



World Risk Poll 2021: Safe at Work?

Global experiences
of violence and
harassment



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ABOUT GALLUP

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Preface



Dr. Ruth Bounphrey

Chief Executive

Lloyd's Register Foundation

The mission of Lloyd's Register Foundation — to engineer a safer world — is fundamentally underpinned by research and evidence, and our World Risk Poll is a powerful tool to understand the nature and scale of different safety challenges across the globe. The Poll gives a voice to people around the world, allowing them to share their personal worries and experiences of risk.

This World Risk Poll report focuses on people's experiences of violence and harassment in the workplace and their response to those experiences. We need to know which types of violence and harassment at work are more prevalent and where, and who is more exposed to it and why. Until now, there were no comparable global and regional data on this. This report and our linked 'Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey' report with the International Labour Organization aim to address that gap.

Our results show that violence and harassment in the workplace is endemic and persistent at a global level. However, we also observed that reported experience is not uniform across the world with certain regions, countries and demographics reporting much higher rates of violence and harassment than others.

There is an ongoing need to raise awareness and understanding of violence and harassment in the workplace and the detrimental impact it has for both the individual and their employer. Alongside this there is also an urgent need to develop and roll out targeted interventions to protect the most at-risk groups. Encouraging countries to ratify and put into force the Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190. is a significant first step in this process.

To support these aims, we make our data freely available so that stakeholders across the world, including governments, regulators, businesses, researchers, NGOs and international bodies, can use them to inform and target policies and interventions that reduce people's experience of violence and harassment at work. Please get in touch if we can help you use these data to create a safer world of work.

Executive summary

Violence and harassment at work has been and remains a pervasive problem globally. However, efforts to combat it have been fragmented and often lacked context. To address this, in 2019 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted a new labour standard to combat violence and harassment in the workplace. The Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (C190), and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation 2019 (R206), were adopted by delegates representing governments and employers' and workers' organisations. However, a significant standardised global dataset remained lacking.

To respond to this need Lloyd's Register Foundation and the International Labour Organization (ILO) joined forces with Gallup in 2021 to create the first global survey on violence and harassment in the workplace as part of the broader Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll. The Poll gauges people's experience of violence and harassment in the workplace and whether they told someone about it (if at all) to identify global, national, and demographic trends for intervention. The study includes results from 125,911 people in 121 countries and territories across all global regions.

“

This survey provides the first global and comparable measure of the nature and extent of violence and harassment in the workplace.



Key findings

- Among those who have worked at some point in their lifetime, one in five people reported experiencing some form of violence and harassment at work in their lifetime to the poll (20.9%).
 - Of those who reported experience of violence and harassment, more than half experienced it more than once (58.5%)
- Men were slightly more likely than women to report experience of violence and harassment at work (21.9% vs 19.8%).
- Psychological violence and harassment was the most frequently reported form (16.5%) compared to physical (7.4%) and sexual (5.5%).
- Of those who reported experiencing violence and harassment at work, over a quarter of people reported experiencing multiple forms of it (27.7%).
 - For a third of women who reported experiencing any violence and harassment there was a sexual element to this experience (32.9%). This dropped to one in six for men (15.4%).
- Australia and New Zealand is the region that reported the highest levels of experience, at nearly one in two people (47.9%).
 - In this and other 'Western' regions there was a significant gap between the sexes, with women much more likely to say they had experienced violence and harassment at work than men.
- Women with a tertiary (university) level of education were both more likely to say they have experienced violence and harassment (29.3%) and also to have told someone about their experience (71.9%) compared to women with primary or secondary level education.
- Foreign-born women have a greater experience of violence and harassment in the workplace than their native-born counterparts (30.2% vs 21.5%), an effect that was not seen for men.
 - This gap was largest in the poorest 20% of the global population at 12.6 percentage points, compared to 6.8 percentage points in the wealthiest 20%.

Insight to action

It is vital that the findings raised in this report lead to direct and impactful action to tackle violence and harassment in the workplace.

- **Early intervention** – People often report experiencing violence and harassment at work multiple times. This repeated occurrence suggests that there is a failure to deal with the issue when it arises. **Employees and stakeholders should therefore ensure that prompt action is taken whenever violence and harassment is reported.** Furthermore, a large proportion of respondents did not report their experience as they felt “it would be a waste of time”. **Therefore, whenever violence and harassment is reported it should be investigated transparently, and visible actions should be taken.**
- **Clear procedures** – Employers should ensure that reporting pathways are clear and available to all, especially the most vulnerable workers. Other stakeholders and agencies that support these vulnerable groups should be consulted on, validate, and support use of these pathways.
- **Raising awareness** – There is significant variation in reported experience of violence and harassment globally. **High-level stakeholders including governments, UN bodies and business and industry associations should raise awareness globally and focus on unifying definitions and action pathways.**
- **Avoid one size fits all approaches** – Different demographic groups have very different reported experiences of violence and harassment. **Therefore targeted approaches should be used rather than applying a single generic approach.**

Acknowledgements

Lloyd's Register Foundation is grateful to a wide range of organisations and individuals who have contributed to the World Risk Poll in a variety of ways. We have been inspired by the enthusiasm of our strategic impact partners who have invested time in developing the questionnaire and are now actively considering how to embed the data in their work with communities and empower people to take action. You can follow their journeys, and the change created, through the Poll website at lrfworldriskpoll.com.

The Technical Advisory Group for the World Risk Poll was convened in early 2019, and we are indebted to the time and effort voluntarily invested by the members in the analysis, planning and reviewing of the report. We would particularly like to thank Susan Maybud and Shauna Olney for investing their time and expertise in reviewing this report.

And finally, our thanks are extended to the team at Gallup for their efforts in constructing and testing the Poll, and to the local staff in countries across the globe who undertook the field work. Data collection took place amid ongoing Covid-19-related disruptions and restrictions, and we are particularly grateful to individual colleagues at Gallup for continuing to deliver the project in the face of these significant challenges.



Introduction

Violence and harassment at work has been and remains a pervasive, widespread problem worldwide¹. It is also multifaceted, with violence and harassment at work manifesting in different forms². It is, therefore, not surprising that global policy efforts to address this issue have often taken a fragmented approach, focusing on specific forms of violence and harassment in different countries, rather than having a unified global strategy³.

Indeed, until recently, there was not even a widely agreed-upon definition of what constitutes violence and harassment at work. There was no established comprehensive definition encompassing the wide range of hostile activities, behaviours, practices or threats that plague contemporary working life in many countries⁴.

In 2019, delegates at the International Labour Conference adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206, and established the first international definition of this concept. In 2021, Lloyd's Register Foundation and the International Labour Organization (ILO) joined forces with Gallup to create the first global survey on violence and harassment in the workplace as part of the broader Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll. The survey draws upon several aspects of the definition of violence and harassment, as established by Convention No. 190. As such, this survey provides the first global and comparable measure of the nature and extent of violence and harassment in the workplace.

ILO Convention No. 190

Convention No. 190 provides the first international definition of violence and harassment in the world of work (Art. 1(1)(a)), which refers to a: *range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm and includes gender-based violence and harassment*. The Convention also defines gender-based violence and harassment (Art. 1(1)(b)) as: *violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex of gender disproportionately and includes sexual harassment*.

- 1 Andrijauskaitė, U.M. (2020). Sexual harassment and violence against women in the workplace in 1920s–1930s Lithuania. *History: A Collection of Lithuanian Universities' Research Papers / Istorija: Lietuvos Aukštuju Mokyklų Mokslo Darbai* 115 (3): 52–65.
- 2 ILO. (2021). *Violence and harassment in the world of work: A guide on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206*.
- 3 Ahmad, S., Sohal, A., & Wolfram Cox, J. (2021). Bullying in the workplace: a cross-cultural and methodological perspective, *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 51:1, 26-46, DOI: 10.1080/00208825.2021.1898099
- 4 ILO. (2021). *Violence and harassment in the world of work: A guide on Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206*.

In its second iteration in 2021, the Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll was fielded in 121 countries and territories, interviewing over 125,000 people using probability-based random sampling to ensure nationally representative data and results. The violence and harassment module specifically asked people about three key manifestations of violence and harassment in the workplace: experience of physical violence and harassment, psychological violence and harassment, and sexual violence and harassment. When people said they had experienced violence and harassment at work, they were then asked how many times this happened to them, when was the last time this happened to them, whether they told someone about their experience, and if yes who they told. If they had not told someone, they were asked why not

While the violence and harassment module benefits from and builds upon related survey research in this field, it provides a more comprehensive and consistent view of violence and harassment at work by using consistent questions and definitions across 121 countries and territories. Regardless of their current employment status, all respondents were asked about their experiences with violence and harassment in the workplace providing a unique lifetime view.



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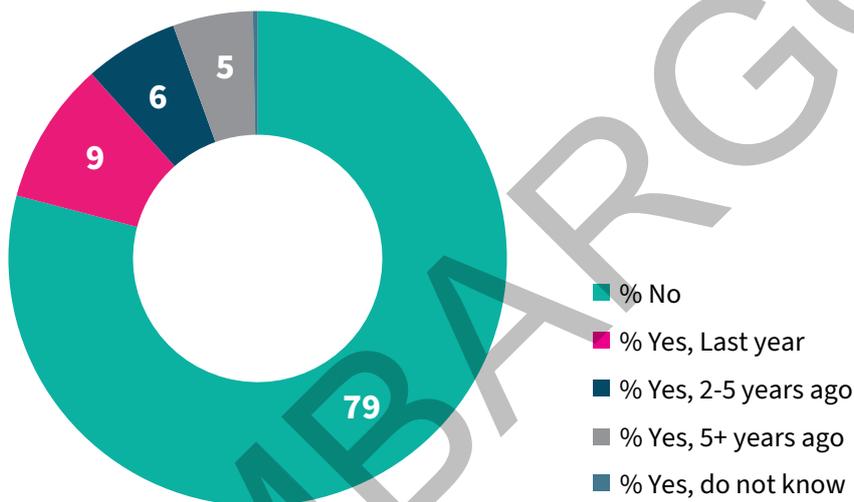
Chapter 1

Violence and harassment in the workplace: a global issue?

Despite the continued rise in remote working⁵ as well as periodic workplace closures in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic⁶, nearly one in ten people worldwide (9.3%) say they have experienced some form – physical, psychological, or sexual – of violence and harassment in the workplace within the past year (Chart 1.1). Another 6.1% said this has happened to them within the past two to five years, and for another 5.2%, their encounter with violence and harassment at work took place more than five years ago. One in five people globally (20.9%) said they had experienced violence and harassment at work⁷.

Chart 1.1

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace and when experienced, global results



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Approximately, when was the last time this happened to you - was it within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

5 Though as ILO World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2022 report points out, remote working is largely the province of “workers with access to technology and higher skills [and] who tend to work in larger businesses...” (ILO, 2022).

6 ILO. (27 October 2021). Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Eight edition. 27 October 2021. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_824092.pdf

7 Note, another 0.2% said they have experienced sexual violence and harassment at work but did not know when this happened. Due to the small size of this group, they do not appear in Chart 1.1 (or analogous graphs which appear later in the report).



At the global level, men report a marginally greater experience of violence and harassment at work compared to women, with 21.9% of men having experienced violence and harassment at work – regardless of when this last occurred – compared to 19.8% of women ([Chart 1.2](#))⁸.

Notably, much of the existing research has found that violence and harassment is an issue that disproportionately affects working women⁹ – a claim which does not appear to be supported by these global-level results. However, analysis later in this report, which considers how an individual's background or personal characteristics is related to experiences with violence and harassment at work, will show that women often are at greater risk.

Chart 1.2

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, global results by sex



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

⁸ Note that as part of the Gallup World Poll sex is determined by the interviewer with only binary options available, similarly sexuality was not polled.

⁹ ILO. (2019). *A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all*.

Who's included in the data and why that matters

The Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll is a large and complex data set that is part of the wider Gallup World Poll. The data can be analysed in a range of different ways and this box clarifies how the data was filtered for this report.

The module dedicated to violence and harassment in the workplace opens with three broad questions asking about experience of physical, psychological or sexual harassment – asked in that order – in the workplace. In each question, respondents could independently state that they have never worked¹. At this point the following questions relating to that experience would be skipped.

For those who had experienced violence and harassment at work it is also possible to analyse the data by both the time frame of experience – within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago – and also by the number of times they had experienced it. Outside of this module and as part of the broader Gallup World Poll dataset, it is possible to group and filter the data based on current employment status.

Based on these interactions there are multiple ways to analyse the data. For this report we have included experiences of violence and harassment from any time in the respondents' life in order to extract meaningful findings in the most objective manner. Therefore, outside of this report's opening paragraph, all data presented will refer to lifetime experience of violence and harassment unless otherwise clearly stated. A more in depth explanation of these methodological decisions is included in Appendix 3.

