#### Specialised Courts and the Reporting of Intimate Partner Violence: Evidence from Spain

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### Motivation (I)

- One out of three women worldwide experienced intimate-partner violence (IPV) during their life (WHO, 2013).
- Multidimensional consequences for the health, education and broader socioeconomic outcomes and well-being of victims, their families and society (Aizer, 2011; Carrasco and Alonso-Borrego, 2019; OECD, 2013).
- Underreporting IPV crimes is common: only between 20% and 32% of the victims report it to the police or to the court.
- Not reporting IPV matters. It compromises the effectiveness of anti-IPV public policies.
- Why IPV cases are not reported? Complex, lengthy and tiresome judicial procedure, personal and family barriers, fear to perpetrator and emotional costs (Broidy et al., 2016; Silván et al., 2015).

### Motivation (II)

- Public policies that facilitate the judicial process for victims and increase the celerity might help to increase the reporting.
- If IPV homicides are typically preceded by softer forms of IPV, increasing the reporting might lead to **prevent IPV homicides** through deterrence or incapacitation.
- The creation of specialised IPV courts targets this goal: It is broadly adopted (Australia, Canada, UK, USA, Spain, etc) but scarcely investigated.

#### This paper

- Study the roll-out of IPV specialised courts throughout Spain using a difference-in-differences model.
- Estimate the effect of IPV courts on the reporting of IPV, the incidence of IPV homicides and judicial decisions.

#### Institutional framework

- Specialised IPV courts were sequentially created in Spain between 2005 and 2011 as the flagship policy to increase reporting of IPV:
  - ► All IPV cases are absorbed by specialised IPV courts in those judicial districts in which a specialised IPV court was created.
  - If not an IPV court in the district, IPV cases treated in an ordinary investigation court.
- Specialised IPV courts vs ordinary investigation courts:
  - Specialisation: Judges in these courts only investigate and sentence IPV cases.
  - Availability of resources: reduced case-load in IPV courts, specific resources for IPV victims (separate circuits to avoid interaction, child care, specialised social workers, etc).

Figure: Chronology of the opening of IPV specialised courts in Spain (Peninsula and Balearic Islands)



#### Data

- Data source: General Council of the Judiciary (Consejo General del Poder Judicial, CGPJ).
- Yearly information between 2005-2018 at the judicial district level on IPV offences by type of offence, length of judiciary process, court decisions and issue of protection orders.
  - The report of an IPV case both to the police or to the court generates within a maximum of 3 days an IPV case in the court.
- Currently 60 judicial districts in the analytical sample with specialised IPV courts and 355 without an IPV court.

#### Methods

- Judicial districts with IPV courts have higher levels of IPV reporting and are more populated than judicial districts without IPV courts. Table
- We use a difference-in-differences approach: compare districts with and without IPV courts *before and after* the IPV courts were opened.
  - Controls for time trends affecting all districts.
  - Controls for fixed differences across districts.
  - Exploits the variation in timing to isolate the effect of the policy.
- This design is valid if, in the absence of the creation of IPV courts, the evolution of IPV outcomes in districts with and without IPV courts would have been similar.
  - Reported IPV evolved similarly in districts with and without IPV courts until the opening of an IPV court.

Results



IPV offences per 100,000 inh.



IPV homicides per 100,000 inh.



Specialised Courts and IPV

#### Results: Effect of Opening an IPV Court

- Reduces time to disposition by 38%-66%.
- Increases IPV reporting by 28%.
  - Effect is driven by an increase in moderate IPV offences.
  - We rule out that the increase in reporting is driven by a rise in the *true* incidence of IPV.
- Inconclusive evidence regarding IPV homicides.
- No effects on the issuance of protection orders.

Mechanisms: What Specific Feature of IPV Courts Drives the Effect? (Suggestive Evidence)

- **1** Judicial decisions that better satisfy victims' expectations.
  - No evidence of differential judicial decisions.
- O Shorter judicial procedures.
  - An additional ordinary investigation court in the district reduced time to disposition but did not increase IPV reporting.
- Targeted resources.
  - Effects on reporting are larger in IPV courts with greater targeted resources.

