

Memorandum

To: Students in PPAI2200
From: Prof. Loury
Re: The plain facts about racial differences in domestic violence

Apropos of the Orlando Patterson article in this weekend's New York Times, which we discussed in class yesterday, I was looking at the Bureau of Justice Statistics web site. This is what I found. Two facets of these data are noteworthy. There has been a steady decline in (reported) nonfatal victimization of intimate partners since the mid-1990s in the United States. Moreover, notwithstanding Patterson's assertion to the contrary – supported by his anecdotal references to the behavior of OJ Simpson and Bishop Thomas Weeks – the racial gap of intimate partner victimization rates is quite modest. Indeed, between the recent years 1999 and 2003 black and white American women reported being victimized by their intimate partners at essentially the same rate. GL

