HETEROGENEITY IN CRIMINAL VIOLENT VICTIMIZATION WITHIN THE LGBT POPULATION: ESTIMATES FROM THE U.S. NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Research consistently shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals experience significantly higher rates of violent victimization than their non-LGBT counterparts. In this study, we address theoretical, empirical, and methodological gaps in this developing body of work. Motivated by intersectionality theory and building on existing research, we examine heterogeneity in rates of violent victimization among the LGBT population compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. We also assess the extent to which subgroup sociodemographic differences account for disparities in violent victimization and whether the effect of LGBT status on violent victimization differs by sex. We address these questions using several waves of data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Consistent with prior work, we find that LGBT subgroups have a higher rate of violent victimization than their non-LGBT counterparts. Our results also reveal heterogeneity within the LGBT population. Rates of violent victimization are highest for bisexual individuals, followed by transgender individuals, lesbian/gay individuals, and non-LGBT individuals. While sociodemographic differences explain a non-trivial portion of these disparities (~15% for gay/lesbian individuals to 41% for bisexual individuals), the bulk of disparities are not accounted for by sociodemographic controls. The conditional effects of sex are minimal and nuanced, warranting further research. We contribute methodologically by drawing attention to current challenges with the recommended measures of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity utilized in the NCVS and other large population surveys. We suggest revisions to foster more inclusive, comprehensive, and precise measurement.

Keywords: LGBT, Violence, Victimization, Intersectionality, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Transgender, Bisexuality

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INTRODUCTION

LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender[1]) individuals experience significantly higher rates of violent victimization than their non-LGBT counterparts (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2020; Rothman et al., 2011; Walters et al., 2013). Increasingly, violence against LGBT individuals is recognized as a significant social and public health problem (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; R. Graham et al., 2011). Although all available evidence indicates that being LGBT significantly increases the risk of criminal violent victimization, our understanding of these disparities remains embryonic due to various theoretical and methodological limitations in research on LGBT populations. Four limitations are particularly salient.

First, much evidence of disparate rates of violence against LGBT individuals is based on nonrepresentative convenience samples, particularly college students and individuals recruited by LGBT activist organizations (e.g., Coulter et al., 2017; James et al., 2016; Krebs et al., 2016). Studies of LGBT victimization using convenience samples generally report consistently elevated rates of victimization, especially sexual assault, than population-based studies (Rothman et al., 2011). Thus, although valuable in illuminating higher rates of violence against some LGBT individuals and subgroups, the extent to which, for example, self-selected online samples or those drawn predominantly from participants in LGBT organizations adequately represent these populations is unclear. Addressing this limitation and building on recent work, we use the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which is representative of noninstitutionalized persons aged 12 and older living in U.S. households.

Second, few studies adjust for sociodemographic differences when estimating disparities in violence against LGBT persons, despite the fact that LGBT persons tend to be younger, reside in urban areas, have lower incomes, and be less educated—all characteristics associated with increased violent criminal victimization (Thompson & Tapp, 2022). Addressing this gap, we assess the extent to which observed disparities are due to these populations being composed of individuals who are different in other ways besides LGBT status, which shape the likelihood of victimization (Crenshaw, 2013; M. Felson & Boba, 2010; R. B. Felson et al., 2013; Lauritsen et al., 1992; Pratt & Turanovic, 2016). We add to the existing

[1] "Transgender" is an umbrella term that includes many different people and identities, including transgender and transsexual persons and those identifying as nonbinary, genderqueer, agender, and other labels. Although defined in various ways, a general definition of transgender is provided by GLAAD as "a term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth." This definition of transgender includes people who have or are in the process of transitioning with surgery and/or cross-sex hormone treatment, as well as people who seek no medical intervention. Following others, we use the term "transgender" to denote this population, which includes, but is not limited to, the following gender identities: transwomen, transmen, trans-feminine, trans-masculine, nonbinary, agender, gender fluid, genderqueer, Two-Spirit, neutrois, genderfuck, pangender, etc. (for more, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_gender_identities).

knowledge base by estimating disparities before and after adjusting for relevant sociodemographic controls.

Third, and most importantly, most extant studies—especially those using population-based surveys—group LGBT (also called "sexual or gender minority" or SGM) individuals together (e.g., Flores et al., 2020, 2023). Yet, lumping LGBT individuals together elides potentially important differences in social position and experiences, including criminal victimization, shaped by the intersection of sexual orientation, sex, and gender identity. Traditional criminological victimization theories tend to adopt a single-axis framework, analyzing categories like sex (male vs. female), race ("Black" vs. "White"), or even LGBT versus majority (i.e., non-trans, heterosexual) individuals. However, as intersectionality theory underscores, "single-axis thinking" is inadequate for comprehending complex social patterns, as individuals' experiences—including those of criminal victimization—are shaped by the interplay of multiple, intersecting identities and associated systems of stratification (Cho et al., 2013, p. 787; Crenshaw, 2013). Thus, although research examining elevated violence against LGBT individuals as a group is a valuable first step, this approach neglects the way that sex,[2] sexual orientation, and gender identity intersect in the lives of LGBT persons.

Importantly, existing research has identified significant within-group differences in the social experiences of LGBT individuals relevant to victimization, underscoring the value of an intersectional approach. Research has long documented nontrivial sex differences in social sentiments toward non-heterosexual individuals (Kite & Whitley, 1996; LaMar & Kite, 1998). Similarly, the experiences of bisexual persons may diverge in important ways from lesbian and gay persons. In particular, bisexual individuals may face stigma or "othering" from *both* heterosexual and LG groups, potentially increasing social precarity and exposure to factors increasing victimization risk (Yost & Thomas, 2012). What is more, the experiences of bisexual individuals are likely uniquely shaped by sex and gender norms. For example, compared with their male counterparts, bisexual females are more likely to be hypersexualized and face the stereotype that they are bisexual for male attention (given the fetishization of female same-sex attraction by some heterosexual men). By contrast, bisexual males often face higher levels of stigmatization for undermining traditional notions of masculinity and are more likely than bisexual women to be perceived as confused or unwilling to admit they are actually gay (Herek, 2002; Yost & Thomas, 2012).

These experiential differences hold theoretical significance. Intersectionality theory posits that multiple social positions or identities intersect at the individual level and

[2] Following recommendations, and for clarity, we use "sex" to refer to biological sex—usually, but not always, correctly observed at birth—and the terms "male" and "female" to refer to biological sex (Hilton et al., 2021; Richie, 2019). We employ the terms "gender identity" or "transgender status" to refer to one's status as transgender or not.

that these intersections reflect and reinforce interlocking systems of power and (dis)privilege in a manner that influences victimization risk (Crenshaw, 2013). Although currently applied to explain disparities between LGBT and non-LGBT individuals, theories such as minority stress, general strain, and lifestyle exposure suggest mechanisms by which these diverse social positions and experiences among the LGBT population may shape victimization patterns. Minority stress theory holds that being LGBT in a hetero- and cis-normative society is a stressor that leads to negative health outcomes, psychological distress, and increased vulnerability to victimization (Meyer, 2003). Similarly, general strain theory (Agnew, 1992) applications contend that LGBT-related stressors—such as discrimination, stigma, and family or peer rejection—may increase strains and decrease social supports and individual coping reservoirs (Button, 2016). High levels of persistent distress, particularly coupled with inadequate social support, are linked to increased risky behaviors, including substance use, which are associated with heightened victimization risk consonant with lifestyle-exposure theories (Hindelang et al., 1978; Reisner et al., 2014). Here, we draw on these criminological theories integrating insights from intersectionality theory to develop and test hypotheses about variation in victimization among the broader "LGBT umbrella," recognizing heterogeneity that shapes differential risk across subgroups.

To date, criminological theories have rarely accounted for the elevated risk of victimization faced by LGBT individuals and have offered even less theoretical attention to the heterogeneity of risk within the LGBT population (Kahle, 2018). As Myers et al. (2020) observed, criminological theories of victimization "provide little room for incorporating explanations that have more to do with social vulnerability, bias, and prejudice. Further investigating LGBTQ victimization may represent a valuable opportunity to enrich our theoretical perspectives…" (p. 430). Addressing this gap, framed in an intersectional theoretical perspective, and drawing on minority stress, general strain, and life-style exposure theories, we analyze heterogeneity within LGBT populations across sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity. We argue that the intersection of these different statuses shapes differentiated exposure to factors influencing the risk of victimization, including stigma and social precarity. Our empirical analysis of subgroup victimization patterns is thus not merely descriptive, but a necessary step in refining and elaborating prevailing theoretical frameworks of risk among LGBT populations. Our work argues for theoretical nuance in understanding the distribution of violent victimization risk within LGBT groups, lending our findings important theoretical weight: we expose what current victimization theories overlook.

In short, while conceptually useful for recognizing a larger community with shared challenges and methodologically useful for increasing statistical power, studying the LGBT population as a homogeneous group obscures the way that identities and inequalities intersect to shape differences in life experiences influencing patterns of violent victimization (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; R. Graham et al., 2011). At present, however, only a paucity of research on differences in violence *within* the

LGBT population exists, particularly estimates based on population samples and controlling for victimization-related sociodemographic differences (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2023). Rapid social changes around LGBT status and identities—including increased acceptance and transformations in the size and composition of these population subgroups—combined with the diversity of experiences within the LGBT community, necessitate further research and careful examination. Here, grounded in an intersectional approach, we move beyond the analysis of LGBT individuals as a monolithic group to investigate how the constellation of different social identities shaping positions in social space—defined by the intersection of sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex—influence patterns of violent victimization (e.g., Coulter et al., 2017).

In addition to theoretical contributions, more fine-grained data on LGBT violent victimization is needed to inform policies and interventions to address the unique vulnerabilities and experiences of this heterogeneous population. In a variety of locales, policymakers and program planners are considering how to respond to the mounting evidence that LGBT individuals are disproportionately targeted by criminal victimization. However, a one-size-fits-all approach is likely inadequate (Myers et al., 2020). Moreover, recent years have seen particularly heightened scholarly and media attention to violence against transgender persons, especially transwomen. Several studies show that transgender people experience a substantially higher rate of violent victimization than their non-trans[3] counterparts (Flores et al., 2021; James et al., 2016). Based in part on these findings, prominent media outlets and political figures in the United States, United Kingdom, and similar countries have referenced an "epidemic of violence" against transgender persons requiring urgent attention (e.g., Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2022; Warren, 2019). Various social policies and legislative reforms have been passed or are being considered that prioritize protecting transgender people based, at least in part, on the idea that they face extremely high risks of criminal violence victimization (see, e.g., Blackburn et al., 2020; Burt, 2022; Murray & Hunter Blackburn, 2019). Yet proclamations about the alarmingly elevated risk of criminal violence against transgender persons are not rooted in population-based, generalizable data. In general, misunderstanding the nature and scope of the problem of violence against LGBT individuals may undermine prevention and intervention efforts with broader social influences. There is thus a need to bring more robust and nuanced evidence to bear on the problem of violence against LGBT persons.

[3] In this study, we refer to those who are not transgender as "non-trans" rather than as "cisgender" primarily because cisgender has a more specific meaning than non-trans (as a person whose gender identity aligns with their natal sex). This term is inappropriate as a descriptor for all who simply do not identify as transgender because it presumes the presence of a gender identity. Some people reject the concept of gender identity, do not experience themselves as having a gender identity, or do not identify with any gender identity ("genderless" individuals). Our choice of terminology also reflects the limitations of the NCVS SOGI instrument, which we discuss later.

In sum, we seek to build on the growing body of research on disparities in violent victimization against LGBT populations in several ways motivated by an intersectional perspective. First, departing from most extant studies, rather than treating the LGBT population as a monolith, we assess heterogeneity in violent victimization *within* the LGBT population compared with their non-LGBT counterparts. We explore patterns of violent victimization between lesbian/gay, bisexual, transgender, and non-transgender heterosexual individuals. Second, we examine disparities before and after controlling for sociodemographic differences. Third, we assess whether sex conditions the effect of LGBT status on violent victimization. Although some studies examine sex differences, most examine LGBT people as a group, potentially obscuring important nuances (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Rothman et al., 2011). Moreover, research has not yet explored whether violent victimization against transgender people varies by sex. We examine these questions using several years of data from the nationally representative NCVS—the premiere victimization survey in the United States. Although a few prior NCVS studies have examined variation in violent victimization among some subgroups of the LGBT population, such as between lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021) or transgender versus non-trans individuals (Flores et al., 2020, 2021), ours is the first study to examine disparities in the prevalence of violent victimization between L, G, B, and T individuals compared with non-trans heterosexual individuals and to examine differences by sex.

