

Will the Gender-Based Violence Crisis Get Worse or Improve?

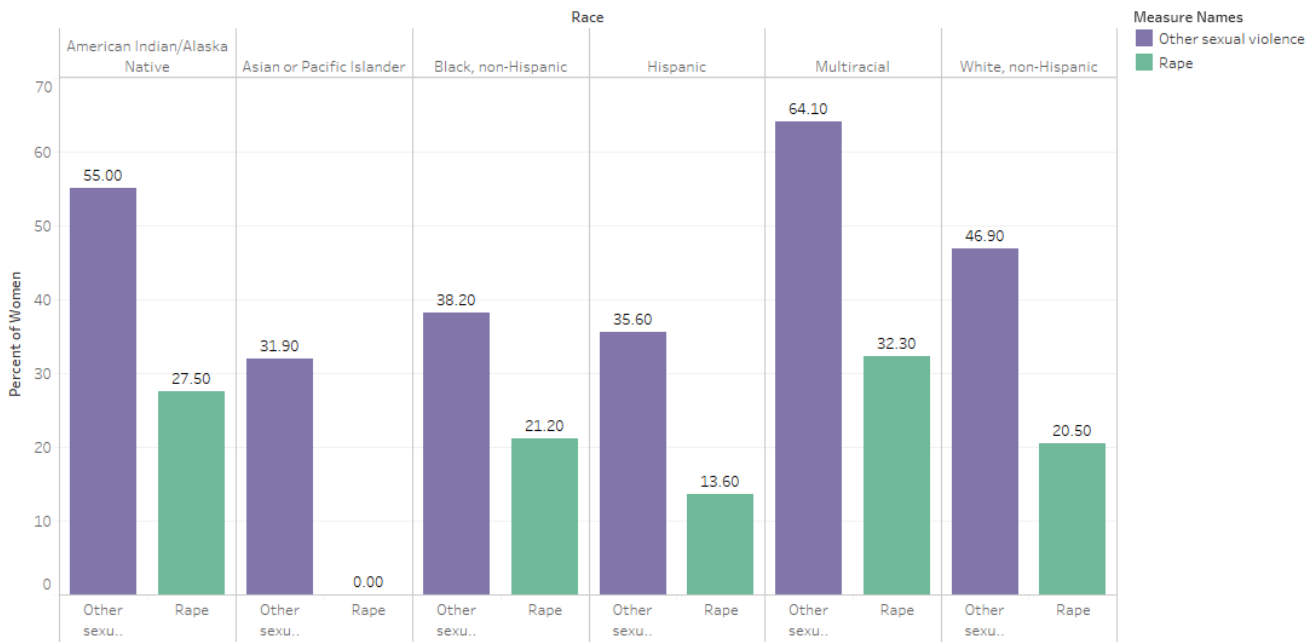
Policies Under the New Administration and Research Will Tell

It is as of yet unclear how the new presidential administration will address the on going crisis of gender-based violence in the United States. As the [New York Times](#) reported in early December, three of President-elect Trump's picks for top positions voted against reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act in 2013: Tom Price, selected to be Health and Human Services Secretary; Mike Pompeo, chosen to direct the CIA; and, Jeff Sessions, who recently faced confirmation hearings to be Attorney General.

More recently, a variety of media outlets reported on the Trump administrations' request to the State Department to outline "[existing programs and activities to promote gender equality, such as ending gender-based violence.](#)" The purpose behind this request is still unclear, but raised concerns on the direction the new administration might take both at home and abroad on this issue. Furthermore, not only has the [President](#) been accused of sexual assault, but two of the men he has picked for key positions, [Labor Secretary](#) and [Chief Strategist](#), were accused in the past of domestic violence.

