Gender, Law Enforcement, and Access to Justice: Evidence from All-Women Police Stations in India

NIRVIKAR JASSAL  Stanford University

Can gender-based “enclaves” facilitate women’s access to justice? I examine all-female police stations in India and test whether group-specific institutions assist victims of gender-based violence and female officers in law enforcement. I create an original dataset based on Indian police reports and leverage the manner in which all-women police stations were opened in Haryana state to estimate their causal effect. The creation of enclaves in law enforcement does not increase registered crime. In fact, the intervention lowers the caseload at standard stations by justifying the deflection of gendered crimes, reduces responsibilities for policewomen, and increases travel cost for victims seeking redress. The institutions formalize the “counseling” of victims by encouraging reconciliation with abusers at the expense of arrest of suspects, and survey evidence suggests that all-women stations might not be associated with positive perceptions of policewomen. Broadly, I argue that representation as separation may have unintended consequences.

INTRODUCTION

Women can face a variety of barriers in their attempt not only to access government services but also justice more broadly (Agnes, Chandra, and Basu 2016; Duflo 2005). While representation for women in powerful positions has been shown to improve service provision for female citizens and increase comfort with approaching administrators (Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004; Iyer et al. 2012), this literature has been restricted to quotas that incorporate women into existing state institutions. Others have theorized that representation in the form of creating separate group-specific arrangements may lead to more substantive outcomes; in such settings, minorities would be entirely unconstrained by the majority (Jensenius 2015; Karpowitz and Mendelberg 2018) and could therefore efficiently provide services to in-groups (Jensenius 2017).

A variety of group-specific measures have emerged as mechanisms to articulate and accommodate the preferences of women—for example, all-female parties in Ireland (Cowell-Meyers 2014), female self-help groups in India (Prillaman 2017), women’s justice centers in Peru (Kavanaugh, Sviatschi, and Trako 2017), and even gender violence courts with female judges in El Salvador (Lin, Burke, and Brigida 2018). The notion behind establishing group-specific mechanisms is not new. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the U.S. feminist movement began demanding separate spheres from men, which led to the rise of all-female institutions in health, banking, politics, legal aid, and education across the United States as a way to empower women (Craig 1994; Freedman 1979). During this era, all-female parties like the Woman’s Peace Party were seen as better able to represent women’s policy preferences (Craig 1994); similarly, separate police stations called Women’s Bureaus in American cities were viewed as effective venues to accommodate victims of sexual violence as well as increase police-women’s participation in the force (Owings 1925; Schulz 2004).1

1 The Women’s Bureaus, including of the New York Police Department, were physically separate institutions run by policewomen that catered to cases involving women (and children), including domestic violence and sexual assault. For policemen, this was a boon because the Bureaus kept what were perceived as less urgent crimes outside standard police stations (Appier 1998; Woman’s Bureau, Police Department, D.C.: Hearings Before the United States S. Comm. on the District of Columbia, and S. Subcomm. on S. 4308, and H. Comm. on the District of Columbia, Subcomm. on S. 4308, 68th Cong. (1925); Woman’s Bureau, Police Department, D.C.: Hearings Before the United States S. Comm. on the District of Columbia, 69th Cong. (1926)).

Nirvikar Jassal, Postdoctoral Fellow, King Center on Global Development, Stanford University, njassal@stanford.edu.

I thank Raminder Singh Jassal. This research was made possible with the help of a Minerva Peace and Security Fellowship from the US Institute of Peace (USIP), an Allan Sharlin Award from the Institute for International Studies at UC Berkeley, grants from the Poverty Action Lab at MIT, and a Gender Research Fund from the UC Berkeley Department of Economics. Components of this research have been reviewed and approved by UC Berkeley’s Committee for Protection of Human Subjects (IRB Protocol # 2017-08-10187). For insights and assistance, I acknowledge Pradeep Chhibber, Alison Post, Cecilia Mo, Supreet Kaur, Fred Finan, Rob Blair, Michael Anderson, Janaki Bakhle, Courtenay Conrad, Joel Middleton, Shiv Jha-Mathur, Laura Stoker, Smita Tewari Jassal, Pranav Gupta, Olivia Bergman, Tanu Kumar, Emmy Lindstam, Josh Kalla, Francesca Jensensius, Saad Guzar, Martin Kaplan, Wendy Kaplan, Sarah Reynolds, Nicholas Dirks, Jake Grumbach, Stanley Bergman, Marion Bergman, Itika Gupta, Ted Miguel, Kimuli Kasara, Maria Victoria Murillo, John Huber, Saumitra Jha, seminar participants at CaliWEPS 2019, and fellows at the Center for Global Development in Washington, D.C. I am appreciative of Sanjay Kumar at the Center for the Study of Developing Societies and Vipul Madgul at Common Cause. I am indebted to Hanif Qureshi and Rakesh Gupta. Replication files are available at the American Political Science Review Dataverse: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/VRH88ND.

Received: October 07, 2019; revised: June 25, 2020; accepted: July 02, 2020.

American Political Science Review (2020) 114, 4, 1035–1054

doi:10.1017/S0003055520000684 © The Author(s), 2020. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the American Political Science Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.
While fully abolished by midcentury in the United States (Lewis 1967), specialized police stations for women have been established across the Global South in Argentina, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, Ghana, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and the Philippines such that female victims of violence can be accommodated by policewomen, potentially separated from patriarchal attitudes (Perova and Reynolds 2017).\(^2\) Afghanistan has established Family Response Units staffed by policewomen trained by the UN to tackle domestic violence, and Brazil has created hundreds of all-women police stations called Delegacia de Defesa da Mulher.

Can such institutions promote women’s participation in the police as well as increase victims’ formal access to justice? This study is situated in India; the country houses the largest number of all-women stations in the world and is a setting with low levels of police legitimacy where citizens, especially women, are reluctant about approaching law enforcement (Stepan, Linz, and Yadav 2011). Methodologically, I create a fine-grained dataset of crime based on millions of individual-level police station reports—a substantial advance on previous studies of violence in the Subcontinent—and leverage the manner in which all-women stations were implemented in an Indian state (Haryana). I also use official logs, a large-scale survey, and eight months of ethnographic research in and around police stations across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana.

I find that all-women police stations do not increase levels of registered crime or change the status of cases in the criminal justice system. Instead, they reduce gendered cases accommodated at standard police stations by enabling (male) officers to pass cases on. The intervention erects barriers for victims in their attempt to access justice by increasing travel cost. I provide qualitative evidence that such bodies promote the counseling of complainants at the expense of registra-
tion of cases or arrest of (male) suspects. A large-scale survey reveals a negative association between proximity to all-women stations and particular notions about policewomen. I also demonstrate that all-women stations lower the formal responsibilities for policewomen working in the agency, preventing them from gaining the same experience as men. This may, in turn, hinder women’s advancement in the police bureaucracy and perpetuate stereotyping.

Representation can be designed on the basis of inclusion (e.g., via quotas and affirmative action that bring diverse groups into existing institutions) or through separation (e.g., in the form of group-specific enclaves). I argue that identity-based enclaves may counter the goals of representation by leading to the segregation rather than integration of gender issues. The study has implications for several strands of research including on violence against women (Htun and Weldon 2012; Iyer et al. 2012), bureaucratic performance and service delivery (Gulzar and Pasquale 2017; Keiser et al. 2002), and the emerging literature on citizen interactions with law enforcement in the Global South (Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019; Karim 2020). The findings also contribute to the literature on policies of inclusion by showing how outcomes greatly depend on institutional design (Jensenius 2017; Parthasarathy 2017).

This article is structured as follows. I review existing literature on representation as separation and then provide a background on gender and policing in India. After presenting the First-Information-Report dataset, I describe the functioning of all-women police stations in north India, and Haryana state in particular. I then probe the impact of such bodies vis-à-vis five outcomes, including with the help of an interrupted time-series analysis (Hausman and Rapson 2018). Finally, I point to two critical mechanisms and then conclude.