The fourth limitation of research on LGBT violent victimization concerns shortcomings with sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) measures, including the widely used two-stage NCVS instrument, which—as we discuss—is confusing, nonexhaustive, and noninclusive. A nontrivial portion of NCVS respondents refuse to answer the SOGI questions, perhaps due to confusion or not seeing their identity in the response options, whereas others relegate themselves to an ambiguous "something else" category, which is difficult to interpret and analyze (Ellis et al., 2018; Truman et al., 2019). No less concerning, this instrument does not allow researchers to make important intersectional distinctions valuable for advancing our understanding of diversity in LGBT violent victimization. For example, the instrument does not differentiate transwomen (i.e., sex: male, gender identity: woman) from other males who identify as transgender (e.g., nonbinary or genderqueer males). The heterogeneous transgender category includes a variety of gender identities and expressions, which likely influence experiences relevant to violent victimization. As such, we are unable to address important questions such as "Do transwomen have a uniquely high risk of violent victimization?" The best one can do to capture such potentially important nuances, as we do here, is to examine the intersection of sex and gender identity. This is a valuable first step, but to facilitate future theoretical and empirical advances, we need to address deficiencies in the SOGI measurement instrument. Here, we critically engage with the measure's limitations and offer concrete recommendations to improve future data collection. Grounded in an intersectional perspective, we emphasize that

precise and inclusive measurement is essential for accurately capturing individuals' identities and the social dynamics that shape their experiences.

To be sure, we are not alone in recognizing limitations with existing SOGI instruments. Several evaluative, forward-looking efforts have addressed SOGI measurement deficits (e.g., Bates et al., 2022; GenIUSS Group, 2014; Federal Interagency Working Group on Improving Measurement of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Federal Surveys, 2016). And, in February 2024, the U.K. government commissioned a review of terms used in research on sex and gender recognizing inconsistencies and deficiencies in current measures (Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology [DSIT], 2024). Yet, despite these efforts, many SOGI instruments, like the widely used NCVS one, remain unchanged. Addressing these limitations and heeding recent calls to improve and refine the SOGI measures, we situate our findings in the context of these methodological challenges, discuss what we cannot know about violent victimization with this instrument, and offer recommendations to foster more inclusive and precise measurement.

RESEARCH ON LGBT CRIMINAL VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION

As noted, a growing body of research documents the higher rates of violent victimization against LGBT[4] individuals compared with their non-LGBT counterparts. Until recently, this evidence was largely based on convenience samples, particularly college students (Griner et al., 2020; Krebs et al., 2016; Lombardi et al., 2002; Martin et al., 2011). Rather than criminal violence victimization in general, many of these important early studies focused on sexual assault and intimate partner violence among LGBT compared with non-LGBT college students (see, e.g., Krebs et al., 2016; Stotzer, 2009). These studies found that the victimization rate for LGBT individuals was usually at least double that of non-LGBT individuals (Coulter et al., 2017; Rothman et al., 2011). In an illuminating study of college students, Coulter et al. (2017) examined heterogeneity in past-year sexual assault victimization among LGBT individuals. Their findings revealed several important differences by sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Significant findings included that the rate of sexual assault victimization was higher for gay and bisexual men compared to heterosexual men, lower for lesbian women compared to bisexual or heterosexual women, and higher for transgender individuals than non-transgender individuals, with no differences observed among the transgender population by sexual orientation. Notably, although sex moderated the effects of being/gay lesbian and heterosexual on sexual assault victimization, Coulter et al. (2017) did not find evidence that bisexual

[4] We note that some studies examined disparities based on sexual orientation *or* based on gender identity, but given similar patterns of findings—a significantly elevated risk of violence—we discuss this past work as LGBT. This early work focused more on sexual orientation than on gender identity.

female college students experienced sexual violence at a higher rate than their bisexual male counterparts.

Other studies provided additional insights using non–college-student samples. Prominent among these is the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey (USTS), a large (n = 27,715) self-selected online survey that aimed to document the challenges that transgender people face (James et al., 2016).[5] In addition to high levels of perceived discrimination, relatively high rates of adverse mental health, including severe psychological distress and suicidality, substance use, and economic hardship, the USTS revealed substantially higher rates of violent victimization against transgender respondents compared with that found in general population surveys. Although providing valuable insights, the utility of the USTS for providing generalizable estimates of criminal violence against transgender people is vitiated by several significant limitations. Most notably, the USTS is not a representative population survey. Because "participants were recruited through transgender advocacy organizations and … asked to 'pledge' to promote the survey among friends and family" (D'Angelo et al., 2021, p. 8), the sample is large but not representative (Biggs, 2020). Particularly relevant, the USTS sample was disproportionately composed of individuals with characteristics associated with a higher risk of violence (e.g., individuals who were young, homeless, and working in the underground economy).[6] Additionally, the USTS did not focus on criminal violence but instead on diverse forms of victimization, including but not limited to, criminal violence.

Until recently, the evidence base on criminal victimization against the LGBT population was hampered by the reliance on college student and self-selected convenience samples, which precluded our ability to estimate population rates and to understand the scope of the problem relative to other populations (Flores et al., 2020). However, in 2016, as part of their ongoing redesign efforts, the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) incorporated SOGI questions in the NCVS for respondents aged 16 and older (Truman et al., 2019). Using these data, several recent studies have compared victimization rates between LGBT individuals (or subgroups) and their non-LGBT counterparts and advanced the evidence base in several ways.

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[5] To our knowledge, no analogous study of LGB people in the United States has been conducted. As of this writing, data collection for a third U.S. Transgender Survey is underway. The USTS is administered by the National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE), a U.S. social justice policy advocacy organization founded in 2003 by transgender activists.

[6] Approximately 9 percent of USTS respondents reported working in the underground economy ("sex work, drug sales, or other work that is currently criminalized") in the past year, and 19 percent reported engaging in sex work at some point in their lives. Involvement in the underground economy is strongly associated with an increased risk of violence. In the USTS, transgender individuals currently working in the underground economy were more than three times more likely to report being physically attacked in the past year ("such as by grabbing them, throwing something at them, punching them, or using a weapon against them for any reason"; James et al., 2016, p. 202).

In the first study, Flores et al. (2020) analyzed 2017 NCVS data and replicated disparities in victimizations based on LGBT status observed in convenience samples. Specifically, they found that both total violence victimization and most forms of violent victimization were significantly higher for LGBT individuals compared to their non-LGBT counterparts after adjusting for demographic characteristics. Overall, LGBT individuals were 2.7 times more likely to experience violent victimization than their non-LGBT counterparts after controlling for sociodemographic differences.

In a subsequent study, Flores et al. (2021) compared victimization rates between transgender people and non-trans people (whom they refer to as "cisgender") using pooled 2017–2018 NCVS data. Their results revealed that transgender people had a significantly higher (~4× higher) victimization rate than non-trans people, without adjusting for sociodemographic differences. Although Flores et al. (2021) reported that compared with their non-trans counterparts, transgender respondents tended to be younger, more likely to have never been married, reside in urban locations, and have lower incomes—all of which are associated with higher rates of victimization, given the small sample size of the transgender population, these sociodemographic differences were not controlled. Thus, determining the extent to which the higher estimated victimization rates of the transgender population remain after adjusting for sociodemographic differences is an important outstanding question.

In a third study, Bender and Lauritsen (2021) examined rates of violent victimization between LGB respondents compared to heterosexual respondents using pooled 2017-2018 NCVS data. They estimated that total violence rates were higher (2x-9x) for LGB individuals compared to heterosexual individuals, with particularly elevated rates of violence against bisexual individuals, especially for more severe violence. Bender and Lauritsen (2021) conducted subgroup analyses by sex and crime type and uncovered some striking disparities. For example, the estimated rate of rape or sexual assault for bisexual females was more than 12 times the rate of that for heterosexual females. However, due to the small subgroup sample sizes, several notable differences between subgroups by sex were unreliable and non-significant thereby suggesting the need for more research with larger samples. Overall, after adjusting for demographic characteristics, Bender and Lauritsen (2021) estimated that LGB individuals' rate of violent victimization was approximately two- to four-fold higher than that of heterosexual individuals.

Finally, in the most recent relevant study, using 2017–2019 NCVS data, Flores et al. (2023) examined violent victimization for LGBT individuals compared with non-LGBT individuals by race/ethnicity and sex. Like most earlier studies, they focused on the broad category of LGBT individuals. Findings revealed significantly higher rates of violent victimization for LGBT versus non-LGBT people for both Hispanic and non-Hispanic White groups but not for non-Hispanic Black individuals. Flores et al. (2023) recognized that "finer-grained categories," such as those we examine here, "could reveal distinct victimization experiences" (p. 12).

In sum, existing evidence based on the NCVS data suggests the following: (1) LGBT individuals experience a higher rate of violent victimization than their non-LGBT counterparts, (2) Transgender individuals have a higher rate of violent victimization than their non-trans counterparts, (3) LGB individuals experience significantly higher rates of violent victimization than their heterosexual counterparts, with bisexual individuals experiencing particularly high rates of criminal victimization, especially sexual assault; and 4) for some LGBT subgroups, sex conditions the effects of LGBT status on violent victimization (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2020, 2021, 2023). However, the findings for the transgender population remain tentative as they are based on relatively small subgroups, which did not include adjustments for sociodemographic characteristics known to be associated both with LGBT status and higher rates of crime (Flores et al., 2020).

CURRENT STUDY

Building on these studies, we address gaps in knowledge on LGBT violent victimization in several ways. First, we explore diversity among the LGBT population in patterns of criminal violent victimization. An intersectional theoretical framework provides the motivation to examine and expect such heterogeneity. Here we move beyond work that "frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences" and examines the LGBT group as a monolith (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). In so doing, we address dynamics of difference by LGBT status and sex by estimating and comparing the prevalence rate of violent victimization among LGBT subgroups compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. To our knowledge, our study is the first to provide a direct comparison of these LGBT subgroups with nationally representative data.

In doing so, we assess whether transgender individuals are at a particularly heightened rate of violent victimization compared to their non-trans LGB and non-LGBT counterparts. As discussed, existing evidence suggests that transgender individuals have elevated rates of violent victimization compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. Both minority stress and general strain theories shed light on this finding, linking marginalization and stigma to distress and increased risk of violent victimization (e.g., Agnew, 1992; Burt et al., 2012; Button, 2016). Moreover, some evidence suggests that transgender people occupy a uniquely precarious position in society, which includes heightened exposure to stigma and discrimination-related stress, and concomitant elevated rates of substance use, psychological distress, and homelessness (e.g., Fish et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2010; James et al., 2016), which increase the risk of criminal victimization (e.g., M. Felson & Boba, 2010; Hindelang et al., 1978; Pratt & Turanovic, 2016). Some violence may, of course, be motivated by negativity against transgender individuals or their unconventionality (i.e., hate crime). Paraphrasing Black (2011, p. 103), being "different" can be "dangerous."

We also test whether, as prior research suggests, (non-trans) bisexual individuals have a higher rate of violent victimization than their non-LGBT and (non-trans) lesbian/gay counterparts (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2021). Research suggests that bisexual individuals experience less social acceptance than gays and lesbians and experience stigma from both heterosexuals and gay/lesbian individuals (see, e.g., Dyar & Feinstein, 2018; Yoshino, 2000). Additionally, research has consistently demonstrated that bisexual individuals are at an increased risk of negative health outcomes, including health risk behaviors like substance use, compared with their LG and non-LGB counterparts (Feinstein & Dyar, 2017). Thus, consistent with intersectionality, minority stress, and general strain theories, we predict that bisexual individuals experience higher rates of victimization than their LG and heterosexual counterparts, in part, due to structural precarity and discrimination-related stress through behavioral responses to distress (e.g., substance misuse or "risky" behaviors), which increase the risk of victimization (e.g., Agnew, 1992; Hindelang et al., 1978; Pratt & Turanovic, 2016).

By contrast, gay and lesbian individuals, although still a sexual orientation minority, are increasingly accepted in society. For example, in recent decades, negative attitudes toward same-sex sex have precipitously declined and so too have discrimination and stigma against gay and lesbian individuals (Gallup, 2025).[7] Since the turn of the century, we have seen the overturning of laws criminalizing same-sex sex as unconstitutional (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003) and the extension of marriage equality to same-sex couples (*Obergefell v. Hodges*, 2015). Recognizing the attenuation of the social marginalization of LG individuals and consistent with existing work, we expect that LG individuals will experience violent victimization at a level that is intermediate between non-LGBT individuals and their transgender and bisexual counterparts (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021).

Additionally, we examine the extent to which sociodemographic characteristics explain observed disparities. As discussed, understanding the extent to which observed disparities are shaped by sociodemographic differences influencing victimization risk is important for theory and policy. Given that LGBT individuals tend to be younger, never married, reside in urban locations, and have lower incomes—characteristics associated with increased criminal victimization—we expect that included sociodemographic controls will significantly reduce the disparities, particularly for the bisexual and transgender subgroups, which are disproportionately younger. Prior NCVS studies were limited in their ability to control for sociodemographic characteristics given small sample sizes. By using additional years of NCVS data with a concomitant increase in sample size, we can include these controls. This increase in sample size is particularly important for the transgender subgroup. Even with sample size increase, the size of this transgender

[7] We note that a few recent U.S. surveys suggest that public support for the LGBT population or some subgroups may be slightly declining; this may, however, reflect random perturbations and more research is needed (Jones, 2023; Gambino, 2024).

subgroup remains relatively small (n=535 person-interviews). Given this, subgroup analyses with this population, although informative, remain tentative.