#### Conclusions

- IPV courts improve the celerity of the judicial process and increases the reporting of IPV cases, particularly of moderate IPV offences.
  - ► IPV courts are effective interventions to increase the reporting of IPV.
  - Analysis of mechanisms suggests the importance of targeted resources.
- We find no significant effects of IPV courts on the incidence of IPV homicides.
  - Results need to be taken with caution due to wide confidence intervals.
- Our results might help to understand how IPV courts shape the reporting of offences, which will contribute to design effective policies to fight IPV.

#### Mechanisms: Different judicial decisions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Dep var: Proportion of IPV									Protection orders	Protection orders
cases that ends	Dismissed	Dismissed	Convicted	Convicted	Acquittal	Acquittal	Elevated	Elevated	100,000 inhab.	100,000 inhab.
ATT	-0.013	0.003	0.001	-0.021	-0.005	-0.017	0.018	0.035	-16.758**	-12.043
	(0.027)	( 0.033)	(0.018)	( 0.020)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.019)	(0.025)	(7.235)	(8.787)
Effect as % of dep var	-3	1	1	-12	-11	-38	6	12	-17	-12
Mean dep var.	0.474	0.474	0.178	0.178	0.045	0.045	0.303	0.303	98.908	98.908
N	5,803	5,726	5,803	5,726	5,803	5,726	5,803	5,726	5,810	5,740
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score

#### Mechanisms: Shorter judicial procedures

Effect of opening an additional ordinary investigation court in the judicial district (Synthetic difference-in-differences)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Time to	Total IPV offences	IPV homicides
	disposition	per 100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab
ATT	-35.289***	28.863	0.026
	(11.830)	(51.786)	(0.044)
Effect as % of dep. var	-66	9	23
Mean	53.80	320.914	0.114
N	4900	4900	4900

#### Mechanisms: Targeted resources

• On-line survey to judges to collect information on availability of targeted resources.

Effect of IPV specialised courts on the reporting of IPV by court resources (Synthetic difference-in-differences)

	L	PV courts with large	resources	IPV courts with less resources				
	Time to disposition (1)	IPV offences per 100,000 inhab (2)	IPV homicides per 100,000 inhab (3)	Time to disposition (4)	IPV offences per 100,000 inhab (5)	IPV homicides per 100,000 inhab (6)		
ATT	-15.540 (53.360)	790.301 (652.503)	-0.290 ( 0.426)	-79.884** (30.943)	67.168 (69.180)	0.034 ( 0.060)		
Effect as % of dep var	-22	69	-44	-73	19	34		
Mean dep var.	70.632	1,143.762	0.665	109.830	348.017	0.100		
N	4,942	4,942	4,942	4,956	4,956	4,956		

# Results: Effect of opening an IPV court on the reporting of $\ensuremath{\mathsf{IPV}}$

Dep var: Reported IPV offences						
per 100,000 inhab.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
АТТ	130.826*** ( 41.734)	121.533** ( 47.361)	124.255*** (30.405)	86.359*** (28.167)	150.355*** (46.791)	143.319*** ( 43.556)
Effect as % of dep var	31	28	29	20	35	34
Mean dep var.	426.807	426.807	426.807	426.807	426.807	426.807
N	5,810	5,740	5,810	5,740	5,782	5,712
Estimation method	Sun & Abraham	Sun & Abraham	TWFE	TWFE	Synth Dif-in-Dif	Synth Dif-in-Dif
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	Outcome	Outcome and controls

### Results: Effect of opening an IPV court on IPV homicides

Dep var: IPV homicides						
per 100,000 inhab.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
ATT	0.041 ( 0.048)	0.014 ( 0.049)	0.013 ( 0.039)	0.000 ( 0.039)	0.037 ( 0.025)	-0.058 ( 0.079)
Effect as % of dep var	22	7	7	0	20	-31
Mean dep var.	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189
Ν	5,810	5,740	5,810	5,740	5,782	5,712
Estimation method	Sun & Abraham	Sun & Abraham	TWFE	TWFE	Synth Dif-in-Dif	Synth Dif-in-Dif
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	Outcome	Outcome and controls

