

## Let's Talk About Sex(uality): A Content Analysis of the Inclusion and Measurement of Sexual Identity and Sexual Orientation in Published Criminological Research

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### ABSTRACT

*Time and again, criminology has been criticized for its lack of inclusion in research regarding diverse populations. Scholars continuously call for criminological research to diversify its focus and measurements, particularly regarding individual characteristics such as race, sex, gender, and, more recently, sexuality. This study utilizes summative content analysis to examine the inclusion, measurement, and context of sexuality and sexual orientation in all articles published between 2011-2020 from four criminological and criminal justice (CCJ) journals. Specifically, we explored to what extent sexuality is incorporated in the selected publications among the sections of each article and if it varies among journals, if sexuality is being measured in the empirical articles examined and, if so, as what type of variable, if the calls for inclusion in 2014 changed the amount of sexuality included in articles, and if the gender makeup of the author team impacts inclusion of sexuality. Results indicate that sexuality and sexual orientation are rarely mentioned in the literature and are measured even less. While sexuality is included more as time passes, much of this is limited. Additionally, articles published by female authors and within the more gender-specialized journal incorporate sexuality more frequently while still limited.*

**KEYWORDS:** sexuality, sexual orientation, criminal justice research, criminology research.

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Queer criminology is a relatively new perspective in criminological research. Emerging in the 1990s, it encompasses the experiences of LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, nonbinary, and other non-gender conforming) persons and communities within the criminal justice system, both as offenders and victims (Buist & Lenning, 2015; Woods, 2014). This is due, in part, to the fact that non-heterosexual relationships and sexual activity were illegal for many years and labeled as deviant by the American Psychological Association until 1973; thus, any research conducted focused on sexual minorities as deviants. Indeed, it has only been in the past 20 years that same-sex relationships became legal nationwide in the US (*Lawrence v. Texas*, 2003).

More recently, calls to include sexual diversity within research and policy have increased. For example, *Critical Criminology* published a special issue in 2014 dedicated to queer criminology (Ball et al., 2014), Peterson and Panfil (2014) published their *Handbook of LGBT Communities, Crime, and Justice*, and then in her 2014 ASC Presidential Address Belknap (2015)

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urged criminologists to pursue activism and representation of marginalized groups (i.e., sexuality, gender, race, class, nationality) through research. Woods (2014) emphasized that criminological inquiry needed to move beyond a victimization focus and consider how sexual orientation and its intersection with other factors, such as gender and race, influence offending. Similarly, Ball (2019) argued that the criminal justice system and its policies could not effectively support the needs of the LGBTQ+ community if criminologists are not accurately developing and improving the foundation of knowledge. Thus, if the information on individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ is unavailable, the criminal justice system may not be able to serve them effectively, and criminological theories may not accurately predict patterns.

Research within the field of criminology and criminal justice (CCJ) has indicated a need to study the influences of sexuality on experiences within the criminal justice system because individuals who identify as sexual minorities tend to experience differences, whether it be in victimization, offending, or working within the system (see Asquith et al., 2017; Black et al., 2011; Cameron, 2003; Cochran & Cauce, 2006; Colvin, 2009; Flores et al., 2020; Hampton, 2019; Kelly & Parsons, 2010; Kerr et al., 2014; Kunzel, 2008; Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2020; McCabe et al., 2013; Mennicke et al., 2018; Messinger, 2011, 2014; Panter, 2018; Pickles, 2021; Scheuerman et al., 2020; Shortnacy, 2001; Smith, 2002). Moreover, it appears that across the social sciences, when sexual identity and orientation are measured, they may not be measured well (Bridges & Moore, 2018; Noel & Lutz, 2020; Suen et al., 2020; Wolff et al., 2017). Measures have been criticized for being static and lacking dimension and context (Bridges & Moore, 2018; Suen et al., 2020). It is, therefore, not only essential to measure sexuality but measure it accurately.

Few studies have attempted to examine the inclusion of sexuality in published CCJ research (Gateley et al., 2022). Therefore, while calls have been made to increase the inclusion of sexual identity and orientation in CCJ research, we do not know to what extent those calls have been heeded, nor do we know how well sexuality is being addressed in the articles that do include them in their study. In the current study, we first review the relevant literature examining the need for inclusion, the current standing of sexuality in the social sciences and then CCJ specifically, and the best practices for measurement. We then consider the inclusion and measurement of sexual identity in recent criminological research through summative content analysis by examining ten years of publications from four select U.S. criminology journals, two predominant, mainstream/ general topics journals, and two issue-focused journals to evaluate the inclusion of sexual identity in the body of the articles and as variables. We also examine if the journal and year of publication influenced the inclusion and measurement of sexual identity. Finally, we qualitatively examine the context of the inclusion of sexuality by analyzing the operationalizations of sexual identity/orientation and the meaning behind the inclusion of sexuality in the discussion/conclusion sections of the articles examined. Results indicate that sexuality is rarely included in any of the examined articles and is rarely used as a variable in studies. Moreover, when sexuality is mentioned in the discussion/conclusion, it is often reported as a limitation of the study.

## **Literature Review**

More recent emphasis on the importance of sexual and gender minority inclusion in criminological studies has led to the formalization of queer criminology (Woods, 2014). Prior to this, many criminology and criminal justice (CCJ) studies that accounted for sexual orientations grouped those considered non-conforming under the singular term homosexual or non-heterosexual. Such studies predominantly viewed marginalized sexual orientations (MSO) as deviant behavior, with several criminological theories historically including sexuality in their explanations of deviant behavior (e.g., de River, 1949; Humphreys, 1970; Lombroso-Ferrero,

1972). Present-day CCJ research that examines sexuality and sexual orientation as a social identity instead of a criminal outcome tends to center on the victimization of LGBTQ+ persons, specifically in bullying and interpersonal violence (Woods, 2014). However, despite continuous calls for inclusion, it appears the field of CCJ has been seemingly slow to incorporate sexuality, particularly sexual identity and orientation into research (Gateley et al., 2022).

Additionally, CCJ education has been found lacking in the inclusion of sexuality in college programs (Fradella et al., 2009). For instance, scholars argue that criminal justice education was woefully behind other fields in addressing biases toward LGBQ individuals, even though it is necessary to improve the negative attitudes of future criminal justice practitioners (Fradella et al., 2009; Noga-Styron & Olivero, 2014). Not only are such topics missing from academic programs, but later studies found them absent from numerous policing and criminal justice introductory textbooks (Noga-Styron & Olivero, 2014). While there have been calls for more inclusion of LGBQ individuals in research, scant research is available to examine if these calls have been heeded (Gateley et al., 2022).

It has only been in recent years that sexuality has been captured in national-level data in the US by several different sources, including non-profit and advocacy organizations and government entities. For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) began including sexual and gender minority questions in 2015. These questions ask for sexual identity (i.e., straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, something else), but not sexual behaviors, along with hate crime victimization due to sexual orientation (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, n.d.). Notably, other Western nations, such as Australia and Sweden, have more inclusive measures in their national-level data collection efforts (e.g., Priebe & Svedin, 2013; Smith et al., 2003). Sweden developed a national survey of late adolescents exploring different dimensions of sexuality (i.e., identity, attraction, and behavior) and considering several orientations, including heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, and unsure (Priebe & Svedin, 2013). Hence, it may be that academic research in the US and criminology are lagging regarding the inclusivity of sexual identity and orientation.

