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How Does Caste Shape Vulnerability to Violent Crime in India?

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Owing to the untimely demise of Harsh Malhotra, this working paper has been published posthumously. Dr. Malhotra completed his M.A. in Economics from the Delhi School of Economics and his Ph.D. from the Toulouse School of Economics.

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Abstract

This paper studies a key aspect of improved living standards: freedom from violence. Using data from a nationally representative sample of nearly 37,000 households (IHDS 2011 and 2005), I document the specific vulnerability of historically marginalised Scheduled Castes (SC), Dalits, to attacks/threats. In 2011, a scheduled caste household is around 40% more likely, on average, to report attacks/threats than any "upper caste" group, even in within-village comparisons, and with various controls including for reported attacks/threats in the previous survey round. The evidence suggests that historical social divisions and present-day economic insecurity are closely related to this pattern. A scheduled caste household is more likely to report attacks/threats relative to others, in especially those villages where discriminatory caste traditions are practised, or where living arrangements are caste-segregated within the village. Places where less-wealthy high-caste households experience slower (faster) economic growth during 2005-2011 see significantly more (less) violence differentially against scheduled castes. The patterns I report are consistent with the hypothesis that economic insecurity among social elites may fuel violence against minority groups. [1]

[1]I am indebted to Matteo Bobba for his guidance and support during the writing of this paper. This paper has benefitted from discussions with Saaduzzman. All remaining errors are mine.

1 Introduction

In many countries, minority social groups are especially disadvantaged, including being more vulnerable to violence (Sen 2007). This paper studies the specific vulnerability of Scheduled Castes (SC) or *Dalits* to violent crime in India. Using data from the nationally representative Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS 2011 and 2005), I document a stark and robust pattern: scheduled caste households report facing significantly greater violence than similar "high caste" households in *within-village/locality* comparisons. A scheduled caste household is around 0.9 percentage points more likely to report, on average, that someone attacked or threatened them in the previous year, in a setting where 2% households report facing attacks or threat overall.

The evidence I present improves our understanding of the link between social identity and violence in India, in a number of ways. For one, it is based on information collected directly from households. Typically, research on crime in India has relied on official police data published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). Police records suffer from well known biases: only crimes that a person reports and which the police agree to register enter the data. Importantly, reporting bias is likely more severe for disadvantaged social groups, who are often poorer, have less access to police and legal institutions, and have more reason to fear reprisals if they register complaints. Banerjee et al (2012) use survey data to show that police records substantially under-estimate the incidence of crime in Rajasthan in India. Iyer et al (2012) show that crimes against women are more often reported in places where women are better represented in political leadership, suggesting that the nature of socio-political inequality (along gender in their case) itself affects official police records. Evidence from large surveys is an essential complement, therefore, to police records data in an unequal society.

A key challenge in studying the relationship between social identity and violent crime, is

that myriad factors effect a household's vulnerability per se. These are difficult to disentangle from meaningful aspects of social identity. For instance, scheduled caste persons may live in places where poverty is high (and therefore, so is crime). At the same time, those committing crime believe scheduled caste persons are easier to intimidate, given their exclusion from institutions that govern civil rights (eg. judiciary, media, powerful social networks). In trying to address this challenge, I rely on unique features of IHDS data. Firstly, by using village fixed effects, I effectively control for the environment that different households face. Village size is small, the median in our sample having 421 total households only (as of 2005). Moreover, I control for the economic and social circumstances that may affect a household's vulnerability to crime within its village/locality (wealth, main occupation, etc.). This includes taking into account a household's past reports of crime. Its responses in the first wave of this panel survey (in 2005) reflect time-invariant factors that render it more vulnerable. Essentially, I rely on especially precise comparisons across households (relative to prior research) to get at the role of social identity.

A second strategy is to unpack the heterogeneity in scheduled castes' vulnerability to violent crime (relative to others in the village). I ask if it is concentrated in places where historical or present-day caste divisions are deeper. Attacks / threats reported by scheduled castes are highly correlated with caste-based discrimination or "untouchability". This refers to a set of explicitly discriminatory or stigmatising actions by "upper caste" persons towards scheduled castes. I also find that their victimisation is concentrated in villages where people reside in caste-segregated hamlets/sub-localities. In mixed-residence villages and urban areas, victimisation is not significantly different across castes on average. Inasmuch discrimination and segregation do reflect deeper social divisions, this pattern strongly suggests that scheduled caste itself, not factors simply incidental to it, account for the greater violence they face. This approach is similar to Bros and Cottenier (2012), who also study the interplay between untouchability, public goods and violence in India. A common form of untouchability involves

preventing scheduled castes from sharing water. Using district level NCRB data, they show that places with public access to water sources see greater homicides of SC, but not of persons from other castes. Our findings connect untouchability to less extreme and more widespread attacks/threats. A number of studies have explored the consequences of historical social divisions on the present day under-development more generally (Dell 2010, Banerjee and Iyer 2005, Nunn 2008) and to violence in particular (Horowitz 2000, Esteban Mayoral and Ray 2012, Field et al 2008).

Our most interesting findings concern the interaction between social divisions, economic growth, and violence. I report a striking pattern. Villages where less wealthy upper castes experience lower (greater) economic growth during 2005-2011, see significantly more (less) violence against scheduled castes (relative to upper castes in the village). In other words, I report evidence in support of the idea that economic deterioration among social elites may fuel violence against minorities. It is well recognised in previous research that economic conditions have an effect on violent crime. Dube and Vargas (2008) show that a sharp fall in coffee prices in Columbia increases violence differentially in regions growing more coffee, because it lowered the opportunity cost of joining armed groups. Iyer and Topalova (2014) use trade and rainfall shocks to argue that increased poverty leads to greater violent crime in India. In contrast to these papers, I focus on how economic changes may increase violence against marginalised groups specifically. In this sense, this paper is closer to Miguel (2005) and Oster (2004) who demonstrate that economic difficulty increased witch-killings of women in Tanzania and renaissance Europe respectively. They argue that economic motives and a ready cultural motive that scapegoats women plays a role. The findings in this paper also bring into focus a similar combination of economic factors and cultural divisions.

The relation between economic conditions and violence faced by scheduled castes, that I uncover here, does not have a ready causal interpretation. This is an important shortcoming of this paper, arising from the fact that variation in economic growth across villages is not

exogenous. As yet, this analysis is exploratory. Nevertheless, the pattern is striking and meaningful for a number of reasons. Economic worsening may correlate with a generally more violent crime for many reasons, but as discussed above, we find greater violent crime specifically against scheduled castes (estimated levels of violence against upper castes in the same villages are the same or marginally lower). Moreover, it is economic growth among less wealthy upper castes that drives this pattern in violent crime, not average economic growth in general. Economic changes are more meaningful among less wealthy households, like the low skilled workers in Dell, Fiegenberg and Teshima (2018) whose job loss in Mexico fuelled drug trafficking and violence. Even more similar are least-skilled workers in Olzak (1990): economic slumps affecting them increase *inter-racial* violence in the US. A large literature suggests that economic factors may result in violence across social groups (Horowitz 2000, Esteban and Ray 2017). Accordingly, economic worsening among upper castes is exactly where we would expect to explain violence against scheduled castes; and this is what we see. The reason for this may be that attempts to appropriate resources / opportunities are more likely to be made across caste lines, in a setting where social networks and kinship are organised around caste. Alternatively, economic difficulty may result in frustration and resentment towards persons with whom they are likely to socially compare. Mitra and Ray (2014) show that increase in Muslim (minority) consumption or a decrease in Hindu (majority) consumption increase incidents of religious conflict in India. In a similar vein, Sharma (2015) uses NCRB data to show that hate crimes against scheduled castes / scheduled tribes are correlated with average SC/ST consumption relative to upper caste consumption at the district level. This paper is distinct in important ways. While these papers focus on large-scale riots or hate crimes, I consider violent crime of a more regular widespread kind. And like most research on violence in India, these papers draw on data in newspapers or in police records. As I have discussed before, our findings are based on interviews with households directly which are an essential way to complete the picture sketched by police records.

