Uncomfortable encounters

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Chapter 1

The Importance of Gender and Gender Nonconformity for Same-Sex-Attracted Dutch Youth's Perceived Experiences of Victimization Across Social Contexts[1]

Abstract

In this survey study, the impact of gender and gender nonconformity on Dutch same-sex attracted youth's perceived experiences of same-sex sexuality related victimization was systematically compared across social contexts. Participants were between ages 16 and 18 years and enrolled in secondary education (n=305). In contexts of school and strangers, boys and participants reporting more gender nonconformity reported more perceived experiences of victimization. Effects were negligible in contexts of parents, extended family, and heterosexual friends. The effect of gender nonconformity was not stronger for boys than girls in any social context. Our findings underpin the role of context in victimization research.

Although many Western societies have demonstrated a trend toward increased tolerance of homosexuality in recent decades, victimization still negatively impacts the lives of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Western countries (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2011; Herek 2009; Stotzer 2007). While the Netherlands could be considered one of the most tolerant countries in the world in its attitudes to homosexuality, same-sex attracted people are still regularly victimized (Keuzenkamp 2010).

In this study, we investigated Dutch same-sex attracted (SSA) youth's perceived experiences of victimization due to their same-sex sexuality, and we compared the role of gender and gender nonconformity across social contexts. In the context of this study, victimization refers to a broad range of experiences, such as harassment, jokes, bullying, and violence, which can be expressed both verbally or physically. Studying victimization experiences among SSA youth is particularly relevant given that studies have demonstrated a relation between victimization and SSA young people's mental health (Almeida et al. 2009; D'Augelli et al. 2002). Furthermore, young people may have less well-developed coping skills for dealing with victimization than their adult counterparts (D'Augelli et al. 2002).

Numerous studies have focused on gender differences in SSA youth's perceived experiences of victimization due to their same-sex sexuality (e.g., Almeida et al. 2009; D'Augelli et al. 2002; Pilkington & D'Augelli 1995; Russell et al. 2011; Toomey et al. 2010) or the effect of gender nonconformity on SSA youth's victimization experiences (e.g., D'Augelli et al. 2002; D'Augelli 2006; Russell et al. 2011; Toomey et al. 2010). However, there has been little empirical knowledge about differences between social contexts. Stigma studies have generally acknowledged that processes of stigmatization are contextualized (Dovidio 2001) and that factors related to victimization may differ across contexts (Tiby 2007). Herek noted in 1986 that the role of gender and gender nonconformity in experiencing victimization due to same-sex sexuality may vary between contexts, yet there has thus far been no systematic empirical contextual investigation.

Victimization, gender, and gender nonconformity

Studies have demonstrated that negative attitudes toward homosexuality can be related to disapproval of gender norm violation (Dewaele et al. 2009; Keuzenkamp 2010; Lehavot & Lambert 2007). The impact of the association of gender nonconformity and same-sex sexuality appears to work out differently for men and women. Men who deviate from masculinity norms are more severely rejected than women who deviate from femininity norms (Bem 2000). Furthermore, people seem to associate homosexuality and gender nonconformity more strongly in the case of men compared to women (Dewaele et al. 2009; Waldner-Haugrud & Magruder 1996).

Consequently, men who do not behave or appear in a way that is 'conventionally' masculine are more readily presumed to be gay and are more firmly rejected for that reason, compared to women whose behavior or appearance is not 'conventionally' feminine (Waldner-Haugrud & Magruder 1996). Based on this knowledge on gender differences in attitudes toward same-sex sexuality and gender nonconformity, it could be expected that SSA boys experience more victimization than SSA girls, particularly if they do not conform to conventional gender norms.

However, empirical support for this expectation has been inconclusive. While evidence has been found in American studies that youth generally experienced more victimization when they were more gender nonconforming (D'Augelli et al. 2002; D'Augelli et al. 2006) and that SSA boys reported a higher frequency of experienced victimization than SSA girls (Almeida et al. 2009; D'Augelli et al. 2006), there have also been less supportive findings. A recent meta-analysis on lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) victimization in all age ranges concluded that gender differences are usually small and meaningful only for specific types of victimization (Katz-Wise & Hyde 2012). This calls for a more precise investigation of gender difference and the role of gender nonconformity in victimization due to same-sex sexuality.