Furthermore, motivated by our intersectional perspective, we present prevalence rates by LGBT status separated by sex and explore whether and, if so, how sex moderates these subgroup findings. In other words, recognizing that sex is a one of the strongest predictors of some forms of crime and victimization and consistent with intersectionality, feminist, and classic victimization theories, we examine whether and how victimization patterns for LGBT subgroups vary by sex (Crenshaw, 1991; Hindelang et al., 1978; Pusch & Holtfreter, 2021). Although some extant NCVS research highlights sex differences by LGB status (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2023), as noted, findings are mixed and research has not explored whether violent victimization against transgender people varies by sex. Here we shed some light on these important intersections by examining patterns of violence against LGBT subgroups separately by sex with additional waves of data.

Finally, in contrast to most prior studies that examine incidence rates (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2020, 2021), we focus on violent crime *prevalence*—whether individuals experienced violence at least once during the past 6 months—because our central aim is to assess differential risks of victimization across intersecting identities. Additionally, existing work tends to aggregate all violence into a single outcome or analyze each type of victimization separately. The former approach risks obscuring meaningful variation, whereas the latter can make it difficult to detect broader patterns across types of violence. Intersectionality theory emphasizes that interlocking systems of (dis)advantage influence not only the likelihood but also the *forms* of violence individuals experience. For example, verbal harassment may reflect gender policing or homophobic ridicule, while serious physical assault may stem from more severe structural marginalization. By taking an intersectional lens and examining several forms of violence, we aim to identify both shared and divergent patterns of victimization risk within the LGBT population.

In sum, the current study recognizes that criminal violence against LGBT individuals is an important public health issue, and motivated by intersectionality theory, we examine heterogeneity in rates of criminal violence victimization among the LGBT population. More robust and fine-grained empirical data on violent victimization against the LGBT population is valuable for advancing theory and informing policy.

METHODS

DATA

The current study uses several waves of data from the National Crime Victimization Study (NCVS), an ongoing nationally representative survey of persons aged 12 and older living in households in the United States. The NCVS is conducted by the U.S.

Census Bureau for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and made publicly available. A sample of ~220,000 persons in approximately 150,000 households is surveyed annually. Response rates are high; between 67 percent and 76 percent of eligible households completed at least one interview in 2017, including 82 percent to 84 percent of eligible persons in sampled households across the 5 years of data (BJS, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2021, 2022). The current study employs data from 2017 to 2021, focusing on data from 2017 to mid-2019, given changes in the application of the SOGI instrument discussed below.

The NCVS measures criminal victimizations through a series of questions and covers individual and household experiences with nonfatal personal crimes and household property crimes. Respondents are asked about threatened, completed, or attempted victimizations during the past 6 months, excluding the interview month. Details about the incident (e.g., time of day, location, weapon use, whether reported to the police) are collected. Standard sociodemographic information is obtained about respondents (e.g., sex, race/ethnicity, age, marital status, education level) and households (income, region, urbanicity; BJS, 2009).

NCVS households are selected for a 3.5-year observation period with interviews every six months. Thus, respondents are interviewed between 1 to 7 times during this period. Given this, the unit of analyses in our analytic models is the person-interview, except for our sample descriptive statistics which are based on persons. We account for nonindependence in observations based on repeated sampling and address-based clustering using the complex sampling design variables and weights provided by the BJS and discussed in the analytic strategy section.

The SOGI questions were added to the NCVS in 2016, located at the end of a section with other personal questions (about citizenship, veteran status, and disability; see Martinez et al., 2016). Only respondents aged 16 and older were asked the SOGI questions, which were administered in the "first, third, fifth, and seventh interviews or if never asked before" (NCVS, 2020a, p. 718). We thus restrict our analyses to interviews with persons aged 16 and older, and the SOGI responses from the prior wave are used for the second, fourth, and sixth waves, when appropriate. Unfortunately, in July 2019, the BJS moved the SOGI instrument from the standard demographic section given to all respondents to a section asked *only to those reporting victimizations* (see, e.g., Flores et al., 2020). While this still allows for the identification of LGBT victims, this significant change precludes precise estimation of victimization rates among the LGBT population during this period. Given the uncertainty, we focus on data before the measurement change (i.e., 2017 to 2019.5). We also estimate victimization rates by LGBT status and by sociodemographic characteristics based on the 2017 to 2021 data, as originally planned, using BJS sampling adjustments. These results and information on the BJS population estimates are presented in the supporting information[8] with details

[8] Additional supporting information is available. Two files are provided: a stand-alone methodological discussion pdf file and an Excel file containing supplemental Tables S1–S13.

about the sampling adjustments and population estimates. Readers should note that the pattern of findings is analogous, as can be seen in Table 4. Unless otherwise noted, the statistics we present are based on the 2017–2019.5 data. Given our interests, we only include incidents within the United States, including territories.

MEASURES

Dependent Variable: Criminal Victimization

Our primary focus is estimating differences in the prevalence of (nonfatal) violent criminal victimization. Prevalence rates estimate a population or subgroup's risk of experiencing at least one victimization during a specific period (see Lauritsen & Rezey, 2013). Notably, given our focus on criminal violence (i.e., acts of violence prohibited by law), and departing from some prior studies of LGBT victimization (e.g., Flores et al., 2021, 2023), we exclude verbal threats without a weapon from our measure of (total) criminal violence and instead examine as a separate category.[9] Both prior research and intersectionality theory motivate our examining different crime types. We focus on two overlapping dependent variables based on variable V4529. The first is *total violent crime,* coded 1 for individuals who report experiencing at least one violent crime, defined as completed or attempted rape or sexual assault, aggravated assault, simple assault, or robbery, or a threat with a weapon in the past 6 months. Approximately 1.2 percent of respondents reported being victimized by these offenses at least once during the 2017–2019.5 study period. Second, we focus on *severe violent crime*, which is coded 1 for those who report experiencing attempted or completed rape or sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated assault at least once in the past 6 months and 0 otherwise. Severe violent crime is total violent crime minus simple assaults (and verbal threats; for a list of specific items in our violent crime measures compared with that in Flores et al., 2020, see Table S8 in the supporting information). We also estimate subgroup differences in two additional violence categories: *simple assaults*, which are nonsexual assaults, without injury, without a weapon, and *verbal threats*, which are spoken threats without a weapon. Full results for these two outcomes are presented in the supporting information.

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[9] Given our interest in criminal violence, prior to our analysis of the data, and after considerable discussion and research on various state statutes regulating verbal threats, we decided to analyze verbal threats *without* a weapon separately from our measure of criminal violence. Many (perhaps most) verbal threats do not meet the threshold for criminal violence under federal and most state laws, which require proof not only that verbal threats represent a "true threat" but also that the uttering person knew or intended for the statement to be an actual threat of violence (*Counterman v. Colorado*, 2023). Although we believe that verbal threats with a weapon typically cross the definition of "true threats" that are prohibited, we deem verbal threats sans weapons as more ambiguous and of uncertain criminality. Verbal threats are, of course, harmful and should be studied, and we do so here but as a separate category. As we will see, this coding decision revealed patterns unique to verbal threats that would otherwise have been obscured. Our overall total crime pattern of findings is the same if we include verbal threats in total violence (see Table S12B in the supporting information).

Independent Variables

LGBT Status. The focal independent variable in our analyses is LGBT status based on responses to the SOGI instrument. LGBT status is coded into five mutually exclusive categories based on respondent self-reports as follows: (0) *non-LGBT* (i.e., heterosexual and not transgender, which serves as the reference category), (1) *transgender*, (2) (non-trans) *lesbian or gay*, (3) (non-trans) *bisexual*, and (4) (non-trans) "*something else*" sexual orientation.

Gender identity/transgender status. Given the evidence that transgender people are at an especially high risk of victimization, we code individuals who self-identify as transgender as transgender, regardless of sexual orientation. This coding decision is motivated both by our aims and out of necessity—the transgender group is too small to disaggregate by sexual orientation. Respondents are classified as transgender if they self-identify as transgender in response to the "gender identity question" (V3086): "Do you currently describe yourself as male, female or transgender?" Respondents can also select "Don't know" or "None of these." In the sample, 175 (.07 percent) respondents (264 person-interviews) identified as transgender. Following others (e.g., Flores et al., 2020, 2021), we also classify the 160 (.07 percent) respondents who do not self-identify as transgender but whose reported sex in response to the question: "What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?" (V3085) does not match their response to how they currently describe themselves (V3086).[10] Following others and noting the regrettably limited response options and concomitant loss of data, we drop from our analytic sample the 449 person-interviews where the respondent identifies as "None of these."

Sexual orientation/LGB status. The remaining (non-transgender) respondents are classified based on their responses to the "sexual orientation question" (V3084): "Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?" Response categories included "Lesbian/gay" (1.22 percent of person-interviews), "Straight, that is, not lesbian or gay" (95.2 percent), "Bisexual" (.59 percent), "Something else" (.17 percent), "I don't know the answer" (.32 percent), and "Refused [to answer]" (2.3 percent). Following others, we excluded the 12,750 person-interviews who refused to answer the sexual orientation question along with 938 (.17 percent) person-interviews coded as "residue" for responses out of range, such as due to a keystroke error. We also exclude the person-interviews for those who answered "I don't know the answer" from the main analyses, but we include this group in supplemental analyses. The LGBT status variables are included in the model as dummy variables, with the non-LGBT group serving as the reference category. Overall, the (unweighted) analytic sample for the 2017 to 2019.5 pooled data is composed of 521,524 non-LGBT (i.e., reported heterosexual and not

[10] We have reservations about coding as transgender those respondents who do not identify as such in the survey, a concern we discuss in the measurement critique. In supplementary analyses presented in the supporting information, we re-estimated our models classifying as transgender only those who identify as transgender. The pattern of results is the same (see Table S4).

transgender individuals), 6678 lesbian and gay, 3214 bisexual, 877 "something else" sexual orientation, and 522 transgender person-interviews.

Sex. Following others, respondent sex is measured using the NCVS "sex allocated" variable (V3018), which is included in household respondent questionnaire. Following BJS suggestions and past research (e.g., Flores et al., 2023), we use household responses instead of individual responses to the SOGI question about sex at birth. Moreover, respondents' self-reports of their "sex … assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate" (V3085) contained a nontrivial number of refusals, particularly among the transgender-identified respondents (~19 percent). No less challenging, almost 1 percent of respondents (2,338) changed in their "sex assigned at birth" response across interviews at least once. Notably, although the household question uses sex terminology (i.e., "Is [name] male or female?"), whether it captures sex or gender identity for transgender respondents is not clear. To assess the robustness of our findings to potential errors in this measure, relevant to our understanding the interaction between sex and transgender status, we conduct supplementary analyses using the respondents reported sex at birth (V3085; see Table S9 in the supporting information). We acknowledge the uncertainty and associated challenges with this recommended measure and subsequently discuss these challenges and their implications in more detail and offer recommendations for improvement.

Sociodemographic and Interview Controls

We control for individual and household characteristics associated with crime and potentially LGBT status and incorporated in prior studies of LGBT violent victimization (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2020). All sociodemographic controls, except race/ethnicity, were reported by the household respondent.

Respondent *race/ethnicity* was measured using NCVS variables V3023A and V3024 with a series of dummy variables representing the following mutually exclusive categories: non-Hispanic *White* individuals (reference category); non-Hispanic *Black* individuals; *Latino/Hispanic* individuals; non-Hispanic *Asian, Pacific Islander*, and *otherwise not specified* individuals; and *Multiracial* individuals. Respondent's *age* was measured using variable V3014. Following others, we converted continuous age into a series of dummy variables with "at least 65 years old" serving as the reference category. *Educational attainment* was measured using variable V3020 as a series of dummy variables with "Bachelor's degree" as the reference category. The control for *annual household income* was measured as the total combined income from all household members during the past year (SC214A) and was recoded into six dummy variables from "Less than $25,000," to "$100,000 or more" (reference category). Additionally, we included dummy variables for current *marital status*, based on variable V3015, where "Married" is the reference category.

We controlled for an indicator of *urbanicity* or residential area type using a variable based on U.S. Census Bureau classifications and household addresses (V2129), with

"Metropolitan central city" as the reference category. We also controlled for geographic *region* (V2127B) with dummy variables: West (reference category), Northeast, Midwest, and South. We included a continuous measure of the *number of times a respondent was interviewed* during the 3.5-year survey period (variable PER_TIS), which ranged from one to seven. On average, respondents completed three interviews. We also controlled for *interview type* (V3011), coded as in-person (44.8 percent) = 0 (reference category) or by phone (55.2 percent) = 1.

