Targeted Crimes Against LGBTQ+ in New Zealand: Facts and Consequences

Abstract

This paper investigates the disparities between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ populations in New Zealand regarding targeted crime, emphasizing the severity of outcomes and systemic reactions. Despite advancements in legislation and society, LGBTQ+ individuals persistently encounter notable discrimination and challenges that increase their victimization risk. Leveraging data from the New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey (NZCVS) spanning 2018 to 2023 and involving over 32,000 participants, this study uncovers a pronounced disparity in crime victimization rates affecting LGBTQ+ individuals. It further examines their interactions with societal and administrative bodies post-incident, including engagements with mental health services and law enforcement agencies. This research provides insight into the particular vulnerabilities of the LGBTQ+ community and evaluates the eff

1 Introduction

This paper examines how crime victimization among LGBTQ+ individuals differs from that experienced by non-LGBTQ+ counterparts, with a particular focus on the severity of consequences. The study acknowledges that LGBTQ+ individuals face unique challenges and discrimination that are not encountered by non-LGBTQ+ people. Discrimination affects the LGBTQ+ community, which includes individuals who are not heterosexual and/or express diverse gender identities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or others.

Despite gradual progress in protecting the basic rights of LGBTQ+ people, legal and administrative systems are still inadequate in safeguarding against and documenting hate crimes and discrimination targeting this community. In New Zealand, the inclusiveness of LGBTQ+ populations has been a topic of intense public debate over the past two decades, with discussions spanning various dimensions including employment, marriage, marriage equality, and gender-affirming procedures (Yeung & Crothers, 2016; Carpenter et al., 2024).

However, an important yet understudied aspect is the violence and crime faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in comparison to the general population. These individuals may face significantly different risks of being victims of crime or offense. The existing body of research is limited, particularly in documenting relevant indicators and the motivations behind such crimes. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on the crime victimization of LGBTQ+ individuals in New Zealand compared to non-LGBTQ+ people, through the exploration of two key research questions.

New Zealand is recognized as an inclusive country, offering valuable resources for LGBTQ+ research. In a study by Flores (2021), which ranked 175 countries based on LGBTQ+ equality from 1981 to 2020, New Zealand was placed as the tenth most inclusive. Legislative progress reflects this inclusivity—discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation has been prohibited since 1990, the 2013 Marriage Amendment Act legalized same-sex marriages, and the 2022 Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Act banned conversion therapy.

Aligned with this commitment to inclusivity, New Zealand systematically documents LGBTQ+ related indicators through its legal systems and social surveys. In this study, we analyse data mainly from the New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey (NZCVS) to explore how LGBTQ+ individuals are affected by or targeted by crime. Covering the period from 2018 to 2023, the NZCVS encompasses data from over 32,000 individuals across five cycles.

The NZCVS offers several key advantages. It provides a comprehensive view of both reported and unreported crime victimization in New Zealand, including household and personal offenses. The survey includes detailed individual-level information, such as sexual orientation and gender identity, which is not readily available from other sources. Additionally, it assesses the risk of being a victim of crime over the past year and categorizes the type of offense. The NZCVS also captures the perceived motives behind crimes or offenses, including potential discrimination based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, and sex. Furthermore, the survey data can be linked to other administrative datasets within the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), enabling a broader analysis of service utilization across multiple public agencies.

Existing literature examined crime victimisation based on sexuality of an individual, which this study will further delve into in terms of the types of crime and related consequences. However, prior research has not examined the

effect of gender identity on crime victimisation. Gender minority might overlap with the sexuality minority group but these two parts are scientifically independent. This study adds to the body of literature by testing the impact of sexual orientation and gender identity on crime victimisation separately.

Our study examines the disparities in crime victimization between sexual and gender minorities (LGBTQ+) and the general population in New Zealand. The research focuses on two main objectives: first, to assess the relative risk of victimization among LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals, and second, to explore how these two groups differ in their interactions with public agencies following crime victimization. This includes their engagement with mental health services, law enforcement, and the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).

\footnote{ ACC is a unique Crown entity in New Zealand that administers the country's no-fault accidental injury compensation scheme. This scheme, known as the ACC, offers financial compensation and support to citizens, residents, and temporary visitors who have sustained personal injuries. The ACC is funded through a mix of levies and government contributions.}

For this empirical analysis, data from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) is utilized. The NZCVS data has been incorporated into the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), a comprehensive administrative research database maintained by Stats NZ, which aggregates information from a diverse range of public agencies. The NZCVS provides detailed records on both reported and unreported instances of crime victimization, along with insights into the motivations behind the crimes and the associated physical and psychological impacts on victims. Moreover, the survey captures a wide array of sociodemographic variables, including those critical to this study: sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex at birth. Using this information, the study identifies individuals as LGBTQ+ based on their sexual orientation (gay/lesbian, bisexual, or other non-heterosexual identities), gender diversity, or when there is a discrepancy between their gender identity and biological sex. The research aggregates data from the NZCVS over five cycles, covering the years 2018 through 2022.