The rest of this paper is organised as follows. In section 2, I discuss the data and context of caste in India. Section 3 presents evidence on within-village differences in reported violence across caste lines. In section 4, I examine how this pattern varies across villages where historical social divisions are likely deeper. Section 5 presents evidence that relates economic growth among social elites to violence reported by scheduled castes. Section 6 concludes.

2 Context and Data

2.1 Crime and Violence

The Indian Human Development Survey is a nationally representative panel dataset. It interviewed 40, 018 households on their economic and social circumstances in 2005 and 2011 (this is the size of the re-interviewed sample, around 83% of the first wave households). The first national level survey to collect crime victimisation data, it asked each household three questions about their experience with crime: "During the past twelve months", [1] "Was anything stolen that belonged to you or to somebody in your household?", [2] "Did anyone break into your home or illegally get into your home?", and [3] "Did anyone attack or threaten to you or someone in your household?". The response to these questions respectively informs us of theft, break-ins and attacks/threats faced by different households.

Table 1 below summarises the averages for these crimes in our main sample (37,292 households). An overall 7.56% households report at least one of the crimes in 2005, which falls to 5.73% in 2011. The main focus here is on attacks / threats, reported by 1.98% households in 2011. Prasad (2013) compares reported crime from IHDS 2005 with data from police records at the district level. The categories of crime in the two datasets are not strictly comparable, but he shows large under-recording of crime in official data. More importantly, he shows that official crime is highly correlated with survey reported crime across districts, which gives us

Table 1: Crime Victimisation (IHDS 2005 and 2011)

Households who report Theft, Break-ins and Attacks / Threats

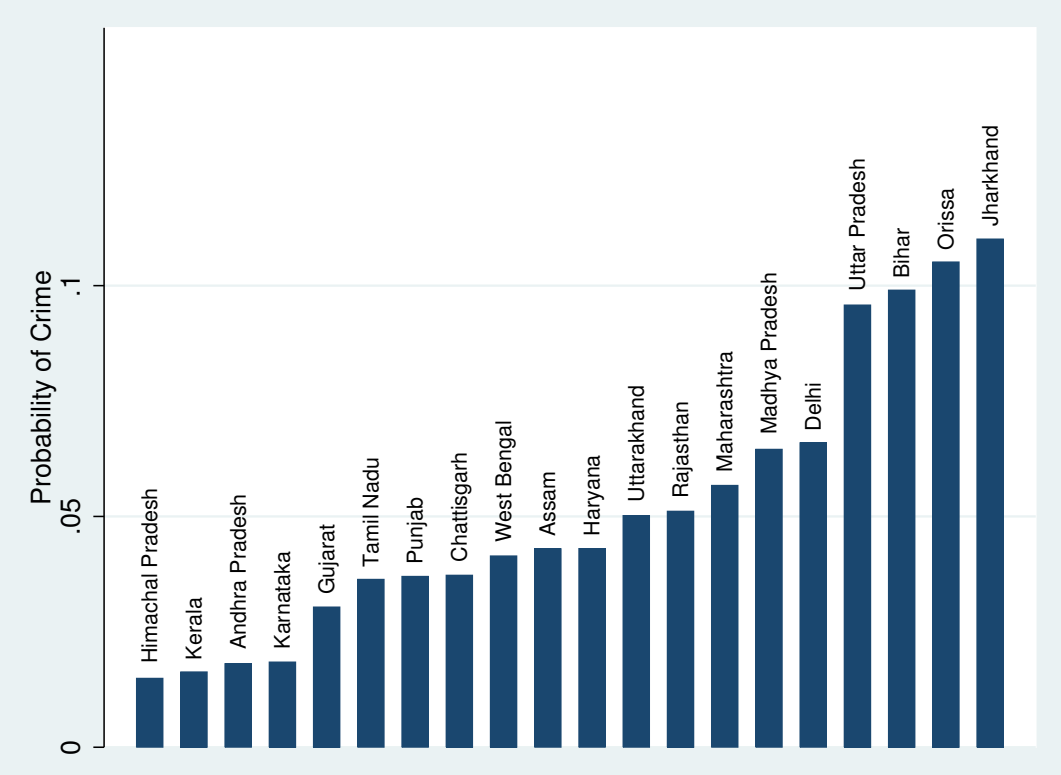
	(1)	(2)
(In Percentage)	2005	2011
Theft	5.25%	4.01%
Break-in	1.38%	1.12%
Attacks / Threats	3.03%	1.98%
Overall Crime	7.56%	5.73%

Notes: Share of households who answered "Yes" to IHDS questions: "During the past twelve months", [1] "Was anything stolen that belonged to you or to somebody in your household?", [2] "Did anyone break into your home or illegally get into your home?", and [3] "Did anyone attack or threaten to you or someone in your household?". The data pertains to major states in India, excluding Jammu & Kashmir, the seven North-eastern states, and Union Territories. N=37,292. □

confidence in survey responses. Note that this does not imply that official data would not bias comparisons of crime across social groups, or at lower levels of aggregation (like the village) since under-recording is more likely to be severe in those cases.

In the IHDS, reports of crime vary widely across states, as we see in Figure 1 below. Around 5.1% household report at least one crime in 2005, which is near the 5.9% found by Banerjee et al (2012) in their 2007 crime victimisation survey in the same state. The analysis pertains to all major states in India. We exclude the state of Jammu and Kashmir where violent conflict between the State and armed militants has been endemic and states in the north-eastern region of India where the SC population is very small. We also exclude union territories where the same size is too small to be meaningfully used with village/locality fixed effects.

Figure 1: Variation in crime across states in India



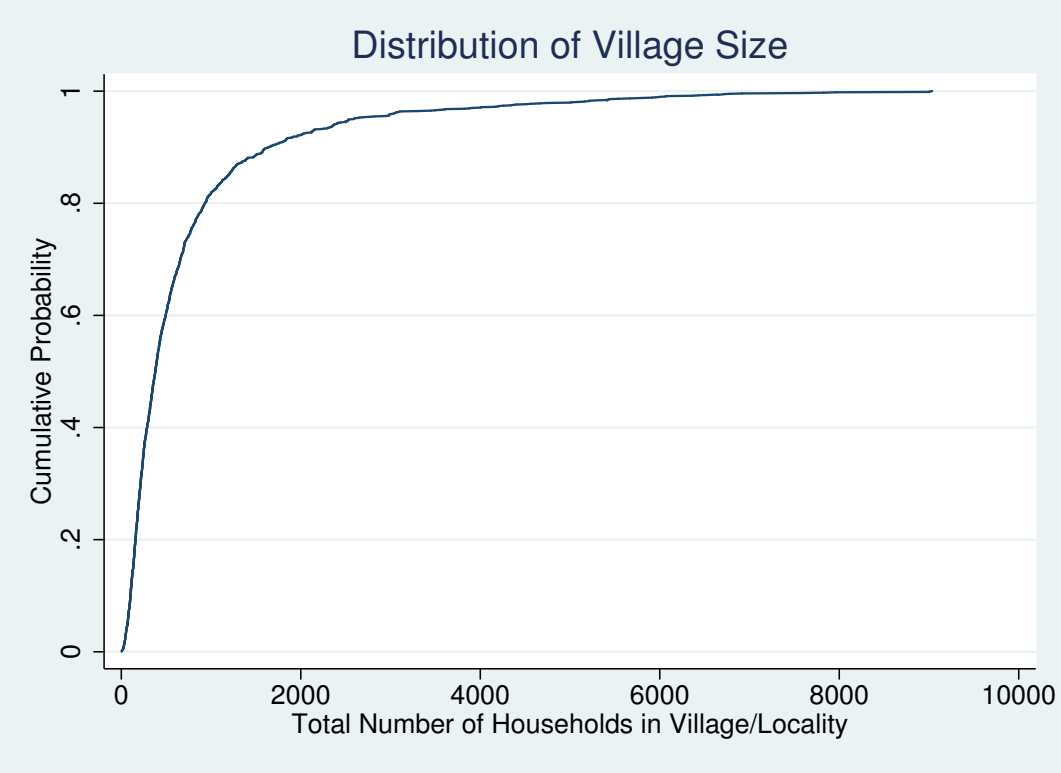
Notes: The average share of households who report a theft, a break-in, or an attack/threat in the year preceding the survey (IHDS 2011). □