It is important to note that this report uses the same dataset as the recently released *Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey*.² Due to the way the data was filtered for each report there are some differences in headline figures, although the overall response is similar. This report includes all respondents who have ever worked, including those currently out of the workforce or unemployed (113,873 respondents), whereas *A global first survey* specifically focuses on those who were employed at the time of polling (74,364 respondents).



¹ This was a volunteered response, meaning it was not explicitly read as a response option by the interviewer, but an individual could offer this as answer to any of the questions about experience of violence and harassment at work. Volunteered responses are not uncommon in survey questions – for instance, “do not know,” is a volunteered response for most of the questions asked on the Gallup World Poll; interviewers do not read this response option to respondents (except in rare cases), but if an individual indicates they are unsure, this is accepted as a response.

² ILO. (2022) *Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey*

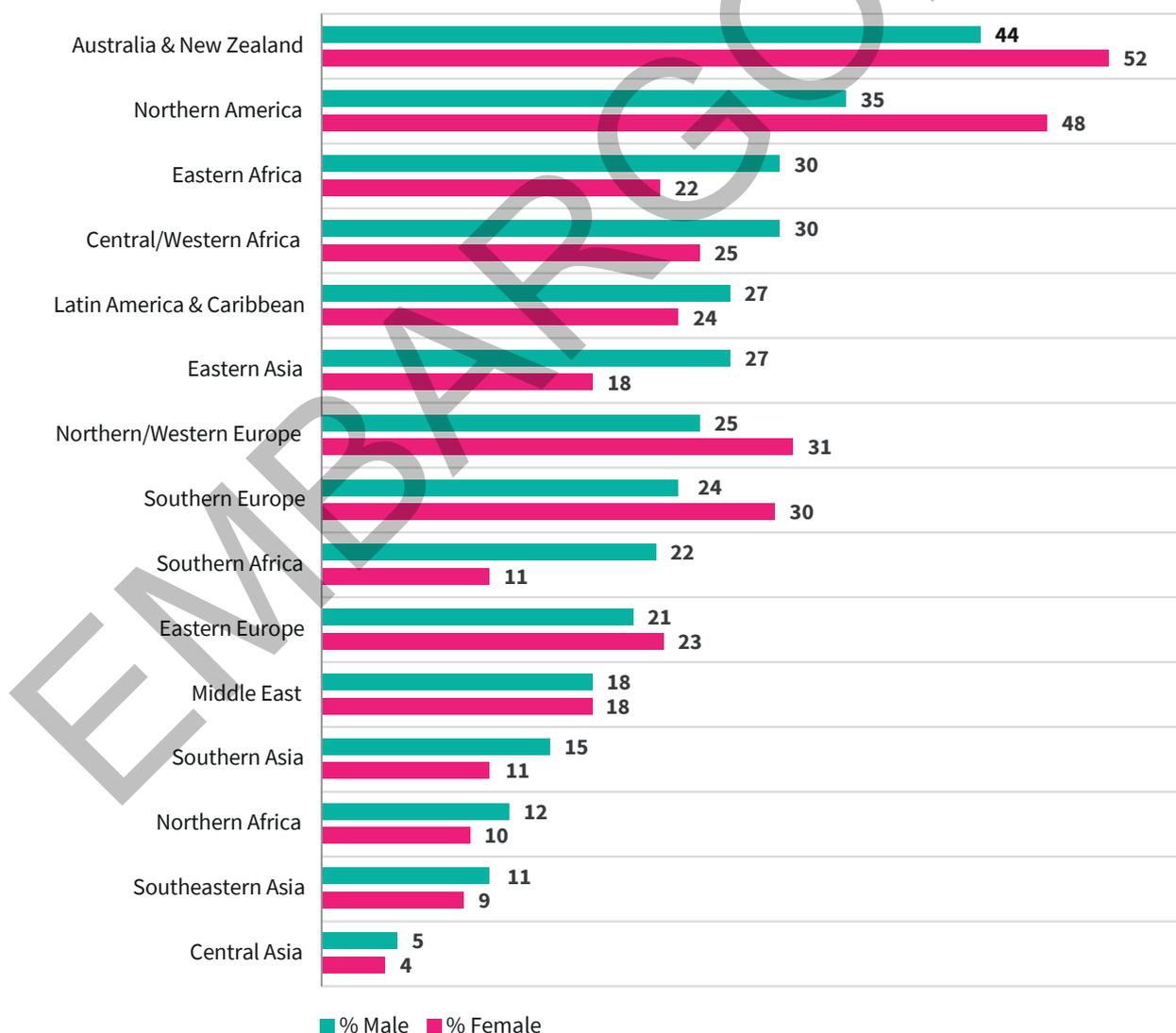
Regional level findings

At the regional level, 47.9% of people in Australia and New Zealand said they had experienced violence and harassment at some point in the past, the region with the greatest experience, with the next highest region being Northern America with a rate of 41.4% (Chart 1.3). For both of these regions – and both Northern/Western and Southern Europe – there was a clear increased risk for women with over half of women (52.1%) in Australia and New Zealand having experienced violence and harassment in the workplace at any point in their life. Whilst levels were slightly lower in Northern America this region demonstrated the clearest difference between men and women with a 13.3 percentage point gap. Conversely in all African regions men were at greater risk, with Southern Africa showing the largest gap at 11 percentage points.

At the other end of the scale Central and South-eastern Asian regions report to the poll a much lower percentage of experience, with Central Asia having an overall experience of 4.6% (5.0% for men, 4.2% for women).

Chart 1.3

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, by region and sex



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

Country level findings

In the 10 countries (Table 1.1) where people's experience violence or harassment in the workplace are highest (regardless of sex), women have significantly higher experience. Whilst Australia has both the highest overall reporting at 49.1% – and the highest score for men at 44.8% – it is Finland where women have the highest experience at 57.9%. In fact the Nordic countries represent a distinct sub-region with high levels of overall experience coupled with a clear increased risk for women.

Strikingly, these are all high-income countries and many of them, particularly the Nordic countries, do well in a number of social measures, such as the World Happiness Report, which, in the most recent report, placed Finland, Denmark and Iceland at the top of its 2022 rankings.¹⁰ Likewise in the 2022 Social Progress Index Norway, Finland, Denmark, and Iceland also filled the top five spots along with Switzerland¹¹.

Table 1.1

Countries with highest and lowest reported experience of violence and harassment in the workplace

Country	World Bank country income group	% All	% Men	% Women	Percentage point difference (women – men)
Ten countries with highest experience					
Australia	High	49.1	44.8	53.3	8.5
Finland	High	47.9	37.6	57.9	20.3
Iceland	High	42.3	39.3	45.2	5.9
New Zealand	High	42.0	38.0	45.9	7.9
Denmark	High	41.7	30.3	53.0	22.7
United States	High	41.5	34.9	47.9	13.0
Norway	High	41.5	33.4	49.7	16.3
Canada	High	40.7	33.1	48.2	15.1
Greece	High	37.6	30.9	44.0	13.1
Sweden	High	36.9	28.8	45.5	16.7
Ten countries with lowest experience					
Kyrgyzstan	Lower-middle	7.4	7.3	7.5	0.2
Lebanon	Lower-middle	7.3	7.2	7.5	0.2
Malaysia	Upper-middle	6.5	8.1	4.1	-4.1
Uzbekistan	Lower-middle	5.1	6.7	3.5	-3.3
Armenia	Upper-middle	4.7	5.8	3.7	-2.0
Indonesia	Lower-middle	4.7	6.4	2.7	-3.6
Georgia	Upper-middle	3.6	3.6	3.7	0.2
Kazakhstan	Upper-middle	3.6	2.2	4.8	2.6
Pakistan	Lower-middle	3.3	3.5	2.9	-0.6
Tajikistan	Lower-middle	3.0	2.9	3.0	0.1

Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

¹⁰ Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., Sachs, J. D., De Neve, J.-E., Aknin, L. B., & Wang, S. (Eds.). (2022). World Happiness Report 2022. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network. <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2022/>

¹¹ Social Progress Imperative, 2022 Social Progress Index reference text. <https://www.socialprogress.org/global-index-2022overview>

Whilst somewhat surprising, these results relating to experience of violence and harassment are not without precedent in terms of past research. Indeed in the 2019 World Risk Poll (in which a more general question about violence and harassment in the workplace was asked) 39% of women in Australia reported experiencing workplace violence and harassment compared to 24% of men¹². Furthermore, a 2018 study of employed Australians found that 54.8% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment at their most recent or a previous workplace¹³. Though this study focuses on just one form of violence and harassment, the findings help provide further context to the 2021 World Risk Poll violence and harassment results for Australia.

A 2015 Eurofound report, meanwhile, found that Finland had one of the highest levels of workers reporting "adverse social behaviour"¹⁴ at work across 29 European countries, at 22.6%¹⁵. While this figure appears significantly lower than the 47.0% found in the World Risk Poll study, it is important to note that Eurofound covered experience only in the past 12 months and was only asked of employed persons.

Eurofound also note that countries such as Finland have very low tolerance (in both a legal and larger social sense) of abusive workplace behaviours and this, in turn, may be one reason why these countries report high levels of violence and harassment. This is an overarching theme this report will return to – societal attitudes and awareness of violence and harassment, often working in tandem with substantive policy and legal measures, can make a meaningful difference on this issue.

At the other end of the scale, countries within Central and Southeastern Asia demonstrate the lowest reported experience with Tajikistan having the lowest overall experience rate at 3.0%, with no difference based on sex. If we apply the same thinking as above then we can perhaps infer that tolerance of violence and harassment may be higher in these regions or there may be a lower level of awareness within the working population.

In several of these countries, Gallup was not able to ask about all forms of violence and harassment (specifically about sexual violence and harassment) or had to ask the question in a modified form. This could be interpreted as a sign of the cultural and political sensitivities that may inhibit individuals' willingness to be open about their history with violence and harassment in the workplace.

12 The Lloyd's Register Foundation 2019 World Risk Poll - <https://wrp.lrfoundation.org.uk/2019-world-risk-poll/>

13 Australian Unions (ACTU). (2018). *Sexual harassment in Australian workplaces: Survey results*. ACTU, Melbourne

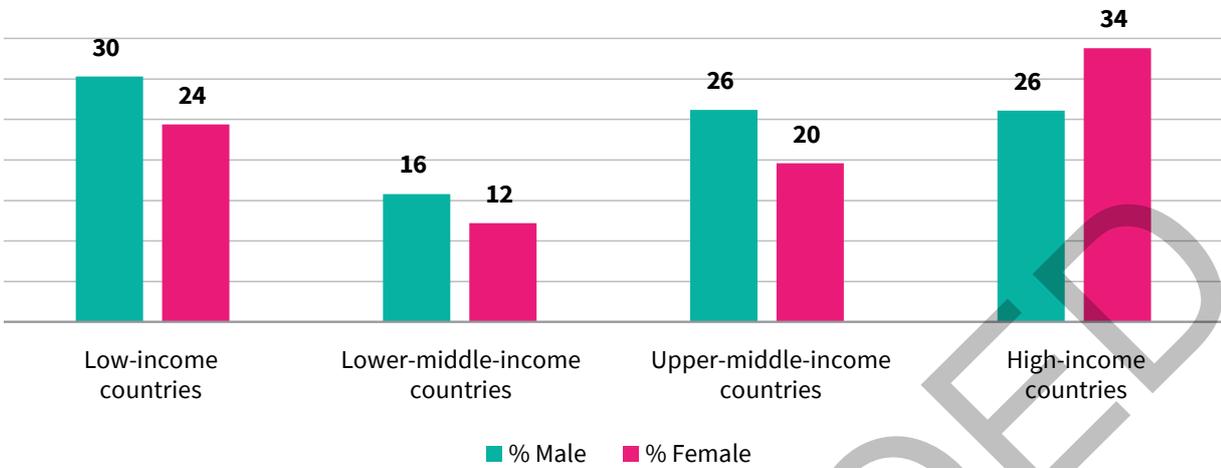
14 According to the 2015 Eurofound report, 'adverse social behaviour' is an index (or summary measure) based on six questions "which ask the person if, during the course of their work, they have been subjected to verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, threats or humiliating behaviour during the last month, or during the previous 12 months."

15 Eurofound. (2015). *Violence and harassment in European workplaces: Causes, impacts and policies*. Dublin.



Chart 1.4

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, by World Bank country income group and sex



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

Sex-based differences are realised even more clearly when grouping countries by World Bank Country Income Classification. When looking at general experience an interesting pattern can be seen with higher experiences in both lower (27.4%) and higher (29.9%) income countries to middle income countries (14.1 and 22.9%). When split by sex however it is only in high income countries where women report experiencing violence and harassment to a greater extent with a 7.7 percentage point difference between the sexes (Chart 1.4). This finding is likely significantly impacted by personal context and societal norms, and these correlations should be further explored.

