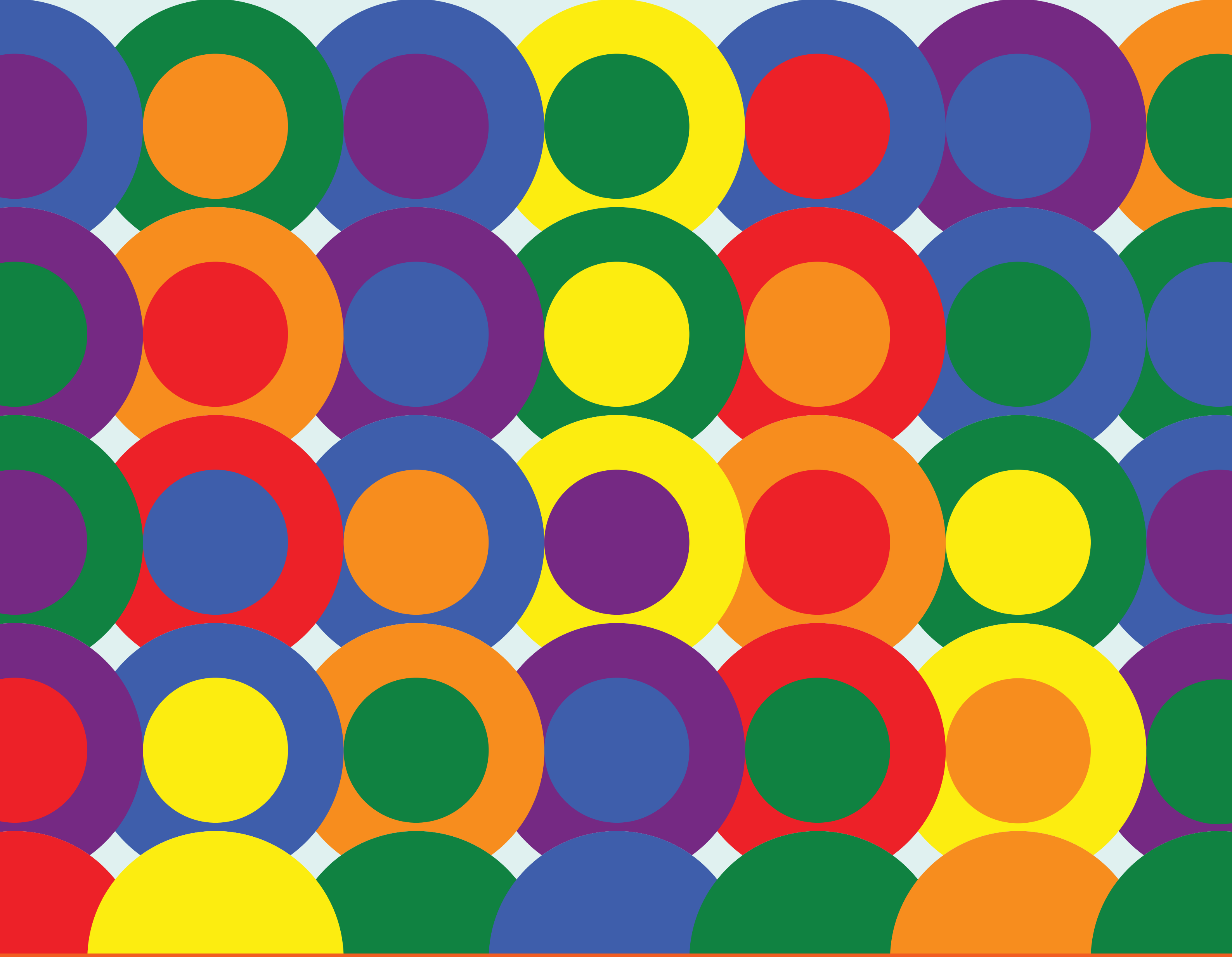

MEASURING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Data collection and evidence on violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics

UN
WOMEN

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

CDC	Center for Disease Control
CSO	Civil society organization
EU	European Union
EU-GBV	EU survey on gender-based violence against women
FRA	European Agency for Fundamental Rights
GBV	Gender-based violence
GLB	Gay, lesbian, and bisexual
HRW	Human Rights Watch
INDEC	National Institute of Statistics and Surveys
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
IPV	Intimate partner violence
KIIs	Key informant interviews
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer. *The plus sign represents people with diverse SOGIESC who identify using other terms or none.*
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NISVS	National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey
NSO	National statistics office
PII	Personal identifiable information
RDS	Respondent-driven sampling
RUCVM	Argentina's Unified Registry of Cases of Violence Against Women
SV	Sexual violence
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics
TGEU	Transgender Europe
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
UN IE SOGI	United Nations Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
USTS	U.S. Trans Survey
VAW	Violence against women

INTRODUCTION

The risks of gender-based violence (GBV), understood as violence perpetrated with the intent to punish those who are perceived as defying dominant gender and/or sexual norms and narratives, are compounded for women, girls, and people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).[1] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent additional human rights standards and legal provisions recognize that violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people are violations of international law and outline States' obligations to protect against such violations.[2]

Despite a growing evidence base and accelerated efforts to develop fit-for-purpose research and data collection methods, significant quantitative and qualitative gaps remain in our understanding of the scale and particular manifestations of violence based on SOGIESC. In their 2019 report, the United Nations' Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity noted that "there are no accurate estimates regarding the world population affected by violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity."[3] Significantly, the report highlights that these **data gaps are both driven by, and drive or reinforce, the very risk multipliers for violence based on SOGIESC**, such as "criminalization, stigmatization, and negation".[4] In other words, **while a lack of data is not the *cause*, it is an *enabler* of this violence– and of the impunity and inaction that so often follows it**.

High-quality data, when safely collected and managed, has the potential to heighten awareness and visibility about the scope and nature of the issue, enable conditions for safe disclosure of experiences with violence by LGBTIQ+ persons, unlock crucial resources, and inform policy and programmatic advocacy and design.[5] Addressing data gaps should not be done at any cost: not only do the same ethical and safety considerations as for any data collection on gender-based violence apply, but particular considerations must be given to the size of the studied group and to the legal and sociopolitical context regarding diverse SOGIESC to ensure no harm is done because of the research.[6]

Overlapping methodological, ethical, and sociopolitical challenges are hampering efforts to fill data gaps about the full scale, scope, and manifestations of violence based on SOGIESC. However, despite these challenges, there is a burgeoning body of scholarly and practitioner literature, as well as community and movement-led research and knowledge-building across the globe, that is working to safely address these.[7] Given that a lack of data can be used as a rationale for inaction,[8] it is important to underscore that enough is already known to make clear that the violence is widespread. The question at hand is how to safely support and enhance approaches to building out the existing evidence base.

This paper does not intend to present the comprehensive state of evidence and data on violence based on SOGIESC around the world. Its aims are to **map existing approaches and methods to collecting data,**[9] **provide a snapshot of the landscape of existing evidence, highlight where the pressing gaps and challenges remain**, and, most crucially, **illuminate promising ways forward to overcome challenges to data collection, uptake, and use.**

BOX 1
SOGIESC and LGBTIQ+, a note on terminology[10]

This paper uses both of the following terms, where appropriate, while respecting their distinctions: violence that is perpetrated against people based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), and violence against LGBTIQ+ people.[11] LGBTIQ+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people. The plus sign represents people with diverse SOGIESC who identify using other terms or none. Various versions of this acronym and a wide range of context-specific terms are in use globally; and they are not static and continue to evolve over time.

It is important to underscore the vast heterogeneity of LGBTIQ+ groups, including the specific risks and forms of violence particular groups face. For example, there are notable data gaps in relation to violence perpetrated based on diverse sex characteristics (e.g., intersex populations). It is crucial that forward-looking data collection agendas on violence based on SOGIESC do not contribute to excluding intersex people's concerns. Thus, while it is beyond the scope of this paper to elucidate the range of these different experiences, more focused research is needed regarding all groups within the diverse LGBTIQ+ umbrella.

Significantly, neither term is universally applicable nor reflects the full range and diversity of sexual and gender formations, practices and identities that exist. Terms and their usage are constantly evolving, and SOGIESC applies to all people. In practice, there are a range of intersections as well as cultural, linguistic, geographic, and generational variations that are admittedly obscured by collapsing so many groups under a single term. Notably, and as illustrated by the works referenced in this paper, the terminology used across the scholarly and practitioner literature, as well as state and administrative or other forms of data where produced, ranges significantly. This is not merely a question of semantics: the concepts and terminology we use carry implications with regard to individuals' right to self-determine[12] their own identities, which, in turn, can have knock-on negative effects on data collection efforts. Indeed, if there is misalignment between the concepts or terminology used in survey questions, for example, this can exacerbate underreporting and the resultant invisibilization.[13] The acronyms here are deployed in line with broader efforts to balance the need for some degree of conceptual neutrality or universality at the global level, with the agility that can enable nuance and inclusion at more local levels.[14]

This work falls under the ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) strategic impact of UN Women, which focuses on a comprehensive approach to EVAWG that addresses legislation and policies, prevention, services for survivors, research and data. Therein, the work on data aims to ensure that quality, comparable data on different forms of violence against women is available and collected over time to address national data gaps and meet policy and reporting commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development commits "to leave no one behind", to ensure "targets [are] met for all nationals and peoples and for all segments of society" and "to reach the furthest behind first". Non-discrimination is a core principle of the international human rights framework, ensuring that all individuals are treated equally and without prejudice, regardless of their background or identity as notably embedded in the CEDAW. The CEDAW provides a comprehensive framework for Member States to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all spheres of life, encompassing civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. In its general recommendation on gender-based violence Number 35, the CEDAW Committee recognizes that gender-based violence may affect some women to different degrees or in different ways and that appropriate legal and policy responses are needed. The CEDAW Committee subsequently lists specific discriminatory factors that include, inter alia being lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex. In doing so, the Committee recognizes that women are not a homogenous group and that those who self-identify with certain identities or who are identified by others through certain identities face disproportionate levels of discrimination, exclusion and violence. To ensure that women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination are not overlooked in data, UN Women is producing research to fill data gaps and methods on intersectional discrimination and violence against women and girls, to better understand the nature of all women's and girls' experiences of violence, and the response and support they receive, in order to design better policies and responses to address their particular needs.

