

Putting Women’s Concerns on the Agenda in Gender Unequal Settings: Evidence from Community Policing in Pakistan*

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Abstract

Can women’s concerns gain recognition within male-dominated bureaucracies in gender-unequal settings? We explore this through an RCT evaluating a community policing intervention in Pakistan, comparing a standard model to a “gender-inclusive” approach. The inclusive model combines women-only community forums run by female officers to elicit women’s concerns, with mechanisms to integrate these concerns into routine planning alongside male officers. Although women rarely participate in “open-to-all” fora in the standard model, they engage robustly in women-only spaces, raising distinct issues, specifically gender-based violence (GBV). In turn, GBV is more likely to be incorporated into policing response strategies co-developed by male and female officers in these areas. Male officers who never attend women’s forums but work with female officers on response plans prioritize GBV more highly, with effects persisting for one year. These findings demonstrate how institutional designs combining separate spaces for articulation with integration for mainstreaming can durably shift frontline priorities.

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Introduction

The prevalence of bias among front-line bureaucrats across a variety of institutional settings and contexts is well documented (Emeriau, 2021; Hemker and Rink, 2017; Neggers, 2018; Purohit, 2024; White, Nathan and Faller, 2015). When individual bureaucrats have significant discretion in how to allocate resources and treat citizens, their biases can produce discriminatory outcomes and reinforce group-based inequalities (Lipsky, 2010). Our focus is on gender bias, which is often prevalent in security-sector institutions, which tend to be male-dominated, and whose institutional culture valorizes traditionally masculine traits (Ahmad, 2022; Silvestri, 2017). A manifestation of such bias in policing is the systematic dismissal or minimization of women's concerns and complaints, particularly those gender-based harassment and violence (GBV) (Jassal, 2024). How can the police come to recognize women's concerns as important and become more responsive to them, especially in gender-unequal contexts?

Studies spanning political science, sociology, economics and criminology examine the efficacy of "gender-responsive policing" strategies to improve police responsiveness to women (Darak et al., 2017). These range from "sensitization" efforts e.g. training for officers (Caparini, 2020; McKee, Mueller-Johnson and Strang, 2020) to "balancing" reforms to increase women's representation in the force (Karim and Beardsley, 2017), to institutional reforms like establishing separate police stations (Córdova and Kras, 2020) or dedicated help-desks to handle GBV (Sukhtankar, Kruks-Wisner and Mangla, 2022). Evidence on the success of these reforms is mixed, particularly in patriarchal settings (Amaral, Bhalotra and Prakash, 2021; Jassal, 2020; Karim et al., 2018; Sukhtankar, Kruks-Wisner and Mangla, 2022).

In this paper, we study whether community policing, a policy commonly used to improve police responsiveness to citizens, can enhance responsiveness to women's concerns. Our study was part of a multi-country randomized control trial of community policing, which aimed to improve police responsiveness to citizens in 6 Global South contexts, including Pakistan, through creating i) community forums for citizens to raise salient issues to the police, ii) dedicated community policing units to respond to issues raised at these forums, and iii) a systematic process of developing preventative 'community policing strategies' based on forum inputs (Blair et al., 2021). This model of community policing, with its focus on community

engagement and “problem-oriented policing”, is a widely used tool to improve citizen trust, perceptions of police, and police responsiveness to citizens around the world (Gill et al., 2014).¹

Our experiment compares a standard community policing model (CPOP) to a gender-inclusive approach (CPOP-G) designed to mainstream women and their concerns into routine police work, and a control condition without any intervention.² In both models, officers convene community forums and prepare beat-level community policing plans (CPPs). However, task integration differs between the two. In CPOP, community policing teams in each beat develop CPPs based on concerns raised in open-to-all forums that, in practice, are overwhelmingly male due to norms of sex segregation. These teams had no official mandate for gender parity, and ended up being staffed entirely by men, reflecting gendered task assignments within the police. In CPOP-G, the intervention introduces women-only forums alongside open-to-all forums; consistent with these segregation norms, women-only forums are moderated by female officers. CPOP-G then required officers who moderate these distinct deliberative spaces, female officers in women-only forums and male officers in open forums, to work together as a team and jointly develop CPPs.

In a context of stark gender inequality, the standard community policing model perpetuates a status quo of women’s exclusion from community spaces and de-prioritization of their distinctive concerns. The “gender-inclusive” model of the intervention is able to overcome women’s exclusion, put their concerns on the agenda through integration into community policing plans, and achieve lasting change in male officers’ prioritization of GBV. We argue that this change is possible because the gender-inclusive approach (CPOP-G) works around contextual social norms of sex-segregation in public space, which are hard to shift in the short-term, while also undoing the status-quo of task-based segregation that keeps male and female police officers siloed into separate roles. It mainstreams women’s concerns into routine institutional workflows by requiring the female officers who lead women-only forums and male officers who lead open

¹Rigorous studies on the effectiveness of community policing in Global South contexts are scant, and recent work finds mixed results (Blair, Karim and Morse, 2019; Blair et al., 2021; Haim, Nanes and Ravanilla, 2025).

²We use the term “gender-inclusive” in the paper as it was used in programming, to refer to the version of the intervention that included explicit measures for women’s inclusion.

forums to jointly develop community response strategies. This mechanism encourages male officers to consider women's concerns when developing their plans, and durably shifts their attitudes.

Four results justify this interpretation. First, in our context, where norms of sex-based segregation proscribe men and women mixing in public space, "open-to-all" community forums created as part of the standard intervention operated as *de-facto* all-male forums with rare attendance from women. Perhaps unsurprisingly, GBV was scarcely brought up in these forums. However, in communities where parallel all-women forums were introduced, they were well-attended by women. When women were present, they made their distinctive concerns heard: the share of issues related to GBV raised by citizens is 35% greater in women-only forums, as compared to "open" forums. In a context where GBV is chronically under-reported, these all-women forums served to put GBV on the agenda.

Second, task integration prevented these forms from being mere "talking shops": a possible pitfall of public deliberation forums. After the forums, police officers in each beat were responsible for preparing community policing response plans (CPPs), the kind of active acknowledgment of citizen concerns by state actors that Parthasarathy, Rao and Palaniswamy (2019) identify as a key component for "good" deliberation. These plans were presented to senior officers at the police station level for action, providing a tangible behavioral measure of whether officers take issues raised by citizens seriously. We find that the integrated policing teams in CPOP-G, where male and female officers jointly formulate plans, are more than twice as likely to propose tangible preventative strategies to address GBV than the all-male policing teams in CPOP. When women's voices are included in public fora, and when task integration promotes their consideration, the police in this highly unequal setting recognized their distinctive concerns.

Third, we find significant changes in officers' beliefs about citizen prioritization of GBV, and their own prioritization of the issue. While the intervention is ongoing, female officers in CPOP-G who conduct all-women's forums and directly hear women citizens' issues are 55 percentage points more likely to identify GBV as being a top priority for citizens, and 12 percentage points more likely to report it among their own top priorities, relative to control.

Male officers in CPOP-G who worked together with female colleagues on integrated teams to respond to citizen concerns, but did not directly attend the women's forums, also changed their views. They become 38 percentage points more likely to identify GBV as being a top priority for citizens, and similarly more likely to report it among their own top priorities.

Effects on officer attitudes persist over a year after the intervention ended. Female and male officers in CPOP-G remain significantly more likely (32 and 20 percentage points respectively) to identify GBV as a top concern of citizens, relative to control. With regards to their own priorities, male officers who participated in CPOP-G were 37 percentage points more likely to report GBV among their own top priorities relative to male officers in control. However, female officers' own prioritization reverts to levels similar to female officers in control a year after the intervention concludes.

Finally, in-depth interviews with a random sub-sample of male and female officers in CPOP and CPOP-G show that officers' experiences with each other on integrated teams was markedly different from interactions in the status-quo of their jobs. An inductive analysis of the interview transcripts highlights two plausible pathways for attitudinal and behavioral change among officers: **issue salience and information**. Comparing male and female officers' experiences, we find that these pathways operated differently for each group. For female officers, conducting community forums and hearing women's experiences heightened the salience of GBV as a crucial issue, but did not necessarily provide novel information about the high prevalence and seriousness of the problem. However, male officers who lack similar lived experiences, were exposed to new information about GBV through formal interactions with their female colleagues while jointly developing response plans, and informal discussions while traveling and working together. In this setting, where GBV crimes are highly under-reported through formal channels and informally silenced in society, the novelty of this information may help explain the persistent effects among men.