### **Current Standing of Sexuality in Social Sciences**

To better contextualize the inclusion of LGBQ individuals in CCJ research, it is important to understand the rates of inclusion of sexuality within various social sciences. For example, mainstream sociology publications frequently include race and gender as important factors in research (Schnabel, 2018), but it was not until 2008 that national surveys included sexuality (e.g., General Social Survey; Schnabel, 2018). Still, popular sociology journals publish only a few articles each year exploring sexuality (Schnabel, 2018). Much of the sexuality research in sociology explores the relationship between sexuality and gender (Cornwell & Laumann, 2011; Denise, 2019; Pfeffer, 2014). Furthermore, a content analysis of the inclusion of sexuality in *Social Psychology Quarterly* from 2000-2012 revealed very low percentages of inclusion, with sexuality being referenced in 5.2 percent and seriously considered in 2.4 percent of the articles (Hunt et al., 2013).

Recently, several national social science surveys have included some form of exploration into sexual orientation (i.e., The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health [Add Health] and The Youth Risk Behavior Survey [YBRS]; Pearson & Wilkinson, 2018). Specifically, YBRS asks students to select one of six categories: “heterosexual (straight),” “gay or lesbian,” “bisexual,” “I describe my sexual identity some other way,” “I am not sure about my sexual identity (questioning),” or “I do not know what this question is asking.” It also measures with whom they have had sexual contact: “never had sexual contact,” “females,” “males,” or “females and males.” The American Freshman Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) have

also begun measuring sexual orientation (Pearson & Wilkinson, 2018). For example, the NSSE measures sexual orientation as: “straight (heterosexual),” “bisexual,” “gay,” “lesbian,” “queer,” “questioning or unsure,” and “another orientation” (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 2022).

On a broader scale, in 2020, the US Census Bureau updated its periodic survey to include questions about individuals’ sexual orientation. It allows respondents to identify whether the household has a same-sex couple (Gurrentz & Valerio, 2019). While previous response categories only included “spouse” or “unmarried partner,” the new categories include “opposite-sex spouse,” “same-sex spouse,” “opposite-sex unmarried partner,” and “same-sex unmarried partner” (Gurrentz & Valerio, 2019). New parent identification questions also allow respondents to identify if the household has two mothers or two fathers in a same-sex relationship (Gurrentz & Valerio, 2019). Thus, there is a move toward diversity in some US national-level data collection efforts.

### **Current Standing of Sexuality in Criminology**

When looking at the research focusing on LGBTQ+ individuals in criminology, gay men and lesbians are currently the most researched, while those who identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, bisexual, asexual, or pansexual are often ignored (Asquith et al., 2017). Although transgender and gender non-conforming terms are related to gender identity and not sexual identity, individuals who identify as such may be discussed concerning sexuality as the difficulties and discrimination are often similar (Panter, 2018). Current sexuality research in criminology shows significant differences in the lived experiences of criminal justice professionals, victims, and offenders due to sexual identity. For example, lesbian and gay police officers are reluctant to disclose their sexuality and experience discrimination in promotion, assignments, evaluations, and workplace hostilities from fellow officers (Colvin, 2009; Mennicke et al., 2018). Studies also show that individuals in the US who identify as sexual and/or gender minorities are disproportionately targeted for most types of victimization, including, but not limited to, stalking, sexual assault, IPV, and hate crimes (Black et al., 2011; Cameron, 2003; Flores et al., 2020; Messinger, 2011, 2014; Panter, 2018; Pickles, 2021; Scheuerman et al., 2020), but tend to report less (Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2020), and are apt to experience secondary victimization in their interactions with the justice system (Jackson et al., 2017). With offenders, research has indicated they are treated more harshly and may have their sexuality used against them in court cases (Asquith et al., 2017; Hampton, 2019; Kunzel, 2008; Shortnacy, 2001; Smith, 2002) and experience higher substance abuse rates and homelessness (Cochran & Cauce, 2006; Kelly & Parsons, 2010; Kerr et al., 2014; McCabe et al., 2013).

### **Intersectionality and Criminology**

Intersectionality, as defined by Crenshaw (1989), is a concept that has grown to encompass the intersection of structural identities, including gender, race, class, and sexuality, which can be analyzed. Crenshaw (1989) originally coined the term intersectionality to explain the lived experiences of black women, which she noted was a starting point. However, throughout the last few decades, this term has evolved and expanded. The intersections of social constructions are often considered in sociology and other social sciences, with research in this area exploring individuals’ interactions and lived experiences based on the categories of race, class, gender, sexuality, and other social identities (Harris & Bartlow, 2015; Pascoe, 2011; Taylor et al., 2011). Intersectionality varies across institutions and social situations (Levon, 2015), and despite the difficulty of application to sexuality noted by Taylor and colleagues (2011), it is imperative to

include sexuality as a factor to understand the unique experiences attributed to sexual orientation more completely.

The intersections of race, gender, and sex may provide a unique experience for LGBTQ individuals regarding the criminal justice system, offending, and victimization. These differing identities interact in ways that can adversely affect health (N. Hsieh & Ruther, 2016). However, these identities are complicated and difficult to analyze as multiple marginalized identities may also contribute to various types of discrimination (Lopez et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Seijas et al., 2019). For example, studies have indicated that black, Hispanic, and white LGBTQ individuals experience higher rates of psychiatric and substance use disorders than heterosexual individuals, but it needs further exploration (Rodriguez-Seijas et al., 2019). There is also a disproportionate rate of intimate partner violence among sexual identity, gender identity, and racial/ethnic minority groups, with LGBTQ racial minorities experiencing more discrimination than LGBTQ white individuals (Whitfield et al., 2014). Differences in sexual orientation discrimination within different racial minorities indicate that including sexuality is imperative (Whitfield et al., 2014).

### **Best Practices in Measuring Sexuality**

Just as capturing the sexuality of research subjects is important, so is the need to use quality measures. Notably, the Kinsey Sexual Orientation Rating Scale views sexuality as fluid. It utilizes a seven-point continuum to identify one's sexual orientation (Kinsey et al., 1948), and recent studies have employed various methods to measure sexual orientation. Westbrook and colleagues (2022) reviewed nine national U.S. surveys over sixty years to assess how sexuality is measured and found that surveys continue to focus on adverse outcomes and risky behaviors. Many still use relationship status as a proxy for sexual practices while ignoring non-relationship experiences (Westbrook et al., 2022).