2.2 Caste

The caste system in India organises people in a social hierarchy of hereditary castes. Historically, caste has been closely tied to a person's social status, occupation and economic rights. Brahmin and Forward castes have dominated positions of learning, government and trade & commerce; with Other Backward Castes (OBCs) traditionally engaged in manual work like cultivation. The Scheduled castes (SC), at the bottom of the social hierarchy, were confined to menial and stigmatising occupations, and ostracised from social and political institutions. The Scheduled Tribes (ST) are outside of traditional Hindu society and have suffered various exclusions as a result. We focus on differences between scheduled castes on the one hand and the other "upper caste" groups on the other. Although caste based norms and inequality have weakened substantially in recent decades (Banerjee and Somanathan 2007, Munshi and Rosenzweig 2006), their levels remain meaningful in the present day (Coffey et 2018, Thorat 2010, Munshi and Rosenzweig 2016).

I focus on whether caste explains within-village variation in the attacks/threats reported by households. The distribution of village size is depicted in Figure 2. It gives the total number of households in a village in 2005, according to the census of India (reported in IHDS 2005). We see that most villages are relatively small, suggesting that households in the same village do face a common environment. I use a number of variables pertaining to social relations in the village. The survey asks all households about the practise of "untouchability" in 2005. This refers to a set of explicitly discriminatory or stigmatising actions by "upper caste" persons towards scheduled castes. A scheduled caste household is asked if they have experienced untouchability in past five years; I use this information at the individual and village level, to assess the extent to which it relates to violence faced by them. The IHDS also tells us if residents of a village live in hamlets / *mohallas* / sub-localities segregated by caste, or whether it is mixed-caste. This is based on focus group interviews with village

Figure 2: The Distribution of Number of Households in Villages.

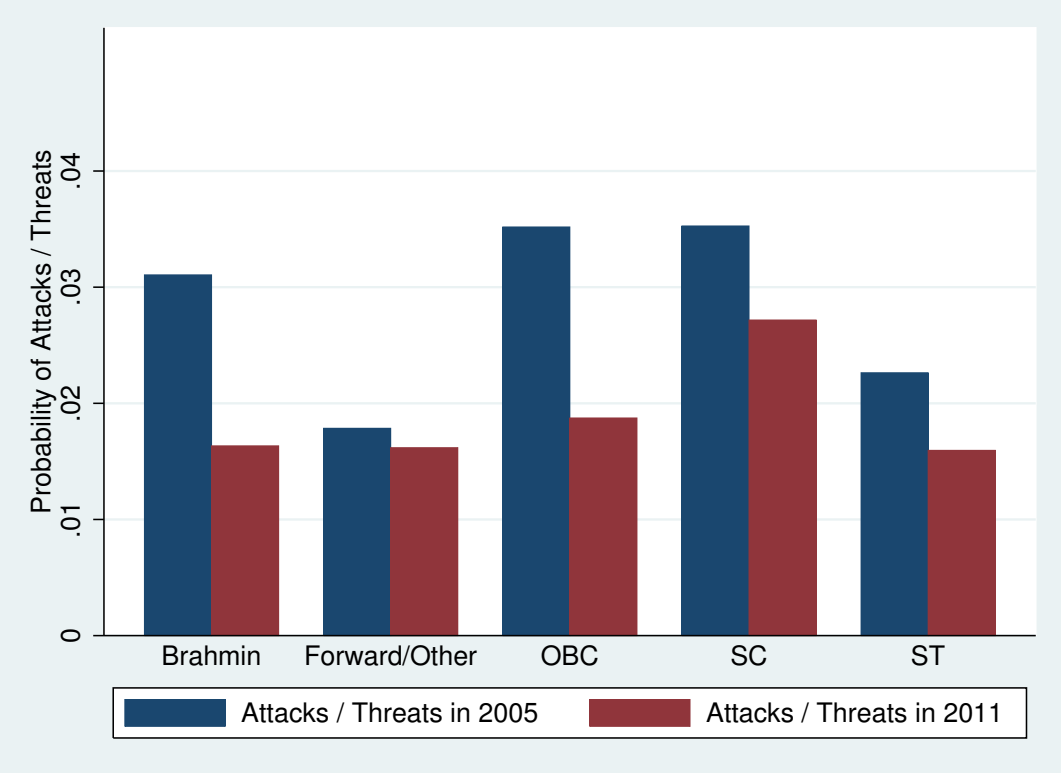


Notes: This figure plots the cumulative distribution of villages over the total number of households residing there as of 2005. These refer to rural areas. □

seniors/representatives.

Violence and caste may be related for a number of reasons. We see the average variation in reports of attacks / threats across caste groups in Figure 3. Attacks/threats show a decline for all groups, but in both waves, scheduled castes report the highest level of violence. The most direct reason is that violence may be caste-motivated. Caste norms that exclude and discriminate against scheduled castes are coercive. Social transgressions by SC persons are often met with violence. Moreover, since social and kinship networks are based around

Figure 3: Attacks / Threats across Caste Groups on Average.



Notes: This figure gives the caste-wise average share of households reporting an attack/threat in the year before the survey. The blue bars refer to IHDS 2005, red to IHDS 2011. □

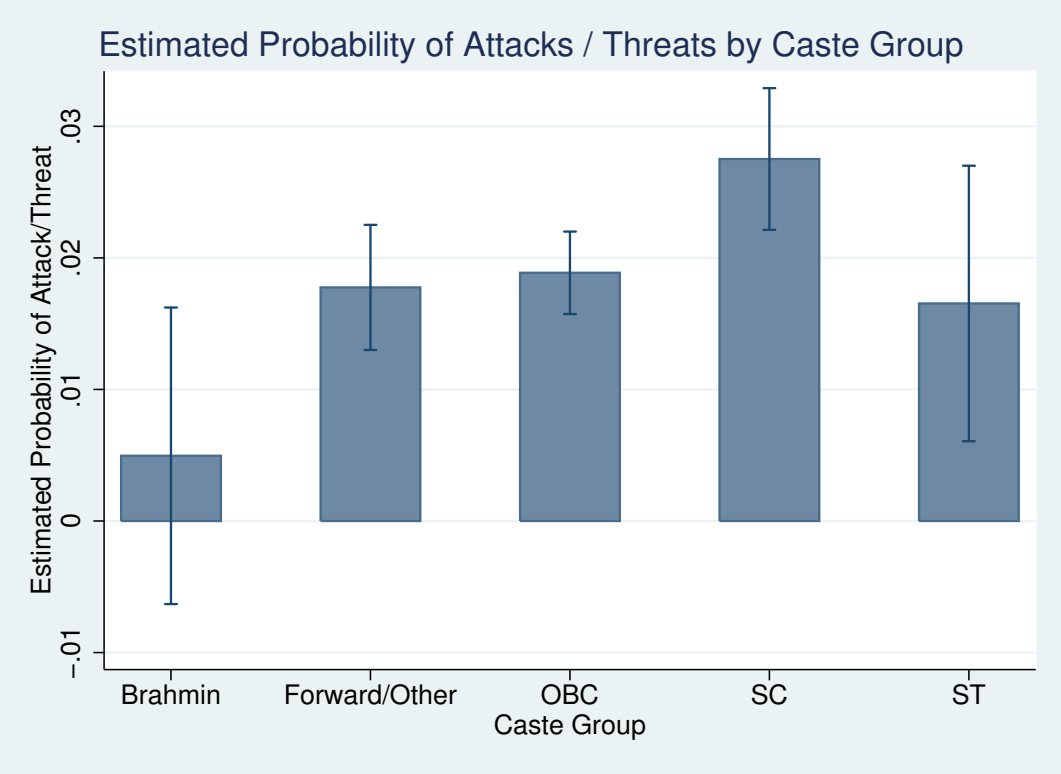
caste, small altercations may get amplified around caste lines in settings where property and civil rights are weak. It is in view of caste-motivated violence that the "Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 and 1995" specifically criminalises violence and civil-rights violations by upper castes against SC/ST persons. This class of crimes is studied in Sharma (2015). The second reason is that violence may derive from caste-inequality even if it is not caste-related. The scheduled castes have higher rates of poverty, less education, etc.. which may render them less able to protect themselves, especially if they live among others who are also poor. Moreover, a history of weak rights may make scheduled castes generally vulnerable to intimidation and attacks, even if the attacks are not by upper caste persons or motivated by caste itself.