BOX 2
A note on scope and violence types

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender.[15] It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. The term is used to describe violence that relates to norms of masculinity/femininity and/or gender norms and that is disproportionately perpetrated against women, girls and LGBTQI+ populations.

There are many forms of gender-based violence that LGBTIQ+ individuals, and particularly LGBTIQ+ women, experience that are common to the forms of violence also experienced by cisgender, heterosexual women, such as intimate partner violence (IPV), for example. But these same forms can manifest differently, and IPV may affect different groups of women in different ways, and have distinct undertones and motivations in same-sex as opposed to heterosexual cases. There are also unique forms of violence that are perpetrated against LGBTIQ+ persons by family, community members, police, or health professionals and others, and the manifestations of which are inextricably linked to the diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics of victim-survivors. The intent of this paper is to map and spur approaches to data collection on both forms of gender-based violence that are more commonly experienced by LGBTIQ+ populations as a whole, and more specific forms of violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals that are motivated by their diverse SOGIESC. For example, so-called "corrective rape" is one form of sexual violence that is perpetrated against individuals with diverse sexual orientations, predominantly women.

APPROACHES TO DATA COLLECTION

To date, efforts to generate evidence on people with diverse SOGIESC, including their experiences with violence, have leveraged a range of data collection approaches. Each of these approaches present opportunities as well as limitations when it comes to data accuracy, quality, and usefulness. This section looks at different approaches or methods for collecting quantitative and qualitative data[16], and what we can learn from them, including, but not limited to: quantitative **survey data**, **administrative data**, **qualitative**, and **mixed methods data**.

Quantitative survey data

Data produced through censuses and population surveys on violence can be useful to collect initial data such as demographics of LGBTIQ+ populations or violence against sub-groups such as lesbian women, and to support resource mobilization and policy and programme advocacy. Still, some significant limitations need to be acknowledged at the outset when it comes to official data on LGBTIQ+ populations. For reasons that range from overt State discrimination to, often related, reluctance amongst groups to self-disclose (even in contexts with official legal protections), SOGIESC populations' experiences with violence are not easily reflected in nationally representative population-based surveys.[17] Cognizant of these limitations, the absence of official data or the availability of only poor-quality data should not be interpreted as reflective of a lack of widespread violence against groups based on their SOGIESC. It is therefore important to find alternative ways to collect data that can fill these gaps, including through specialized research studies, which are discussed more below.

Notably, State-led efforts to better and more comprehensively capture demographics of populations with diverse SOGIESC have tried to respond to these challenges. For example, in countries such as Argentina, Ireland, Costa Rica, Pakistan, and Australia, efforts are being made to integrate questions about elements of SOGIESC into State-led censuses and national population surveys.[18] In some cases, like New Zealand and the United States, these efforts are being accompanied by researcher-supported initiatives to help standardize survey terminology to enable comparability across States.[19] In New Zealand, the country's national statistics office (NSO) has implemented a statistical standard for gender identity that is also being deployed by administrative bodies and research institutes.[20]

The mere inclusion of questions on SOGIESC though is not sufficient to ensure that surveys properly capture the diversity in populations. Indeed, in some cases, efforts to produce official data on LGBTIQ+ people have fallen short of the hopes of civil society organizations (CSOs) who initially celebrated the initiatives. For example, in 2017, transgender people were included in Pakistan's national census for the first time, after a sentence emitted by the Lahore High Court.[21] However, the results of the census counted only 10,418 transgender people out of a total population of more than 207 million people, which members of the trans community decried as a "disturbing" undercount, leaving them feeling further marginalized.[22] Trans activists associated the undercount as a result of sociopolitical and methodological challenges that were not adequately accounted for prior to the administration of the census. They noted, for example, that many individuals did not know that it was an option to register as trans, or that others had registered with their sex assigned at birth to avoid discrimination (for example, at the time, inheritance laws did not recognize transgender people). They also raised concerns about the lack of sensitivity training amongst enumerators charged with carrying out data collection.[23] These instances point to the need for more comprehensive efforts on the part of governments when planning and implementing such initiatives, including the urgency of collaborating with CSOs to socialize and raise awareness and address fears around disclosure.

While these surveys are not designed with the goal of generating data on violence, understanding how questions on these populations are being integrated into broader surveys and censuses can shed light on methods and measures that could be leveraged in more specialized studies. For instance, in the United States context, the *Transpop* study, which was conducted by researchers at the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, Columbia University, Harvard University, and The Fenway Institute at Fenway Health with the support of a federal grant and supplemental grants, represented the first national probability sample of transgender individuals within the U.S. population, resulting in dozens of peer-reviewed studies and reports that have provided essential insights into the intersectional dynamics of transgender individuals' health outcomes. While not specifically focused on violence, *per se*, data and research initiatives such as these help to illuminate factors that exacerbate (or protect against) vulnerabilities related to health and service utilization across the lifecourse, and which are inextricably linked to experiences with violence.[24]

In the past decade, significant strides have been made by a few countries in generating **surveys and population-based data on violence against LGBTIQ+ persons**. For instance, in the United States, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) published in 2013 a study drawing upon nationally-representative survey data on sexual violence (SV), stalking, and intimate partner violence (IPV) among self-reported gay, lesbian, and bisexual women and men.[25] The data revealed the particular risk of sexual violence faced by bisexual women, and the predominance of male perpetrators irrespective of the reported sexual orientation of the victim.[26] In 2018 Statistics Canada administered a *Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces* – the responses of which illuminated the reach of violence and unwanted sexual behaviors against gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) and other sexual minorities 15 and older in places of work, public, and online, in particular.[27] Out of the estimated 1 million people aged 15 and older living in Canada who said that they were part of the sexual minority population, almost 6 in 10 (59%) had been sexually or physically assaulted since the age of 15 by someone other than an intimate partner.

BOX 3

Case Study - The European Agency for Fundamental Rights' Online Survey

In 2019, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights administered an online survey on people aged 15 years and older in the European Union (EU) and North Macedonia and Serbia who describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or intersex (LGBTI), collecting responses from almost 140,000 individuals on a range of issues, **including violence**.[28] Significantly, this was a second-wave survey after a first survey conducted in 2012, thus enabling the production of comparable datasets. The survey highlighted several persistent trends, including that the majority (58%) of respondents had experienced some form of harassment or violence in private, public, or online settings in the past five years, and that reporting these experiences to police authorities or other organizations was a rare exception.[29]

Notably, much of the available **prevalence data produced in surveys conducted via scholarly studies leverages convenience samples** to develop estimates on the rates of violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ people.[30] These data are of course useful starting points for advocacy (and valuable in their own right)[31]; however, they are also vulnerable to dismissal due to the "data hierarchy",[32] which accords significantly more power to population-based (e.g., representative) samples.

Administrative data

Administrative data from state agencies and service providers (such as justice, health, or social services, including those delivered by CSOs) can provide valuable and timely insights related to violence against LGBTIQ+ people seeking services after experiencing violence. Again, it bears repeating that as with survey data, there are challenges, risks, and limitations with administrative data that is compounded for LGBTIQ+ populations, including due to under-reporting and criminalization. For example, where criminal and other civil laws have penalties for diverse sexual orientation or gender expressions (e.g., so-called "cross-dressing"), the use of administrative data to gather information can be even more of a challenge since reporting violence to authorities is not only a risk of exposure of identity or behavior, but also may not be legally recognised as an offense.