**REPRESENTATION, SEPARATION, AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

Gender representation in administrative agencies is understudied; moreover, existing research on the topic presents ambiguous evidence about its impact. It is especially unclear as to whether group-specific arrangements for women would generate positive outcomes.

Literature from the Global North does show that gender representation in the police increases the likelihood women approach law enforcement (Riccucci, Van Ryzin, and Lavenna 2014). Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) contend that the presence of policewomen in the force is associated with higher rates of arrest for sexual assault. This is may be particularly true when policewomen are conferred front-line authority (Andrews and Johnston Miller 2013). Policewomen sensitize policemen to gender biases, and women feel more comfortable reporting crimes to policewomen (Miller and Segal 2019).

However, research on policing in deeply patriarchal settings paints a more complicated picture. Karim et al. (2018) find no evidence that gender balancing in law enforcement increases sensitivity to women’s issues in Liberia. Survey experiments with Ugandan officers show that the presence of women in the police may not improve service quality and policewomen are neither more ethical nor reliable (Wagner et al. 2017). Cooper (2018) finds that citizens in Papua New Guinea may turn to traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in settings where policewomen have a prominent role.

Some contend that separate spheres for women in the criminal justice system may go farther in facilitating claim-making, promoting policewomen’s professionaliza-
tion, and addressing violence against women. Kavanaugh, Sviatschi, and Trako (2017) find that women’s justice centers in Peru improve female welfare and reduce domestic violence. Amaral, Bhaltola, and Prakash (2018) suggest that group-specific institutions in India are associated with greater levels of crime registration. Research from Tamil Nadu suggests that all-women stations improve policewomen’s career.

---

2 These are distinct from Women Protection Cells within standard police stations (Blair, Karim, and Morse 2019).
trajectory in the bureaucracy (Natarajan 2008), and Pruitt (2016) suggests that all-female police units in Liberia help to normalize women’s participation in regulatory agencies. Perova and Reynolds (2017) persuasively argue that Brazilian all-women police stations may have an overall weak impact in terms of addressing intimate partner violence, but may be effective in metropolitan settings where there are less traditional social norms.

However, qualitative studies from Brazil are more cautionary about the idea of separate spheres. Santos (2004; 2005) describes how some Brazilian feminists were skeptical of all-women police stations when they were opened in São Paulo precisely because the “separatist strategy” was rooted in the essentialist notion that women, by their very nature, were more considerate toward in-groups. This skepticism may have been well founded because, Santos (2004) finds, female officers invariably blame the victim and do not believe sexual violence to be on the same par as other crimes. Isolating female officers into “women’s spaces” without any “institutionalized gender-based training” may not always be effective; the “separatist strategy” fails to acknowledge that policewomen and victims may have opposing interests (50–51).

Hautzinger (2007) and Nelson (1996) echo this argument. Hautzinger (2007) shows that policewomen sometimes overcompensate in an attempt to match a norm set by a hypermasculine police subculture, and they may be particularly dismissive of complaints related to gender-based violence. Relatedly, Nelson (1996) makes the case that female officers may be frustrated that they are associated with crimes perceived as “minor” when serving in Brazilian all-women stations; this could lower job performance because policewomen may channel their dissatisfaction about being separated from “mainstream” police work toward complainants.

These insights contrast with political science literature on gender-based enclaves and deliberation. Mendelberg, Karpowitz, and Oliphant (2014) argue that all-female enclaves can empower women by removing members of an authoritative identity (men) and facilitate responsiveness to women’s interests. Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2018, 1137) note that, “In groups consisting entirely of their own members, disadvantaged individuals may be best able to develop their own capacity, and come to articulate their own perspectives and preferences. . . . In such enclaves, women may provide each other with mutual psychological support, further enhancing their personal empowerment. Women may focus on their distinctive concerns as women, giving them the autonomy to prioritize issues that may otherwise be shunted aside.”

Yet, one can imagine negative outcomes associated with enclaves, especially because segregation is in the design. Let us suppose that a homogeneous enclave for women is created in a legislature (Mendelberg, Karpowitz, and Oliphant 2014). Research on Latin American legislatures shows that women are already isolated on committees related to social welfare or women’s issues and marginalized from those related to national security or foreign policy (Michelle Heath, Schwindt-Bayer, and Taylor-Robinson 2005). It is therefore plausible that the creation of an enclave might perpetuate such occupational segregation and provide standard committees an excuse to disregard or ignore gender issues entirely. Further, Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2018) note that women in enclaves are more likely to focus on “care” topics like “family” rather than those of “distinctive interest to men” such as “finance.” Yet, if women in enclaves do not adequately engage in non-gendered issues, this may hurt their career advancement. As Sapiro (1981, 712) notes, on the pretext of empowerment, segregation can “ghettoize” rather than facilitate women’s substantive representation by pushing gender issues away from the mainstream and into the periphery.

Applying this logic to law enforcement, the creation of all-women stations may enable standard police stations to turn away victims of sexual violence by using the institutions as an excuse to lighten their own caseload, thereby hindering victims from speedily accessing justice. The separation of policewomen may also fail to improve police services if officers continue to hold the belief that reconciliation of victims with abusers is preferable to arrest of suspects (Sherman and Berk 1984). In fact, rather than improving policewomen’s professionalization (Natarajan 2008), enclaves may associate them with specific roles, thereby reinforcing stereotypes that women do not have the skills to carry out tasks that are not gendered (Martin 1999).

I make a distinction between two categories: “enclave” and “inclusive” representation. Quotas or affirmative action recruitment are forms of “inclusive” representation, whereas group-specific institutions such as women-only courts or police stations can be referred to as “enclave” representation. I attempt to reconcile the sometimes contradictory existing evidence on representation as separation by probing whether the creation of enclaves in law enforcement affects (a) gendered crime registration, (b) cases investigated by policewomen, (c) cases with female complainants, (d) the disbursal of cases to the courts, and (e) perceptions of female officers.

CONTEXT

Gender and Policing in India

Indian law enforcement is divided between an elite bureaucracy called the Indian Police Service and state/provincial officials. Policing on the ground in terms of responding to citizen complaints, registering crimes, and carrying out investigations is done almost entirely by the provincial ranks that serve at local police stations called thanas. These institutions are generally run by an inspector called a station house officer, who is supported by sub-inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors,
and constables. Typically, the station house officer hears a victim’s complaint; a crime report—also known as a First-Information-Report or FIR—may then be lodged and assigned to an officer for investigation. Registration of a crime report is a citizen’s first step towards formal access to justice.

For years, the federal government has promoted the policy of increasing the number of women in law enforcement (Sabha 2012). Most states have approved a 33% quota for women in their forces, and several have established all-women police stations, of which there are more than 500 in operation (Figure 1). All-women stations specialize in tackling crimes like dowry harassment, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, acid attacks, and so on. Aside from Tamil Nadu, all-women stations are usually located in the administrative headquarters of districts in states that adopted the policy. Policewomen can be posted at a standard station or all-women station, the main distinction being that the latter is run entirely by female staff. All-women stations are additive; a victim may register a crime in the standard police station near where the crime occurred or to the all-women station in the district headquarters. There is no obligation that women must register crime at all-women stations.

Additional resources. Such cases coincide with physical and emotional abuse. Yet, such crimes are not typically seen as serious by the Indian criminal justice system. In 2014 and 2017, the top court, siding with “men’s rights activists” ruled that Section 498-A was brought forward by “disgruntled wives” and should avoid being brought before the police directly—Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, Appeal No. 1277 (Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, 2014); Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh, Appeal No. 1265 (Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, 2017).