Our study contributes to a debate on the efficacy of segregation vs. integration as approaches for achieving inclusion in divided societies and improved responsiveness to marginalized groups by showing the promise of combining these approaches. We find that in a highly gender-unequal context with strong norms of sex-based segregation, separate spaces enable women to contribute

to public participatory forums, and raise the issue of GBV. This is not surprising, in settings with less restrictive norms scholars have documented positive effects of all-women spaces on women's political influence, academic achievements, likelihood of speaking up, and asserting their preferences (Brown et al., 2023; Gneezy, Niederle and Rustichini, 2003; Karpowitz, Mendelberg and Shaker, 2012). Yet, without integrating women officers into community policing teams and assigning them an explicit role in the preparation of response strategies, women's issues would risk remaining confined to "enclaves" after being raised (Jassal, 2020). When male and female officers work jointly to develop response plans, women's distinctive concerns are reflected in the output in the form of explicit strategies to prevent GBV. This is consistent with recent work documenting the efficacy of approaches that "mainstream rather than segregate attention to women's cases within routine police work" (Sukhtankar, Kruks-Wisner and Mangla, 2022, p. 191). Our evidence on lasting change in male officers' attitudes contributes to a growing empirical literature on the positive effects of contact for inter-group relations (Mousa, 2020; Pettigrew, 1998), and scholarship documenting how interaction with female colleagues can change men's attitudes, even in masculinized institutions (Dahl, Kotsadam and Rooth, 2021; Finseraas et al., 2016; Jones, 2023).

Our findings also speak to the promises and pitfalls of participatory interventions that rely on citizen engagement (Gaventa and Barrett, 2012; Pateman, 2012). Such interventions run the risk of reproducing social divisions and inequalities unless specific efforts are made to include marginalized groups (Mansuri and Rao, 2012). For instance, Gonzalez and Mayka (2022) find that attendees at community policing forums in Sao Paulo frame already marginalized groups as threats and make demands for greater repression by the police. Studies in the urban US find that citizens who attend policing forums, and thus set the agenda, are more likely to be older, White, higher-income, home-owners (Forman Jr, 2004; Skogan, 1992; Skolnick and Bayley, 1988). To our knowledge, ours is the first study to examine the *gendered* implications of community policing in a setting where women are systematically marginalized.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. First, we describe our study context, highlighting how gender inequality manifests in Pakistani society and the police, and how GBV is handled by law enforcement. We then describe community policing as a policy tool, and

the intervention implemented in this study. Next we provide details of our research design: sampling, data sources, and randomization. We then present our theoretical predictions and experimental findings from quantitative data, and lay out possible mechanisms drawing on qualitative data. We conclude by discussing theoretical contributions and implications for policy design.

Context

This section describes relevant aspects of gender inequality as they manifest in society and the institutional context of the police in Pakistan. These factors shape the design and implementation of the community policing intervention, inform our theoretical predictions, and help define the scope conditions of our findings.

Gender Inequality in Society

Pakistan ranked 145th out of 193 countries on the Human Development Report's 2023 Gender Inequality Index (GII).³ One manifestation of gender inequality are social norms of sex-based segregation, and women's exclusion from public spaces (Jayachandran, 2015; Miller, Peck and Seflek, 2020). In Pakistan, such segregation, while not legally enforced, is widely practiced and enforced informally. A 2010 Pew Survey found that 85% of Pakistani Muslims say they would favor making segregation of men and women in the workplace the law in their country. Masood (2019) notes: "[...]educational facilities in Pakistan are almost always segregated by gender. Women-only universities and medical colleges are an extension of this social norm. Hospitals have separate male and female wards. Government offices and businesses including banks have separate counters for women" (p.223). These norms have clear implications for police-community relations and community policing: they make it especially costly for women to directly approach male officers, or to participate in mixed-gender public spaces and forums.

Another manifestation of gender inequality is the ubiquity of various forms of GBV experienced by women within and outside the home. According to the 2018-19 Demographic and Health Survey, 28% of ever-married adult women in Pakistan reported having experienced

³The GII is "a composite metric of gender inequality using three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market." (UNDP, 2025)

physical or sexual violence from partners in domestic settings. While nationally representative statistics on other forms of GBV do not exist, individual studies have documented high prevalence of sexual harassment of women in public spaces. A 2016 online survey of female university and college students in three Pakistani cities found that over 90% had experienced some form of harassment, most commonly from strangers in public in the form of staring, blocking paths, and whistling (Anwar, Österman and Björkqvist, 2019). A World Bank survey of over 5,000 women in Peshawar, Pakistan found that over a third had experienced sexual harassment in public spaces (Pande et al., 2020). Direct experiences and fear of harassment are reflected in women's expressed concerns: in a 2016-17 survey of nearly 50,000 households in Lahore, Pakistan, 40% of respondents reported feeling that it was unsafe for women to walk in their neighborhood (Sajjad, Vyborny and Field, 2019). Despite its ubiquity and felt salience, GBV remains under-reported to formal channels.⁴

Gender Inequality in Policing and Responsiveness to Women

Pakistan's police force remains highly male-dominated: in 2022, women comprised 3% of the police force in Pakistan despite the introduction of a 10% quota in government jobs for women in 2007 (Accountability Lab Pakistan, 2024). Moreover, women officers are subject to task segregation within the police, mirroring the social segregation described above. Time-use data collected in surveys with police officers in our sample shows that field-based duties are dominated by male officers. While women officers report spending most of their time (86%) in duties within the police station; men spend over half their time (55%) in beat patrolling (Table 1). Notably women do not report spending any time on First Information Report (FIR) investigation, the first step in pursuing reported crimes. A 2024 policy report confirms this finding, "Women are not just less in number but are restrained from playing an active role in policing...restricted to peripheral policing" (Accountability Lab Pakistan, 2024, p. 4). Women are also especially underrepresented in senior leadership roles that come with executive command over resource allocation.

⁴To illustrate, of the women self-reporting experiencing domestic violence in the DHS survey, fewer than 1% said they had approached the police.

Table 1: Percent of Time Spent by Officer on an Activity on a Typical Day

Police Activity	Male Officers	Female Officers
Panel A: Main Policing Duties		
Spending Time with Community	1.8	0.0
Beat patrolling	55.3	0.0
FIR investigation	6.1	0.0
Panel B: Administrative Duties		
Duties inside Police Station	19.7	86.3
Court duties	6.4	5.8
Providing security to politicians and bureaucrats	1.3	4.0
Panel C: Others		
Refreshment Break	9.4	4.0
Don't Remember/Refuse to Answer	0.1	0.0
N	180	42

Notes: Sample includes officers in control and non-sample beats surveyed at endline

In the institutional status-quo, police officers' individual discretion means that their personal recognition of GBV as serious and high-priority can potentially impact women's access to justice. This applies both to officers' discretionary powers over responding to citizens' complaints, and over allocating scarce resources towards preventative strategies. Officers have considerable discretion in classifying and registering complaints, timely collection of evidence, and quality of investigation. Studies show that resource-constrained police departments in Pakistan tend to prioritize the investigation of high value property crimes, kidnapping, homicide, and law and order issues (Cheema et al., 2020, p. 291), and that front-line officers often avoid treating GBV complaints as serious crimes (Aziz and Sicangco, 2021). Dismissal of complaints and low effort expended on investigation has negative consequences for justice outcomes downstream. In 2021, 9734 cases of violence against women were reported in our study province of Punjab, a 10% increase from 2020;⁵ but the conviction rate remained low and stagnant at 5% in 2020 and 4% in 2021. (Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2021).

As it pertains to prevention, Table 1 shows that the bulk of male officers' time is spent in beat patrolling. Recent studies suggest that targeted police patrols show promise in reducing certain forms of crime (Collazos et al., 2021), particularly when focused on specific locations

⁵These include rape, murder, attempted murder, beating, gang rape, custodial rape, acid burning, incest, stove-burning and honor killing

or offenses. In urban India, Amaral et al. (2025) find that a “hot-spot” patrolling approach effectively reduced severe forms of street harassment against women. However, decisions about allocating scarce human resources for such patrols depend on which crimes are seen as high priority. Failing to recognize the prevalence and seriousness of GBV can lead to underinvestment in effective preventative strategies. Given that public harassment is unlikely to be formally reported due to challenges with identifying perpetrators and social tolerance of certain forms, preventative responses are especially key (Amaral et al., 2025).