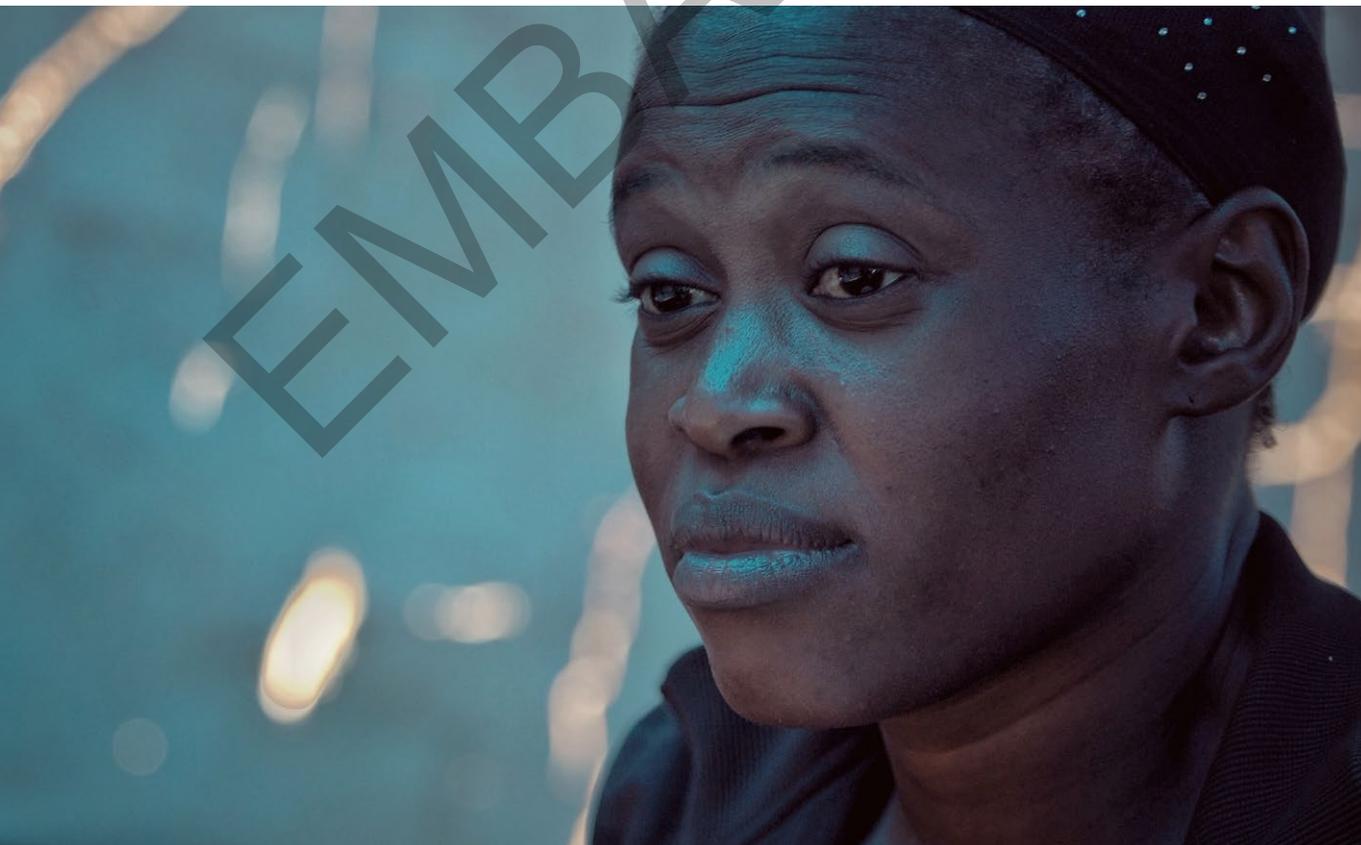
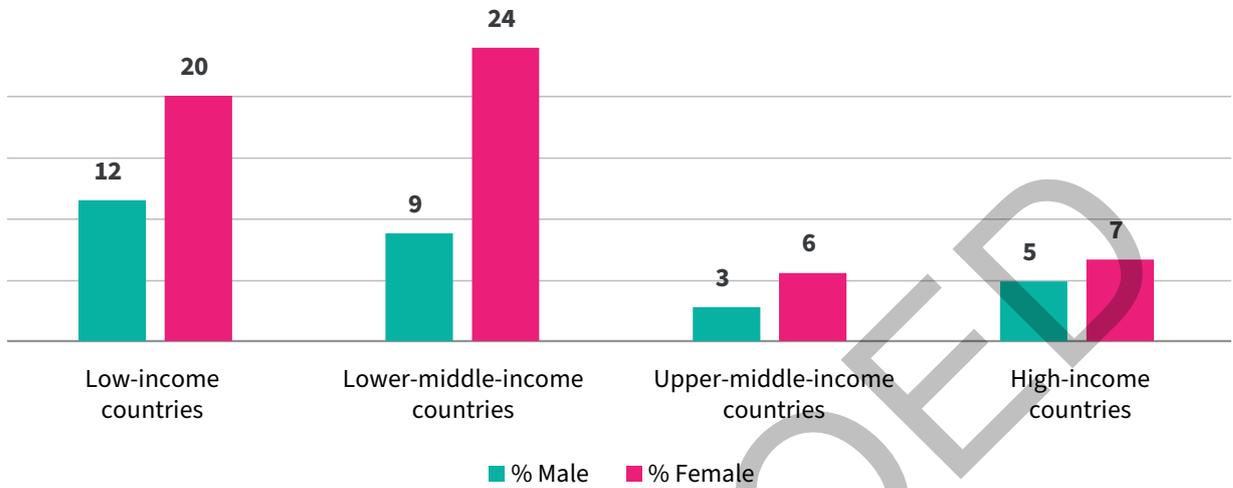


Photo by Zach Vessels on Unsplash

Chart 1.5

Percentage of people excluded from analysis based on stating never worked, by World Bank country income group and sex



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Those who answered "Never worked"

Here it is worth referring to the relative numbers of men and women excluded from the polling due to them stating that they have never worked in paid jobs. Looking at the total population 5.9% of men stated that they never worked and are excluded from this analysis, compared to 13.9% of women. Breaking this down by Country Income Classification reveals a stark difference. In low (20.1%) and lower-middle (24.1%) income countries over one in five women state that they have never worked, compared to less than one in 10 men; this dramatic difference is not observed in upper-middle- or high-income countries where roughly one in 20 people stated they have never worked regardless of sex (Chart 1.5).

If women represent a minority of the workforce they may experience different treatment and perhaps be more exposed to violence and harassment compared to regions where there is parity in the workforce. One potential way to explore this hypothesis would be to attempt a normalisation of the data to account for varying employment levels however such an approach lies beyond the scope of this report.

Discrimination

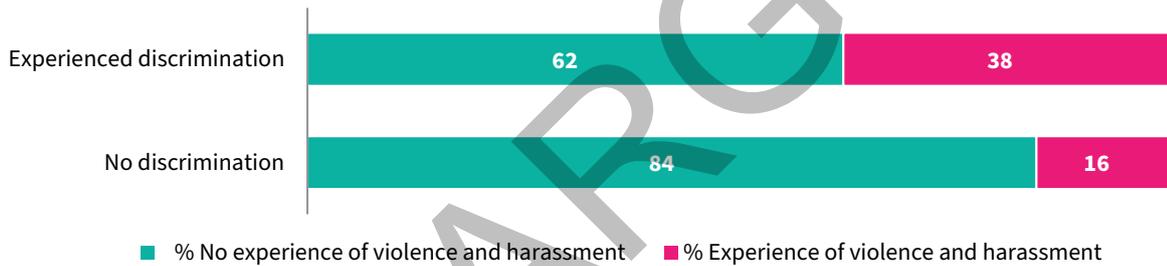
Individuals whose personal characteristics differ, in some way, from the dominant strand or traditions in a society often suffer from discrimination. The Lloyd's Register Foundation 2021 World Risk Poll asked individuals if they have ever personally experienced discrimination due to a disability, or their gender, nationality, racial or ethnic origin, or religion.

Violence and harassment in the workplace is known to affect certain groups more than others, often groups that have been historically disadvantaged¹⁶. The survey results appear to confirm this, showing a decisive relationship between experiencing personal discrimination and having experienced violence and harassment at work. Thirty-eight point four percent of those who experienced any of the forms of discrimination on the grounds noted above said they had also experienced violence and harassment at work, compared to 16.2% for those who had not experienced discrimination (Chart 1.6).

An important caveat here is that due to the formulation of the polling questions it is not possible to separate out whether the reported discrimination occurred at work. It is therefore possible that the experience of discrimination and violence and harassment in the workplace could be the same event.

Chart 1.6

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, global results by experience of discrimination

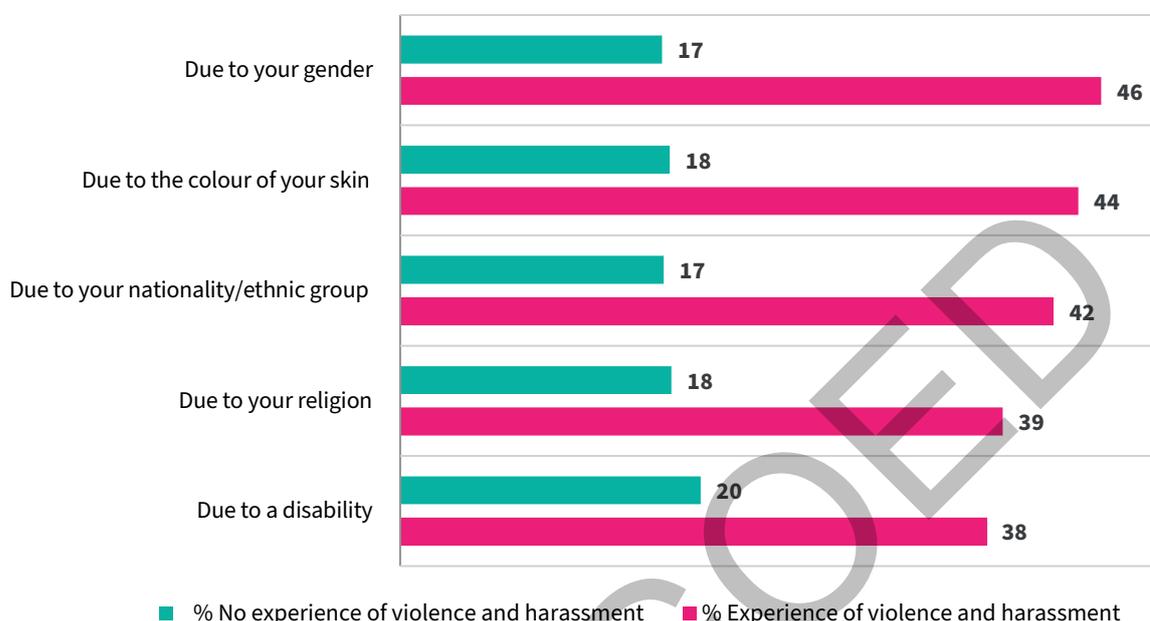


Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Have you, personally ever experienced any discrimination because of any of the following? The color of your skin, your religion, your nationality or ethnic group, your gender, a disability if you have one.

¹⁶ ILO. (2019). *A quantum leap for gender equality; for a better future of work for all.*

Chart 1.7

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, by type of discrimination experienced



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Have you, personally ever experienced any discrimination because of any of the following? The color of your skin, your religion, your nationality or ethnic group, your gender, a disability if you have one.

Breaking down to the individual types of discrimination experienced shows a consistent trend of those who had experienced discrimination being roughly twice as likely to experience violence and harassment at work. Gender based discrimination demonstrates the largest impact, with 45.5% of people who have experienced gender-based discrimination experiencing any form of violence and harassment (**Chart 1.7**). When split by sex there was no clear difference between men (46.3%) and women (44.9%) who have experienced discrimination also experiencing violence and harassment – although it is worth noting that women were twice as likely to report gender-based discrimination.

There were some further sex-based differences in the data: men who have experienced discrimination based on either their religion (41.4% vs 36.8%) or due to a disability (42.3% vs 33.9%) were more likely than women to report experience of violence and harassment at work. As with gender-based discrimination, the reported experience of violence and harassment for those who experienced discrimination based on religion or disability was equal between the sexes.