There are a number of countries whose national equality or human rights institutions and Ombudsman's offices collect official data related to experiences of discrimination. Currently, 18 European countries make anonymized data on complaints related to sexual orientation or gender identity publicly available.[33] More recently, some European Member States have started recording hate crime data, though this is more likely in cases when the crime is said to be motivated by sexual orientation rather than gender identity.[34] Meanwhile, Kenya's National Commission on Human Rights added non-binary markers on sexual orientation in its complaints management data collection forms and system; the data is recorded only with the complainant's consent.[35]

There is also significant scope to improve how administrative data on violence against women is collected to be more inclusive of all women. While administrative data record systems tend to conflate sex and gender, where the appropriate safeguards and legal context are in place, documenting whether people identify as cisgender, transgender, or non-binary separately would better illuminate the experiences and needs of survivors with diverse SOGIESC. For example, as part of its minimum data set, Argentina's Unified Registry of Cases of Violence Against Women (RUCVM) collects sex and gender identity using two variables (biological sex and whether the person self-identifies as trans). This data collection effort was catalyzed by a formal agreement between the country's National Women's Institute and NSO (the National Institute of Statistics and Surveys– INDEC), and in the context of Argentina's violence against women (VAW) law, which calls for inter-institutional partnerships to improve and develop country-level statistics on VAW.[36]

BOX 4

Case Study: Partnerships to advance implementation of protective laws and de-binarize data for improved GBV screening (Argentina)

In Argentina, ongoing public health research is helping to advance the de-binarization of healthcare data, which will improve the quality and representativeness of administrative healthcare data. The "de-binarization" of the national electronic health record system will allow people to select their own gender identity from a list of options, with the possibility of inputting their chosen identity under "none of the above". This is expected to improve gender expansive individuals' representation in administrative data sets in the country. Working together with advocacy organizations and state agencies, and crucially, leveraging an **enabling legislative environment** (in light of Argentina's 2012 Gender Identity Law) researchers are working to identify safe, context-specific methods for making the experiences of transgender and gender diverse individuals visible.[37]

Qualitative studies

Quantitative data is critical for showing the scale of violence based on SOGIESC. But activists have long-known that numbers are insufficient for making survivors' experiences with violence "count", nor, indeed, do they provide adequate information for crafting tailored service or advocacy responses. Thus, one of the most significant contributions of the qualitative studies, most of which are undertaken by scholars and advocates, has been in providing a more nuanced understanding of the **manifestations of violence that are specific to LGBTIQ+ sub-populations**.

Qualitative research has been key for generating empirical insights about what violence looks like across different local, country, and regional contexts and spatialities, and highlighting what needs to be done to address it. Dynamics such as "**outing**", "**compulsory heterosexuality**", or **police violence against masculine-presenting LBQ+ women**, for example, have been illuminated through this approach. A recent report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) draws upon interviews with LBQ+ activists, researchers, lawyers, and movement leaders in countries ranging from high- to low-income contexts.[38] The report identifies key areas where discrimination manifests in individual (e.g., restrictions on movement) as well as more structural or socioeconomic expressions of violence (e.g, denial of land, housing, or property rights),[39] and spotlights "compulsory heterosexuality" among other forms of violence. The report also evidences how physical, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic modalities of violence are leveraged to pressure or coerce victim-survivors into heteronormative relationships, including forced marriages.[40] In Cuba, UNESCO is working with the Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual to generate data about homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools, including through research conducted amongst young LGBT adults about their experiences of violence when they were in school.[41] **Such qualitative research helps to surface dynamics that can in turn be included in quantitative studies and surveys moving forward**– for instance, by introducing questions that could help quantify the scale of lesbian or bisexual women forced into heterosexual marriages.

Mixed methods approaches

Mixed methods approaches are grounded in the perspective that **combining qualitative and quantitative methods leads to the generation of data with considerably greater descriptive and explanatory power**.[42] Research that is geared towards policy and advocacy often relies on mixed methods approaches that can help answer questions concerned with measuring levels of a phenomenon (e.g., violence based on SOGIESC), as well as questions concerned with illuminating particular experiences (e.g., amongst LGBTIQ+ sub-populations) and developing strategies to address these dynamics. Studies retrieved during the scoping review suggest that **CSOs in particular are playing a vital role in filling gaps in the data on prevalence and forms of violence based on SOGIESC using mixed methods approaches**.[43] Indeed, such data collection initiatives are often catalyzed through the efforts of non-government or civil society organizations, or member-based consortiums, often in collaboration with universities and research institutes.[44]

In France, for example, the volunteer-run *SOS Homophobie* publishes annual quantitative and qualitative data on violence and discrimination against LGBTI people; and *Colombia Diversa* does the same in Colombia.[45] Relatedly, a report on the Economic Inclusion of LGBTI Groups in Thailand also included data about experiences of discrimination and violence.[46]

And one of the more significant efforts to fill the vacuum of data collection efforts in Europe is from *Transgender Europe (TGEU)*, which is a 200 member-based consortium representing 48 countries across Europe and Central Asia.[47] For example, in a recent landmark mixed methods study, *Under the Radar*, project partners from Hungary, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, and Turkey documented violence against trans people between 2015-2020. The report includes data showing how perpetrators traverse individual (e.g., family members) and institutional (e.g., police) scales, and also points out the role of mainstream media in reproducing the harmful coverage and negative stereotypes that perpetuate violence against trans people in each country.[48] Crucially, and as is often the case when data collection initiatives are led by community-based organizations with a stake in linking data to advocacy for policy changes, TGEU leverages research and data for strategic litigation efforts to advance human rights and legal protections for trans people across Europe.

In certain cases, community organizations also provide insights into how local organizations navigate the collection of mixed methods data in overtly discriminatory legal contexts, including by working with members to build agreement on the risks (e.g., privacy violations leading to targeted violence) and opportunities (e.g., tailored community support, resource mobilization). For example, in 2019, *Iranti-Org*, which supports local and regional lesbian, trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming movements in South Africa and across the continent, published a report on the quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts of movements in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and South Africa, where these groups are criminalized (with the exception of South Africa).[49] By focusing on six key indicators across the five countries, the report provides a useful snapshot of the current state of available data, and the possibilities and limitations of future data collection efforts.

BOX 5

Case Study - Multi-stakeholder collaboration and mixed methods approaches for intersectional data generation (Nepal)

In 2022, UN Women's Nepal Country Office led a consortium of international, national, and local partners in conducting a study on violence against LGBTIQ+ people in Nepal.[50] The study is particularly notable for highlighting how vulnerability to and experiences with violence are exacerbated along **intersectional lines**; on this front, the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and engagement with those representing not only LGBTIQ+ but also specifically youth, indigenous groups, and specific ethnicities and castes, was critical.

Through a mixed-methods approach that included a national survey, key informant interviews (KIIs), and a legal and policy analysis, the study was able to illuminate how experiences with (and impacts of) violence may differ for Dalit lesbian women as opposed to Muslim trans men, for example. The study tethers its findings to recommendations for tailored violence prevention and response programs and policies that take into account how factors that include, but which are not necessarily limited to, caste, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability, shape experiences with violence.

BOX 6

Case Study: Mixed methods research to illuminate MSM and transgender women's experiences with sexual violence (Mongolia)

Research on sexual violence against MSM and transgender women in Mongolia leveraged both quantitative and qualitative research strategies for data generation. The quantitative data provided more comparable understandings of prevalence rates and allowed for analysis between variables, while the qualitative data helped contextualize findings and capture a greater heterogeneity of experiences (including the different experiences of MSM and transgender women). Mixed methods approaches to research like this can help generate rich, nuanced, and actionable evidence on violence. Combining different types of research also offers utility when it comes to insulating against government, donor, or anti-rights organizations' accusations that data is limited due to small sample size, bias, or relevance. For example, it can help address data hierarchies that denote qualitative data.

STATE OF EVIDENCE AND DATA

While there remain significant data gaps, available evidence already identifies trends and main characteristics of violence based on SOGIESC. This section provides a brief snapshot of the state of evidence and data on prevalence, forms, and the risk factors and drivers of this violence. In particular, it spotlights key themes and findings from the scholarly and practitioner literature, including where researchers and advocates have flagged pressing data gaps and a need for future focused research.

Prevalence

There are no accurate estimates about the world population affected by violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. A common caveat in the existing literature and prevalence studies pertains to the problem of “undercounting”: namely, that data on violence based on SOGIESC are “often incomplete or unreliable”.[51] Existing prevalence data and studies are hardly comparable because of the range of definitional parameters used to refer to the groups or sub-populations that are surveyed. These parameters tend to vary based on factors such as the sociocultural context (e.g., language, geography, history), the legal landscapes that shape and constrain the possibilities for safely collecting data, as well as the self-identifying preferences of the groups in question, which often also vary generationally.[52]

The overall gaps in representative data are due to a myriad of methodological, ethical, and sociopolitical challenges that are discussed further below.

Notable features of the evidence base concerning prevalence data:

- A recent systematic review of quantitative literature on prevalence and correlates of intimate partner violence (IPV) in **transgender populations** found that rates of IPV victimization are “dramatically higher” amongst transgender individuals than for cisgender individuals.[53] Another recent systematic review commissioned by the World Health Organization focuses specifically on **violence motivated by sexual orientation and gender identity** and captured studies from 50 different countries which showed prevalence of sexual and physical violence ranging from 6 to 25%; though the authors note that the quality of the data is poor due to the lack of standardized measures and small samples.[54]
- **There is a notable data gap in prevalence data along geographic lines:** namely, the evidence on violence against LGBTIQ+ populations in **rural contexts** is woefully inadequate.[55] Reflecting on the contexts in Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, and Uganda, for example, advocates note that the available data predominantly focuses on LGBTI persons living in urban settings, which is reflective of “the placement of the majority of [non-governmental organizations (NGOs)]” as well as related to internet connectivity (or lack thereof). This underscores that both from a data collection and service provision perspective, there is a pressing need to expand support networks so that the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people living outside of the (relative) umbrella of protection and visibility potentially offered by (better funded) CSOs or NGOs in urban centers can be accounted for.[56]

Forms of violence

Recent scholarly studies and advocacy-oriented reports have done a great deal to close gaps in our understanding of violence based on SOGIESC,[57] even while some of these may focus more narrowly on a specific manifestation of violence (e.g., intimate partner violence, or IPV) and on specific subpopulations (e.g., transgender people), at the exclusion of others (e.g., outing as a form of psychological violence that also has severe socioeconomic consequences, or research on intersex or asexual populations). Notably, there is a lack of consensus on which forms of violence are most commonly perpetrated against LGBTIQ+ individuals.[58] This includes a lack of consensus among studies in similar sociopolitical contexts,[59] as well as among studies in distinct sociopolitical contexts[60] — which could be due to the different methodologies used and/or reflect dynamics that are unique to the context. Still, across the evidence base, there are some consistent thematic threads that emerge in relation to the forms or manifestations of violence, as well as data and evidence gaps where there is a noted need for further research.

