Reactions of Law Enforcement to LGBTQ Diversity Training

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Knowledge about the ways in which employees respond to workplace diversity training can help in the preparation and delivery of the training. Few studies have looked at responses toward with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) diversity training, in general, or with law enforcement, in particular. The present study examined reactions, specifically resistance and receptiveness, to an LGBTQ diversity training for approximately 120 law enforcement officers. Twenty subthemes about resistance were categorized into four overarching themes: perceptions of law enforcement, beliefs regarding LGBTQ community, defending law enforcement practices, and nonverbal forms of resistance. Seventeen subthemes about receptiveness were organized into five main themes: requesting elaboration from trainers, how law enforcement can support LGBTQ people, awareness and motivation to address LGBTQ community needs, appreciation for the training, and helping the trainers or training succeed. The results indicate that both resistance and receptiveness were present among participants. Further, some of the receptiveness and resistance is similar to what is found in the literature, while some of these reactions were unique to LGBTQ diversity training and working with law enforcement.

Key Words: diversity training, law enforcement, LGBTQ, receptiveness, resistance

Training to increase awareness and skills related to diversity is proliferating throughout educational institutions, businesses, and community settings (Alhejji, Garavan, Carbery, O'Brien, & McGuire, 2016; Kulik & Roberson, 2008; Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2001; Roberson, Kulik, & Tan, 2013). Diversity training is often thought to be one facet of diversity management programs and is typically conceptualized in terms of addressing diversity

among employees in order to raise awareness of differing values, enhance workplace relationships, improve employee performance, and improve business (Holladay & Quiñones, 2005; Kochan et al., 2003; Pendry, Driscoll, & Field, 2007; Wiethoff, 2004). Although less represented in the human resources literature, diversity training can also focus on helping employees or trainees better serve a diverse public, as is true for mental health professionals, educators, and law enforcement.

Literature on diversity training for law enforcement has focused primarily on outcomes of intercultural communication training (e.g., Boulware-Brown, 2004; Cornett-DeVito & McGlone, 2000; Rowe & Garland, 2003) and recommendations for training content and format (e.g., Coderoni, 2002). There are good reasons to extend diversity training to prepare law enforcement to work effectively with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities, including barriers to LGBTQ people reporting crimes (Kuehnle & Sullivan, 2003; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2011), biased treatment of LGBTQ people by law enforcement (Bernstein & Kostelac, 2002; Wolff & Cokely, 2007), and evidence of hostility toward sexual minority law enforcement (Collins & Rocco, 2015; Jones & Williams, 2015; Lyons, DeValve, & Garner, 2008). There are, however, only a few published studies that investigate training for law enforcement on LGBTQ issues, and these focus on evaluation of training outcomes (Israel, Harkness, Delucio, Ledbetter, & Avellar, 2014) or themes that emerged during law enforcement training (Israel et al., 2016; Miles-Johnson, 2016).

Similar to other studies of workplace diversity training, Israel and colleagues (2014) focused on outcomes related to employee understanding of diversity (Alhejji et al., 2016), self-efficacy (Combs & Luthans, 2007), and perceived value of the training (Holladay & Quiñones, 2005). Such approaches to studying diversity training provide valuable information about the overall impact of the training, although they do not offer insight into employee reactions that emerge in the process of workplace diversity training. In contrast, Miles-Johnson's (2016) study of police resistance to training on transgender issues is more in line with literature that describes students' reactions to diversity training in higher education settings, which also focus primarily on resistance to diversity training (Thomas & Plaut, 2008). Literature on workplace diversity training and diversity education in classroom settings have developed as separate entities, but may be useful in informing one another (King, Gulick, & Avery, 2010). Specifically, our study will apply frameworks from higher education that describe students' reactions to diversity training to investigate employees' responses to workplace LGBTQ diversity training. Human resource literature regarding diversity tends to focus on the organizational culture, diversity management, and workforce diversity (Thomas & Plaut, 2008), with less emphasis on the process of conducting diversity training and the individual and group responses to such trainings. The current study focuses specifically

on training about diversity issues rather than broader policy and practice related to diversity.

