				
m. Apply the law correctly and consistently				
Other goals (specify) _____				

Sentences and Dispositions

26. For criminal cases that end in conviction, indicate how often you determine to impose the following dispositions:

	Never (0%)	Rarely (1-33%)	Sometimes (34-66%)	Often (67-99%)	Always (100%)
a. Diversion program					
b. Probation					
c. Prison/jail					
d. Protection/restraining order					
e. Restitution					
f. Fine					
g. Community service					
h. Conditional discharge					
Other (Please specify the frequency:)_____					

27. In order to rehabilitate/reintroduce an offender in accordance with what is established by Law No. 54, what would you say is the minimum number of therapy sessions that should be received and what should be the average duration (in minutes) of each session?

Minimum number of therapy sessions: _____

Average duration of each therapy session (in minutes): _____

28. How do you feel about compliance with Law No. 54 by the rehabilitation programs that offer services to offenders?

○ Very satisfied

○ Satisfied

○ Neither satisfied not unsatisfied

○ Unsatisfied

○ Very Unsatisfied

○ Do not know

○ Do not want to answer

Rehabilitation Programs for Offenders

29. What is the typical length in months that you order an offender to attend rehabilitation program?

- ○ 12 months
- ○ 18 months
- ○ 24 months
- ○ 30 months
- ○ 36 months
- ○ 42 months
- ○ Not sure
- ○ Do not want to answer

30. What importance, if any, did the following reasons have at the time of sending offenders in domestic violence cases to diversion programs?

	Not Important at All	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
a. Treatment or rehabilitation				
b. Accountability				
c. Monitoring				
d. Proportionality (appropriate penalty)				
e. Alternative to incarceration				
f. Other; please describe the level of importance: _____				

SUPERVISION AND COMPLIANCE

ACCEPT

31. How often, if any, do you do follow up hearings to people who participate in diversion programs for cases of domestic violence?

- ○ Never (0%)
- ○ Rarely (1-33%)
- ○ Sometimes (34-66%)
- ○ Often (67-99%)
- ○ Always (100%)
- ○ Don't know
- ○ Don't want to answer

32. Which of the following activities do you usually perform in a follow-up hearing? Check all that apply.

- ○ Check for any arrest or violation to court orders
- ○ Reiterate the consequences of violating the conditions of the programs
- ○ Reiterate the responsibilities related to not contacting the victim
- ○ Reiterate the consequences of not complying with court orders
- ○ Acknowledge good behavior regarding compliance with court orders
- ○ Verbally sanction the offender when in violation of court orders
- ○ Impose specific sanctions due to lack of compliance
- ○ Review report(s) submitted by the probation officer
- ○ Speak directly with the offender in the courtroom
- ○ Other specify: _____

33. In the last twelve (12) months, how often have you imposed sanctions in response to non-compliance with diversion programs when the prosecutor's office or the socio-penal technician requested it?

- ○ Never (0%)
- ○ Rarely (1-33%)
- ○ Sometimes (34-66%)
- ○ Often (67-99%)
- ○ Always (100%)
- ○ Don’t know
- ○ Don’t want to answer

34. When an abuser violates diversion programs, how often do you take each of the following actions?

	Never (0%)	Rarely (1-33%)	Sometimes (34-66%)	Often (67-99%)	Always (100%)	Unknown
a. Order defendant to return to court immediately						
b. Verbally admonish defendant						
c. Order defendant back to program taking into account previous assistance						
d. Order defendant back to program adding new sessions						
e. Order defendant to restart the program						
f. Order defendant to start a new program						
g. Order defendant to make more frequent court appearances						
h. Revoke probation or amend conditions						
i. Resentence defendant to jail						
j. Order frequent drug tests						
k. Other please specify:_____						

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

35. What arrangements do you usually make in the session room for the safety of the victim? (Check all the options that apply).