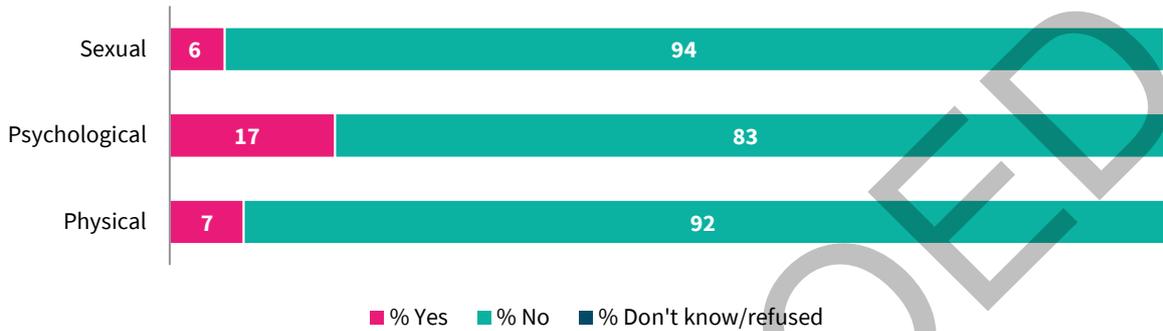


Forms of violence and harassment experienced

The Lloyd's Register Foundation 2021 World Risk Poll measures individuals' experiences with three forms of violence and harassment in the workplace: physical, psychological, and sexual. These three types of unacceptable behaviours and practices (including threats) constitute a major part of the definition of "violence and harassment in the world of work", according to Convention No. 190.

Chart 1.8

Reported experience of violence and harassment in the workplace, by form experienced



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

Globally, psychological violence and harassment is the most common of the three forms reported, with 16.5% saying they have ever experienced psychological violence and harassment, "such as insults, threats, bullying or intimidation at work" (Chart 1.8)¹⁷. At the global level, men are slightly more likely to say they have experienced psychological violence and harassment than women, at 17.4 and 15.6%, respectively (Chart 1.9).

On a regional basis, 41.9% of respondents in Australia and New Zealand reported experiencing psychological violence and harassment with Northern America following with 33.6%. In both regions women were more likely to experience psychological violence and harassment – 43.4% vs 40.3% and 36.2% vs 31.0% respectively. At the other end of the scale Central Asia was the region with the lowest overall reported experience at 3.3% with no variation based on sex.

Physical violence and harassment "such as hitting, restraining, or spitting", is the next most frequently reported, affecting 7.4% of people globally – including 8.4% of men and 6.2% of women¹⁸. Regional differences are much smaller than with psychological violence and harassment, and whilst reported experience in Australia and New Zealand (11.3%) and Northern America (11.7%) was high, reported experience was actually highest in Eastern (13.2%) and Central/Western Africa (13.6 %). In both African regions men reported a significantly higher experience than women – 15.0% vs 11.5% and 15.0% vs 12.0% respectively. Northern America was the only region where women had a higher experience, at 13.1% compared to 10.3% for men. Once again Central Asia was the lowest reporting region at 2.2%.

At the income group level, it is immediately apparent that people in low-income economies are especially exposed to this abuse, with 15.2% saying they have ever experienced physical violence and harassment at work. This is a rate twice as high as in lower-middle income countries at 7.4%.

Sexual violence and harassment, "such as unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails, or sexual requests while at work", is reported in the poll by 5.5% of people globally. However, some caution should be taken when interpreting these results. In several countries, the question was posed in a slightly different – or 'softer' manner – asking instead about "unwanted intimate physical contact" – due to cultural sensitivities¹⁹.

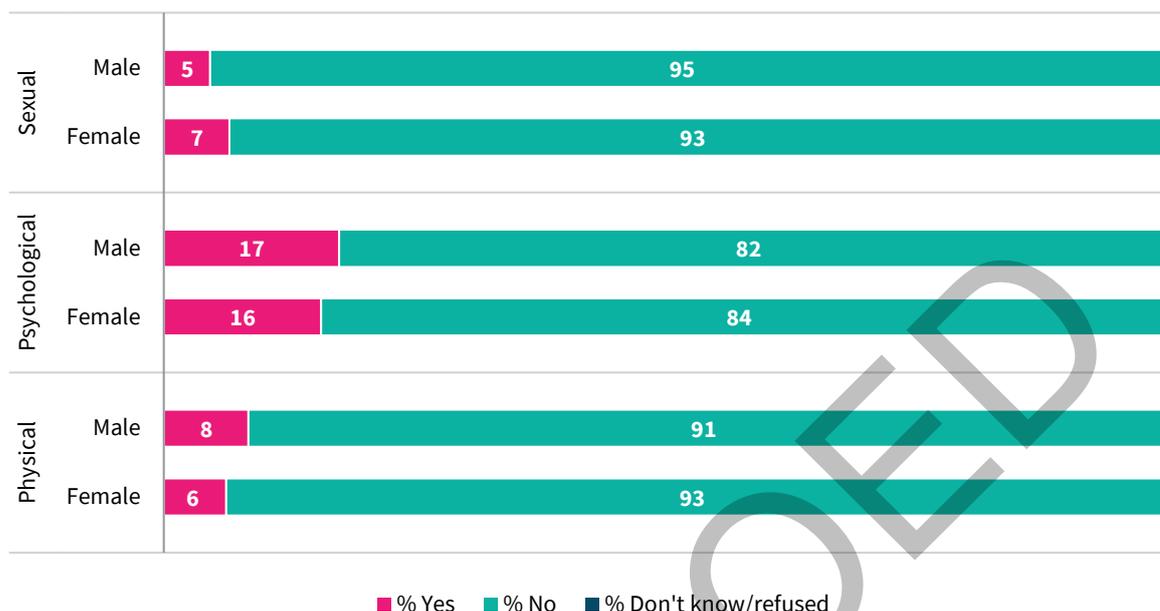
¹⁷ Note: this question was asked using slightly different wording in China, though China's results are included in Chart 1.8 as well as related charts pertaining to this question.

¹⁸ Note: This question was not asked in China.

¹⁹ In another three countries, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq, this question was not asked at all.

Chart 1.9

Reported experience of violence and harassment in the workplace, by form experienced and sex



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

At the global level, women are slightly more likely than men to say they have ever experienced sexual violence and harassment, at 6.5% compared to 4.6%, respectively. At the regional level, 15.8% of respondents in Northern America reported experiencing sexual violence and harassment with Australia and New Zealand following with 15.4%. In both regions women reported a significantly greater experience – 23.0% vs 8.4% and 24.8% vs 5.8% respectively.

In other regions, as well as low and middle-income economies, there tends to be parity between the sexes in terms of ever having experienced sexual violence and harassment, though this is an issue that other research has consistently shown to affect women more than men²⁰. One important predictor for the World Risk Poll results is likely to be the social forces in many of these countries, areas or territories which may discourage some women from being forthcoming about their experiences – a hypothesis supported by other research²¹.



20 Fitzgerald, L. F., & Cortina, L. M. (2018). Sexual harassment in work organizations: A view from the 21st century. In C. B. Travis, J. W. White, A. Rutherford, W. S. Williams, S. L. Cook, & K. F. Wyche (Eds.), *APA handbook of the psychology of women: Perspectives on women's private and public lives* (pp. 215–234). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000060-012>

21 Palermo, T., Bleck, J., & Peterman, A. (2014). Tip of the iceberg: reporting and gender-based violence in developing countries. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 179(5), 602–612. <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwt295>

Frequency of experience

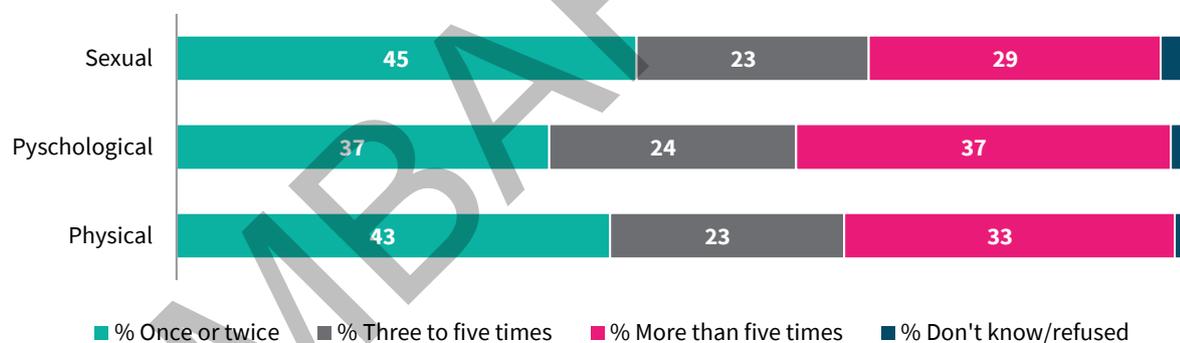
Another important characteristic of psychological violence and harassment at work is that it is often experienced multiple times. 61.2% of individuals worldwide who have ever experienced it report facing it three or more times, including 36.9% who reported experiencing it more than five times (Chart 1.10). In Australia and New Zealand (79.3%) and Northern America (73.8%) this figure rises further with over three quarters of those who have experienced psychological violence and harassment experiencing it multiple times (Table 1.2). These findings coupled with the high overall experience of psychological violence and harassment identify this as a high priority area for action given the high impact it can have on both the individual and the employer²².

However, high levels of repeated experiences are not limited to those regions alone. For example in the Netherlands 71.6% of respondents who reported experiencing physical violence and harassment, experienced it more than three times. Similarly, In Brazil 70.2% of respondents who reported experiencing sexual violence and harassment did so more than three times.

A similar pattern was seen for both experience of physical and sexual violence and harassment globally with 55.5% and 51.7% respectively of respondents reporting multiple experiences. At the regional level Australia and New Zealand was once again the region with the highest overall experience of repeated incidents of physical violence and harassment at 71.9%. However, in this instance Central and Western Africa was the next highest region at 67.2%. For repeated experience of sexual violence and harassment, Australia and New Zealand and Northern America were once again the regions with the greatest experience, each both at 65.4%. Whilst there was a clear sex-based difference in Australia and New Zealand – women 67.6% vs men 55.2% – this difference was not seen within the Northern American region.

Chart 1.10

Frequency of reported experience of violence and harassment, by form experienced



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? How many times have you experienced this? Once or twice, three to five times, or more than five times?

Table 1.2

Regions with the highest reported experience of multiple incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace

Physical	Psychological	Sexual
Australia and New Zealand (71.9%)	Australia and New Zealand (79.3%)	Northern America (65.4%)
Central/Western Africa (67.2%)	Northern America (73.8%)	Australia and New Zealand (65.4%)
East Asia (61.7%)	Eastern Europe (68.6%)	Central Asia (64.9%)

22 Pacheco, E. C. R. L., Bártolo, A., Rodrigues, F., Pereira, A., Duarte, J. C., & Silva, C. F. (2021). Impact of Psychological Aggression at the Workplace on Employees' Health: A Systematic Review of Personal Outcomes and Prevention Strategies. *Psychological Reports*, 124(3), 929–976. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294119875598>

Conclusions

That violence and harassment at work is a significant problem is undeniable with one in five people globally reporting any experience of violence and harassment through the Poll. Furthermore, that most of the respondents state that they have experienced violence and harassment multiple times suggests that there are significant issues with corrective actions in the workplace or with national legal frameworks. Addressing these gaps would be a highly impactful intervention that could be led at both the national and employer level.

Analysis of the data at the country levels reveals stark differences in reported experiences of violence and harassment with very low values in several regions and countries. A naïve reading of this could be that violence and harassment in the workplace is truly confined to certain countries and regions and not experienced elsewhere. It is therefore important to consider factors such as personal context pervasive discrimination and societal norms when considering the findings.

Further work is needed to raise awareness of the issues in the face of social norms, encourage targeted policy interventions and truly standardise the definition and reporting of violence and harassment in the workplace globally, all of which may be more likely as countries ratify and apply Convention No. 190.

In some ways these regional comparisons can mask the true value of the data, which enables us to identify groups at high risk of experiencing violence and harassment, which present targets for impactful policy intervention. Identifying clear differences between the sexes in both the frequency and type of violence and harassment in high income regions, in particular Australia and New Zealand, Northern America, and the Nordic countries, presents a clear path to action.

In the following chapters we will tease out other demographic groups at high risk, and identify at risk groups across regions, and country income groups, to identify key predictors relating to respondents' experiences of violence and harassment.