ANALYTIC SAMPLE AND ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Based on the noted exclusions, our analytic sample is reduced from 553,925 to 538,033 person-interviews. We use listwise deletion, which further reduces the sample by 5,218 (<1 percent) to 532,815 person-interviews (and 241,250 respondents). Household income and educational attainment account for most missing responses.[11] We note all data exclusions, all measures considered for the study, all variable manipulations, and all analyses conducted (Simmons et al., 2012). The specification of measures and selection of models to run and depict were made without knowledge of the results of the analyses.

Following recommendations, we use person-level sample weights and methods to account for the multistage complex sampling design, including address-based clustering, survey nonresponse, and repeated interviews (BJS, 2022). We estimate standard errors and confidence intervals using Taylor series linearization (TSL) for the 2017-2019.5 data and using generalized variance functions (GVF) for the 2017-2021 data (Couzens et al., 2015; Shook-Sa et al., 2015). Analyses were conducted using Stata (StataCorp, 2021).

Our analyses proceed in a series of steps. First, we consider the relationship between LGBT status and sociodemographic characteristics associated with violent victimization. Then, we present population estimates of the prevalence rate of violent victimization for each LGBT group by sex. Next, we conduct logistic regression analyses to estimate differences in the odds of violent victimization between LGBT subgroups and compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. We estimate models with and without sociodemographic controls, which allows us to estimate the extent to which adjusting for sociodemographic variables affects observed disparities in violent victimization. We then test whether the effect of LGBT status on violent victimization is moderated by sex using interaction terms between LGBT status and sex. Finally, using BJS population estimates, we estimate the prevalence rates of violent victimization by LGBT status using the 2017 to 2021 data for the full sample and compare with that of the 2017–2019.5 data.

[11] Thirteen transgender person-interviews (10 self-identified, 3 "gender-sex mismatch") were dropped using listwise deletion due to missing educational attainment and/or marital status information. As a robustness check, we estimated supplementary models without controls for educational attainment and marital status for each victimization outcome with all available person-interviews. The pattern of results, displayed in Table S5 in the supporting information, is analogous to that presented here.

Throughout, our focus is on the differences in victimization among LGBT individuals and compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. Although we present the results for the "something else" sexual orientation category, we do not focus on this subgroup in our discussion given the likely heterogeneity captured under this label (e.g., pansexuality, asexuality, or demisexuality). We again note that full models for all outcomes, including simple assault and verbal threats, are presented in the supporting information.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 1 displays sample descriptive information on the relationships between LGBT status and sociodemographic characteristics and illuminates social patterns by LGBT status. We display characteristics of the individuals who compose this sample; for time-varying measures, we use their responses from the most recent interview. Survey-adjusted (i.e., weighted) descriptive statistics for the person-interviews are presented in Table S1. Percentages that are substantially lower than the non-LGBT group are underlined, whereas those noticeably higher than the non-LGBT group are depicted in bold.

Table 1 about here

Table 1 reveals several notable sociodemographic differences between groups based on LGBT status. Transgender respondents and, especially, bisexual respondents tend to be younger with lower household incomes than their non-LGBT and LG counterparts. The bisexual subgroup has a markedly lower proportion of males (~24.5 percent), and the lesbian/gay subgroup has a significantly higher proportion of males (~53.3 percent) relative to their non-LGBT counterparts (~47.5 percent male). Not surprisingly, all LGBT subgroups were less likely to be married or have ever been married than their non-LGBT counterparts. Overall, bisexual and transgender respondents tended to be more sociodemographically similar, namely, younger, with less education, lower household incomes, residing in the central city or surrounding areas and the West region than their counterparts. By comparison, LG individuals tended to be between BT individuals and non-LGBT individuals in terms of age, marital status, and region. Taken together, these descriptive statistics underscore the importance of controlling for sociodemographic differences when examining LGBT disparities in violent victimization.

PREVALENCE RATES

Table 2 displays the prevalence rates ("P Rates") for violent victimization based on LGBT status by sex. The "Ratio" column provides the ratio of the prevalence rates for each LGBT group compared with that of their non-LGBT counterparts. Notably, we shade the cells with the highest estimated prevalence rate for each crime category by sex. Note that due to the small sample size and relatively low prevalence of violent victimization, the prevalence rate estimates for the transgender subgroup are flagged (!), which means they should be interpreted with

caution due to uncertain precision and low reliability. This is evidenced by the wide confidence intervals, which include negative prevalence estimates, and a coefficient of variation that is greater than 50 percent. Nevertheless, following prior NCVS studies, we display these point estimates for comparisons and as a starting point for further analyses.

First, we focus on violent victimization prevalence among males. As shown, criminal violence prevalence rates (number of persons victimized per 1,000) are highest for bisexual males (~34), followed by males reporting "something-else sexual orientation" (~19.5), gay males (~13.6), transgender males (including transwomen, nonbinary males, etc.; ~11), and the non-LGBT male subgroup (~5.3). As displayed in the ratio column, the prevalence of violence for bisexual males is ~6.3× that of non-LGBT males, whereas the prevalence for transgender males is ~2× that for non-LGBT males. The estimated prevalence of criminal violence for bisexual males is more than twice that for both gay males and transgender males. The differences in prevalence rates between LGBT male subgroups and non-LGBT male subgroups for total violence are significant, except for transgender males due to the small sample size and resulting wide confidence intervals around the point estimate.

Table 2 about here

The pattern of findings was similar for severe violence. Thus, among males, for total violence and severe violence, prevalence rates were lowest for non-LGBT males and highest for bisexual males with the gay male and transgender male subgroups in between.

We note that the male transgender subgroup evidenced a significantly higher and divergent pattern of verbal threats without a weapon than other subgroups. Specifically, their prevalence of verbal threats is 7.6× higher than that of non-LGBT males and more than 2× higher than bisexual males. Additionally, and in contrast to other subgroups whose rates of verbal threats were less than half that of criminal violence, for the male transgender subgroup, the prevalence of verbal threats (~19.5) was nearly 2× higher than the prevalence of criminal violence (~10.9).[12] This finding is both novel and notable given that prior NCVS studies of disparities in victimization among LGBT persons did not separately examine verbal threats sans weapons (e.g., Flores et al., 2021, 2023).

Next, we turn to the prevalence rate among females shown at the bottom of Table 2, where we observe heightened disparities for the bisexual and transgender (including transmen, nonbinary females, etc.) subgroups. As with males, the

[12] As noted, these estimates for the transgender subgroup should be treated with caution, given the small size of the male transgender subgroup (n = 244) and the relative rarity of violence, which increases the likelihood that estimates are influenced by chance.

prevalence of criminal violence was highest for bisexual females (~44.5 per 1000)—a rate 8× that of non-LGBT females. This was followed by the "something else" sexual orientation subgroup (~24), the female transgender subgroup (~21), a rate ~3.8× that of non-LGBT females, and then the lesbian subgroup (~10.4), a rate 1.9× that of non-LGBT females. As observed among males, differences between the female transgender subgroup and their LGBT counterparts were not statistically significant due to the small subgroup sample size.

Patterns are similar for severe violence. Except for verbal threats, the estimated prevalence of violence was highest for bisexual females compared to their lesbian and non-LGBT counterparts. As with males, the prevalence of verbal threats was highest among the female transgender subgroup; however, in contrast to their male counterparts and like that of all other subgroups, the prevalence rate of verbal threats for the female transgender subgroup was half the rate of criminal violence and similar to that of bisexual females (i.e., not an extreme outlier).

LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS

Table 3 presents the results of four survey-weighted logistic regression models examining differences in the odds of experiencing criminal (models 1 and 2) and severe violent victimization (models 3 and 4). For both outcomes, we first regress violent victimization on LGBT status, only adjusting for the two interview controls (not shown[13]). Models 2 and 4 incorporate sociodemographic controls. The column labeled "%△OR" reports the percentage reduction in the size of the LGBT coefficient due to the inclusion of sociodemographic controls. In other words, this indicates how much of the observed disparity is accounted for by sociodemographic differences between these subgroups. Given that these models estimate prevalence rates, the odds ratio (OR) should be interpreted as the odds of experiencing violence at least once versus never in the past 6 months, compared to the reference category. Furthermore, as logit models are nonlinear, the differences in the odds of victimization should be interpreted as the estimated effects holding other variables in the model constant.

Table 3 about here

Turning first to criminal violence and consistent with previous results, model 1 reveals that each LGBT group has a significantly higher odds of experiencing criminal violence relative to their non-LGBT counterparts, net of interview controls. Specifically, compared to non-LGBT respondents, the estimated odds of victimization is 2.75 ($p = .016$) higher for transgender respondents, 2.09 higher for lesbian/gay respondents, 6.66 higher for bisexual respondents, and 3.72 higher for respondents whose sexual orientation is "something else" ($p < .001$, for all but the transgender subgroup). Compared to bisexual individuals, lesbian/gay individuals have a ~69 percent ($p < .001$) lower odds of violent victimization, and transgender individuals have ~59 percent lower estimated odds of victimization (p

[13] We display the full results with the interview controls in Table S2 in the supporting information.

= .035). Although transgender individuals have a higher estimated odds of victimization than both non-LGBT and lesbian/gay individuals, due to the small sample size, the difference between transgender and LG respondents is not statistically significant (p = .513).

In model 2, we incorporate demographic and household controls. As shown, the pattern of findings remains the same, although the disparities are reduced, particularly for the bisexual, transgender, and something else sexual orientation respondents who are disproportionately younger and with lower incomes. Adjusting for these demographic characteristics reduced the (higher) odds ratio by ~41 percent for bisexual individuals, ~35 percent for transgender and "something else" SO subgroups, and ~15 percent for lesbian and gay individuals. Even after controlling for sociodemographic differences, the estimated odds of victimization for LGBT subgroups compared to non-LGBT individuals is highest for bisexual individuals, followed by "something else" sexual orientation respondents, transgender respondents, and lesbian and gay respondents. Given the small sample size of the transgender subgroup, with the introduction of controls, the transgender coefficient/odds ratio was no longer statistically significant. Again, comparisons (not shown) reveal that the estimated odds of violent victimization is significantly higher for bisexual individuals compared to both the lesbian/gay and non-LGBT subgroups.

Although our focus is on LGBT disparities, situating these effect sizes relative to that of other demographic variables can be informative. For example, out of all the variables in the model, the relative risk of violent victimization is greatest for bisexual individuals (vs. non-LGBT individuals). In other words, being bisexual versus non-LGBT is associated with the greatest increase in the odds of violence (295 percent) of all the variables in the model. This is followed by being in the younger age categories compared with being age 65+ [16–24 (259 percent) and aged 25–34 (246 percent)], being separated versus married (261 percent increase in the odds), being aged 35–39 versus 65+ (200 percent), and being divorced versus married (146 percent). By contrast, being transgender or gay/lesbian versus non-LGBT are associated with a 79 percent and a 77 percent increase in the odds of violent crime, respectively, net of the sociodemographic variables in the model. The relative risk of violence for a person aged 50–65 compared to age 65+ is greater than the relative risk of being transgender versus non-LGBT. Notably, relative risks are informative about disparities but do not indicate actual risk of violence (see figure 1 for a comparison of prevalence rates for LGBT status and by age).

Turning to severe violence, the results displayed in models 3 and 4 resemble that for total violence, albeit with slightly larger disparities for the LGBT population. Holding constant interview controls only and compared to non-LGBT individuals, the estimated odds of experiencing severe violence at least once versus never is ~7× higher for bisexual individuals (p < .001), ~4× higher for "something else"

sexual orientation individuals ($p < .001$), 3.2× higher for transgender individuals ($p = .007$), and 2.2× higher for lesbian or gay individuals ($p < .001$). Within LGBT subgroups, only the difference between bisexual individuals versus lesbian/gay individuals (OR = 3.16, $p < .001$; not shown) was statistically significant.

Like the patterns for criminal violence, controlling for demographic characteristics substantially reduced but did not eliminate disparities in severe violence experienced by LGBT individuals. For bisexual individuals, the odds ratio was reduced by ~42 percent, compared with ~36 percent for transgender individuals, ~35 percent for "something else" sexual orientation individuals, and ~14 percent for lesbian and gay individuals. As with criminal violence, the estimated effect of being transgender versus non-LGBT was no longer a statistically significant predictor of severe violence after introducing sociodemographic controls; this is due to the small sample size and imprecision of point estimates.

To aid in interpreting results, we estimated the adjusted prevalence of experiencing criminal and severe violence for each LGBT group, holding all other variables at their means (based on models 2 and 4 in Table 3). We also display, but do not discuss, these comparisons by age groups to contextualize these differences. Figure 1 displays four graphs by crime type (i.e., figure 1A—total violent crime by LGBT status, figure 1B—severe violent crime by LGBT status, figure 1C—total violent crime by age group, and figure 1D—severe violent crime by age group). For each group, the adjusted prevalence is presented as a point estimate with 90 percent confidence intervals.