- ○ Separate the sitting area in the session room
- ○ Escort out of court before the judicial process
- ○ Escort in the courtroom before the judicial process
- ○ Escort in court after the judicial process
- ○ Escort out of court after the judicial process
- ○ None
- ○ Other. Specify: _____

ATTITUDES DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ACCEPT

36. Consist of domestic violence:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Does not know
a. make decisions without consulting your partner						
b. Ignore your partner frequently or for long periods of time						
c. not allow your partner to work outside the home						
d. insist on knowing where the person is all the time						
e. control the way your partner dresses						
f. not allow your partner to socialize (relate to their family or friends)						
g. accuse your partner of cheating?						
h. force your partner to share the passwords of their electronic accounts?						
i. Not trust how your partner uses the money, or take the couple's salary / income?						
j. Treat your partner as inferior?						
k. humiliate or make						

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fun of your partner?						
l. Yell at your partner						
m. verbally threatening to hurt your partner or someone close to the partner?						
n. threatening your partner with any weapon (e.g., with a knife, pistol) or other forceful object?						
o. push or hammer your partner?						
p. hit your partner with your hands (e.g., slap, fist, choke) or kick him/her?						
q. hit your partner with a blunt object?						
r. force the couple to have sex or some sexual act that the person does not want?						
s. Forcing the couple to drop domestic violence charges?						

EVALUATION CRITERIA

With respect to each of the following evaluation criteria, indicate how you would describe the performance of the last twelve (12) months of the judicial region where you currently practice.

ACCEPT

37. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

Criteria	Very bad	Bad	Neither good or bad	Good	Very good	Unkown
a. collaboration between the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation and your region.						
b. The supervision by the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation of domestic violence offenders who benefited from the batterer program.						
c. The performance of the programs of the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation aimed at rehabilitating offenders.						

38. SERVICES TO THE VICTIM

Criteria	Very bad	Bad	Neither good or bad	Good	Very good	Unkown
a. The comfort and safety of court facilities from the perspective of a victim of domestic violence.						
b. The initiative and proactivity of lawyers in recommending service programs for their clients.						
c. The availability of **shelters** for victims of domestic violence						
d. The availability of **psycho-social services** for victims of domestic violence						
e. The availability of **legal advocacy services** for victims of domestic violence						
f. The availability of services offered by government entities for victims of domestic violence (e.g., ASUME, Department of the Family, Department of Housing)						
g. The quality in the provision of support services offered by organizations that provide assistance to victims of domestic violence.						

39. SUITABILITY AND PREPARATION OF OTHER PERSONNEL (OF THE COURT AND OTHERS) AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO CASES

Puerto Rico Police (State / Municipal)

Criteria	Very bad	Bad	Neither good or bad	Good	Very good	Unkown
a. The number of police officers to adequately address the volume of cases of domestic violence.						
b. How thoroughly are criminal investigations carried out, in cases of domestic violence, by the agents of the Puerto Rico Police						
c. The promptness of the process of filling out and notifying the cases of domestic violence carried out by the agents of the Puerto Rico Police.						
d. Filing of complete information on the back of the protection order (Date, place and mode of delivery, and name of the person to whom the delivery was made).						
e. Availability of a liaison officer of the Puerto Rico Police.						
f. The promptness with which the liaison officer of the Puerto Rico Police seized firearms.						

40. Justice Department

Criteria	Very bad	Bad	Neither good or bad	Good	Very good	Unkown
a. Number of prosecutors to adequately attend the volume of cases of domestic violence.						
b. The use by the Prosecutor Office for objective information (data and documents) as evidence in cases of domestic violence.						
c. Make good use, by the prosecution, of the provisions of Act No. 54.						
d. The level of preparation of the prosecutors to present the case.						
e. Functioning of the services of the Office of Compensation and Services to Victims and Witnesses of Crimes, of the Department of Justice.						

41. Court of first instance

Criteria	Very bad	Bad	Neither good or bad	Good	Very good	Unkown
a. The knowledge shown by the sheriffs about the proper handling of cases of domestic violence.						
b. The efficiency of the process of filling out forms, citations and notifications of the cases of domestic violence carried out by the sheriff of the General Court of Justice.						
c. The level of compliance of the sheriffs regarding the period of twenty-four (24) hours to inform the petitioner personally, that a request for protection has been made to the requested party.						
d. The frequency with which the petitioner was notified about his / her hearing, on time and correctly, the first time.						

