Supplementary Appendix:

Representation Behind Closed Doors: The Effect of Electing Women Mayors on Domestic Violence

Maya Dalton* Giancarlo Visconti[†]
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^{*}Ph.D candidate, Department of Political Science, Pennsylvania State University; mad6821@psu.edu.

[†]Assistant Professor, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park; gvis@umd.edu

A Understanding Gender-Based Violence

On average, nearly 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States. Over the course of a year, this equates to more than 10 million women and men (NCADV, 2023). In Chile, one in four women who have been in a relationship report experiencing some form of partner violence in the past 12 months – whether psychological, physical, sexual, or economic (Saavedra, Contreras Urbina and Inchauste, 2022). More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased rates of domestic violence worldwide, as lockdown measures gave abusers greater freedom to act without being reported. For instance, domestic abuse rates increased by 5% in Australia, tripled in China, and rose by 20–30% in the United States (Mittal and Singh, 2020). In Chile, research has found that lockdown measures led to an increase in domestic violence helpline calls and shelter occupancy, even though police reports of domestic violence did not rise (Bhalotra et al., 2024).

Studies have shown that low-income, minority ethnic, and racialized women are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable to interpersonal violence, as they are often subjected to violent social structures (Hearn et al., 2016). Increasingly, the intersections of gender with other forms of inequality, such as age, disability, and education, are crucial to consider when examining instances of gender-based violence. Additionally, external circumstances within communities can exacerbate gender-based violence, such as elections, armed conflict, and economic crises (Agbalajobi, 2016; Kishi, 2021; Lindsey, 2022). In the context of armed conflict, for example, domestic violence is often punished less severely than other forms of violence, such as rape (Lindsey, 2022). Moreover, survivors of such violent acts frequently face societal stigmatization and repercussions rather than receiving support (Koos and Lindsey, 2022). Women and their families may lose trust in the government and security forces, such as police officers. This stigmatization, combined with a lack of resources, significantly impacts women's physical, emotional, financial, and even political lives.

B The Case of Chile

In 2006, Chile elected a woman as president for the first time. This follows a change in electoral rules for municipal elections in 2002, which has been found to have gendered effects (Hinojosa and Franceschet, 2012a). Since then, the country has experienced various improvements in terms of women's representation (Reyes-Housholder and Roque, 2019). The best example was the 2020 election for the Constitutional Assembly, which implemented a gender quota law to ensure an equal distribution between women and men members (Suarez-Cao, 2021; Piscopo et al., 2023). Even though Chile has exhibited this clear improvement in terms of women's representation in national politics, this has been less clear at the local level, such as in mayoral posts (Holman, 2017; Alberti, Diaz-Rioseco and Visconti, 2022). This problem is not unique to this country; women are usually underrepresented in local executives across the entire Latin American region (Escobar-Lemmon and Funk, 2018). The main factor explaining women's under-representation at the local level relies on the processes of candidate nominations, which are usually controlled by men, and they are usually less attentive to narrowing the gender gap (Hinojosa and Franceschet, 2012b).

Despite the lack of representation of women at the local level, women who hold political offices have been vocal in combating gender-based violence in Chile (Franceschet, 2010). For example, Mayor Claudia Pizarro of La Pintana has led a campaign against domestic violence. Part of this campaign includes the "Woman Alert" program, which delivers GPS devices with a panic button to the users. If threatened, the person can press the button, allowing responders to find the person's location and direct them to the La Pintana Community Protection Network, Carabineros de Chile, and the South Metropolitan Prosecutor's Office (Con Todos La Pintana, 2023). Similarly, Mayor Carolina Leitao of Peñalolén has worked closely with the implementation and oversight of "SOS Women Program" which collects locations from a panic button that recovers the user's location and connects them with an operator for support in real-time (Acuña, 2021).

C Regression Discontinuity Design

As an alternative empirical strategy, we employ a regression discontinuity design (RDD) in close electoral races, comparing municipalities where a woman narrowly wins over a man to those where a man narrowly wins over a woman. In this RDD setup, the unit of analysis is the municipality-year. Each municipality has a score based on the margin in the previous local election, and treatment is assigned if the score exceeds a particular cutoff. The treatment is defined as having a woman mayor (with a man as the runner-up), while the control is defined as having a man mayor (with a woman as the runner-up). The score represents the vote share difference between women and men candidates (the margin of victory). The cutoff is set at zero; thus, when the score is positive, the winning candidate is a woman, and when the score is negative, the winning candidate is a man. It is important to note that RDD estimates the effect of electing women at the cutoff, meaning the results are local in nature and apply to closely contested races.