Although “gender balancing” reforms are a popular policy tool for improving police responsiveness to women and GBV, an increase in the number of female officers is unlikely to produce change without addressing the task-based segregation that sidelines them from beat-patrolling, investigative work, and decision-making over resource allocation. In England, Andrews and Johnston Miller (2013) find that domestic violence arrest rates only increase under female police chief constables, when these constables are given the opportunity to carry out front-line police work. In India, Kruks-Wisner, Mangla and Sukhtankar (2025) find that dedicated help desks staffed by female officers within police stations increase responsiveness to women’s cases when the female officers are given institutional recognition and resources. On the other hand, policies that encourage the handling of women’s concerns and complaints *exclusively* by women officers, e.g. as in the case of all-women police stations, can risk further siloing both women’s concerns and stymieing career advancement for female officers (Jassal, 2020). It is worth noting that female officers in Pakistan themselves recognize this: in a press interview a Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) stated that she “agrees that women hesitate to approach the police for lack of female officers, but she believes the solution isn’t to depute women everywhere but rather [increase] gender sensitivity among the male force.” (Rizwan, 2022). In the following section, we describe how the gender-inclusive community policing intervention takes a different approach of integrating existing women officers into public-facing work undertaken jointly with male colleagues to bring women’s concerns into the mainstream.

Intervention

We study a community policing program with a focus on problem-oriented policing (CPOP) implemented in two districts (Sheikhupura and Nankana) in Pakistan's Punjab province during 2019-2020, as part of a coordinated multi-country RCT in 6 Global South countries under the EGAP Metaketa IV project.

Community policing is a policy approach to crime reduction that actively engages citizens in the policing process through practices such as community forums or town-halls, and seeks to create greater trust between police and citizens by establishing dedicated units to respond to citizen concerns. It is often deployed in contexts where mistrust of the police – for instance in ethnically divided societies, or in transitional and post-conflict settings – is seen as a challenge to effective policing. The approach emphasizes “problem oriented policing” over traditional incident-driven responses to crimes, which may be especially well suited to issues requiring preventative responses rather than reactive enforcement (Braga, 2008). Community policing practices have proliferated globally, and such activities are often supported and funded by international donors, and integrated into UN peace-building activities in the Global South.

Community policing practices have gained traction in Pakistan in the past two decades, but have not been evaluated rigorously. The approach was initially introduced in response to evidence of an acute trust deficit between the citizens and the police in Pakistan (Cheema, Hameed and Shapiro, 2017), and motivated by the idea that citizen engagement and cooperation are critical determinants of effective policing (Akerlof and Yellen, 1994; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), 2015). The program we study was designed by Regional and District Police Officers in Sheikhupura during 2017-2018, adapting standard community policing practices to the country context. The main components of the CPOP intervention were as follows:

Dedicated Beat-Level Units (DBUs): The intervention was carried out by teams of officers, Dedicated Beat-Level Units (DBUs), formed at the beat level: the lowest administrative unit of policing in Pakistan. Appendix B1 describes the selection criteria for officers in DBUs and Appendix B2 describes the content of the mandatory training completed by DBU officers.

Monthly Community Forums: The program sought to improve citizen access to the police

through monthly community forums convened by the DBUs. Forums were held every month at a randomly drawn location within a beat, and open to all area residents. Meeting times and locations were publicized and residents were encouraged to attend through public announcements using mosque loudspeakers, and word of mouth via active community residents. These forums aimed to make police officers more accessible to citizens, and promote citizen engagement through facilitated discussions about common law and order problems faced by the community.

Community Policing Plans: DBUs prepared prevention strategies in the form of community policing plans (CPPs) in response to the issues raised at forums. The plans were reviewed and updated on a monthly basis, and included an assignment of roles and responsibilities for the DBU officers. DBU officers were required to formally report and log their plans in police stations, and present progress at monthly meetings with a senior police officer at the district level. See Appendix B5 for two sample plans.

The community policing intervention did not have any explicit criteria for women's inclusion, and became male-dominated in practice. While criteria for selecting officers to DBUs were prima-facie gender-neutral, two factors contributed to a *de-facto* preference for the selection of male officers: 1) women's overall low representation in the police force and 2) the criteria for DBU officers to have experience in community-facing roles, which essentially restricted the pool to men given the task-based segregation detailed in Table 1. Thus, the composition of DBUs in CPOP intervention beats ended up being *all-male*. Simultaneously, although citizen forums were advertised as open to all residents, norms of sex-based segregation meant that women faced high social costs in attending such forums, and their attendance was negligible.

To address women's exclusion in CPOP, a gender-inclusive model of the intervention (CPOP-G) was designed and rolled out four months later. CPOP-G introduced parallel women-only forums to encourage women's participation, without violating prevailing norms of sex segregation in public spaces. As these norms made it unacceptable for male officers to moderate women-only forums, each Dedicated Beat Unit (DBU) in CPOP-G beats was mandated to include a female officer. To ensure that women's concerns were incorporated into policing responses, male and female officers were required to jointly formulate the Community Policing Plans (CPPs) for their assigned beats, which would be transmitted to their higher-ups. This joint

formulation requirement was designed to mainstream women’s concerns into routine planning.

The combination of segregated forums and integrated planning was developed with community input. In the design process, women interviewed in out-of-sample localities overwhelmingly expressed a preference for women-only forums over mixed-gender alternatives, citing greater comfort, anticipated objections from male household members, and reluctance to discuss sensitive issues in the presence of male family members. In light of this, women-only forums were viewed as more feasible than efforts to encourage women’s participation in open forums. This logic aligns with prior work documenting how demands for women-only public services often reflect both women’s own safety concerns and patriarchal restrictions on mobility (e.g., Jayachandran (2021)).

CPOP-G required the recruitment of one female constable per DBU to conduct women-only forums and participate in joint development of CPPs. As a result, CPOP-G beats were supported by gender-integrated teams in which male and female officers jointly engaged in community-facing tasks, thus shifting the status-quo of task-based segregation. The addition of female officers to an established workflow and creation of women-specific places within that workflow shares the core logic of the intervention studied in Sukhtankar, Kruks-Wisner and Mangla (2022) which addressed gender-bias in traditional in-station crime reporting by introducing women’s help desks staffed by female officers to police stations in India.

The key components of CPOP and CPOP-G are summarized in Table 2:

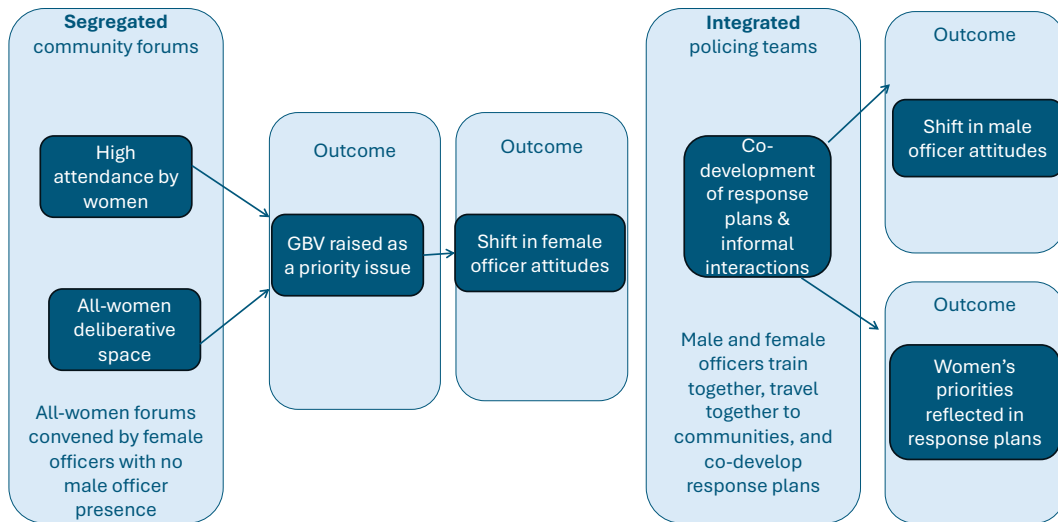
Table 2: Intervention Components

Design Feature	Standard Model (CPOP)	Gender-Inclusive (CPOP-G)
Community Policing Teams	2 member team (all male)	3 member team (2 male + 1 female)
Monthly Community Forums	Open forums run by male officers	Open forums run by male officers + Women-only Forums run by female officers (not attended by male officers)
Community Policing Response Plans	Prepared by all male team	Prepared by mixed gender team

Theory of Change

In this section, we discuss the promise of approaches that combine segregation to elicit marginalized groups’ concerns with task integration to mainstream them into routine workflows. While these are often posed as a binary, our theory of change, visualized in Figure 1, emphasizes the importance of combining them.