42. In your opinion, in what aspects, if any, should there be improvement in the attention and handling of domestic violence cases in the judicial region where you currently practice?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Judge Survey (Original Spanish)

EVALUACIÓN DE LA ATENCIÓN DE CASOS DE VIOLENCIA DOMÉSTICA
ENCUESTA A LA JUDICATURA

Introducción:

La siguiente encuesta es parte de un estudio evaluativo que lleva a cabo la Directoría de Programas Judiciales (DPJ) de la Oficina de Administración de los Tribunales (OAT) para conocer la perspectiva de diferentes sectores acerca del funcionamiento de las opciones instituidas para atender la violencia doméstica en el Tribunal de Primera Instancia; a saber, las Salas especializadas de violencia doméstica, la Especialización de servicios y el modelo convencional o tradicional.

En este caso, interesamos encuestar a la totalidad de jueces y juezas que atendieron casos civiles o criminales de violencia doméstica durante el periodo de los últimos doce meses, para conocer su valoración sobre diferentes aspectos operativos de estos modelos de intervención, así como aquellas recomendaciones que tengan a bien proponer para perfeccionarlos.

Su participación en la encuesta, la cual agradecemos de antemano, será voluntaria, confidencial, breve y esencial para la fiabilidad del estudio. Será confidencial, ya que los datos recopilados se informarán para el agregado del conjunto de jueces y juezas participantes, es decir, que no se aludirá a ninguna persona o proceso judicial en particular en los informes o artículos académicos que se deriven de esta investigación. Será voluntaria, ya que puede optar por no participar o suspender su participación en la encuesta en cualquier momento; y si luego de contestar la encuesta, desea retirar cualquier información que haya provisto en esta, sólo tiene que contactar al investigador principal del estudio para ello (su información de contacto está disponible al fondo). Será breve, ya que le tomará 30 minutos completar este cuestionario. Y será esencial para la fiabilidad del estudio, ya que contribuirá a una mayor tasa de participación y, por ende, a un error muestral menor; y a ampliar la diversidad de puntos de vistas sobre políticas y prácticas judiciales y administrativas.

Conviene acotar que los datos de esta encuesta se relacionarán con aquellos que se obtendrán del examen de expedientes administrativos, con el fin de identificar factores que contribuyen a definir el éxito de los modelos de intervención. Esta asociación de datos nos ayudará a obtener un cuadro más completo del funcionamiento de las diferentes estrategias y de sus posibilidades de desarrollo.

Le agradeceremos que conteste esta encuesta no más tarde del miércoles, 3 de julio de 2019. Cualquier pregunta que tenga referente a esta encuesta o sobre el estudio propiamente, no dude en contactar a Jo Marie González o Betzaida Muriel, al (787) 641-6600, extensiones 5741/5709 o a través de los correos electrónicos jomarie.gonzalez@ramajudicial.pr y betzaida.muriel@ramajudicial.pr.

ACEPTAR

PREGUNTAS

1. ¿En qué grupo de edad se encuentra?
   - ○ 34 años o menos
   - ○ 35 a 44 años
   - ○ 45 a 54 años
   - ○ 55 a 64 años
   - ○ 65 años o más

2. ¿Cuál es su género?
   - ○ Hombre
   - ○ Mujer
   - ○ Otro

3. ¿Qué cargo(s) judicial(es) ha ejercido en la región judicial donde trabaja actualmente?
   - ○ Juez(a) Municipal
   - ○ Juez(a) Superior
   - ○ Ambos cargos judiciales

4. ¿En qué región judicial ejerce su cargo actualmente?
   - ○ Aguadilla
   - ○ Aibonito
   - ○ Arecibo
   - ○ Bayamón
   - ○ Caguas
   - ○ Carolina
   - ○ Fajardo
   - ○ Guayama
   - ○ Humacao
   - ○ Mayagüez
   - ○ Ponce
   - ○ San Juan
   - ○ Utuado

5. ¿En qué tipo(s) de sala(s) está asignado(a) actualmente?
(***Marque todas las opciones que apliquen***)
   - ○ Sala Municipal
   - ○ Sala de Investigaciones
   - ○ Sala de Vista Preliminar
   - ○ Sala Asuntos de lo Criminal
   - ○ Sala Asuntos de lo Civil
   - ○ Sala Asuntos de Familia y Menores
   - ○ Otra (especifique): _____