We use the same time frame as the main analysis in the manuscript (2005 to 2020). To estimate the effects of electing a woman, we use local linear regressions, relying on an MSE-optimal bandwidth and a triangular kernel. The following estimation equation is used for this analysis, which is the same as the one used to analyze security plans.

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 T_i + \beta_2 M_i + \beta_3 T^* M_i + X_i' \beta_4 + \gamma_r + \varepsilon_i$$

Y is domestic violence in municipality i and year t. T depicts the treatment (units above the cutoff). M describes the margin of victory. The interaction between T and M allows the regression function to differ on both sides of the cutoff point. X_i is a matrix of relevant pre-treatment characteristics (i.e., local development indicators, population, and vote share), γ_r represents region fixed effects, and ε_i is the error term. The coefficient of interest is β_1 (i.e., the effect of electing a woman mayor at the cutoff).

Table A1 shows the results using equation 1, which allows us to observe the effect of electing a woman mayor (at the cutoff) on domestic violence. Only coefficient β_1 from equation 1 is reported.

Table A1: RDD results

	Domestic Violence			
	Reported by citizens	Found by the police		
	(1)	(2)		
Woman mayor	0.512*	-0.077		
	(0.149)	(0.151)		
Observations	676	676		
Note:		*p<0.05		

The conclusions align with those from the difference-in-differences analysis. On the one hand, we observe a significant increase in reports made by citizens. On the other hand, we do not find evidence of a significant impact in cases found by the police. Importantly, the RDD estimates only the impact of electing a woman mayor at the cutoff, only for competitive elections, and does not provide insights into how these effects evolve over time or whether they vary during her first, second, or third year in office.

D Research Design

Figure A1 summarizes the treatment across units and time. Each row represents a municipality; red spaces indicate a woman mayor, while blue spaces indicate a man mayor. Importantly, we exclude (i) municipality-years where a man was elected after a woman (i.e., not a staggered treatment) and (ii) municipalities that elected a woman mayor in the first year of the dataset (i.e., always treated). This figure shows the final structure of the staggered treatment used to implement the dynamic difference-in-differences approach, where 304 municipality-years have a woman serving as mayor and 4,425 municipality-years have a man serving as mayor.

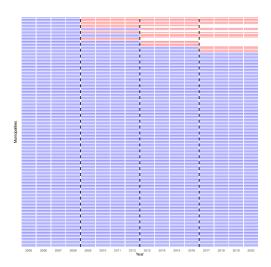


Figure A1: Women mayors across municipalities and years. Red indicates municipalities with women mayors, blue indicates municipalities with men mayors, and white indicates cases where a man was elected after a woman.

Using data from 2005 to 2020, Figure A2 provides a map of Chile highlighting municipalities that have had a woman mayor in red and those that have never had a woman mayor in blue. This illustrates that women mayors are distributed across the entire country.

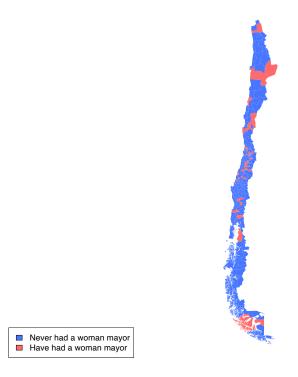


Figure A2: Map of Chile depicting municipalities. In red: municipalities that had a woman mayor at any time between 2005 and 2020; in blue: municipalities that never had a woman mayor from 2005 to 2020.

The regression equation approximating the Callaway and Sant'Anna (2020) method for a dynamic DiD model with group-time-specific treatment effects is the following:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \sum_{k=-10}^{10} \beta_k \cdot 1(k = t - g) + X_{it}\theta + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where Y_{it} is the outcome of interest (e.g., violence against women in standard deviation units) for unit i at time t. α_i represents unit fixed effects (to control for time-invariant differences between units). γ_t represents time-fixed effects (to account for common shocks across units in each time period). k is the time to or since a municipality was first treated with a woman mayor, and g is the first year of having a woman mayor. β_k represents the treatment effect at event time k, allowing for dynamic treatment effects. X_{it} is an index of local development measured before 2004 when we began collecting outcome data. ε_{it} is the error term.