5 Haryana, after August 8, 2017, became the second exception.

4 A commonly registered case in police stations falls under Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code. The section states that it is illegal for a “husband or relative of husband of a woman to subject her to cruelty.” It is typically invoked in the context of dowry harassment, which refers to forcing a bride or her family to pay the husband (and his family) for the privilege of marrying the groom. While this occurs prior to marriage, a substantial number of such cases take place after marriage whereby a man harasses his wife for additional resources. Such cases coincide with physical and emotional abuse. Yet, such crimes are not typically seen as serious by the Indian criminal justice system. In 2014 and 2017, the top court, siding with “men’s rights activists” ruled that Section 498-A was brought forward by “disgruntled wives” and should avoid being brought before the police directly—Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, Appeal No. 1277 (Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, 2014); Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh, Appeal No. 1265 (Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, 2017).
The establishment of all-women stations is an implicit acknowledgment that law enforcement can be dismissive of sexual violence. All-women stations are based on Indian policy makers’ presumption that policewomen are fairer and more empathetic toward other women (Sabha 2012). Some lawmakers have noted that, even with increased gender representation in the force, policewomen might still be constrained from channeling their perceived skills in relation to in-groups; instead, the separation of female officers in group-specific institutions would potentially create a space removed from patriarchy. Policy makers have argued, “The role of women police in promoting gender sensitivity, dealing with causes related to women and promoting friendly behavioral sub-culture in the police are considered crucial” (Sabha 2012, 9) or “The setting up of specialized women police stations has been seen as a progressive step as issues like domestic violence, dowry harassment, and child abuse invariably end up at police stations. Women police, by their nature, are better equipped to take a sympathetic approach” (Sabha 2012, 14). The intuition behind enclaves is that they would improve policing quality (e.g., registration rates of gender-based violence), and therefore perceptions of law enforcement.

The First-Information-Report (FIR) Dataset

Data on crime in India typically come from official statistics published by the National Crime and Records Bureau. However, these statistics have been known to be unreliable and susceptible to manipulation (Wilkinson 2010). The present study introduces a new dataset.

In 2009, following the Mumbai terror attacks, the Indian government initiated the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS). The goal of the project was to create a national database of criminals as well as electronically link police stations and crime reports. Following a 2016 Supreme Court ruling that made police records accessible, I harvested and parsed into a readable file crime registrations from that made police records accessible, I harvested and parsed into a readable file crime registrations from

ALL-WOMEN STATIONS AND THE HARYANA INTERVENTION

At a descriptive level, what kinds of cases do all-women police stations typically register? Figures 2 and 3 present the locations of police stations as well as the number of gendered crimes registered at standard and all-women stations across Bihar and five districts of Uttar Pradesh from 2015–2018. The size of the dots represents the intensity (count) of registered crime. Panel A of Figures 2 and 3 show that crimes registered at all-women stations (red dots) represent just 2.7% of gendered cases in Bihar and 1% in Uttar Pradesh. In panel B, when excluding crimes related to dowry harassment or Section 498-A, the red dots virtually vanish, and the numbers drop to 1% and 0%, respectively. In other words, in two of India’s largest states, crime registered in all-women police stations accounts for a fraction of all gendered cases, and the cases that are registered relate to offenses involving a woman’s spouse and his family.

To investigate the causal effect of all-women stations, I turn to Haryana, which serves as the only case with which to examine the effect of all-women stations using individual-level crime data before and after the implementation of the policy. The state is known for high levels of violence against women, honor killings, and a skewed sex ratio as a result of female infanticide/feticide. Survey data show that 88% of women in the state express being

---

6 The police are exempted from disclosing details on “sensitive” crimes like violent sexual offenses and terrorism, yet, even if personally identifiable details are withheld, information about the time or place that an offense occurred as well as details about laws violated are available.

7 These data include only the date of registration, laws broken, and the status of the case.

8 Police officers do have some discretion as to which reported complaints are registered; the dataset contains every case that the police formally registered/investigated.

9 Names that begin with the prefix “Shrimati” (Miss/Mrs.), end with “Kaur,” “Kumari,” or “Devi,” or begin with first names like “Mee-naksi” were coded as female.

10 Aligarh, Agra, Azamgarh, Ambedkar Nagar, and Amethi.
afraid of their spouse, 10 percentage points more than the national average (Appendix Table A18).

Haryana is the newest state to adopt all-women police stations; 20 institutions were opened in each of the state’s district headquarters on August 28, 2015, one year after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power, and eight months after the establishment of the CCTNS system.\textsuperscript{11} There was no particular demand for all-women stations among citizens; in fact, some NGOs and feminist associations expressed concern

\textsuperscript{11} Haryana had had an all-women station in Sonipat district since 1995. See Appendix Table A1.
about such a top-down effort at the expense of hiring more policewomen to work in standard police stations (Gilmore et al. 2015).

The institutions were opened on the same day across all districts, twenty-four days after a memo was issued by the state government that new segregated stations be built (Appendix Figure A3). For public relations (PR) reasons, the stations were opened on the day of the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan, a holiday that celebrates women’s protection. Foundation stones outside the police stations record the day as well as the names of the government officials that were present for the inauguration. Each police station came equipped with 30–40 policewomen (Mishra 2015; PTI 2015), who were transferred from other offices. Appendix Table A1 confirms that the stations began registering/investigating their first crime reports between August 28 and September 3, 2015, highlighting the fact that the institutions came equipped with among the most important resources: the CCTNS system.

In addition, Haryana did not implement a 33% gender quota in the police. Immediately before and after the intervention, the rate of policewomen serving in the force was stable (Appendix Figure A19). Moreover, over half of Haryana’s citizens have knowledge of all-women stations, the highest rate for any state in the union (Appendix Figure A14). Haryana happens to be a smaller state, and a majority of its residents live close to the special institutions; this is desirable because if all-women stations failed to have an impact, it would less likely be a factor of lack of awareness.

I carry out an interrupted time-series analysis, a form of regression discontinuity in which time is the running variable (Anderson 2014; Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2001). Such designs have been known to produce estimates close to experimental benchmarks (St. Clair, Cook, and Hallberg 2014). The discretion of the researcher is minimal in terms of coding treated and untreated units (Mummolo 2018). The high frequency of data used, the exact moment of intervention, and the fact that the implementation of all-women police stations was unrelated to areas in which crime was increasing or decreasing, supports this design.

OUTCOMES

I study the period in Haryana from January 1, 2015, (when crime reports were made electronic) to August 8, 2017.14 With the universe of registered cases, I examine the change in the rate of registered gendered crime15 on and subsequent to August 28, 2015. Gendered crimes are those that invoke at least one of the laws listed in the 2015 Haryana order (Appendix Figure A1 and Table A2). I also examine the proportion of crimes investigated by policewomen and cases with female victims. Formally, I estimate the following equation:

$$Y_t = \alpha + \beta_{awps} + \beta_{days \cdot awps} + \delta X_t + f(\text{days}) + \epsilon_t,$$

where $Y_t$ is the outcome for each day $t$ since January 1, 2015, $awps$ is an indicator for when all-women stations came into effect, and $\beta$ is the coefficient of interest. $Days$ are days with 0 when the intervention begins and positive or negative otherwise. If the assumptions underpinning the RD are valid and $\epsilon_t$ does not change discontinuously on the day of intervention, the estimate $\beta$ should be unbiased. Nevertheless, to increase precision and take into account seasonality, I include $X_t$ as controls for the year, month, and day of the week when looking at all days from 2015–2017 (Anderson 2014). I include $f(\text{days})$ that represent quadratic and cubic functions on either side of the treatment threshold. Because expanding the time window increases the probability of bias, I run similar models in tighter bandwidths of 200- and 100-days around the intervention date and estimate HAC standard errors (Newey and West 1987). Finally, I carry out a placebo test by estimating the equation with August 28, 2016, as the day of “treatment”—that is, one year after the intervention.

Cases of Gendered Crime

Figure 4—which includes the locations of Haryana’s police stations—highlights the spatial change in registered gendered crime the week before and after the intervention in the state. During the week of August 21–28, 2015, almost all gendered crimes were registered at standard police stations. The week following the creation of all-women stations, 32% of registered gendered crime was now tackled at the alternate venues. Yet, in aggregate terms, the total number of cases registered remained virtually identical across both weeks.16

Figure 5 presents the temporal change in registered gendered crime. Figure 5, panels A, B, and C include the 265 standard stations in the state as well as the 20 all-women stations created 239 days after January 1, 2015. Panel A highlights the absolute number of gendered crimes registered/investigated for each day and shows no level change. Panel B reflects the rate of gendered crime by highlighting its seasonality; whereas there is an upward trend long after the intervention (approximately 750 days following January 1, 2015),

---

12 Interviews confirm that the police stations had at least one inspector as the station house officer, 2–5 sub-inspectors, and several deputies such as assistant sub-inspectors and head constables at their inauguration. There may have been a shortage of female constables, but in the Indian police system, constables are not investigators and deputies such as assistant sub-inspectors and head constables at their inauguration. There may have been a shortage of female constables, but in the Indian police system, constables are not investigators and

13 Policewomen working in standard police stations including the women’s cells and help lines in those units were moved (Mishra 2015; TISS 2015).