Comparison across social contexts

Context-specific studies give reason to expect a more detailed picture on the relationships among gender, gender nonconformity, and experienced victimization. In this study we focused on social contexts that are particularly significant to young people, such as parents, family, friends, and fellow students. In private contexts such as parents and family, American studies have revealed an ambiguous picture of the effect of gender and gender nonconformity on experienced victimization. Pilkington and D'Augelli (1995) found that in the social context of family members and parents, gender differences were often negligible. In the case of gender differences, SSA girls experienced more victimization than SSA boys. In the social contexts of parents, other American studies have demonstrated that gender nonconforming boys are confronted with more negative responses from parents than are gender nonconforming girls (D'Augelli et al. 2006; Kane 2006). These findings in the private contexts of parents and family present a mixed and incomplete picture, and it is unclear how outcomes should be interpreted in relation to each other.

In the social context of school, empirical studies have supported the pattern between gender, gender nonconformity, and experienced victimization that would be expected based on the previously mentioned insights from studies on attitudes toward same-sex sexuality and gender nonconformity. Youth were more likely to have experienced victimization when they reported higher levels of gender nonconformity (D'Augelli et al. 2002; Russell et al. 2011; Toomey et al. 2010) and American SSA boys

reported more victimization experiences than SSA girls (D'Augelli et al. 2002; Katz-Wise & Hyde 2012; Russell et al. 2011; Toomey et al. 2010). These outcomes are not surprising, as adolescents are relatively sensitive and intolerant toward violation of gender and sexuality norms (Lobel et al. 2004), and among peers gender norms tend to be particularly strict for boys (Buijs, Hekma, & Duyvendak 2009; Horn 2007).

Relevance of other factors

A shortcoming in most studies investigating the role of gender and gender nonconformity in experienced victimization is that the effect has rarely been analyzed simultaneously in one model, while also taking into account other potentially theoretically relevant factors. Possible effects of gender and gender nonconformity might decrease or disappear when simultaneously investigated and when other variables are included in the models. Pilkington and D'Augelli (1995) found no effect for gender or gender nonconformity on experienced victimization in general after controlling for age, age of first coming out, age of first self-labeling, and concealment of same-sex sexuality. Toomey and colleagues (2010) reported that gender nonconformity was related to being victimized in middle or high school, but the strength of this relation was similar for boys and girls after controlling for sociodemographics, sexual orientation, and 'outness' to others. Based on these two studies, we conclude that age, a person's sexual orientation, and openness about same-sex sexuality are relevant factors to include in models to explain differences in degree of perceived experiences of victimization.

Furthermore, a higher visibility of a person's same-sex sexuality may increase the risk of encountering victimization due to same-sex sexuality. People may employ visibility management by regulating the exposure of their sexual orientation as a coping strategy to protect themselves from external stressors, such as victimization (Dewaele et al. 2013). Baams and colleagues (2013) showed that exclusively same-sex attracted Dutch youth are more open about their sexual orientation than both-sex attracted Dutch youth, and having a same-sex partner might increase the likelihood of being recognized as same-sex attracted. In addition, education level may be relevant as a control variable in the analysis, because lower-educated Dutch people hold less positive attitudes toward homosexuality compared to higher-educated people (Keuzenkamp 2010). In the Dutch school system students are predominantly surrounded by peers of similar educational levels.

Although studies have shown that additional factors may be relevant in relation to experienced SSA-related victimization, it remains unclear whether there are different patterns in the relation between experiences of victimization, gender, and gender nonconformity when comparing across social contexts.

The Dutch case

This study focuses on SSA youth in the Netherlands. Several Dutch studies are relevant in relation to our study. Recent studies on Dutch SSA youth and young adults showed that male participants (Kuyper 2011; Baams et al. 2013) and those reporting higher levels of gender nonconformity (Baams et al. 2013) report more perceived experiences of victimization. Furthermore, gender nonconformity was significantly correlated with perceived experiences of victimization for male but not female participants (Baams et al. 2013). These studies did not compare different social contexts.

Context-specific empirical findings, all focusing on LGB adults, are incomplete and not always consistent. In the social context of public places, Dutch studies disagree about whether adult gay men are more likely to experience a higher degree of victimization (Kuyper 2006) or whether gender differences are negligible (Keuzenkamp, Kooiman, & Van Lisdonk 2012). Findings on private contexts appear to be more in line with each other. Adult lesbian women experience more negative reactions than adult gay men in social contexts such as the private sphere (Schuyf 2009), parents, and family (Kuyper 2006). Information about the role of gender nonconformity on experienced victimization among LGB adults is scarce, with the exception of Keuzenkamp and colleagues (2012), who reported that LGB adults encountered more victimization in public places if they were more gender nonconforming.