Our study reveals that LGBTQ+ individuals experience significantly higher rates of crime victimization compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals, with 45.5% of LGBTQ+ respondents reporting victimization in the past 12 months, compared to 31.8% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents—a difference of 14.3 percentage points. This disparity persists even after accounting for sociodemographic differences such as age, household income, and educational attainment, indicating that these factors have minimal impact on the victimization gap between the two groups.

The research also highlights regional variations in victimization disparities, with smaller differences observed in major urban centers like Auckland and Wellington, where the gap is 7.8 percentage points, compared to a more pronounced difference of 14.2 percentage points in other parts of New Zealand. Moreover, LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to perceive that their victimization was motivated by their sexual orientation or gender identity. They also tend to experience more severe consequences from their victimization, such as the need to take time off work or enduring physical injuries, compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals.

The remainder of this report is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses the New Zealand crime victimisation landscape and summarises the national and international literature on the crime victimisation prevalence of

LGBTQ+ individuals. Section 3 details the data used and provides descriptive statistics. Section 4 presents the econometric approach used in this study, and Section 5 discusses the empirical findings. Section 6 concludes and presents the policy implications of the results.

2 Background and Literature Review

Between 4% and 5% of New Zealand's population have been victims of crime over a 12-month period, according to police records, though not every crime is reported.[1] The 2023 New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) reveals that nearly one-third of NZ adults were victimised in the preceding year. The risk of crime is unevenly distributed, with LGBTQ+ individuals facing the highest risk; 17.8% of LGBTQ+ respondents reported experiencing interpersonal violence, the highest rate among all demographic groups.[2]

Early literature, such as that by Herek (1990), attributes the higher frequency of attacks against LGBTQ+ individuals to heterosexism or heteronormativity. The basis of this concept is that heterosexuality is the only normal and natural expression of sexuality and encompasses the belief that all people are, or should be heterosexual and that heterosexual relationships are the only norm and therefore superior (Cramer, 2002).

Research indicates that LGBTQ+ individuals face higher victimization rates than cis-heterosexual peers, often driven by multiple intersecting factors such as discrimination. Meyer's studies (2008, 2010) using semi-structured interviews in New York City highlighted that violence severity perceptions among LGBTQ+ vary by ethnicity, social class, and gender. For instance, middle-class white individuals perceived their experiences as more severe compared to low-income people of colour, who actually faced more physical violence. Gender differences in victimization are complex and affected by age and race, with some studies indicating men face more frequent victimization, while others suggest young women are more susceptible to crime.

A close paper to our study is Flores et al. (2021), which used NCVS data to reveal that transgender individuals experience violence at four times the rate of their cisgender counterparts, with similar victimisation rates between transgender men and women. Those assigned male at birth are more likely to perceive their victimization as a hate crime. Despite high victimization rates, reporting is low among both transgender and cisgender victims, often due to fears of safety and discrimination. Further studies like Briones-Robinson et al. (2016) and Kahle (2020) highlight ongoing challenges such as differential police treatment and higher rates of bullying and intimate partner violence (IPV) among LGBTQ+ youth. These findings emphasize the need for inclusive policies and more research to address the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals.

Meyer (2012) noted that LGBTQ+ people of colour might see anti-queer violence as reflecting negatively on their racial communities. Additionally, women report higher levels of fear, even when adjusting for victimization history. Rothman et al. (2011) reviewed studies on sexual assault among LGBTQ+ individuals, revealing high variability in victimization rates, with lesbian or bisexual women frequently reporting higher rates of childhood, adult, and intimate partner sexual assaults compared to gay or bisexual men, who reported more hate crime-related assaults.

[1] The Estimated Resident Population was used as the denominator. See: https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/population

[2] The report defines LGBT+ as a demographic group that includes transgender people and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or having another non-heterosexual sexual identity.

The literature reports differences in crime victimisations not only by sexual orientation or transgender status, but by demographic characteristics. For example, Bender & Lauritsen (2021) found that those who identified as bisexual were more likely to be younger, female, and in the lowest income category. Being young and female may explain why bisexual individuals have higher victimisation rates rather than their sexual orientation. Therefore, it is vital to investigate how the prevalence of self-reported crime victimisation differs between LGBTQ+ individuals and their cisgender-heterosexual peers after controlling for a large range of socio-demographic characteristics.