14 After August 8, 2017, the Haryana government unevenly began expanding the all-women police station policy across the state’s subdivisions. See Appendix Figure A2.

15 The total number of gendered crimes registered each day divided by the population of Haryana according to the 2011 census and multiplying by 100,000.

16 The National Crime Record Bureau’s annual statistics also confirm that the implementation of all-women stations did not significantly affect the number of registered crimes against women in 2016 compared with the previous year (Appendix Table A8).
total crime is also increasing during this period (Appendix Figure A8). When examining the proportion of gendered crimes (daily number of gendered crimes registered divided by the total registrations per day), we see that all-women stations did not have an impact. The addition of new specialized police stations did not significantly affect the count, rate, or proportion of registered gendered crimes.

However, when we restrict the sample to only the 265 standard police stations, we find sharp discontinuities in Figure 5, panels D, E, and F. In panel D, we see a drop in the absolute number of gendered crimes recorded per day, and panel E highlights a steep decline in the rate of gendered crimes registered. The proportion of gendered crimes in panel F drops substantially, and does not return to its original level for the subsequent two years. Broadly, panels D, E, and F show that the incoming caseload of gendered crimes was now moved out of standard police stations; either female victims of violence began visiting enclaves of their own volition overnight or they were turned away from standard police stations and asked to travel to the new institutions for justice.

Table 1 presents formal tests across a variety of specifications and bandwidths. Columns 1–3 reveal that all-women stations did not have a positive effect on the rate of gendered crime registered; however, columns 4–6 reveal that the rate of gendered registrations decreased in standard stations between 0.026 to 0.048 (the mean daily rate of gendered crimes registered in the state prior to the intervention was 0.098 per 100,000 citizens). In other words, the registered rate of gendered crimes at standard police stations dropped between 27–49% immediately after the opening of all-women stations.17 Figure 6 examines heterogeneous treatment effects graphically across individual crimes, and Appendix Tables A4 and A5 present the same in a regression framework; the pattern is consistent across specific crimes. The preintervention mean rates (per 100,000 persons) for dowry, rape, and child sexual assault were 0.038, 0.014, and 0.011; these crimes saw significant declines, by some estimates upwards of half, at standard police stations across the state.

**Cases Investigated by Female Officers**

Even if all-women stations are not associated with an increase in registered crime, enclaves may promote substantive representation by augmenting the influence and participation of female investigators in the force.18 I examine the monthly count as well as proportion of cases that listed a policewoman as an investigating officer before and after the intervention. Strikingly, Figure 7 reveals that from August to September 2015, the absolute number of cases investigated by policewomen precipitously declines. When examining the daily proportion of cases assigned to policewomen, we see that the level declines following the intervention, and it does not fully return to its original level for the two-year duration after.

17 As expected, a placebo test reveals there is no such decline in gendered crimes in standard police stations one year after the treatment (Appendix Table A3).
18 See Appendix Table A7 for descriptive statistics. Policewomen investigate 1% of all crime, while the percentage of crime reports with a female complainant is less than 10%.
FIGURE 5. Temporal Change in Gendered Crime Registrations Pre/Post AWPS Intervention

A) FIRs Per Day
Total Cases = 24,345 (Stations = 285)

B) Rate Per Day

C) Proportion Per Day

D) FIRs Per Day (SPS)
Total Cases = 19,630 (Stations = 265)

E) Rate Per Day (SPS)

F) Proportion Per Day (SPS)

Note: The figure plots the count, rate, and proportion of gendered crime for each day from January 1, 2015–August 8, 2017. Zero represents January 1, 2015, when CCTNS was made operational, and the vertical line indicates the day of intervention (Day 239). Panel A depicts the count of gendered crime reports (FIRs) registered per day, panel B the daily gendered crime rate (stable denominator), and panel C the daily proportion of gendered crimes (changing denominator). Panels D, E, and F plot the same at standard police stations (SPS). The curved lines are the predicted value generated by locally weighted (LOESS) regression on sequential day numbers, with no adjustment for covariates. Panels A, B, and C reveal that the intervention did not affect registered gendered crime, but it significantly reduced such cases at standard police stations (panels D, E, and F).
Why do policewomen get fewer cases after the intervention? Prior to the establishment of enclaves, policewomen—which according to official data accounted for 9% of the force (Appendix Table A20)—were posted at standard police stations where they may have been tasked with a variety of crimes. However, after the intervention, because female officers were deployed to staff all-women stations and the institutions could only accommodate a specific subset of crimes, female investigators became less likely to carry out diverse forms of police work. In fact, when asked about how all-women stations affect one’s advancement in the police, a policewoman in Uttar Pradesh was upfront and said, “It’s not liked this we are fished for. We don’t ask postings. The senior SP [superintendent] posted us. I’ve also been the station officer of a normal station. I prefer the gent’s police station. We … can’t handle basic day-to-day cases here.” Similarly, with an air of disgruntlement, another policewoman said:

Murder cases are not investigated at women’s police stations. At the other police station, I was serving in, I was working on a murder case. They [policemen] are now carrying out the investigation while I am posted here. If they ask me to work on it, I will. I recently went to visit a 2-year-old that was raped [and killed] at the hospital/medical college and interrogated the accused. But they [policemen] didn’t end up giving me the case. They are now doing it themselves. So, I said fine, keep doing it! I’ll get other kinds of cases.

While scholars have theorized that all-female enclaves enable women to develop capacity and experience because they are unconstrained by men, this may not be the case with all-women police stations. Assuming upward mobility within an organization is derived from an equitable division of labor where there is no discrepancy between men and women’s work (Babcock et al. 2017), gender-based enclaves may promote occupational segregation by hindering female administrators’ potential for professionalization.22

### Cases With Female Complainants

The establishment of all-women stations could potentially increase comfort with the police among complainants and affect the likelihood that women’s cases are registered, even for non-gendered crimes. I measure the level change in such cases following the intervention; as demonstrated in the second row of Table 2 (or Appendix Figure A9), the proportion of cases (including non-gendered crimes) that had a female complainant did not significantly change following the intervention.

#### TABLE 1. Effect of AWPS on Rate of Gendered Crime Registered

|               | SPS + AWPS | SPS |
|---------------|------------|-----|
|               | (1)        | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|               | (linear)   | (quadratic) | (cubic) | (linear) | (quadratic) | (cubic) |
| \(\hat{\beta}\) | 0.006      | 0.005 | −0.009 | −0.029*** | −0.027*** | −0.042*** |
| (standard error) | (0.005) | (0.008) | (0.010) | (0.005) | (0.007) | (0.009) |
| Observations  | 949        | 949  | 949  | 949  | 949  | 949  |
| 200-day bandwidth \(\hat{\beta}\) | 0.008      | 0.011 | 0.010 | −0.030*** | −0.028** | −0.029** |
| (standard error) | (0.008) | (0.011) | (0.015) | (0.008) | (0.012) | (0.015) |
| Observations  | 199        | 199  | 199  | 199  | 199  | 199  |
| 100-day bandwidth \(\hat{\beta}\) | 0.013      | −0.003 | −0.019* | −0.026** | −0.045*** | −0.048*** |
| (standard error) | (0.012) | (0.013) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.011) | (0.007) |
| Observations  | 99         | 99   | 99   | 99   | 99   | 99   |

Note: SPS and AWPS refer to standard and all-women police stations, respectively. Models in the top row control for year, month, and day of the week. Models in 200- and 100-day bandwidths control for day of the week. HAC standard errors (Newey–West) are in parentheses for all models. * \(p < 0.10\), ** \(p < 0.05\), *** \(p < 0.01\).