E Security Outcomes

An alternative explanation for substantive representation is that women are simply better mayors, leading to a general increase in reports of other offenses that affect people's quality of life. Women mayors might improve reporting avenues overall, resulting in more complaints about various types of crimes. To test this alternative explanation, we focus on two common offenses in Chile that are typically reported by citizens: disturbing the peace and public intoxication. If women mayors are enhancing communication between citizens and the government, we would expect to see an increase in reports of these offenses.

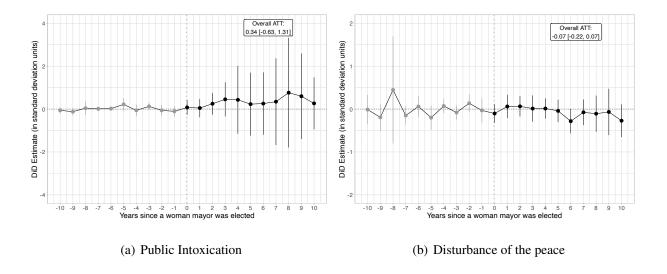


Figure A3: Average effect of having a woman mayor on reports of alternative offenses. A length of exposure of -1 refers to the period before the first exposure, 0 to the first exposure, and 1 to the second exposure. The overall treatment effect is reported with coefficients, standard errors in parentheses, and (*) denoting p-values lower than 0.1.

We do not find evidence that women mayors have either an overall or dynamic effect on offenses typically reported by citizens, such as public intoxication and disturbance of the peace. This finding strengthens the interpretation of substantive representation, suggesting that women mayors specifically facilitate the reporting of violence that disproportionately affects women.

Additionally, we investigate whether women mayors enhance the security performance of mu-

nicipalities, which could have two implications. First, improved security might explain changes in reporting. Second, and more importantly, it could influence our primary outcome: cases found by the police. In other words, if women mayors improve security measures, our benchmark may no longer serve as a true baseline or reference for reports but instead become an outcome or consequence of electing women mayors. To explore this possibility, we examine the impact of electing a woman mayor on two security-related outcomes: the number of security cameras and the number of security booths.

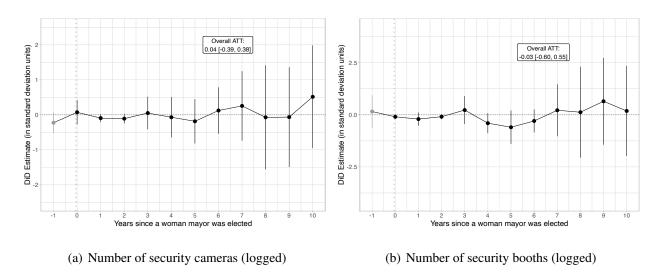


Figure A4: Average effect of having a woman mayor on reports of alternative offenses. A length of exposure of -1 refers to the period before the first exposure, 0 to the first exposure, and 1 to the second exposure. The overall treatment effect is reported with coefficients, standard errors in parentheses, and (*) denoting p-values lower than 0.1. N = 4,729 (municipality-year observations).

We do not find evidence that electing women mayors affects the number of security cameras or security booths. We interpret this as a lack of support for the explanation that our main findings are driven by improved security performance. Additionally, this provides extra support for our benchmark outcome – cases found by the police – since women mayors do not appear to improve security performance.

F Main Results in Table Format

Table A2: Figure 1a - Reported by citizens

Event Time	Estimate	Std. Error	[95% Simult. Conf. Band]
-10	0.1218	0.2029	[-0.4206, 0.6641]
-9	-0.3317	0.5481	[-1.7968, 1.1335]
-8	0.2028	0.3026	[-0.6060, 1.0115]
-7	0.1638	0.1483	[-0.2326, 0.5602]
-6	-0.0358	0.1831	[-0.5253, 0.4537]
-5	0.0070	0.1276	[-0.3340, 0.3480]
-4	-0.0345	0.0999	[-0.3015, 0.2325]
-3	-0.0788	0.1115	[-0.3768, 0.2192]
-2	0.0720	0.1265	[-0.2660, 0.4100]
-1	-0.0926	0.0725	[-0.2864, 0.1012]
0	0.0994	0.0783	[-0.1099, 0.3086]
1	0.1078	0.0695	[-0.0780, 0.2936]
2	0.1826	0.1086	[-0.1077, 0.4729]
3	0.2242	0.1042	[-0.0542, 0.5026]
4	0.3424	0.1458	[-0.0474, 0.7322]
5	0.3838	0.1425	[0.0029, 0.7646]
6	0.4177	0.1454	[0.0290, 0.8065]
7	0.3238	0.1862	[-0.1737, 0.8214]
8	0.3652	0.2243	[-0.2344, 0.9648]
9	0.2432	0.2249	[-0.3579, 0.8443]
10	0.0829	0.2513	[-0.5887, 0.7546]