Responses to diversity training are often described in terms of resistance (e.g., Thomas & Plaut, 2008). *Resistance* has many meanings, so it is important to define our use of this term. There is a history in many fields of theorizing resistance as challenging dominant structures in society, as promoting liberation in the face of societal systems of inequities (Vinthagen, 2015). Resistance to diversity training is not resistance to dominant structures as the diversity training itself challenges dominant hierarchies, so this is not how we are using the term *resistance*. Thomas and Plaut (2008) define diversity resistance as "a range of practices and behaviors within and by organizations that interfere, intentionally or unintentionally, with the use of diversity as an opportunity for learning and effectiveness" (p. 5). Workplace diversity resistance can take many forms, including open denial of prejudice, bias or discrimination (Mildred & Zúñiga, 2004), challenging the information presented (Vasquez, 2006), refusal to engage in diversity work or training (Mildred & Zúñiga, 2004), and verbal or nonverbal hostility or agitation (Schmitz, Stakeman, & Sisneros, 2001). Within this human resource literature, there are a variety of perspectives on resistance to organizational change (Mathews & Linksi, 2016), although most of these encompass systemic initiatives—we will focus specifically on employee responses within diversity training. The resistance that emerges during diversity training may surface for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, individual readiness, trainers and training tactics, or the larger sociopolitical context (Mildred & Zúñiga, 2004).

Although the literature on participant responses to diversity training primarily describes resistance, there are occasional references to ways in which participants may be open to learning about diversity. For example, some write about "maximizing the gains and minimizing the pains" (Galinsky et al., 2015), while others explore ways of moving diversity training participants from "resistance to learning" (Dass & Parker, 1999). Such receptiveness to learning about diversity has been described as being engaged and actively participating in the training activities and conversations (Vasquez, 2006). It may also be seen as expressing empathy for marginalized groups and considering the costs of oppression for marginalized groups (Goodman, 2001). Participants may also express a general appreciation for the training and what they learned (Vasquez, 2006), which may be an indication that they are open and receptive to the trainers, the material being presented, or the training, in general.

There is evidence that law enforcement culture embodies larger sociopolitical contexts of traditional masculinity and heteronormativity (Collins & Rocco, 2015; Dwyer & Tomsen, 2016). Institutional heteronormativity and heterosexist culture maintains and perpetuates anti-LGBTQ sentiment (Ferfolja, 2007, 2013; Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2013; Yep, 2002). Diversity training on LGBTQ issues challenges these norms. Within this context, law

enforcement culture reflects the dominant stance, and the LGBTQ training represents resistance to dominance. Thus, resistance to training is actually in line with dominance, and receptiveness to LGBTQ diversity training is a form of resistance to dominance. Whether the resistance is active or passive, awareness of the role of heteronormativity on social norms and attitudes is likely important in addressing some of the resistance that is expressed in LGBTQ-focused diversity training (Harding & Peel, 2007). Understanding that resistance to LGBTQ topics is part of institutional heteronormativity is important for the overall study of police culture and diversity training initiatives—although it is not the main focus of this study, it likely provides a framework for understanding the resistance within the current social context.

Literature on participant responses to diversity training on LGBTQ issues follows this pattern of describing resistance. Active resistance may include open criticism and disagreement with LGBTQ-affirming policies, bullying, harassment, and violence (Hill, 2009). Resistance may also be expressed as ignoring, avoiding, or shunning LGBTQ topics, or, more commonly, as passive resistance, such as not being involved in diversity-related events, making excuses, and only marginal cooperation (Hill, 2009). We located one study about law enforcement reactions to training on transgender issues, and it, too, focused on participant resistance.

In sum, empirical literature on workplace diversity training focuses primarily on evaluating outcomes of training to address cultural differences. Literature about participant responses during the process of training is largely drawn from higher education contexts and focuses almost exclusively on resistance to training. Although the literature offers examples of resistance within the higher education and human resources literature, there is little that helps to systematically categorize the various types of resistance from a diversity-training workshop. Further, only two studies (Hill, 2009; Miles-Johnson, 2016) focused on LGBTQ-specific resistance.

What is still missing is an empirically based understanding of resistance and receptiveness, generally speaking, and especially with diversity trainings for employees preparing to serve a diverse public. It is unclear if other forms of resistance exist that have yet to be categorized and how specific populations might respond to an LGBTQ diversity-training workshop. Scholarship on receptiveness to diversity training is in even earlier stages of development, completely lacking any empirical literature or any attention to receptiveness to LGBTQ diversity training. There is also little in the literature to guide conceptualization of participant responses beyond dichotomous notions of resistance and receptiveness.

Investigating responses of diversity training participants in the process of training may help to uncover factors that contribute to training outcomes and can inform how such training is delivered. Furthermore, qualitative approaches may illuminate the more nuanced aspects of context and participant experiences of workplace diversity training (Alhejji et al., 2016).

Our research team had the unique opportunity to investigate reactions to a series of LGBTQ diversity training sessions offered to law enforcement in a small city in the western United States. This workforce has experienced historic tensions with LGBTQ communities (Gillespie, 2008) and currently has both positive and negative interactions with LGBTQ people (Avellar, Israel, Ledbetter, Harkness, & Delucio, 2012). Although such tensions were not a widespread concern in the local community, a collaborative effort among researchers, community members, and service providers had identified safety from violence and harassment as the number one concern local LGBTQ individuals wanted organizations to address (Israel et al., 2009). The police department was highly responsive in mandating training on LGBTQ issues for all sworn officers.