3 Caste Inequality in Victimisation by Attack / Threats

How does vulnerability to crime vary across castes within a village? In comparison to upper castes, a scheduled caste household is 0.9 percentage points more likely to report an attack/threat in the previous year. This is a substantial effect over an average of around 2% for all groups. All regressions in Table 2 control for differences in key economic and social circumstances across households, village fixed effects and for whether a household reported being victimised in the 2005 survey. This includes controlling for household wealth at baseline (i.e. in 2005), which refers to an index of household possessions, income, consumption per capita; for education and age of the household head, and for the number of people living in the home. Independent of these circumstances, scheduled caste households are significantly more likely to report attacks.

The caste of a household is closely tied to its occupation. It is possible that SC persons

Figure 4: Within-Village Estimation of Violent Crime in 2011 by Caste Group



Notes: The estimated probability that a household reports an attack/threat n 2011. These come from regressions with village fixed effects, a number of controls and indicators for major caste groups. Controls include household wealth consumption per capita and income in 2005, growth in wealth (2005-2011), an indicator for whether the household reported a crime in 2005, household size, age of household head, education level, religion, and indicators for occupation categories for main source of household income □.

may be engaged in occupations where conflict is more likely, possibly accounting for the greater violence they face. In column 2 of table 1, we add indicators for the occupational categories (of the household's main source of income), and see that the effect of caste does not weaken. In column 3, we also control for differences in the household's wealth between 2005-2011. This is a way of comparing households in similar situations, since even households with similar wealth at baseline may be in different economic circumstances by 2011. The point is, scheduled caste households in similar settings, a similar long term economic standard and similar economic experiences in recent years nevertheless report greater violence than upper caste households.

This finding survives a number of robustness checks. It is not driven by outliers. The results do not change if I repeat the analysis after excluding persons whose estimated probability of facing violence (in our main results) is especially high. Nor if I exclude villages/localities with especially high/low estimated violence. These results are summarised in Tables A4 and A5 in the appendix. More importantly, I examine how effect of caste varies if we exclude relatively large villages. If increased vulnerability of scheduled castes is driven by "large" villages, it may mean that our results do not hold where we *meaningfully* control for the environment that different households face. We find that excluding villages with more than 4000, or 3000, or 2000 households does not affect the results at all (Table A3 in the appendix). The effect remains similar but loses significance if we keep to villages below 1000 households (which is unsurprising because we are throwing out a large number of observations).

Interestingly, scheduled caste households are not significantly more vulnerable to theft or to break-ins. Both these crimes are 0.4% more likely to reported by them, but have large standard errors; the corresponding p-values are 0.458 and 0.151 respectively compared to 0.005 we obtain for violent crime. These results are summarised in Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix. This is not surprising if one expects at least some violence against scheduled castes to be related to discrimination. They may face violence also due to their exclusion from

institutions that keep civil rights secure (eg. social ties to persons in government services, information about their legal rights, etc). To some extent, weaker rights may make them more vulnerable to property crimes as well. However, there is also less to steal from households with weaker economic prospects.

In figure 4, we observe this co-variation more starkly. The probability of violent crime is around 40% greater among scheduled caste households than any other group. We also see a clear pattern related to caste hierarchy, with Brahmins reporting the least violence (although the standard errors is large since the groups is small), followed by forward castes and OBCs and with scheduled castes. This also comes from within-village regressions with all the controls that we have previously described.

4 What links Caste and Violence: The Role of Social Divisions

4.1 Social Divisions I: Discrimination / Untouchability

Another way to explore if social identity plays a meaningful role in rendering scheduled castes vulnerable to violence, is to consider how the effect of caste varies across places with different social relations. The IHDS asks every scheduled caste household: "In your household, has some member experienced untouchability in the last five years?" Around 23% households answer yes. At the household level, reports of untouchability and attacks/threats are highly correlated. This may reflect an obvious and natural link between the two, since untouchability refers to caste norms that are often coercive in themselves; and because scheduled castes may resist the stigmatising practise leading to violence. In the reverse direction, conflicts that occur for other reasons may acquire a caste overtone (eg. the use of caste slurs, or subsequent

Table 2: The relationship between Caste and Violent Crime: Within Village Estimation

Attacks / Threats: Upper Castes vs. Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Controls for Wealth etc	Plus Occupation	Plus Growth in Wealth	Plus Growth in Consumption
Scheduled castes (SC)	0.00940**	0.0102***	0.00981***	0.00983***
	(0.00370)	(0.00373)	(0.00368)	(0.00368)
Scheduled tribes (ST)	-0.00156	-0.000868	-0.00128	-0.00160
	(0.00590)	(0.00589)	(0.00591)	(0.00592)
Wealth (2005)	-0.000584*	-0.000680**	-0.00112***	-0.00111***
	(0.000307)	(0.000338)	(0.000378)	(0.000375)
Growth in Wealth			-0.00445**	-0.00452**
			(0.00214)	(0.00216)
Growth in Consumption				0.000284
				(0.000450)
Observations	37,324	37,310	37,302	37,263
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,258	2,258	2,258
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The outcome is a 0-1 variable indicating if a household reports facing an attacks/threat in the year before the survey in 2011. The main explanatory variables of interest are indicators for whether a household is Upper caste (i.e. Brahmin, Forward caste, OBC), Scheduled caste, or Scheduled tribe. All regressions include village fixed effects, controls for household wealth consumption per capita and income in 2005, an indicator for whether the household reported a crime in 2005, household size, age of household head, education level, religion. In column 2, we add indicators for main occupation. In column 3, we add growth in wealth (2005-2011). In column 4, growth in per capita household consumption (2005-2011) □

exclusion from public resources) which the household refers to, in reporting untouchability. It is also possible that both reflect unobservable features of a household that render it especially marginalised. Or especially sensitive in interpreting / reporting other persons behaviour. In order to understand the role of untouchability, I contrast *villages* where at least some persons report experiencing untouchability with other villages. This avoids some of the confounding factors involved in making household level comparisons. Table 3 tells us that villages where untouchability is reportedly practised is also where increased attacks/threats against scheduled castes are reported (column 2). These villages have 1.8% greater violence against scheduled castes relative to upper castes; Which is significantly different from the gap in other villages (SC report 0.4% more attacks there, not itself statistically different from zero). In column 3, I interact an indicator for a village with vs without reports of untouchability, not by the modified caste variable. It tells us whether a household is upper caste, scheduled caste who did not report untouchability, scheduled caste who did report untouchability, or a scheduled tribe. We see that while households who themselves report untouchability have substantially greater likelihood of reporting attacks/threats. Even scheduled caste households who do not report experiencing untouchability themselves but who live in villages where someone else does are significantly more likely to report facing attacks/threats than are upper caste households (by 1.15% points). This reduces by 0.8% points when we consider villages where no reports of untouchability were obtained. Inasmuch as the presence of untouchability reflects the presence of more strained social relations, we may interpret these findings as suggesting that caste inequality in vulnerability to violence has to do with caste norms.