Additionally, because research often depicts sexual orientation as a unidimensional static trait (Bridges & Moore, 2018), multidimensional perspectives of sexual orientation that account for sexual identity, attraction, and behavior are needed (Wolff et al., 2017). These approaches align with the American Psychological Association (APA) definition of sexual orientation as both emotional and sexual attraction and include lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, queer, pansexual, or asexual, among other identities. Research has also examined the preferences of those being questioned. For example, Suen and colleagues' (2020) qualitative study worked to identify the limitation of sexual orientation and other questions and found that individuals who identify as sexual or gender minorities viewed common survey questions as limiting with a fixed rather than a fluid perspective of sexual/gender identity. Participants also found such questions to lack dimension as to past, present, or future experiences, leading to confusion regarding identity, behavior, or attraction (Suen et al., 2020).

Similarly, Noel and Lutz (2020) explored individuals' preferences for self-reporting their sexuality, gender identity, and sex assigned at birth. While participants reported clear preferences for sharing sex assigned at birth ("What sex were you at birth?") and gender identity ("Are you male, female, or transgender?"), such a consensus was not found in reporting sexual orientation (Noel & Lutz, 2020).

As diverse sexual orientations and identities continue to gain acceptance, they must be measured and represented accurately. Similarly, as highlighted by previous research, LGBTQ individuals have unique experiences associated with their sexual orientation that must be considered and further explored in criminal justice and criminology research (Asquith et al., 2017; Hodge & Sexton, 2020; Morales, 1989; Rodriguez-Seijas et al., 2019). Such an instrument does not exist despite the need for standardized methods to measure sex assigned at birth, gender

identity, and sexual orientation (Noel & Lutz, 2020). Noel and Lutz (2020) suggest that offering open-ended questions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity may permit respondents to “self-describe their own identities outside of the constraint of options” (p. 993). Thus, even if CCJ is including sexuality in its research, it may not be including it well or using best practices regarding measurement.

## Current Study

As noted, there have been continuous calls for the inclusion of sexuality, particularly from queer, critical, and feminist criminology. These calls continue to multiply through the years, with 2015 the tipping point due to the 2014 special issue on queer criminology in *Critical Criminology* (Ball et al., 2014); Peterson and Panfil’s (2014) foundational volume *Handbook of LGBT Communities, Crime and Justice*, and Belknap’s (2015) ASC Presidential Address calling for research on and activism for marginalized groups along with others. However, the literature indicates that other social sciences and countries may be doing a better job of including and measuring sexuality in their published studies or at least examining the inclusion/measurement in studies (Hunt et al., 2013; Pearson & Wilkinson, 2018; Priebe & Svedin, 2013; Schnabel, 2018; Smith et al., 2003), but limited research examines how well published CCJ research in the US is doing to heed the call for inclusivity (Gateley et al., 2022).

Queer criminology and intersectional frameworks within critical and feminist criminology advocate for the theoretical development and inclusion of sexuality in CCJ research and curriculums (Belknap, 2015; Dwyer, 2011; Fradella et al., 2009; Kahle et al., 2018; Noga-Styron & Olivero, 2014; Panfil, 2018). As also shown, sexuality intersects with sex, gender, race, and ethnicity in multiplicative, critical, and complex ways (N. Hsieh & Ruther, 2016; Lopez et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Seijas et al., 2019; Whitfield et al., 2014). All these social constructions and corresponding identities may impact experiences with the criminal justice system, crime, and victimization. Thus, taking sexuality into account should make our research more complete. Notably, current research insinuates that the lack of inclusion of sexual minorities leads to disparate treatment because LGBTQ individuals who encounter the criminal justice system have different experiences than their heterosexual counterparts (Bernstein & Kostelac, 2002; Dwyer, 2011; Kay & Jeffries, 2010; Shortnacy, 2001; Smith, 2002). Fradella and colleagues (2009) argued that including sexuality in the criminal justice curriculum could decrease homophobia and heterosexism in the criminal justice system. Therefore, it would stand to reason that incorporating sexuality in CCJ research would also lead to tangible benefits.

Authorship and who is conducting the research may also play a role in including minority groups with research noting that women and people of color are less likely to be published in mainstream CCJ journals (Crow & Smykla, 2015; del Carmen & Bing, 2000; Eigenberg & Whalley, 2015; Tewksbury et al., 2005; Zettler et al., 2017), which may be because they are more apt to research “special topics” or those including sexual, gender, or racial minorities which are often pushed out of the mainstream and into specialty journals because this research is often considered “on the margins” of criminology. Consequently, if women and people of color may be more likely to conduct this research but more likely to be published in specialty-focused journals, sexuality may appear in these specialty journals at higher rates than in mainstream journals.

Considering the historical exclusion and current awareness of the complexity of measuring sexuality, evaluation of criminological research is sorely needed to understand the rates of inclusion and how criminologists in the US measure sexuality. The growing calls should have ostensibly resulted in greater inclusion of sexual identity. However, the questions remain: Has it? Are we seeing progress in criminological journals? Are we seeing more progress in specialty than



mainstream journals? The current study fills the gap in the literature by examining publications from four criminological journals, two mainstream/general and two specialty journals, over ten years (2011-2020): *Criminology*, *Journal of Research on Crime and Delinquency*, *Feminist Criminology*, and *Race and Justice*. Our research focused on the following questions:

**RQ1.** To what extent is sexuality incorporated in the selected criminological publications among the sections of each article? Does it vary among the journals?

**RQ2.** Is sexuality being measured in the empirical articles from the selected criminological publications? If so, is it being measured as a dependent, independent, or control variable, and how is it operationalized?

**RQ3.** Considering 2014 appears to be a tipping point for calls for the inclusion of sexuality (and noting that published research may need some time to catch up to calls), was there a change in inclusivity from articles before and after 2015?

**RQ4.** Does the presumed gender makeup of the author team impact the inclusion of sexuality in the articles examined?

## Methods

The current study utilized a summative content analysis to address the research questions, a qualitative content analysis often used to analyze journal articles and textbooks (H.-F. Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In this type of analysis, the research team “starts with identifying and quantifying certain words or content in the text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the words of content” (H.-F. Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). Because summative content analysis includes manifest and latent content analyses, it tends to produce quantitative and qualitative results, providing a more mixed methods approach (H.-F. Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This method is appropriate for the current study because we wanted to explore the extent to which sexual identity and orientation are included in pieces published in criminological journals and explore the nature or context of this inclusion. Thus, while we account for how many articles included sexual identity/orientation and the sections in which they were mentioned, we also explore the meaning behind this inclusion and the quality of the inclusion. Content analyses have historically been used to examine the inclusion of various social constructs in journal articles and criminology and criminal justice (CCJ) materials (e.g., Crittenden et al., 2022; Crow & Smykla, 2015; Eigenberg & Whalley, 2015; Fradella et al., 2009; Gateley et al., 2022), along with other fields (e.g., Hunt et al., 2013).

