



## Dismantling Racial Discrimination Fact Sheet: **RACISM AND GUN VIOLENCE**

Racism intersects with gun violence in the U.S. through multiple interconnected pathways, affecting both who experiences gun violence and how society responds to it.

### **Disproportionate Impact on Communities of Color**

Gun violence disproportionately affects Black and Latino communities. Black Americans experience gun homicide rates roughly 10 times higher than White Americans, with young Black men facing particularly elevated risks. This disparity reflects broader patterns of residential segregation, economic inequality, and concentrated poverty that increase exposure to violence.

### **Historical Context and Structural Factors**

The concentration of gun violence in certain communities stems partly from historical policies like redlining, urban renewal, and discriminatory lending practices that created isolated areas of disinvestment. These conditions, combined with limited economic opportunities and inadequate public services, can contribute to environments where violence becomes more prevalent.

### **Policing and Criminal Justice Responses**

The criminal justice response to gun violence often differs by race and geography. Communities of color experiencing high rates of gun violence may simultaneously face both over-policing and under-protection—heavy law enforcement presence that can strain community relations while still leaving residents feeling unsafe. Gun crimes involving White perpetrators and victims sometimes receive different prosecutorial treatment than those involving people of color.

### **Media Coverage and Public Perception**

Research shows that media coverage of gun violence varies significantly by the race of perpetrators and victims. Mass shootings by White perpetrators often receive more extensive coverage and different framing than gun violence in communities of color, potentially influencing public perception and policy priorities.



### **Policy Implications**

Gun control policies can have racially disparate effects. Some advocates argue that certain regulations disproportionately burden law-abiding minority gun owners, while others contend that stronger gun laws could reduce the violence devastating many communities of color.

### **Community-Level Responses**

Many communities of color have developed their own approaches to addressing gun violence, including violence intervention programs, community organizing, and trauma-informed services that address both immediate safety concerns and underlying social conditions.

Learn more [here](https://www.osfphila.org/justice-and-peace/racism/).