Notable features of the evidence base on forms of violence against LGBTIQ+ people, including violence based on SOGIESC:

- The literature highlights that LGBTIQ+ people as well as cisgender heterosexual women are put at risk of or experience **numerous forms of physical, sexual, psychological**[61] **or emotional, and economic gender-based violence** across both private and public spaces throughout their life.

- Other studies illuminate how LGBTIQ+ people are also exposed to **specific forms of violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics**. The evidence base is consistent in emphasizing that there are forms of violence that hinge on the sexuality and/or gender identity or gender expression of the victim. These include forms of sexual violence like so-called **"corrective rape"**, and psychological or emotional forms of violence like **intentional misgendering**, or **threats to "out" an individual**, and economic forms of violence like **withholding of social protection benefits**, amongst others.[62]

    - **The documentation of forced heterosexual marriages remains a pressing research gap**. Researchers and advocates highlight the need for research that can elucidate the specific ways in which LBQ+ women, in particular, experience this violence, including through **in depth analyses that can help disaggregate what is motivating or driving it**: for instance, is it a form of punishment and/or an attempt at "corrective" therapy, a "strategic" protective act by the victim-survivor to avoid further abuse from family, or is it due to forced marriages being pervasive to the context irrespective of sexuality or gender expression?

    - The literature also suggests that there are **significant data gaps** on how **threatening to 'out'** a family member, partner, or co-worker, for example, manifests as a form of psychological or emotional violence, and how these dynamics may differ across cultural contexts and subpopulations.

    - The literature highlights that while research and data on violence based on SOGIESC is still relatively sparse for all groups, the lack of studies on **intersex and asexual individuals' and their experiences with violence** is especially concerning.[63]

- In diverse country contexts, studies have also shown how **perpetrators** of gender-based violence against LGBTIQ+ persons range from the individual (interpersonal or familial) scales to the organizational (coworkers) and institutional (police and healthcare providers) ones, to strangers and people not known to victims.[64]

Risk factors and drivers

- **Social and gender norms**. One throughline across the scholarly and practitioner literature reviewed is that the ways in which LGBTIQ+ people **challenge (or are perceived to challenge) patriarchal gender and social norms** due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics exposes them to severe forms of violence across their life course, by a diverse range of actors.[65] The focus on the relationship between gender norms and violence mirrors much of the literature on violence against women, and underscores that LGBTIQ+ people are 'disciplined' through violence in ways that—while also unique— are often similar to the gender-based violence perpetrated against cis heterosexual women.[66]

- **Intersectional discrimination.** Much of the evidence base takes an intersectional approach in analyzing concurrent risk factors associated with experiences of violence among LGBTIQ+ individuals; these studies train attention on how race (or racialization), ethnicity, caste, age, religion, disability, migratory status, having multiple intimate partners, or participation in the sex industry shape exposure to and experiences with violence.[67] For example, studies show that a key risk factor that increases LGBTIQ+ individuals' experiences with violence is linked to the sex industry, and the working conditions often present. This research underscores that participation in the sex industry, where workers are chronically underpaid, stigmatized, and unprotected or criminalized by the state and law enforcement, can mean LGBTIQ+ persons in the sex industry who survive violence have limited recourse to support, and perpetrators enjoy even greater impunity.[68] There is also evidence highlighting the **specific experiences of violence experienced by LBTIQ+ women due to the intersection of their multiple identities as women and as LBTIQ+, amongst other factors**. For example, data on women and girls' experiences with online or technology-facilitated violence during COVID-19 shows how lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women were particularly targeted with hate speech and incitement to violence.[69] The evidence base also highlights that there are **drivers that may be unique to, or more salient for, particular LGBTIQ+ individuals, such as levels of 'outness', the level of State or socially sanctioned stigma and/or criminalization, and lack of family approval**.[70] Scholars also note the need for additional research here, particularly with an intersectional lens (e.g., how drivers of violence specific to LGBTIQ+ individuals may differ based upon age, race, class, profession, etc).[71]

- Across diverse socio-political contexts, research shows that the **failure of states to protect LGBTIQ+ individuals** from violence creates environments of impunity that puts them at further risk of violence. Beyond the failure of some states to actively protect LGBTIQ+ individuals, there is also a notable evidence base showing how organizational actors within police and judicial systems, health care, and education services, among others, are at times active perpetrators of violence against these populations.[72] Beyond individual actors, research shows that these dynamics help to protect perpetrators of violence within institutions at a structural level.

- **Conflict-related violence:** While increasing attention has been paid to the role that gender plays in conflict-related violence, there has been a dearth of study about how this violence manifests when it comes to LGBTIQ+ people.[73] In fragile settings like conflict and post-conflict contexts, both quantitative and qualitative data is lacking. Some research suggests that LGBTIQ+ people are targeted in conflict settings because they are perceived as transgressing dominant social and gender norms, and thus violence, including lethal violence, against them, is used as a form of social control to regulate populations by armed groups.[74]

- **Violence in the context of disasters:** In contexts of disaster, like the COVID-19 pandemic, further violence and differential treatment based on SOGIESC was reported, including limited access to medicine and support for mental well-being.[75]

- Evidence shows that the **rise of authoritarianism** around the world has contributed to a rollback of progressive rights, including the criminalization of LGBTIQ+ people.[76] Such contexts increase risks of violence, as well as impunity in relation to it. LGBTIQ+ people are accused of “undermining the binary gender hierarchy celebrated by many authoritarians” and as a result, they are “frequently marginalized and stigmatized through homophobic policies”.[77] **Thus, targeting LGBTIQ+ rights becomes part of the “authoritarian playbook”.**[78] In Colombia, for example, broad factions of the political and social right mobilized to generate moral panic around the supposed inclusion of LGBT-related provisions in the peace accord that was going to national plebiscite in 2016.[79] Such contexts obviously undermine efforts to collect data for advocacy purposes, and, on the contrary, may introduce new risks, such as data collection that is performed with the intent of *violating* human rights, such as for “surveillance, harassment, entrapment, arrest, and persecution.”[80]

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Myriad challenges emerge when it comes to collecting data on violence based on SOGIESC. **Methodological, ethical, and sociopolitical challenges are deeply intertwined and overlapping.** Data is necessary to make visible the violences based on SOGIESC. At the same time, any data collection on violence must be undertaken with caution and care, prioritizing ethics and the safety of affected individuals and communities, rather than with an a *priori* assumption that any data will make things better irrespective of how it is generated.[81] In terms of both the processes involved in collecting this data (methods and approaches) and the interests that shape decision-making about how that data is used and by whom and to what ends (outcomes), it is paramount to respect human rights and "do no harm" principles. The implication is not to avoid action where safety concerns are substantial. Rather, taking the lead from community or member-led civil society organizations (CSOs)-- especially, though not solely, in contexts where certain forms of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression are explicitly criminalized by the State– is paramount.[82] Indeed, in hostile environments data subjects, and indeed data collectors, can be at risk of harm when data about them is gathered and used to persecute, or when a lack of data is used to justify a lack of response. In settings like these, survivors are unlikely to report to the police, in order to avoid further violation.[83] Methodological challenges around how to collect data thus intersect with ethical challenges about *when* (*or when not*) to collect data, and to sociopolitical challenges around *how* this data may be used and to what end.

The following sections identify promising case studies that signal how each of these challenges can be overcome, including in complex security contexts. Such cases are included to inspire creative thinking about how to ensure that data is gathered thoughtfully, securely, and intentionally, particularly in contexts where mitigating potential risks of the *misuse* of data need to be factored into all stages of the research, analysis, and dissemination cycle. Indeed, it is of critical importance that data – collection, use, and storage – about people with diverse SOGIESC adopt a *do no harm* approach that adheres to human rights principles in data, and builds in safeguards for data subjects.[84] With these considerations in mind, **turning to the community and member-led organizations and scholar-activists already doing the work** is essential for surfacing appropriate ways forward.

Methodological

The first set of challenges to data collection and evidence generation are methodological, and relate to the **lack of existing research tools, agreed upon methodologies, or standardized frameworks** for capturing the unique experience of LGBTIQ+ individuals. Indeed, some expectations around using the advances in VAW research and methodologies to capture the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people may have fallen short. These tools were developed to capture the experiences of women specifically, with the objectives to measure specific forms of violence experienced by women because of their gender, such as but not limited to violence from male partners in heterosexual relationships.

These challenges highlight the need for specific methods, measurement tools, and tailored ethical and safety guidelines. Recommendations on sampling approaches should also reflect considerations related to the size of the surveyed populations as a sub-group of the general population and taking into account that they can be stigmatized or criminalized. Methods and tools should also consider both forms of gender-based violence that are already known, including through VAW research, as well as forms of violence that are unique to their diverse SOGIESC (see the *State of Evidence of evidence and data* section above). Given the diversity within LGBTIQ+ communities within and across countries and cultures, there is a need for measurement tools that account for diversity, and can capture the specific forms and risk factors for each of these groups, even while some questions and experiences may be common due to stigma and discrimination.