For our current research, the content of interest was sexual identity/orientation. As is common in summative content analysis (see H.-F. Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), the current examination was accomplished by first searching all sections of journal articles for keywords that are commonly used/have been used before to describe/identify sexual identity/orientation: “sexuality,” “sexual orientation,” “gay/homosexual,” “lesbian,” “bisexual,” “pansexual,” “queer,” and “heterosexual/straight” (Noga-Styron & Olivero, 2014; Truman et al., 2019). The coders also read through the articles to double-check that mentions of sexual orientation were not missed. If an article mentioned sexual identity, the coder indicated on the code sheet which section of the article it was mentioned. These sections included: the abstract, keywords, literature review, methods, analysis/results, and discussion/conclusion. To explore the context and significance of inclusion in the manuscript, the coder determined if the article included sexual identity in the literature review

or discussion/conclusion section and if it was used as a theme or simply mentioned<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, manifest (i.e., surface level) and latent (i.e., underlying meaning) content analyses were utilized (see Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999) in line with the steps of summative content analysis.

Additionally, coders examined whether sexual identity was measured as a variable in the study and, if so, how a technique was used in prior research (i.e., Hunt et al., 2013). If it was, coders indicated if it was measured as a dependent, independent, or control variable and noted its operationalization. Coders also noted the journal title, volume/issue number, article title, and year of publication for each article examined. They also determined the gender of each author by utilizing the pronouns in the authors' biographies. The author was classified as male if he/his pronouns were used. If she/her pronouns were used, the author was classified as female. If they/them or no pronouns were used, the author was classified as unknown gender. Due to the examination and exploration of latent and manifest content, it is vital to ensure reliability and validity by developing "a coding scheme that guides coders in the analysis of content" and "assess the decisions made by the coders against some standard" (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999, p. 266). For our study, we accomplished this by having two trained coders code each article using a standardized coding sheet. A third researcher reviewed all the coding sheets to resolve any coding discrepancies<sup>3</sup>.

## Data

The data for this study included all publications published in *Criminology*, *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency (JRCD)*, *Feminist Criminology (FC)*, and *Race & Justice (RAJ)* between the years 2011-2020. This resulted in the analysis of 936 pieces<sup>4</sup> across the four journals, as shown in Table 1. The data from this study were derived from a more extensive study examining the inclusion of gender/sex, race/ethnicity, and sexuality in journal articles within the field of criminology and if/how they are included together. However, the current study only focuses on the data collected regarding the inclusion of sexual identity in these journals.

*Criminology* is the official journal of the American Society of Criminology (ASC), the largest criminological association in the US<sup>5</sup>, and has an impact factor of 6.692, and while impact factors and rankings ebb and flow, it is currently ranked as 3/69 in Criminology and Penology Journals (Clarivate Analytics, 2022). The aims and scope of *Criminology* note that articles published in this journal work to "advance the theoretical and research agenda of criminology and criminal justice" (Wiley Online Library, 2022, About Us section). In addition, *JRCD* and *Criminology* are also consistently noted as significant journals in our field and have been dubbed part of "criminology's 'Big Three'" (Barranco et al., 2016, p. 20). Currently, *JRCD* has a 5-year impact factor of 4.678 and is ranked 11/69 in Criminology and Penology Journals (Clarivate Analytics, 2022). According to the publisher's website *JRCD*, the works published in this journal

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<sup>2</sup> In order to be considered a theme, sexual orientation had to constitute a significant portion of the literature review or conclusion, as determined by the coder. Often, if more than a paragraph was included or sexual identity was a heading/subheading of a section, it was considered a theme. It was considered a mention if it was only mentioned in 1-3 sentences.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1 for a copy of our codesheet.

<sup>4</sup> Not all pieces examined were empirical articles. Some were non-empirical pieces such as book reviews, literature reviews, and editorial statements. These pieces were still coded, but only the methods, findings/results, and variables sections were marked as "no."

<sup>5</sup> *Critical Criminology*, which published a special issue on Queer Criminology, is the official journal of the ASC Division on Critical Criminology and Social Justice.



focus on “contemporary issues and controversies within criminology and criminal justice” (SAGE, 2022, Journal Description section).

*RAJ* and *FC* were chosen because they are the official journals of ASC’s Division of Women and Crime<sup>6</sup> and the Division on People of Color and Crime. Previous research has indicated that race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and sexuality intersect (N. Hsieh & Ruther, 2016; Lopez et al., 2021; Rodriguez-Seijas et al., 2019; Whitfield et al., 2014) and that it is important to note if and how queer criminology is being incorporated into other critical criminologies (Ball, 2014). Therefore, the current study was interested in examining the inclusion of sexuality in these two specialty-focused journals. When examining the aims and scope of *RAJ*, it was noted that it publishes research to expand and test theoretical perspectives, including the intersection of social identities such as race/ethnicity, class, and gender (SAGE, 2021). In their recent call for an editor, *Feminist Criminology* noted they sought to advance feminist thinking by publishing diverse and inclusive articles, particularly intersectional pieces (Feminist Criminology, 2021). In sum, both journals aim to publish intersectional research highlighting justice issues.

## Findings

### Descriptive and Bivariate Analysis

The vast majority of articles examined did not include sexual identity at all. Indeed, of the articles examined, only 18.3% (n=171) included sexual identity somehow, meaning 4 out of 5 articles in our sample did not include it. When examining the article sections, as shown in Table 1, only 1.1% of articles included sexual identity in the title, 2.4% in the abstract, 1.3% in the keywords, 3.2% as a variable, 12.5% in the literature review, 5.6% in the methods, 5.9% in the analysis/results, and 8.2% in the conclusion. A variable was created as a count of inclusion for all sections of the articles, which revealed that, on average, sexual identity was mentioned in 0.40 sections per article ( $SD = 1.14$ ; range = 0-8), meaning that sexual identity was typically not mentioned, but when it was, it was typically in only one section.

### *Any Inclusion of Sexuality in the Articles*<sup>7</sup>

A greater percentage of *FC* articles included sexual identity in each section of the article than in all other journals, as shown in Table 2. There was a significant association between any mention of sexual identity and journal type, with a larger percentage of articles in *FC* having any mention. Accordingly, 61.4% of the articles that mentioned sexuality were published in *FC*, while 16.4% were in *RAJ*, 15.8% were in *Criminology*, and 6.4% were published in *JRCD*. The mean number of mentions in the articles published was also significantly different, as determined by a one-way ANOVA ( $F(3,932) = 63.021, p < .001$ ), with *FC* having the highest mean of 1.19 ( $SD = 1.58$ ), followed by *RAJ* ( $M = 0.23, SD = 0.67$ ), *Criminology* ( $M = 0.22, SD = 0.90$ ), and *JRCD* ( $M=0.06, SD = 0.30$ ), respectively. A Tukey post hoc test revealed that the inclusion of sexual

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<sup>6</sup> In 2021, the name was changed to the Division of Feminist Criminology (see <https://ascdwc.com/2021/12/feminist-criminology-call-for-editor/>)

<sup>7</sup> All chi-square test statistics are included in Tables 2 and 3, which refer to the inclusion of sexuality by journal and year, respectfully. The Fisher Exact Test was utilized due to zero/low cell counts, and P values are based on this test. Please refer to the tables for these statistics. Please note that the numbers are different from those reported in the text because they rely on articles that included and did not include sexuality. Percentages reported in the text are based on the articles that included sexuality.

identity was significantly higher for *FC* compared with all other journals. However, there were no statistical differences between *Criminology*, *RAJ*, and *JRCD*.