The connection between reported untouchability and violence also presents a challenge to the credibility of our data. Only scheduled caste households were asked if they experienced untouchability in the previous year (because this form of discriminations is targeted towards them). It is placed in the household questionnaire in the section close before questions about crime. This opens the possibility that responses of scheduled caste households concerning

Table 3: Attacks / Threats and Caste - Relation with Social Discrimination

VARIABLES	(1) Overall Effect of Caste	(2) By Untouchability at the Village Level	(3) By Untouchability at the Household and Village Level
Scheduled Caste (SC)	0.00981***	0.0182***	0.0278***
	(0.00368)	(0.00638)	(0.00928)
SC x Household Reports No Untouchability			0.0115*
			(0.00694)
SC x Village Reports No Untouchability		-0.0149*	-0.00803
		(0.00783)	(0.00834)
Growth in Wealth	-0.00445**	-0.00442**	-0.00435**
	(0.00214)	(0.00215)	(0.00213)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00112***	-0.00110***	-0.00110***
	(0.000378)	(0.000379)	(0.000377)
Observations	37,302	37,302	37,302
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,258	2,258
Controls	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The outcome is a 0-1 variable indicating if a household reports facing an attacks/threat in the year before the survey in 2011. The main explanatory variables of interest are indicators for whether a household is Upper caste (i.e. Brahmin, Forward caste, OBC), Scheduled caste, or Scheduled tribe. All regressions include village fixed effects, and the standard set of controls. Column 1 is a standard estimation of the overall relation between caste and violent crime, identical to column 3 in Table 2. In column 2, we interact indicators for scheduled caste with an indicator for untouchability in the village. The latter takes value 1 if any scheduled caste households report experiencing untouchability (explicit caste discrimination) in the previous five years. In column 3, we use a modified indicator for caste with the same untouchability-in-village indicator. This modified caste variable separates scheduled caste households who report facing untouchability themselves, and those who do not. □

Table 4: Untouchability and Attacks/Threats across Survey Rounds

	(1)	(2)
VARIABLES	2005	2011
Model 1: Correlation of Untouchability in 2011 with only		
Attacks / Threats	0.106*	0.138*
	(0.0623)	(0.0674)
Model 2: Correlation of Untouchability in 2011 with		
Attacks / Threats	0.0925	0.125
	(0.0674)	(0.0787)
Break-in	0.126	0.0265
	(0.137)	(0.0842)
Theft	-0.0339	-0.00115
	(0.0547)	(0.0558)
Observations	3,682	3,682
Number of Villages/Localities	547	547
Controls	NO	NO
Village FE	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES

Notes: This table presents within-village correlations between untouchability and crime. The outcome is an indicator that the household reports experiencing untouchability (in the past five years) in IHDS-2011. The question about untouchability was not asked in IHDS-2005. In Model 1, we explain it with indicators of the household reporting violent crime in 2005 and 2011 (placed in columns 1 and 2 respectively). In Model 2, we explain it household's reporting of varied crimes in 2005 and 2011. The table suggests that reports of violent crime in 2011 do not appear to be *artificially* driven by responses about untouchability in 2011. If that were true, reports of violent crime in 2005 would be less correlated to untouchability in 2011.

crime may have gotten biased in some way, compared to the responses of other households. It could be because preceding questions about discrimination primes memory concerning attacks, because of what the household believes surveyors want to hear, or in still other ways. I submit that there are good reasons to believe that this does not account for our results, although the possibility of it having had some effect is simply impossible to eliminate. First, untouchability was not asked about at all in first wave of interviews (in 2005). If reports of violence based on caste were driven by preceding questions on untouchability we should see high correlation between untouchability and crime (both in 2011), but not between untouchability in 2011 and crime in 2005. We should expect to see the latter co-vary if the two are in fact genuinely related, whereby the factors that render a household vulnerable to crime predict its *future* experience of untouchability. This is exactly what we see in Table 4. I explain the chance that a scheduled caste household reports untouchability on reports of attacks/threats in the two waves (in model 1), and on reports of the three different crimes (model 2). We observe that attacks / threats in 2005 and in 2011 are both similarly correlated with untouchability in each case. In the latter model, it is in fact break-ins in 2005 that most strongly predict untouchability in 2011. In addition to this test, we see that even scheduled castes who do not report experiencing untouchability but live in places where other households do, are more likely to report facing violence than other households. This suggests a substantive link between the two. In addition to this, after being asked about untouchability, households were asked first about theft, then break-ins, then attacks/threats. We note that reports of theft are actually negatively related to untouchability in both waves. It is possible that simply being asked about untouchability biases responses. But then, why do those who were asked but live in no-untouchability villages not report significantly greater violent crime. Further, as we see below, it would be hard to explain why scheduled caste households who report especially high victimisation relative to other households tend to reside in villages where low-wealth upper caste persons see low economic growth.

4.2 Social Divisions II: Caste Segregation

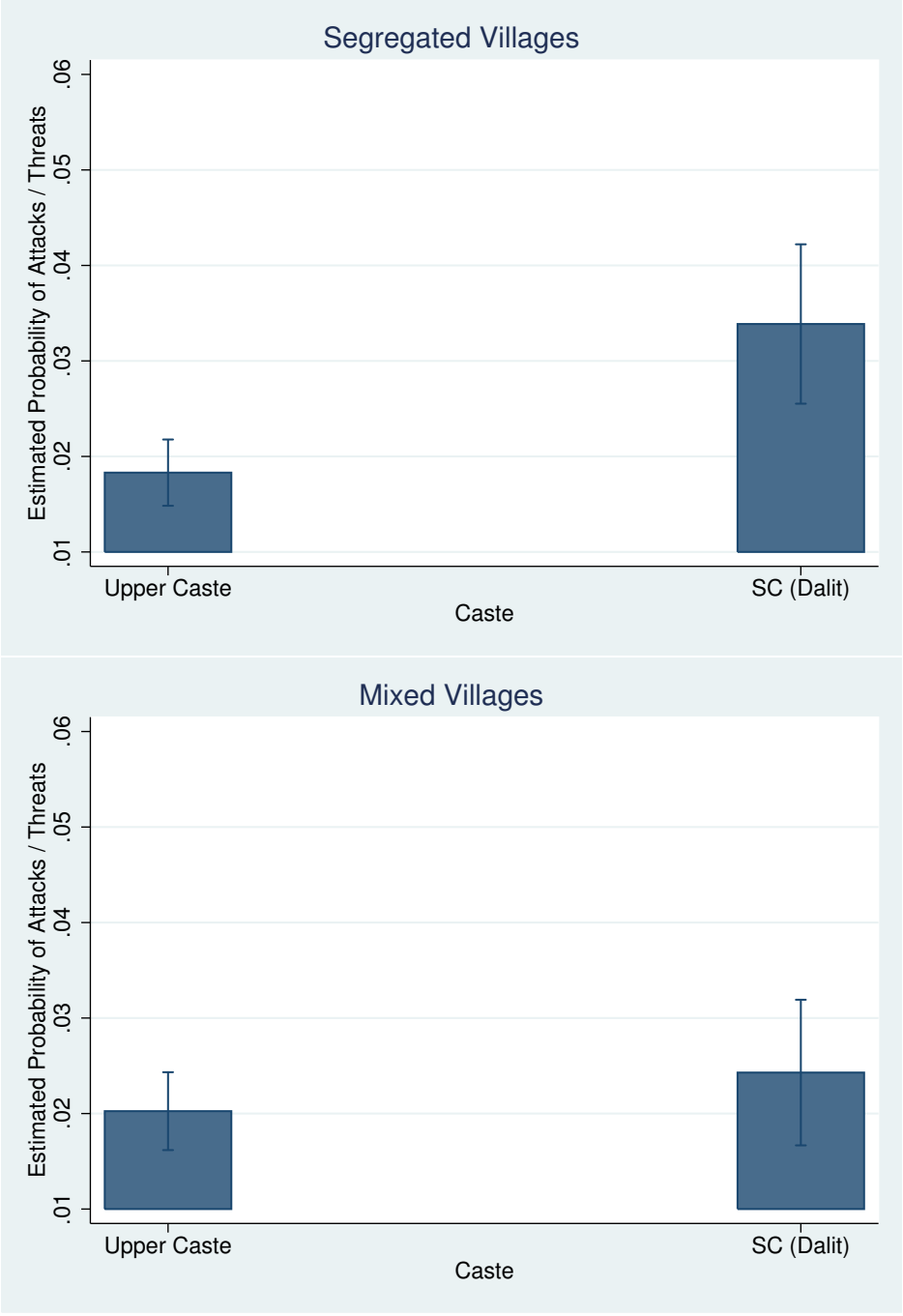
There is reason to believe that caste-relations meaningfully differ between villages and cities; and between villages where residential arrangements (hamlets/sub-localities) are caste-segregated and villages where they are mixed. In Table 5, we see that violence reported by scheduled castes relative to upper caste households, is concentrated in villages with segregation. How should we interpret this? India has notoriously low rates of migration and mobility. In the IHDS, when asked "how many years ago did your family come to your village/town/city?", 90% households of rural respond with "90 years or more". Among urban households 53% percent give the same response. The fact that villages are old, and migration is low makes it likely that segregated-vs-mixed living is a feature of a village's social history. It may simply reflect the stronger/harsher caste norms. It may also make frictions between social groups more likely by discouraging civic engagement across caste lines. On the other hand, a priori, it could lower social tensions by minimising opportunities of clashes (although residing in the same village implies people would need to share resources, like roads, water, markets etc.). Figure 4 is a stark representation of the difference in violence against scheduled castes and upper castes, in segregated vs mixed villages.