The authors were able to participate in these training sessions as co-facilitators and researchers. Although the original intent of qualitative data collection was to inform the evaluation of the training, upon reflecting on the material, we recognized the opportunity to analyze these data to advance the understanding of resistance and receptiveness to diversity training. Evaluation of training outcomes (Israel et al., 2014) and tactics generated by law enforcement officers in these training sessions (Israel et al., 2016) has been reported elsewhere. The evaluation indicated that law enforcement officers found the training to be valuable and that knowledge and self-efficacy for engaging in LGBTQ-affirming tactics increased as a result of the training. The goal of the present study was to identify and categorize both resistant and receptive responses of law enforcement to LGBTQ-focused workplace diversity training. Specifically, we sought to answer the following questions: "How do law enforcement officers respond to LGBTQ diversity training in ways that fit working definitions of resistance and receptiveness derived from the literature?" and "What themes and subthemes describe law enforcement officers resistance and receptiveness to LGBTQ diversity training?" Although not the original focus of our study, we also identified responses that could not be categorized clearly as resistance or receptiveness. For the purposes of this study, we focused on observable representations of resistance and receptiveness.

Method

This section describes the participants, the training sessions from which data were gathered, data collection and analysis, and measures the researchers took to enhance trustworthiness of the findings.

Participants

Participants included approximately 120 law enforcement officers from a single police department who participated in a training workshop on LGBTQ issues. The training was mandatory for all sworn officers and optional for unsworn officers. The descriptive information that follows was gathered from 81 participants who completed a voluntary demographic questionnaire.

Almost all of the participants (90.1%) were sworn officers, and the remaining participants were unsworn officers. Participants ranged in age from 26 to 60 years old (*M* = 41.05), and had worked in law enforcement for an average of 14.13 years (range = 1–32). The majority of participants were men (74.1%), fewer were women (16%), and the remaining participants did not report their gender (9.9%). Eight participants did not report their sexual orientation, and the rest identified as heterosexual (90.1%). In terms of ethnicity, participants identified as European American/White (63%), Latino(a) or Hispanic (16%), African American/Black (2.5%), Asian American (2.5%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (2.5%), and Other (4.9%). A total of 13.6% of participants did not report their ethnicity.

Procedure

Training Sessions. Four training sessions were offered with approximately 30 to 40 law enforcement officers in attendance per five-hour training. The training was developed as a collaborative effort between a social justice–based community organization with experience in multicultural training, a local LGBTQ-serving nonprofit organization, LGBTQ researchers from a local university (the authors), and representatives of the police department. The collaborators met multiple times to review local data that the researchers gathered, discuss the format and content of the training that the community organizations drafted, and plan logistics of the training based on information provided by law enforcement. The training was designed specifically for local law enforcement and included LGBTQ-relevant terminology, societal messages about sexuality and gender, statistics regarding local and national LGBTQ communities' perceptions of safety and experiences with law enforcement, and recommendations for effective interactions with LGBTQ individuals. The materials were presented using a variety of teaching methods including personal reflections, small group discussions, brief lectures, problem solving in groups, and interactive role-plays. Participants were invited to discuss the various topics presented and to ask questions throughout the training.

Data Collection. A scribe was present at each training session to capture participants' responses to the training and to fully and accurately describe the training. Participants were informed that the note takers would document "questions and feedback that arise during the training," but no identifying information. The scribes were graduate students in counseling psychology who were members of the research team, working in collaboration with a faculty member. Scribes were instructed to capture participants' comments and questions, using the participants' own words to the extent possible; the context of these comments; and trainer responses. As the original intent of scribing was to inform the overall evaluation of the training, and the focus on resistance and receptiveness was identified only after the training sessions were completed, the scribes included anything that occurred during the training. Material was scribed from the segments of the training in which all participants

were together, but not from small group discussions. Following the first training session, the scribes consulted with each other to increase consistency in the quantity and content of scribed material. The scribe informed participants about her or his presence and role as a scribe and did not document any identifying information about participants.

Data Analysis. The scribed material was coded using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and managed with the qualitative software program NVivo 10. The scribed material from each training session was a data item, which together constituted the data corpus. Four research team members defined the data set by identifying all instances in the data corpus that represented any aspect of participants' responses to the training (i.e., anything participants said or did during the training, in contrast to what the trainers said or did). Each research team member reviewed a data item to identify the data set, which was then audited by a different team member.