6. ¿En qué tipo(s) de instalación(es) ha ejercido como juez o jueza en la región judicial donde trabaja actualmente?
   - ○ Centro judicial
   - ○ Salas fuera del centro judicial
   - ○ Ambos tipos de instalaciones judiciales

7. ¿En qué mes y año comenzó a ejercer como juez o jueza en la región judicial donde trabaja actualmente?
Mes: _____ y Año: _____

8. Indique en qué institución académica se graduó de Juris Doctor y de Maestría en Derecho, si aplica.

	Juris Doctor	Maestría en Derecho
a. Universidad de Puerto Rico		
b. Universidad Interamericana		
c. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico		
d. Facultad de Derecho Eugenio María de Hostos		
Otro (especifique)_____		

9. ¿En qué disciplinas(s) académica(s) se graduó de bachillerato?
_____

10. Indique si ha trabajado alguna vez como… (Marque todas las opciones que apliquen)
- ○ Fiscal
- ○ Procurador(a) de menores
- ○ Abogada(o) de la Sociedad para la Asistencia Legal
- ○ Abogada(o) de Servicios Legales de Puerto Rico
- ○ Abogada(o) que trabajó por cuenta propia
- ○ Abogada(o) de bufete con 2 a 4 abogada(os), incluyéndose
- ○ Abogada(o) de bufete con 5 a 9 abogada(os), incluyéndose
- ○ Abogada(o) de bufete con 10 o más abogada(os), incluyéndose
- ○ Asesor(a) Legal
- ○ Oficial Jurídico(a)

Ahora le haremos preguntas acerca de la sala donde ejerce como juez o jueza actualmente:

ACEPTAR

11. ¿Es usted jueza administradora o juez administrador regional?
- ○ Sí
- ○ No

12. ¿La sala donde trabaja actualmente maneja casos de violencia doméstica en un calendario separado?
- ○ Sí
- ○ No
- ○ No sabe

13. ¿Cuantos jueces o juezas dedicados a casos de violencia doméstica hay en su región judicial actualmente?
[1 a 10, ninguno]

14. ¿Con cuántos de los siguientes recursos cuenta la región judicial para trabajar los casos de violencia doméstica?
[1 a 10 o más, no sabe, no desea contestar]

- ○ Coordinadores(as) de proyectos/administradores(as)
- ○ Intercesores(as) legales
- ○ Alguaciles(as)
- ○ Secretarias(os) auxiliares
- ○ Secretarias(os) de servicios a sala
- ○ Otros (Por favor especifique sus roles): _____

15. ¿Los jueces o juezas que están actualmente asignados(as) a casos de violencia doméstica en su región judicial han recibido capacitación para este tema?

- ○ Sí
- ○ Algunos
- ○ No
- ○ No estoy seguro(a)

16. ¿Tienen estas salas donde hay jueces y juezas asignados a casos de violencia doméstica un calendario separado para atender las vistas de seguimiento a personas agresoras bajo el programa de desvío?

- ○ Sí
- ○ No
- ○ No sabe
- ○ No deseo contestar

17. ¿Usted ha recibido capacitación específicamente diseñada para atender casos de violencia doméstica?

- ○ Sí
- ○ No
- ○ No estoy seguro(a)

18. ¿Cuántos adiestramientos de esta índole ha recibido?
[1 a 10, 11 o más]

19. ¿Cuándo fue la última vez, la penúltima vez y la antepenúltima vez que tomó un adiestramiento para atender casos de violencia doméstica? (Escoja la fecha en el ícono del calendario de cada ocasión que le aplique. Si no recuerda el día exacto, escoja el último día del mes en que ocurrió)

	Año:	Mes:
Fecha última		
Fecha penúltima		
Fecha antepenúltima		

20. ¿Qué tipo de adiestramiento tomó en cada una de estas ocasiones? (Marque todas las que apliquen)

	Charla	Taller	Conferencia	Otra
Última vez				
Penúltima vez				
Antepenúltima vez				
Sí marcó Otra, favor especificar_____				