Current study

In summary, although studies have investigated the separate role of gender and gender nonconformity on experiences of victimization due to same-sex sexuality, the impact of these factors has hardly been examined in relation to each other and after controlling for other potentially relevant factors. Moreover, the literature has provided indications that patterns in the relationships among experiences of victimization, gender, and gender nonconformity may differ across social contexts, yet empirical results have provided an inconsistent picture and thus far there has been no systematic approach to comparing social contexts. In the present study we aim to investigate the impact of gender and gender nonconformity on the degree of perceived experiences of victimization of Dutch same-sex attracted youth between ages 16 and 18 who are enrolled in secondary education. We compare the social contexts of parents, extended family, heterosexual friends, school, and strangers.

We hypothesize that in the more public contexts of school and strangers in the neighborhood, Dutch SSA boys report more perceived experiences of victimization than SSA girls. Due to inconsistent findings in the literature, no specific predictions can be made about the effect of gender on perceived experiences of victimization in the more private contexts of parents, extended family, and heterosexual friends.

Furthermore, we predict that participants report higher levels of perceived experiences of victimization in all social contexts when they are more gender nonconforming, and we anticipate that the effect of gender nonconformity on perceived experiences of victimization is stronger for SSA boys than SSA girls.

Considering the possible relevance of additional factors, we investigate whether gender and gender nonconformity contribute to the degree of perceived experiences of victimization above and beyond controlling for the impact of age, sexual attraction, experience with having a same-sex partner, openness about same-sex sexuality, and level of education.

Method

Research participants
The total sample consisted of 1,636 participants. All participants lived in the Netherlands and reported at least some same-sex attraction. Because school was an important social context that we wanted to include in this study, we selected only those participants who were enrolled in secondary education and who were between ages 16 and 18. Nine participants in secondary education were between 19 and 22 years old. Because these ages were rare in the target group, these participants were excluded from the sample. This study sample comprised 305 participants. The mean age of the study sample was 16.75 years (*SD*=.75). There were more female (61%) than male (39%) participants.

Of the participants, 17% were enrolled in vocational education, 34% in higher intermediate education, and 49% in pre-university education. The overrepresentation of participants in pre-university education is likely to be related to the relation between age and educational level in the Dutch secondary school system. The standard period for vocational education is four years, for higher intermediate education five years, and for pre-university six years. A fifth (20%) of participants identified themselves as religious, predominantly Christian. In all, 14% of participants had an ethnic minority background, meaning that at least one of their parents was not born in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands 2012a).

Procedure
Data were collected through a self-administered online survey, targeting Dutch same-sex attracted young people between ages 16 and 25. Online data collection is useful for investigating sensitive topics in which anonymity is important for participants (Dillman 2007). With 99% of Dutch youth between ages 12 and 25 having home access to the Internet (Statistics Netherlands 2012b), selectivity due to limited Internet

access was negligible. To minimize possible shortcomings of a nonrepresentative sample of SSA young Dutch individuals, multiple recruitment techniques were used. Participants were recruited through websites and social media focusing on young people generally as well as young LGB people in particular. Newsletters and mailing lists of national and local LGB interest groups were also used. In addition, a promotional team recruited participants at LGB parties and events in a number of regions of the Netherlands. Of the total sample, 62% were recruited through online LGB channels, 15% through online channels for youth generally, 13% through offline recruitment at LGB parties and events, 7% through people in their social networks, and 8% through other channels (multiple answers were allowed). All recruitment materials, such as banners, calls and giveaways, targeted "boys who feel attracted, or also feel attracted, to boys" and "girls who feel attracted, or also feel attracted, to girls." Survey questions were tailored to participants' gender, sexual attraction (exclusively same sex or both sex), social network, and level of openness.

Measures

Perceived experiences of victimization
Measurement of experiences of victimization was based on self-report; hence we refer to perceived experiences of victimization. Degree of perceived experiences of victimization in the preceding 12 months were measured for the specific social contexts of parents; extended family; heterosexual friends; people at school; and strangers (formulated as "people in the neighborhood/unknown people") with one-item questions, for example: "Have you in the preceding 12 months been victimized at your school due to your same-sex attraction?" In the Dutch survey, a slightly different wording was used for "being victimized," since this phrase is very uncommon in the Netherlands[2]. For each social context, they were asked to rate on a five-point scale how frequently they had experienced victimization (0 = Never to 4 = Very often). The frequency distributions of degrees of perceived experiences of victimization were nonnormal (positively skewed), as a large group of participants had experienced no or hardly any victimization. Even after data transformations, the assumptions for linear regression analyses, such as normality and homoscedasticity of residuals, were violated. To maintain maximum information we modeled our data using ordered logistic regression (Ologit regression), a model for ordinal dependent variables. We computed an ordinal variable with three scores (0 = Never, 1 = Rarely, 2, 3, 4 = Regularly to very often). Values 2, 3, and 4 were combined, as these values received few scores (Van Bergen et al. 2013).