**Table 1**  
*Descriptives (N = 936)*

Variable	%	n	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Journal Type					
Criminology	30.8	288			
JRCD	28.6	268			
RAJ	20.4	191			
FC	20.2	189			
Year of Publication					
2011-2015	49.3	461			
2016-2020	50.7	475			
Number of Mentions			0.40	1.14	0-8
Any Mentions	18.3	171			
Title	1.1	10			
Abstract	2.4	22			
Keyword	1.3	12			
Literature Review (any)	12.5	117			
Theme	2.5	23			
Mention	10.0	94			
Methods	5.6	52			
Variable	3.2	30			
Dependent	0.3	3			
Independent	1.2	11			
Control	1.8	17			
Analysis/Findings	5.9	55			
Discussion/Conclusion (any)	8.2	77			
Theme	1.8	17			
Mention	6.4	60			

There was a statistically significant relationship between any mention and year of publication, as shown in Table 3, with almost twice as many articles published between 2016-2020 (n=112) mentioning sexuality compared to 2011-2015 (n=59). Moreover, a t-test of the means for any inclusion by publication year indicated a significant difference ( $t(934) = -3.768, p < .001$ ), with a higher mean of inclusion for the articles published between 2016-2020 ( $M = 0.49, SD = 1.18$ ) than 2011-2015 ( $M = 0.24, SD = 0.803$ ).

**Table 2***Chi-Square of Inclusion by Journal (N = 936)*

	<i>Criminology</i>	<i>JRCD</i>	<i>RAJ</i>	<i>FC</i>	X <sup>2</sup>
	Yes % (n)	Yes % (n)	Yes % (n)	Yes % (n)	
Any Mention	9.4 (27)	4.1 (11)	14.7 (28)	55.6 (105)	228.913***
Title	0.7 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.2 (8)	23.244***
Abstract	2.1 (6)	0 (0)	1.0 (2)	7.4 (14)	29.012***
Key Word	1.0 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.8 (9)	24.176***
Lit Review (Any)	8.3 (24)	1.5 (17)	8.9 (72)	38.1 (72)	149.727***
Lit Review (Theme)	1.4 (4)	0 (0)	1.0 (2)	9.0 (17)	43.408***
Lit Review (Mention)	6.9 (20)	1.5 (4)	7.9 (15)	29.1 (55)	101.744***
Methods	2.4 (7)	2.2 (6)	2.6 (5)	18.0 (34)	69.810***
Variable	1.7 (5)	0.7 (2)	2.6 (5)	9.5 (18)	31.761***
Dependent	0.3 (1)	0 (0)	0.5 (1)	0.5 (1)	1.372
Independent	1.0 (3)	0 (0)	1.6 (3)	2.6% (5)	7.006*
Control	0.7 (2)	0.7 (2)	0.5 (1)	6.3 (12)	27.321***
Analysis	2.8 (8)	0.7 (2)	4.7 (9)	19.0 (36)	77.03***
Conclusion (Any)	4.2 (12)	1.1 (3)	5.8 (11)	27.0 (51)	113.840***
Conclusion (Theme)	1.4 (4)	0 (0)	1.0 (2)	5.8 (11)	22.877***
Conclusion (Mention)	2.8 (8)	1.1 (3)	4.7 (9)	21.2 (40)	88.332***

*Note.* Significance is based on Fisher Exact Test due to low cell count. \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

**Table 3***Chi-Square of Inclusion by Year (N = 936)*

	2011-2015	2016-2020	X <sup>2</sup>
	Yes % (n)	Yes % (n)	
Any Mention	12.8 (50)	23.6 (112)	18.210***
Title	0.7 (3)	1.5 (7)	1.499
Abstract	1.5 (7)	3.2 (15)	2.74
Key Word	0.7 (3)	1.9 (9)	2.861
Lit Review (Any)	8.0 (37)	16.8 (80)	16.625***
Lit Review (Theme)	1.1 (5)	3.8 (18)	7.141**
Lit Review (Mention)	6.9 (32)	13.1 (62)	9.671**
Methods	4.1 (19)	6.9 (33)	3.561
Variable	2.0 (0)	4.4 (21)	4.596*
Dependent	0.2 (1)	0.4 (2)	0.305
Independent	1.1 (5)	1.3 (6)	0.64
Control	0.9 (4)	2.3 (13)	4.584*
Analysis	3.9 (18)	7.8 (37)	6.384*
Conclusion (Any)	5.4 (25)	10.9 (52)	9.457**
Conclusion (Theme)	1.3 (6)	2.3 (11)	1.35
Conclusion (Mention)	4.1 (19)	8.6 (41)	7.931**

*Note.* \* Significance is based on Fisher Exact Test due to low cell count. p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, \*\*\* p < 0.001.

A chi-square analysis of any mention by author team gender was significant, as shown in Table 4, with a significantly larger percentage of pieces written by all-female author teams, including sexuality at least once, compared to mixed/unknown gender and all-male author teams, respectively. A one-way ANOVA ( $F(3,932) = 24.852, p < .001$ ) on the inclusion of sexuality by author team gender revealed that all-female teams ( $M = 0.83, SD = 1.55$ ) had a significantly higher rate of inclusion than all-male ( $M = 0.15; SD = 0.59$ ) and mixed-gender teams ( $M = .23; SD = 0.70$ ).

**Table 4**  
*Chi-Square Inclusion by Author Team Gender (N = 936)*

	Male Only	Female Only	Mixed/Unknown Gender	X <sup>2</sup>
	Yes % (n)	Yes % (n)	Yes % (n)	
Any Mention	9.8 (42)	26.7 (115)	18.7 (14)	41.795***
Title	0.4 (1)	3.6 (9)	0 (0)	20.528***
Abstract	0.7 (2)	6.7 (17)	0.7 (3)	28.839***
Key Word	0.7 (2)	4.0 (10)	0 (0)	20.228***
Lit Review (Any)	6.6 (18)	22.9 (58)	10.1 (41)	36.426***
Lit Review (Theme)	0 (0)	7.5 (19)	1.0 (4)	37.591***
Lit Review (Mention)	6.6 (18)	15.4 (39)	9.1 (37)	12.373**
Methods	1.1 (3)	13.0 (33)	3.9 (16)	39.591***
Variable	0.7 (2)	7.5 (19)	2.2 (9)	21.885***
Dependent	0 (0)	0.4 (1)	0.5 (2)	1.304
Independent	0.4 (1)	2.4 (6)	1.0 (4)	4.82
Control	0.4 (1)	4.7 (12)	1.0 (4)	17.012**
Analysis	3.3 (9)	13.0 (33)	3.2 (13)	32.244***
Conclusion (Any)	2.6 (7)	19.4 (49)	5.2 (21)	58.520***
Conclusion (Theme)	0 (0)	5.5 (14)	0.7 (3)	27.360***
Conclusion (Mention)	2.6 (7)	13.8 (35)	4.4 (18)	32.848***

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

***Title, Abstract, and Keywords***

Only ten articles included sexuality in the title, two of which were published in *Criminology*, while the other eight were published in *FC*. None of the articles in our sample published by *JRCD* or *RAJ* included sexuality in the title. While not statistically significant, a larger percentage of articles published between 2016-2020 (1.5%) included sexuality in the title compared to 2011-2015 (0.7%). None of the articles published by *JRCD* included sexuality in the abstract either. In contrast, 63.3% of the articles that specified sexuality in the abstract were published in *FC*, 27.3% in *Criminology*, and 9.1% in *RAJ*.