Initially, the researchers were interested in exploring law enforcement officer's resistance to training. This focus was based on notable examples that stood out during the training sessions. After reviewing, coding, and analyzing the data regarding resistance, the researchers recognized that this did not offer a full representation of participants' response to the training. Consequently, the researchers engaged in another round of data coding and analysis focused on law enforcement officers' receptiveness to training. Thus, the steps described below occurred sequentially, with the analysis of receptiveness following the analysis of resistance.

Taking a theoretical approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the researchers created working definitions of *resistance* (based on Jackson, 1999; Mildred & Zúñiga, 2004; Thomas & Plaut, 2008) and *receptiveness* (based on Clements & Jones, 2008; Garmon, 2004; Goodman, 2001; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Vasquez, 2006) after a careful review of the literature and in collaboration and consultation with a diversity-training professional who helped to design and facilitate the training. The researchers used the following working definition of *resistance:* the ways in which participants responded to the training that indicates some struggle, discomfort, distancing, concern, anxiety, lack of acceptance, or rejection regarding material being presented. It can take many forms, including removing attention (leaving room, texting), arguing, and questioning to prove wrong (not questioning to help understand). Researchers used the following working definition of *receptiveness:* the ways in which the participants responded to the training that are consistent with information or perspectives introduced by the trainers. It may take many forms including demonstrating insight, expressing empathy for the target group, applying the material to their own experiences, using the material to understand past or future, challenging others about their resistance, verbalizing positive feedback to the trainers, or staying on topic.

Four research team members reviewed a data item that they had not previously coded or audited and identified extracts that met the working definitions of resistance and receptiveness. Research team members who had not previously coded or audited that data item then audited the resistance and receptiveness coding to ensure the codes matched the working definition and captured adequate context. Discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. Researchers familiarized themselves with the full data set by scribing, coding, or auditing each data item. Researchers took individual notes while they were coding and auditing, and collective notes were captured during research team meetings.

Research team members coded all possible forms of resistance and receptiveness, even those that did not positively fit the working definitions. For example, a participant leaving often to use the restroom was coded, even though it was not clear if this was a form of resistance. The team members captured the context of the resistance or receptiveness whenever possible. Upon identifying all data extracts that met the definitions of resistance, and then receptiveness, each extract was given a code, a phrase that described the resistance or receptiveness while staying as close to the participant's meaning as possible. Two researchers then audited the code labels to ensure that the codes reflected the content of the extracts. All discrepancies were discussed to consensus with the original coder, auditors, and the rest of the research team. The codes were then organized into themes that reflected the types of resistance and receptiveness that were identified within and across data sets. The themes were then audited for accuracy and suggested changes were made. The researchers recognized different levels of themes, and overarching themes were named to represent their subthemes, which were audited again for accuracy until consensus was reached. In sum, the researchers identified data from the original transcripts that reflected participant responses to the training, coded extracts that fit within working definitions of *resistance* and *receptiveness,* combined the codes into themes, and then organized the themes into overarching main themes and subthemes.

Trustworthiness. The research team employed a number of measures to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (Morrow, 2005). In terms of credibility, the researchers were engaged with participants during the development and implementation of the training, field observations were scribed throughout the training sessions, peer researchers consulted with each other to improve consistency of scribing and coding, and all coding and development of themes and subthemes were audited by multiple researchers. We addressed dependability through individual research memos regarding coding and emerging themes and by maintaining records of all research team discussions, including decisions made, steps in data collection and analysis, and interpretation of the data.

Results

The analysis yielded four resistances (perceptions of law enforcement, beliefs regarding the LGBTQ community, defending law enforcement practices, and nonverbalized forms of resistance), composed of 20 subthemes, and five receptiveness themes (requesting elaboration from trainers, how law enforcement can support LGBTQ people, awareness and motivation to address LGBTQ community needs, appreciation for the training, and helping the training succeed), composed of 17 receptiveness subthemes. Table 1 shows the organization of the themes and subthemes related to resistance and receptiveness. Various "mixed" responses (i.e., both resistance and receptiveness) were also identified. The types of resistance, receptiveness, and mixed responses identified are discussed below. Because individual participants were not associated with specific responses in the scribed notes, the results reflect the responses that were present and do not indicate how pervasive the responses were across participants. The results of the current analysis focus on law enforcement officers' responses during the process of the training, as evaluation of the training outcomes are reported elsewhere (Israel et al., 2014).