3 Data and Descriptive Statistics

We mainly use data from the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS), which collects information about New Zealanders' experience of crime. The survey has been run every year since 2018, and each cycle asks around 8,000 New Zealanders from all walks of life about their experiences of crime. The NZCVS consists of a core module with recurring crime and victimisation questions, supplemented by changing in-depth modules on various topics.[3] The NZCVS is a vital source of comprehensive data on adult victims of crime in New Zealand, offering insights into crime patterns and victimisation across different regions and demographics. A consistent methodology across all five cycles from 2018 to 2023 allows for accurate analysis of changes in crime and victimisation levels over the years.

About 35,000 participants have been interviewed across the five NZCVS cycles. Of the 35,000 participants, around 32,000 individuals have agreed to have their NZCVS responses linked to the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI).[4] Having the NZCVS linked within the IDI provides two substantial advantages: first, further background information for each individual can be retrieved from other datasets. Second, other outcome variables related to crime victimisation can be examined for each individual in the NZCVS. This is particularly important for Research Aim 2, which looks at the uptake of public agency support. We restrict our sample to the adult population between 18 and 79 at the time of the interview. After removing all unlinked individuals, our final sample consists of 28,692 individuals.

[3] For example, Cycle 3 focused on family violence by asking additional questions, while Cycle 4 addressed controlling behaviour in families following legislative changes.

[4] The IDI is a large research database containing de-identified microdata about people and households. Data is provided by a large range of government agencies (e.g., Police, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Development, Inland Revenue), Stats NZ surveys, and non-government organisations. Individuals are linked across datasets to form the IDI. To allow for a wider analysis that incorporates factors not otherwise captured in the NZCVS, the participants were asked for their consent to link their anonymised records with the Statistic NZ IDI.

Table 1: Demographic summary statistics

	(I)	(II)	(III)
Panel A	Demographic		
	LGBTQ+	Non- LGBTQ+	Total
Age			
<30	435 (0.361)	4,290 (0.156)	4,725 (0.165)
≥30	771 (0.639)	23,196 (0.844)	23,967 (0.835)
Partnership status			
Single	531 (0.440)	8,613 (0.313)	9,144 (0.319)
Partnered[a]	675 (0.560)	18,873 (0.687)	19,548 (0.681)
Geographic location			
Metro area	594 (0.493)	10,866 (0.395)	11,460 (0.399)
Rest of New Zealand	612 (0.507)	16,620 (0.605)	17,232 (0.601)
Deprivation score			
8 or higher	465 (0.386)	9,882 (0.360)	10,347 (0.361)
< 8	741 (0.614)	17,604 (0.640)	18,345 (0.639)
Birthplace			
New Zealand	963 (0.799)	20,883 (0.760)	21,846 (0.761)
Overseas	243 (0.201)	6,603 (0.240)	6,846 (0.239)
Panel B	Crime victimization		
	LGBTQ+	Non- LGBTQ+	Difference
Any	0.455	0.312	0.143***
Personal offence	0.296	0.157	0.139***
Interpersonal offence	0.192	0.073	0.119***
Panel C	Mental health benefits claims		
	LGBTQ+	Non- LGBTQ+	Difference
PRIMHD	0.087	0.036	0.051***
PHARMAC	0.358	0.226	0.132***
PHARMAC (anxiety/depression)	0.269	0.141	0.128***
Individuals	**28,692**	**1,206**	**27,486**

The first column of Table 1 shows the distribution of the sociodemographic characteristics of our population of interest. Almost 84% of participants are aged 30 and above, and 68% state being in a (same-sex or different-sex) relationship. Two out of five adults live in Auckland or Wellington, and three-quarters of the population were born in New Zealand.

Our sample comprises 1,206 LGBTQ+ individuals, which is 4.2% of the total population. Substantial differences exist when comparing sociodemographic characteristics by LGBTQ+ status (columns II and III

of Table 1). LGBTQ+ individuals are, on average, younger (36.0% are below 30 compared to 15.6% of the non-LGBTQ+ sample), are single (44.0% vs 31.0%) and live in Auckland or Wellington (49.0% vs 40.0%).