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Chapter 2

People often experience multiple forms of violence and harassment in the workplace

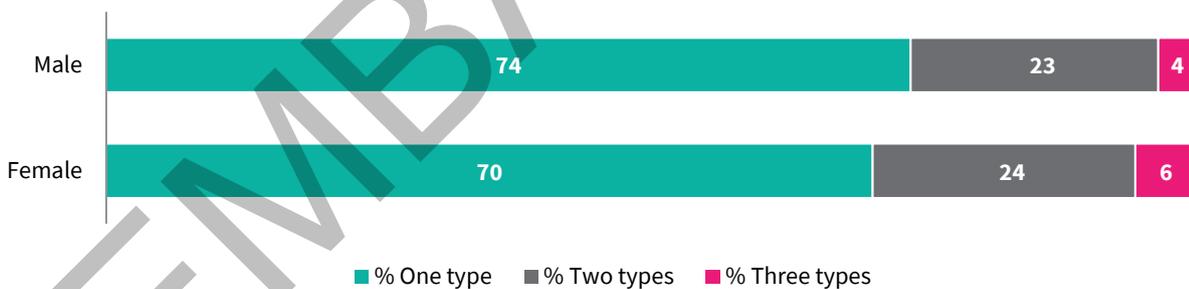
In the previous chapter we explored the experience of any form of violence and harassment and then also broke this down to look at the experience of different forms. However, it is important to acknowledge that such experiences do not exist alone. People can experience multiple types of violence and harassment during their lifetime and such multiple exposures can have more profound impacts on a person's health and wellbeing than experiencing one form alone²³.

When looking at the global population, of those who have experienced any form of violence and harassment at work 72.2% report only experiencing one kind, 23.3% two kinds and 4.4% three types (Chart 2.1). At the country level Senegal (20.1%), Zambia (15.9%), Uganda (15.1%), and South Africa (13.4%) had the highest percentage of respondents who experienced all three forms of violence and harassment (although it is worth noting that the overall level of experience was generally lower in these countries). Indeed, Senegal was the only country polled where a majority of people who reported experiencing violence and harassment at work experienced more than one form of violence and harassment at 52.1%.

The focus of this chapter is to identify specific demographic groups that experience multiple types of violence and harassment in the workplace, presenting policymakers and employers with options for targeted interventions.

Chart 2.1

Reported experience of multiple types of violence and harassment in the workplace, by sex



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

23 (Leon-Perez, Notelaers, Arenas, Munduate, & Medina, 2013; Lutgen-Sandvik et al., 2007)



When we look at the crossovers between the types of violence and harassment a clear sex-based difference appears. Whilst experience of psychological violence and harassment alone accounted for the largest share of cases for men (49.2%) and women (46.6%) the next biggest categories differed significantly (**Chart 2.2**). For men 19.7% experienced both psychological and physical harassment with a further 15.7% experiencing physical violence and harassment alone. For women the two next biggest categories were experience of sexual violence and harassment at 12.0% and a further 11.3% experienced a combination of sexual and psychological violence and harassment.

Importantly, for a third (32.9%) of women who experienced any violence and harassment there was a sexual element to this experience. For men this figure drops to 15.4%. A similar split between psychological, physical and sexual violence and harassment for women in the workplace was found in a 2015 paper by MacIntosh *et al.* The authors correlate experience of sexual violence and harassment with greater levels of distress, and where relevant with more severe symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder²⁴. Considering the earlier discussion around the reticence of some women to discuss their experience of sexual violence and harassment, the limitations placed on questioning in certain regions, these values may be a significant underestimation.

This highlights the need for contextualised interventions to combat violence and harassment, a theme that will continue throughout this chapter and the next²⁵.

24 MacIntosh, J., Wuest, J., Ford-Gilboe, M., & Varcoe, C. (2015). Cumulative effects of multiple forms of violence and abuse on women. *Violence and Victims*, 30(3), 502–521. doi:10.1891/0886-6708.vv-d-13-00095

25 Quinlan, E., Robertson, S., Carr, T., & Gerrard, A. (2020). Workplace harassment interventions and labour process theory: A critical realist synthesis of the literature. *Sociological Research Online*, 25(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1360780419846507>

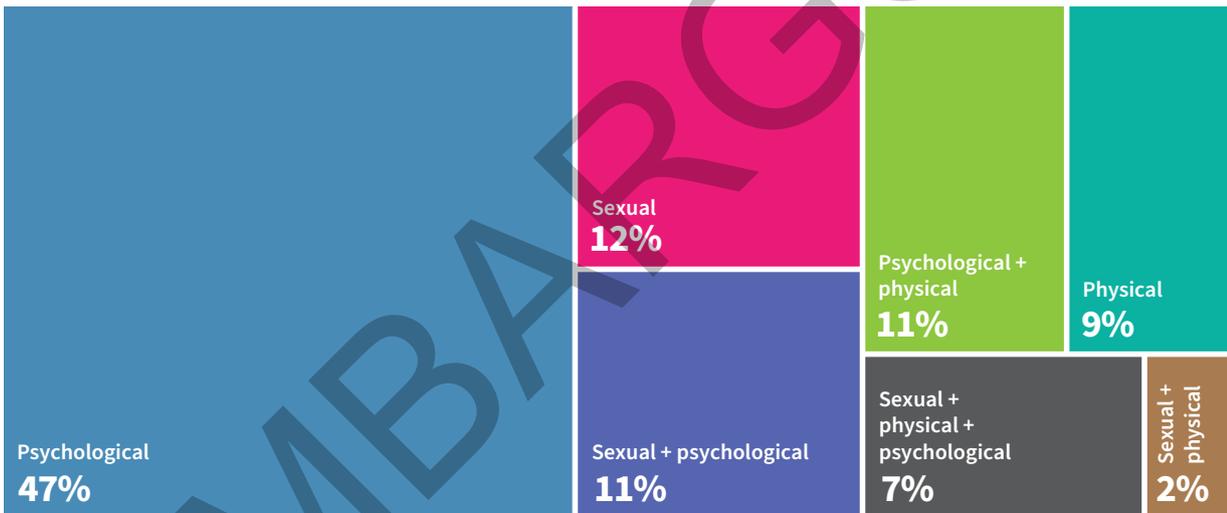
Chart 2.2

Breakdown of reported experience of multiple types of violence and harassment in the workplace, by sex

Male



Female



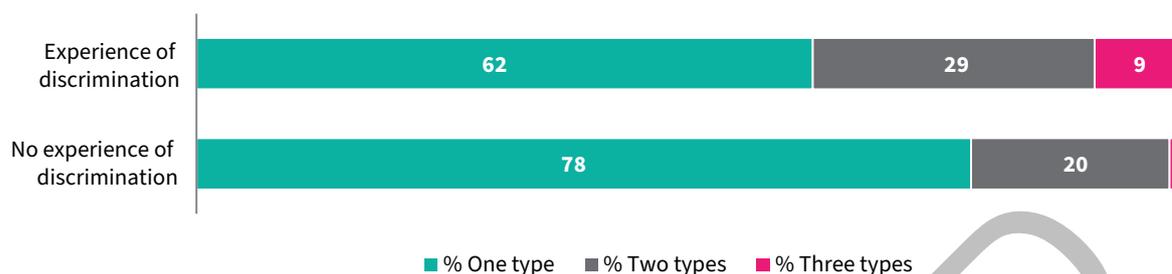
Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

Discrimination

In the previous chapter we discussed the impact experiencing any form of discrimination has on violence and harassment in the workplace, with those who had experienced discrimination based on their skin colour, gender, race, religion or any disability more than twice as likely to experience violence and harassment. However, the impact doesn't stop there; focusing more closely on those who have any experience of discrimination demonstrates that this experience greatly increases the likelihood of having also experienced multiple forms of violence and harassment – 37.6% vs 21.6% (Chart 2.3). In addition, any experience of discrimination significantly increased the likelihood of the same individual experiencing all three forms of polled violence and harassment – from 1.5% to 9.1%

Chart 2.3

Reported experience of multiple types of violence and harassment in the workplace, by experience of discrimination



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Have you, personally ever experienced any discrimination because of any of the following? The color of your skin, your religion, your nationality or ethnic group, your gender, a disability if you have one.

When analysing the data regionally and by country income groups it emerges that those in low-income countries are the major contributor to this result; with 42.9% of individuals who reported experience of violence and harassment experiencing multiple forms of violence and harassment, and 9.7% experiencing all three polled forms. Regionally, this was influenced by the high level of experience in both Eastern Africa (41.7% and 10.6%, respectively) and Southern Africa (39.4% and 12.7% respectively). Senegal reported the highest overall levels of multiple experience, at 52.1%, with 20.1% of respondents experiencing all three forms of violence and harassment – with significant gender-based discrimination also being reported.

Given the significant impact on personal wellbeing of violence and harassment in the workplace and the crossover with experience of discrimination, identifying dominant forms of discrimination at the country level could help governments and other national agencies map a more targeted path to action, including whether existing interventions require reinforcing or stronger implementation²⁶.

For example, in the United Kingdom it was only those who had experienced discrimination based on a personal disability who also experienced all three forms of violence and harassment. Likewise, in France only those who had experienced discrimination based on religion also experienced all three forms of violence and harassment. Conversely in Germany or the United States experience of multiple types of violence and harassment was not associated with any particular type of discrimination.

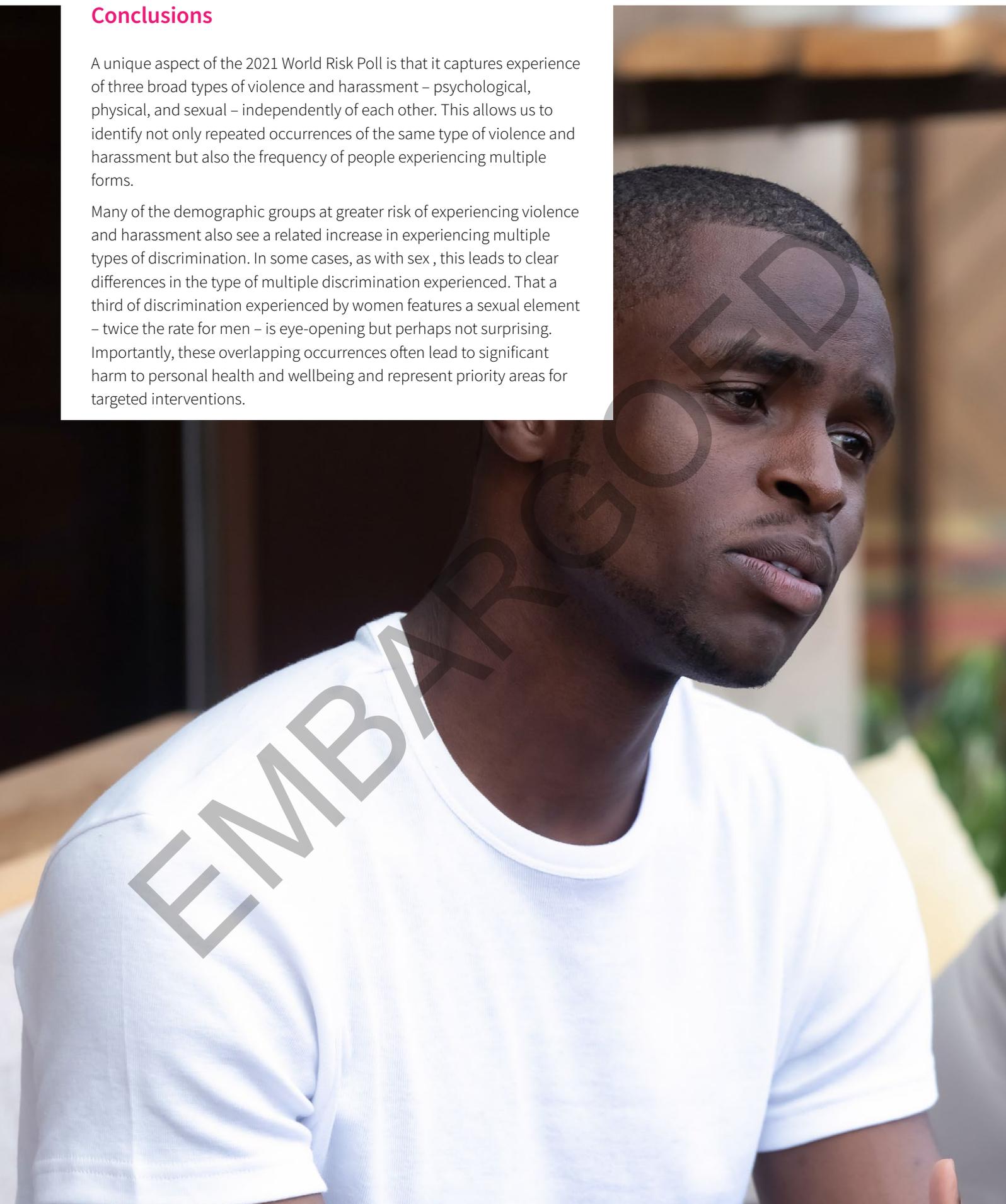


²⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2011). Hidden in plain sight: Inquiry into disability-related harassment.

Conclusions

A unique aspect of the 2021 World Risk Poll is that it captures experience of three broad types of violence and harassment – psychological, physical, and sexual – independently of each other. This allows us to identify not only repeated occurrences of the same type of violence and harassment but also the frequency of people experiencing multiple forms.