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[2]The Dutch phrase was *negatieve reacties*.

Same-sex sexuality
Two dimensions of same-sex sexuality were measured. First, participants were asked to give a score indicating who they felt attracted to on a five-point scale (0 = Exclusively same sex, 1 = Mostly same sex, 2 = Equally attracted to boys and girls, 3 = Mostly other sex, 4 = Exclusively other sex). In addition, two other options were included (5 = Don't know, 6 = Neither girls nor boys). The participants who answered 4 or 6 were removed from the data set; those who answered 5 were not included in multivariate analyses. Second, participants were asked whether they had experience with having a relationship with a same-sex partner lasting at least one month.

Openness about same-sex sexuality
The degree of openness by participants about their same-sex sexuality toward other people was measured. Items were mainly adopted from previous Dutch studies on young LGB people (De Graaf et al. 2005; Franssens & Hospers 2008). Participants were asked whether they were open about their same-sex sexuality to their mother, father, extended family members, heterosexual friends, and fellow students. "Don't know" responses were coded as system missing. An index for the overall degree of openness was calculated based on a mean score for the categories that were applicable to the participants (e.g., not all participants had a mother). The index for the overall degree of openness ranged from 0 (Not out at all) to 2 (Out to all people). For this sample, Cronbach's alpha = .80. Preliminary analysis showed that for each context-specific model, comparisons in controlling for either 'overall degree of openness' or 'context-specific openness' showed minimal differences in outcomes and no differences in the patterns of effects and final conclusions. In multivariate analysis, we included 'overall degree of openness' instead of 'context-specific openness' (openness in specific social contexts, e.g., parents), because applying the same variable in each model allowed for equal sample sizes between models, which optimized comparisons between models.

Gender nonconformity
The degree of gender nonconformity was investigated using the Adulthood Continuous Gender Identity Scale (Bailey et al. 1995; evaluated in Rieger et al. 2008), which measured participants' global judgment of feeling and acting masculine or feminine at present. This scale measured self-report of perceived gender nonconformity. We used five out of 10 items of the original scale items (i.e., 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 in the men's version) (Rieger et al. 2008), which included statements such as "People think I should act more masculine than I do" (for male participants). Equivalent items were included for men and women. Items which were associated with transsexuality (1, 2) or transvestism (7), or which would allude to stereotypical images related to lesbian and gay people (9, 10) were excluded, because we considered them inappropriate for this study. The responses were anchored on a

five-point scale (0 = Completely agree, 4 = Completely disagree). The variable gender nonconformity was created by computing the mean score of five items. A higher score indicated more self-reported gender nonconformity. The reliability of the five-item scale was sufficient, Cronbach's alpha = .78.

Data analyses

To investigate whether gender, gender nonconformity, and their interaction accounted for differences in perceived experiences of victimization, we constructed similar hierarchical models for each social context (parents, extended family, heterosexual friends, people at school, strangers).

To assess the contribution of gender and gender nonconformity to the dependent variable 'perceived experiences of victimization' in each social context, we first entered these independent variables separately in the model. In step 1a gender was the only independent variable, and in step 1b only gender nonconformity was included as an independent variable. In step 2, gender, gender nonconformity, and all other control variables were included (age, level of education, openness about same-sex sexuality, sexual attraction, experience of having a same-sex partner). In step 3, the interaction of gender with gender nonconformity was added to determine whether the effect of gender nonconformity differed for SSA boys and SSA girls. The ordered logistic regression coefficients were interpreted in odds ratio (OR).

In ordered logistic regression analysis, conventional estimates of model of fit are not produced. To be able to compare the relative fit of several competing models, the BIC' (Bayesian Information Criterion) index was used. When fitting models, it is possible to increase the likelihood by adding parameters, but doing so may result in 'overfitting.' The BIC' resolves this problem by introducing a penalty term for the number of parameters in the model. To interpret BIC' scores, lower scores are better. In comparing different, extended models, a decrease in BIC' scores of at least six points indicates a strong improvement, and a decrease of at least 10 points is a very strong improvement compared to the more parsimonious model (Raftery 1995). An increase or positive BIC' score implies that the model has too many variables and could be considered not statistically relevant. Analyses were conducted using Stata version 12.1 and SPSS version 17.0.