Error! Reference source not found. shows crime victimisation by LGBTQ+ status. One out of three (31.2%) non-LGBTQ+ individuals reported having experienced a crime in the 12 months before the interview. Almost every second LGBTQ+ individual (45.5%) states having been a victim of an offence or crime. That is a difference of 14.3 percentage points – this means that sexual and gender minorities report almost fifty per cent higher victimisations (0.143/0.312 = 45.8%) compared to their cis-heterosexual peers. By offence types, these differences are even more so pronounced: personal offences (87% higher), physical offences (131% higher), and interpersonal offences (162% higher). There are also large differences in crime victimisation by sexual orientation and gender identity. Individuals who identify as bisexual have a much higher victimisation rate, even when compared to those whose sexual orientation is gay or lesbian. Bisexual individuals report being victims of an interpersonal offence 20.4 percentage points more often than their heterosexual peers (279% = 0.204/0.073).

As mentioned in Section 2, there is likely to be a positive correlation between the overall distribution of LGBTQ+ individuals' socio-demographic characteristics in **Error! Reference source not found.** (e.g., younger, living in Auckland or Wellington) and having reported being a victim of a crime. Thus, the econometric model used in this study estimates the likelihood of being a victim of an offence and controls for both LGBTQ+ status and socio-demographic characteristics. This will help understand to which degree the differences observed in **Error! Reference source not found.** are caused by differences in the individual's background or by their LGBTQ+ status.

To explore the broader impacts of victimization on various aspects of victims' lives, we use several datasets from the IDI. These include: (1) NZ Police data on all recorded crime victims, (2) ACC Injury Claims data, which provides information on accepted claims for injuries and accidents, (3) Ministry of Health (MoH) Pharmaceutical data, which tracks subsidized medications. We follow Bowden et al. (2020) by using chemical IDs to identify mental health-related drugs, including those for depression, anxiety, and emotional problems, (4) MoH PRIMHD data, which collects information on secondary mental health referrals for services outside of general practitioners and hospitals, and (5) Ministry of Social Development (MSD) benefit data, detailing individuals receiving working-age social welfare benefits, including unemployment, sickness-related benefits, and hardship benefits such as accommodation supplements or sole parent support.

NZCVS respondents who appear in the survey but were not victims of a crime may also access these services for other reasons. For each individual, we create a binary indicator equal to 1 if the individual had accessed the respective service in the past 12 months before the interview and 0 otherwise. **Error! Reference source not found.** provides public agency uptake rates for the entire sample (columns (I) and (II), those who reported having been a victim of crime in the past 12 months before the interview (columns

(III)-(IV)), and those who were the victim of an interpersonal or physical offence or have been highly victimised.

Error! Reference source not found. shows LGBTQ+ individuals have a slightly higher share of individuals who recorded their victimisation to the police (4.2%) compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals (3.3%). These numbers are substantially lower compared to the prevalence of self-reported crime victimisation, as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, but in line with what the NZ Police publishes. In terms of uptake of other agencies, there are similar levels of ACC claims but higher levels of PHARMAC mental health prescriptions and PRIMHD referrals for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. When examining MSD benefits, we find higher uptake of unemployment/sickness-related benefits and lower uptake of hardship benefits for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals.

When we restrict the sample to those individuals who reported having experienced a crime in the past twelve months prior to the interview (columns (III) and (IV)) or being a victim of an interpersonal or physical offence or highly victimised (columns (V) and (VI)), the magnitude of differences is further pronounced. For example, the share of LGBTQ+ individuals with a mental-health prescription is 13.2 percentage points higher compared to non-LGBTQ+ people in the full sample. This difference grows to 19.5 percentage points when examining only victimised individuals by LGBTQ+ status. Interestingly, police reporting flips – while LGBTQ+ individuals were more likely to report being a victim of a crime compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals in the full sample, the victimised subsample shows LGBTQ+ individuals were one percentage point less likely to report to the police. Those who experienced an interpersonal or physical offence or are highly victimised were 1.9 percentage points less likely to report to the police.

4 Empirical Approaches

We focus on understanding the contributing factors to the elevated number of victimisations among the LGBTQ+ population. We use the same approach as Bender & Lauritsen (2021) by predicting the probability of being a victim of an offence and controlling for sociodemographic characteristics. We use the following linear probability model:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LGBTQ_i^+ + \beta_j \boldsymbol{X} \quad (1)$$

where y_i is a dummy variable on crime victimisation; it is equal to 1 if the individual was a victim of a crime and 0 otherwise. The variable $LGBTQ_i^+$ is equal to 1 if the individual is identified as part of the LGBTQ+ group and 0 else. The matrix $\boldsymbol{X}$ controls for the socio-demographic characteristics displayed in Table 1. The variable of interest is β_1, which measures the likelihood of LGBTQ+ individuals being victimised compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals after controlling for socio-demographic characteristics. β_1 is compared to the unadjusted difference in crime victimisations observed in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