Many of the demographic groups at greater risk of experiencing violence and harassment also see a related increase in experiencing multiple types of discrimination. In some cases, as with sex, this leads to clear differences in the type of multiple discrimination experienced. That a third of discrimination experienced by women features a sexual element – twice the rate for men – is eye-opening but perhaps not surprising. Importantly, these overlapping occurrences often lead to significant harm to personal health and wellbeing and represent priority areas for targeted interventions.



Chapter 3

Education and migrant status impact on reported experience of violence and harassment

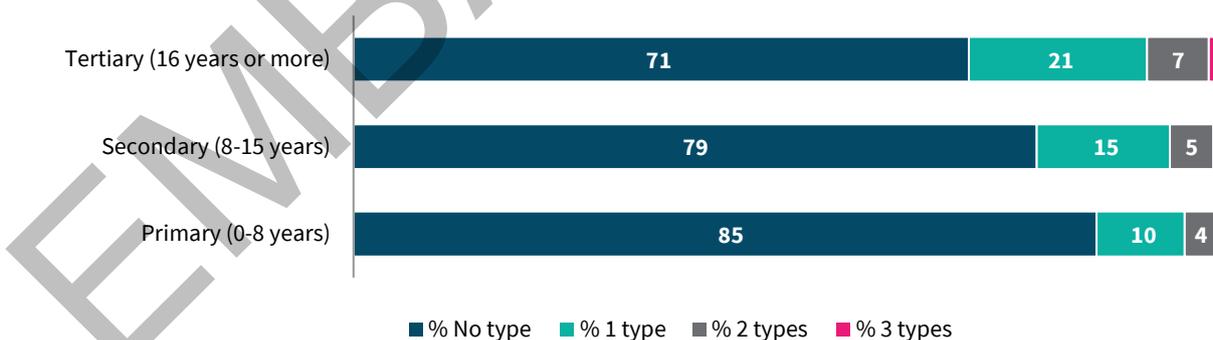
The true power of the Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll is the breadth and depth of its polling globally. It allows for open-ended research to identify specific at-risk demographic groups in a data-led way²⁷. In this chapter we will detail two such focused groups and explore their different experiences of violence and harassment, and importantly how they responded to this experience.

Globally, people with the highest level of educational attainment – the tertiary level (graduating from a university) – were the most likely to experience violence and harassment, at 25.8%. Among those with a primary education or lower, this figure is 18.2%, while it stands at 21.8% for individuals with a secondary-level education.

These global differences can be attributed primarily to women's experience of violence and harassment in the workplace. Among those with a tertiary degree, women are more likely than men to have reported in the poll that they experienced any form of violence and harassment, standing at 29.3% and 22.5% for men (**Chart 3.1**). The opposite is true for those with a primary level education, where 21.5% of men reported experiencing violence and harassment compared to 14.6% of women. There therefore exists a 14.7 percentage point gap between reported experience of violence and harassment between women with a tertiary or primary level education; for men this gap stands at 1 percentage point.

Chart 3.1

Women's reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, by level of education



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

²⁷ Stepwise regression was used to identify specific demographic groups with a greater experience of violence and harassment.

This trend was visible for numerous countries. For example in Germany there is a 15.1 percentage point gap in women's reported experience between those with a tertiary and primary education. An even greater difference is present in Sweden with a 37.2 percentage point gap. Conversely there were some countries where this gap was much smaller, for example in Italy there was only a 6.5 percentage point difference, and in Israel there was no difference in reported experience at all. It is worth noting here that in some countries there were very low numbers of women reporting a particular educational level, in such cases country level comparisons are difficult to make.

A combination of factors may help explain why women with tertiary-level education reported a higher level of violence and harassment in the poll than men. As the ILO notes, women with higher education are more likely to be in the workforce overall, but "women do not get the same educational dividends as men,"²⁸ in terms of opportunity or advancement.

For those women who do rise through the ranks, though, one study found that their authority is "often not respected owing to a perception that their power was 'illegitimately' obtained (e.g., via a quota system)"²⁹. According to the ILO, women in management positions – positions of authority – "tend to have higher levels of educational attainment than their male counterparts"³⁰. Women in such positions may be more likely to experience violence and harassment based on feelings around the legitimacy of their employment.



Alongside this higher reported experience, women with a tertiary education were also significantly more likely to tell someone about their experience of violence and harassment. Seventy-one point nine percent of women with this level of education told someone (**Chart 3.2**)³¹; this drops to 60.2% for those with a secondary-level education and even further to 37.6% for those with a primary-level education. For context the overall proportion of both sexes and of any educational level who told someone was 51.8%. Men with a primary-level education were more likely than women to tell someone about their experience at 42.2%, however they were less likely at secondary (47.7%), and tertiary-levels (57.8%) of education.

28 ILO. (2019). *A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all*.

29 Branch, S., Ramsay, S., & Barker, M. (2013). Workplace bullying, mobbing and general harassment: A review. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15(3), 280–299. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2012.00339.x>

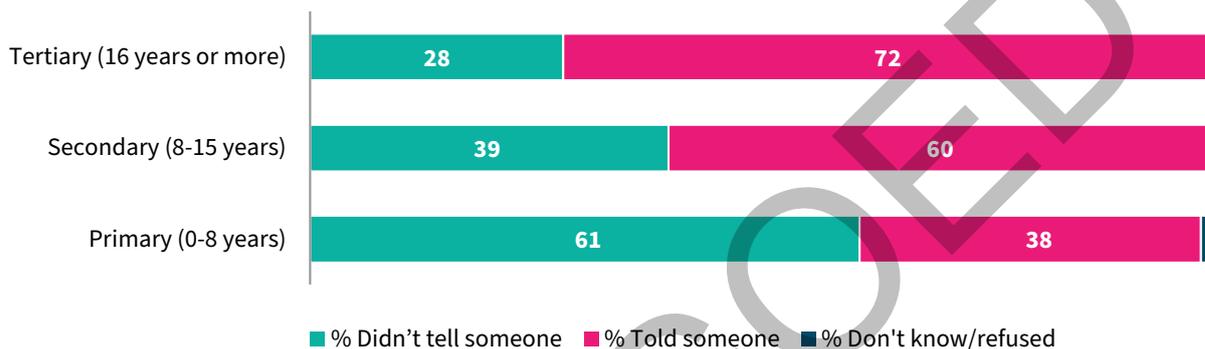
30 ILO. (2019). *A quantum leap for gender equality: for a better future of work for all*.

31 Question phrased as "Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced AT WORK?"

The Poll data clearly demonstrates that women with higher levels of education are more likely to tell someone about their experience. It is also likely that the factors that influence telling someone will also influence the willingness of individuals to report their experience in a World Risk Poll interview, and may therefore contribute to the greater proportion of women with higher levels of education reporting their experience in the Poll. Whilst the Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll is fully anonymised, other respondents may have the same concerns about sharing their experience here as they do with other stakeholders.

Chart 3.2

Percentage of women who reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace who told someone about their experience, by level of education



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced at work?

Who they told also varied significantly based on educational level. Whilst women with a tertiary or secondary-level education were more likely to tell their employer or a co-worker than those with a primary-level education, they were also much less likely to tell an external agency outside of their organisation (Table 3.1). One possible suggestion is that those with tertiary or secondary-level may be less likely to fear reprisal within their workplace and perhaps more trusting of a successful resolution to their experience, or they may be more aware of what constitutes violence and harassment in the workplace. Conversely, those with primary-level education may have less access to, or knowledge of, internal reporting systems.

Table 3.1

Percentage of women who reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace who told someone about their experience, by who they told and level of education

	Employer (%)	Co-worker (%)	Friend or family (%)	Trade union (%)	Police/ community leader (%)	Social services (%)
Tertiary (16 years or more)	53	74	87	11	11	6
Secondary (9-15 years)	52	66	86	12	10	6
Primary (0-8 years)	46	53	80	21	22	16

Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Whom did you tell about your experiences?

This is somewhat validated when we look at the reason female respondents gave for not telling someone about their experience of violence and harassment. Women with a primary-level education were significantly more concerned about "people at work finding out", "fear of punishment", and "fear for their reputation" than those with either a secondary or tertiary level of education (Table 3.2). The main reason women with a tertiary-level education gave for not telling someone about their experience was that they thought it was a "waste of time", which in this instance aligns with the views of those within the other two educational groups. This suggests that personal context can alter responses even when people are polled anonymously.

Table 3.2

Percentage of women who reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace who DID NOT tell someone about their experience, reason they did not tell someone

	Worried people at work would find out (%)	Fear for my reputation (%)	Waste of time (%)
Tertiary (16 years or more)	31	39	51
Secondary (9-15 years)	41	42	52
Primary (0-8 years)	57	53	55

Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work? Please tell me if each of the following is a reason why you did not tell anybody about your experience. Was it because you thought it was a waste of time, you did not know what to do, procedures at work were unclear, you were worried people at work would find out, fear of punishment, fear for your reputation, lack of trust in the police or community leaders.



Foreign-born female workers

In a previous chapter we identified that workers in low-income countries report high levels of experience of violence and harassment at work. Further analysis of this risk group has identified that foreign-born workers, and in particular foreign-born women, are at high risk of experiencing violence and harassment at work.³²

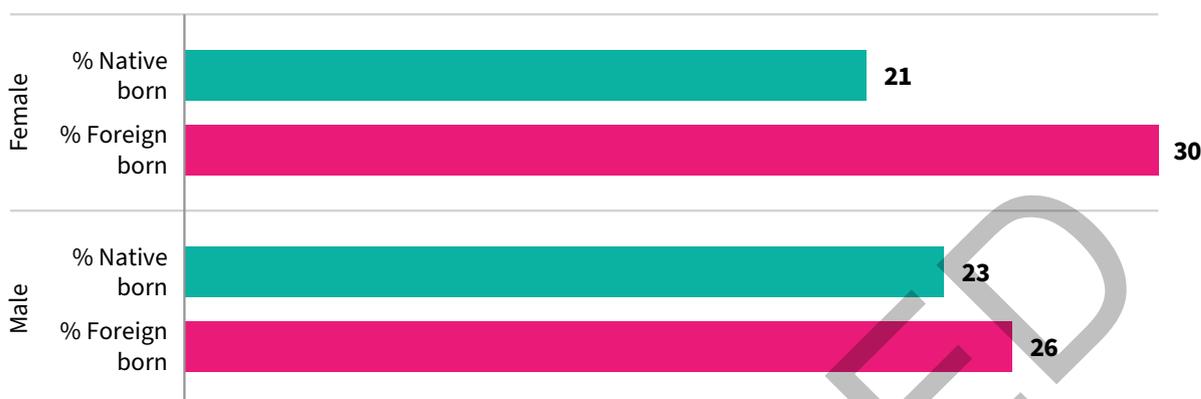
While the Gallup World Poll does not directly inquire about migrant status, respondents are asked if they were born in the country they are currently residing in (that is, the country where the interview is taking place) or born in another country. While this question can be used as a proxy for migrant worker status³³, it should be noted that foreign-born residents may include long-term immigrants and, in some cases, citizens of the country, as well as short-term or temporary migrants.

³² Secretary-General, U. N. (1995). *Violence against women migrant workers: report of the Secretary-General*.

³³ For instance, the 2018 World Happiness Report also uses this question to examine the relationship between happiness and migration-status (Helliwell, Layard & Sachs, 2018).

Chart 3.3

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, by country of birth and sex



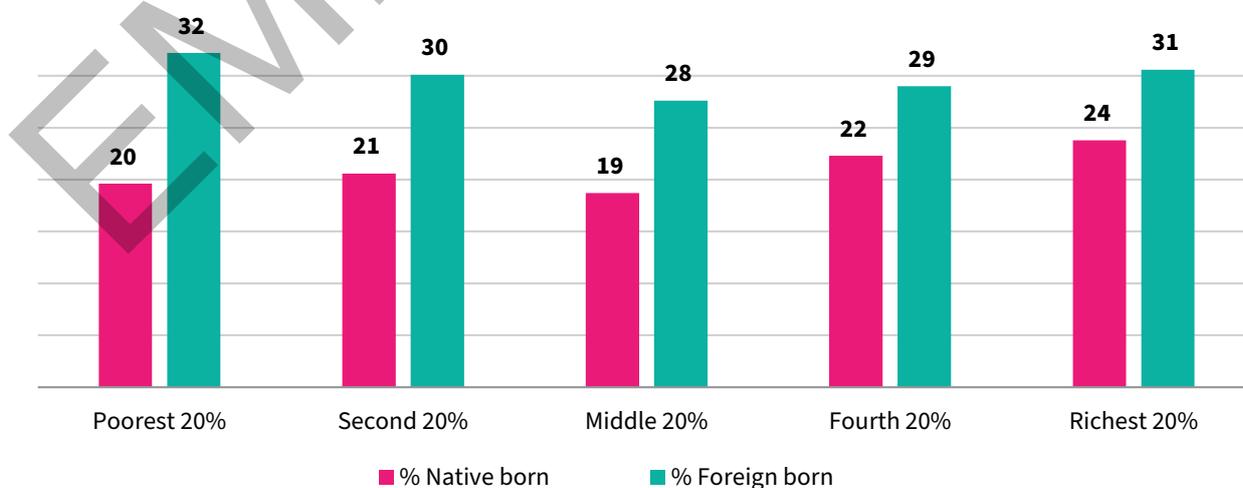
Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

Globally, we can see that foreign-born men are slightly more likely to experience violence and harassment at work compared to their native-born counterparts – 25.5% vs 23.4% respectively (Chart 3.3). The gap, and overall experience, is significantly higher for women, with 30.2% of foreign-born women experiencing violence and harassment in the workplace, compared to 21.0% for native-born women.