19 This figure is inclusive of the representation of female constables that have no investigative power; the representation of female investigators was slightly lower.
20 Personal interview, AWPS Jaunpur, September 27, 2017. The fact that the policewoman described the standard police station as a “gent’s” station is emblematic of the way in which segregation has also affected the bureaucratic jargon whereby now a standard station is seen exclusively as a man’s domain.
21 Personal interview, AWPS Faridabad (2), November 24, 2017.
22 I use the term professionalization rather than promotion because the latter may come with seniority-based progression in Indian public agencies (Bertrand et al. 2020).
FIGURE 6. Temporal Change in Individual Gendered Crime Rates Pre/Post AWPS Intervention

Panel A): Dowry Harassment
Total Cases = 9,147

Panel B): Rape
Total Cases = 3,353

Panel C): Child Sexual Assault
Total Cases = 2,868

Panel D): Dowry Harassment (SPS)
Total Cases = 7,447

Panel E): Rape (SPS)
Total Cases = 2,171

Panel F): Child Sexual Assault (SPS)
Total Cases = 1,942

Note: The figure plots the count, rate, and proportion of gendered crime for each day from January 1, 2015–August 8, 2017. Zero represents January 1, 2015, when CCTNS was made operational, and the vertical line indicates the day of intervention (Day 239). Panels A, B, and C depict the daily rate of crimes that invoked Section 498-A, Section 376, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act (Child Sexual Assault), respectively. Panels D, E, and F plot the same at standard police stations (SPS). The curved lines show the predicted value generated by locally weighted (LOESS) regression on sequential day numbers, with no adjustment for covariates. Panels A, B, and C reveal that the intervention did not affect individual crimes, but it significantly reduced such cases at standard police stations (panels D, E, and F).
Yet, if the proportion of crimes assigned to policewomen diminishes following the intervention, but cases with female complainants remain stable, then the effect of all-women stations is that policewomen become less likely to accommodate female victims. In other words, if female complainants sought to be accommodated by policewomen for cases with no gendered subtext close to the crime/incident, this would now become less likely after the intervention. If, however, complainants were also sexually assaulted and visited the all-women station, only then would they likely be assisted by in-group officers. If one of the goals of gender representation is to increase interaction between and responsiveness toward in-groups on the part of administrators (Mansbridge 1999; Pitkin 1967),

---

23 Another test is a level change in the proportion of cases with both a female complainant and investigator; Appendix Figure A10 graphically shows a decline in such cases.
all-women stations may have an adverse effect by associating female officers with gendered crimes only rather than women complainants more generally.

**Case Statuses in the Criminal Justice System**

Policewomen in enclaves may be more invested in or concerned about the status of gendered crimes, and they may try to ensure that suspects are charged or cases are sent to the courts once crimes have actually been registered. To investigate this systematically, I merged crime reports with case status records from the Haryana police, which officers update for crimes that they have been tasked with. Most cases (85%) are updated as “chargesheet” or “canceled.” Chargesheet refers to whether an individual has been charged, whereas “canceled” denotes whether a case is believed to be false and therefore not sent to the judiciary.

Figure 8 reveals there is no change in the statuses of gendered crimes in the criminal justice system in 200- and 100-day bandwidths. In fact, there is no substantive change even when factoring in all the days before and after the intervention (Appendix Figure A12). Put differently, even though cases of gender violence at standard police stations were significantly reduced overnight, the expansion of state capacity in the form of additional institutions did not make it more likely that suspects are charged or fewer cases are canceled. Canceled cases typically consist of two categories: (a) cancellations because officers believe the victim is lying, and (b) cases withdrawn by victims, often after pressure from family or the community (Qureshi and Kim 2018). As before, approximately 30% of gendered cases were canceled by the police.

**Attitudes Toward Female Officers**

As a final outcome, I examine whether enclaves are associated with positive attitudes toward female officers. I turn to the first nationally representative survey on policing in India, carried out in 2017. Additional details, including of the sampling strategy, are available in the Appendix. Unlike the previous outcomes, I treat the survey as an observational exercise rather than a causal argument. The usual caveats apply: respondents that say an all-women station opened in their locality may not be valid counterfactuals for those that said “no.”

---

24 Less frequently, officers categorize a case as “under investigation” or “untraced” if evidence is still being collected or suspect/s could not be found.

25 Additional details, including of the sampling strategy, are available in the Appendix.

26 Unlike the previous outcomes, I treat the survey as an observational exercise rather than a causal argument. The usual caveats apply: respondents that say an all-women station opened in their locality may not be valid counterfactuals for those that said “no.”

---

**FIGURE 8. Status of Gendered Crimes in Haryana Criminal Justice System Pre/Post AWPS Intervention**

|          | A) (200-Day Bandwidth) | B) (100-Day Bandwidth) |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Cancelled | 0.31                   | 0.31                   |
| Chargesheet | 0.29               | 0.28                   |
| Under Investigation | 0.06               | 0.06                   |
| Untraced  | 0.05                   | 0.05                   |

Post: 2,508; Pre: 2,738
(Post = 1,383; Pre = 1,356)

Note: Source: FIR dataset (merged with Haryana police data). Distribution of case statuses of gendered crimes before and after the intervention in 200- and 100-day bandwidths. The intervention did not affect how cases were carried forward by the criminal justice system or the likelihood of a gendered crime being canceled by the police. The 95% confidence intervals are included.
FIGURE 9. All-Women Stations and Perceptions of Policewomen (Female Respondents Across India)

A) Police requires physical strength and aggressive behavior which women lack.
B) A woman should prioritize managing the home instead of joining police.
C) Women police are incapable of handling high intensity crimes/cases.
D) Because of inflexible working hours it is difficult for women to work in police.

Note: Source: CSDS-Common Cause Survey 2017. Attitudes about women serving in law enforcement among female respondents across India who said that they have and do not have an all-women police station in their locality. AWPS Introduced = 1,240, Not Introduced = 4,566 (95% confidence intervals included).
station that say the statement in panel A is justified is significantly higher (63%) compared with the justified share without such an institution (49%). Similarly, in panel B, a larger proportion of female respondents (47%) with an all-women station in their locality believe it is justified for women to prioritize managing the home instead of joining the police compared with the justified share among those that say they do not have such an institution (35%).27 While one may expect all-women police stations to be correlated with positive perceptions of policewomen, the survey results are suggestive of a null to negative association in attitudes.28 Therefore, it is plausible female respondents may not prioritize an all-women station over a standard station; either citizens say they do not have access to an enclave or appear not to have positive perceptions of policewomen in settings where they do.

**MECHANISMS**

I advance two mechanisms: an institutional and behavioral explanation. Institutionally, I argue that all-women stations caused the decline of gendered crime at standard police stations not necessarily because complainants felt empowered to visit enclaves but because they were told to go there. All-women stations were designed as an alternate mechanism for women to register and have cases investigated; nevertheless, the intervention enabled (male) police officers to lighten their load by forwarding complainants elsewhere.

In addition, from a behavioral standpoint, I find no evidence that officers posted at all-women stations are more likely than policemen at standard police stations to facilitate victims’ access to the formal justice system. Qualitative evidence reveals that policewomen spend time counseling victims at the expense of registration/investigation of cases and may harbor similar biases as policemen.

**Bureaucratic Deflection**

When asked whether male officers appreciate women working in the police, a female sub-inspector at an all-women station in Uttar Pradesh informed me, “Yes, now more so, because women officers lighten their load. They can focus on other things. [Male] officers can forward complainants to this police station.”29 If officers pass on gendered cases when all-women stations are established, then there may be travel costs should victims be turned away from seeking justice at a non-enclave close to their residence or location of crime. Yet, the FIR dataset alone cannot shed light on complainants being sent to another venue because it

reflected cases that were formally registered and accommodated by a particular station.