We further estimate the uptake of public agency support following crime victimisation. However, the uptake of particular public agency support is not restricted to being a victim of a crime. An individual's interaction with public agencies following crime victimisation may 1) be unrelated to the crime victimisation itself or 2) be related to an individual's likelihood to use public agency support prior to the crime victimisation itself. For example, mental health prescription uptake following a crime victimisation may be related to an individual's prior mental health. To account for this, we expand Equation (1) and add the variable y_i^L, which is the lagged dependent variable referring to the time window 13 to 24 months before the interview. This controls for the likelihood of having a mental health prescription between one to two years prior to the crime victimisation, as show in Equation (3) below:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LGBTQ_i^+ + \beta_2 y_i^L + \beta_j \boldsymbol{X} \quad (3)$$

$$b_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LGBTQ_i^+ + \beta_2 Social_i^+ + \beta_3 LGBTQ_i^+ * Social_i^+ + \beta_j \boldsymbol{X}$$

$$b_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LGBTQ_i^+ + \beta_2 Targeted_i^+ + \beta_3 LGBTQ_i^+ * Targeted_i^+ + \beta_j \boldsymbol{X}$$

5 Results

We first discuss the regression results for crime victimisations and whether regional differences are observed. Next, we test different perceived reasons for victimisation. We then examine differences in crime victimisation consequences and the societal perceptions within the LGBTQ+ community. Lastly, we discuss differences in the uptake of public agency services following crime victimisations.

Error! Reference source not found. presents the results for Equation (1) which examines the likelihood to report having been a victim of an offence in the past 12 months, by offence type.[5] Equation (1) accounts for differences in sociodemographic factors between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals. This contrasts with the differences reported in **Error! Reference source not found.**, which provides only descriptive victimisation rates based on socio-demographic characteristics. The coefficients in **Error! Reference source not found.** are reported as percentage points and report how likely an LGBTQ+ individual states being a victim of a crime compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. If the coefficients differ substantially from the differences reported in **Error! Reference source not found.**, then this indicates that their socio-demographic characteristics largely explain the higher prevalence of crime victimisation for LGBTQ+.

When looking at any offence type, we see that LGBTQ+ individuals are 11.1 percentage points more likely to report being a victim of a crime in the past 12 months compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. The raw difference, as reported in **Error! Reference source not found.**, is 14.3 percentage points. The difference between the two is 3.2 percentage points, which is small. This means that the socio-demographic characteristics of LBGTQ+ individuals help explain some of the differences in crime victimisations observed between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals. The results are similar when examining other offence types. For example, the estimated likelihood of being a victim of a physical offence is 2.8 percentage points higher for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. This is only slightly lower than the unadjusted difference of 3.8 percentage points.

The next set of results controls for sexual orientation and shows that gay/lesbian and bisexual individuals are significantly more likely to report being victimised in the twelve months prior to the interview compared to heterosexual/straight individuals. This finding holds across the different offence categories except for physical offences, where gay/lesbian individuals had no significantly different likelihood compared to heterosexual/straight individuals. The regression estimates also show that bisexual individuals have a substantially larger likelihood of reporting being a victim of an offence compared to gay/lesbian

[5] The full regression output tables can be found in the Online Appendix.

individuals. For example, gay/lesbians individuals are, on average, 2.9 percentage points more likely to report being victims of an interpersonal offence compared to heterosexual/straight individuals—the difference is 16.9 percentage points for bisexual individuals.

We also find significant differences by gender identity. Gender minority individuals are, on average, 7.5 percentage points more likely to report having been a victim of any offence compared to cisgender individuals. Significant differences are also observed across all other offence categories, except for physical offences.