Table 5: Attacks/Threats: The Role of Caste based Segregation

	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Overall Effect of Caste	Rural vs Urban	Caste-Segregated vs Mixed vs Urban
Scheduled Caste (SC)	0.00981***	0.0113***	0.0167***
	(0.00368)	(0.00429)	(0.00600)
SC × Mixed Caste Village			-0.0151*
			(0.00826)
SC × Urban		-0.00915	-0.0153**
		(0.00634)	(0.00763)
Growth in Wealth	-0.00445**	-0.00441**	-0.00432**
	(0.00214)	(0.00214)	(0.00214)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00112***	-0.00112***	-0.00113***
	(0.000378)	(0.000378)	(0.000378)
Observations	37,302	37,302	37,231
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,258	2,255
Controls	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The outcome is a 0-1 variable indicating if a household reports facing an attacks/threat in the year before the survey in 2011. The main explanatory variables of interest are indicators for whether a household is Upper caste (i.e. Brahmin, Forward caste, OBC), Scheduled caste, or Scheduled tribe. All regressions include village fixed effects, and the standard set of controls. Column 1 is a standard estimation of the overall relation between caste and violent crime, identical to column 3 in Table 2. In column 2 we interact the caste indicators with whether the place is rural / urban as of the census of India 2001 (given in IHDS). In column 3 we interact with a variable that separates villages with caste-segregated hamlets, mixed-caste hamlets, and urban areas. □

Figure 5: Caste-Segregated vs Mixed-Caste Villages: Estimated probability of Violent Crime by Caste.



Notes: The figures come from separate analysis of data from villages where living arrangements are caste-segregated (top panel) and where they are mixed-caste. Villages where scheduled tribes live in segregated hamlets are not coded as "caste segregated", but mixed. These do not include urban areas. Regressions that supply estimates for both panels have village fixed effects and a number of household specific controls. □

5 Social Divisions, Economic Growth and Violence

The question I pose in this section is motivated by two ideas. It is well-recognised in previous research that economic conditions have an effect on violence (Dube and Vargas 2008; Iyer and Topalova 2014; Dell, Fiegenberg and Teshima 2018). Economic disruptions, for instance, lower the opportunity cost of crime for individuals, and make recruits available for violent organisations. It may also result in frustrated aspirations, resentment and in turn conflict (as suggested by Genicot and Ray 2017). At the same time, in many societies, minorities have de-facto weaker rights. The findings presented above add to the evidence that this is the case for scheduled castes in India. In settings where specific groups of people have weaker rights, economic disruption may disproportionately affect persons from these groups.

I report that villages where less wealthy upper castes experience lower (greater) economic growth during 2005-2011, see more (less) violence against scheduled castes relative to others in 2011. In the average village, scheduled castes are near 1% point more likely than upper castes to report attacks/threats (we interact caste with normalised values of growth in wealth). A one standard deviation increase in growth among upper caste households who had below-median wealth at baseline, is related to 0.039 to 0.086 percentage point change in this. This is summarised in Table 6, where we see consistent results when we control for average economic growth in the village (or interact our main variable of interest with it). I visually depict this in Figure 8, which plots the estimated probability of violence reported by scheduled caste persons (top panel) and upper caste persons (bottom panel), over average growth among low-wealth upper-caste households in the village. The estimates plotted here come from a model where caste is interacted with growth among this group, and separately with average growth in the village as a whole (corresponding to column 2 in Table 6). In Tables A6 in the appendix, we see that this pattern is not driven solely by persons who are outliers in having high estimated vulnerability to violent crime, or by high crime neighbourhoods, or by places

Table 6: Economic Insecurity and Caste based differences in Violence

VARIABLES	(1) Growth among Low-wealth Upper-Castes	(2) + Growth among All Households in Village	(3) × Growth among All Households in Village
Scheduled Caste (SC)	0.0106***	0.0105***	0.00997**
	(0.00386)	(0.00387)	(0.00401)
SC × Growth (Low-wealth Upper-castes)	-0.00399**	-0.00764*	-0.00865**
	(0.00186)	(0.00393)	(0.00395)
SC × Growth (Village Avg.)		0.00492	0.00446
		(0.00521)	(0.00561)
SC × Growth (Low-wealth Upper-castes) × Growth (Village Avg.)			0.000632
			(0.000824)
Growth in Wealth	-0.00319**	-0.00340**	-0.00341**
	(0.00146)	(0.00151)	(0.00151)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00114***	-0.00114***	-0.00114***
	(0.000391)	(0.000391)	(0.000392)
Observations	34,951	34,951	34,951
Number of Villages/Localities	2,073	2,073	2,073
Controls	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The outcome is a 0-1 variable indicating if a household reports facing an attacks/threat in the year before the survey in 2011. The main explanatory variables of interest are indicators for whether a household is Upper caste (i.e. Brahmin, Forward caste, OBC), Scheduled caste, or Scheduled tribe. All regressions include village fixed effects, and the standard set of controls. Column 1 is a standard estimation of the overall relation between caste and violent crime, identical to column 3 in Table 2. In columns 2-3, we introduce another key variable. This is the average village-level growth in the household wealth index between 2005-2011 for upper caste household that had below-median wealth (i.e. upper caste median) in 2005. The main caste variable is interacted with it. We also interact with it the average village-level growth of all households. Both growth variables are used in a normalised form (z-value). In column 3, we use a three-way interaction. □

where average growth among low-wealth upper-castes is especially high.