Table 1.1 Gender differences in age, education, same-sex sexuality, openness, and gender nonconformity

Variables	Girls M (SD)	Girls n (%)	Boys M (SD)	Boys n (%)	Sign. (in Spearman's rho)
Age (range 16-18)	16.75 (.75)	185	16.66 (.75)	120	-.062
Secondary education level					-.081
Vocational education		25 (13%)		27 (22%)	
Higher intermediate education		66 (36%)		38 (32%)	
Pre-university education		94 (51%)		55 (46%)	
Attraction					-.253***
Exclusively same sex attracted		69 (37%)		71 (59%)	
Mostly same sex attracted		61 (33%)		38 (32%)	
Both sex attracted		54 (29%)		11 (9%)	
Don't know		1 (1%)		0 (0%)	
Experience same-sex partner		72 (39%)		41 (34%)	-.048
Openness					
To mother[a]		82 (64%)		82 (70%)	.063
To father[a]		68 (53%)		74 (63%)	.106
To extended family members		88 (48%)		73 (61%)	.130*
To heterosexual friends[b]		134 (78%)		92 (80%)	.030
					.086
To fellow students at school		109 (59%)		81 (68%)	
Gender nonconformity (low to high degree; range 0-4)	1.51 (.75)	185	1.66 (.79)	120	.093

[a] Due to a technical problem there were some missing scores on the item about openness to their mother and father. Of the study sample, 129 girls answered these items, 118 boys the item about their mother, and 117 boys about their father. The nonresponse group did not differ from the response group in sociodemographics or same-sex sexuality experiences.
[b] Participants received this item only when they had answered that their heterosexual friends were important to them. Of the study sample, 173 girls and 115 boys answered this item.

Results

Gender, gender nonconformity, age, education, same-sex sexuality, and openness
An overview of descriptives of age, education, same-sex sexuality, openness about same-sex sexuality, and gender nonconformity are provided in Table 1.1. More girls than boys reported some degree of both-sex attraction (r_s = -.253, p < 0.001). Compared to boys, girls were significantly less open about their same-sex sexuality to extended family members (r_s = -.130, p < 0.05). Table 1.2 shows the correlations (in Spearman's rho) for the independent study variables. There was no evidence of

multicollinearity. In addition to Table 1.2, gender was correlated with overall degree of openness (r_s = -.127, p < 0.05). Gender nonconformity was significantly correlated with attraction (r_s = -.120, p < 0.05). Correlations were strong between overall degree of openness and attraction (r_s = -.525, p < 0.000; exclusively same-sex attracted participants were more open than both-sex attracted participants) and between openness and experience with having a same-sex partner (r_s = .447, p < 0.000).

Table 1.2 Correlations among the independent study variables (in Spearman's rho), N = 305.

Variables	Gender	Age	Education	Openness	Attraction	Same-sex partner
Gender (0 = girls, 1 = boys)						
Age	-.062					
Education (low to high)	-.081	.163**				
Overall degree of openness (low to high)	.127*	.082	-.083			
Attraction (excl. same sex attracted to both sex)	-.253***	-.041	-.047	-.525***		
Experience same-sex partner	-.048	.086	-.153**	.447***	-.232***	
Gender nonconformity (low to high)	.093	-.060	-.071	.080	-.120*	-.011

* p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Perceived experiences of victimization and social contexts

Table 1.3 shows the percentages of female and male participants who had perceived experiences of victimization in each specific social context in the preceding year. Perceived experiences of victimization were most prevalent in the social context of school (rarely to very often: 55% of boys, 40% of girls) and strangers (rarely to very often: 46% of boys, 31% of girls). Boys reported significantly higher levels of perceived experiences of victimization than girls in the context of school (r_s = .167, p < 0.01) and strangers (r_s = .178, p < 0.01). In the other three social contexts, reported levels of perceived experiences of victimization were lower and gender differences were small. For both girls and boys, 25% of participants reported perceived experiences of victimization from their heterosexual friends, 18% from parents, and 10% from extended family members.

Table 1.3 Percentages of perceived experiences of victimization in preceding year in each social context of participants, $N = 305$

Social context	Gender	Never	Rarely	Regularly to very often	Sign. (in Spearman's rho)
From parents[a]	Girls	82	10	8	-.058
	Boys	85	12	3	
From extended family	Girls	89	8	3	-.057
	Boys	93	7	1	
From heterosexual friends	Girls	75	23	2	.008
	Boys	75	23	3	
From people at school	Girls	60	28	12	.167**
	Boys	45	32	23	
From strangers	Girls	70	27	4	.178**
	Boys	54	33	13	

[a] Due to rounding, the total percentage per row does not always equal 100%.