	Offence			Perceived reason				Social attitudes	
	Any	Personal	Interpersonal	Ethnicity	Sexual orientation	Sex	General discrimination	High safety feeling	High life satisfaction
Non-LGBTQ+									
LGBTQ+	0.111***	0.116***	0.094***	0.017	0.120***	0.109***	0.132***	-0.047**	-0.096***
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.016)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.013)
Unadjusted model	0.142***	0.138***	0.118***						
	(0.015)	(0.013)	(0.011)						
ME of a Probit model	0.108***	0.109***	0.080***						
	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.01)						
Observations	28,692	28,692	28,692	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,123	9,114
Heterosexual/straight									
Gay or lesbian	0.072***	0.056***	0.029*	0.012	0.113***	0.062**	0.098***	-0.031	-0.002
	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.033)	(0.037)	(0.038)
Unadjusted model	0.093***	0.069***	0.041**						
	(0.025)	(0.021)	(0.016)						
ME of a Probit model	0.071***	0.054***	0.026*						
	(0.024)	(0.02)	(0.014)						
Bisexual	0.174***	0.196***	0.169***	0.015	0.145***	0.145***	0.162***	-0.052*	-0.199***
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.015)	(0.025)	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.031)	(0.032)
Unadjusted model	0.220***	0.229***	0.206***						
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.02)						
ME of a Probit model	0.169***	0.181***	0.136***						
	(0.023)	(0.021)	(0.017)						
Observations	28,551	28,551	28,551	9,075	9,075	9,075	9,075	9,057	9,054
Cisgender									
Gender minority	0.075**	0.083***	0.059**	0.028	0.056*	0.076*	0.084**	-0.033	-0.027
	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.032)	(0.039)	(0.042)	(0.050)	(0.050)
Unadjusted model	0.096***	0.095***	0.074***						
	(0.032)	(0.028)	(0.023)						
ME of a Probit model	0.073**	0.079***	0.054***						
	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.021)						
Observations	28,692	28,692	28,692	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,123	9,114

Source: IDI (2024) and author's own calculations. Each regression controls for sex at birth, ethnicity, age, relationship status, region living in, regional deprivation, born overseas, household income, and year of interview. The number in parenthesis refers to standard errors. ***, **, and * are significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% level, respectively. *Personal offence*: includes personal theft, property damage, assault incl. sexual, robbery, fraud and deception, cybercrime, harassment and threatening behaviour. *Interpersonal offence*: includes sexual and other assault, harassment and threatening behaviour, robbery, and damage of personal or household property if the victim knows the offender.

Survey respondents who reported having been victims of a crime were asked about the perceived reason for their victimisation. We test for differences where perceived reasons were related to ethnicity, sexual orientation and sex, with each reason a dummy variable equal to 1 if the respondent perceived the victimisation to be related to these reasons, 0 otherwise. Separate regressions were run for each perceived reason and controlled for socio-demographic characteristics. As a robustness check, we also test whether any type of discrimination might have been the underlying perceived cause, which is a much broader measure that captures other forms of discrimination (e.g., discrimination due to disability).

Error! Reference source not found. presents the estimated coefficients for perceived reasons for crime victimisation. The results show that ethnicity is more commonly cited as one of the perceived reasons for victimisation by LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. However, this is only weakly significant (at the 10% level) and modest at 1.7 percentage points. However, there are large differences when examining sexual orientation or sex as the perceived reasons for victimisation. LGBTQ+ individuals who reported being a victim of a crime in the past 12 months are, on average, 12 percentage points more likely to state that the perceived reason for the victimisation is their sexual orientation compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. Interestingly, while the coefficients for gay/lesbian and bisexual individuals are of similar magnitude regarding sexual orientation as the perceived reason, we see larger effects for sex among bisexual individuals (14.5 percentage points compared to heterosexual individuals) compared to gay/lesbian individuals (6.22 percentage points compared to heterosexual individuals).

Lastly, we want to understand how experiencing a crime relates to feelings of safety and life satisfaction after being a victim of crime and whether we find differences by LGBTQ+ status. The survey respondents were asked about their feelings of safety and provided a score ranging from 0 (is not at all safe) to 10 (completely safe). We construct a binary variable equal to 1 if the score is seven or higher (high safety) and 0 otherwise. The results indicate that LGBTQ+ individuals are significantly less likely to report a high feeling of safety after a victimisation compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. Second, participants were asked about their life satisfaction, which ranged between 0 (very low life satisfaction) and 10 (very high life satisfaction). We construct a binary variable equal to 1 when the score is eight or higher (high life satisfaction) and 0 otherwise. We find that LGBTQ+ individuals are, on average, 8.6 percentage points less likely to report high life satisfaction compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals.

The second research aim of this study is to examine the interaction of individuals who reported being a victim of a crime and their service uptake with public agencies following a victimisation, and whether there are differences by LGBTQ+ status. Service uptake includes whether the individual is recorded by the police as a victim, they made an ACC claim, received an MSD benefit, or received treatment for mental health in the past twelve months.

We expand our regression as described in Equation (3) by adding as a covariate a binary indicator on the uptake of the respective agency interaction 13 to 24 months prior to the interview date (except for police

records). Given there is a possible correlation between an individual's likelihood of public agency uptake pre- and post-victimisation, we wanted to control for persistence in uptake over time. For example, we expect someone with a mental health prescription in the past to have a higher likelihood of having another mental health prescription in the future compared to someone who did not have prior mental health prescriptions.

Error! Reference source not found. shows the regression coefficients for the full sample, those individuals who have reported being a victim of a crime in the past twelve months, and those experiencing an interpersonal or physical offence or more than one offence (highly victimised).