As shown, non-LGBT individuals have the lowest estimated prevalence and a precise estimate, bisexual individuals have the highest estimated prevalence, and transgender individuals have an intermediate prevalence estimate (higher than non-LGBT individuals, lower than bisexual individuals, and like that of gay individuals) with wide confidence intervals indicating the low precision of the estimate due to the smaller sample size. Notably, these prevalence rates are lower than that presented in Table 2 because these are adjusted for sociodemographic differences included in the logistic regression models.

Figure 1 about here

Conditional Effects of Sex

Finally, we tested whether sex moderates the effects of LGBT status in models with and without sociodemographic controls. Although point estimates were in the direction of a higher risk of violence for bisexual females compared to bisexual males for total violence and severe violence, none of the interaction terms were significant, even before adjusting the *p*-value for multiple testing. These results are presented in Table S3 in the supporting information. Thus, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that sex does not moderate the effects of LGBT status on violent victimization.

SUPPLEMENTARY MODELS

We conducted several supplementary models to gauge the robustness of our findings to alternative specifications, in addition to those already discussed. These models include a comparison of the estimated prevalence rates using the 2017 to 2019.5 data with that from the 2017 to 2021 data, displayed in Table 4. As can be seen, the prevalence rates are similar, and the overall pattern of findings are analogous.

Table 4 about here

Although we deem prevalence estimates appropriate for our study, as discussed, some prior studies have used incidence rates—where the number of violent incidents are the numerator rather than the number of persons victimized at least once. Thus, we also re-estimated the rates depicted in Table 4 using incidence rather than prevalence. Following others, we winsorized repeated (series) victimizations for each crime type at ten (e.g., Flores et al., 2021). Results for these comparisons using full and study subsamples using both TSL and GVF estimations (where appropriate) can be found in Table S6 in the supporting information. Tables S7 and S11 provide information on the GVF estimates, which must be used for the 2019.5 to 2021 data. Again, the pattern of findings is the same. Notably, the heightened rate of violent victimization for the bisexual subgroup compared to other groups is even greater using incidence rates than using prevalence rates.

Additionally, we re-estimated Table 2 but used the violent crime coding used by prior researchers (i.e., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021), which counts verbal threats without a weapon in the "total crime" category and the "simple assault" category. These results are presented in Table S12B in the supporting information. (Table S12A replicates Bender and Lauritsen's [2021] Table 2 but using prevalence rates instead of incidence rates and our LGBT status variable.) These results reveal that the overall pattern of findings is not dependent on our coding of verbal threats as a separate category.

Furthermore, our finding of no conditional effects of sex on LGBT status was somewhat unexpected. Bender and Lauritsen's (2021) recent work using the NCVS sample (with fewer years coverage) reported significant sex differences for heterosexual individuals and for bisexual individuals for total violent crime, rape and sexual assault, and simple assaults, albeit without controls for sociodemographic differences. To assess whether our findings of no sex differences were due to our larger sample (potentially smoothing out outliers) or to our use of prevalence rates (recall: they used incidence rates), we re-estimated Table 2 and added the category of rape and sexual assaults. These results are presented in Table S13 in the supporting information. Our results replicate Bender and Lauritsen's findings of sex differences for the bisexual subgroup and reveal differences between male and female bisexual and heterosexual individuals in the *incidence* but not *prevalence* of total violent crime and severe violent crime. Thus, bisexual females

and males show comparable rates of experiencing violent victimization at least once (prevalence), but bisexual females experience a significantly higher number of victimization events overall (incidence). In other words, bisexual females experience more multiple or repeat victimizations, although the rate and risk of experiencing victimization at least once is similar. Overall, these results suggest that sex *does matter* but in a more nuanced way that calls for more fine-grained analyses and more statistical power (larger subgroup sample sizes), particularly for bisexual and transgender individuals.

Finally, as a robustness check to measurement error in the sex variable, we re-estimated violence prevalence (displayed in Table 2), using respondent reported "sex assigned at birth" instead of the recommended sex-allocated variable. Recall, 19 percent of transgender respondents refused to answer the sex-at-birth question; these respondents were necessarily excluded from these supplementary model estimates. Notably, none of the excluded transgender person-interviews reported any victimizations; given this, these estimates for the transgender subgroup may be very slightly inflated. These results are presented in Table S9 in the supporting information. As can be seen, the pattern of findings for criminal violence remains the same. However, the pattern of verbal threats for transgender respondents is significantly altered. Using respondent-reported sex, the female transgender subgroup has the highest rate of verbal threats and a different pattern than that of all other groups (i.e., a higher rate of verbal threats than other violence combined), whereas the male transgender subgroup has a lower point estimate of verbal threats than the bisexual male subgroup. Such divergent findings about verbal threats based on the different measures of sex underscore the need for accuracy in measurement. In particular, this finding raises concerns about the accuracy of the SOGI instrument and highlights the need to get more accurate and detailed information relevant to patterns of violent victimization.

DISCUSSION

Violence against LGBT individuals is increasingly viewed as a significant social and public health problem (Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Flores et al., 2020). Most research on disparities in LGBT victimization is informed by minority stress or general strain models, theorizing that being LGBT is a form of stress that increases distress and the likelihood of risky behaviors or routine activities, which augment the risk of violent victimization (e.g., Button, 2016; Hancock & Daigle, 2021). However, research on variation in victimization within the LGBT population is scarce and underdeveloped. Building on extant work, motivated by intersectionality theory, and informed by stress and strain theories, we addressed limitations existing work by exploring heterogeneity in violent victimization within the LGBT population. Our findings reveal several differences, including comparisons previously unexplored, using several years of data from the nationally representative NCVS. In what follows, we discuss our findings, implications, and salient limitations.

Consistent with past work and theoretical predictions, we found that the prevalence of violent victimization is noticeably higher among each LGBT subgroup than among their non-LGBT counterparts (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Button, 2016; Flores et al., 2020, 2021), even with the inclusion of sociodemographic controls. Thus, LGBT individuals not only contend with structural marginalization and interpersonal discrimination, but also experience higher rates of criminal violence, including severe violence and verbal threats—disparities that are likely shaped, in no small part, by these same social and structural disadvantages. As expected, incorporating sociodemographic controls reduced LGBT disparities in violence by at least 35 percent for bisexual and transgender individuals and ~15 percent for lesbian/gay individuals. These findings suggest that a nontrivial portion of LGBT groups' higher rates of violent victimization is due to sociodemographic differences—especially being younger, unmarried, with lower income, and residing in central cities—underscoring the need to account for sociodemographic differences when examining disparities. Importantly, however, the bulk of the disparities in violent victimization by LGBT status was not accounted for by sociodemographic differences. Moreover, some of these sociodemographic differences may be mechanisms through which LGBT-related status and disadvantage influences victimization risk (e.g., income, marital status, urban residence).

Turning to within-LGBT group variation, and consonant with intersectionality theory, we observed heterogeneity in the prevalence of violent victimization. The most conspicuous finding was that the bisexual subgroup had higher prevalence rates of both criminal violent and severe violent crime victimization than their LGT counterparts. Indeed, in models including sociodemographic controls, being bisexual was the characteristic most strongly associated with the odds of criminal violent victimization. Overall, our work replicates prior findings of a particularly heightened risk of violence for bisexual individuals, both male and female (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Coulter et al., 2017). Even so, the unique experiences and challenges faced by bisexual individuals, including high rates of victimization, have often been ignored or disregarded (e.g., Hayfield et al., 2018). Indeed, the dismissal and neglect of bisexuality and the experiences of bisexual individuals have been studied as a form of "bisexual erasure" (Ochs, 1996; Yoshino, 2000). Research has documented sentiments of "binegativity"—as stigma and marginalization—by both heterosexual and gay/lesbian individuals (e.g., Feinstein & Dyer, 2017; Yoshino, 2000). These findings, combined with those of others, behoove us to examine and address high rates of criminal violent victimization against bisexual individuals in a manner that both combats bisexual erasure and informs theory, prevention, and intervention efforts.

Our findings also revealed that transgender individuals, especially the male subgroup, experienced a higher rate of criminal violent victimization than non-transgender LG individuals and the highest rate of verbal threats. Indeed, the rate of verbal threats against the transgender male subgroup was double that of any

other group. Notably, these verbal threat estimates are based on a small sample and are not observed in the incidence rates or in the 2017–2021 data, thus, weakening our confidence this estimate reflects the true population rate. No less concerning, when the respondent reports of sex are used, the verbal threat pattern flips, such that the data suggest that female transgender respondents experienced a significantly elevated rate of verbal threats compared to any other group. Such findings suggest the need to conduct further population-based research on the transgender subgroups with better measures and larger samples and highlight the value of exploring different types of victimization.

Notably, and inconsistent with our predictions, we did not find evidence that sex moderates the effects of LGBT status on violent victimization using prevalence rates. Although point estimates were in the direction of a higher risk of violence for bisexual females compared to bisexual males for total violence and severe violence, these differences were not statistically significant. This finding of no sex differences is theoretically unexpected, as intersectionality theory, along with classic lifestyle/routine activities (e.g., Hindelang et al., 1978) and feminist theories (Belknap, 2020), predict sex matters for victimization. However, three clarifying comments are in order. First, these findings should not be interpreted to mean that sex *does not* condition the effects of LGBT status on violent victimization. The absence of significant evidence that sex moderates LGBT status (i.e., the inability to reject the null hypothesis of no difference) is not significant evidence of no effect. Although this is a large population sample, violent crime is still a relatively rare event and LGBT individuals still constitute only a small proportion of the sample. Furthermore, for the bisexual comparisons, bisexual male individuals constitute an even smaller portion (one-fourth of the bisexual group). The relative rarity of violent crime combined with the still relatively small size of the LGBT subgroups precludes our ability to confidently generalize from smaller, but still potentially meaningful, differences.

Second, since the mid-2000s, NCVS data have revealed an unexpected pattern: Overall crime victimization rates show parity between sexes rather than the large sex differences documented in earlier NCVS data and still seen in homicide statistics (where males account for more than 75 percent of victims). This pattern of sex parity in general victimization has remained relatively sTable, even though significant sex differences persist for specific crime types, especially rape and sexual assault (Lauritsen & Heimer, 2008; Lilley et al., 2023). This finding contradicts classic victimization theories that were grounded in the assumption of substantial sex differences in victimization previously observed (Hindelang et al., 1978).

Third, our supplementary analyses suggest that sex differences exist for some LGBT population subgroups for some crime types, when *incidence rates* are used. Particularly noTable, while a comparable number of heterosexual and bisexual males and females seem to be affected by the crime types we examine, females in

those subgroups experience more overall incidents of violent victimization due to repeated or multiple victimization.

LIMITATIONS

Our study findings are, of course, not without limitations. Several deserve mention, in addition to the SOGI measurement we discuss next. First, the NCVS has several well-known nonsampling limitations related to the accuracy of reporting due to inaccurate recall of events (e.g., telescoping), the coverage of sensitive topics with a stranger interviewer, and respondent fatigue due to the longitudinal nature of the study and series of questions that follow each report of victimization (Groves & Cork, 2008; Hart et al., 2005; Kruttschnitt et al., 2014; Thornberry & Krohn, 2003). For example, respondents may become "test wise" and realize that a series of questions follow a report of crime victimization and thus not report victimization to avoid such questions (Biderman, 1967). However, we have no reason to believe that such errors are systematically associated with LGBT status.

Another well-known limitation of the NCVS as a population survey is its household sampling frame. Individuals who do not have stable residences lack representation in the sample. Research suggests that due in part to discrimination, stigma, and family rejection, LGBT individuals are more likely than non-LGBT individuals to lack stable housing, and individuals who lack stable housing are at a heightened risk of criminal victimization. Thus, we speculate that, were the NCVS a representative sample of the U.S. population (rather than people with stable housing), differences between the LGBT and non-LGBT individuals would be larger. Additionally, although robust, NCVS population estimates are imperfect. Census Bureau weighting procedures designed to minimize sampling error are included to reduce biases (Truman & Morgan, 2022); however, like all surveys, the NCVS suffers from sampling errors, such as nonparticipation biases.

A significant limitation of our study, which we have noted throughout, is the small sample size of the transgender and male bisexual subgroup combined with relative rarity of violence. Even large, nationally representative surveys like the NCVS will have only a small number of some LGBT subgroups reporting violent victimization over the study period. Consequently, the estimates are less precise and reliable than those based on larger population subgroups. Generalizing to the population from such small sample sizes for rare events like severe crime victimization is thus a fraught endeavor. For example, we can confidently conclude that there is no evidence for epidemic of criminal violence against transgender people in this large population-based survey; however, we cannot confidently generalize this finding to the population of transgender people in the United States. Although valuable, these estimates for the transgender subgroup should be interpreted cautiously and alongside evidence from other surveys and approaches with different strengths and weaknesses. Although some may find these tentative estimates unsatisfying, we believe that waiting years until large population surveys have a sufficiently large transgender subgroup sample size for more precise estimates and more well-

powered comparisons would be an egregious error given the importance of evidence on these problems and their relevance for science and policy.
Finally, the 2019 change in the administration of the SOGI instrument only to those who report violent victimization undermined our ability to robustly analyze the data from 2019.5 to 2021. Fortunately, this was reversed in 2022. Ensuring that the SOGI instrument continues to be applied to all respondents aged 16 or older rather than just crime victims in the NCVS is important.