21. ¿Qué tema(s) fue(ron) cubierto(s) en cada ocasión? (Marque todos los temas cubiertos para cada una de las ocasiones que apliquen)

	Última vez	Penúltima vez	Antepenúltima vez
a.Manejo de casos de violencia doméstica			
b. Aspectos Psicosociales de la Violencia Doméstica			
c. Marco Conceptual de la Ley 54 de 15 de agosto de 1989 (Ley 54-1989; Ley para la Prevención e Intervención con la Violencia Doméstica)			
d. Aspectos Evidenciarios en los Casos de Violencia Doméstica			
e. Violencia Doméstica, Cultura y Migración			
f. Violencia Doméstica y Perspectiva de Género (Femineidad y Masculinidad)			
g. Nuevas Tendencias en el Manejo de Casos de Violencia Doméstica			
h. Violencia Doméstica, Acecho y Agresión Sexual			
i. Violencia Doméstica y Abuso de Personas de Edad Avanzada			
j. Manifestaciones y Causas de la Violencia Doméstica			
k. Vínculos Afectivos entre la Víctima y la Persona Agresora			
l. Naturalización de la Violencia, Idealización y Dependencia de la Persona Agresora			
m. Manejo de las Salas de Violencia Doméstica			

22. ¿Las actividades de adiestramiento que tomó formaban parte del Currículo especializado de violencia doméstica de la Academia Judicial Puertorriqueña (AJP)?

	Sí	No	No recuerda	No sabe	No deseo contestar
Última vez					
Penúltima vez					
Antepenúltima vez					

23. En los pasados doce (12) meses, ¿cuánto tiempo aproximadamente le dedicó al estudio de violencia doméstica por su cuenta (e.j., lectura de jurisprudencia, artículos de revista jurídica, libros, entre otros)?

- ○ Menos de 12 horas
- ○ Doce horas o más pero menos de 20 horas
- ○ Veinte horas o más pero menos de 40 horas
- ○ Cuarenta horas o más pero menos de 60 horas
- ○ Sesenta horas o más pero menos de 100 horas
- ○ Cien horas o más pero menos de 140 horas
- ○ Ciento cuarenta horas o más pero menos de 180 horas
- ○ Ciento ochenta horas o más

24. ¿Qué tipo de adiestramiento para atender casos de violencia doméstica le gustaría recibir, independientemente si ya lo tomó?

- ○ Manejo de casos de violencia doméstica
- ○ Aspectos Psicosociales de la Violencia Doméstica
- ○ Marco Conceptual de la Ley 54-1989
- ○ Impacto de la Violencia Doméstica en los y las Menores
- ○ Aspectos Evidenciarios en los Casos de Violencia Doméstica
- ○ Violencia Doméstica, Cultura y Migración
- ○ Menores, Inmigración y la Violencia Doméstica
- ○ Violencia Doméstica y Perspectiva de Género
- ○ Nuevas Tendencias en el Manejo de Casos de Violencia Doméstica
- ○ Violencia Doméstica, Acecho y Agresión Sexual
- ○ Violencia Doméstica y Abuso de Personas de Edad Avanzada
- ○ Manifestaciones y Causas de la Violencia Doméstica
- ○ Vínculos Afectivos entre la Víctima y el Agresor
- ○ Naturalización de la Violencia, Idealización y Dependencia del Agresor
- ○ Manejo de las Salas de Violencia Doméstica
- ○ Otra (especifique) _____

25. Qué importancia le adjudica a los siguientes aspectos cuando trabaja en un caso de violencia doméstica.

Metas y objetivos	No es importante en lo absoluto	Algo importante	Muy importante	Extremadamente importante
a. Hacer responsable a la persona agresora por sus acciones				
b. Lograr la reeducación de la persona agresora				
c. Desalentar la reincidencia de la persona agresora				
d. Penalizar a la persona agresora si no cumple con las órdenes de los tribunales				
e. Incrementar la agilidad en el procesamiento de casos de violencia doméstica				
f. Mejorar la consistencia en las disposiciones y sentencias en los casos de violencia doméstica con circunstancias similares				
g. Aumentar la visibilidad en la comunidad de la violencia doméstica como un problema social				
h. Lograr una respuesta coordinada a la violencia doméstica				
i. Mejorar la seguridad de la víctima				
j. Facilitar a la víctima acceso a servicios de apoyo				
k. Promover el peritaje en jueces y juezas que atienden casos de violencia doméstica				
l. Mejorar la percepción de la víctima sobre la imparcialidad del proceso judicial				
m. Aplicar las leyes de manera correcta y consistente				
Otro aspecto no listado anteriormente. Por favor especifique el grado de importancia conforme a la escala utilizada. _____				