The first column of **Error! Reference source not found.** refers to the likelihood of being recorded as a victim in police records. As MoJ (2024) described, only a small fraction of offences are reported to the police. The coefficients indicate that, in general, we do not observe statistically significant differences between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals in the likelihood of being recorded by the police as a victim of a crime. When we subset this to i) those who were victimised in the past twelve months and ii) those who were victims of an interpersonal or physical offence or who are highly victimised, the results show that LGBTQ+ individuals were less likely to report to the police compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. However, the results are not statistically significant. One explanation may be the lack of statistical power – there are 342 LGBTQ+ individuals who experienced an interpersonal or physical offence or more than one offence. Of these 342, only 8.8% (about 30 individuals) of those are recorded as victims in police records.

Columns IIa and IIb examine ACC claims, and columns IIIa – IIIc examine MSD benefit uptake. There are hardly any significant differences in ACC claims and MSD benefit uptake for the full sample of LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. This is also the case when examining ACC claims and MSD benefit uptake for the subsample of victimised and highly victimised individuals.

Lastly, columns IVa-IVc examine differences in mental health treatment where individuals receive mental health-related drug prescriptions as recorded by PHARMAC and/or mental health referrals recorded by PRIMHD. We observe a statistically significant higher uptake of mental health treatment for LGBTQ+ individuals compared to non-LGBTQ+ people, irrespective of whether they were victimised in the past 12 months or had been victims of an interpersonal or physical offence or were highly victimised. For example, LGBTQ+ individuals are, on average, 6.9 percentage points more likely to have received at least one mental health prescription compared to non-LGBTQ+ people. This increases to 9.5 percentage points when trimming the sample to those reporting being the victim of an offence in the past 12 months; and 11 percentage points for victims of an interpersonal or physical offence or if highly victimised. One potential explanation for the elevated uptake in mental health prescription or referral may be LBGTQ+ individuals having lower feelings of safety and a higher likelihood of being physically injured compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals.

6 Conclusion and Policy Implications

Our study highlights the disparities in crime victimisation between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals. We investigate multiple aspects of crime, including different offence types, the seriousness of the offence, the perceived reason and motivation for the offence, and the consequences of victimisation. The aim was to understand the relative vulnerability to crime victimisation based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Using a sample of over 28,000 individuals from the New Zealand Crime Victimisation Survey (NZCVS) from 2018 to 2023, we analyse how crime victimisation experiences vary across different sexual orientation and gender identity groups.

We found that LGBTQ+ individuals experience significantly higher crime victimisation rates across all types of offences, even after controlling for differences in socio-demographic characteristics. We see large differences by sexual orientation - bisexual and gay/lesbian individuals experience much higher rates of crime victimisation compared to heterosexual/straight individuals, with even larger differences for those who identify as bisexual. Similarly, gender minorities face much higher crime victimisation rates compared to cisgender individuals.

Our findings also show that LGBTQ+ individuals face a much higher likelihood of targeted crime, particularly sexual orientation-targeted crime, compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. They also face significantly higher chances of sex-targeted crime and other forms of discrimination. Additionally, LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to experience severe consequences of crime, such as taking time off work or sustaining physical injuries after their victimisation. In more diverse areas like Auckland and Wellington, the difference in victimisation rates between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ groups are narrower compared to victimisation rates outside of these regions.

We linked crime victimisation experiences with societal perceptions. Overall, LGBTQ+ individuals harbour more negative feelings about society, particularly among bisexual individuals, compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals. This is reflected in their higher likelihood of seeking mental health services, as indicated by PHARMAC and PRIMHD records.

Our findings also highlight the vulnerability of the LGBTQ+ community regarding crime victimisation and their significant mental health challenges. Mental health issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity are particularly severe among LGBTQ+ individuals, and crime victimisation experiences can exacerbate these issues. Research might try to explore further the connection between the crime victimisation history of LGBTQ+ individuals and the impact on their mental health. Moreover, understanding how healing processes differ between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals is crucial when designing responses to victimisation.

Future research can build on our findings and explore further aspects. First, examining differences in crime victimisation between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals concerning time, location, and offenders

can help develop root cause prevention strategies. Second, incorporating further aspects of social attitudes from surveys can help understand how crime victimisations influence the attitudes of LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals differently. Lastly, connecting our research with work performance data can help provide insights into how crime victimisations affect the performance of LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals differently in the workplace.

