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## **Awakening from androcentrism: calls for measurement of gender and sexuality in criminology**

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# Awakening from Androcentrism: Calls for Measurement of Gender and Sexuality in Criminology

Hannah Gateley & Courtney Crittenden, Ph.D.

## Review of Literature

Criminology is and has long been a male-dominated field, designed by heterosexual men to punish and treat other men, despite the fact that analyses have revealed gendered patterns of offending since its inception. Criminologists have consistently asserted that research on predominately-male or all-male subjects can be broadly applied to females as well. The inclusion of sexuality in criminology has been even more gradual than gender. After gaining social attention, sexual minorities were thought of as ‘biological degenerates’ and were criminalized with sodomy laws. Following the repeal of those laws, criminologists remained silent, maintaining sexual minority stigma. Criminological research on sexual minorities is still sparse, and measurements of sexuality and gender are limited, even though there have been repeated calls for inclusivity, most notably in Belknap’s 2014 Presidential Address to the American Society of Criminology. Belknap emphasized a continued need for activist criminology due to the continual marginalization of minorities by the criminal justice system. Noting the “heightened responsibility” that criminologists have in dealing with marginalized populations, she suggested that of all fields that can and are discussing gender and sexuality progressively, criminologists should be at the forefront due to their relative privilege and knowledge on the shortcomings of the system.

The current study explores the current standing of the inclusion of gender and sexuality in criminology and victimology. The research questions for this study are:

- 1) To what extent are gender and sexuality included in criminological and victimization articles?
- 2) How are gender and sexuality operationalized, and are there major differences across the disciplines?
- 3) What, if any relationship exists between presumed gender of the author(s) and the inclusion of gender and sexuality?

## Method

The current study is a content analysis of journal articles from two preeminent journals in the field of victimology and criminology: *Journal of Interpersonal Violence (JIV)* and *Criminology*. In order to collect the data, journals were accessed electronically, and publications from 2015-2019 were included. All *Criminology* publications were included, but due to the large number of *JIV* publications, a sample of *JIV* publications was randomly selected to match the number of *Criminology* articles sampled (n=139), for a total of 278 publications. Each piece was coded by a single trained coder. The coding sheet examined whether gender and sexuality were included in the title, abstract, as keywords/terms, literature review, methods, analysis/results, and conclusion/discussion sections of the article. Additionally, if gender and/or sexuality were used as variables in the study, it was determined if they were used as a control, independent, or dependent variable, how the variable was operationalized, and whether or not that operationalization was non-binary. Finally, the gender of the author(s) was presumed based on pronouns used in authors’ biographies.

## Results

A total of 278 publications (*Criminology* = 139 and *JIV* = 139) were analyzed using descriptive and chi-square analyses. On average, gender was mentioned in 3.78 out of 7 possible article sections, and sexuality was mentioned in less than one. Gender ( $X^2 = 15.207, p < .001$ ) and sexuality ( $X^2 = 19.608, p < .001$ ) were both found to be significantly associated with journal type. Specifically, a significantly greater percentage of *JIV* articles mentioned gender (99.3%) and sexuality (31.7%) compared to *Criminology* articles (87.8%; 10.1%, respectively).

Any Mention of Social Constructs by Journal Type

	Criminology	JIV	X <sup>2</sup>
Gender	87.8% (122)	99.3% (138)	15.207***
Sexuality	10.1% (14)	31.7% (44)	19.608***

Gender and sexuality were both most often included as control variables, but gender was included as a variable in 176 articles, while sexuality was only included as any kind of variable in 12 articles. While a greater percentage of *Criminology* articles included gender as a control variable (51.1%), a significantly larger amount of *JIV* articles included gender as an independent variable (28.8%). The relationship between journal type and the inclusion of sexuality as any kind of variable was also statistically significant ( $X^2 = 5.574, p < .05$ ), with *JIV* including sexuality as a variable in a higher percentage of articles (7.2%) than *Criminology* (1.4%). A significantly higher percentage of *Criminology* articles operationalized sexuality outside of a binary (1.4%), as compared to *JIV* (0.7%). However, sexuality and gender were only measured outside of a binary in three articles each.

Author Gender by Journal Type

	Criminology	JIV
All male	33.8% (47)	5.8% (8)
All female	17.3% (24)	33.8% (47)
Both	43.2% (60)	41.7% (58)
Undeterminable	5.8% (8)	18.7% (26)
X <sup>2</sup> = 44.669***		

Within *Criminology*, all-male author teams included gender in 78.7% of articles, but only mentioned sexuality in 8.5% of articles, compared to all-female author teams, who included gender in 100.0% of articles and sexuality in 16.7% of articles. Within *JIV*, 100.0% of articles authored by all-male author teams, 100.0% of articles authored by all-female teams, and 98.3% of articles authored by mixed-gender author teams included the construct gender at some point.

Social Constructs as Variables by Journal Type

	Criminology	JIV	X <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gender</b>	61.2% (85)	65.5% (91)	0.557
Control Variable	51.1% (71)	36.7% (51)	5.843*
Independent Variable	12.9% (18)	28.8% (40)	10.545**
Dependent Variable	1.4% (2)	5.8% (8)	3.734
Non-binary operationalization	0.7% (1)	1.4% (2)	0.669
<b>Sexuality</b>	1.4% (2)	7.2% (10)	5.574*
Control Variable	0.7% (1)	4.3% (6)	3.664
Independent Variable	0.7% (1)	1.4% (2)	.337
Dependent Variable	0.0% (0)	2.2% (3)	3.033
Non-binary operationalization	1.4% (2)	0.7% (1)	9.574**

## Conclusion

Overall, *JIV* included gender and sexuality more than *Criminology*. These findings suggest that productive next steps would be to increase inclusion of gender and sexuality in scholarship, with conceptualizations that match societal perceptions of gender and sexuality and to work towards gender parity in authorship. These measures would encourage gender and sexual minorities to engage more with the field of criminology.