Figure 1: Theory of Change



Segregated spaces for women run the danger of reinforcing discriminatory norms, and inattention to women’s concerns (Jassal, 2020). While these trade-offs are important, the motivation for segregation in our setting comes from the high social cost of mixed-gender interactions. A short-term intervention is unlikely to transform these long-standing norms. Under such costs, supposedly integrated spaces risk excluding women altogether. Moreover, women may themselves express preferences for separate spaces; e.g. in the case of gender-segregated transport options (Field and Vyborny, 2022; Kondylis et al., 2020). Even in settings without restrictive norms, separate spaces may have advantages, for instance as Karpowitz and Mendelberg (2018) argue, because “women face identity-based threats to their authoritative influence in mixed-gender groups” (p.1144). They find that participation in an all-women group has empowering effects for women and also leads to different policy decisions than

mixed-gender groups. In India, Prillaman (2023) documents positive effects of all-women's networks on women's political engagement; while Parthasarathy, Rao and Palaniswamy (2019) find that women are disadvantaged in being heard in mixed-gender village assemblies.

In our context, segregation serves two functions: 1) it allows women to attend public forums without incurring social censure 2) provides an enabling environment for them to speak up and express distinctive concerns. We thus expect that issues of GBV are more likely to come up in all-women forums where women are present, and can express themselves:

H₁: GBV will be more frequently discussed in women-only forums in CPOP-G than in open forums in CPOP or CPOP-G.

Once GBV is put on the agenda by discussion in forums, we expect that the female officers will come to recognize it as high priority. This could happen through an informational channel, whereby the forums provide officers with new information about the prevalence of the issue or through a salience channel, whereby hearing the concerns reinforces their importance. While we cannot quantitatively adjudicate between these two channels, we test the following observable implications:

H_{2a}: Female officers in CPOP-G beats will be more likely to recognize GBV as a priority for communities than female officers in control or CPOP beats.

H_{2b}: Female officers in CPOP-G beats will be more likely to personally prioritize GBV as a problem than female officers in control or CPOP beats.

Without an element of integration, the buck would stop here. However, the CPOP-G intervention also required female officers to formally work with their male colleagues on response plans addressing issues raised in the forums, and increased informal interactions between male and female officers as they trained, traveled, and worked together on teams. We expect formal and informal task-integration to complement elicitation in segregated settings as: 1) female officers share what they learned with their male counterparts on the DBUs; and 2) they work together to develop response plans to issues raised in both open forums and women-only forums. We thus expect that issues of GBV are more likely to be present in CPPs from CPOP-G beats. CPPs are presented to senior leadership and therefore represent a costly behavioral measure of officers' responsiveness towards GBV mitigation. Specifically:

H₃: Responsiveness to women’s concerns, defined as the development of CPPs that explicitly include one or more strategies to address GBV, will be higher in CPOP-G beats than in CPOP.

What does this mean for male officers attitudes? In the CPOP-G intervention arm, interactions between male and female officers meets conditions identified by scholars of inter-group contact as important for achieving attitudinal change (Pettigrew, 1998; Lowe, 2021; Mousa, 2020).⁶. Interactions between officers on DBUs in CPOP-G took place in the context of cooperating on common goals of carrying out the intervention activities, were sanctioned by leadership in the police force who recruited officers to join the teams, and placed officers on equal footing in terms of tasks, which are otherwise highly differentiated in the status quo. Moreover, previous scholarship on exposure to female colleagues has been shown to influence men’s attitudes and behaviors in police and military forces (Miller and Segal, 2019; Finseraas et al., 2016). We thus expect that the increased contact, through formal task-based integration in developing CPPs with female officers, and informal interactions while working on mixed teams, will shift male officers’ attitudes toward GBV:

H_{4a}: Male officers in CPOP-G beats will be more likely to recognize GBV as a priority for communities than male officers in control or CPOP beats.

H_{4b}: Male officers in CPOP-G beats will be more likely to personally prioritize GBV as a problem than male officers in control or CPOP beats.

To summarize: segregation enables women citizens’ presence and voice in public forums, and gets their issues on the agenda. Yet without integration and mainstreaming, the scope for change would remain limited to female officers’ priorities and GBV would likely remain a “women’s issue”. Task integration and increased contact at the officer level is expected to support responsiveness to women’s concerns in planning and to changes in male officers’ attitudes.

⁶“...contact should only reduce prejudice when the integrated groups have common goals, inter-group cooperation, equal status, and the support of authorities” (Lowe, 2021, p. 1807)

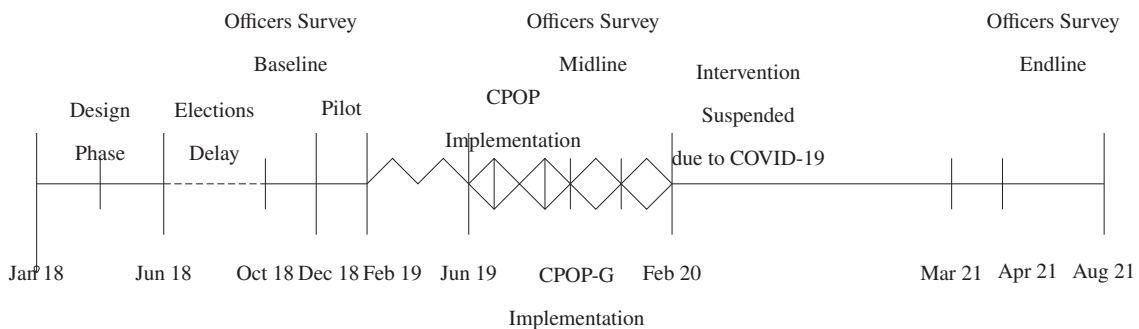
Sampling and Randomization

This section provides background on the study area, sampling and randomization, and intervention timeline. The study received IRB approval, and we provide further details on ethical considerations in Appendix A1.

The intervention was implemented in two districts (Sheikhupura and Nankana) in the Punjab Province of Pakistan, which together have a population of 4.6 million. The districts include 27 police stations that cover 150 beats, and comprised 1053 villages and 516 urban neighborhoods. The sample for the evaluation consists of 108 beats. Appendix Figure A1 shows beat boundaries, and their assignment to experimental conditions; Appendix Table A1 shows that the registered crime rate in the study districts lies within 1 standard deviation of the provincial average.

The monthly forums were held in villages and neighborhoods within beats at randomly drawn locations to ensure that access was inclusive within beats. Figure 2 summarizes the timeline of the field experiment. The CPOP intervention began in March 2019, and CPOP-G began later in July 2019. Both programs were halted early due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.

Figure 2: Project Timeline



Randomization was carried out within police stations, with the beat as the unit of randomization. Initially, 3 beats were randomly drawn from each of 27 stations, and assigned to each experimental condition: Control, CPOP, and CPOP-G. In the second stage, one additional beat from each of the 27 police stations was randomly assigned to each of the 3 conditions, using PPS (Probability Proportional to Size) sampling for a total sample of 108 beats. Figure 3 shows the final randomization scheme. Appendix Tables A2 and A3 show balance across beats on key characteristics measured pre-treatment.

Table 3: Randomized Allocation of Beats to Experimental Conditions

Treatment	Stage 1 Beats	Stage 2 Beats	Total Beats
Control	27	9	36
CPOP	27	9	36
CPOP-G	27	9	36
Total	81	27	108

Note: 108 study beats were randomly sampled in 2 stages from a total of 150 beats across 27 police stations

Data

We report outcomes at the level of community forums, beats, and individual officers. Officers in treatment beats maintained administrative logs of community forums recording attendance, and the issues highlighted at each forum. These logs were electronically submitted at their respective police stations as part of program reporting and made accessible to the senior police officer overseeing the program at the district level. We use the monthly log data from February 2019 to February 2020 to report on forum attendance and issues brought up at forums. A detailed description of log data collection and audits is provided in Appendix B3.