Effect of gender and gender nonconformity on perceived experiences of victimization across social contexts

Hierarchical ordered logistic regression analyses showed that the effect of gender and gender nonconformity on degree of perceived experiences of victimization in the preceding 12 months differed across social contexts (Table 1.4). Comparisons of BIC' scores show the most relevant step in each model. Positive scores indicate no statistical relevance, and lower BIC' scores are considered better. Overall, BIC' scores were substantial in the social context of school (best step 2, BIC' = -43.303) and strangers (best step 2, BIC'= -51.140), while the scores were low in the social context of extended family (best step 1b, BIC'= - 6.034) and heterosexual friends (best step 1b, BIC'= -1.968), and not relevant in the social context of parents (BIC' scores were positive). Apparently, the combination of independent and control variables in the models had a lot more explanatory power to predict perceived experiences of victimization in more public contexts, such as from fellow students and strangers, than in more private contexts.

A closer look at each social context shows that the role of gender and gender nonconformity in degree of perceived experiences of victimization varied. As noted, in the social context of parents no models were statistically relevant, which indicated that in this social context gender and gender nonconformity did not have a significant effect on the degree of perceived experiences of victimization.

In the social context of extended family and heterosexual friends, gender was not significant (step 1a). Yet gender nonconformity was significant when included

as a single variable (step 1b). Participants who reported higher levels of gender nonconformity reported a higher degree of perceived experiences of victimization from extended family members (OR = 2.55, p < 0.01) and heterosexual friends (OR = 1.63, p < 0.01). The positive BIC' scores in steps 2 and 3 showed that adding more variables did not lead to substantially better predictions.

In the social context of school and strangers, gender and gender nonconformity had a bigger impact on the degree of perceived experiences of victimization. At school, the main effect of gender was significant in step 1a (OR = 1.93, p < 0.01), which indicated that boys experienced a higher degree of perceived experiences of victimization than girls. This effect was also present after controlling for age, level of education, openness, attraction, experience having a same-sex partner and gender nonconformity (step 2, OR = 1.74, p < 0.05). The main effect of gender nonconformity was significant in step 1b (OR = 2.36, p < 0.001) and in step 2, when more variables were included (OR = 2.26, p < 0.001). Hence, at school, participants who reported higher levels of gender nonconformity reported a higher degree of perceived experiences of victimization. In step 2, having a same-sex partner (OR = 2.47, p < 0.01), being more open about their same-sex sexuality (OR = 1.89, p < 0.01), and being younger (OR = 0.69, p < 0.05) also had significant effects. The interaction of gender with gender nonconformity was not significant (step 3). The less negative BIC' score in step 3 (BIC' = -38.707) compared to step 2 (BIC'= -43.303) indicated that adding this interaction effect did not lead to a substantially better model.

In the social context of strangers, the effect of gender was significant in step 1a (OR = 2.12, p < 0.01) and step 2 (OR = 2.04, p < 0.05). Gender nonconformity was also significant in the first two steps (step 1b, OR = 2.36, p < 0.001; step 2, OR = 2.34, p < 0.001). In step 2, having a same-sex partner (OR = 3.30, p < 0.001) and being more open about their same-sex sexuality (OR = 1.93, p < 0.01) was significantly related to the degree of perceived experiences of victimization. The interaction of gender with gender nonconformity was not significant and the addition did not improve the model. The BIC' score in step 3 (BIC' = -48.225) was less negative compared to step 2 (BIC' = -51.140).

In conclusion, our hypothesis that SSA boys report more perceived experiences of victimization than SSA girls in the social contexts of school and strangers was confirmed. These effects remained significant after controlling for age, level of education, openness, sexual attraction, and experience of having a same-sex partner. There were no gender differences in perceived experiences of victimization in the social contexts of parents, extended family, and heterosexual friends. Participants who reported higher levels of gender nonconformity reported substantially higher levels of perceived experiences of victimization in the social context of school and strangers.

Effects of gender nonconformity were significant yet negligibly small in the social context of extended family and heterosexual friends. Our expectation that the effect of gender nonconformity would be stronger for boys than girls was not confirmed in any social context.

Table 1.4 Summary of hierarchical ologit regression analyses on perceived experiences of victimization across social contexts in the preceding year