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Appendix

Other regressions

The NZCVS contains detailed information on the causes and consequences of crime victimisation. The first column of Table 2 looks at the perceived seriousness of the offence. Survey respondents have the option to assign reported offences a score ranging from 0 to 10, where higher scores indicate higher perceived seriousness. We construct a binary variable equal to 1 if the responder reported at least one offence with a score of 9 or 10, indicating having experienced a highly serious offence, 0 otherwise. The results show that LGBTQ+ individuals were not more likely to perceive their victimisation as highly serious compared to non-LGBTQ+ people.

The second column examines whether there are differences in the reporting behaviour towards police. The survey asks, for those who were victims of a crime, whether the offence was reported by the police, by oneself or someone else. We construct a binary indicator variable equal to 1 if at least one offence was reported to the police and 0 otherwise. The results show no systematic difference between LGBTQ+ and non-LGBTQ+ individuals with respect to reporting their victimisation to the police.

The third and fourth columns examine the impact of an offence on the victim. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows LGBTQ+ individuals were more likely to be victims of a personal, interpersonal or physical offence. We, therefore, want to test whether they are more likely to take time off or were physically injured. We construct two binary variables that are equal to 1 if the person experienced at least one offence in which they were physically injured or they took some time off after the victimisation and 0 otherwise. The results show that LGBTQ+ individuals are, on average, significantly more likely to take time off (3.4 percentage points) or were physically injured during the offence (4.2 percentage points) compared to non-LGBTQ+ individuals.

Table 2: Regression results on causes and consequences

	Perceived serious	Reported to police	Taking time off	Physically injured
Non-LGBTQ+		***reference***		
LGBTQ+	-0.018 (0.018)	-0.028 (0.022)	0.034** (0.016)	0.042*** (0.011)
Observations	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,135
Heterosexual/straight		***reference***		
Gay or lesbian	-0.012 (0.032)	-0.051 (0.039)	-0.020 (0.028)	-0.023 (0.020)
Bisexual	-0.019 (0.026)	-0.007 (0.031)	0.064*** (0.023)	0.099*** (0.016)
Observations	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,135
Cisgender		***reference***		
Gender minority	0.020 (0.041)	-0.019 (0.050)	0.040 (0.037)	-0.022 (0.026)
Observations	9,135	9,135	9,135	9,135

Source: IDI (2024) and author's own calculations. Each regression controls for sex at birth, ethnicity, age, relationship status, region living in, regional deprivation, born overseas, household income, and year of interview. The sample is restricted to individuals who have reported having experienced at least one offence in the past 12 months. The number in parenthesis refers to standard errors. ***, **, and * are significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% level, respectively.

Data structure and construction

Disclaimer

Access to the data used in this study was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Data and Statistics Act 2022. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers.

These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and Longitudinal Business Database (LBD) which are carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI or LBD please visit https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/ .

The starting point of this analysis is the creation of our population of interest, which uses the *core* dataset from the NZCVS and serves as the spine for which other variables are attached. The core dataset holds a large range of sociodemographic characteristics that are relevant to our study, most importantly, sexual orientation, gender identity and biological sex. This dataset holds individual-level information, which is constant over time, including birth date (year and month) and birthplace (overseas or NZ). We restrict our sample to the adult population between 18 and 79 at the time of the interview. After removing all unlinked individuals, our final sample consists of 28,692 individuals.

We link our spine to the *incident* dataset of the NZCVS database. The dataset holds detailed information on any experienced offence or crime in the past 12 months, including the offence category, the perceived reason for the offence, the relationship with the offender, and the consequences (e.g., the offence was reported to the police, taking time off, being physically injured). We follow the MoJ (2023) definition of offence type to create the following variables that focus on personal and physical offences which may be linked to certain individual characteristics like identifying as LGBTQ+:

- *Any*: all offence types
- *Physical offence*: includes robbery and non-sexual assault
- *Personal offence*: includes personal theft, property damage, assault incl. sexual, robbery, fraud and deception, cybercrime, harassment and threatening behaviour
- *Interpersonal offence*: includes sexual and other assault, harassment and threatening behaviour, robbery, and damage of personal or household property if the victim knows the offender
- *Highly victimised*: reporting more than one victimisation in the past 12 months (note that MoJ (2023) has a higher threshold of four or more offences)

Note that our measures are calculated on the pool of individuals across all 5 cycles that are available in the IDI, and as such, we cannot examine differences over time. However, MoJ (2024) has stated that the overall prevalence rate of victimisation has been stable across different cycles, with significant changes observed in some subcategories (e.g., personal offences). The focus of this study is to examine crime victimisations for a vulnerable priority population – splitting the analysis by survey cycle would substantially lower the statistical power and ability to interpret the results.