Resistance to LGBTQ Diversity Training

Law enforcement officers' resistance to the LGBTQ training was coded into 20 subthemes, which were then organized into four themes: resistance about law enforcement, resistance about the LGBTQ community, resistance about how law enforcement do their job, and nonverbalized forms of resistance. The subthemes (identified in italics) and their corresponding resistance themes are described below.

Perceptions of Law Enforcement. The resistance that surfaced in this theme focused on whether participants needed the training, law enforcement officers not having personal biases, and concerns over the public's perception of law enforcement officers. One subtheme was that *law enforcement was already doing a good job, and no additional training was necessary.* For example, some participants believed that law enforcement officers already receive adequate professional training. One participant stated, "I would just say as a new officer, I think we should continue what we are doing. The training that I have received over the last 6 months has been completely professional. From my standpoint as being brand new, our training helps us be professional, kind, empathetic … I honestly cannot see anything that we need to add to what is in place." Participants explained that police are professional and people are getting the services they need. They also referenced the statistics presented during the training that indicated LGBTQ community members held positive perceptions of law enforcement and that the LGBTQ community seems fine approaching police based on those statistics. Further, participants argued that not only are law enforcement officers fair, professional, and equal, but that it

Table 1. Resistance and Receptiveness Themes and Subthemes

Resistance Themes	*Resistance Subthemes*
Perceptions of law enforcement	1. Law enforcement is already doing a good job; no additional training needed 2. Law enforcement officers treat everyone the same 3. Law enforcement officers do not have personal biases 4. Concerned about how public perceives law enforcement 5. Questioning statistics about law enforcement
Beliefs regarding LGBTQ community	6. LGBTQ people allege discrimination to get out of trouble 7. LGBTQ community can harm law enforcement officers with accusation of bias 8. LGBTQ people want special treatment 9. LGBTQ community doesn't understand law enforcement 10. LGBTQ concerns are no longer as much of an issue because there is greater acceptance 11. Language shouldn't be taken so seriously by LGBTQ people
Defending law enforcement practices	12. Law enforcement is just doing their job and following protocol 13. No time to further engage with LGBTQ persons in the moment 14. Don't want to go digging for evidence of a hate crime 15. Reluctance to intervene 16. Law enforcement intervening could cause more harm than good 17. Law enforcement prioritized interests of parents over those of LGBTQ youth
Nonverbalized forms of resistance	18. Low engagement during training 19. Joking and laughing during training 20. Discomfort with the role-plays
Receptiveness Themes	*Receptiveness Subthemes*
Requesting elaboration from trainers	1. Questioning for clarification 2. Asking for guidance for law enforcement officers 3. Questions about LGBTQ resources
How law enforcement can support LGBTQ people	4. Things that could help law enforcement officers do a good job 5. Ideas of how to help LGBTQ people feel comfortable reporting crimes 6. Openness to open dialogue with LGBTQ people 7. Offering suggestions for working with LGBTQ people
Awareness and motivation to address LGBTQ community needs	8. Understanding, grappling with, or upset about LGBTQ oppression and discrimination 9. Empathy for LGBTQ community 10. Thinking about unique considerations for LGBTQ people 11. Recognition of law enforcement officer's need for improvement in working with LGBTQ people

(Continued)

Receptiveness Themes	Receptiveness Subthemes
Appreciation for the training	12. Recognizing learning gained from training 13. Appreciation
Helping the training succeed	14. Naming law enforcement defensiveness 15. Actively participating in small and large group activities 16. Helping other law enforcement officers understand training material or LGBTQ oppression 17. Providing professional examples that help elucidate training content

is actually LGBTQ people who need to make a change and trust law enforcement, explaining that, "We have this agency that is fair and professional, but at which point do you expect people to rise up to their own stuff and realize that we're just trying to help and we're fair and equal."

Some participants were adamant that *law enforcement officers treat everyone the same*. One person explained that they would treat a hostile transgender person like any other hostile person they might encounter. Participants explained that LGBTQ people are like everyone else and law enforcement officers treat everyone the same. Similarly, some participants were reluctant to recognize any of their potential biases against LGBTQ people, a pattern that was captured in the subtheme: *Law enforcement officers do not have personal bias against LGBTQ persons*. One participant made it a point to mention that they were raised by a tolerant family and received no negative messages about LGBTQ people. He stated, "What I noticed is that we were all raised with pretty tolerant families and none of us shared any experiences of negative and we wonder if that's why we lean toward law enforcement." Other participants did not want to acknowledge any early messages or negative messages about LGBTQ people. One participant noted that being raised without bias contributes to wanting to be a law enforcement officer. Some officers seemed to struggle with the idea that they could have any bias against this marginalized community, or that they had received any negative messages from family, media, or peers about LGBTQ people.