IMPLICATIONS

Despite these limitations, our findings have several implications for theory, policy, and research methodology. Drawing on intersectional theory, our findings illuminated the value of moving beyond focusing on the LGBT group as a monolith to examine intersections in inequalities and experiences in shaping patterns of violence (e.g., Cho et al., 2013). By examining the intersection of sexual orientation, sex, and gender identity, we identified patterns of sameness—i.e., an overall increased risk of violent victimization—and difference—significant within group differences in risk—that are obscured when examining the LGBT group as a monolith. These findings, combined with that of others, suggest the need to continue working to understand, explain, and address the higher rates of violence against LGBT individuals while accounting for heterogeneity in experiences.

Intersectionality theory advances the theoretical understanding of victimization by foregrounding the role of structural and identity-based inequalities in shaping risk. Future research might beneficially consider how societal norms, stigma, and institutional responses may differentially impact subgroups within the broader LGBT umbrella, facilitating more tailored and inclusive theorizing than that offered by classic, single-axis theories (Hindelang et al., 1978; see also Myers et al., 2016). Although intersectionality theory emphasizes the causal role of interlocking systems of structural disadvantages, importantly, whether (or to what extent) these disparities in victimization are driven by structural inequalities—and the mechanisms underlying these effects—require further theoretical and empirical attention. Future work might capitalize on the relatively rapid and significant declines in prejudice and discrimination toward the LGBT population, in general, and the LG population, in particular, to evaluate the role of structural marginalization. Assessing whether increased acceptance of LGBT people has been accompanied by declines in violent victimization disparities could provide suggestive evidence of a causal role of structural disadvantages, recognizing that nontrivial changes in the sociodemographic composition of some subgroups may also play a role (e.g., Jones, 2023).

Intersectionality provides the theoretical motivation for examining heterogeneity within the LGBT population by emphasizing how intersecting systems of inequality shape differentiated social positions and experiences. While this framework motivates our analysis of within-group heterogeneity, it does not, on its own, specify the mechanisms that produce these disparities. Our study suggests the value

of linking intersectional theory with criminology victimization theories to illuminate specific mechanisms underlying the heightened violence against the LGBT population and within-group differences. Building on our findings and drawing on intersectional insights, future work can elaborate theories of victimization that have largely neglected LGBT status and within-LGBT-group heterogeneity. This work might beneficially consider factors such as social prejudice and marginalization, highlighted by minority stress and general strain theories, as well as differential increase exposure to risky situations and potential offenders, as emphasized by lifestyle-exposure and similar theories (e.g., Bender & Lauritsen, 2021; Button, 2016; Felson & Boba, 2013; Hindelang et al., 1978; Simons et al., 2014). Such work will require additional data. The NCVS has many strengths, but it is not designed to identify the causes of criminal victimization—the contextual factors, situational precursors, and individual psychosocial forces that result in an act of violence against an individual or heightened risks of violence against various demographic subgroups. In short, our research points to the need to integrate intersectional insights into broader theoretical frameworks to more fully account for the diverse experiences of victimization *within* LGBT communities.

Additionally, although a group too often overlooked, our findings call for greater attention to the mechanisms underlying the conspicuously elevated rates of criminal violence against bisexual individuals (see, e.g., Coulter et. al., 2017; Grove & Johnson, 2023). Evidence from our study and that of others, including work identifying disturbingly high rates of interpersonal violence and sexual assault against bisexual females (e.g., Flanders et al., 2019; Grove & Johnson, 2023), emphasizes the need to enhance theoretical understanding of bisexual individuals' heightened vulnerability that can inform prevention and intervention efforts. Our nuanced findings also suggest the need for further research that examines in even more detail, with more precise and inclusive measurement and larger samples, variation observed. For example, future work should incorporate information on the sex and sexual orientation of the offender and its intersection with crime type. Our supplementary findings highlight the need to consider incidence and prevalence rates given the different patterns observed and their relevance for theory and policy.

Turning to policy, while further research is needed, our findings have tentative implications for policy and programs. First, our findings call into question the wisdom of lumping LGBT individuals together given divergent experiences and patterns of victimization. Although LGBT people are linked by virtue of their violating traditional norms regulating appropriate expressions and behaviors for each sex (i.e., gender norms), we find considerable variation among the LGBT group in violent victimization, including patterned variation based on sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation; by crime type; and by crime incidence and prevalence. These findings suggest that policies and prevention programs targeting LGBT populations should move beyond one-size-fits-all approaches and consider addressing the distinct risks faced by specific subgroups. For instance, while public

discourse often emphasizes violence against transgender individuals, our results suggest that bisexual individuals face the highest levels of victimization. Policy efforts and victim services might be recalibrated to better recognize and respond to the vulnerabilities of this often-overlooked subgroup.

Relatedly, our findings speak to public discussions and policy debates around an alleged epidemic of violence against LGBT people, in general, and transgender people, in particular. News outlets and politicians, citing evidence often compiled by activist organizations[14] (e.g., James et al., 2016) reference an "epidemic of violence" against transgender individuals. This framing, in concert with other shifts, has spurred legislative efforts to enact legal protections and safeguarding policies that prioritize the transgender population, particularly transwomen, due to their purported extreme vulnerability to violence (e.g., Burt, 2023). Recent examples include the enactment or consideration of gender/sex self-identification policies for access to intimate or protected spaces generally reserved for females, including shelters, refugees, changing rooms, and prisons, in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and other jurisdictions (see, e.g., Burt, 2020, 2023; Sullivan & Todd, 2023).

To be sure, and consistent with other studies, our results suggest that transgender people do experience a substantially (~2–3×) higher prevalence of criminal violence relative to their non-LGBT counterparts, before accounting for sociodemographic differences, particularly age and urban residence, which reduce disparities by ~35 percent. The elevated rate of violence against transgender individuals, compared to non-trans heterosexual individuals, warrants serious attention. However, our findings do not suggest that transgender people experience a uniquely high or "epidemic level" of criminal violence requiring or justifying extreme measures.[15] To wit, the current framing of criminal violence against transgender people as being at an epidemic level is inconsistent with available evidence from population-based surveys.

Importantly, this empirically unwarranted "epidemic of violence" framing may do more harm than good. While the intentions of those activist organizations and political actors using such alarmist rhetoric are no doubt benign—for example, drawing attention to the heightened violence transgender people face—exaggerating the risk of criminal victimization against marginalized groups is not

[14] For example, the U.S. National Center for Transgender Equality announced: "Transgender people face extraordinary levels of physical and sexual violence, whether on the streets, at school or work, at home, or at the hands of government officials" (https://transequality.org/issues/_anti-violence). As another example, U.S. Senator and former presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren has prominently tweeted about an epidemic of violence against transgender people and even used her closing statement at one of the US Presidential Debates to bring up the "epidemic of violence against trans women."

[15] To be sure, the term "epidemic" has no consensus meaning, but it is often used to mean a disease (or harmful event) that is rampant or widespread and requiring urgent attention, even extraordinary measures (see, e.g., Green et al., 2002).

without costs. Stoking unwarranted fears of an extreme risk of violence can harm individuals' health and social lives by unnecessarily increasing fear, anxiety, and other forms of distressing psychological arousal; reducing social involvement; and subsequently increasing isolation (Adams & Serpe, 2000; Stafford et al., 2007). The prevailing message that transgender people in the United States, United Kingdom, and similar nations face rampant violence is likely to increase their distress and reduce their social participation. This is particularly concerning given that transgender individuals already experience disproportionately high levels of anxiety, depression, and psychological distress and are at risk of reduced social involvement due in part to perceived discrimination and stigma (James et al., 2016). In short, although more research is needed, available evidence indicates that claims of an epidemic of criminal violence against transgender people in the United States (see, e.g., Human Rights Campaign, 2022) are misguided and should be avoided to not stoke empirically unwarranted fears of extreme vulnerability to violence (see also Sullivan, 2023a).

The third implication of our study relates to the (in)adequacy of the NCVS SOGI instrument and similar measures now widely used. The SOGI instrument is confusing, noninclusive, and imprecise; as a result, research on LGBT populations is less nuanced and accurate than is desirable or necessary. How to best measure sexual orientation and gender identity in large population surveys continues to be discussed (e.g., Bates et al., 2022); however, glaring deficiencies in widely used instruments remain unaddressed, which, among other limitations, impede our ability to ask important questions about violent victimization against LGBT subgroups. In the next section, we explicate the challenges with this instrument and offer recommendations to enhance our ability to measure sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation accurately and inclusively. Given space constraints, we constrain our discussion in the text to problems and solutions; we provide more detail in the supporting information as a stand-alone methodological discussion. Our aim is to stimulate a discussion about these measures, and we offer these recommendations as a starting point.

SOGI Instrument: Limitations and Recommendations

Understanding disparities in victimization based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity is crucial, and robust and reliable data on these differences require accurate, inclusive measures (Bates et al., 2022; Sullivan, 2023a). The addition of the SOGI instrument to the NCVS in 2016 has laudably facilitated research on criminal victimization among LGBT individuals; however, the instrument has problems and would benefit from refinement. As new measures are implemented and inevitable challenges are encountered, it is important to take stock and evaluate whether instruments are capturing what we want them to capture in the most precise, inclusive, and effective way possible. We take on this important task here.

Sexual Orientation Measure

Existing Measure. As noted, sexual orientation is currently measured in the NCVS with the question (V3084) "Which of the following represents how you think of yourself?" Response options include "Lesbian or gay"; "Straight, that is, not lesbian or gay"; "Bisexual"; "Something else"; "I don't know the answer"; and "Refused." These response options are unduly narrow and noninclusive (see also Morgan et al., 2020), and increasingly so since the number of sexual orientation identities is expanding (Bates et al., 2022; Goldberg et al., 2020; Rothblum et al., 2020). For example, this measure does not offer a response option for those who identify as asexual or pansexual. Individuals who identify as such may have trouble answering and/or opt to select "Something else." They might also select "I'm not sure" and be lumped in with people who are questioning their sexuality. In the pooled 2017 to 2021 data, more than ~700 (.19 percent) respondents chose "Something else," and ~1,300 respondents (.32 percent) chose "I don't know the answer." Although only a small percentage of the total sample—approximately half of 1 percent—combined, this group accounts for more than one out of every five respondents (~21 percent) who responded as something other than "Straight" or "Refused." Notably, research on sexual orientation identity questions suggests that these measurement issues do not affect all populations equally; instead, certain population subgroups (e.g., Latinos/Hispanics or individuals of lower SES) are more likely to be misclassified (Ridolfo et al., 2012). Response options are critically important for accurate classification and understanding. The use of limited or unclear response options combines heterogeneous groups, wastes information, and often results in the undesirable exclusion of respondents from analyses (e.g., Truman & Morgan, 2022), with implications for findings (see, e.g., West & McCabe, 2021).

Recommendations. We suggest revising the question as follows: "Which of the following *best* describes how you identify your sexual orientation based on the sex or gender of the persons to whom you are sexually attracted?" This phrasing explicitly clarifies the focus of the existing instrument—with orientation defined based on sex/gender rather than on more personalized identities that capture a wider variety of sexuality characteristics (see the discussion in the supporting information). No less important, we propose expanding the response options to be more exhaustive/inclusive as follows: "Lesbian or gay"; "Straight or heterosexual"; "Bisexual"; "Pansexual"; "Asexual"; "Questioning or I'm not sure yet"; or "Something else." We recommend that the "Something else" response choice would be followed up with encouragement to identify a best-fit category along with an open-ended question where respondents could state the specific preferred identity not mentioned.

GENDER IDENTITY MEASURE

Existing Measure. The NCVS's two-stage gender identity instrument is "used to classify people as transgender (gender identity is different from their sex at birth) or cisgender (gender identity is the same as their sex at birth)" (Truman & Morgan, 2022). In the first stage, individuals are asked "What sex were you assigned at birth,

on your original birth certificate," with response options, including "Male," "Female," "Refused," and "Don't know." This is followed by a question: "Do you currently describe yourself as male, female or transgender?" Response options are "Male," "Female," "Transgender," "Don't know," or "None of these." As noted, following prior studies we classified respondents as transgender if they identify as transgender or if their response to the sex at birth question differs from "how they currently describe themselves" unless they reported "none of these" (in which case, they were excluded; e.g., Flores et al., 2020, 2021).