When looking at within-country income quintiles it is noticeable that the gap between foreign-born and native-born women is largest in the poorest 20% of respondents, at 12.6 percentage points (Chart 3.4). In comparison this reduces to 6.8 percentage points in the richest 20% of respondents, a change mediated by a small increase in experience in native-born women and a small decrease in experience in foreign-born women, although importantly the gap is present across all income quintiles.

Chart 3.4

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace for women, by income quintiles and country of birth



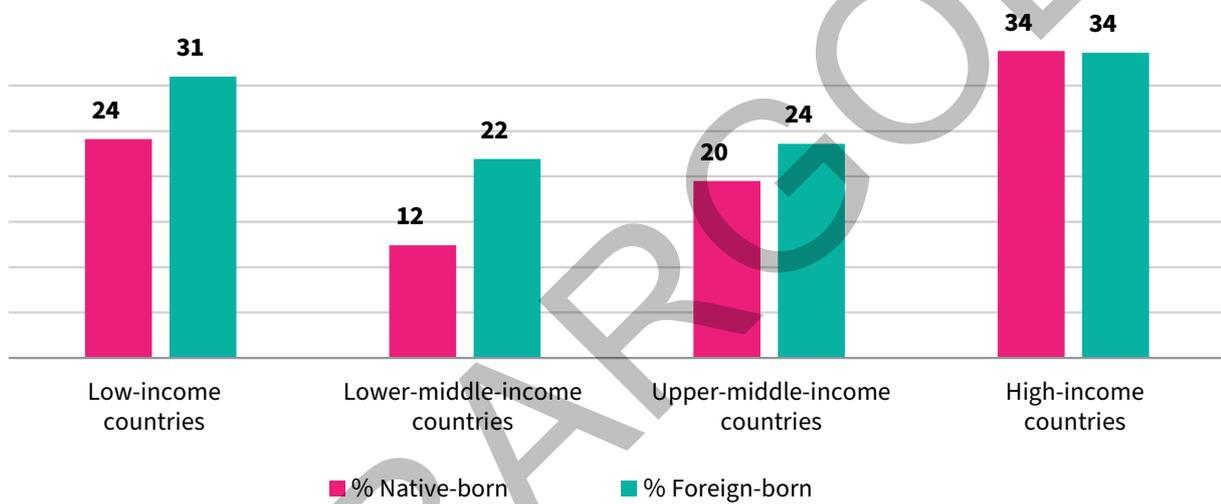
Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?

There are many ways to interpret this pattern, some of which we have discussed in previous chapters. To focus on the differences between birth locations one explanation may be that "migrant workers are concentrated in sectors of the economy with high levels of temporary, informal or unprotected work³⁴," characterised by poor working conditions and low levels of protection. Additionally, migrant workers are often subjected to discriminatory acts and expressions of xenophobia – both of which are reportedly on the rise since the Covid-19 crisis³⁵. Foreign-born women workers in the richest income quintile are unlikely to be as exposed to these precarious conditions and this may account for their relatively lower experience with violence and harassment.

This hypothesis is supported if we look at the data in another way, based on country income groups and considering the typical sectors and fields of work in these regions. Strikingly, while the difference between foreign-born and native-born women is maintained in low- and middle-income countries it disappears in high-income countries (Chart 3.5).

Chart 3.5

Women who reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace, by World Bank country income group and country of birth



Survey question: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?



Richard Vogel/AP/Shutterstock

34 ILO. (April 2020). Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic: Recommendations for policy-makers and constituents. ILO Policy Brief.

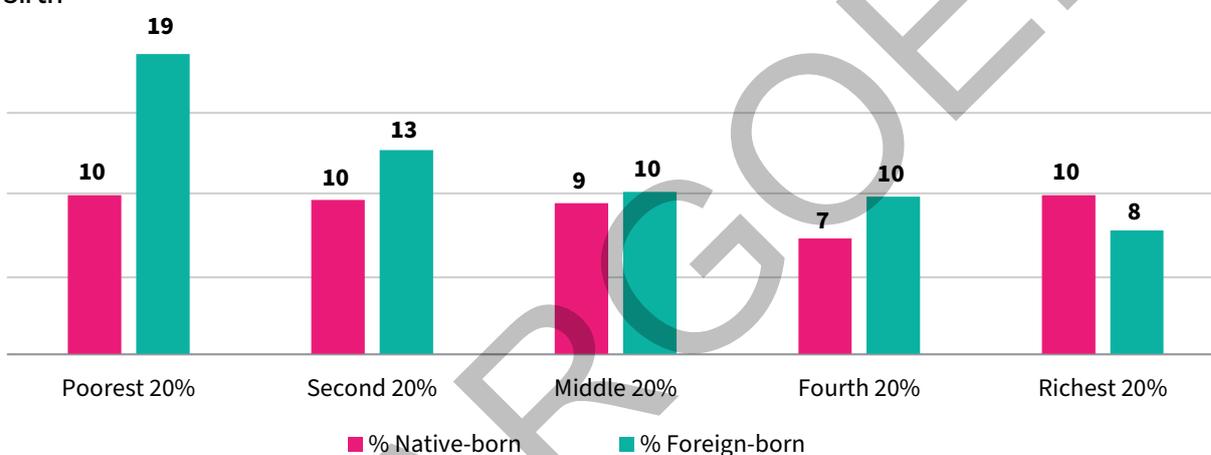
35 Ibid.

If we look at these two groups and their experience of discrimination two strong correlations emerge, although with a differing impacts across the income quintiles. For the poorest 20% of respondents who reported experience of violence and harassment, foreign-born women were twice as likely to experience discrimination based on the colour of their skin – 18.7% vs 9.9% respectively (**Chart 3.6**). Moving up the income quintiles this effect disappears rapidly achieving parity in the richest 20% of respondents.

When looking at discrimination based on nationality or ethnic group foreign-born women were again twice as likely to have experienced it compared to their native-born counterparts (**Chart 3.7**). Unlike with skin colour however this difference was consistent across all income quintiles. These granular findings provide further points for focused interventions.

Chart 3.6

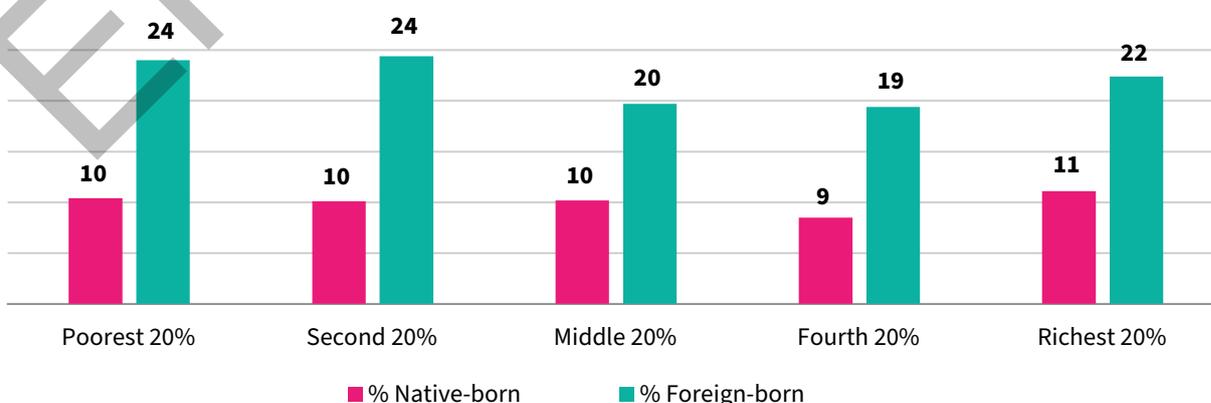
Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace for women who experienced discrimination based on the colour of their skin, by income quintiles and country of birth



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?
Have you, personally, ever experienced any discrimination because of the colour of your skin?

Chart 3.7

Reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace for women who experienced discrimination based on their nationality or ethnic group, by income quintiles and country of birth



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?
Have you, personally, ever experienced any discrimination because of your nationality or ethnic group?

The likelihood of telling someone about experience of violence of violence and harassment also varied based on birth location. Overall, 61.1% of native-born women told someone about their experience of violence and harassment compared to 56.5% of foreign-born women (Chart 3.8). However, again the details matter with a much larger gap in telling someone visible in the poorest 20% – 11.3 percentage points – compared to all other groupings.

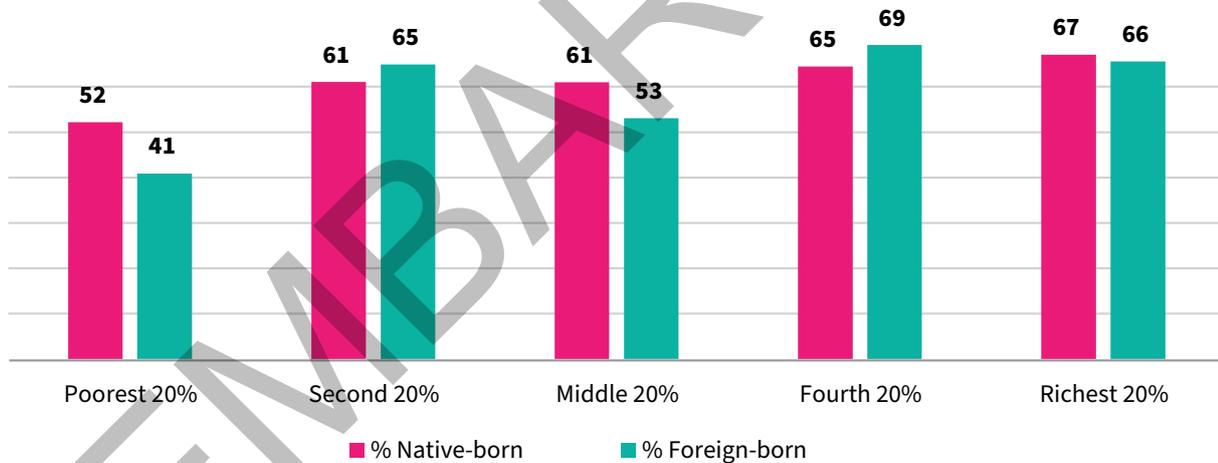
Diving further into who people tell, there were some differences in both whom foreign-born women told about their experience of violence and harassment, as well as the reasoning behind the decision of those who didn't tell anyone. Perhaps surprisingly, foreign-born women were more likely to tell either their employer or a co-worker than their native-born counterparts – 58.8% vs 50.2% and 70.3% vs 66.0% respectively.

In the other direction native-born women were more likely to tell a friend or family member at 85.7% compared to 79.9% for foreign-born women. This latter aspect highlights an important support network that may not be as available to, or not utilised by, foreign-born women.

Foreign-born women who did not tell anyone about their experience were more likely to say this was due to "not knowing what to do" (51.1% vs 46.4%) or the "procedures at work being unclear" (60.2% vs 40.6%). However, foreign-born women were much less worried about being punished due to reporting their experience with 27.2% stating this was a reason they did not tell anyone about their experience compared to 35.9% of native-born women.

Chart 3.8

Percentage of women who reported experience of any form of violence and harassment in the workplace who told someone about their experience, by income quintiles and country of birth



Survey questions: Have you, personally, ever experienced (physical/psychological/sexual) violence and/or harassment at work?
Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced at work?



Conclusion

In this chapter we presented two distinct groups with an increased experience of violence and harassment and described their differing responses to this experience. Women with tertiary education are more likely to report experiencing violence and harassment in the Poll, and they are also more likely to tell someone about it, possibly in part due to less fear of reprisals in the workplace.

Foreign-born women also experience significantly more violence and harassment, with the largest disparities seen both in low-income countries and in the poorest 20% within countries. In high-income countries there was a minimal difference between foreign-born and native-born women, suggesting that experience could be guided by the sector, field, and status of employment.

The main reasons foreign-born workers did not tell anyone about their experience was due to a lack of understanding of the processes rather than any fear of reprisal³⁶. This provides a clear intervention point for policymakers and employers, for whom ensuring clear and consistent reporting pathways for those experiencing violence and harassment in the workplace should be a priority.