This pattern does not have a ready causal interpretation, since variation in economic growth with which I relate violence is not exogenous. However, this is a striking pattern, for a number of reasons, and therefore provokes serious questions. Firstly, economic growth among low-wealth upper castes is related, not simply to the *level* of violence in the village, but to the excess in attacks/threats to scheduled castes relative to upper caste households. If the reason why growth among social elites correlates with less violent crime is because safer villages promote growth, why would villages where especially scheduled castes are safer promote growth. Second, it is economic conditions of a quite specific group of households with which attacks/threats against scheduled castes co-move. These are upper caste household with below the median wealth in that village. Like low-skilled workers in Dell, Fiegenberg and Teshima (2018) in Mexico, and in Olzak (1990) in the context of US race riots, these are persons whose standard of living is most affected during economic slumps. Moreover, this is a group of social elites, which is relevant in at least two ways. In a setting where social and kinship networks are organised around caste, if economic worsening among upper castes leads to greater violence *by* them, it is more likely to be directed across rather than within caste boundaries. Independently, it is also more likely to be directed towards persons who have weaker rights than them i.e. "lower" castes. It is in general difficult to explain our findings without appealing to social fissures in some way. This is also true for Mitra and Ray (2014) who find that Muslim (minority) consumption levels tend to increase violence against them, while Hindu (majority) consumption decreases it, in the context of religious riots in India. And with Sharma (2015) who finds that the ratio of SC/ST spending to Upper caste spending in a district is correlated with hate crimes or "atrocities" against SC/ST persons recorded by the Police. An alternative explanation is that economic growth among upper castes renders them more appealing targets for attacks/violence than scheduled caste households. This may explain why scheduled castes are safer relative to others in villages where the former show

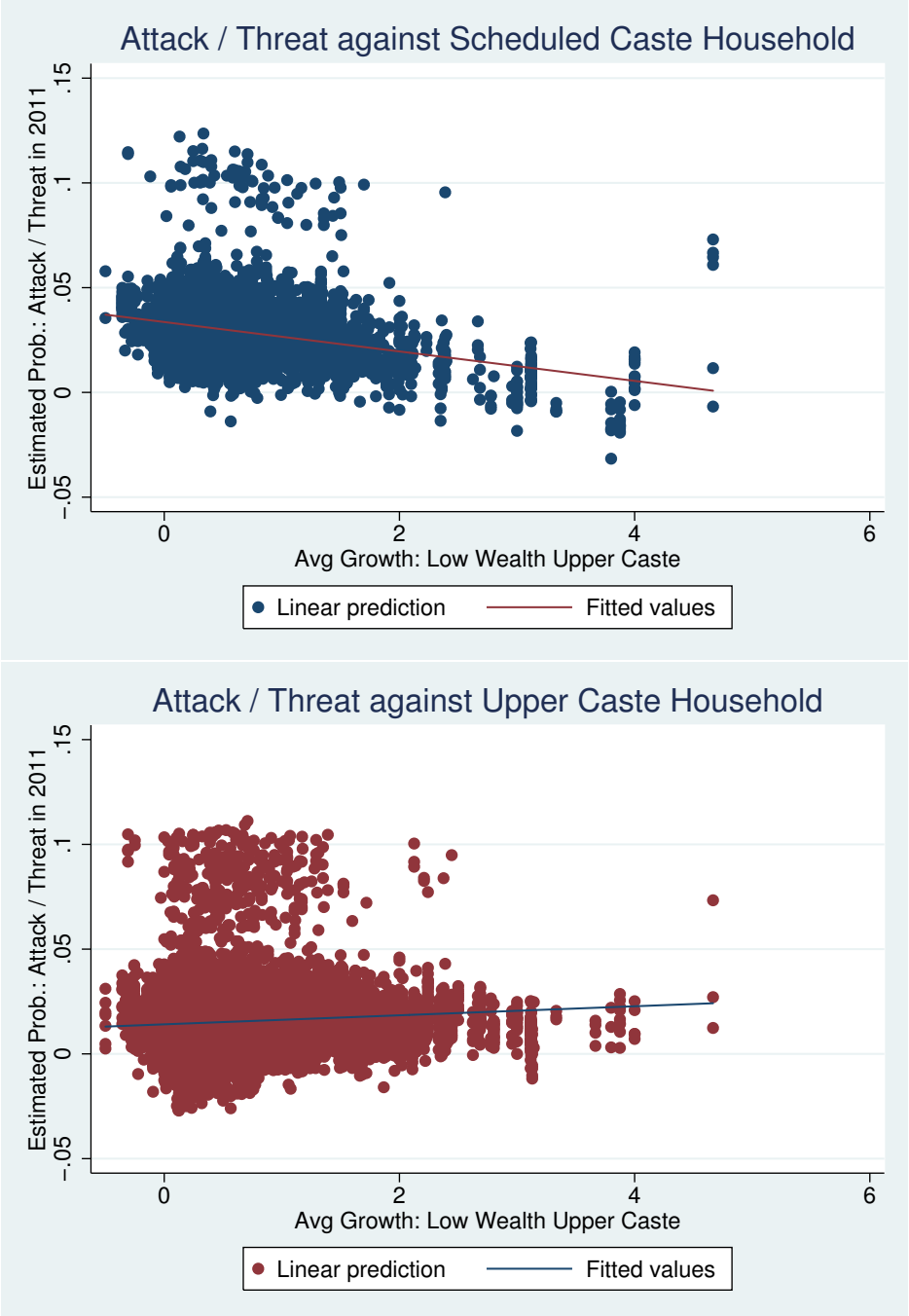
high growth. However, in all our regressions, both wealth at baseline and economic growth are strongly related to *less violence* against it.

Strikingly, although caste-segregated villages account for much of the *average* violence reported by scheduled castes relative to upper castes, economic changes have pronounced effects in *mixed caste villages*. Table 7 summarises results from separate regressions on caste-segregated villages, mixed caste villages, and urban areas. The correlation between economic growth among low-wealth upper castes and relative violence against scheduled castes is most meaningful in villages with mixed-caste hamlets. One standard deviation increase in growth is related to increased violence by 1.2% points compared to the 0.7% percentage points in analysis that pools all villages/localities. Essentially, starting from relatively small differences in violence across castes, mixed-caste villages where economic condition of social elites worsen tend to resemble caste-segregated villages in violence against SC households. On the one hand, this may indicate the fragility of social relations when economic conditions worsen; On the other hand, it may be taken to mean that the greater vulnerability of violence in segregated villages is less ameliorated by economic improvement among social elites.

6 Conclusion

Caste is strongly related to violence in India. Scheduled castes report much greater victimisation than similar households in the same village on average. It is challenging to understand the full range of factors behind this. Analysis based on direct interviews with households overcomes some of the challenges, related to the credibility of police records in an unequal society. Since caste based divisions have long historical roots, it is striking that places where caste identity is strongly divisive for (likely) historical reasons show the greatest caste-differences in violent victimisation to the present day. On the other hand, this inequality is substantially weaker in urban areas and in places where scheduled castes do not report "untouchability".

Figure 6: Violent Crime (2011) over Average Growth in Wealth of Low-Wealth Upper Castes (2005-2011)



Notes: . □

Table 7: Caste and Violence: The role of Economic Growth and Segregation

VARIABLES	(1) Segregated Villages	(2) Mixed Villages	(3) Urban Areas
Scheduled Caste (SC)	0.0170***	0.00417	0.000170
	(0.00647)	(0.00543)	(0.00458)
SC × Growth (Low-wealth Upper-castes)	-0.00262	-0.0120*	-0.00766
	(0.00532)	(0.00693)	(0.00675)
SC × Growth (Village Avg.)	-0.00180	0.0105	0.00586
	(0.00799)	(0.00822)	(0.00722)
Growth in Wealth	-0.00820**	-0.00251	0.00231
	(0.00382)	(0.00289)	(0.00583)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00188***	-0.000591	-8.75e-05
	(0.000587)	(0.000705)	(0.000578)
Observations	14,249	10,755	9,894
Number of Villages/Localities	731	538	802
Controls	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The outcome is a 0-1 indicating a household report of facing an attack/threat in the year before the survey in 2011. The main explanatory variables are indicators for whether a household is Upper caste (i.e. Brahmin, Forward caste, OBC), Scheduled caste, or Scheduled tribe. All regressions include village fixed effects, and the standard set of controls. In each case, we interact the caste variables separately with two village level variables. One is growth in he household wealth index between 2005-2011 for upper caste household that had below-median wealth (i.e. upper caste median) in 2005. The other is average economic growth in the village as a whole. Both variables are normalised (z-scores). Across columns 1-3, we respectively consider a subset of villages: caste-segregated hamlets, mixed-caste hamlets, and urban areas. □

These facts suggest that violence against marginalised groups may be highly persistent where historical social practices change less, but the situation may be different where the nature and terms of usual social interactions have changed more over time. The immediate economic context is also evidently important. It seems that scheduled castes' well-being is especially sensitive to the economic circumstances of upper castes around them. We do not yet understand the precise mechanism that links the two, but the nature of the evidence - whose growth specifically affects whose welfare - indicates some possible channels. Economic changes may intensify or ease competition over resources / opportunities which breaks out along caste lines and affect those with weaker rights, or it may intensify or ease economic resentment against minorities. The particular patterns we observe provoke more enquiry in this direction with a sharper focus on causal mechanisms.