This measure has several weaknesses. First, the language used in these questions is confusing. Sex terms (male, female) are used as response categories for both the sex and gender identity questions.[16] Although sometimes used interchangeably, sex and gender/gender identity are distinct concepts (Bates et al., 2022; Burt, 2020; Sullivan, 2023a). Sex is widely understood to refer to the human classification as male or female, an innate characteristic determined by endogenous biogenetic factors (Hilton et al., 2021; Sullivan, 2023a). Whereas "gender is a social construction whereby a society or culture assigns certain tendencies or behaviors to the concepts of masculinity and femininity. Terms such as 'transgender,' 'non-binary,' and 'gender nonconforming' all refer to gender [or gender identity], not sex" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Conflating these terms likely impedes accurate measurement by promoting misunderstanding or nonresponse (also Sullivan, 2023a). Indeed, in an evaluation of the two-stage SOGI measure, some transgender respondents reported difficulty or dissatisfaction with response options given that "male and female were biological concepts of sex and not exclusive from gender identities" (Ellis et al., 2018, p. 28).

An additional challenge arises due to the sex question's terminology. The question asks about one's "sex assigned at birth," which acknowledges the fact that some individuals with differences in sexual development (DSD; sometimes called "intersex") conditions can have their sex mis-observed and wrongly classified at birth. However, the use of "assigned at birth" language is confusing and problematic here because this instrument explicitly aims to identify transgender people, not people with DSD conditions whose sex was incorrectly recorded at birth. In current form, this measure *wrongly* classifies people with DSD conditions who were *misassigned* their sex at birth as being transgender. To be sure, sex misassignment at birth due to DSD conditions is increasingly rare; thus, this issue will only affect a minuscule proportion of respondents. However, given that the transgender population is also small, these classification issues are important. "Even small errors in the general population that lead to misclassification of some respondents as [transgender] can result in samples that include a large portion of respondents who are not actually transgender" (Scout & Gates, 2014, p. 44). The recommended

[16] Reflecting this confusion, the variable label for the measure of biological sex (at birth) (V3085) is "gender identity at birth," which is conceptually incoherent.

removal of “as assigned on birth certificate” should also eliminate the need for an “I don’t know” response category.

No less important, the unduly restricted response options are noninclusive and non-exhaustive and result in a loss of information. The range of gender identities, such as nonbinary, agender, or genderqueer identities, has expanded in recent years, and these identities are not included. Given this, it is no surprise that evaluations of this measure have noted that “some respondents did not see themselves in the response categories offered” (Ellis et al., 2018; p.28). Indeed, the proportion of NCVS respondents who identify as transgender or are classified as such by the sex-gender mismatch question is roughly equal to the proportion of individuals who answer “None of these”. In all years, the proportion of individuals classified as transgender by the two-stage question is less than the proportion who answer with “None of these” or “I don’t know.” Respondents who fall into these residual categories are likely to be a mixed group of individuals who identify as another gender identity (e.g., nonbinary or agender) and are part of the transgender population on most conceptualizations, as well as respondents who respond in this way due to being “generally offended and not wanting to answer the gender identity question” or because they do not believe they have a gender identity (Truman et al., 2019, p. 844; also Ellis et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2020). Inasmuch as the goal is capturing individuals who are transgender under an inclusive definition, these response categories are confusing and inadequate, at best.

Another significant limitation, as we have noted throughout, is the inability to differentiate the various identities and different experiences that are subsumed under the transgender label, thereby impeding more fine-grained examinations. For example, a genderqueer male respondent, who expresses themselves in a traditionally masculine way, a nonbinary male who presents in an androgynous manner, and a transwoman, who may be typically perceived or reacted to as a (trans)woman, are all lumped into the same category of transgender males obscuring important differences in experiences. This lack of nuance is avoidable.

A final limitation with the measurement of sex and gender identity in the NCVS concerns the “sex allocated” variable typically used in NCVS research (V3018). The BJS recommended variable for “sex” is gleaned from the household respondent. As we have noted, it is not clear whether the household respondent reports sex or gender identity. This poses a challenge, given, as noted, some respondents, disproportionately those who identify as transgender (~19 percent), refuse to answer the biological sex question. This response pattern produces uncertainty with implications for our findings. Take, for example, a respondent whose household respondent identified them as female, who refused the sex at birth question, and answered “Transgender” for the gender identity question. Is this respondent appropriately classified as a trans-identified male (sex: male, gender identity: (trans)woman, nonbinary, agender), or a trans-identified female (sex: female, gender identity: (trans)man, nonbinary, genderqueer, etc.)? The current survey

instrument does not provide sufficient information for this classification. This undermines our ability to examine differences in victimization by sex and gender identity with noTable consequences. As we discussed, when we use the sex allocated measure, transgender male persons have a uniquely high rate of verbal threats, but when we use the respondent self-reports of sex at birth (albeit with nearly 20 percent refusals), the pattern is reversed so that transgender females have the highest rate of verbal threats. Accurately measuring sex remains important (e.g., Sullivan, 2023a), and so too is accurately measuring the wide range of different identities and experiences subsumed under the "transgender umbrella".

Recommendations. First, we suggest the household respondent be asked about both sex and gender identity/status (i.e., whether the respondent expresses, lives, or presents themselves as man/boy, girl/woman, nonbinary/genderqueer/agender, or something else). This question, which might be called *gender status*,[17] could be worded as follows: "Which of the following *best* describes [respondent]?" Response categories might include "Man, including trans-men"; "Woman, including trans-woman"; "Nonbinary, genderqueer, agender, gender fluid, Two-Spirit"; "Not sure"; "Something else." This question would be followed with a question about the respondents "Sex at birth" with response categories: "Male," "Female," or "I don't know." With these questions, we would get more precise and consistent information (i.e., avoiding responses that are a mixture of gender identity and sex).

The two-stage measure of gender identity answered by respondents might be revised with enhanced measures of sex and gender identity. Respondents could initially be asked, "*What is your biological sex, as the sex that you were born*?" Response categories include "Male" or "Female." Although some may suggest the inclusion of an "intersex" category, following others, we do not suggest this for several reasons (e.g., Sullivan, 2020, 2023a). First, "intersex" is not included as an option on birth certificates as having a DSD condition does not make one unsexed or a third sex. Second, in recent years, intersex has become used as an identity among people who do not have DSD conditions (Conron et al., 2014), and this is a measure of sex, not self-identification.

Next, given the goal of identifying those who are transgender, we suggest revising the gender identity question as follows: "Which of the following best describes your gender identity?" Response categories include "Transgender or gender minority" and "Cisgender or not transgender." Those who respond "Transgender" are then asked a follow-up question: "Which of the following *best* characterizes your gender identity?": "Woman, Trans-woman, Trans-feminine, or Transsexual male-to-female"; "Man, Trans-man, Trans-masculine or Transsexual female-to-male"; "Nonbinary, Genderqueer, Agender, Genderfluid, Two-spirit"; "Something else." The "Something else" response would be followed up with encouragement to

[17] The term "status" is proposed in recognition of the fact that "statuses can change over time and people's gender identities can and do shift across the life course" (Reisner et al., 2014, p. 1).

identify a best-fit category along with an open-ended question where respondents could state the identity not mentioned.

We believe the costs to implement these changes to the measurement of sexual orientation, sex, and gender identity/transgender status are minimal and, in our view, far outweighed by the benefits, including enhanced precision, clarity, and inclusivity. With these changes, we believe the measurement of sexual orientation and gender identity in the NCVS would be greatly enhanced and provide more accurate, fine-grained, and thus useful data on this heterogeneous population relevant to understanding violent victimization, particularly as we collect more data and have more statistical power to detect subgroup differences.

CONCLUSION

The current study employed a nationally representative household survey to estimate heterogeneity in rates of violent victimization among LGBT individuals compared to their non-LGBT counterparts. To our knowledge, our study is the first population-based study to compare victimization rates among lesbian/gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, to do so by sex, and to include sociodemographic controls. Consistent with prior studies, our findings suggest that the prevalence of violent victimization is higher for each LGBT group than for their non-LGBT counterparts. Within the LGBT population, our findings revealed that the prevalence (and incidence) of criminal and severe violent victimization is highest among bisexual individuals, even after adjusting for demographic differences, followed by transgender, lesbian/gay, and then non-LGBT individuals. We found that sex conditions the effects of LGBT status on violent victimization in a nuanced manner—for incidence but not prevalence, for bisexual and heterosexual individuals, and for some crime types—in a manner that calls for further attention. Finally, although experiencing a significantly higher rate of victimization than their non-LGBT counterparts, our findings do not suggest that there is an epidemic of criminal violence against transgender persons in the United States.

The present moment is a bit of a paradox. The past decade in the United States, United Kingdom, and similar nations has seen the most social acceptance of and legal protections for LGBT individuals than at any other time in the modern era (Gallup, 2025). At the same time, attention to the adverse situations faced by LGBT individuals is at its peak. Robust evidence to inform policies and programs to ameliorate violence and promote flourishing without stoking exaggerated fears of victimization or minimizing disparities in violent victimization remains in short supply. Alarmingly, efforts to cut federal funding for research on LGB and/or T populations are emerging just as researchers are gaining vital scientific traction—bolstered by more robust population-based data—to address important questions around crime, victimization, health, and development among these groups (C. Graham et al., 2025; Ryan & Bendix, 2025). Significant knowledge gaps remain, making continued research on LGBT population subgroups essential.

Finally, as part of the ongoing effort to gain more knowledge on LGBT populations, we urge scholars to recognize the avoidable limitations in widely used and endorsed SOGI measures, such as that employed in the NCVS, and heed calls to improve measures of sexual orientation, sex, and gender identity. Our ability to accurately understand diversity among the LGBT population is currently hampered by measurement deficiencies, which can be improved without much effort or disruption. The widespread recognition that disparities in violence against LGBT persons are crucial to document and understand, must be matched with the recognition that documenting and measuring such disparities requires robust and reliable data on gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation.

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Table 1. Sample Descriptive Statistics with Column Percentages [n= 241,250 persons]

		Non-Trans Respondents by Sexual Orientation				
		Non-LGBT	Transgender	Lesbian/Gay	Bisexual	"Something Else"
		(n=235,522)	(n=266)	(n=3,224)	(n=1,795)	(n=443)
	Total %	97.63%	0.11%	1.34%	0.74%	0.18%
(Household reported) Sex						
Male	**47.4**%	47.5	45.5	53.3	24.5	34.8
Female	**52.6**	52.5	54.5	46.7	**75.5**	**65.2**
	100%				Pearson chi2(4) = 454.5261	Pr = 0.000
Race/Ethnicity						
White	**68.7**%	68.6	69.9	71.5	69.9	69.8
Black/African American	**11.0**	11.1	7.9	10.2	9.2	8.1
Hispanic/Latino	**13.3**	13.3	15.4	13.1	13.0	13.8
Asian, Pacific Islander, & ons*	**5.7**	5.7	4.1	3.5	4.2	4.7
Multi-racial/ethnic	**1.3**	1.3	2.6	1.8	3.7	3.6
	100%				Pearson chi2(16) = 159.0078	Pr = 0.000
Age						
16-24	**12.5**%	12.1	**28.6**	15.5	**42.6**	**27.1**
25-34	**16.8**	16.5	22.9	24.8	**30.3**	26.4
35-49	**23.9**	24.0	20.3	26.4	15.3	17.4
50-64	**25.0**	25.1	13.9	23.8	8.4	17.4
65+	**21.9**	22.3	14.3	9.5	3.5	11.7
	100%				Pearson chi2(16) = 2.7e+03	Pr = 0.000
Marital Status						
Married	**52.4**%	53.0	30.1	29.8	18.3	19.6
Never Married	**27.7**	26.9	**56.8**	**59.7**	**67.0**	**60.9**
Widowed	**6.3**	6.4	2.6	1.1	1.3	4.7
Divorced	**11.5**	11.6	8.6	7.9	10.6	12.9
Separated	**2.0**	2.0	1.9	1.4	2.8	1.8
	100%				Pearson chi2(16) = 3.6e+03	Pr = 0.000
Education						
Less than High School	**13.5**%	13.6	15.0	7.0	15.7	11.3
High School Graduate	**25.7**	25.8	24.1	18.9	20.6	20.1
Some College	**28.4**	28.3	30.8	29.9	**37.8**	35.7
BA/College Graduate	**20.7**	20.6	18.4	26.4	17.7	22.8
Post-Graduate Education	**11.7**	11.7	11.7	**17.8**	8.1	10.2
	100%				Pearson chi2(16) = 445.8976	Pr = 0.000
Annual Household Income						
< $25,000	**19.3**%	19.1	28.9	18.8	**32.6**	**31.2**
$25,000 - $34,999	**10.2**	10.3	13.2	8.3	11.8	9.5
$35,000 - $49,999	**15.1**	15.2	13.9	14.2	13.3	14.2
$50,000 - $74,999	**18.2**	18.2	13.5	18.2	15.2	17.2
$75,000 - $99,999	**14.7**	14.8	13.5	14.2	12.2	9.9
$100,000+	**22.4**	22.5	16.9	26.3	15.0	18.1
	100%				Pearson chi2(20) = 338.4943	Pr = 0.000
Residential Area Type						
(S)MSA/Central City	**31.6**%	31.2	**44.4**	**46.5**	**48.1**	**48.1**
Suburb/Surrounding (S)MSA	**54.1**	54.3	46.2	45.1	42.2	42.9
Nonmetropolitan	**14.4**	14.5	9.4	8.4	9.7	9.0
	100%				Pearson chi2(8) = 682.1809	Pr = 0.000
US Region						
West	**22.0**%	21.8	30.1	27.5	30.8	**34.1**
Northeast	**13.0**	13.0	14.7	15.8	11.3	11.7
Midwest	**28.9**	29.0	28.6	24.1	30.5	26.0
South	**36.1**	36.2	26.7	32.6	27.5	28.2
	100%				Pearson chi2(12) = 265.1274	Pr = 0.000
Interview Format						
In-Person	**44.8**%	44.7	47.0	46.5	**49.2**	44.9
Phone	**55.2**	55.3	53.0	53.5	50.8	55.1
					Pearson chi2(4) = 19.2599	Pr = 0.001
Mean Number of Interviews	**3.21**	3.22 BCDE	2.71 AD	2.83 AD	2.34 ABCE	2.67 AD

Notes: *ons refers to "otherwise not specified." Characteristic percentages based off of each respondent's most recent interview. Percentages underlined represent substantially lower percentages than the non-LGBT group, whereas those in **bold** are substantially higher.