Fortunately, I am able to use another dataset, in particular, information on transferred complainants in Haryana’s neighboring state of Uttar Pradesh. Police stations, as in Haryana, do not always record information on cases that were forwarded, yet Uttar Pradesh—which has housed all-women stations since the 1990s—retains this information in official police logs. The logs reflect (a) cases forwarded to another station at the time a victim attempted to register a crime report and (b) cases transferred midway through investigation.

I use the first set of logs and create two variables: intra- and interdistrict transfers. Intradistrict transfers are those in which an origin and destination police station fall in the same district but the case is moved because the origin station may believe the crime occurred in a neighboring precinct. Interdistrict transfers include, say, crimes that occurred on a train or prior to a journey and so are returned to another district.30 Typically, in states without all-women stations (e.g., Maharashtra), officers can send complainants away for reasons that relate to territorial jurisdiction.

However, in states with all-women stations, officers appear to be able to transfer complainants based on reasons unrelated to territory—that is, the complainant is a woman or the crime is gendered. Indeed, as illustrated by written entries in the log data, officers explicitly provide justifications for transferring a case to all-women stations such as, “The case concerns dowry,” “She mistakenly came to this station,” and “The case concerns a woman” (Table 3).31 The logs reveal that in Uttar Pradesh, from 2015–2017, 28% of approximately 8,000 cases forwarded to another police station were to mahila thanas or all-women stations.

I geocode each police station that both transferred and received cases in Figure 10. The plot is illustrative of two points. First, all-women stations were the destination of the largest number of transferred complainants in Uttar Pradesh. As the sizes of the red circles reveal, the top 20 of approximately 1,100 police stations across the state that had crimes transferred to them happened to be the all-women stations. Second, the figure displays where the transferred cases originated from; most crimes forwarded to an enclave were done so by surrounding non-enclaves in the district.

I calculate the geodesic distance using the longitude/latitude of the origin and destination police stations. Each dot in Figure 11—representing a real individual

---

27 For estimations of the significance of the differences in means, see Appendix Table A15.
28 These results also hold when restricting the sample to men or Haryana respondents (Appendix Figure A17).
29 Personal interview, AWPS SI Varanasi, September 26, 2017.
### TABLE 3. Selected Entries from the Police Logs (2015–2017)

| District      | Station     | Transferred district | Transferred station | Reason for transfer                                |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Gautambudh Nagar | Noida Sector-20 | Gautambudh Nagar      | Noida Sector-24     | घटना स्थल दिल्ली नोएडा सेक्टर 24 का होने के कारण |
| Ghaziabad     | GRP Ghaziabad | Kanpur City           | GRP Kanpur          | घटना स्थल्स रेलवे स्टेशन कानपुर का होने के कारण |
| Ghaziabad     | Niwari      | Ghaziabad             | Murad Nagar         | घटना स्थल मुराद नगर का होने के कारण               |
| Ghaziabad     | Niwari      | Ghaziabad             | Mahila Thana        | दर्शज सम्बन्धित मामलों की बढ़तेना महिला बांटने से   |
| Ghaziabad     | Niwari      | Ghaziabad             | Mahila Thana        | दर्शज से सम्बन्धित मुखद्दम       |
| Ghaziabad     | Niwari      | Ghaziabad             | Mahila Thana        | महिला बांटने से सम्बन्धित मुखद्दम होने के कारण    |
| Ghaziabad     | Masuri      | Ghaziabad             | Mahila Thana        | महिला से सम्बन्धित आरोप                        |

*Note: Cases transferred from one police station to another in Uttar Pradesh. For cases transferred to mahila thanas or all-women police stations, the justifications include, among others, that the "case concerns a woman."*

### FIGURE 10. Stations Complainants Forwarded to (Uttar Pradesh)

*Note: Source: Uttar Pradesh police log data. Transferred cases geocoded to destination police stations (January 2015–September 2017). All-women stations represent the largest proportion of transferred complainants in Uttar Pradesh. The map is cropped for ease of visualization. It reveals that all-women stations provide an alternate justification—different from territorial jurisdiction—for standard police stations to lighten their caseload.*
FIGURE 11. Distance Citizens Must Travel When Forwarded (Kilometers)

![Graph showing distance traveled](image)

Note: Source: Uttar Pradesh police log data. Box-plots depicting the mean, median, and interquartile range of the distance citizens must travel when forwarded to another station. Left: Distance women must travel when sent to an enclave. Right: Distance citizens must travel for territorial transfers.

---

who came forward for help to a police station but was forwarded elsewhere—is plotted by the distance in kilometers complainants were now forced to travel. The distance women must travel (if traveling in a straight line) to an all-women station—not taking into account quality of roads and other factors—is 20 km (1st Quartile = 5, Median = 17, 3rd Quartile = 30) or twice as long for other generic transfers related to territorial jurisdiction. It is unclear how many complainants actually followed through and traveled to the other sites for justice. It may be that (male) officers do not deflect cases for malign reasons but believe a victim may actually receive better service and representation at an all-women station. Still, Indian law was amended in 2013 after a brutal gang-rape of a college student on a moving bus; it mandated that crimes brought forward at police stations have to be accommodated, especially gendered crimes, which are all cognizable.

Reconciliation and Counseling

A mechanism that may explain why the intervention is not associated with an aggregate change in registered crime is that all-women stations emphasize counseling whereby policewomen “patch up” female victims with abusers. Because police officers do not record data on victims that were dissuaded from registering a case, I carried out ethnographic research at all-women stations in Haryana, and eight such institutions in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Policewomen repeatedly underscored how they were unlikely to register cases because they believed (a) “patching up” a woman with her abuser was more effective than registration of cases and (b) formal action taken in cases of gendered crimes may embolden women to bring frivolous cases or weaken the victim’s social standing in the community. Qualitative research suggests that complaints that officers at standard stations deflected were essentially being “counseled” at all-women stations such that, at either venue, it was only the most brutal cases that were registered. Moreover, inside enclaves, policewomen expressed dissatisfaction that they were not working on diverse cases, and victims often appeared distressed that their cases were not being registered after seemingly repeated attempts to do so.

Officers at all-women stations often dissuade victims from accessing the criminal justice system—especially in cases where they are being raped or tortured by their husbands—and signal the virtue of family. One policewoman said

> The main piece of advice we give [the victim] is to stay in the family. In case there is a problem or some sickness, you need the support of your family… Sometimes the advice we have given has certainly saved marriages. If the marriage is saved, then we certainly get satisfaction [emphasis added].

When asked if an emphasis on “mediation” rather than arrest might enable the violence to continue, another policewoman said

> We make sure he [the suspect] asks for forgiveness and tries to sort it out. If the girl has no family and we find that she’s living with her husband and his family and there’s a good deal of torture going on, then we may register a case [emphasis added]. But there’s often a settlement of the situation and everyone leaves satisfied [emphasis added].

---

32 It may be that because we see a null effect on levels of aggregate gendered crime in Haryana, yet complainants are being transferred, more women are coming forward to register cases by overcoming the additional hurdles in terms of travel. Nevertheless, Haryana is a fraction of the size of Uttar Pradesh where, if turned away, women can more easily find an all-women station nearby. This is less likely for a woman living in the periphery of districts in most other Indian states.

33 See the Appendix for further details on the ethnographic work.

34 Policewomen may deter a complainant from accessing the formal justice system out of a genuine belief that such an act would protect the victim from destitution, additional violence, or retribution from her community. Moreover, there is no law against marital rape in India (Chhibber and Jassal 2018).