## Results: Effect of opening an IPV court on the length of IPV judicial processes

Dep var: Time to						
disposition (days)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
ATT	-69.189*** (8.477)	-39.873*** (9.598)	-80.350*** (7.991)	-49.212*** ( 8.272)	-74.784*** (7.021)	-66.752*** ( 6.681)
Effect as % of dep var Mean dep var. N	-66 104.804 5,804	-38 104.804 5,740	-77 104.804 5,804	-47 104.804 5,740	-71 104.804 5,740	-64 104.804 5,712
Estimation method Weights	Sun & Abraham None	Sun & Abraham Prop. score	TWFE None	TWFE Prop. score	Synth Dif-in-Dif Outcome	Synth Dif-in-Dif Outcome

#### Results: Effect of opening an IPV court

Estimation method: Sun	and Abra	ham (2021)								
Dep var: IPV offence	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
per 100,000 inhab	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Sexual	Sexual	Other	Other
ATT	1.327	2.386	89.306***	85.612***	4.634*	4.865	0.018	0.689	36.654**	35.726**
	(3.654)	(4.145)	(26.667)	(30.113)	(2.783)	(3.397)	(1.134)	(1.377)	(14.594)	(16.625)
	_									
Effect as % of dep. var	5	9	32	31	32	34	1	22	35	34
Mean dep. var.	26.596	26.596	278.292	278.292	14.267	14.267	3.149	3.149	104.246	104.246
N	5,810	5,740	5,810	5,740	5,810	5,740	5,810	5,740	5,810	5,740
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score

#### Results: Effect of opening an IPV court

- Results imply that IPV victims have updated information about the cost of reporting. Is this assumption reasonable?
  - 77% of women that suffered IPV checked with their family or friends before deciding whether to report an IPV case to the police or the court (Spanish Ministry for Equality, 2019).
  - 24% of women that suffered IPV checked with lawyers before deciding whether to report an IPV case to the police or the court.
  - ▶ 15% of women that suffered IPV checked with social services before deciding whether to report an IPV case to the police or the court.
  - 10% of women that suffered IPV checked with support organizations before deciding whether to report an IPV case to the police or the court.

#### Robustness checks

- Effects are not capturing a positive effect of IPV courts on the *true* prevalence of IPV.
- Use of region-year FE to rule out that results are confounded by policies implemented around the same time. Table
- Use of alternative staggered dif-in-dif estimators.
- Different placebos and specification tests. Table
- Spillovers on outcomes in other jurisdictions.
- Other outcomes: hospitalizations, suicides, etc. Table

#### Contribution

- Document the effect of IPV courts on the reporting of IPV and on the incidence of IPV.
  - Specialised courts are associated with differential judicial decisions: Coviello et al., 2014; Golestani et al., 2021; Miller and Curry, 2013, 2009; Garoupa et al., 2009.
  - Closer paper to ours is Golestani et al., 2021.
- IPV courts can be an effective policy to increase the reporting of IPV:
  - Effectiveness of policies and strategies that aim to increase the reporting of IPV: Iyer et al., 2012; Amaral et al., 2019; Sviatschi and Trako, 2021; Miller and Segal, 2018; Iyengar, 2009; Chin and Cunningham, 2019.
- Rises in the reporting of IPV does not necessarily lead to reductions in IPV homicides.
  - Link between the reporting of IPV, and the prevalence of homicides: lyengar, 2009; Miller and Segal, 2018; Carrell and Hoekstra, 2012.