Sentencias y Disposiciones

ACEPTAR

26. Para los casos criminales que terminan en condena, indique con qué frecuencia usted determina imponer las siguientes medidas:

	Nunca (0%)	Rara vez (1-33%)	A veces (34-66%)	A menudo (67-99%)	Siempre (100%)
a. Programa de desvío					
b. Probatoria					
c. Cárcel					
d. Órdenes de protección					
e. Restitución					
f. Multa					
g. Servicio comunitario					
h. Libertad condicional					
Otra medida. Por favor especifique la frecuencia._____					

27. Para que una persona agresora se reeduque y readiestre conforme a lo que establece la Ley Núm. 54, ¿cuál diría usted que es la cantidad mínima de sesiones de terapias que debería recibir y cuál debería ser la duración promedio (en minutos) de cada sesión?
Número mínimo de sesiones de terapia: _____
Duración promedio de cada sesión de terapia (en minutos): _____

28. ¿Cómo se siente con respecto al cumplimiento con la Ley Núm. 54 por parte de los programas de reeducación y readiestramiento que ofrecen servicios a personas agresoras?

- ○ Muy satisfecha(o)
- ○ Satisfecha(o)
- ○ Ni satisfecha(o), ni insatisfecha(o)
- ○ Insatisfecha(o)
- ○ Muy insatisfecha(o)
- ○ No sabe
- ○ No desea contestar

Programas de Reeducación y Readiestramiento para Personas Agresoras

29. ¿Cuál es la cantidad típica de meses que usted ordena a una persona agresora asistir a un programa de reeducación y readiestramiento?

- ○ 12 meses
- ○ 18 meses
- ○ 24 meses
- ○ 30 meses
- ○ 36 meses
- ○ 42 meses
- ○ No sabe
- ○ No deseo contestar

30. ¿Qué importancia, si alguna, tuvieron las siguientes razones al momento de usted enviar a las personas agresoras en casos de violencia doméstica a programas de desvío?

	No es importante en lo absoluto	Algo importante	Muy importante	Extremadamente importante
a. Tratamiento o reeducación				
b. Lograr que la persona agresora asuma responsabilidad por sus actos				
c. Monitoreo				
d. Proporcionalidad (pena apropiada)				
e. Alternativa a encarcelación				
f. Otra. Por favor especifique el grado de importancia conforme a la escala utilizada. _____				

Supervisión y Cumplimiento

ACEPTAR

31. ¿Con cuánta frecuencia, si alguna, usted realiza vistas de seguimiento a personas que participan de programas de desvío para casos de violencia doméstica?

- ○ Nunca (0%)
- ○ Rara vez (1-33%)
- ○ A veces (34-66%)
- ○ A menudo (67-99%)
- ○ Siempre (100%)
- ○ No sabe
- ○ No deseo contestar

32. ¿Cuál de las siguientes actividades realiza usualmente en una vista de seguimiento? Marque todas las que apliquen.

- ○ Revisar cualquier arresto o violación a las órdenes del tribunal
- ○ Reiterar las consecuencias de incumplir las condiciones de los programas
- ○ Reiterar las responsabilidades relacionadas a no contactar a la víctima
- ○ Reiterar las consecuencias de incumplir con las órdenes del tribunal
- ○ Reconocer el buen comportamiento respecto al cumplimiento con órdenes del tribunal
- ○ Amonestar verbalmente a la persona agresora cuando está en incumplimiento
- ○ Imponer sanciones concretas debido a la falta de cumplimiento
- ○ Revisar informe(s) sometido(s) por el(la) oficial de probatoria
- ○ Conversar directamente con la persona agresora en corte
- ○ Otro. Especifique: _____

33. En los últimos doce (12) meses, ¿con qué frecuencia ha impuesto sanciones en respuesta al incumplimiento de programas de desvío cuando fiscalía o el(la) técnico socio-penal lo solicitó?