Table 2. Violent Victimization Prevalence rates, by Type of Crime, Sex, and LGBT Status, 2017-2019.5 (n = 532,815; from 241,250 persons)

Males

	Gay (n = 3702)				Bisexual (n = 794)				Transgender (n = 244)				Something Else SO (n =310)				Non-LGBT (n = 244,596)		
	P Rate	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90 % CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90% CI	
Total Violent Crime	**13.63**	10.14	18.30	**2.56**	**33.66**	22.40	50.28	**6.33**	**10.88 !**	3.71	31.44	**2.05**	**19.51 !**	7.86	47.59	**3.67**	**5.31**	5.00	5.64
Severe Violent Crime	**9.15**	6.53	12.81	**2.92**	**20.15**	12.46	32.40	**6.43**	**10.88 !**	3.71	31.44	**3.47**	**17.54 !**	6.48	46.63	**5.60**	**3.13**	2.89	3.40
Simple Assault	**4.84**	2.95	7.91	**2.10**	**15.20**	7.59	30.21	**6.61**	**5.21 !**	0.99	26.91	**2.26**	**1.96 !**	0.37	10.25	**0.85**	**2.30**	2.10	2.52
Verbal Threats	**4.03**	2.61	6.22	**1.57**	**8.23**	4.15	16.27	**3.20**	**19.54 !**	7.47	50.10	**7.59**	**1.26 !**	0.24	6.65	**0.49**	**2.57**	2.36	2.81

Females

	Lesbian (n = 2976)				Bisexual (n = 2420)				Transgender (n = 278)				Something Else SO (n = 567)				Non-LGBT (n = 276,928)		
	P Rate	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90 % CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	90% CI	
Total Violent Crime	**10.43**	7.22	15.06	**1.88**	**44.49**	37.34	52.94	**8.00**	**20.97 !**	9.05	47.84	**3.77**	**24.07**	13.66	42.08	**4.33**	**5.56**	5.28	5.86
Severe Violent Crime	**5.38**	3.30	8.77	**1.78**	**27.94**	22.80	34.19	**9.21**	**10.63 !**	4.52	24.83	**3.51**	**11.72**	5.56	24.55	**3.86**	**3.03**	2.82	3.26
Simple Assault	**6.38**	3.92	10.38	**2.29**	**18.44**	13.44	25.25	**6.62**	**10.34 !**	2.42	43.03	**3.71**	**13.53**	6.16	29.45	**4.85**	**2.79**	2.59	3.00
Verbal Threats	**6.26**	3.93	9.96	**2.67**	**9.58**	6.15	14.90	**4.08**	**9.87 !**	3.73	25.84	**4.21**	**8.18 !**	3.42	19.40	**3.49**	**2.35**	2.15	2.56

Notes: Estimates were calculated using Taylor's series linearization for 2017-2019.5 pooled years after listwise deletion of socio-demographic characteristics. Subpopulation sizes are survey-weighted and rounded to the nearest whole number. **P Rate** = the prevalence of experiencing a given crime type at least once in the past 6 months per 1000 individuals. **Shaded cells** denote the highest estimated prevalence rate for each crime category by sex. **Ratio** = the prevalence of each LGBT group relative to (i.e., divided) by the prevalence of the non-LGBT group for each sex. **!** = interpret estimate with caution; the coefficient of variation (ratio of the standard error to the estimate) is greater than 50%, indicating low precision and reliability.

Table 3. Logit Analysis of LGBT status on Total Violence & Severe Violence Victimization (n = 532,815)

	Total Violent Crime							Severe Violent Crime						
	Model 1			Model 2			M1→M2	Model 3			Model 4			M3→M4
	OR	p	95% CI	OR	p	95% CI	%△OR	OR	p	95% CI	OR	p	95% CI	%△OR
LGBT Status *(reference: Non-LGBT)*														
Transgender	2.75	*	(1.21 - 6.24)	1.79		(0.77 - 4.15)	-.35	3.19	**	(1.39 - 7.31)	2.03		(0.86 - 4.79)	-.36
Lesbian/Gay	2.09	***	(1.55 - 2.80)	1.77	***	(1.32 - 2.37)	-.15	2.24	***	(1.59 - 3.16)	1.93	***	(1.36 - 2.73)	-.14
Bisexual	6.66	***	(5.38 - 8.25)	3.95	***	(3.16 - 4.93)	-.41	7.08	***	(5.58 - 8.99)	4.14	***	(3.19 - 5.37)	-.42
Something Else' Sexual Orientation	3.72	***	(2.04 - 6.76)	2.42	**	(1.32 - 4.45)	-.35	4.06	***	(1.89 - 8.69)	2.65	*	(1.22 - 5.75)	-.35
Sex *(Male)*														
Female				1.03		(0.94 - 1.13)					.96		(0.85 - 1.08)	
Race/Ethnicity *(Non-Hispanic White)*														
Black/African American				.85	*	(0.73 - 0.99)					.86		(0.72 - 1.04)	
Hispanic/Latino				.74	***	(0.62 - 0.87)					.84		(0.68 - 1.03)	
Asian, Pacific Islander, or Otherwise Not Specified				.65	***	(0.52 - 0.80)					.76		(0.57 - 1.01)	
Multi-racial/ethnic				1.75	***	(1.36 - 2.26)					1.89	***	(1.41 - 2.54)	
Age *(65+)*														
16-24				3.59	***	(2.82 - 4.57)					3.82	***	(2.72 - 5.37)	
25-34				3.46	***	(2.83 - 4.24)					3.62	***	(2.62 - 5.02)	
35-49				3.00	***	(2.47 - 3.64)					3.10	***	(2.31 - 4.15)	
50-64				2.22	***	(1.84 - 2.68)					2.19	***	(1.69 - 2.84)	
Marital Status (*Married*)														
Never Married				1.70	***	(1.47 - 1.97)					1.74	***	(1.44 - 2.09)	
Widowed				1.95	***	(1.46 - 2.60)					1.82	**	(1.24 - 2.66)	
Divorced				2.46	***	(2.12 - 2.84)					2.42	***	(1.99 - 2.95)	
Separated				3.61	***	(2.90 - 4.48)					3.04	***	(2.32 - 3.99)	
Education (*BA/College Graduate*)														
Less than High School				1.27	**	(1.07 - 1.50)					1.52	***	(1.21 - 1.92)	
High School Graduate				1.06		(0.92 - 1.22)					1.32	**	(1.08 - 1.61)	
Some College				1.15	*	(1.00 - 1.32)					1.34	**	(1.08 - 1.67)	
Post-Graduate Education				1.03		(0.85 - 1.24)					.89		(0.67 - 1.19)	
Annual Household Income (*$100k+*)														
< $25,000				2.16	***	(1.84 - 2.53)					2.32	***	(1.84 - 2.93)	
$25,000 - $34,999				1.54	***	(1.30 - 1.84)					1.60	***	(1.27 - 2.01)	
$35,000 - $49,999				1.37	***	(1.15 - 1.62)					1.38	*	(1.06 - 1.78)	
$50,000 - $74,999				1.13		(0.94 - 1.35)					1.10		(0.86 - 1.40)	
$75,000 - $99,999				1.00		(0.82 - 1.23)					1.04		(0.77 - 1.40)	
MSA Status *(Metropolitan Central City)*														
Suburb/Surrounding (S)MSA				.78	***	(0.70 - 0.87)					.76	***	(0.68 - 0.85)	
Nonmetropolitan				.80	*	(0.66 - 0.96)					.78	*	(0.63 - 0.96)	
Model Info	F(6, 165) = 114.17***			F(33, 138) = 60.39***				F(6, 165) = 90.88***			F(33, 138) = 46.55***			
Adjusted McFadden R^2	.03			.08				.03			.08			

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed tests); Model info: Strata = 160, PSUs 330; Subpopulation Observations = 532,815; Subpopulation size = 577,221,647

Notes: Reference category in *parentheses* following variable label. **%△OR** = the percent reduction in the odds ratio after adding control variables. Controls for number of interviews and interview type included but not shown in both models; in Models 2 and 4, US region is also controlled but not presented. The Adjusted McFadden R^2 is based on a model without the survey design adjustments.

Table 4. Violent Victimization Prevalence rates, by Type of Crime and LGBT Status: Comparison of Weighted NCVS Data 2017-2019.5 and 2017-2021

NCVS 2017 - 2019.5 - Full Sample (n = 538,033) - TSL

	Lesbian/Gay (n = 6709)					Bisexual (n = 3230)					Transgender (n = 535)					Something Else SO (n = 891)					Non-LGBT (n = 526,668)			
	P Rate	**#vict**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90 % CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90% CI	
Total Violent Crime	12.19	82	9.60	15.48	**2.25**	41.62	130	35.38	48.91	**7.69**	16.88	10	8.91	31.74	**3.12**	21.94	18	13.50	35.46	**4.06**	5.41	2,654	5.19	5.64
Severe Violent Crin	7.50	52	5.67	9.90	**2.44**	25.89	85	21.48	31.19	**8.45**	10.53	7	5.32	20.74	**3.43**	13.75	11	7.34	25.61	**4.49**	3.07	1,466	2.89	3.25
Simple Assault	5.47	34	3.86	7.74	**2.16**	17.55	53	13.31	23.11	**6.93**	8.75 !	4	3.16	23.97	**3.45**	8.90	8	4.32	18.25	**3.51**	2.53	1,279	2.38	2.69
Verbal Threats	4.96	36	3.59	6.85	**2.03**	9.20	31	6.30	13.42	**3.77**	14.12	8	7.04	28.12	**5.79**	5.40	6	2.38	12.22	**2.22**	2.44	1,280	2.29	2.60

NCVS 2017 - 2021 (weighted subpopulation size = 1,172,366,308) - GVF

	Lesbian/Gay (weighted n = 16,030,6510)					Bisexual (weighted n = 8,353,814)					Transgender (weighted n = 1,304,778)					Something Else SO (weighted n = 2,062,703)					Non-LGBT (weighted n = 1,144,614,363)			
	P Rate	**#vict**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90 % CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90% CI		**Ratio**	**P Rate**	**#vict**	90% CI	
Total Violent Crime	11.08	145	7.60	14.56	**2.24**	35.17	225	26.36	43.99	**7.10**	18.70	18	5.08	32.32	**3.77**	23.70	35	11.08	36.32	**4.78**	4.95	4,700	4.48	5.43
Severe Violent Crin	6.27	85	4.26	8.27	**2.19**	21.53	143	16.19	26.87	**7.53**	12.42	11	3.62	21.22	**4.35**	14.84	22	6.97	22.70	**5.19**	2.86	2,651	2.60	3.12
Simple Assault	5.22	65	2.83	7.61	**2.32**	14.91	92	9.20	20.62	**6.61**	7.42 !	8	-1.43	16.26	**3.29**	11.47	16	2.42	20.52	**5.09**	2.26	2,205	1.96	2.55
Verbal Threats	5.29	75	3.23	7.35	**2.24**	9.37	61	5.61	13.13	**3.96**	10.71 !	12	1.50	19.93	**4.53**	5.46 !	13	0.25	10.67	**2.31**	2.36	2,388	2.10	2.62

Notes: Subpopulation sizes are survey-weighted and rounded to the nearest whole number. **P Rate** = the prevalence of experiencing a given crime type at least once in the past 6 months per 1000 individuals. **#vict** = the unweighted number of persons on which the estimates are based. **Ratio** = the prevalence of each LGBT group relative to (i.e., divided) by the prevalence of the non-LGBT group. **!** = interpret with caution; estimates have a coefficient of variation that is >50%, indicating questionable precision and reliability. **TSL** = Taylor's series linearization and **GVF** = generalized variance functions (see Supplementary Table S7 for more detail on the GVF estimates). The weighted n is presented for the GVF models is necessitated by the change in SOGI application and the resulting inability to count LGBT respondents who did not report crime victimizations. See Appendix A for the population estimates.