35 Personal interview, AWPS Sonipat, November 22, 2017.

36 Personal interview, AWPS Varanasi, September 26, 2017.
The empirical findings in this article show that 30% of gender violence cases are canceled by the police because officers may believe women are exaggerating. Qualitative insights suggest policewomen are likely to hold similar beliefs as policemen. For instance, when I asked a policewoman who served as a computer operator in Kaithal, Haryana about the kinds of cases that come forward in enclaves, she noted that victims fabricate stories. She said

Most of the cases get patched up here. Of the cases that come here, only about 50% go to court… In my point of view, 70% of the cases are lies. The truth is something else, and what the women try to have written down is something else. Most of the cases that come here women say, “look, I was beaten up.” But that happens in everyone’s house, I’m from a village too.37

In fact, some senior bureaucrats expressed skepticism about enclaves. A veteran policewoman and administrator who previously oversaw dozens of local police stations said

If I am in trouble, I will go to a police station that is nearby. Yet, the normal thana may send me to the all-women station 13 kilometers away. If I am in distress, why should I be asked to go farther away? We should have women stationed in normal police stations rather than all-women police stations. What’s worse is that the officers at all-women police stations spend a lot of time counseling. I don’t know whether it’s “counseling” or not, because they are not trained counselors. If, in front of police, you can make a compromise with an abuser, the police officers think it is a success… Sometimes when a female sub-inspector decides not to register a crime, in her own way she may be trying to be helpful. In India, marriage is still so sacrosanct, it pains everyone to break it. Once you don a uniform, your thinking and cultural background is still the same. So, people may act in a certain way without bad intentions.38

DISCUSSION

I examine the introduction of an institutional design in a developing country where law enforcement suffers from low levels of legitimacy, especially among women. I ask, can gender-based enclaves facilitate representation for women in the police and increase victims’ formal access to justice? In addition to making a distinction between “enclave” and “inclusive” representation, I introduce a new dataset of crime, while also employing a large-scale survey, official police logs, and eight months of field research in north India. Taken together, I argue that enclaves or representation as separation may have unintended consequences.

In two of India’s largest states (Bihar and Uttar Pradesh), all-women stations account for a low level of registered crime. In the state of Haryana, I leverage a discontinuity whereby the government opened all-women stations at exactly the same time in order to coincide with a festival. I demonstrate that while the number of cases in Haryana’s more recent all-women stations are greater than other states, the aggregate level of registration remained stable following the intervention.

Strikingly, female-only stations served to significantly lighten the load of standard stations, despite the fact that they were meant to be an alternative forum rather than an exclusive venue for women to access services. In settings where there are few police officers per capita, overstretched and underresourced law enforcement agencies may use any incentive to deflect cases. In this way, the creation of enclaves may have created red tape, thereby serving a function similar to Women’s Bureaus of early twentieth century America in terms of keeping gendered crimes outside of “mainstream” police work. Using official logs from Uttar Pradesh, I show officers explicitly note down that they transferred complainants simply because the victims were women. Regardless of whether (male) officers pass on cases for malign reasons (shirking) or in a benign effort to alert complainants to an alternate venue with a sincere belief that specialized institutions will better represent or prioritize women’s preferences, I show that the act of forwarding complainants adds travel (and likely other) costs. This may induce victims to reconsider registering a case at all, many of whom turn to the police as a last resort.

Further, the intervention is not associated with a change in services—that is, more suspects charged or fewer cases dismissed. Qualitative evidence suggests that when women do in fact come forward to register cases at all-women stations, they are likely to be counseled or “patched up,” especially for crimes in which the victim and abuser are known to one another. This suggests that the mere separation of female officers in group-specific institutions might not automatically change outcomes vis-à-vis the criminal justice system, and it may even hinder case registration and formal investigation by heightening discourse inside police stations about the virtue of family or one’s social status. Survey evidence reinforces the notion that all-women police stations may not be associated with positive perceptions of policewomen.

Counterintuitively, while the expansion of state capacity in the form of new police stations run by policewomen should theoretically have increased the influence of and responsibilities for female officers, the intervention reduced their registered caseload, relegating policewomen to tasks the state believes they would be suited for because of their gender. This may be counterproductive for two reasons. First, experimental evidence from India shows women have the most trust in policewomen when they are investigating gender-neutral rather than gendered crimes (Jassal and Barnhardt 2020). Second, female officers working in collaborative environments sensitize policemen to gender biases (Miller and Segal 2019), yet, if policewomen are physically and occupationally segregated in enclaves, patriarchal norms may remain unchanged.

37 Personal interview, AWPS Kaithal, January 16, 2019.
38 Personal interview, Meeran Borwankar (IPS), Bureau of Police Research and Development, July 20, 2017.
While enabling lawmakers to signal progressive change, enclaves may have consequences that are reinforced in conservative social settings where deep-rooted beliefs predominate about gender violence being a “family matter” or such cases not being on the same par as other crimes (Qureshi et al. 2020). We may see different effects if, for instance, all-women police stations are designed to investigate all forms of crime, or potentially in settings with dissimilar bureaucratic arrangements or gender norms (Perova and Reynolds 2017). Still, from a policy perspective, the results suggest that gender sensitization of serving officers or “inclusive” representation in the form of hiring more women to work within existing bodies alongside men may be alternatives to “enclave” representation. Furthermore, while gender diversity in public institutions and increased access points for services are essential, a more comprehensive approach may be needed toward addressing the scourge of violence against women.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000684.

Replication files are available at the American Political Science Review Dataverse: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/VRH8ND.

REFERENCES

Agnes, Flavia, Sudhir Chandra, and Monmayee Basu. 2016. Women and Law in India. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Amaral, Sofia, Sonia Bhalotra, and Nishith Prakash. 2018. “Gender, Crime and Punishment: Evidence from Women Police Stations in India.” Working Paper, IFO Center for Labour and Demographic Economics.

Anderson, Michael L. 2014. “Subways, Strikes, and Slowdowns: The Impacts of Public Transit on Traffic Congestion.” American Economic Review 104 (9): 2763–96.

Andrews, Rhys, and Karen Johnston Miller. 2014. “Representative Bureaucracy, Gender, and Policing: The Case of Domestic Violence Arrests in England.” Public Administration 91 (4): 998–1014.

Applier, Janis. 1998. Policing Women: The Sexual Politics of Law Enforcement and the LAPD. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Babcock, Linda, Maria P. Recalde, Lise Vesterlund, and Laurie Weingart. 2017. “Gender Differences in Accepting and Receiving Requests for Tasks with Low Promotability.” American Economic Review 107 (3): 714–47.

Bertrand, Marianne, Robin Burgess, Arunish Chawla, and Guo Xu. 2020. “The Glittering Prizes: Career Incentives and Bureaucrat Performance.” The Review of Economic Studies 87 (2): 626–55.

Blair, Robert A., Sabrina M. Karim, and Benjamin S. Morse. 2019. “Establishing the Rule of Law in Weak and War-torn States: Evidence from a Field Experiment with the Liberian National Police.” American Political Science Review 113 (3): 641–57.

Chattopadhyay, Raghabendra, and Esther Dufo. 2004. “Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India.” Econometrica 72 (5): 1409–43.

Chhibber, Pradeep, and Nirvikar Jassal. 2018. “Next Steps after the 377 Judgment: It is Time that Marital Rape is Criminalised.” The Hindu, October 11.

Cooper, Jasper Jack. 2018. “Policing Power: Essays on Coercion, Corruption, and the State.” PhD diss. Columbia University.

Craig, John M. 1994. “The Woman’s Peace Party and Questions of Gender Separatism.” Peace & Change 19 (4): 373–98.

Duflo, Esther. 2005. “Why Political Reservations?” Journal of the European Economic Association 3 (2): 668–78.

Freedman, Estelle. 1979. “Separatism as Strategy: Female Institution Building and American Feminism, 1870–1930.” Feminist Studies 5 (3): 512–29.

Gillow, Aideen, Devyani Srivastava, Maja Duruwa, and Devika Prasad. 2015. Rough Roads to Equality: Women Police in South Asia. New Delhi: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative.

GOI. 2013. “Criminal Law Amendment Act: Ministry of Law and Justice.” Gazette of India, April 2.

Guilzer, Saad, and Benjamin J. Pasquale. 2017. “Politicians, Bureaucrats, and Development: Evidence from India.” American Political Science Review 111 (1): 162–83.

Hausman, Catherine, and David S. Rapson. 2018. “Regression Discontinuity in Time: Considerations for Empirical Applications.” Annual Review of Resource Economics 10 (1): 533–52.