Regarding the year of publication, 68.2% of the articles that included sexuality in the abstract were published between 2016-2020. None of the articles in *JRCD* or *RAJ* included sexuality as a keyword, and the largest percentage of articles including sexuality as a keyword (75.0%) were published in *FC*. Also, by year of publication, a larger, but not statistically significant, percentage of articles published between 2016-2020 included sexuality as a keyword compared to 2011-2015. Females authored 77.3% of the articles that included sexuality in the

abstract. In comparison, mixed/unknown gender authors authored 13.6% of articles, and 9.1% were written by all-male authors, which was statistically significant.

### *Inclusion in the Separate Sections of the Article*

Sexual identity was included in the literature review of 117 articles: 25 times as a theme and 94 as a mention. When examining inclusion by journal type, the associations for both theme and mention were statistically significant, with 73.9% of articles including it as a theme and 58.5% of articles mentioning it being published in *FC*, followed by *Criminology*, *RAJ*, and *JRCD*, respectively. Regarding inclusion as a theme or mention by year of publication, the relationships were also significant, with 78.3% of the articles that incorporated sexuality as a theme and 66.0% of articles that only mentioned sexual identity being published between 2016-2020. There was a significant relationship between any inclusion of sexuality as a mention and as a theme in the literature review by author gender, with a larger percentage of all-female author teams including it as a theme and as a mention than other author gender compositions. Notably, 82.6% of articles that included sexuality as a theme in the literature review were authored by all-female authors compared to 0% of articles authored by all males. Only 19.1% of the mentions of sexuality in the literature review were in articles authored by all-male teams.

Regarding inclusion in the methods section, the Fisher exact test examining inclusion by journal type was significant but not for the year of publication. Again, the largest percentage of articles that included sexuality in the methods (65.4%) were published in *FC*, followed by *Criminology*, *JRCD*, and *RAJ*, respectively. While not significant, most articles that included sexuality in the methods section (63.5%) were published between 2016-2020. A significantly larger percentage of articles that included sexuality in the methods section were written by all-female authors (63.5% of all articles) than all other gender compositions.

Findings regarding the inclusion of sexual identity in the analysis/results section of the articles for both journal type and year of publication associations were significant. Again, the majority (65.5%) of articles that included sexual orientation in the analysis/results section were published in *FC*, followed by *RAJ*, *Criminology*, and *JRCD*, respectively. Twice as many articles (n=36) published between 2016-2020 included sexual identity in the analysis/results compared to 2011-2015 (n=18). Once again, articles authored by all-female author teams comprised a significantly larger percentage of those including sexuality in the analysis/results section, with 60% of the articles that included sexuality being written by all-female authors.

Regarding the conclusion section, the associations for inclusion as a theme and mention by journal type were both significant, with the largest percentage of articles mentioning it as both a theme (64.7%) and as a mention (66.7%) being published in *FC*. Notably, none of the articles published in *JRCD* included sexuality as a theme in the conclusion/discussion section of the article, while only 1.1% included it as a mention. When examining by year, being included as a theme was not significant, while being included as a mention was. Over twice as many articles published between 2016-2020 (n=41) included sexuality as a mention compared to 2011-2015 (n=19). A significantly larger percentage of articles written by all-female author teams included sexuality in the conclusion, both as mentions and themes, with 82.4% of articles that included it as a theme and 58.3% of articles that mentioned it authored by all-female author teams.

### *Variable Types of Sexuality*

Regarding variable type, sexuality was used as a dependent variable in 3 articles, an independent variable in 11 articles, and a control variable in 17 articles, with 30 articles using sexuality as a variable<sup>8</sup>. Arguably, the finding of sexuality as a dependent variable is somewhat unexpected due to the nature of dependent variables. However, for these three articles, one variable examined the sexualization of females through nudity, and two examined the rates of discrimination and/or hate crimes due to sexual orientation. Our findings indicated that even when sexuality is being examined, it is often not a primary variable of concern, with over half of the articles examining it using it as a control variable. Notably, when we looked at differences between journals and years of the use of sexuality, several significant findings emerged. The largest portion of articles that measured sexuality as control and independent variables were in *FC*. Importantly, articles in *JRCD* only ever measured sexuality as a control variable – none of the variables measured as independent or dependent variables were published in *JRCD*.

Additionally, *Criminology* and *RAJ* published a very similar number of articles that included sexuality as a variable. When examining by year, a larger percentage of articles published between 2016-2020 included sexuality as any variable compared to 2011-2015. Also, of the articles that included sexuality as a variable, most were written by female author(s), which was significant in the chi-square analysis.

### **Contextualizing the Use of Sexuality in Articles**

To better understand the context of how sexuality is included and measured in published articles within CCJ, we qualitatively explored several factors. First, we examined how sexual orientation was operationalized when utilized as a variable. Then, we analyzed the titles and abstracts that included sexual orientation in the title. Finally, because we found that “mentions” in the discussion and conclusion sections were much more common than “themes,” we analyzed the mentions to determine if there were any themes as to why sexuality might be mentioned but not a major theme for this section.

### *Operationalization of Sexuality*

The operationalization of sexuality as a variable is also noteworthy. Two variables that measured sexuality were not measures of sexual orientation. These operationalizations included “sexualization of females through nudity” as part of a qualitative study and “being flirtatious/promiscuous,” measured on a Likert-type scale. A handful of articles also examined sexuality through the lens of hate crimes. Operationalizations for these articles included “anti-gay hate crime victim,” “sexual orientation related discrimination,” “sexual orientation bias inclusion in the laws,” “hate crimes against gays,” and “laws against anti-gay hate crime.” Two of these operationalizations appear to be more inclusive (i.e., sexual orientation), while the anti-gay operationalizations could be interpreted as more binary/dichotomous views (i.e., gay or heterosexual).

Two articles indicated that participant sexuality was measured but provided no operationalization. Additionally, several articles had limited operationalizations of sexuality and sexual orientation. These were often dichotomous measures. For example, some

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<sup>8</sup> Of the 936 articles examined, 120 (12.8%) were non-empirical or did not collect data. Thus, out of the 816 empirical articles, only 30 (3.7%) measured sexuality as a variable.



operationalizations included “heterosexual, bisexual,” “same-sex relationships: yes/no,” “sex with a person of the opposite sex: yes/no,” “abuser opposite sex, abuser same-sex, missing,” “heterosexual, nonheterosexual,” and “homosexual, heterosexual.” One operationalization conflated gender and sexuality: “sexual orientation: homosexual, transgender, heterosexual, bisexual, and other.” Some of these pieces lacked an explicit operationalization but instead utilized reported categories of sexual orientation. Therefore, with an operationalization such as “heterosexual, bisexual,” it is possible that researchers had initially measured additional categories or that these were the only categories indicated in their qualitative methodology, but since they did not report them or discuss how respondents were asked about their sexuality, we are left only knowing that these two categories were definitively measured.