Table A3: Figure 1b - Found by the police

Event Time	Estimate	Std. Error	[95% Simult. Conf. Band]
-10	0.0828	0.1818	[-0.4102, 0.5758]
-9	-0.2175	0.2123	[-0.7931, 0.3582]
-8	-0.2100	0.2614	[-0.9189, 0.4989]
-7	-0.0214	0.0773	[-0.2310, 0.1883]
-6	0.0055	0.0942	[-0.2499, 0.2609]
-5	0.0639	0.0928	[-0.1878, 0.3156]
-4	-0.0469	0.1318	[-0.4043, 0.3104]
-3	-0.0703	0.0808	[-0.2894, 0.1488]
-2	0.0487	0.0842	[-0.1798, 0.2771]
-1	-0.0733	0.1109	[-0.3741, 0.2274]
0	-0.1342	0.0773	[-0.3439, 0.0755]
1	0.0423	0.0793	[-0.1729, 0.2575]
2	0.0878	0.1081	[-0.2054, 0.3810]
3	-0.0134	0.1097	[-0.3108, 0.2841]
4	0.0897	0.1219	[-0.2410, 0.4204]
5	0.1200	0.1094	[-0.1766, 0.4166]
6	0.0803	0.1457	[-0.3147, 0.4754]
7	0.1113	0.1125	[-0.1937, 0.4163]
8	0.2187	0.2062	[-0.3404, 0.7778]
9	0.1014	0.2345	[-0.5346, 0.7374]
10	0.0288	0.1557	[-0.3935, 0.4511]

G Length of Effects

Figure A5 shows that electing a woman mayor increases reports of domestic violence around five years after her election, but this impact completely disappears ten years later. Why do these effects diminish over time?

There are two plausible explanations for this: (i) municipalities controlled by men catch up with those controlled by women following a highly salient national discussion about domestic violence in 2010, which culminated in Congress passing a law on femicides (Vásquez Mejías, 2015); or (ii) policies that facilitate reporting fail to address the structural dynamics of violence against women and therefore may not have long-term consequences for reports of violence (Franceschet, 2010).

To determine which of these explanations is supported by the data, we disaggregate the dynamic difference-in-differences effects by the year of first exposure. Four groups are analyzed: never-treated, first exposed in 2009, first exposed in 2013, and first exposed in 2017 (with data spanning from 2005 to 2020). This allows us to compute the effects for three different groups: those first exposed in 2009, 2013, and 2017.

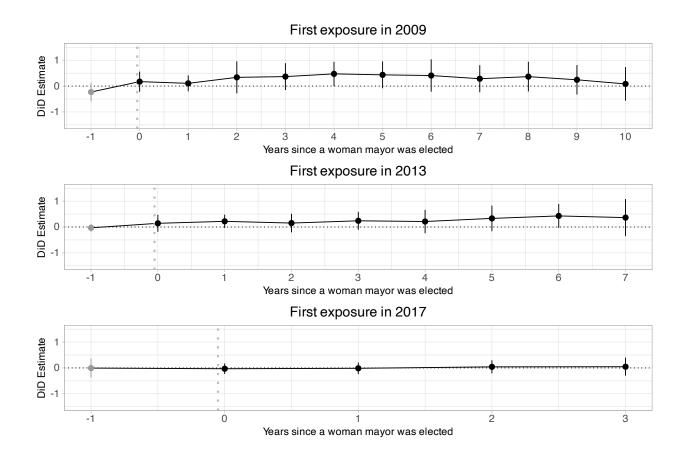


Figure A5: Average effect of having a woman mayor on violence against women by length of exposure and by group (first exposure in 2009, 2013, and 2017). A length of exposure of -1 refers to the period before the first exposure, 0 to the first exposure, and 1 to the second exposure.

Figure A5 provides consistent results across the three subgroups. For units exposed in 2009, we observe an increase in reports, but then they completely disappear ten years after first exposure. For units exposed in 2013, we also observe an increase, but since our data do not extend beyond 2020, we cannot compute effects beyond seven years after exposure for this group. Finally, for units exposed in 2017, we do not observe an effect within the first three years, unlike the previous groups.