We measure the presence of GBV-related strategies in the CPPs by reviewing all 584 CPPs submitted by DBUs to the senior officers in their police station throughout the study. Strategies that included at least one strategy to address GBV-related concerns were coded as being responsive to women’s specific concerns, e.g. to curb harassment around girls’ colleges, the police recommended increasing patrolling during peak exit hours, especially at college closing time. Similarly, to strengthen the response to child abuse cases, the police proposed to senior officials that they maintain a register of individuals previously reported, investigated for, or convicted of child abuse. See Appendix B for translated examples of CPPs with (Figure B5) and without (Figure B6) GBV-related strategies.

We measure officer-level outcomes using repeated cross-section surveys of 205 male and 100 female officers. Officers were assigned to treatment and control beats based on their status quo deployment. Within each police station, officers who usually handled cases in the treatment beats were assigned to the treatment beats, while those who usually worked in the control beats were assigned to the control beats. These in-person surveys were conducted by same-gender enumerators with individual officers one-on-one with full privacy. Due to budgetary constraints,

we surveyed only a subset of male officers (those of Upper Subordinate rank) at baseline. We conduct three rounds of surveys with this sample of male officers baseline (2018); midline (2019); and endline (2021). At midline and endline, we surveyed all male and female officers in our sample.

The survey asked officers to report what they considered to be the top three public safety issues in their beat as well as what they believed citizens considered to be the top three public safety concerns.⁷

We construct a dummy variable for “GBV” which takes a value of 1 if sexual assault, domestic violence, or child abuse are among the top 3 reported concerns. Our outcome measures are i) the probability that an officer reports GBV as one of the top 3 concerns of citizens in their beat, and ii) the probability that an officers reports GBV as one of their own top 3 concerns

We supplement this with qualitative interviews. During April 2022, we conducted 36 semi-structured interviews with a random subset of officers who were part of the study. We interviewed 12 officers (6 male; 6 female) in each experimental condition: control, CPOP and CPOP-G beats. These interviews were conducted by trained enumerators of the same gender in-person with full privacy. We draw on interview transcripts to understand officers’ lived experiences of the intervention, and the mechanisms of observed change.

Analysis

We registered the design of the community policing field experiment with the AEA registry in June 2019, before rolling out the CPOP-G treatment, and submitted modifications prior to endline data collection in March 2020. However, this paper focuses on outcomes of citizen attendance and prioritization of GBV in open forums, on differences in CPPs between arms, and on effects on police officer attitudes and beliefs about GBV, which were not part of our pre-registered hypotheses. Moreover, the qualitative interviews which were conducted after the conclusion of the intervention, and following preliminary analysis of quantitative data,

⁷Enumerators, who were blind to treatment status, asked the officers an open-ended question “What are the three top public safety issues in your beat” and classified responses into the appropriate category from a list (see Appendix D). The list of options was developed after piloting the survey in the non-sample district of Kasur, and was not read out to officers during the survey.

inform our current understanding of the mechanisms of change, which were not reflected in the pre-analysis plan.

We report results on forum attendance and on concerns raised by citizens in community forums convened across beats assigned to each treatment condition (CPOP and CPOP-G) using administrative log data. We report results on the presence of GBV-related strategies in CPPs based on the authors' review and coding of the CPPs.

For our survey based outcomes, we estimate intent-to-treat (ITT) effects on female and male officers' beliefs about citizens' priorities and their own prioritization of GBV through the following specification:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CPOP_i + \beta_2 CPOPG_i + \gamma_s + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Where γ_s are police station fixed effects, and standard errors are clustered at the police station level.

For the subset of male officers surveyed at baseline, we also report results at midline and endline controlling for the baseline values of the outcome measures using the following equation in Appendix Table C5:

$$Y_{i,t=1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CPOP_i + \beta_2 CPOPG_i + \pi Y_{i,t=0} + \sigma_s + \epsilon_I \quad (2)$$

Where $Y_{i,t=1}$ is the given outcome variable measured post-treatment, $Y_{i,t=0}$ is its baseline value, σ_s is a police station fixed effect, and standard errors are clustered at the police station level.

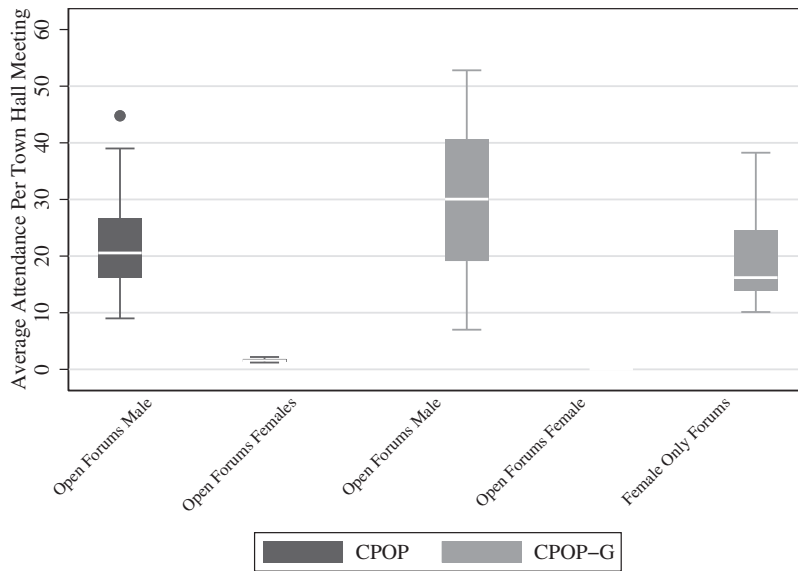
For all specifications, we take a conservative approach and cluster standard errors at the police station level (n=27), rather than at the unit of randomization, i.e. the beat level (n=108), because officers were recruited for the experiment at the police station level. Appendix Tables C2 and C3 show robustness of results to the alternate specification with standard errors clustered at the beat-level. Our midline results measure short-term effects while the intervention was still ongoing, while endline results measure persistence of the effects after the intervention had been suspended for a year due to COVID-19.

Finally, we draw on our qualitative interview data to understand officers’ experiences of the intervention and processes of change.

Results

Forum Attendance, Citizen Concerns, and Response Plans: Figure 3 shows the number of male and female attendees in forums held in treatment beats. We find that women’s attendance in open-to-all forums in the CPOP condition is extremely low: 23 women attended 412 open forums conducted between February 2019 and February 2020. However, in the CPOP-G beats which held women-only forums, 1146 women attended the 188 women-only forums held between July 2019 and February 2020. A separate space thus boosted women’s participation. Appendix Figure B1 shows average monthly attendance at forums throughout the life of the intervention.

Figure 3: Average Forum Attendance by Treatment



Source: Police administrative records of the monthly community forums (Feb2019–Feb2020).

Notes: Box plot shows average and inter-quartile range of average attendance per forum per beat. Total attendance: Open Forums (CPOP): 2984 men and 23 women in 412 forums; Open Forums (CPOP-G): 2034 men and 0 women in 208 forums; All-Women Forums (CPOP-G): 1146 women in 188 forums. Forums were held between Feb 2019 and Feb 2020 in CPOP beats, and between July 2019 and Feb 2020 in CPOP-G beats.