There were some more extensive/inclusive and explicit operationalizations. These included: “heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, questioning/other, don’t want to answer,” “straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or unknown,” “LGBQ Identity: heterosexual/straight, homosexual/gay/lesbian, bisexual, not sure,” and “same-sex behavior: have never had sexual intercourse, females only, males only, males and females.” Notably, one article noted that respondents were asked to self-identify their sexual orientation.

### ***Sexuality Included in Titles***

Of the ten articles that included sexuality in the title, three specifically mentioned hetero- or heterosexual, all of which were published in *FC*. For example, “Masculinity threat, “incel” traits, and violent fantasies among heterosexual men in the United States” was published in 2020. Another title was “The struggle for heterofeminine recognition: Bullying, embodiment, and reactive sexual offending by adolescent girls.” Five articles that mentioned sexuality in the title were specifically regarding youth, two of which mentioned strain theory as the framework in the title as well. For example, one title written by an all-female author(s) was “Applying a General Strain Theory framework to understand school weapon carrying among LGBQ and Heterosexual Youth.” Notably, of the articles that mentioned sexuality in the title, all but one were written by all-female authors.

### ***Sexuality in Abstracts***

As noted, only 2.4% (n=22) of articles included sexuality in the abstract. Typically, abstracts are used to briefly consider the article’s purpose, the methods employed, and general findings. Therefore, if sexuality was mentioned in the abstract, it was arguably an essential aspect of the research. Many of the abstracts that included it highlighted that criminological scholarship on sexuality is limited. For example, in one abstract, the authors note: “Despite recent calls for scholarship that is more inclusive of LGBTQ populations and attentive to issues of sexual identity, however, most gang research remains overwhelmingly heteronormative” (C202058214). Another study noted that criminological literature on sexuality exists, but “much of it is sex-negative, employs a ‘deviance frame,’ and regards many sex acts as dangerous or destructive” (F201813514). Again, like the titles, some abstracts mentioned sexuality but only included heterosexuality. For example, one study utilized “an online self-report survey of 18- to 30-year-old heterosexual men” (F202015313). Another study examined the issuance of protective orders “in family courts involving women seeking orders against their male partners.” Thus, even when sexuality is included in abstracts, it is not always diverse.

### *Discussion/Conclusion Mentions of Sexuality*

As previously noted, 8.2% of the articles included sexuality in the discussion and/or conclusion in some way. Sixty articles included sexuality in a way that was classified as only a mention rather than a theme, while only 17 articles included it as a theme. Considering most of the inclusions of sexuality in the conclusion/discussion section were only mentioned, we focused on the text in our analysis since this is where authors wrap up their article. These sections usually include summations, policy implications, limitations, and avenues for future research. Therefore, we examined the articles looking for these themes and noted when the conclusions limited sexuality to heterosexuality<sup>9</sup>. We were particularly interested in studies that indicated the lack of sexuality was a limitation or suggested future research include sexuality because this might indicate that while researchers know they “should” include sexuality, they did not. Additionally, our analysis of the texts revealed that a focus on heterosexuality and implications for sexual orientation/sexuality were two other major and often conflicting themes of these mentions.

Over half of the articles (n=31) that mentioned sexuality in the conclusion did so as a limitation or noted that more examination was needed in future research. Of the ones that specifically mentioned future research, several studies indicated that the intersecting factors of social identities, such as gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, among others, caused people to experience phenomena differently. Therefore, close attention needs to be paid to these factors. Importantly, in these cases, sexual orientation or sexuality was mentioned as part of a long list of other factors. For example, one study noted that “future research could investigate how faculty across a range of social identities (such as race, gender, sexuality, etc.) experience...” (R20188103). Another noted that “race, class, sexual orientation, and similar social context should be further explored...” (F201106201). Even when studies mentioned it as a limitation, some still included it as part of a list of other social identities that were also excluded. For instance: “it does not account for the complex nature of multiple identities, such as the intersection of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation” (F201409217). Again, sexuality was just one of many identities that needed further exploration.

Quite a few of these studies included a theme of heterosexuality (n=12) and excluded other forms of sexuality. However, one study did indicate that “heteronormative expectations affect both LGBT and heterosexual girls...” (F201207307). Additionally, a few that were deemed to fall into heterosexuality did not specifically mention sexuality but rather described sexual relationships between men and women. For instance, one study noted that research fails to explore “women with abusive ex-partners” (F201611113), which could be sexuality inclusive. However, the following sentence referred expressly to abusive ex-husbands, which makes the theme of heterosexuality predominant. Several studies that examined IPV did so by limiting their analysis to heterosexual couples, even though research has shown that LGBTQ individuals tend to experience higher rates of IPV (Cameron, 2003; Messinger, 2011, 2014). Still, not all studies that mentioned sexuality as heterosexuality were focused on IPV, with one study focusing on females noting that they may “emphasize heterosexuality” to “appear attractive to the opposite sex” (F201712207).

Implications of research, such as calls for laws or provisions for protecting sexual minorities, were also part of sexuality being mentioned in the conclusions. One study noted that children of immigrants face many obstacles and dangers and that schools should focus on their safety and learning while considering “disparities linked to race/ethnicity, region of origin, religion,

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<sup>9</sup> Two research team members examined the text of the conclusions with sexuality mentions to identify which theme(s) it would be best characterized as. The coding results were then compared, and any discrepancies were resolved through the consensus of the researchers.

gender, sexual orientation, language proficiency, and socioeconomic status” (R202010316). Again, as was the case with many “future research” and “limitations,” sexual orientation is just one of many social constructs that affect experiences of the phenomenon. Another article indicated that school curriculums should “begin challenging the notion of ‘Other’ and to organize knowledge based on the inclusion of the least advantaged in terms of gender and sexuality” (F201106302). Yet another noted that “strong advocacy might impact hate crime prosecutions based on antisexual orientation bias when states include this provision in their laws” (R201202310).

Studies also mentioned the need for change in social norms and attitudes. However, sometimes this was tied into themes of gender roles as well or was ambiguous in meaning, which may work to conflate the term sexuality for “sexual freedoms” rather than sexual orientation. For instance, one study indicated that “conditions should be created for women to be truly free from traditional norms of sexuality and motherhood...” (F201813516), and another called for “expanded access to contraceptive services and sexuality education,” which “allows for governments to prevent unwanted pregnancy...” (C202058317). In both instances, the meaning of sexuality is ambiguous. It could be referring to sexual orientation, but it could also be referring to sexual freedom. So again, like the titles and abstracts, the inclusion of sexuality was not always diverse. Sometimes it was ambiguous, and sometimes it upheld heteronormative expectations of behavior.