- ○ Nunca (0%)
- ○ Rara vez (1-33%)
- ○ A veces (34-66%)
- ○ A menudo (67-99%)
- ○ Siempre (100%)
- ○ No sabe
- ○ No deseo contestar

34. Cuando una persona agresora incumple con los programas de desvío, ¿con qué frecuencia usted realiza cada una de las siguientes acciones?

	Nunca (0%)	Rara vez (1-33%)	A veces (34-66%)	A menudo (67-99%)	Siempre (100%)	Desconoce
a. Ordena a la persona agresora a regresar al tribunal inmediatamente						
b. Amonesta verbalmente a la persona agresora						
c. Ordena a la persona agresora a regresar al programa de desvío, con créditos por las secciones ya asistidas						
d. Ordena a la persona agresora a regresar al programa de desvío, añadiéndole secciones a asistir						
e. Ordena a la persona agresora a reiniciar el programa de desvío						
f. Ordena a la persona agresora a comenzar un nuevo programa de desvío						
g. Señala vistas de seguimiento más frecuentes						
h. Revoca o enmienda las condiciones de libertad a prueba						
i. Ordena encarcelamiento						
j. Ordena prueba(s) periódicas de dopaje						
k. Otra acción: Por favor especifique:_____						

SERVICIOS A LA VÍCTIMA

35. ¿Qué disposiciones toma usted usualmente en el salón de sesiones para la seguridad de la víctima? (Marque todas las opciones que apliquen).

- ○ Separar el área de sentarse en el salón de sesiones
- ○ Escoltar fuera del tribunal antes del proceso judicial
- ○ Escoltar dentro del tribunal antes del proceso judicial
- ○ Escoltar dentro del tribunal después del proceso judicial
- ○ Escoltar fuera del tribunal después del proceso judicial
- ○ Ninguno
- ○ Otro. Especifique: _____

Percepción de la Violencia Doméstica

36. ¿Constituye violencia doméstica:

	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo	Desconoce
a. tomar decisiones sin consultar a la pareja?						
b. ignorar a la pareja frecuentemente o por largos períodos de tiempo?						
c. no permitir a la pareja trabajar fuera del hogar?						
d. insistir en saber dónde está la persona todo el tiempo?						
e. controlar la forma en que se viste la pareja?						
f. no permitir a la pareja socializar (relacionarse con sus familiares o con sus amistades)?						
g. acusar a la pareja de ser infiel?						
h. obligar a la pareja a compartir las contraseñas de sus cuentas electrónicas?						
i. no confiar en cómo su pareja utiliza el dinero, o quitarle a la pareja su sueldo/ingreso?						
j. tratar a la pareja como inferior?						
k. humillar a o burlarse de la pareja?						
l. gritarle a la pareja?						
m. amenazar						

verbalmente con hacer daño a su pareja o a alguien cercano(a) a la pareja?						
n. amenazar con algún arma (e.g., con cuchillo, pistola) u otro objeto contundente a su pareja?						
o. empujar o jamaquear a la pareja?						
p. golpear a su pareja con las manos (e.g., bofetada, puño, ahorcamiento) o patearla?						
q. golpear a su pareja con un objeto contundente?						
r. obligar a la pareja a sostener relaciones sexuales o algún acto sexual que la persona no desee?						
s. obligar a la pareja a retirar los cargos de violencia doméstica?						

CRITERIOS EVALUATIVOS

Con respecto a cada uno de los criterios evaluativos siguientes, indique cómo describiría el desempeño de los últimos doce (12) meses de la región judicial donde ejerce actualmente.

ACEPTAR

37. MONITOREO Y CUMPLIMIENTO

Criterio	Muy mala	Mala	Ni buena ni mala	Buena	Muy buena	Desconoce
a. La colaboración entre el Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación y su región.						
b. La supervisión por parte del Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación de las personas agresoras de violencia doméstica beneficiadas con el privilegio del desvío.						
c. El desempeño de los programas del Departamento de Corrección y Rehabilitación dirigidos a reeducar y readiestrar a las personas agresoras.						