Participants were also *concerned about how the public perceives law enforcement* and expressed qualms about attending the training in light of these concerns. This subtheme included comments about not being able to change people's perceptions of law enforcement. Other participants were concerned about the media's portrayal of law enforcement officers attending LGBTQ training. Participants were worried that attending the training may suggest to the public that they had done something wrong to warrant such training. They were concerned with how they might be perceived, not only by the LGBTQ community, but the public in general as well.

Statistics about the LGBTQ local and national communities were presented as part of the training. Some of the resistance encountered emerged within a subtheme of *questioning the statistics to prove them wrong*. For example,

participants questioned the statistics and asked about when and where the studies were conducted, stating, "Law enforcement has changed over the past 20–25 years. … Possibly a lot of these perceptions that are on the walls here come from a previous generation and that needs to be stated. In [our state] we're on the cutting edge of community policing." Participants also suspected the validity of the statistics since they did not match their experiences. One law enforcement officer stated, "Personal experience is not well represented by these statistics. I'm suspect of their accuracy. I understand that maybe a lot of these facts or numbers were counted by an advocate or student who didn't really understand law enforcement." Other participants explained that the veracity of the statistics depends on context. Another participant stated, "I'm finding all of these confusing and they raise more questions than answers."

Beliefs Regarding LGBTQ Community. Some of the resistance that was encountered was about the LGBTQ community. In the first subtheme, participants suggested that *LGBTQ people allege discrimination to get out of trouble.* Within this subtheme, participant's comments were categorized into two subcategories, which included feeling justified in stopping LGBTQ people for traffic violations, and explaining that LGBTQ people make accusations of discrimination to get out of trouble. For example, one officer said, "In my experience people use it as a crutch, that they are LGBT or whatever. Time out, why did you get stopped, what was this for? They say I stop them because they are gay, but don't realize that I just stopped them because they ran a light."

In a similar subtheme, *law enforcement officers were worried about being harmed by LGBTQ individuals accusing law enforcement of bias.* Officers explained that it is difficult to deal with being accused of bias and also difficult to be told that they are not doing a good job. For example, one participant asked the trainers, "Is there anything to inform your community about how they are harming new officers that are being accused of being homophobic?" One participant stated, "I invite you to do a ride-along. I think that all these people have been accused of being biased and we have to deal with this." An officer also explained that witnesses might be biased against officers, reporting that "a lot of times witnesses will bring in certain biases—biases about beliefs of officers. … People might be putting pieces together that may not be true, or other times when they might think the officer does not believe the victim."

Law enforcement officers suggested that *LGBTQ people want special treatment.* They talked about minority groups wanting special rights, feeling entitled, and thinking that law enforcement officers are lazy if they cannot prove a hate crime occurred. Other participants explained that LGBTQ people want to be treated equally, but they also want to be treated differently based on their sexual orientation. The participant stated, "… The dilemma I have is in one sense it's that 'we [referring to LGBTQ people] want to be treated equally,' but there's also, 'treat us differently because we're a part of a certain group.'" One participant explained, "… We forget to talk about how personal rights can't

infringe on another's rights. Yours don't trump other people's rights. I feel like I'm very empathic and I have skills to work with minority groups that feel that they have extra rights that they believe they have. These are great enhancement tools, but there are already things on the books that we … we perpetuate the feelings of entitlement and we need to be conscious of it. We are doing our job. … We're not lazy, and there's a sense of entitlement."

Participants also expressed that the *LGBTQ community doesn't understand law enforcement.* This subtheme included complaints that LGBTQ people stereotype law enforcement officers and curiosity about what the trainers were doing to inform LGBTQ people about their stereotypes of law enforcement. Some participants also believed that LGBTQ communities need more education about law enforcement, stating, "There is already a good change happening but there needs to be education on both sides. We're here because we want to learn more about this community, but there are misunderstandings from the LGBT community, too. There's a new type of police officer now." One participant explained that they were doing their part in getting trained, but LGBTQ people need to do their part and trust law enforcement.

Some participants suggested that *LGBTQ concerns are no longer as much of an issue because there is greater acceptance.* Participants talked about how societal attitudes toward gay people have improved over the years and explained that it is not a big deal now. Further, participants reported that it is more acceptable to talk about LGBTQ issues, suggesting that there was no reason to participate in the LGBTQ training. Similar to LGBTQ issues being less of a concern, participants expressed some resistance about language, explaining that *LGBTQ people should not take language so seriously.* For example, some reported that the saying "that's so gay" is not necessarily negative, while others explained that stereotypes are just entertainment, nothing more. Others were resistant to the idea that *fag* and *faggot* could be derogatory words for LGBTQ people, reporting that these words are meant to denote that someone is stupid, not necessarily gay.