Forum attendees encompassed a range of educational and occupational backgrounds (see Appendix B4). In our interviews, police officers’ perceptions converged on most attendees being

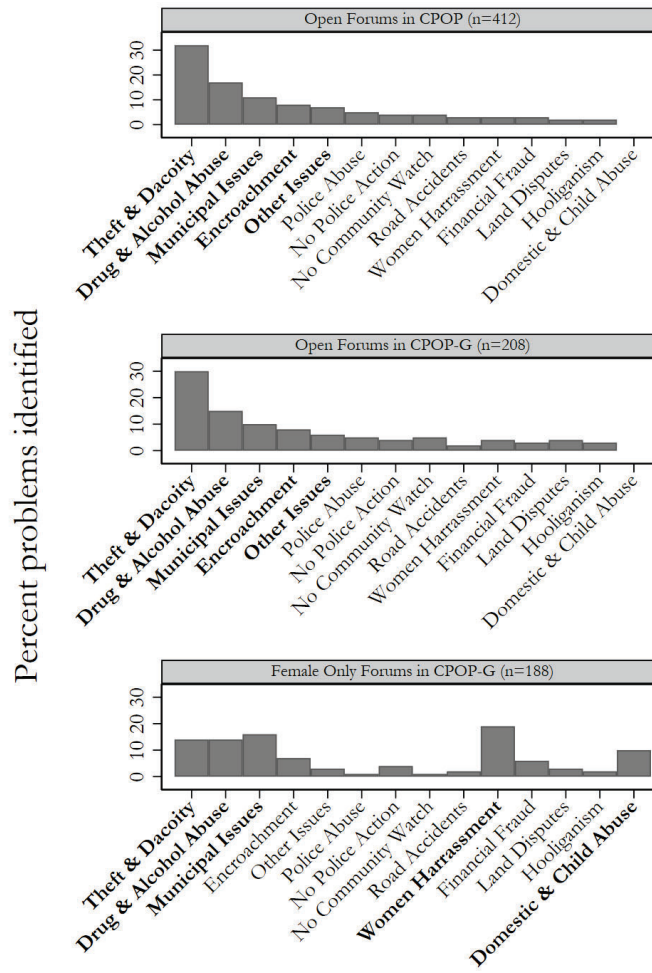
poor and working class. Data collected from attendees shows that 40% of women attendees had completed high-school, while only 30% of men had. This is broadly reflective of district averages for women, but the male attendees were less educated than the district average.⁸ The vast majority of men were employed in daily wage labor or agricultural work, while 35% of women attendees were housewives. 40% of women attendees reported being daily wage workers, which is higher than the female labor force participation rate in the province (27.8%).⁹ This selection is intuitive: working women are likely to be ones with fewer constraints on mobility, and more able to participate in a public forum.

Does women's presence through all-women's forums have substantive implications? Figure 4 shows the frequency with which different issues were raised by forum attendees across types of forums. The top 5 issues raised in open forums in both CPOP and CPOP-G beats included theft and dacoity (armed robbery), drug and alcohol abuse, municipal issues, encroachment and other miscellaneous issues. While women's forums also raised theft and dacoity, drug and alcohol abuse and municipal issues, their top 5 issues also included women's harassment and domestic and child abuse. By contrast, women's harassment and domestic abuse saw negligible mention in open forums across both treatment conditions.

⁸According to the 2017-18 MICS Survey, 38.8% of women and 45.3% of men in Sheikhpura had completed upper secondary education

⁹Punjab Gender Parity Report, 2021

Figure 4: Problems Identified in Monthly Community Forums



Source: Police administrative records of the monthly community forums (Feb 2019 - Feb 2020). **Notes:** Figure shows distribution of problems identified by forum participants. Total problems identified in 412 Open Forums in CPOP: 735. Total problems identified in 208 Open Forums in CPOP-G : 472. Total problems identified in 188 Female Only Forums in CPOP-G: 339. Bold font represents top 5 problems identified in each forum type.

Table 4: Identification of GBV as a Problem at Community Forums & Inclusion of GBV-related Response Strategies in Policing Plans

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Panel A: Pr(Problem was GBV related)			
CPOP-G vs. CPOP	0.084*** (0.023)		
Open forums in CPOP-G vs. Open Forums in CPOP		-0.019 (0.029)	
All Women Forums in CPOP-G vs. Open forums in CPOP-G			0.236*** (0.044)
Obs.	775	582	421
CPOP mean (sd)	0.215 (0.411)		
Open forums mean (sd)		0.218 (0.413)	
Open forums in CPOP-G mean (sd)			0.224 (0.418)
	(1)		
Panel B: Pr(GBV-related response strategy suggested)			
CPOP-G vs. CPOP	0.236*** (0.029)		
Obs.	584		
CPOP mean (sd)	0.093 (0.291)		

Notes: * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$. Robust standard errors are clustered at the beat level. Panel A uses forum-level data. The unit of observation is a forum-month-beat. For CPOP there is one row per month per beat (open forums only). For CPOP-G there are two rows per month per beat, one for open forums and one for women-only forums. The sample comprises 354 CPOP open forums, 228 CPOP-G open forums, and 193 CPOP-G women-only forums ($N = 775$). The outcome is the probability that any issue raised in the forum concerns is either Child Abuse or Domestic Abuse or Gender-based Harrassment (GBV). This outcome is constructed by generating, for each combination of month, police station, beat, treatment condition (CPOP vs CPOP-G), and forum type (open vs women-only), a dummy equal to 1 if at least one of the issues raised in the forum is GBV and 0 otherwise. Panel B uses plan level data. The unit of observation is a month-beat-plan. The sample comprises 354 CPOP plans (prepared by the all male community policing teams serving CPOP beats) and 230 CPOP-G plans (prepared jointly by the male and female officers on the integrated teams serving CPOP-G beats), for a total of 584 plans. The outcome is the probability that a policing plan included a response strategy related to GBV. This outcome is constructed by generating, for each combination of month, police station, beat, and treatment condition (CPOP vs CPOP-G), a dummy equal to 1 if at least one strategy was suggested in response to GBV-related issues and 0 otherwise.

The probability of forum attendees raising a problem that can be classified as GBV is 8.4 percentage points higher in the “gender-inclusive” arm (CPOP-G) vs. the standard model treatment arm (CPOP), as shown in Table 4, Panel A, column 1. Comparing open forums across the two treatment arms (Table 4, Panel A, column 2), we find no significant differences. The difference across experimental conditions is clearly driven by the women-only forums. In CPOP-G beats, the probability of a problem that is raised being classified as GBV is 24 percentage points higher in the women-only forums.¹⁰ The gender composition of forums has substantive implications for the concerns raised at forums, specifically the extent to which GBV

¹⁰Results are robust to dropping an outlier beat from the sample (Appendix Table C1)

is raised as a top concern.¹¹

In an interview, a female officer who conducted all-women forums noted how GBV was a shared concern, even as it took on different forms for housewives vs. working women:

“they told us about the violence against them, instances where boys would harass their daughters, or instances when their husbands would domestically abuse them. Some educated women described issues that other women did not: issues with their workplaces, how several people bother them, and the backlash they receive at home for wanting to get jobs.”(Female Officer, CPOP-G)

Turning to responsiveness to women’s concerns, the probability that a CPP includes at least one GBV-related response strategy is 24 percentage points higher in CPOP-G vs. CPOP beats (Table 4, Panel B, column 1). Examples of creative response strategies proposed in these plans included increased patrols around harassment “hot-spots” such as bus-stops near women’s colleges at peak times, coordinating with *imams* at local mosques to include anti-domestic violence messaging in sermons, and creating public registries of child sexual abusers. In line with the “problem-oriented policing” approach, some strategies (such as working with mosques), include involving actors “outside the normal police arena” (Braga, 2008). These plans were presented to senior officers at the station house level for follow-up by the community policing teams. As the CPPs are formulated by mixed gender teams of 2 male officers and 1 female officer after consideration of inputs from both open and women-only forums, the increased rate of addressing GBV directly in them reflects the combination of different concerns elicited from women-only forums and the impact of task integration and mainstreaming.

Police Officers’ Beliefs and Priorities: Tables 5 and 6 show estimated effects of the two treatments on officers’ beliefs about citizens’ prioritization of GBV as an issue, and officers’ own beliefs about whether GBV should be a priority issue for the police. We estimate effects for all female and male officers who participated in the study at midline, while the intervention was ongoing, and at endline, about a year after the intervention had been suspended due to the

¹¹In Appendix C6, we provide qualitative evidence to show that discussions in the forums were indeed organic, and not driven by police officers.

pandemic.¹²

Table 5: Officer Beliefs about Citizens' Priorities

Pr(Officer Ranks GBV Among Top 3 Citizen Priorities)		
Panel A: Female Officers		
	Midline Only	Endline Only
CPOP	0.083 (0.127)	0.023 (0.137)
CPOP-G	0.550*** (0.105)	0.322*** (0.124)
Constant	0.640*** (0.088)	0.122 (0.095)
CPOP-G vs CPOP (t-test value)	4.233	2.417
CPOP-G vs CPOP (p-value)	0.000	0.018
Control Mean	0.5	0.444
Total clusters	27	27
N	100	100
R ²	0.440	0.328
Panel B: Simple Differences (Male Officers Only)		
CPOP	-0.111 (0.090)	-0.062 (0.101)
CPOP-G	0.386*** (0.086)	0.203** (0.099)
Constant	0.821*** (0.074)	0.562*** (0.081)
CPOP-G vs CPOP (t-test value)	6.090	2.870
CPOP-G vs CPOP (p-value)	0.000	0.005
Control Mean	0.485	0.441
Total clusters	27	27
N	200	205
R ²	0.327	0.160

Notes: (1) * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$. (2) Robust standard errors are clustered at the police station level. (3) The outcome variable measures the probability that an officer reports gender-based violence (sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse) among any one of the top 3 public safety concerns according to citizens (4) Column 1 shows regression results from midline; Column 2 shows estimates from endline. Details on survey questions and construction of outcome measures are provided in Appendix D.