Variables	Never to very often, in odds Ratio				
	Parents (n = 303)	Family (n = 303)	Friends (n = 303)	School (n = 303)	Strangers (n = 303)
Step 1a					
Gender	0.71	0.65	1.02	1.93**	2.12**
Likelihood chi² (df)	1.103(1), p = 0.294	1.077(1), p = 0.299	.007(1), p = 0.932	8.514(1), p < 0.001	9.858(1), p < 0.001
BIC'	4.610	4.637	5.706	-2.800	-4.144
Step 1b					
Gender nonconformity	1.24	2.55**	1.63**	2.36***	2.36***
Likelihood chi² (df)	1.115(1), p = 0.291	11.748(1), p < 0.01	7.681(1), p < 0.01	31.370(1), p < 0.000	27.844(1), p < 0.000
BIC'	4.545	-6.034	-1.968	-25.656	-22.131
Step 2					
Gender	0.55	0.51	0.86	1.74*	2.04*
Gender nonconformity	1.18	2.77**	1.58**	2.26***	2.34***
Age	0.97	0.89	0.84	0.69*	1.08
Education	0.83	1.02	0.86	0.87	0.97
Overall degree of openness	0.71	1.03	1.02	1.89**	1.93*
Attraction	0.55*	1.01	0.88	0.98	0.82
Same-sex partner	1.84	2.13	1.89*	2.47**	3.30***
Likelihood chi² (df)	15.766(7), p < 0.05	17.866(7), p < 0.05	17.485(7), p = < 0.05	83.299(7), p < 0.000	91.136(7), p < 0.000
BIC'	24.230	22.130	22.511	-43.303	-51.140
Step 3					
Gender	0.48*	0.28	0.71	1.56	1.66
Gender nonconformity	1.16	2.87**	1.51*	2.17***	2.16***
Age	0.99	0.93	0.87	0.70*	1.12
Education	0.82	1.00	0.85	0.86	0.96
Overall degree of openness	0.68	0.98	0.98	1.85**	1.86*
Attraction	0.52*	0.93	0.83	0.95	0.78
Same-sex partner	1.81	2.07	1.86	2.42**	3.22***
Gender x Gender nonconformity	1.64	2.37	1.73	1.43	1.86
Likelihood chi² (df)	16.935(8), p < 0.05	19.286(8), p < 0.05	19.475(8), p < 0.05	84.417(8), p < 0.000	93.935(8), p < 0.000
BIC'	28.775	26.424	26.235	-38.707	-48.225

* p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001.

Discussion

Our aim in this study was to investigate whether gender and gender nonconformity contributed to the degree of perceived experiences of victimization of Dutch same-sex attracted youth between ages 16 and 18 who were enrolled in secondary education. We systemically compared the social contexts of parents, extended family, heterosexual friends, school, and strangers.

Gender, gender nonconformity, and perceived experiences of victimization in social contexts

The assumption that SSA youth who are male and more gender nonconforming report higher levels of perceived experiences of victimization was empirically investigated systematically across social contexts in a sample of Dutch same-sex attracted youth between ages16 and 18 years who were enrolled in secondary education. Overall, the degree of perceived experiences of victimization was higher in the social contexts of school and strangers than in the more private contexts of parents, extended family, and heterosexual friends. This is in line with outcomes for American LGB youth who experienced verbal and physical victimization (D'Augelli et al. 2006).

Interestingly, patterns between perceived experiences of victimization, gender, and gender nonconformity were different across social contexts. In the more private contexts of parents, extended family, and heterosexual friends, the impact of gender on perceived experiences of victimization was nonsignificant. Gender nonconformity played only a minor role in relation to perceived experiences of victimization from extended family and heterosexual friends. The negligible effects of gender and gender nonconformity in more private contexts were inconsistent with previous American studies on SSA youth's experienced victimization from parents (Kane 2006; Pilkington & D'Augelli 1995) and Dutch studies among SSA adults in the private sphere (Kuyper 2006; Schuyf 2009). Our study indicated that in private contexts the effect of gender nonconformity disappeared after controlling for other variables. We do not know whether these different findings compared to previous studies are a result of more advanced models or may be related to methodological differences such as study samples (e.g., age range and nationality) and design (bivariate versus multivariate analysis).

In the social context of school and strangers, SSA boys reported a higher degree of perceived experiences of victimization than SSA girls, corroborating other studies (D'Augelli et al. 2002; Katz-Wise & Hyde 2012; Russell et al. 2011; Toomey et al. 2010). Previous studies have shown that, among young male peers, publicly rejecting non-heterosexual men by stigmatizing them can serve to establish masculinity and heterosexual identity, while this peer group process is seldom observed among girls (Buijs et al. 2011; Herek 1986; Kimmel 2004a). Among Dutch high school students,

more boys than girls reject explicit expressions of same-sex sexuality by peers, and boys are more negative toward non-heterosexual same-sex peers than girls (Keuzenkamp & Kuyper 2013). Our study suggests that these gender differences in attitudes are reflected in more (perceived) victimization of SSA boys than SSA girls at school.