Defending Law Enforcement Practices. This theme includes subthemes about *law enforcement* protocol, working with hate crime cases, and intervening in situations when LGBTQ people are being harassed. Participants explained that *law enforcement is just doing their job and following protocol.* They talked about people perceiving law enforcement as vicious and uncaring while law enforcement officers believe that they are simply doing their job and being matter of fact. During a discussion about where to place transgender individuals in jail, participants explained that the jails are just following protocol and are not trying to discriminate against transgender people. They also explained that they have to prioritize laws.

Another subtheme that arose was about *not having time to engage with LGBTQ persons in the moment.* There were conversations about when and how law enforcement officers intervene and some participants talked about having limited time and, sometimes, more pressing concerns arise that pull them

away. Participants explained that it can be difficult to talk to people given the officer's time constraints and that they are not counselors and do not have time to ask questions or talk to LGBTQ people, especially when other calls are more dangerous. While talking about a scenario with truant teens, participants explained that given their lack of time, school administrators should get training on LGBTQ topics so that they could deal with the teens, rather than relying on law enforcement.

Some participants also expressed that they *didn't want to go digging for evidence of a hate crime.* They explained that they would ask basic questions, but did not want to go deeper and would not go digging for a hate crime. Participants also expressed some frustration and impatience with victims who would not open up and talk to law enforcement. They talked about having to make distinctions between taking a potential hate crime seriously and taking extra steps to determine if it was, in fact, a hate crime. Some also worried that talking about the possibility of a crime being a hate crime will put the idea into the person's head.

Participants discussed *a reluctance to intervene* when LGBTQ people are being harassed or people are using derogatory hate speech toward the LGBTQ community. Officers worried they could "get heat" for intervening or imposing on free speech, and explained that they had to be careful about intervening. Participants reported that they need more information to intervene and then have to decide if it is worth intervening. They gave reasons for why intervening might not be a good option. For example, officers may interject or intervene when the victim does not want them to or they may not be able to intervene when they hear a slur because of first amendment rights. Participants also talked about the benefits of not intervening given their limited resources. Some participants argued that by not intervening when they hear an anti-LGBTQ slur, it would not pull them from more important calls. Participants also argued that *law enforcement officers intervening could cause more harm than good.* They explained that officers intervening could make things worse by escalating the situation. Further, participants were worried that intervening could create problems if it is outside of the officers' expertise.

Another general resistance subtheme emerged during one of the scenarios in which *law enforcement prioritized the interests of the parents over those of LGBTQ youth.* The scenario involved deciding how to handle truant LGBTQ youth and whether or not telling parents about teens engaging in same-sex behavior was necessary. Participants argued during the training about whether or not it was a good idea, or necessary, to tell the parents of their children's same-sex behaviors. Some officers argued that they should tell parents that their children were engaged in same-sex behavior because they deserve to know. Participants also explained that the same-sex relationship is not as important as the relationship with the parents, therefore, officers should tell parents what the children were doing and why they were truant.

   Nonverbalized Forms of Resistance. Some of the resistance came in the form of nonverbal behaviors. For example, one subtheme in this theme captures *low engagement during the training*. This subtheme included having side conversations during the training, doing the posttest during the training, having off-topic conversations during the group discussions, playing with a cell phone or texting, walking in and out of the training, and sitting alone and not discussing during group activities.

   A similar subtheme involved *joking and laughing during the training*. Though joking or laughing during the training may not constitute resistance by itself, it may have been a way to cope with the discomfort of discussing the difficult subject matter. In addition to general joking and laughing, some humor was targeted toward LGBTQ people. For example, a participant role-playing a scenario about public verbal harassment of LGBTQ people yelled "faggot" and then said they were done acting out the scene, at which point everyone laughed.

   The role-plays and scenarios seemed to present a unique challenge to some of the participants, which was captured as *discomfort with the role-play activity*. Role-plays can often be uncomfortable for some people, however; although this resistance included general hesitation and discomfort, there were also specific moments about LGBTQ issues that seemed to induce discomfort. For example, some participants seemed uncomfortable with acting as a same-sex couple during the role-play.

Receptiveness to LGBTQ Diversity Training

Law enforcement's receptiveness to the LGBTQ training was coded into 17 subthemes, which were then organized into five themes: requesting elaboration from trainers, what law enforcement can do to support LGBTQ people, acknowledging the need for law enforcement to attend to the LGBTQ community, sharing insights about the training, and helping the trainers or training succeed. The themes and their corresponding subthemes (identified in italics) are described below.

