

Offender Race in Assaults Against American Indian/Alaska Native Women Recorded in the National Incident Based Reporting System

Darryl S. Wood, Washington State University Vancouver



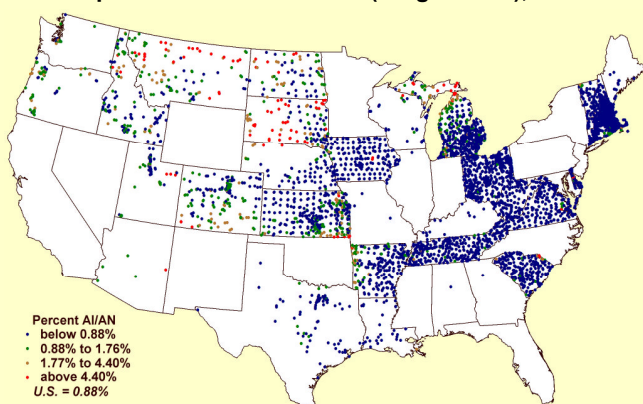
Abstract

Unlike the widely replicated finding that most violence is intra-racial, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) indicates that American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) are most likely to be assaulted by non-AI/AN offenders.^{1,2} However, with the NCVS's lack of geographic specificity, the degree to which this finding holds true across places that vary in relative size of AI/AN population is unclear. National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data³ were used to determine if opportunity for intra-racial contact, as measured by proportion of the population in a jurisdiction that reported AI/AN heritage in the 2000 Census, was positively associated with the likelihood that violent offenses were intra-racial. The results indicate that the larger the size of the AI/AN population relative to the total population, the greater the likelihood that violence against AI/AN women was at the hands of an AI/AN offender.

Hypothesis

Most analyses of victim and offender race permutation are rooted in Blau's proposition that the likelihood of intergroup social association is related to opportunity for intergroup contact which is, in turn, a function of each groups' relative size.^{4,5} Accordingly, we would expect that AI/ANs – a tiny minority in most places – would be more likely to experience 'social association' such as violent crime with members of other races. We would also expect that *intra*-racial crime would be much more common in places where the relative size of the AI/AN populations is much more substantial.

Fig. 1: NIBRS Jurisdictions (n = 4,648) by Proportion of Population that was AI/AN (Single Race), 2000



Data and Method

Assaults committed against female victims from 2002 to 2007 as reported to police/sheriffs serving city or county NIBRS jurisdictions were coded as inter- or intra-racial. The relative size of the AI/AN population for each jurisdiction was derived from the 2000 Census. Bivariate correlations and comparisons (based on non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals) of the relative incidence of intra-racial violence for jurisdictions that had proportions of AI/AN populations less than the national average (0.88%) vs. those 1 - 2 times vs. 2 - 4 times vs. > 4 times normal were estimated for assault, intimate partner assault, and sexual assault.

Results

The analysis confirms the hypothesis that there is a positive association between the relative size of the AI/AN population and the likelihood that assaults against AI/AN women were intra-racial. There was a weak to moderate correlation between the relative size of the AI/AN population and the proportion of cases of assault against AI/AN women that were intra-racial ($r = .24, p < .001$). For all assaults against AI/AN women (see Fig. 2), those that occurred where the proportion of the population that was AI/AN was less than the national average were half as likely to be intra-racial (32.7%) compared to those that occurred in jurisdictions with a proportion of the AI/AN population that was 1 - 2 times the national average (68.1%). As the relative size of the AI/AN population grew, so did the likelihood that assaults would be intra-racial: roughly 4-in-5 assaults against AI/AN women (80.5%) were intra-racial in jurisdictions with proportions of AI/AN populations that were at least 5 times the national average. The pattern held true for intimate partner violence (IPV) and for sexual assault (see Table 1).

Conclusion

Assaults against AI/AN women are most likely to be inter-racial because the majority live in urban areas with relatively small AI/AN populations.⁶ As the proportion of the population that is AI/AN increases, so does the likelihood that assaults against AI/AN women will be intra-racial.

References

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Fig. 2: Proportion of Intra-Racial Assaults by Relative Size of AI/AN Population, NIBRS Agencies, 2002-2007

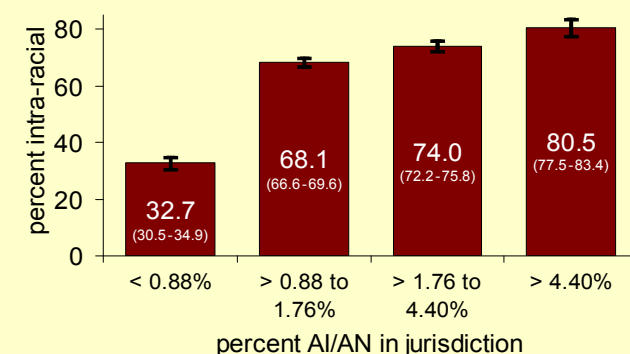


Table 1: Proportion of Intra-Racial Assaults by Type of Assault, Victim Race, and Relative Size of AI/AN Population, NIBRS Agencies, 2002-2007

Victim Race	Type of Assault	
	IPV % Intra-Racial (95% CI)	Sexual % Intra-Racial (95% CI)
Total	91.0 (90.8 - 91.2)	80.1 (79.5 - 80.7)
Asian/Pacific Islander	48.2 (46.7 - 49.8)	30.9 (26.6 - 35.7)
Black	96.5 (96.2 - 96.9)	88.3 (86.9 - 89.7)
White	89.1 (88.9 - 89.3)	78.8 (78.2 - 79.5)
AI-AN Total	55.0 (53.3 - 56.7)	38.4 (33.5 - 43.9)
Percent AI/AN in Jurisdiction		
< 0.88%	27.6 (25.0 - 30.5)	9.1 (4.5 - 16.3)
> 0.88% to 1.76%	61.7 (59.7 - 63.8)	46.5 (40.3 - 53.3)
> 1.76% to 4.40%	68.7 (66.2 - 71.2)	55.0 (47.2 - 63.8)
> 4.40%	76.2 (72.5 - 80.2)	72.2 (58.5 - 88.1)