VAW surveys that include questions about sexual orientation and/or gender identity provide important sources of data, although partial, about LBTIQ+ women. For example, the EU survey on gender-based violence against women (EU-GBV) moves beyond traditional heterosexual relationships by including a question about the sex of the partner, and by referring to sexual orientation and/or gender identity as a basis of violence perpetration in some settings. With that said, Eurostat does not collect and process data on sexual orientation, as collecting this data is legally forbidden in several European Union countries.[85] While this is a well-intentioned practice, it reveals that different methods are needed for different contexts, as it ultimately fosters further evidence gaps. Here, again, we see an example of where the divisions between socio-political, ethical, and methodological challenges are overlapping. Data collection efforts that specifically focus on violence and discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+ populations (see the Approaches section above) meet the challenge of the lack of standardization rather than a complete lack of tools.

Data collection and evidence generation is also made difficult by **definitional inconsistencies** between contexts.[86] When there exists a lack of clarity between researchers, governments, and international organizations on terms, labels, or categories of measurement the result can be data collection that is inconsistent and therefore **difficult to compare** with other datasets, including in contexts where individuals are able to self-identify.[87] Within the relevant literature, the lack of a shared definition on SOGIESC is frequently cited as a challenge to meaningful data and evidence generation. In different countries and regions, understandings of SOGIESC can vary significantly, and can lead to difficulties in comparing findings across diverse cultural contexts; for example, in North America the concept of "two-spirit" people is an Indigenous term used to describe sexual, gender, or spiritual identity.

On the other hand, *travesti* is a term commonly accepted in Latin America, yet considered a transphobic slur in Spain and elsewhere, including in its English translation 'transvestite.' Language itself can represent a challenge; a UNECE report notes that certain languages are based on a binary sex framework, where "terms differ depending on whether a man or woman is speaking, or whether a man or woman is being spoken to." In other languages – and in certain contexts – the concept of gender (vs. sex) is not well established.[88] When it comes to self-identification[89], there is an enormous variety of colloquial expressions that individuals adopt, and these may vary from the terms formally agreed upon, and may only be used and relevant at the local or community level.

Challenges also arise when researchers fail to differentiate between sexual identity, sexual attraction, and sexual behavior when measuring violence. Treating them as synonymous can flatten or invisibilize certain dynamics of violence, for example, sexual violence against or by men who have sex with men (MSM), or women who have sex with women, who do not identify as non-heterosexual. Finally, there is a lack of broader consensus around definitions of violence motivated for reasons related to SOGIESC – for example, what types of violence 'count', and what types of violence against LGBTIQ+ people are physical, sexual, psychological, or economic, etcetera – and around definitions of perpetrators and their relationships to individuals including questions of who counts as an 'intimate' partner.

Creating new tools could be a costly endeavor, as it may involve adding or adapting questions to those designed for research on violence against heterosexual women in heterosexual relationships.[90] These costs should not be a deterrent, however.

Indeed, the field of VAW research highlights the importance of investing in methods, data, and measurement for accurate and safe reporting, and hence, quality of data to be useful to inform policies and programmes. There are exemplary paths forward for this work. For example, the U.S. Trans Survey (USTS) provides a promising example of how to develop specialized survey tools to capture data on the transgender population; the survey instrument was reviewed by academic researchers, members of the transgender community, and transgender advocates at multiple stages during its development. The outreach strategy also took care to integrate an intersectional approach, leveraging connections with transgender and LGBTIQ+-specific organizations, support groups, health centers, and online communities to reach respondents at risk of being underrepresented (i.e. people of color, senior citizens, low-income individuals, or people in rural areas).[91] Meanwhile, ILGA World's (the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association) *Trans Legal Mapping Report* combines desk research with "lived realities of trans people" to document the legal situation of trans people in 143 countries. The report includes laws that range from officially changing identity documents to those that criminalize trans identities, both "explicitly and *de facto*" providing essential evidence-driven insights that can be used for future advocacy purposes.[92] Examples of other dedicated new tools can be found in the Statistics Canada Survey and the *Transgender Europe* study.[93]

Researching LGBTIQ+ populations poses specific methodological challenges relating to sampling:

- Experts have identified that one of the "greatest barriers" to including people with diverse SOGIESC in more population-based surveys is related to sample size; **smaller sample sizes increase the risk of revealing personal identifiable information (PII)**.[94] However, there are alternative methods and sampling techniques for reaching highly marginalized populations that may be a relatively small fraction of the population, including for example **respondent-driven sampling (RDS),** which is a form of snowball sampling where respondents are selected from a social network of existing sample members.[95]
- **The absence of sampling frameworks, especially when census data on the LGBTIQ+ population is not available.** The scholarly evidence base suggests that there are limited representative studies on violence based on SOGIESC, with the majority of available research drawing on convenience sampling. Although this method can capture important trends related to prevalence, forms, and drivers of violence, the lack of representativeness does not lend itself as easily to **broader awareness-raising, resource-mobilization, or policy-making.** Still, in many public health areas, non-probability sampling provides data that is essential for shaping policy and advocacy agendas. For example, non-representative survey studies on transgender and gender diverse populations have been leveraged to address mental health inequities.[96] There are clear strategies for building the landscape of representative studies– for example by oversampling underrepresented groups, increasing total sample, or pooling data[97] – but these will require specialized training and increased research investments.

Ethical

Data collection on violence based on SOGIESC also presents key ethical challenges. Research and data collection can present varying degrees of security concerns, depending on the social and legal contexts in which it takes place, for researchers, data subjects, and other engaged stakeholders. Moreover, the methodological shortfalls identified above also give rise to a lack of understanding and training on how to overcome security and data privacy concerns in order to safely, responsibly, and ethically conduct research, collect data, and generate evidence.[98]

Indeed, **there is a clear dilemma inherent to efforts to make highly vulnerable populations more visible through qualitative and/or quantitative data collection**. While data on violence based on SOGIESC is essential for generating evidence, advancing knowledge, monitoring progress, and informing policies and service provision, they cannot be collected without guarantees of protection for these individuals. Depending on the social and legal context, increasing visibility can add serious security and privacy concerns for individuals and even their loved ones.[99] **The question of whether greater visibility through data acts as a risk multiplier or a protective force hinges in large part on the wider context and where the risks or threats of (further) violence stem from**. For example, in a context with de jure protections for LGBTIQ+ populations, perhaps the risk comes from within the family or from an intimate partner. Or in a context where criminalization is enshrined in the law, perhaps the risk primarily stems from public institutions, or the government, through police or military forces. The ethical concerns around data and visibility are especially salient in unstable contexts where data rights protections may be lacking, including in humanitarian crises, and/or in contexts where data collection is a means to an anti-human rights end, such as surveillance or persecution.[100,101] For example, investigations have shown that the police and state authorities in Egypt have used dating apps – including digital records of conversations and geolocation data– to locate and target LGBTIQ+ people online (known as digital entrapment), resulting in "offline" physical and sexual violence.[102] Similar tactics have been used in Lebanon and Iran.[103] The resolution to these dilemmas is neither straightforward nor agreed upon by stakeholders on the frontlines of LGBTIQ+ advocacy: as discussed further below, in **contexts of overt criminalization of certain forms of sexual orientation and gender identity or gender expression, CSOs may take divergent positions on whether or not data collection for the purposes of advancing human rights is even possible**.[104]

Relatedly, it is important to note that guidelines on ethical research specific to violence based on SOGIESC are still nascent[105]. In the absence of universally agreed upon **ethical guidelines**, there is a risk that research with LGBTIQ+ populations is held to lower standards than with the general population, or that some researchers may refrain from pursuing sensitive research agendas, particularly in contexts hostile to LGBTIQ+ rights. Research from Human Rights Watch (HRW) has outlined good practices for conducting research with people with diverse SOGIESC in highly sensitive contexts.[106] The research reflects on interviews conducted by HRW between 2018-2019 with survivors of sexual violence against men, boys, and trans people in Syria. The findings are clear about the importance of accepting that outreach and interviewee recruitment faces limitations, the need to allow interviewees to request the presence of a social worker familiar to them during the interview and arranging for a psychologist to be available for interviewees after the interview.[107]

BOX 7
Case Study: Prioritizing safety above data generation (Iraq)

Data security and informed consent are of paramount importance in countries where homosexuality is criminalized and where LGBTIQ+ people are at risk of harm. A study on violence based on SOGIESC in Iraq undertaken by Human Rights Watch was made possible by **leveraging their connections with a local LGBTIQ+ rights organization**, *IraQueer*.[108] They used this connection to identify potential participants while gaining their trust. The qualitative interviews provided detailed insights to generate evidence, however researchers took extensive measures to ensure anonymity. For example, some interviews were conducted in writing to avoid voice identification, all names were pseudonymized, and data collectors later vetted the interviews for security.

BOX 8
Case Study: Developing security protocols with communities (Asia)

A five-country study on violence against lesbians, bisexual women, and transgender people in Asia conducted by the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) with research partners illustrates how to successfully **develop security protocols alongside grassroots advocates with built-in opportunities for iteration**.[109] The study described the overarching macropolitical context of each country and then outlined how this framework shaped research implementation. For example, **the trustworthiness of interlocutors – i.e. their sensitivity to LGBTIQ+-specific issues rather than simply their professional training (for example, as mental health counselors) – was considered when hiring research assistants**. Those in charge of the study also provided safe times and locations for interviews, and stored data securely by using file encryption and hard-drive backups. Finally, researchers identified LGBTIQ+-friendly counselors and feminist psychologists to be available to intervene for interviewees experiencing violence.