¹²Appendix Tables C2 and C3 show robustness to clustering errors at the beat-level, rather than police-station level

Table 6: Officers' Own Priorities

	Pr(Officer Ranks GBV Among Top 3 Own Priorities)	
Panel A: Female Officers		
	Midline Only	Endline Only
CPOP	-0.055 (0.138)	-0.048 (0.154)
CPOP-G	0.434*** (0.111)	-0.052 (0.146)
Constant	0.546*** (0.095)	0.639*** (0.108)
CPOP-G vs CPOP (t-test value)	4.191	-0.032
CPOP-G vs CPOP (p-value)	0.000	0.975
Control Mean	0.444	0.528
Total clusters	27	27
N	100	100
R ²	0.396	0.273
Panel B: Simple Differences (Male Officers Only)		
CPOP	0.027 (0.079)	0.209*** (0.080)
CPOP-G	0.385*** (0.097)	0.368*** (0.096)
Constant	0.280*** (0.068)	0.155** (0.060)
CPOP-G vs CPOP (t-test value)	4.123	1.851
CPOP-G vs CPOP (p-value)	0.000	0.066
Control Mean	0.333	0.265
Total clusters	27	27
N	200	205
R ²	0.240	0.250

Notes: (1) * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$. (2) Robust standard errors are clustered at the police station level. (3) The outcome variable measures the probability that an officer reports gender-based violence (sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse) among any one of the top 3 public safety concerns according to themselves (4) Column 1 shows regression results from midline; Column 2 shows estimates from endline. Details on survey questions and construction of outcome measures are provided in Appendix D.

Female Officers: Panel A, column 1 in Tables 5 and 6 describes effects for female officers at midline. In line with H3, we find that female officers who participated in CPOP-G are 55 percentage points more likely to report that GBV is among citizens' top priorities, and 43 percentage points more likely to report that GBV ought to be among the top priorities of the police, relative to female officers in control.

Panel A, column 2 shows effects at endline. The effect on female officers' beliefs about citizen priorities persists: female officers in CPOP-G remain 32 percentage points more likely

to report that GBV is among citizens' top priorities (Table 5). However, effects on their own reported priorities dissipate: at endline there is no significant difference between female officers in CPOP-G and those in control (Table 6). As expected, given that female officers were not involved in the standard intervention (CPOP), we do not detect effects on beliefs of female officers in beats assigned to this treatment.

Male Officers: Panel B in Tables 5 and 6 describes effects on male officers. Male officers' beliefs about citizens' prioritization of GBV and their own beliefs about the importance of GBV in CPOP beats remain unchanged at midline. This is in line with the evidence that the mostly male attendees of open community forums convened by male officers in CPOP beats did not voice GBV as an important concern (Figure 4 and Table 4)

However, in line with H4, we observe substantively large and significant changes in male officers' beliefs and priorities in CPOP-G beats. At midline, officers in these beats are 39 percentage points more likely to report that GBV is a top priority for citizens (Table 5, Panel B, Column 1), and 39 percentage points more likely to report personally considering GBV a top priority (Table 6, Panel B, Column 1). Similar to their colleagues in CPOP beats, male officers convened open community forums in CPOP-G beats, which were almost exclusively attended by men who did not raise concerns of GBV (Figure 4). However, unlike in CPOP, in CPOP-G, male officers worked closely in teams with female colleagues who conducted all-women forums.

Importantly, changes in male officers' attitudes persist after the intervention ends. At endline, male officers in CPOP-G beats remain 20 percentage points more likely to report GBV among citizens top priorities (Table 5, Panel B, Column 2), and 37 percentage points more likely to report GBV among their own top priorities (Table 6, Panel B, Column 2) than control.

Robustness and Further Analysis:

Experimenter Demand Effects: Could changes in officers' self-reported attitudes reflect an experimenter demand effect, or social desirability bias? We think this unlikely for several reasons. First, adding strategies to the CPPs on GBV or other women's concerns was not cost-free. CPPs were officially logged and formed part of the routine workflow of police reporting and preventive action. So the demand effects would have to be quite strong to drive changes to them.

Second, the training for both male and female officers was entirely focused on how to implement a general model of problem-oriented community policing; there was no content related to women’s concerns or GBV specifically. Prioritizing GBV or responsiveness to women was never an explicitly stated goal of the program. If there were strong experimenter demand effects we would expect to see changes on outcomes most closely related to publicly stated program goals and topics emphasized in training. We test to see if this is the case, and find null effects on measures of officer attitudes towards police abuse, accountability, corruption and empathy to citizens, all of which were emphasized in training (Appendix Figure C1).¹³

Finally, we would expect survey responses to be most influenced by experimenter demand during or immediately following the intervention, but we observe durable effects. Using two waves of surveys (midline conducted in 2019, and endline conducted in 2021) allows us to show that effects on officers’ perceptions of community importance of GBV, and on male officers’ own prioritization of GBV, persist up to a year after the intervention had ended.

Effects by Gender: To analyze whether the treatment effects are significantly different for male and female officers, we estimate models pooled by officer gender, including indicators for officer gender and interaction variables between officer gender and treatment assignment (Appendix Table C4). We find largely similar effects by gender, except at endline, where effects of CPOP-G on officers’ own prioritization of GBV persist for male officers but not women. In the following section, we draw on qualitative interviews to identify a plausible explanation for this difference.

Effects Controlling for Baseline Levels: Our panel data shows a secular decay in male officers’ prioritization of GBV in the control group from baseline to midline. This decline is significantly reduced by the CPOP-G treatment. For the subset of male officers for whom we have baseline data on officer attitudes and beliefs, we estimate the treatment effect controlling for baseline values. Appendix Table C5 shows that there is no substantive change to results when doing so.

Effects on Reported Crime at the Police Station: Finally, we consider whether CPOP-G

¹³Note that these were the primary outcomes pre-registered for the evaluation of the coordinated multi-country trial of the community policing program (Blair et al., 2021)

changes the registration of GBV crimes for purposes of investigation by the police. Increasing crime registration was not a primary goal of the program, which was focused on problem-solving and prevention, where a “problem” was defined broadly as “Any condition that alarms, harms, threatens, causes fear, or has the potential for disorder in the community...” While community forums were the mechanism through which these problems were “officially” reported and recorded for response action, it was possible that they would increase trust in and familiarity with the police for women, leading to greater reporting of GBV at police stations.

We do not find evidence of significant effects (Appendix Table C6), which is unsurprising as the treatment did not address significant social and institutional frictions associated with women reporting GBV at police stations. This is consistent with the findings of the coordinated 6-country RCT, which finds null effects of the standard model community policing treatment arm on crime reports. In their meta-analysis, Blair et al. (2021) discuss how challenges elsewhere in the justice process, such as a lack of sustained support from police leadership in implementation, frequent rotation of police leadership, and resource scarcity may drive these null results.

Officer Experiences and Processes of Change

We draw on interviews conducted with male and female officers more than a year after the conclusion of the intervention to develop an inductive account of the plausible mechanisms for change.

Integrated Teams: The CPOP-G intervention challenged norms of gender task-based segregation in the police by having female officers take on community-facing tasks and work together with male officers on developing response plans. The novelty of this experience was brought up by nearly all interviewees who participated in CPOP-G. For instance a male officer noted: “Normally the lady constables do not take part in everyday police duties. It was a new opportunity to have worked with them.” (Male Officer, CPOP-G). Commenting on the task-based integration, a female officer noted “All members went into the field, and work was divided on the basis of career hierarchy, rather than sex.”(Female Officer, CPOP-G)

A by-product of this integration was also a change in the informal quotidian interactions between male and female officers. For instance, a female officer in CPOP-G noted, “since we worked together, we would gather at the end of the day and discuss everything”, while another

female officer in CPOP-G said “we were traveling together and our work was almost the same. We talked openly about the problems of the community.”

