



PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AMONG PERUVIAN ETHNIC GROUPS

Nearly half of all Peruvian women experience some form of violence, according to national survey data. Only recently have studies shed light on the specific experience of indigenous women, suggesting better ways for policymakers to tailor state responses. In a groundbreaking study entitled “Prevalence of Violence against Women among Peruvian Ethnic Groups,” Professor Jorge M. Agüero, University of Connecticut, explains how violence against women differs over time and among ethnic groups in Peru and makes suggestions for improving interventions and services for the most affected populations.

Major Findings

Violence against Women in Peru

- 48% of women have suffered some form of domestic violence in their lifetime.
- 1 in 3 women has suffered emotional violence and 1 in 10 has suffered sexual violence.
- Only 7% of women who suffer incidents of violence report these to the authorities.
- Among those who report suffering physical violence, 39% experience moderate violence and 18% severe violence.
- Levels of domestic violence are higher among older women and those who participate in the labor force.
- Levels of violence decrease as education levels increase, and are lower among married women than unmarried women.

Prevalence of Violence against Women by Ethnic Group

- Among different ethnic groups, rates of violence against women are greatest among those who only recently began speaking Spanish at home. Women who were raised speaking an indigenous language but now speak Spanish with their partner are +9.4% more likely to experience violence than women who have spoken only Spanish since childhood.

Methodology

Defining “ethnicity” is complex in multi-ethnic countries such as Peru. Peru’s national household survey has only included questions about ethnicity since 2000. For purposes of this study, Agüero used the Demographic and Family Health Survey (ENDES) because it includes direct questions about violence and its surveys are conducted in a safe space. Furthermore, the ENDES reports results among linguistic groupings, and uses a typology of violence consistent with Peru’s National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI).

Linguistic groupings of ethnic populations. The ENDES divides ethnic populations into three linguistic groupings:

1. *Historic* Spanish speakers: those who grew up speaking Spanish and continue to do so today;
2. *Recent* Spanish speakers: those who grew up speaking an indigenous language but now speak Spanish;
3. *Indigenous* language speakers: those who only speak an indigenous language.

There are two main advantages of this classification:

- It is consistent over time.
- It permits the identification of vulnerable groups.

- Women with fewer “outside options” when compared to their partners suffer the greatest violence. Generally, these are women who have migrated or are in transition. Because these women have fewer alternatives and fewer social networks upon which to rely, they have reduced negotiating power within the household.
- *Recent* Spanish speakers experience the greatest levels of severe physical violence (+25%) and sexual violence (+22%) when compared to *historic* Spanish speakers.
- *Recent* Spanish speakers tend to live apart from their communities of origin, such as in urban or semi-urban areas, and closer to their partner’s family than their own.
- Women who exclusively speak *indigenous* languages report the least domestic violence: a 19% drop compared to *historic* Spanish speakers—although the difference falls to 7.7% when looking only at severe physical violence.

Recommendations for Policymakers Based on These Findings

1. Target violence prevention programs to *recent* Spanish speakers. In general, this means designing programs for urban and semi-urban areas, where rural-urban migration is most common and *recent* Spanish speakers are more likely to settle.
2. Design prevention programs that specifically address psychological and emotional violence—the most prevalent forms of violence among *recent* and *historic* Spanish speakers. Additionally, prioritize violence prevention initiatives that address moderate or severe physical violence among women who speak only *indigenous* languages.
3. During public education campaigns on the rights of women, direct the message to both partners, not just women. Encourage greater awareness among male partners about women’s rights.



Typology of Violence. The ENDES measures three types of violence against women by an intimate partner:

1. *Emotional violence* occurs when the woman reports that her partner has humiliated her, threatened to hit her, insulted her, or made her feel bad.
2. *Sexual violence* implies that the woman was forced to have sexual relations against her will using physical force, or was forced to conduct sexual acts that she did not approve of.
3. *Physical violence* is broken into two categories:
 - a. *Moderate physical violence:* A partner shoves a woman, throws something at her, slaps her, or twists her arm;
 - b. *Severe physical violence:* A woman’s partner strikes her with his fist or something that could harm her, kicks or drags her, attempts to strangle or burn her, attacks or attempts to assault or threaten her with a knife, gun, or another type of weapon.



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