Sociopolitical

Sociopolitical challenges that hamper data collection on violence based on SOGIESC relate to **discriminatory legal and social contexts**, (related) **underreporting**, and a **lack of state investment** in due diligence monitoring.

Discriminatory legal and social contexts can shape the degree to which LGBTIQ+ individuals can safely express and disclose their SOGIESC. Private, consensual same-sex sexual acts are criminalized in 64 countries across the world; with seven countries (with the recent addition of Uganda) imposing the death penalty. Two additional countries (Nigeria and Somalia) impose the death penalty in some regions.[110] In settings like these, research and data collection efforts can put data subjects, researchers, and partner organizations at risk of significant harm.[111] And, even in contexts where there exist *de jure* protections, data collection may still present risks, particularly where authoritarian actors in government and civil society actively engage in strategies to rollback LGBTIQ+ rights.[112] Such harms can take place when laws progress 'ahead' of discriminatory social and gender norms that constrain possibilities of progress, or when governments pass legislation but fail to invest in resources for training state functionaries, updating survey instruments, or expanding services (i.e. shelters) for LGBTIQ+ individuals. Even in more progressive legal contexts, LGBTIQ+ people may be hesitant to express their SOGIESC or participate in data collection efforts due to fears of stigma and ostracization, or worse punishment, by family and society for not conforming to accepted social norms, especially in settings where local communities view or frame LGBTIQ+ movements as driven by foreign interests or where there is a strong backlash or anti-rights movement at play.[113] They may also fear political backlash; for example, in the United States, despite the impressive gains made in evidencing prevalence data , there has been a regression in state-led SOGIESC data collection in recent years, which reflects shifts in political commitments to LGBTIQ+ rights.[114]

BOX 9

Case Study: CSO-led data collection efforts in discriminatory legal contexts (Africa)

In Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, and Uganda, CSOs are leading data collection efforts to improve monitoring of violence against LGBTIQ+ individuals in **sociopolitical contexts that lack formal protections for, or even criminalize**, these populations. By taking a regional approach to data collection, they are helping to fill data gaps where state-led efforts are lacking. This data can also be leveraged to hold states accountable to their commitments to LGBTIQ+ rights; for example in Botswana, CSO data was used in a 2019 High Court ruling to decriminalize same sex relations.[115]

Underreporting is a significant challenge highlighted in the literature. LGBTIQ+ individuals can be reluctant to report experiences with violence to authorities, which results in underreporting to services and, consequently, biased administrative data and survey data. For example, multiple studies show that LGBTIQ+ people are less likely than non-LGBTIQ+ people to report violence to the police, even in contexts with *de jure* legal protections.[116]

There are various reasons why LGBTIQ+ individuals feel unable to report their experiences, including negative experiences with service providers and security forces including the police and military.[117] Such fears are warranted: both in countries with overt criminalization and in countries where there are formal protections, there is evidence to show that state authorities and service providers can be active perpetrators of physical, sexual, and psychological or emotional violence based on SOGIESC.

LGBTIQ+ populations are accordingly disillusioned by – and sometimes afraid of – the police and judicial institutions.[118] Even where service providers are not overtly hostile to LGBTIQ+ people, a lack of relevant training and awareness of these groups' realities and elevated risks can also lead to failures to identify violence. [119]

In cases where LGBTIQ+ individuals overcome the barriers to reporting experiences with violence to authorities, data collection may be flawed by (intentional or unintentional) **misgendering**.[120] Misgendering can also occur during research studies if enumerators make assumptions about data subjects rather than directly asking them for information.[121] In the context of lethal violence, there are also challenges around who is allowed to report for the deceased, and how they choose to do so.[122]

The **lack of state investment in due diligence monitoring** is another notable sociopolitical challenge. This principle requires states to protect those citizens who are at a particular risk of violence and discrimination, as well as to take measures to understand and eliminate causes of violence and discrimination.[123] Indeed, political will and state capacity are deeply entwined with data collection and generation. Studies highlight that when there is a lack of prioritization or stigmatization of an issue – in this case, LGBTIQ+ individuals' right to live a life free from violence – there is also a widespread underfunding of research and monitoring systems.[124] Some evidence points to instances where a lack of data allows states to defer action.[125] Thus, while community and member-led CSOs are spearheading vital data collection initiatives, it is also important to highlight that this data might not always be accepted as legitimate – and might even face resistance – from state and other repressive actors who do not want to respond to LGBTIQ+ individuals' needs.

BOX 10

Case Study: Leveraging co-design and peer data collection methods to safely address participant fears and underreporting (Central America and Caribbean)

In El Salvador, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Haiti, research on trans women's experiences of GBV illustrates how study design and the use of peer data collection methods can help to address challenges around underreporting, particularly in contexts that are hostile to the rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals. This multi-sectoral study engaged CSOs, universities, government agencies, and international organizations to **train trans women to collect data on other trans women's experiences of GBV** in education, healthcare, and police encounters. These women were also **involved in study design, development of interview guides, selection of study sites, participant recruitment, interviews, and, crucially, the interpretation of results**.[126]

CONCLUSION

Despite a growing scholarly evidence base and human rights investigations, significant data gaps concerning violence based on SOGIESC remain. At the same time, in some settings, the evidence also shows that there are serious risks that can be introduced by data collection efforts. Stakeholders interested in investing in, or undertaking, data collection thus need to be taking the lead from community and member-led organizations in their particular contexts. They must also have a clear grasp of how data might help to advance the rights of people who are vulnerable to violence based on their SOGIESC, how any new data might be used or received, and by whom, and how they are prepared to respond if the generation of greater visibility through data actually increases vulnerability.

There is no consensus when it comes to data collection; indeed, some stakeholders who contributed to the UN IE SOGI's landmark 2019 report on data collection and management suggested that the existence of a criminalization law prevents "any safe, trustworthy data collection from taking place".[127] Listening to local advocates embedded in the context –which can often shift over time – can facilitate a 'proceed with caution' approach that safeguards the rights and safety of all involved in sensitive data collection. Ultimately, calling for improved data collection and analysis efforts cannot be separated from law and policy reform and other advocacy efforts. Thus, while pushing for data collection might not always be possible within a *do no harm* approach, it does not mean that nothing should be done. Rather, and in conversation with community and member-led organizations working on the ground, data collection should be thought of as one of the tools in a broader toolbox that seeks to create the conditions in which LGBTIQ+ individuals can live safely.

BOX 11
Checklist before initiating a new data project on violence based on SOGIESC

The following questions serve to guide researchers who are embarking on data collection initiatives on violence based on SOGIESC. Their purpose is to ensure that data collection efforts involve a do-no-harm approach, as well as engage meaningfully with local contexts and the challenges and risks that may be present. Moreover, they encourage researchers to look first to the existing library of published knowledge, as well as guidelines and data advocacy efforts, to ensure that any new data initiative builds upon– rather than ignores or tries to supplant– the efforts that have preceded it. These are not exhaustive questions, and their importance will vary depending on the sociopolitical context. However, they encourage those engaging in data collection to reflect on whether, how, and in what ways to proceed with their projects.

Have I consulted with member and community-led organizations? Is my intervention welcome or deemed as appropriate?

In many instances, community and member-led organizations *are already doing the work* in ways that address many of the ethical and sociopolitical challenges noted by navigating fraught and discriminatory macro-legal contexts, and adapting methods or crafting new ones that address the methodological ones. Supporting (financially, with resources, and otherwise) that work so it can continue and expand is critical. It is also important to acknowledge that there may not be a consensus amongst these organizations about whether it is safe and viable to move forward with data collection, particularly in contexts of overt criminalization. While there is not a straightforward solution in such instances, the baseline for carving a path forward is having ongoing and iterative engagement so that the range of perspectives can be heard, rather than merely proceeding with the path of least resistance (e.g., ignoring the concerns of those who are reluctant to proceed with data collection).

Is the context where I want to collect data characterized by stigmatization, and/or is there a risk of trauma?

Seek to develop and support data collection strategies based upon local sociopolitical and legal contexts and limitations, and always in close consultation with local CSOs representing LGBTIQ+ individuals. Adopt a trauma-informed approach.

Is the approach I am proposing for data collection participatory and inclusive?

Data collection initiatives must prioritize and respect communities' rights to participation, following the principle of "nothing about us, without us". As defined by the UN Independent Expert on SOGI, meaningful participation is "the ability to participate on equal terms with others, including in all stages of data-collection, such as the design of the research methodology, the collection and analysis of the data, the compilation of the research report, the dissemination of the results, and the implementation of recommendations."[128]

Participatory research methods not only help maximize the potential uses of data and align with the right to self-determination, but are also essential for developing context-appropriate research methodologies and practices.[129]

Have I consulted with the existing data and guidelines, and scholarly and advocacy literature on the topic?

Would my research or data collection help to address a noted gap? Does the data I want to collect already exist, so that I can avoid repeating data collection on sensitive subjects with vulnerable populations? Are there specific guidelines relevant for the context in which I am working (i.e. humanitarian, conflict, authoritarian, etc.)?