Hautzinger, Sarah J. 2007. Violence in the City of Women: Police and Batterers in Bahia, Brazil. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Htun, Mala, and S. Laurel Weldon. 2012. “The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005.” American Political Science Review 106 (3): 548–69.

Iyer, Lakshmi, Anandi Mani, Prachi Mishra, and Petia Topalova. 2012. “The Power of Political Voice: Women’s Political Representation and Crime in India.” American Economic Journal: Applied Economics 4 (4): 165–93.

Jassal, Nirvikar, and Sharon Barnhardt. 2020. “Do Female Officers Affect Police Legitimacy? Experimental Evidence from India.” Working Paper, University of California, Berkeley.

Jensenius, Francesca. 2015. “Mired in Reservations: The Path-Dependent History of Electoral Quotas in India.” The Journal of Asian Studies 74 (1): 85–105.

Jensenius, Francesca. 2017. Social Justice through Inclusion: The Consequences of Electoral Quotas in India. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Karim, Sabrina. 2020. “Relational State Building in Areas of Limited Statehood: Experimental Evidence on the Attitudes of the Police.” American Political Science Review 114 (2): 536–51.

Karim, Sabrina, Michael J. Gilligan, Robert Blair, and Kyle Beardsley. 2018. “International Gender Balancing Reforms in Postconflict Countries: Lab-in-the-Field Evidence from the Liberian National Police.” International Studies Quarterly 62 (3): 618–31.

Karpowitz, Christopher F., and Tali Mendelberg. 2018. “Do Enclaves Remediate Social Inequality?” The Journal of Politics 80 (4): 1134–49.

Kavanaugh, Guadalupe E., Marra Micaela Sviatschi, and Iva Trako. 2017. “Inter-Generational Benefits of Improving Access to Justice for Women: Evidence from Peru.” Working Paper, SSRN Electronic Journal. http://conference.iza.org/conference_files/Gender_2018/sviatschi_m23512.pdf.

Keiser, L., Vicky M. Wilkins, Kenneth J. Meier, and Catherine A. Holland. 2002. “Lipstick and Logarithms: Gender, Institutional Context, and Representative Bureaucracy.” American Political Science Review 96 (3): 553–64.

Lewis, Alfred E. 1967. “Women’s Bureau Will Be Abolished.” The Washington Post, September 24.

Lin, Jacqueline, Sarah Burke, and Anna-Cat Brigida. 2018. “Inside a Court Room Specialized in Justice for Gender Violence.” VICE, September 11.

Mansbridge, Jane. 1999. “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent Yea.” The Journal of Politics 61 (3): 628–57.

Martin, Susan. 1999. “Police Force or Police Service? Gender and Emotional Labor.” The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 561 (1): 111–26.
Meier, Kenneth, and Jill Nicholson-Crotty. 2006. “Gender, Representative Bureaucracy, and Law Enforcement: The Case of Sexual Assault.” Public Administration Review 66 (6): 850–60.

Mendelberg, Tali, Christopher F. Karpowitz, and J. Baxter Oliphant. 2014. “Gender Inequality in Deliberation: Unpacking the Black Box of Interaction.” Perspectives on Politics 12 (1): 18–44.

Michelle Heath, Roseanna, Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer, and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson. 2005. “Women on the Sidelines: Women’s Representation on Committees in Latin American Legislatures.” American Journal of Political Science 49 (2): 420–36.

Miller, Amalia R., and Carmit Segal. 2019. “Do Female Officers Improve Law Enforcement Quality? Effects on Crime Reporting and Domestic Violence.” The Review of Economic Studies 86 (3): 2220–47.

Mishra, K. K. 2015. “Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Functioning of Women Police Stations.” Standing Order No. 137, No. 8185-8205/GAW-I (Panchkula), August 24.

Mummolo, Jonathan. 2018. “Modern Police Tactics, Police-Citizen Interactions, and the Prospects for Reform.” The Journal of Politics 80 (1): 1–15.

Natarajan, Mangai. 2008. Women Police in a Changing Society: Back Door to Equality. Farnham: Ashgate.

Nelson, Sara. 1996. “Constructing and Negotiating Gender in Women’s Police Stations in Brazil.” Latin American Perspectives 23 (1): 131–48.

Newey, Whitney K., and Kenneth D. West. 1987. “A Simple, Positive Semi-Definite, Heteroskedasticity and Autocorrelation Consistent Covariance Matrix.” Econometrica 55 (3): 703–8.

Owings, Chloe. 1925. Women Police: A Study of the Development and Status of the Women Police Movement. New York: Frederick H. Hitchcock.

Parthasarathy, Ramya. 2017. “Ethnic Quotas as Term-Limits: Caste and Distributive Politics in South India.” Comparative Political Studies 50 (13): 1735–67.

Perova, Elizaveta, and Sarah Anne Reynolds. 2017. “Women’s Police Stations and Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from Brazil.” Social Science & Medicine 174:188–96.

Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel. 1967. The Concept of Representation. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Prillaman, Soledad Artiz. 2017. “Strength in Numbers: How Women’s Groups Close the Political Gender Gap.” Working Paper, University of Oxford.

Pruitt, Lesley J. 2016. The Women in Blue Helmets: Gender, Policing, and the UN’s First AU-Female Peacekeeping Unit. Berkeley: University of California Press.

PTI. 2015. “Women Police Stations to Be Opened in All 21 Districts of Haryana.” Press Trust of India, August 28.

Qureshi, Hanif, and Jee Yecrin Kim. 2018. “Sharing Gender, Shifting Blame: The Effects of Victim Gender and Observer Sexuality on Victim Blame.” Sexual Assault Report 22 (1): 1–13.

Qureshi, Hanif, Teresa C. Kulig, Francis T. Cullen, and Bonnie S. Fisher. 2020. “Rape Myth Acceptance among College Students in India: Prevalence and Predictors in a Changing Context.” Deviant Behavior. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2020.1720935.

Riccucci, N. M., G. G. Van Ryzin, and C. F. Lavena. 2014. “Representative Bureaucracy in Policing: Does It Increase Perceived Legitimacy?” Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory 24 (3): 537–51.

Sabha, Lok. 2012. Working Conditions of Women in the Police Force: 21st Report. Committee on Empowerment of Women: Parliament of India.

Santos, Cecilia. 2004. “En-gendering the Police: Women’s Police Stations and Feminism in Sao Paulo.” Latin American Research Review 39 (3): 29–55.

Santos, Cecilia. 2005. Women’s Police Stations: Gender, Violence, and Justice in São Paulo, Brazil. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sapiro, Virginia. 1981. “Research Frontier Essay: When Are Interests Interesting? The Problem of Political Representation of Women.” American Political Science Review 75 (3): 701–16.

Schulz, Dorothy Moses. 2004. “A Precinct of Their Own: The New York City Women’s Precinct, 1921–1923.” New York History 85 (1): 39–64.

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2001. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Sherman, Lawrence W., and Richard A. Berk. 1984. “The Specific Deterrent Effects of Arrest for Domestic Assault.” American Sociological Review 49 (2): 261–72.

St. Clair, Travis, Thomas D. Cook, and Kelly Hallberg. 2014. “Examining the Internal Validity and Statistical Precision of the Comparative Interrupted Time Series Design by Comparison with a Randomized Experiment.” American Journal of Evaluation 35 (3): 311–27.

Stepan, Alfred, Juan J. Linz, and Yogendra Yadav. 2011. Crafting State-Nations: India and Other Multinational Democracies. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

TISS. 2015. Paving New Pathways: Special Cell for Women and Children in Haryana. Mumbai: Tata Institute for Social Sciences.

Wagner, Natascha, Matthias Rieger, Arjun Bedi, and Wil Hout. 2017. “Gender and Policing Norms: Evidence from Survey Experiments among Police Officers in Uganda.” Journal of African Economics 26 (4): 492–515.

Wilkinson, Steven I. 2010. “Data and the Study of Indian Politics.” In The Oxford Companion to Politics in India, eds. Niraja Gopal Jayal and Pratap Bhanu Mehta, 587–601. Delhi: Oxford University Press.