## Results: Effects of IPV courts on the incidence of different types of IPV using survey data

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	Psychological	Psychological	Physical	Physical	Sexual	Sexual	Economic	Economic	Any	Any
	violence	violence	violence	violence	violence	violence	violence	violence	IPV	IPV
Prop. pop with IPV court	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.002	0.003	-0.000	-0.000	0.007	0.007
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Mean dep. var	0.093	0.093	0.011	0.011	0.039	0.039	0.009	0.009	0.117	0.117
Observations	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454	84,454
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Province FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Province unemployment control	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES



#### **Descriptive statistics**

Table: Descriptive Statistics: Judicial districts with and without IPV courts (excluding districts where an IPV court was opened in 2005)

	Judio	cial districts with	Judicia	l districts without	
	J	IVM (N=60)	٦٢	/M (N=355)	
	Ν	Mean	Ν	Mean	Diff (T-C)
Reported IPV offences per 100.000 inhab	60	169.193	355	106.710	62.48***
IPV homicides per 100,000 inhab	60	0.078	355	0.074	0.00
Time to disposition (days)	60	80.468	350	72.872	7.60
Severe IPV offences per 100,000 inhab	60	4.735	355	2.251	2.48*
Moderate IPV offences per 100,000 inhab	60	86.565	355	56.229	30.34***
Minor IPV offences per 100,000 inhab	60	11.239	355	11.029	0.21
Other IPV offences per 100,000 inhab	60	65.890	355	37.832	28.06***
Sexual IPV offences per 100,000 inhab	60	0.691	355	0.928	-0.24
Proportion cases dismissed	60	0.327	349	0.296	0.03
Proportion cases conviction	60	0.338	349	0.364	-0.03
Proportion cases acquittal	60	0.055	349	0.077	-0.02**
Proportion cases elevated	60	0.280	349	0.264	0.02
Proportion cases oral trial	60	0.393	349	0.441	-0.05*
Protection orders issued per 100,000 inhab	60	48.798	355	35.710	13.09**
Population	60	202,499.800	355	57,122.172	145,377.63***



#### Alternative staggered dif-in-dif estimators

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A - Dep var: R	Reported IPV offe	ences per 100,0	000 inhab.	
ATT	124.099*** (38.772)	117.845*** (45.399)	114.168*** (35.789)	109.975*** ( 41.789)
Panel B - Dep var: II	PV homicides pe	r 100,000 inha	b.	
ATT	0.038 ( 0.049)	-0.001 ( 0.052)	0.048 ( 0.049)	0.013 ( 0.053)
Panel C - Dep var: T	ime to dispositio	on		
ATT	-74.986*** (8.721)	-46.284*** (9.945)	-77.371*** (9.040)	-49.686*** (10.677)
Estimation method	Callaway & Sant'Anna	Callaway & Sant'Anna	Chaisemartin & D'Haultfoeuille	Chaisemartin & D'Haultfoeuille
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score

# Spillover effects on judicial outcomes for non-IPV offences and family cases

Dep var:	(1) Time to disp	(2) Time to disp	(3) Non-IPV offences	(4) Non-IPV offences	(5) Time to disp	(6) Time to disp	(7) Family cases	(8) Family cases
	(non-IPV offences)	(non-IPV offences)	per 100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab	tamily juris.	family juris.	per 100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab
ATT	-8.470*** ( 2.601)	-5.635 (4.680)	-124.662 (159.799)	487.420** ( 196.097)	-8.674 (7.265)	6.087 (8.363)	1.686 (8.954)	-5.803 (10.936)
Effect as % of dep var	-14	-10	-1	5	-5	3	0	-1
Mean dep var.	58.988	58.988	9,960.370	9,960.370	179.893	179.893	571.431	571.431
N	5,810	5,810	5,810	5,810	5,810	5,810	5,810	5,810
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score

Table: Effect of opening an IPV court in the judicial district: Analysis conducted using Region  $\times$  Year fixed effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A - Dep var:	Reported IPV of	offences per 10	0,000 inhab.					
ATT	131.808*** (41.526)	55.599*** (21.278)	274.044*** (68.200)	213.385*** (70.929)	121.740*** (35.515)	104.267** (43.526)	126.354*** (34.507)	68.462*** (17.682)
Panel B - Dep var:	IPV homicides	per 100,000 in	hab.					
ATT	0.024	0.039	-0.062	-0.127	0.046	0.034	-0.003	0.012
	(0.054)	(0.049)	(0.158)	(0.180)	(0.049)	(0.060)	(0.041)	(0.038)
Panel C - Dep var:	Time to dispos	ition						
ATT	-54.066***	-32.226***	-152.532***	-110.517***	-61.729***	-43.368***	-63.941***	-35.528***
	(9.215)	(10.543)	(23.550)	(36.743)	(9.143)	(12.073)	(7.955)	(7.884)
Estimation method	Sun & Abraham	Sun & Abraham	Callaway & Sant'Anna	Callaway & Sant'Anna	Chaisemartin & D'Haultfoeuille	Chaisemartin & D'Haultfoeuille	TWFE	TWFE
Region x Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score