RECOMMENDATIONS

Methodologies

- At a global level, aggregate high-level standards for methods, measurement tools, and ethical or safety guidelines for data collection on violence based on SOGIESC, which can help with broader efforts to exchange knowledge, best practices, and set research agendas. Importantly, any such standards should be agile and not supplant regional, country, or sub-national approaches that are already responsive and tailored to the methodological, ethical and sociopolitical challenges and heterogeneity of particular contexts.
- Ensure inclusivity of:
  - Diverse definitions for LGBTIQ+ identities – including non-Global North-centric definitions – for evidence generation. Ideally, allow space for individuals to self-identify using the terms of their choice, which can also help to surface generational and other nuances that may shift over time.
  - Underrepresented and under-researched individuals, (e.g., asexual or intersex people), and the role of gender expression in understanding risk factors for violence and rights violations.
- NSOs and national machineries/line ministries responsible for gender equality and women's rights should collaborate with LGBTIQ+ civil society organizations to determine how to safely and respectfully include data on diverse SOGIESC in national data collection initiatives, including through specialized population-based surveys, administrative data sets, and other targeted research efforts. Follow the principle of "nothing about us, without us."
- Where systematic data collection on VAW exists (and in countries with protections for LGBTIQ+ individuals, and where data privacy laws allow for the collection of personal information), data should be disaggregated by SOGIESC. This would facilitate the generation of more nuanced insights about the particular experiences with violence amongst LGBTIQ+ women, recognizing the limitations of findings if sampling does not intend to seek representativeness for SOGIESC populations.
- Relatedly, VAW administrative data record systems should – when safe to do so –collect (1) sex and (2) gender identity as two variables (rather than conflate the two). This will help illuminate LBTIQ+ women's particular experiences with violence, and could provide a clearer pathway forward for service provision.
- Ensure all data collectors, including service providers processing data, have received thorough training on LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusive language, as well as survivor-centered, trauma-informed data collection approaches. For example, ensure parallel and follow-up care and support services for researchers and data collectors, as well as respondents. Include LGBTIQ+ people (and advocates) as experts when training research teams and enumerators.
- Ensure data is secure and anonymized, aligning both with international standards as well as recommendations from local data privacy experts and LGBTIQ+ CSOs.

Investments

- Where robust legal protections are in place, and LGBTIQ+ people and community and member-led organizations have been consulted, States should invest in efforts to include LGBTIQ+ populations in census data collection and relevant population surveys, including surveys on gender-based violence. States should further invest in support services, as this research should ideally only be conducted where such services are available and accessible.

- Provide long-term, flexible financial support to CSOs and member-led research organizations engaged in data collection efforts, including those that are seeking to adapt, enhance, or produce novel methods and approaches to evidence generation. Such long-term support should include additional security measures needed to safely conduct research and data collection in hostile contexts.
- Support multi-country studies across regions, which can help to foster exchange of promising and best data collection practices and approaches.

Multistakeholder engagement

- Support data collection projects that have established (or have a clear plan for) ethical approval by local research institutions and/or research ethics committees with representation from local experts, CSOs, and LGBTIQ+ rights activists. If there are concerns about connections between local ethics boards and sites of potential harm (i.e. in settings with authoritarian governments), consider seeking ethical consultations from advocacy organizations directly.
- When working with smaller organizations, support their efforts at building strategic alliances, transnational advocacy networks, consortiums, and multi-stakeholder initiatives.[130] This is particularly important in contexts where there is no NSO data, and where there may be pushback from power brokers and policymakers against the "legitimacy" of the data generated from smaller and more local grassroots organizations (especially where the data they produce is of a more qualitative variety).
- Engage local LGBTIQ+ rights activists and CSOs early in the research design process, in order to identify what data is needed, and how it will be used, and also to establish context-appropriate research methodologies (concepts, terminology, etc). Provide compensation for such consultations.

Areas for future research

- Invest in qualitative research approaches. Qualitative methods are essential both for providing victim-survivors with opportunities to tell their stories and, relatedly, for identifying forms of violence specific to LGBTIQ+ groups (e.g., the threat of 'outing' someone, forced heterosexual marriages, 'conversion' therapies). Such research can help inform the development of questions to measure these forms of violence in specialized LGBTIQ+ surveys.
- Support data collection projects that have a clear rationale for why their proposed methodologies are appropriate for their local context, including considerations for the security of data subjects, researchers, and engaged stakeholders. Relatedly, support data collection projects that have a clearly defined theory of action or data uptake, including evidence that the proposed data is needed, can be safely collected, and is likely to be used to advance the rights of LGBTIQ+ people.
- Thematically, programmes of research that can shed more empirical light on understudied and less visible problems and sub-populations – for example, the issue of forced heterosexual marriages or intersex populations' experiences with violence – are needed. There is also a need for further studies that focus on the ways in which intersectional factors – like race, ethnicity, gender, disability, geography, etc., – increase the likelihood of violence against LGBTIQ+ communities, and how these can be addressed through prevention and response.

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ENDNOTES

1 For more on the terminology used in this paper, see Box 1.

2 Adapted from LGBTIQ+ Equality and Rights Internal Resource Guide (UN Women, 2022) https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/06/lgbtiq-equality-and-rights-internal-resource-guide

3 IE SOGI 2019, p. 5.

4 Ibid.

5 UN Women, 2022

6 See Cookson & Fuentes 2025 for a discussion around the need for more nuance in theories of change that hinge on the idea that "more data are always better", particularly when it comes to setting priorities and parameters for data collection.

7 And, indeed, prevention and response initiatives should be crafted based on the available data. See also HRC 2022 https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2022

8 Fuentes & Cookson 2020

9 The section highlighting approaches and methods does not focus exclusively on data collection efforts pertaining to violence against LGBTIQ+ people; it also elucidates approaches that help to visibilize the populations in more generalized studies or data collection efforts. The latter can provide crucial insights and generative pathways for developing specialized studies on violence based on SOGIESC.

10 For more on terminology and definitions, see: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/06/lgbtiq-equality-and-rights-internal-resource-guide

11 The focus is on adult populations

12 IE SOGI 2019, p. 15.

13 IE SOGI 2019, 9-10.

14 IE SOGI 2019, 9. See also UN Women 2022.

15 UN Women. Frequently asked questions: Types of violence against women and girls.

16 The case studies included have not been assessed for quality or impact; rather, the intention is to shed light on the different approaches being taken to generate data on LGBTIQ+ people and violence based on SOGIESC.

17 For example, the Report of the Secretary-General about Gender statistics that emerged from the 55th session of the UN Statistical Commission about how data on sex and gender are compiled across Member States revealed that about 70% of those who responded collect data on sex only, with many only offering a binary selection (male/female, men/women, boy/girl). See ECOSOC 2023).

18 To be sure, these practices are not being shared as recommendations, per se. It is important to highlight that from a safety, ethics, and do no harm perspective, such initiatives would be extremely dangerous in settings where data can be used by the State for punitive action (discussed more below).

19 IE SOGI 2019, p. 11

20 UN Women 2022, p. 13. A statistical standard refers to the "set of rules used to standardize the way data are collected and statistics produced." In this case, Statistics New Zealand revised the government's statistical standard for sex in response to concerns from transgender communities that this older standard "required them to respond on the basis of their sex assigned at birth, not their gender identity" (Pega et al. 2017).

21 See Reuters. (2017). "Pakistan counts transgender people in national census for first time" https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-transgender-census-idUSKBN14T1XK

22 See Reuters. (2017). "Don't we count? Transgender Pakistanis feel sidelined by census" https://www.reuters.com/article/pakistan-transgender-census-idUSL8N1ME398

23 Ibid.

24 See http://www.transpop.org/ and http://www.generations-study.com/

25 Walters et al 2013

26 While the data are from 2010, the CDC is currently in the process of updating this study drawing from the ongoing National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS).

27 See Statistics Canada 2018. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020060-eng.htm

28 FRA 2020. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf

29 FRA 2020, p. 17.

30 To be sure, while convenience samples "are often regarded as inferior" because they are not representative of the general population, non-probability sampling has proven highly valuable in producing insightful and actionable survey data about mental health inequities experienced by transgender and gender diverse populations (Turban et al. 2022).

31 Edwards et al 2015; Callan et al 2020; Brown and Herman 2015

32 See for example Fuentes and Cookson 2020.

33 Austria, Denmark, Greece, Netherlands, Ireland, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. See Bell 2017.

34 Bell 2017, p. 12. For a critique of the limitations and contentious nature of "hate crime" approaches in law, see Spade 2013.

35 IE SOGI 2019, p. 12.

36 UN Women 2022, p. 35, 41. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Improving-the-collection-and-use-of-administrative-data-on-violence-against-women-en.pdf

37 CIECTI 2021

38 Canada, Indonesia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, Poland, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Ukraine

39 HRW 2023

40 HRW 2023, p. 58.

41 OHCHR 2019.

42 Ritchie and Lewis 2003, p. 38

43 IE SOGI, 2019.

44 See, for example, the "Set of Proposed Indicators for the LGBTI Inclusion Index", developed by the World Bank and UNDP in close consultation with LGBTI people, government and multinational representatives, academics, and private sector stakeholders. Amongst the proposed strategic areas of inclusion, the composite Index aims to measure personal security and violence (UNDP and World Bank 2019; see also UNDP and World Bank 2016). The Index was successfully rolled out by the UNDP, engaging with participants in 52 countries and culminating in the creation of LGBTI Inclusion Indices in the Dominican Republic, Georgia, Guyana, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Viet Nam (UNDP 2024).