Given that patterns are similar for groups first exposed in 2009, 2013, and 2017, this suggests that the length of exposure to a woman mayor, rather than the year itself, explains the effects.

Also, we note that the effects are not immediate (as seen in the first, second, and third plots)

and vanish after a few years (first plot). This pattern aligns with the second explanation, suggesting that the reforms lose power over time rather than being driven by contextual factors, such as mencontrolled municipalities catching up with women-controlled municipalities after Congress passed a law on femicides.

Given that gender-based violence is often rooted in deep cultural norms (Merry, 2009), we speculate that policy interventions may have short-term impacts when they are not accompanied by deeper structural and cultural transformations, which typically require a longer time to materialize. In particular, because gender-based violence is frequently embedded in longstanding and slow-moving cultural and religious norms (Merry, 2009). We encourage further research to have a better understanding of the long-term effects of electing women.

H Substantive Representation

A wide body of literature has examined the causes and effects of substantive representation. For example, studies have analyzed policies in the United States that disproportionately affect marginalized communities of voters (e.g., women, African Americans, Asian Americans, first-generation immigrants) and how electing individuals from these communities reduces biased policy outcomes (Sances and You, 2017; Zingher and Farrer, 2016; Gay, 2002; Kao et al., 2022; Weldon, 2002). Furthermore, there is a consensus in the literature that when more women hold positions of power, women's issues are prioritized in legislatures, such as state abortion policies, children's issues, and maternal health (Bratton and Ray, 2002; Taylor-Robinson and Heath, 2003; Chattopadhyay and Duflo, 2004; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006; Childs, 2006; Wängnerud, 2009; Piscopo, 2014; Funk and Philips, 2019; Jiang and Zhou, 2022).

When an individual is affected by domestic violence, they may not have fully articulated their own needs due to the complex environment in which they live (e.g., prioritizing the safety of children in the household, facing financial barriers to leaving or adhering to religious beliefs against separation from a spouse). In such cases, elected public officials can play a vital role by providing resources that survivors may not realize they need to ensure their safety. This challenge is even more pronounced in the Global South, where women may hold public office but face significant disparities in rights and resources.

While national resources like the US National Domestic Violence Hotline or South Africa's "Stop Gender Violence Hotline" exist, many countries lack overarching resources for reporting, and local communities often have limited access to such services. Local-level officials can fill this

¹An illustrative example comes from the German government, where Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Development Minister Svenja Schulze co-authored a feminist foreign policy. This policy allocates 12 billion euros (12.8 billion) in German development funds to projects addressing gender inequality, including the appointment of an ambassador for feminist foreign policy (Deutsche Welle, 2023).

gap by creating accessible resources for survivors, such as hotlines and safe houses, implementing educational programs for youth, and promoting bystander intervention practices within the community. Research has shown that community-wide educational programs, such as radio broadcasts or video demonstrations, can effectively reduce violence against women and increase support for gender equality (Arias, 2019; Green, Wilke and Cooper, 2020). For instance, women politicians in Mexico have been shown to significantly reduce homicide rates among women, with evidence suggesting this effect is due to their prioritization of budgetary plans aimed at combating violence against women (Alcocer, Skillmana and Torres-Beltran, 2022). Moreover, studies indicate that such programs lead to increased willingness to report incidents to authorities and a reduction in the number of women experiencing violence in the months following their implementation (Green, Wilke and Cooper, 2020).

Based on this evidence, we expect that electing women mayors will influence reports of domestic violence by empowering survivors to articulate their best interests and by providing avenues for reporting and supportive policy efforts.

I Security Plans

Municipality security plans were processed in two stages using Python. First, the *pypdf* package² was used to clean for stop words, tokenize, and export into a bag-of-words data frame. Some files could not be processed this way due to being scanned images, so the second stage utilized Python OCR. Python OCR is a technology that extracts text from images, such as scanned documents and photos, using Python.³ This process was completed using the open-source OCR engine Tesseract. Security files that could not be processed in the first stage were treated as images and processed through OCR, resulting in another bag-of-words data frame.

Table A4 shows the keywords of interest for this analysis in Spanish (left-hand table) and English (right-hand table). The most common mentions are "mujeres" or "women", closely followed by the singular of this keyword and "intrafamilial". The "vif" keyword refers to intrafamilial violence, which is also common across the documents.