#### Figure: Judicial procedure of IPV cases



#### Other outcomes

### Table: Effect of the proportion of population in the province covered by an IVP court on different outcomes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	Homicides per	Women homicides	Suicides per	Women suicides	Hospitalizations per	Women hospitalizations	IPV Helpline calls
	100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab	100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab	100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab
Panel A - Estimation metho	od: TWFE						
Prop. pop with IPV court	0 123	0.025	0.608	0.086	570 830	347 482	4 414
	(0.145)	(0.091)	(0.636)	( 0.232)	(586.534)	(289.917)	(19.360)
	. ,	. ,	. ,	. ,	. ,	. ,	, ,
N	700	700	700	700	700	700	572
Mean Dep. var	0.707	0.254	9.037	2.077	10,968.390	5,718.180	141.743
Unemployment control	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Panel B - Estimation method: Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille							
Prop. pop with IPV court	-0.112	-0.112	1.525	0.562	56.236	136.656	7.546
	(0.276)	(0.212)	(1.474)	(0.474)	(311.428)	(167.739)	(16.822)
N	433	433	433	433	433	433	200
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Province FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Unemployment control	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

### Table: Effect of opening an IPV court in the judicial district: Analysis includes unemployment rate in the province as a control variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Panel A - Dep var: Reported IPV offences per 100,000 inhab.								
ATT	131.059*** ( 41.750)	121.121** (47.470)	122.687*** (38.688)	115.780** (45.439)	114.265*** (35.794)	110.190*** (42.491)	124.948*** (30.330)	87.256*** (27.896)
Panel B - Dep var: IPV homicides per 100,000 inhab.								
ATT	0.041 (0.048)	0.013 (0.048)	0.030 (0.049)	-0.004 (0.052)	0.052 (0.050)	0.012 (0.055)	0.014 (0.039)	0.001 (0.040)
Panel C - Dep var: Time to disposition								
ATT	-69.218*** (8.473)	-39.854*** (9.599)	-74.526*** (8.735)	-43.601*** (12.543)	-77.784*** (9.033)	-49.687*** (10.674)	-80.417*** (7.985)	-49.162*** ( 8.236)
Control Unemployment Estimation method	Yes Sun & Abraham	Yes Sun & Abraham	Yes Callaway & Sant'Anna	Yes Callaway & Sant'Anna	Yes Chaisemartin & D'Haultfoeuille	Yes Chaisemartin & D'Haultfoeuille	Yes TWFE	Yes TWFE
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score

#### Appendix

Table: Placebo analysis: Effect of IPV specialised courts on the number of civil cases and their time to disposition

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)				
Dep var:	Time to disp	Time to disp	Civil cases	Civil cases				
	civil juris.	civil juris.	per 100,000 inhab	per 100,000 inhab				
Panel A - Estimation method: Sun and Abraham (2021)								
ATT	4.577	17.179	4.992	-10.896				
	(9.620)	(13.077)	(5.186)	(6.692)				
	()	(	()	( )				
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score				
		•		· ·				
Panel B - Estimation method: TWFE								
ΔΤΤ	-12 808	-3 740	8 468	-0.960				
	(11.068)	(10.188)	(6.661)	-0.900				
	(11.500)	(10.100)	( 0.001)	(0.151)				
Weights	None	Prop. score	None	Prop. score				
Panel C - Estimation method: Synthetic Dif-in-dif								
ATT	-6.626	-6.380	5.686	5.782				
	(11.261)	(11.403)	(5.525)	(5.609)				
Matched on controls	No	Yes	No	Yes				

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