45 Where distinct acronyms and concepts are used, these reflect the ones used by the source being cited.

46 See World Bank 2018.

47 See TGEU (Trans Europe and Central Asia) website https://tgeu.org/about-us/

48 Boglarka Fedorko and Sanjar Kurmanov 2021

49 Iranti 2019

50 See final report at UN Women (2023). Evidence to Action. Addressing Violence Against LGBTIQ+ People in Nepal https://un.org.np/sites/default/files/doc_publication/2023-06/LGBTIQ%20Study%20Report-Final-web%20version-11%20June%202023%20evening.pdf

51 HRC 2022

52 Bell 2017; IE SOGI 2019, p. 9.

53 Peitzmeier et al 2020. Notably, the authors highlight the challenges of measurement through surveys that include different definitions, groups, time frames, and also the different nature and prevalence of specific forms of violence across the different groups.

54 Blondeel, Vasconcelos, García-Moreno, Stephenson, Temmermana and Toskin. (2018). Violence motivated by perception of sexual orientation and gender identity: a systematic review. Bull World Health Organ 2018;96:29–41E. https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/272221/PMC5791869.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y" \h

55 Iranti 2019, p. 39

56 Ibid.

57 See for example Peitzmeier et al 2020; HRC 2022, 2023; Walters et al 2013

58 Edwards et al 2015; Murphy et al 2019; Evens et al 2019; Blongdeel et al 2018

59 For example, see Edwards et al 2015

60 For example, see Human Rights Watch 2022 and Finnerman et al 2012

61 For example, a UNESCO study on School Violence and Bullying notes that LGBTIQ+ children and adolescents are "disproportionately affected by school violence and bullying" (UNESCO, p.24).

62 IE SOGI 2019; IE SOGI 2021; Human Rights Watch 2022; Motta and Saez 2013

63 Medina & Mahowald 2021; Iranti 2019

64 Peitzmeier et al 2020; *UN Women 2023, Nepal Study*

65 Johnston et al 2015; Balik & Belgin 2019; Longobardi & Badenes-Ribera 2017; Blongdeel et al 2018; Sabidó et al 2015

66 Boesten 2014; Fuentes 2020; Wright 2011; UNW Resource Guide

67 Langenderfer-Magruder et al 2014; Balik & Belgin 2019; Longobardi &Badenes-Ribera 2017; Unmark et al 2021; Ali et al 2022; Hershow et al 2018

68 UN Women 2023, Nepal Study.

69 UN Women. (2020). Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Brief-Online-and-ICT-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-during-COVID-19-en.pdf

70 Edwards et al 2015; Unmark et al 2021

71 Edwards et al; Unmark et al 2021; Sabidó et al 2015

72 Human Rights Watch 2022; Poore 2016; Lanham et al 2019; Balik and Belgin 2019; Fraser 2015

73 Loken & Hagen 2022; Serrano-Amaya 2017; Duggan 2016.

74 See Centro de Memoria Historica, https://www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/descargas/informes2015/aniquilar-la-diferencia/aniquilar-la-diferencia.pdf as well as UN SOGI 2019.

75 UN Women. (2022). Gender Equality Update 36. https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/bd-6June-GE-Update-36.pdf See also Reid and Ritholtz (2020).

76 UN Women 2020

77 Chenoweth and Marks, 2022. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2022-02-08/women-rights-revengepatriarch.

78 Albarracín, HRW, 2022.

79 Ibid.; Corredor 2023 (OUP Chapter); Ritholtz and Mesquita 2023 (OUP Chapter).

80 See IE SOGI 2019, p. 8.

81 See for example UN Women 2020. https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/decision-tree-data-collection-on-violence-against-women-and-covid-19

82 IE SOGI 2019, p. 9.

83 To be sure, reluctance to report to police is not unique to settings where LGBTIQ+ people are overtly criminalized.

84 See Box #1 ('Recommendations for improving the evidence base to support LGBTIQ+ rights') in UN Women 2022.

85 Eurostat. (2021). Methodological manual for the EU survey on gender-based violence against women and other forms of inter-personal violence (EU-GBV) https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3859598/13484289/KS-GQ-21-009-EN-N.pdf/1478786c-5fb3-fe31-d759-7bbe0e9066ad?t=1633004533458 p 583

86 A variety of countries, however, are making developments on capturing data about LGBTIQ+ populations by going beyond binary sex categories, or developing questions on LGTBIQ+ populations in their censuses. In particular, New Zealand's NSO has developed a statistical standard for gender identity, which they are working on transforming into an international statistical standard. (UNW 2022 Internal document).

87 See also, the Lessons Learned section from an Italian data collection initiative (UNECE, 2023).

88 UNECE 2019.

89 See, for example, OHCRH's guidance on how to adopt a human-rights based approach to data (2018).

90 Sell 2017. Some efforts to develop new methodologies for data collection do exist. See the annexes in the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2020-lgbti-equality-1_en.pdf) report on LGBTI Equality. Statistics Canada's 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) included questions on both sex assigned at birth and the gender of respondents. The 2020 updated report promises to provide "more fulsome analysis of the transgender and gender diverse population" (https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00017-eng.htm).

91 James, S. E., Herman, J. L., Rankin, S., Keisling, M., Mottet, L., & Anafi, M. (2016). The Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf

92 ILGA World. Trans Legal Mapping Report https://ilga.org/trans-legal-mapping-report

93 See Statistics Canada https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2020060-eng.htm and Boglarka Fedorko and Sanjar Kurmanov 2021

94 Sell 2017

95 See Cloete et al 2023. It is important to note, however, that while this may be an advisable approach given a lack of alternatives, it can be particularly susceptible to sampling bias.

96 Turban et al 2022.

97 Sell 2017

98 Peitzmeier et al 2020

99 Iranti 2019, IE SOGI 2019, Poore 2016, Human Rights Watch 2022

100 Human Rights Watch 2022; IE SOGI, 2019, p. 8.

101 For toolkits and guidance on how and when to collect data on diverse SOGIESC in humanitarian crises, including forced displacement, see UN Women 2021, UNHCR 2021.

102 ILGA World. 2021. Our Identities Under Arrest. https://ilga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Our_Identities_Under_Arrest_2021.pdf. Also see IE SOGI 2019, p. 8.

103 Article 19. 2018. LGBTQ Online. Summary Report. https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/LGBTQ-Apps-Arrest-and-Abuse-report_22.2.18.pdf

104 IE SOGI 2019, p. 8.

105 See approach of the IE SOGI under the OHCHR's Special Procedures Branch: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Report_Work_Plan_2021_2023.pdf. Also see Henrickson et al 2020 and LGBT Foundation Ethics Guide, n.d.

106 HRW 2020

107 Indeed, some of these findings are also reflected in existing ethical and safety guidelines for researching VAG. Gonzalez Cabrera et al, 2023.

108 HRW 2022 ("Everyone wants me dead")

109 The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. 2014.

110 See ILGA World Database at https://database.ilga.org/en

111 For example, see Poore 2016

112 UN Women 2025, Human Rights Watch. 2022. "How Targeting LGBTQ+ Rights Are Part of the Authoritarian Playbook". https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/09/06/how-targeting-lgbtq-rights-are-part-authoritarian-playbook

113 Fraser 2015

114 Cahill & Makadon 2017

115 Iranti et al 2019

116 Human Rights Watch 2022, Santoniccolo et al 2021, Poore 2016

117 Another factor in underreporting is internalized stigma (which is driven by external, socio-political stigma rather than individual factors); evidence suggests that internalized stigma is both a risk factor for violence itself, as well as for underreporting. Due to external stigma, individuals with a sense of internal stigma may also be less willing to report their SOGIESC or participate in research studies, resulting in unrepresentative studies or data that is biased towards LGBTIQ+ individuals who feel more comfortable being 'out'. See Edwards et al, 2015, Santoniccolo et al 2021

118 Lanham et al 2019; Human Rights Watch 2022; Peitzmeier et al 2015. For examples in El Salvador, see Davis et al, 2020; in Nigeria, see Giwa et al, 2020; in the Netherlands see Feddes and Jonas, 2020 ; in the United States, see Williams Institute 2020; in France, see Le Monde 2022.

119 Simpson & Helfrich 2014; Kurdyla et al 2019;

120 Wirtz et al, 2018

121 Peitzmeier et al 2020

122 In Colombia, it was historically the case that only family members could report homicides and forced disappearances to authorities. If the murder had homophobic or transphobic motives, however, many families did not report, to avoid stigma. In the context of the country's Victims' Registry, however, the government allowed friends to report deaths as well as family (Ritholtz 2022).

123 IE SOGI 2019

124 Iranti 2019; Poore 2016

125 For example, state authorities in Botswana argued that the MSM population was too small to warrant their inclusion in HIV programming and suggested that MSM have adequate access to healthcare—despite a lack of government research into the question, and directly contradictory to findings from civil society-based research (Iranti et al 2019).

126 Lanham et al 2018

127 IE SOGI 2019, p8

128 IE SOGI 2019

129 For example, see Ali et al 2022, Lanham et al 2018, Evans et al 2018, Poor et al 2016, or Carpenter 2021

130 The work of *Transgender Europe* represents this modality of collaboration. They channel urgently needed funding to smaller organizations operating in difficult country contexts, shed light on and build awareness about particular dynamics that are otherwise ignored or invisibilized by the State, and help accelerate efforts to share new or adapted data collection practices across borders. Thus, they open the door to more comparable data sets in the future.

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