38. SERVICIOS A LA VÍCTIMA

Criterio	Muy mala	Mala	Ni buena ni mala	Buena	Muy buena	Desconoce
a. La comodidad y seguridad de las instalaciones del tribunal desde la perspectiva de una víctima de violencia doméstica.						
b. La iniciativa y proactividad de abogadas y abogados de parte en recomendar programas de servicios para su clientela.						
c. La disponibilidad de **albergues** para víctimas de violencia doméstica						
d. La disponibilidad de **servicios psico-sociales** para víctimas de violencia doméstica						
e. La disponibilidad de **servicios de intercesoría legal** para víctimas de violencia doméstica						
f. La disponibilidad de servicios ofrecidos por entidades gubernamentales para víctimas de violencia doméstica (ej., ASUME, Departamento de la Familia, Depto. de la Vivienda)						
g. La calidad en la prestación de los servicios de apoyo ofrecidos por organizaciones que proveen ayuda a las víctimas de violencia doméstica.						

39. ADECUACIÓN Y PREPARACIÓN DE OTRO PERSONAL (DEL TRIBUNAL Y OTROS) Y PROCEDIMIENTOS RELACIONADOS A LOS CASOS

Policía de Puerto Rico (Estatal / Municipal)

Criterio	Muy mala	Mala	Ni buena ni mala	Buena	Muy buena	Desconoce
a. La cantidad suficiente de agentes de la Policía para atender adecuadamente el volumen de casos de violencia doméstica.						
b. Cuán completas se realizan las investigaciones criminales, en los casos de violencia doméstica, por parte de los y las agentes de la Policía de Puerto Rico						
c. La agilidad del proceso de diligenciamiento y notificaciones de los casos de violencia doméstica que llevaron a cabo los y las agentes de la Policía de Puerto Rico.						
d. Diligenciamientos con información completa al dorso de la orden de protección (Fecha, lugar y el modo de la entrega, y nombre de la persona a quien se hizo la entrega).						
e. Disponibilidad de un(a) oficial de enlace de la Policía de Puerto Rico.						
f. La agilidad con que el o la oficial de enlace de la Policía de Puerto Rico incautó armas de fuego.						

40. Departamento de Justicia

Criterio	Muy mala	Mala	Ni buena ni mala	Buena	Muy buena	Desconoce
a. La cantidad suficiente de fiscales para atender adecuadamente el volumen de casos de violencia doméstica.						
b. El uso por parte de la Fiscalía de información objetiva (datos y documentos) como evidencia en los casos de violencia doméstica.						
c. Hacer buen uso, por parte de la fiscalía, de las disposiciones de la Ley Núm. 54.						
d. El nivel de preparación de los y las fiscales para presentar el caso.						
e. Funcionamiento de los servicios de la Oficina de Compensación y Servicios a las Víctimas y Testigos de Delitos, del Departamento de Justicia.						

41. Tribunal de Primera Instancia

Criterio	Muy mala	Mala	Ni buena ni mala	Buena	Muy buena	Desconoce
a. El conocimiento mostrado por alguaciles y alguacilas acerca del manejo adecuado de los casos de violencia doméstica.						
b. La agilidad del proceso de diligenciamiento, citaciones y notificaciones de los casos de violencia doméstica que llevaron a cabo alguaciles y alguacilas del Tribunal General de Justicia.						
c. El nivel de cumplimiento de alguaciles y alguacilas en cuanto al plazo de veinticuatro (24) horas para informarle personalmente a la parte peticionaria, que se ha efectuado el diligenciamiento de una orden de protección a la parte peticionada						
d. La frecuencia con la que la parte peticionada fue notificada sobre su vista, a tiempo y de manera correcta, la primera vez.						

42. En su opinión, ¿en qué aspectos, si alguno, debe mejorar la atención y el manejo de los casos de violencia doméstica en la región judicial donde ejerce actualmente?

1. _____
_____
_____
_____
2. _____
_____
_____
_____
3. _____
_____
_____
_____