## Discussion

Several important findings emerged from our analysis. First and most importantly, sexuality is still largely ignored in criminology, with only 171 of the 936 articles examined including sexuality in any way. Again, within the nearly 1,000 pieces examined across four journals over ten years, more than 80% of publications excluded sexuality and sexual orientation from mention. More troubling, only 30 articles (3.2%) measured sexuality, most of which measured it as a control variable. Often when sexuality was measured, the operationalization was limited (i.e., binary measures, conflated measures). While previous research has noted no consensus for measuring sexual orientation/sexuality and that it is often difficult to measure well (Noel & Lutz, 2020), the lack of any measurement is much more problematic than limited, static measures. A handful of articles measured sexuality in more progressive ways, for example, more exhaustive measures and allowing respondents to self-identify. However, these were less common than binary measures and even rarer than outright exclusion.

Notably, there were times when sexuality was mentioned. However, it was referring explicitly to heterosexuality, as was the case with 30% of the titles that included sexuality, which could either be an acknowledgment that heterosexuality is indeed a sexuality or just an issue of clarity for the authors so that readers know they are only examining heterosexual relationships (i.e., exclusion). A notable finding highlighting sexuality’s exclusion from the articles is that when sexuality was included in the conclusion, it was typically as a mention, and most of those mentions were either indicating its lack of inclusion as a limitation or noting that its inclusion should be a direction for future research. This means that even when researchers know that sexuality/sexual orientation should be included, they still do not. Moreover, even though these studies are noting it as a limitation, they are still being published. Therefore, while CCJ may be paying more lip service to sexuality and its importance, it is still not included in published criminological studies.

It is also notable that journal type, year of publication, and the presumed gender of the author team are important factors. *FC* consistently included sexuality at higher rates throughout the ten years examined comparatively. Still, even in this publication, sexuality is included very limitedly. Also, many articles that mentioned sexuality by restricting it to heterosexual couples were published in *FC*. Therefore, researchers may also limit the discussion of sexuality and sexual

orientation in nuance. *JRCD* had the least inclusion for sexuality despite its description of staying “up-to-date- on contemporary issues and controversies within criminology and criminal justice” (SAGE, 2022, Journal Description section). Considering the numerous calls over the last decade for inclusivity, particularly regarding sexuality, the CCJ field should consider this a contemporary issue. In terms of time, publication dates mattered when examining the inclusion of sexuality, with those articles published between 2016-2020 having significantly higher mentions for many of the sections examined. Yet, the inclusion of sexuality was never higher than ¼ of the articles, and it was usually only included in 10-15% of the articles examined. While it appears that CCJ includes sexuality more as time progresses, it is still largely ignored. Finally, all-female author(s) teams tend to include sexuality more than other gender authors. Still, as continuously mentioned, it is not a high inclusion rate, and there is a lack of nuance in the discussion.

### Limitations

The current examination of scholarship is limited in a few ways. First, we only analyzed pieces from four criminological journals across ten years. However, two of these journals, *Criminology* and the *Journal of Crime and Delinquency*, were “mainstream” and considered part of the “Big Three” for criminological journals (Barranco et al., 2016, p. 20). As such, one might assume that the articles published in these journals reach a broader audience than others in the criminology and criminal justice field. Additionally, *Feminist Criminology* and *Race and Justice*, while specialty journals, may have a higher readership and receive more attention than others due to the recognition they receive from ASC as the official journals of the Division of Women and Crime and the Division on People of Color and Crime. Other journals beyond the scope of this investigation that receive less attention may be publishing more sexuality-inclusive pieces, and future research may want to focus on other such journals.

Another limitation of our study was the measurement of author gender. If no pronouns were used in the official biography, this led to the author gender being coded as unknown. This means some gender teams measured as “mixed/unknown” gender may have been miscoded due to lack of information. Also, the analysis of the articles examined was largely manifest content analysis. The researchers relied heavily on counting whether sexuality was mentioned in sections, more so than context. Therefore, we may have missed some interpretation or part of the context for the inclusion of sexuality.

Additionally, the authors of the pieces examined may have initially measured for LGBTQ but dropped it from their analysis without noting it in the publication due to a lack of representation. Considering that many studies published in the mainstream journals are quantitative and are often conducting data analysis of large datasets and official measures of crime, it may be that sexuality/sexual orientation was omitted because this information is not collected, or again, LGBTQ respondents were low and were thus excluded from statistical analysis. Copes and colleagues’ (2020) study on published qualitative research in CCJ journals noted that from 2010-2019, only 10.4% of the articles in *Criminology* and 3.4% of the articles in *JRCD* were qualitative. Finally, as noted, over 80% of articles did not mention sexuality; however, it may be that sexuality was not directly relevant to these published pieces. Still, the context provided in our qualitative examinations of studies that did include sexuality shows that we are far from heeding the call for inclusivity. Additionally, it is hard to know if sexuality is relevant for criminological studies if few studies incorporate it in their measurement/analysis. Future research may want to examine how sexuality is included in the literature when it is indeed included.

## Conclusion

While it appears that over the ten years examined, more articles incorporated and included sexuality as time progressed, it was still a minimal amount of research. Less than 1 in 5 articles examined included sexuality or sexual orientation in any way, and only about 3% of the articles measured sexual orientation as a variable. When it was measured, the operationalizations were often lacking or limited. Moreover, when it was included in the discussion/conclusion sections of articles, it was most often done so as a limitation of the study. Notably, the specialty journal *Feminist Criminology* was the most inclusive of sexuality, even though it did not have exceptionally high inclusion rates. Subsequently, it appears criminologists published in the selected journals have yet to heed the call for the inclusion of sexuality. This is a major problem because, as noted by articles examined and other scholars, sexual minorities are often marginalized and have different lived experiences than heterosexual individuals due to heterosexism and heteronormative social standards (Ball, 2019; Woods, 2014). From research on victimization, we know that LGBTQ individuals are at a higher risk of experiencing victimization than their heterosexual counterparts for many types of crime (Black et al., 2011; Panter, 2018). We also know that there is a considerable victim/offender overlap and that other factors that affect victimization, such as sex, race, class, and age, also affect criminality (see Jennings et al., 2012). Yet, criminological studies have been slow to examine sexuality and sexual orientation issues, even though logic would dictate it is needed. We will not know if and how sexuality and sexual orientation affect criminality and offending until we examine it. This leaves us with a consequential gap in our understanding of crime and offending, one that many seem content to keep ignoring.

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**APPENDIX 1**

**JOURNAL TITLE:**                      **VOL. NO.**                      **TITLE:**

**AUTHORS:**

		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Sexuality	Specified in title		
	Specified in abstract		
	Specified as a key term/word		
	Used as control variable		
	Used as dependent variable		
	Used as independent variable		
	Operationalization: ( <i>insert here</i> )		
	Discussed in literature review		
	Discussed in methods section		
	Discussed in analysis		
	Discussed in discussion/conclusion		

**Additional Comments:**