In the writing of this chapter one notable piece of missing data is the outcomes of reporting violence and harassment to either employers or other official bodies. Combining this information with peoples reasoning for not reporting violence and harassment would be very helpful for analysis and should be covered by future research.

³⁶ Global Compact for Migration. (n.d.). International Organization for Migration. <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration> (Accessed 16 January 2023).

Concluding remarks

Violence and harassment in the workplace is endemic, and for those who do experience it they often experience it multiple times and in multiple forms. However, reported experience is not uniform across the world with large differences between regions, countries and demographics. In this report we have attempted to understand and highlight some of these differences, whilst also identifying significant research gaps that need to be addressed.

Regardless, it is clear that the current state of violence and harassment in the workplace is untenable and there is an urgent need for action globally. In the most general form these interventions should raise awareness of violence and harassment in the workplace, the significant harm it causes to employees, and the economic impact to employers and at the national level; a process that should go hand in hand with ratification of Convention No. 190.



Appendix 1: Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll questionnaire

- 1. Have you, personally, EVER experienced PHYSICAL violence and/or harassment AT WORK, such as hitting, restraining, or spitting?**

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Yes	1
No	2
(Respondent has never worked)	7
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1, Continue; Otherwise, Skip to Q4)

- 2. How many times have you experienced this?**

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Once or twice	1
Three to five times	2
More than five times	3
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

- 3. Approximately, WHEN was the last time this happened to you – was it within the last two years, three to five years ago, or more than five years ago?**

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Within the last two years	1
Three to five years ago	2
More than five years ago	3
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

- 4. Have you, personally, EVER experienced PSYCHOLOGICAL violence and/or harassment, such as insults, threats, bullying, or intimidation AT WORK?**

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Yes	1
No	2
(Respondent has never worked)	7
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1, Continue; Otherwise, Skip to Q7)

- 5. How many times have you experienced this?**

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Once or twice	1
Three to five times	2
More than five times	3
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

6. Approximately, **WHEN** was the last time this happened to you – was it within the last two years, three to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Within the last two years	1
Three to five years ago	2
More than five years ago	3
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

7. Have you, personally, **EVER** experienced any type of **SEXUAL** violence and/or harassment **AT WORK**, such as unwanted sexual touching, comments, pictures, emails, or sexual requests while at **WORK**?

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Yes	1
No	2
(Respondent has never worked)	7
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1, Continue; Otherwise, Skip to Q10)

8. How many times have you experienced this?

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Once or twice	1
Three to five times	2
More than five times	3
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

9. Approximately, WHEN was the last time this happened to you – was it within the last two years, three to five years ago, or more than five years ago?

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Within the last two years	1
Three to five years ago	2
More than five years ago	3
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1 in Q1, Q2, or Q3, Continue; Otherwise, Skip to Q10)

10. Did you ever tell anyone about the violence and/or harassment that you experienced AT WORK?

	CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE:
Yes	1
No	2
(DK)	8
(Refused)	9

(If code 1, Continue; If code2 Skip to Q12)

11. Whom did you tell about your experiences? Was it...?

	Yes	No	(DK)	(Refused)
Your employer or supervisor	1	2	8	9
A co-worker	1	2	8	9
A friend or family member	1	2	8	9
A trade union representative	1	2	8	9
A [insert country specific example, such as a labor inspector], police, or community leader	1	2	8	9
Social services or a not-for-profit organization	1	2	8	9

12. Please tell me if each of the following is a reason why you did not tell anybody about your experience. Was it because...?

	Yes	No	(DK)	(Refused)
You thought it was a waste of time	1	2	8	9
You did not know what to do	1	2	8	9
Procedures at work were unclear	1	2	8	9
You were worried people would find out about it at work	1	2	8	9
Fear of punishment	1	2	8	9
Fear for your reputation	1	2	8	9
Lack of trust in [insert country specific example, such as a labor inspector], police, or community leaders	1	2	8	9

13. Have you, PERSONALLY, ever EXPERIENCED any discrimination because of any of the following?

	Yes	No	Does not apply	(DK)	(Refused)
The color of your skin	1	2	7	8	9
Your religion	1	2	7	8	9
Your nationality/ethnic group/race	1	2	7	8	9
Your gender	1	2	7	8	9
A disability, if you have one	1	2	7	8	9

Appendix 2: Regions

2021 World Risk Poll regions and countries

Australia & New Zealand	Australia; New Zealand
Central Asia	Armenia; Georgia; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Uzbekistan
Central/Western Africa	Benin; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Congo Brazzaville; Gabon; Ghana; Guinea; Ivory Coast; Mali; Nigeria; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo
Eastern Asia	China; Hong Kong SAR of China; Japan; Mongolia; South Korea; Taiwan
Eastern Africa	Kenya; Mauritius; Mozambique; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe
Eastern Europe	Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Hungary; Kosovo; Moldova; Poland; Romania; Russia; Slovakia; Ukraine
Latin America & Caribbean	Argentina; Bolivia; Brazil; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Honduras; Jamaica; Mexico; Nicaragua; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Uruguay; Venezuela
Middle East	Iran; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Lebanon; Saudi Arabia; Turkey; United Arab Emirates
Northern/Western Europe	Austria; Belgium; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Iceland; Ireland; Latvia; Lithuania; Netherlands; Norway; Sweden; Switzerland; United Kingdom
Northern Africa	Algeria; Egypt; Morocco; Tunisia
Northern America	Canada; United States
Southern Asia	Afghanistan; Bangladesh; India; Nepal; Pakistan; Sri Lanka
Southeastern Asia	Cambodia; Indonesia; Laos; Malaysia; Myanmar; Philippines; Singapore; Thailand; Vietnam
Southern Africa	Namibia; South Africa
Southern Europe	Albania; Bosnia Herzegovina; Croatia; Cyprus; Greece; Italy; Malta; North Macedonia; Portugal; Serbia; Slovenia; Spain

Appendix 3: Methodology -

Data filtering

As briefly discussed in the main report the Lloyd's Register Foundation World Risk Poll is a significant data set, and part of the wider Gallup World Poll. The approach taken with the data is detailed here to ensure that the analysis can be understood and replicated independently.

The World Risk Poll module dedicated to violence and harassment in the workplace opens with three broad questions asking about experience of physical, psychological or sexual harassment – asked in that order – in the workplace. In each question, respondents could independently state that they have never worked³⁷. At this point the following questions relating to that experience would be skipped.

For those who had experienced violence and harassment at work it is also possible to split the data by both the time frame of experience – within the last year, two to five years ago, or more than five years ago – and also by the number of times they had experienced it. Additionally, outside of this module and as part of the broader Gallup World Poll dataset, it is possible to group and filter the data based on current employment status.

Based on these interactions there are multiple ways to split the data. For this report we included experiences of violence and harassment from any time in the respondents' life in order to extract meaningful findings in the most objective manner.

For each question, respondents were asked if they worked. If they stated in the context of any of the three questions that they did not work, they were excluded from the analysis. In total, 12,038 respondents said that they have never worked in their lives, while 113,873 people did not say this – and this latter group are the focus of this report.

One outcome of providing respondents with the opportunity to state that they have never worked in relation to each type of violence and harassment is that it identifies a small group of respondents whose answers were inconsistent. Put another way: while 12,038 individuals said, at some point during the interview, that they have never worked, not all of them did so when asked the first question in the module³⁸ for all three questions. In fact, 780 people who would eventually say they have never worked answered the first question of the module; 45 of these individuals answered in the affirmative to this initial query, meaning they said that they had experienced the form of violence and harassment they were asked about. Another 716 said "no," to this initial question about their experience with violence and harassment at work, while the remainder were unsure.

Still, this means 11,258 of the people who said they have never worked mentioned this at the onset of the module; these respondents were asked no further questions about violence and harassment at work. In the following question about personal experience with violence and harassment at work (psychological for all respondents except people in China, who were asked a modified form of the question about sexual violence and harassment), 469 people said they have never worked. In the final question of this type – which focuses on sexual violence and harassment for 1,295 respondents, with all respondents (or a modified form of the question) – another 311 individuals said they have never worked. Notably, 63% of people who said they have never worked when asked about sexual violence and harassment (or the modified form of the question) were women.

³⁷ This was a volunteered response, meaning it was not explicitly read as a response option by the interviewer, but an individual could offer this as answer to any of the questions about experience of violence and harassment at work. Volunteered responses are not uncommon in survey questions – for instance, "do not know," is a volunteered response for most of the questions asked on the Gallup World Poll; interviewers do not read this response option to respondents (except in rare cases), but if an individual indicates he or she is unsure, this is accepted as a response.

³⁸ Except for respondents in China, the first question on this module was: "Have you, personally, EVER experienced PHYSICAL violence and/or harassment AT WORK, such as hitting, restraining, or spitting?" In China, this question was not asked, so the first question asked of respondents in that country was about experience of psychological violence and harassment at work (the second question of this type for all other countries).

Table 1

Number of respondents who volunteered they have never worked when asked about violence and harassment at work, by when the respondent offered this response

Said "never worked" when...	Number of respondents
Asked first question about ever experiencing violence and harassment at work (physical violence and harassment at work, except for residents in China, who were asked if they have ever experienced psychological violence and harassment at work)	11,258
Asked second question about ever experiencing violence and harassment at work (psychological violence and harassment, except for residents in China who were asked about sexual violence and harassment at work)	469
Asked third question about ever experiencing violence and harassment at work (sexual violence and harassment for all respondents)	311
Total	12,038

Perhaps most striking is the fact that 99 respondents who eventually said they have never worked first admitted to experiencing some form of violence and harassment. While there is no way to know why this happened, the sensitive nature of the questions – and the troubled memories they may evoke – may be one reason why some respondents answered in an inconsistent manner. These respondents were excluded from the analysis, despite having answered at least one of the three questions about experience with violence and harassment in the affirmative.

This thorny issue is good way to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the World Risk Poll dataset and start a discussion around what some readers may consider surprising results, especially when looking at country and regional level differences.

Therefore, it is worth recalling that the World Risk Poll surveys individuals and because of this and despite the conceptual anchoring provided by the survey in terms of what constitutes violence and harassment in the workplace (either physical, psychological, or sexual), there are important limitations and considerations to keep in mind when comparing results across countries, territories, or areas, or even by subgroups within the same territory. A number of these limitations are explored here.

Attitudes or willingness to talk about violence and harassment at work will differ on an individual basis and may be shaped by larger forces such as individual (for example, personality traits), organisational (for example, quality of work environment and leadership) and socio-cultural factors (for example, national cultures and social norms).

An important consideration relates to the sensitivity of the subject. The survey asks about an inherently sensitive issue, and respondents asked sensitive questions may not always be entirely forthcoming in terms of their responses. The reasons for this reticence may depend on macroenvironmental factors (national politics, institutional norms, historic traditions, or cultural norms), microenvironmental factors (such as interviewing mode, place of interview, or presence of others in the interview setting) and personal characteristics and attitudes of respondents. While the Gallup World Poll has extensive experience asking about sensitive topics in ways that aim to minimise this type of effect, it is not possible to eliminate it entirely.

The definitions of and examples given for physical, psychological and sexual violence and harassment at work provided to the respondents may not always resonate with all respondents nor clarify how they understand these concepts.

In a few countries, it was necessary for Gallup to ask some of the questions in a slightly different manner due to political sensitivities. In addition, in some countries, Gallup was not allowed to ask at least one survey question (relating to sexual violence and harassment) at all.

This theme of sensitivity, personal interpretation and societal norms influencing responses runs throughout the report and opens the door to many different interpretations.

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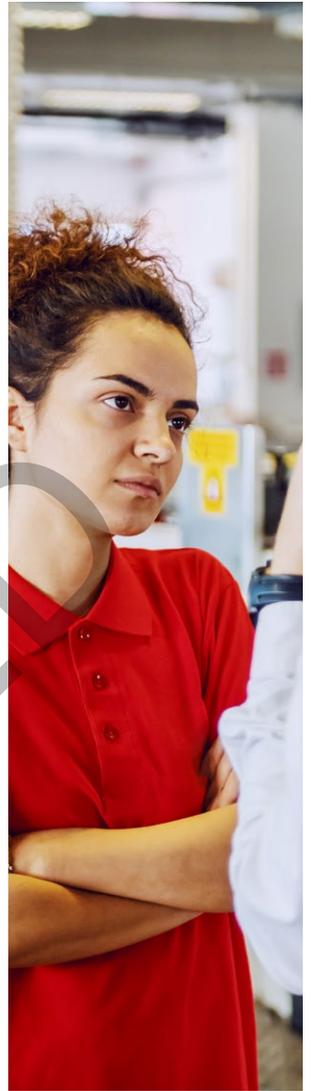
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