In our study, SSA youth who perceived themselves as fairly gender nonconforming reported higher levels of perceived experiences of victimization at school and from strangers. In a public context where people do not know one another well, gender nonconformity could serve as a marker to assume one's non-heterosexual orientation (Rieger et al. 2010).

Contrary to our expectation, the relation between gender nonconformity and perceived experiences of victimization was not stronger for boys than for girls in any of the five social contexts included in this study. Further research is needed to examine whether this outcome is confirmed in larger samples. Perhaps the assumption that gender nonconforming male SSA youth are particularly susceptible to experiencing victimization compared to female and gender conforming male SSA youth needs more qualification and may be relevant only for specific types of victimization.

Furthermore, the Dutch context of the study may be relevant in interpreting these outcomes. Hofstede (2001) described Dutch national culture as being 'less masculine' compared to most other Western countries, which indicates relatively small gender differences and gender-role expectations in society. Effects of gender and gender nonconformity were indeed negligible in private contexts in our study yet remained significant factors in explaining differences in degree of perceived experiences of victimization in more public contexts. Other Dutch studies have not found convincing empirical support for Hofstede's (2001) notion of the 'less masculine culture' in the Netherlands in relation to attitudes toward homosexuality and gender nonconformity. Baams and colleagues (2013) demonstrated that gender nonconformity was significantly related to Dutch SSA youth's perceived experiences of victimization; and Kuyper and colleagues (2013) concluded that Hofstede's (2001) model did not contribute well to explaining differences between European countries in attitudes toward homosexuality.

The outcomes in the social context of school demonstrated that younger SSA students were more likely to report perceived experiences of victimization than their older counterparts. Our study confirms theoretical notions that gender and sexuality norms are particularly strict among peer adolescents compared to young adults (Lobel et al. 2004). Moreover, social conformity pressure peaks in this life phase (Lobel et al. 2004), which makes it more likely that adolescents will express negative attitudes and victimize peers who are 'different.'

Limitations and future research

The present study had several limitations. First, a convenience sample was used. Probability samples would be preferable but are difficult to organize among Dutch SSA young people. Baams and colleagues (2013) also used a convenience sample among Dutch SSA young people. In anticipation of possible drawbacks of a convenience sample, we used a wide range of offline and online recruitment channels and aimed for a large sample size. There was a presumption that Dutch SSA youth who had not come out to anyone or who were in denial of their same-sex sexuality would be less likely to participate in this study. The study was cross-sectional and therefore did not allow us to interpret the direction of the associations between perceived experiences of victimization, gender, and reported level of gender nonconformity.

The data presented here are a subset of a larger survey that addressed a broad range of topics, limiting our capacity to extensively measure perceived experiences of victimization.

For each social context a one-item question was used. The wording in Dutch is commonly understood to refer to a broad range of victimization experiences such as verbal or physical harassment, jokes, bullying, and violence. However, we acknowledge that measurement would have been more precise using multiple items per social context. Distinguishing between mothers' and fathers' perceived experiences of victimization would probably have led to a more nuanced picture than measuring a composite parent response. Furthermore, the data did not allow investigation of the role of gender and gender nonconformity on diverse types of victimization in each social context.

A self-report measure of experienced victimization was used, which allowed us to draw conclusions only about participants' *perceptions* of having experienced victimization. We were unable to establish whether the willingness to report victimization in this online survey differed between Dutch SSA girls and SSA boys. Furthermore, although we asked participants explicitly to report experienced victimization due to their same-sex sexuality, perpetrators' motives remain unknown. We cannot be sure whether perpetrators may have been motivated by their rejection of gender-role violation or by a combination of factors (Baams et al. 2013). Degree of gender nonconformity was also measured based on self-report. We presumed that participants' own perceptions of their degree of feeling and behaving in a way that is consistent with conventional gender norms reflected how people in their social networks would view them. However, we could not empirically examine such a relation in this study.

This study demonstrated that the included predictors hardly explain differences in SSA youth's reports of perceived experiences of victimization in private contexts. Yet it remains unclear which factors do have explanatory power. Because victimization by known people in the private sphere appears to have a greater impact on victims'

psychosocial well-being than victimization by acquaintances or strangers (Lawyer et al. 2006), victimization research in private contexts deserves attention.

Conclusion

This study showed that the impact of gender and gender nonconformity on perceived experiences of victimization differed across social contexts. Among Dutch SSA youth, boys and participants who reported higher levels of gender nonconformity were at higher risk of encountering perceived experiences of victimization in the social contexts of school and strangers, but effects of gender and gender nonconformity were negligible in the more private contexts of parents, extended family, and heterosexual friends. The effect of gender nonconformity on perceived experiences of victimization was not stronger for boys than for girls in any of the five social contexts studied.