Table A4: Keyword Mentions in Security Plans

yword	Mentions	Keyword
icidios	5	femicides
micidio	6	femicide
ıtrafamiliar	853	intrafamilial
nujer	858	woman
f	668	vif
nero	7	gender
ujeres	895	women
olencia	125	violence

Table A5 lists the municipalities and years for security reports, totaling 115 security plans from Chilean municipalities spanning 2011 to 2024.

²For documentation on usage, see https://github.com/py-pdf/pypdf.

³For documentation on this process, see https://builtin.com/data-science/python-ocr.

Table A5: Security Plans for Municipality-Years

Municipality	Years	Municipality	Years		
Alto Del Carmen	2018, 2019, 2020	Mejillones	2023		
Ancud	2022	Melipilla	2019		
Antofagasta	2022	Molina	2022		
Arica	2021, 2024	Mulchen	2021, 2022		
Buin	2019	Nueva Imperial	2017, 2021	Municipality	Years
Cabo De Hornos	2017	Nunoa	2016, 2017	San Antonio	2015, 2021
Cabrero	2023	Osorno	2016	San Fabian	2023
Calbuco	2018	Ovalle	2022	San Fernando	2022
Castro	2020	Padre Hurtado	2022	San Javier	2022
Cerro Navia	2022	Padre Las Casas	2023	San Joaquin	2022
Chillan	2022	Paillaco	2022	San Miguel	2021
Cholchol	2019	Paredones	2018	San Pedro De Atacama	2021
Chonchi	2017, 2023	Parral	2011	San Vicente De Tagua Tagua	2022
Colina	2021, 2022	Pelluhue	2022	Santiago	2019, 2023
Collipulli	2022	Penaflor	2022	Sierra Gorda	2019, 2023
Conchali	2017, 2022	Penalolen	2022	Tagua Tagua	2022
Coquimbo	2022	Pichilemu	2017, 2022	Talca	2022
Coyhaique	2022	Pitrufquen	2021	Talcahuano	2015
Curepto	2022	Providencia	2021, 2023	Temuco	2022
El Tabo	2022, 2025	Pucon	2019	Teno	2022
Freirina	2017	Puente Alto	2022, 2023	Teodoro Schmidt	2022
Futaleufu	2022	Puerto Montt	2023	Tocopilla	2023
Huechuraba	2022	Puerto Varas	2022	Tucapel	2017
Iquique	2020	Purranque	2016	Valdivia	2022, 2023
La Cruz	2022	Putaendo	2023	Valparaiso	2017
La Florida	2022	Quilicura	2022	Vichuquen	2022
La Pintana	2020	Quinta De Tilcoco	2022	Victoria	2023
La Reina	2017	Quintero	2022	Villa Alegre	2021, 2023
Lautaro	2023	Quisco	2021	Villa Alemana	2022
Limache	2023	Rancagua	2016	Vina Del Mar	2022
Lo Padro	2019	Recoleta	2020		
Los Alamos	2018	Renca	2017		
Los Angeles	2017, 2021	Rengo	2022		
Los Lagos	2023	Rinconada	2023		
Los Vilos	2017	Saavedra	2017		

J Community Outcomes

To further evaluate the substantive representation of women mayors in Chile, we analyze the effect of electing a woman mayor on spending directed toward community organizations. Community organizations are those that may provide additional resources for women to report instances of domestic violence and are funded by the government. For instance, women mayors might prioritize funding for community groups for mothers, which can serve as alternative reporting mechanisms for women in domestic violence situations, outside of traditional police channels.

We present evidence to examine this potential mechanism in Figure A6. First, for community organizations, we use spending on community organizations and the number of community organizations as outcome variables. Our findings show a positive and significant effect of electing women mayors on both, with a trajectory similar to the trends reported in the main findings.

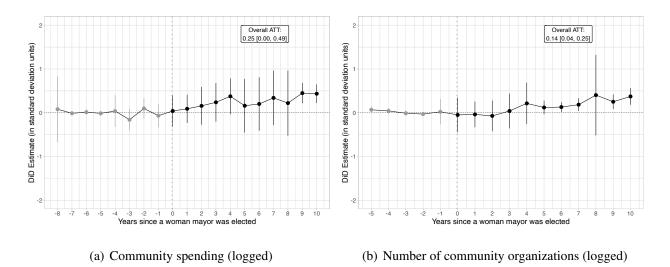


Figure A6: Average effect of having a woman mayor on reports of alternative offenses. A length of exposure of -1 refers to the period before the first exposure, 0 to the first exposure, and 1 to the second exposure. The overall treatment effect and 95% confidence intervals are reported.

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