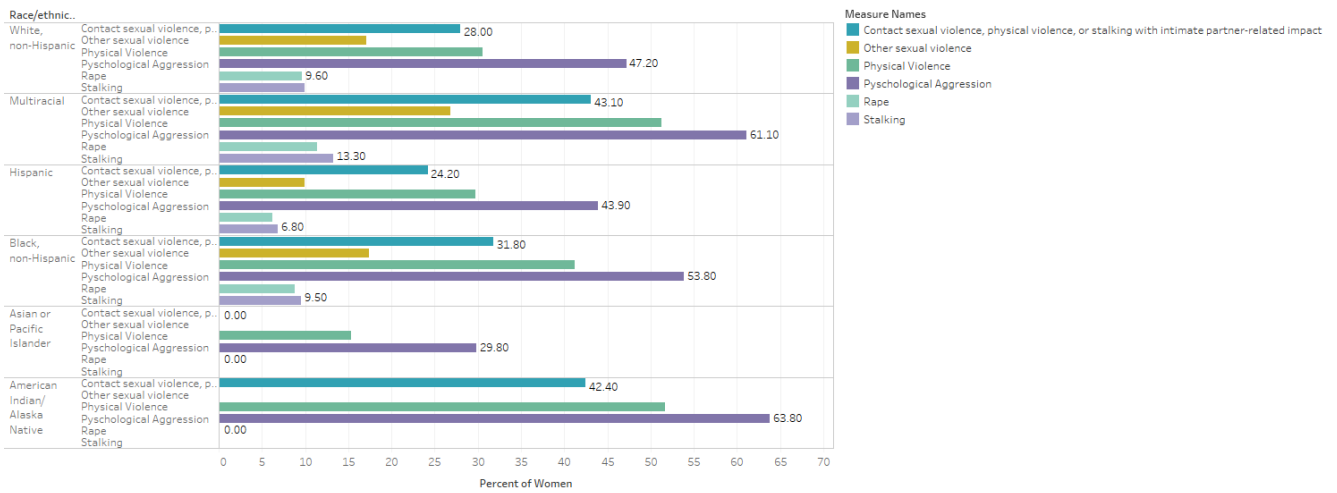
Rape, sexual violence including sexual coercion, unwanted sexual contact, stalking, physical violence, harassment, physical, psychological and economic intimate partner violence are but some of the most common forms of gender-based violence. Their multiplicity is as staggering as their prevalence rates.

Experience of Sexual Violence by Race/Ethnicity



The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) estimated in 2011 that 19.3% of women in the United States have been raped at some point in their lives and 1.6% during the past 12 months; 43.9% have experienced some type of sexual violence other than rape during their lifetimes and 5.5% during the past year. In terms of the racial and ethnic prevalence rates, the study estimates that 32.3% of multiracial women, 27.5% of American Indian/Alaska Native women, 21.2% of non-Hispanic black women, 20.5% of non-Hispanic white women, and 13.6% of Hispanic women were raped at some point in their lives. The prevalence of sexual violence other than rape is also high: 64.1% of multiracial women, 55.0% of American Indian/Alaska Native women, 46.9% of non-Hispanic white women, 38.2% of non-Hispanic black women; 35.6% of Hispanic women and 31.9% of Asian or Pacific Islander women experienced sexual violence during their lifetimes.

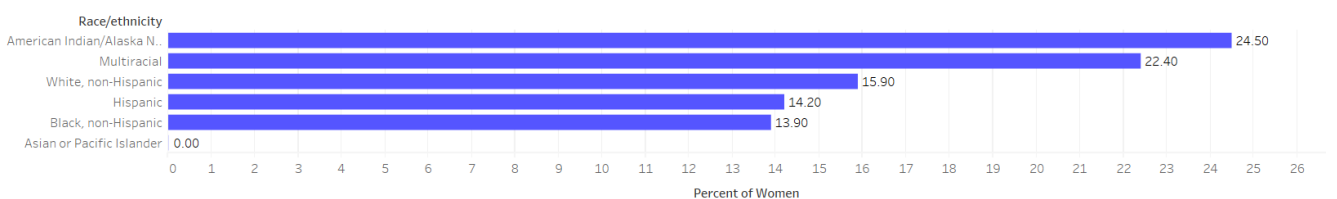
Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women by Race/Ethnicity of Victim



It is known that homes can be dangerous places for women. This same CDC study estimated the lifetime prevalence of physical intimate partner violence at 31.5% and at 4.0% in the past 12 months. Last, in terms of stalking, 15.2% of women have been stalked during their lifetimes, 4.2 in the past 12 months.

Based on the CDC’s 2010 [National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey](#), “sexual minority” respondents reported equal or higher lifetime rates of sexual or intimate partner violence. Lifetime prevalence of rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner was 43.8 percent for lesbians, 61.1 percent for bisexual women, and 35 percent for heterosexual women, while it was 26 percent for gay men, and 37.3 percent for bisexual men. Furthermore, the [National Coalition on Anti-Violence Programs](#) reports that in 2015 there were 25 reported homicides of individuals from the LGBTQ community, up 20% to from the previous year.

Prevalence of Stalking Victimization by Race/Ethnicity



The numbers, while instrumental in providing the evidence for legislation such as the 1994 [Violence Against Women Act](#) (VAWA)

and its subsequent reauthorizations, including one due in 2017, hide a scary truth: when you walk down the street in the United States, over a third of those women you see taking the bus, shopping, and going about their business have been victims of violence. Also hidden from view is the positive effect policies may have on diminishing violence. In addition, US policies have spillover effects, internationally providing sample legislation and best practices. During the Obama administration under the Clinton and Kerry tenures, the US Department of State also advanced a foreign policy agenda that centered on gender equity, including the need to address gender-based violence.

The Gender Policy Report will illuminate upcoming policy proposals and what research tells us about how they may affect gender-based violence.

– *Greta Friedemann-Sánchez and Leigh Goodmark*

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