Could greater interaction with female officers, absent other components of the community policing intervention, have been sufficient to change male officers’ beliefs and attitudes? While we cannot test this formally, it is worth noting that several officers in the control and CPOP treatment conditions also reported interacting with each other as a matter of routine, e.g. “I usually talk with ease with male colleagues. I don’t have any issue or hesitation in talking with them. We mostly talk [about matters] related to the police station” (Female Officer, Control), and “in normal routine I talk very easily with my female colleagues, [...]our conversation is about normal duty e.g. today my duty is at such and such place, here my work was tough - our talks are just like this.” (Male Officer, Control). To us, this suggests that it is not merely interaction between male and female officers, but rather interaction centered around the intervention, including both the community forums in which female officers heard about the concerns of women in the community and working together on CPPs, that drove the changes we see in officers that participated in CPOP-G. Responses from male officers further support this interpretation, e.g.:

“After the forum, when the female constable approached us with her list of the female community members [issues], I noticed that most of the complaints were in regards to domestic violence.” (Male Officer, CPOP-G)

“when all 3 of us would gather together to talk, the Lady constables would tell us of the issues women face. This included rape, violence and men harassing girls outside their colleges.” (Male Officer, CPOP-G)

These aspects are likely to be absent from routine interactions between officers in the control and CPOP conditions, which take place in the context of gendered task-based segregation whereby male and female officers are unlikely to collaborate. As one female officer in the control group noted, “us females have to do our duties being inside, while the male constables also have to go outside, conduct raids, arrests, and physically take part in investigation, while we just have to sit here and do calls.”(Female Officer, Control)

Finally, some female officers noted feeling a boost in confidence due to taking on new,

previously unfamiliar community facing tasks that were previously the exclusive domain of male officers, e.g. “I think I have noticed a lot of changes in myself since joining the program. I was very afraid of talking to people but now I have developed the confidence I needed.” (Female Officer, CPOP-G). It is plausible that this confidence contributed to their willingness to speak up about sensitive gendered concerns to male colleagues in the response planning process and informal conversation. In parallel, seeing female officers in more equal roles may have made male officers more receptive to hearing and learning from their female colleagues.

Issue Salience and Information The women’s-only forums served as a source of unique information about the priorities of women, whose voice is otherwise marginalized in public settings, and was nearly absent from the open forums attended mostly by men. Moreover, since GBV is so under-reported in formal channels, police may underestimate the extent to which community members would like the police to actively address it. As a male officer noted:

“I learned about unreported cases a lot through this program. These cases were quite common in our society but never seemed to get reported. This included harassment and disrespectful behavior towards women that were just walking down the street and violence/domestic violence.”(Male Officer, CPOP-G)

We find that both female officers who conducted the forums, and the male officers whom they interacted with come to recognize that GBV is a high priority issue for communities, and this perception persists overtime.

When it comes to officers’ *own* prioritization of GBV, we propose that this could happen due to the issue becoming more salient and top-of-mind when they hear female citizens raise it repeatedly at the forums (directly in the case of female officers and indirectly when preparing CPPs or in informal discussions with female officers, in the male officers’ case). The forum discussions could also provide new information about the true prevalence of GBV, and/or the ways in which it impacts women’s lives, which makes officers take it more seriously.

For female officers, our interviews suggest that the information about GBV brought up in women’s forums was not altogether “new” to them. And as one female officer noted: “they were the common issues I knew of already.”(Female Officer, CPOP-G). Moreover, in control beats, female officers are already 11 percentage points more likely than male officers to cite

GBV as a top-3 priority. Meanwhile, male officers in CPOP-G convey a sense of genuine surprise at the prevalence and seriousness of domestic violence that they gleaned from their female colleagues' accounts of the community forums, for instance a male officer noted that he "learned through the lady constable just how common and severe the problem with violence against women is." (Male Officer, CPOP-G). And another officer's interview suggests updating beliefs about the impacts of such violence:

"We would get to know how distressed the women are. I had always assumed that domestic violence is something between the husband and wife, and is a non issue. However, now I understand how many women lose their lives because of this." (Male Officer, CPOP-G)

For female officers who may already be attuned to the high prevalence of GBV from their own lived experiences, hearing about it in the community forums may have merely increased its salience while it provided truly "new" information about prevalence and seriousness for their male colleagues. This could explain the faster decay of effects on female officers' own beliefs, and is in line with existing evidence on the relative durability of treatment effects, which suggests that treatments that provide new information or introduce "new considerations", endure longer than those of treatments that work primarily by priming or framing, or "changing weights given to considerations" (Coppock, 2023).

Discussion

This study contributes to a growing literature on how to encourage institutional recognition and responsiveness to women's concerns in gender-unequal contexts.

We contribute first to debates in women's inclusion and "gender-responsive" policy, which often juxtapose approaches based on "separate spaces" against "integration" (Jassal, 2020). In many settings social costs to integration are high and act as a constraint: as Bush and Prather (2021) note, in Tunisia: "biases against gender mixing represent a meaningful obstacle to women's participation." We provide clear evidence that moving beyond the binary is important, and show that a combination of segregation and integration at different points in a policy process holds promise. In our study, creating a socially appropriate separate space for women allowed them to voice their concerns to female police officers (similar to the women's help desks in

(Sukhtankar, Kruks-Wisner and Mangla, 2022)). Simultaneously, task-level integration and mainstreaming women's voice by setting up institutional structures that have male officers work together with female officers to consider women's concerns alongside other issues led to significant shifts in community policing plans and in those male officer's beliefs.

Our study also contributes to literature on representative bureaucracy. Women remain starkly under-represented in policing in many contexts. Our findings suggest that it is possible to reap some of the theoretical gains of increased descriptive representation without fundamentally altering the composition of the bureaucratic institution itself. Rather, by undoing task-based segregation and integrating existing bureaucrats – in this case women officers – to work with their male colleagues in a joint team on in-field tasks, women's concerns gained greater salience among male bureaucrats. We do not consider such efforts to be an alternative to greater parity in representation, rather, we think there are complementary gains to be achieved from task-based integration, alongside efforts to improve representation.

A question for policy design is whether interventions that simply promote greater integration (without a citizen participatory element) could have similar benefits. While our study design precludes us from testing this directly, we think it is important to note that convening the forums raised the salience of GBV for female officers in the short term, absent which they may not have raised it with their male colleagues. In a similar vein: would fully integrated forums led by male and female officers (where not proscribed by social norms) be equally effective at getting women's issues on the agenda? We are skeptical given studies that show women are disadvantaged in speaking in village assemblies in India, even when they are present (Parthasarathy, Rao and Palaniswamy, 2019). However, if this were indeed possible, and male officers were to directly hear from women, we might expect even stronger effects.

We document significant changes in officers' beliefs about the importance of GBV. Do such attitudes and beliefs "matter"? Attitudes and beliefs can be a critical link in the causal chain from reforms to action in many settings, especially policing (Wang, 2015). Furthermore, bureaucrats' attitudes are especially important when there is high individual discretion (Michael et al., 1980; Shoub, Stauffer and Song, 2021). Police in many contexts have tremendous discretion over how crimes, especially GBV, enter the legal system (Bouhours and Daly, 2010; Hohl and Stanko,

2015). Officers' priorities are also crucial in settings characterized by bureaucratic overload, whereby "local bureaucrats are often heavily under-resourced relative to their responsibilities." (Dasgupta and Kapur, 2020, p. 1316). When it comes to preventative strategies, officers have discretion over allocating resources targeting particular crimes and locations. Since men comprise an overwhelming majority of the police force and are especially overrepresented in higher ranks, their attitudes and priorities may be especially key.

Greater prioritization of GBV by police officers who interface with complainants is key for such cases being registered appropriately, investigated better, and increasing reporting rates in the long run. Yet, it is not enough on its own, and perhaps unsurprisingly, we do not detect any change in GBV crimes registered for investigation in our study. The officers we study are embedded in a larger command and control structure, and this program neither altered broader institutional priorities nor reduced the social frictions associated with women engaging with police stations. We interpret our findings as illustrating the "bottom-up" potential of priority shift among front-line bureaucrats in a hard setting. Yet unless officers are incentivized from "top" or provided resources and support, their ability to act on new priorities remains constrained.

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