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8 Appendix

Appendix Table A1: No significantly different rates of Theft among SCs.

Thefts and Caste - With Controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Controls for Wealth etc	Plus Occupation	Plus Growth in Wealth	Plus Growth in Consumption
Scheduled Caste (SC)	0.00367	0.00445	0.00438	0.00447
	(0.00583)	(0.00590)	(0.00590)	(0.00589)
Scheduled Tribe Caste (ST)	-0.000711	3.86e-05	-3.73e-05	-0.000249
	(0.00818)	(0.00817)	(0.00817)	(0.00816)
Wealth (2005)	-0.000511	-0.000565	-0.000648	-0.000720
	(0.000451)	(0.000454)	(0.000475)	(0.000470)
Growth in Wealth			-0.000835	-0.00151
			(0.00266)	(0.00262)
Growth in Consumption				0.00187
				(0.00129)
Observations	37,326	37,312	37,304	37,265
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,258	2,258	2,258
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The IHDS-I (2004) and IHDS-II (2011) ask households if in the past twelve months, they have been victims to three different types of crime: (i) attacks/threats, (ii) theft and (iii) break-ins. Our main results concerning attacks/threats against Scheduled castes households. This table reports the relationship between caste identity and theft. The specifications are identical to that for attacks/threats, which include village fixed effects, past crime victimisation and household controls. Being a victim to theft is positively but very weakly related to being scheduled caste (an order of magnitude smaller than attacks/threats). This is consistent with what we know about history of violent enforcement of caste norms over marginalised castes. □

Appendix Table A2: No significantly greater rates of break-ins among SCs.

Break-ins and Caste - With Controls

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
VARIABLES	Controls for Wealth etc	Plus Occupation	Plus Growth in Wealth	Plus Growth in Consumption
Scheduled Caste (SC)	0.00446	0.00450	0.00422	0.00422
	(0.00308)	(0.00297)	(0.00294)	(0.00294)
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	0.000545	0.000834	0.000500	0.000207
	(0.00517)	(0.00517)	(0.00516)	(0.00516)
Wealth (2005)	-0.000520*	-0.000548*	-0.000908***	-0.000883***
	(0.000309)	(0.000328)	(0.000341)	(0.000341)
Growth in Wealth			-0.00365**	-0.00359**
			(0.00161)	(0.00162)
Growth in Consumption				-0.000122
				(0.000206)
Observations	37,325	37,311	37,303	37,264
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,258	2,258	2,258
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The IHDS-I (2004) and IHDS-II (2011) ask households if in the past twelve months, they have been victims to three different types of crime: (i) attacks/threats, (ii) theft and (iii) break-ins. Our main results concerning attacks/threats against Scheduled castes households. This table reports the relationship between caste identity and break-ins. The specifications are identical to that for attacks/threats, which include village fixed effects, past crime victimisation and household controls. Being a victim to a Break-in is positively but very weakly related to being scheduled caste. This is consistent with what we know about history of violent enforcement of caste norms over marginalised castes. □

Appendix Table A3: Robustness: Large Villages/Localities Are Not Driving Results

VARIABLES	(1) Main Sample	(2) Villages With $\leq$ 4000 HHs	(3) Villages With $\leq$ 3000 HHs	(4) Villages With $\leq$ 2000 HHs
Scheduled Castes (SC)	0.0118***	0.0121***	0.0114***	0.0118**
	(0.00433)	(0.00441)	(0.00441)	(0.00465)
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	-0.00243	-0.00144	-0.00176	-0.00175
	(0.00656)	(0.00658)	(0.00658)	(0.00678)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00145***	-0.00147***	-0.00162***	-0.00184***
	(0.000477)	(0.000495)	(0.000475)	(0.000501)
Observations	26,893	26,165	25,905	25,059
Number of Villages/Localities	1,409	1,365	1,347	1,295
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: □

Appendix Table A4: Robustness: High Vulnerability Individuals Are Not Driving Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
		Excluding Persons With	Excluding Persons With	Excluding Persons With
VARIABLES	Main Sample	Estimated Pr[Violence]> 5%	Pr[Violence]> 4%	Pr[Violence]> 3%
Scheduled Castes (SC)	0.00981***	0.00768**	0.00856***	0.00712**
	(0.00368)	(0.00357)	(0.00319)	(0.00320)
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	-0.00128	-0.00193	-0.000501	-0.000264
	(0.00591)	(0.00596)	(0.00588)	(0.00591)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00112***	-0.000958***	-0.000598*	-0.000513*
	(0.000378)	(0.000353)	(0.000316)	(0.000304)
Observations	37,302	36,968	35,932	34,660
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,258	2,257	2,257
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: □

Appendix Table A5: Robustness: High Crime Villages/Localities Are Not Driving Results

VARIABLES	(1) Main Sample	(2) Excluding Places With Fixed Effect Pr[Violence]> 30%	(3) Excluding Places With Pr[Violence]> 20%	(4) Excluding Places With Pr[Violence]> 10%
Scheduled Castes (SC)	0.00981***	0.00882**	0.00834**	0.00754***
	(0.00368)	(0.00366)	(0.00345)	(0.00292)
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	-0.00128	-0.00188	-0.00135	-0.000888
	(0.00591)	(0.00578)	(0.00553)	(0.00538)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00112***	-0.000934***	-0.000823**	-0.000816***
	(0.000378)	(0.000341)	(0.000326)	(0.000296)
Observations	37,302	37,216	36,997	35,836
Number of Villages/Localities	2,258	2,251	2,234	2,171
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: □

Appendix Table A6: Robustness: The Relation B/W Economic Insecurity, Caste and Violece

VARIABLES	(1) Main Sample	(2) Excluding Persons With Pr[Violence]> 4%	(3) Excluding Places With Pr[Violence]> 30%	(4) Excluding Persons With Growth > 3 S.D.
Scheduled Castes (SC)	0.00981***	0.00895***	0.00933**	0.00990**
	(0.00368)	(0.00333)	(0.00382)	(0.00388)
SC × Growth (Low-wealth Upper castes)		-0.00751*	-0.00757*	-0.0101**
		(0.00396)	(0.00394)	(0.00492)
SC × Growth (Village Avg.)		0.00689	0.00465	0.00508
		(0.00540)	(0.00519)	(0.00595)
Growth in Wealth	-0.00445**	-0.00506**	-0.00583**	-0.00668**
	(0.00214)	(0.00258)	(0.00276)	(0.00305)
Observations	37,302	33,673	34,887	34,427
Number of Village/Localities	2,258	2,072	2,068	2,040
Controls	YES	YES	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES	YES	YES

Notes: □

Appendix Table A7: Robustness: Controls for State-Specific Effects in How Economic Growth and Social Divisions Interact

	(1)	(2)
VARIABLES	All Villages/Localities	Mixed Villages
SC × Growth (Low-wealth Upper-castes)	-0.00909**	-0.0154**
	(0.00408)	(0.00699)
SC × Growth (Village Average)	0.00964*	0.0161**
	(0.00574)	(0.00791)
Wealth (2005)	-0.00118***	-0.000387
	(0.000400)	(0.000694)
Observations	34,951	10,755
Number of Village Average	2,073	538
Controls	YES	YES
Village FE	YES	YES
Clustered SE	YES	YES