

LGBTQ/GNC Hate Crimes in Miami-Dade County: Improving Awareness, Service Delivery, Reporting, Collaboration, and Prosecution

Project Overview

Problem: The prevalence and causes of hate crimes perpetrated against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or gender nonconforming individuals (LGBTQ/GNC) are poorly understood, and the volume of research on this at-risk population pales in comparison to studies of racially-motivated crimes. Further, anti-LGBTQ/GNC hate crimes are vastly underreported, making official statistics of limited value for estimating prevalence. Current crime prevention strategies are hampered by a lack of a full understanding of barriers to reporting, and the characteristics and motivation of offenders.

Partnerships: Florida International University, in partnership with The Ohio State University, proposes to fill the existing gap in research and policy development. This work will be carried out in Miami in close collaboration with the *Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office* and the *Miami-Dade Police Department*. These agencies will provide data rarely accessible for research, and lead the process of translating findings into tangible reforms.

Objectives: The goal of this study is to enhance public safety through effective identification, investigation and prosecution of anti-LGBTQ/GNC hate crimes in Miami. This important goal will be achieved by examining and documenting victimization experiences, offender characteristics and motivations, crime reporting and case processing nuances, and the criminal justice system's challenges and opportunities for reform.

Methods: We propose a mixed-methods design using quantitative and qualitative data from victim interviews, administrative records, case file reviews, and practitioner interviews. We will interview 400 LGBTQ/GNC individuals who have been victims of a crime employing an innovative sampling strategy—*three-stage venue-based sampling*. Our government partners will also provide access to administrative data, and all police and prosecutorial files processed as hate crimes against LGBTQ/GNC individuals. Finally, we will interview practitioners to capture their views about various challenges and areas for reform.

Impact: The findings will help police and prosecutors develop more effective internal policies and practices for identifying and investigating hate crimes, processing them accordingly, and providing assistance to crime victims. This increased awareness will likely bolster confidence in the justice system, and have significant justice and public safety implications through increased reporting and cooperation with police and prosecutors.

Products: The project will yield: (1) the summary overview, (2) the policy brief, (3) podcast, (4) social media postings, (5) conference presentations, and (6) at least three journal publications. To make the findings available to a larger audience, we will contact the editorial boards at The Miami Herald, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Huffington Post, and post the reports on university websites.

For questions about the project, please contact Besiki Luka Kutateladze at bkutatel@fiu.edu or 305-348-4892