   Requesting Elaboration From Trainers. Three themes arose in this theme in which participants engaged in the training by asking questions, which often seemed to help them understand the training material or topic discussed. In one subtheme, participants *questioned for clarification*. Participants asked questions about acceptable terminology, the LGBTQ acronym, statistics, and gender identity. One participant asked, "Is this just for the training or do they actually use this [the LGBTQ acronym] out there. Do they refer to themselves as LGBT? As a group of people?" Participants also asked questions about the statistics presented, often in ways suggesting that they were trying to make sense of the data. One officer asked, "Do you know if this percentage of LGBT people that commit suicide are people that are out or not yet?" Many of the questions were about sex, gender identity, transitioning. For example, one participant asked, "… when someone is transitioning and going through

surgeries … at what point can they change their identity on their license and such?"

Some questions fit into a subtheme entitled *asking for guidance for law enforcement,* where officers asked specific questions about what they could or should do in various situations. For example, during a discussion about supporting LGBTQ victims when the perpetrator cannot be arrested or prosecuted, one officer asked, "What would be your recommendations on communicating empathy when it's borderline between a hate crime and freedom of speech?" Some officers were grappling with the struggle between what an LGBTQ person might want or expect (i.e., the incident to be treated as a hate crime) and the limits of the law, while still considering how to support the LGBTQ person and demonstrate empathy. There were also more questions about how to use words and terminology when talking to people who are part of the LGBTQ community or with other police officers. One participant asked, "Would you recommend that we [police officers] stay away from the word *queer*?" Another officer stated, "One thing that I come across on a regular basis is a man who is dressing as a woman. … How do I articulate this person in a simple and straightforward way with my [police] partner?"

Finally, participants had *questions about resources* that they could offer to LGBTQ individuals. This subtheme included wanting to know more about local resources including counseling services, school-based LGBTQ services, and resources they could share with parents of LGBTQ youth. Some officers seemed especially concerned about support services for youth who are struggling with at home or at school. In response to some of the statistics presented around the room, one officer stated, "This whole wall stood out to me about the kids getting beat up, suicides, bullied. … What is a resource for these kids at school? Do they have someone that can come talk to those kids?" Others asked about resources for parents, asking, "If we do have parents who have those concerns, does [local LGBTQ support agency] have resources to address that?"

How Law Enforcement Can Support LGBTQ People. This theme includes four subthemes about law enforcement officer's role in working with and supporting LGBTQ individuals. Participants discussed *things that could help law enforcement do a good job*, including wanting to know what resources are available and "have the resources handy," which might make it easier and more convenient to pass along the resources to LGBTQ people. Participants also had *ideas of how to help LGBTQ people feel comfortable reporting crimes.* One participant suggested that law enforcement could have an online system for reporting hate crimes or a private location as opposed to a busy and public lobby. Another participant mentioned that it might be helpful to tell the LGBTQ community that the law enforcement officers had received an LGBTQ-specific training "… so that the LGBT community might be more receptive to reporting." Another subtheme included comments about *openness to open dialogue with LGBTQ people.* One participant stated, "… [it's] important to know

what the community thinks of us. The only thing to improve our relationship with the community is to continue the dialogue and the continue the growth of communication." So many of the receptive comments that officers made during the training included *offering suggestions for working with LGBTQ people.* These were often shared in response to a question posed by a trainer or another participant and often took the form of various participants brainstorming positive ways of working with LGBTQ people. Many of the suggestions included various ways of working with transgender individuals during traffic stops and arrests. In response to a question about pronoun use, one participant noted, "I would ask what is the term that you prefer to use. I basically would just ask how you prefer to be referred to." Another participant stated that they have been "taught to be polite … [using] sir, ma'am" when approaching a person, and though it might be embarrassing, they would apologize if they misgendered someone. While talking about hate crimes, one participant stated that they might "… offer resources that can provide support. Build trust with the victim in some way and tell them that what happened wasn't right and I'm gonna do what I can to make this right."

Awareness and Motivation to Address LGBTQ Community Needs. Four subthemes were classified within this theme, including the subtheme *understanding, grappling with, or upset about LGBTQ oppression and discrimination.* One participant expressed frustration with LGBTQ discrimination and stated, "Firing someone for being gay … it struck me, but the army could do it until just months ago. I find it ridiculous for the government to say one group has rights and another doesn't. I'm waiting for the gay drinking fountains to be installed. It's ridiculous." Another participant made connections between LGBTQ oppression and other types of oppression, stating, "I recognize there are some common issues with regard to LGBT community; they're actually what I see as the same things as any group that feels underrepresented within the system; homelessness, victims of domestic violence—it's a lot of these same things."

Another subtheme, *empathy for LGBTQ community,* was heavily represented throughout the training, with participants often describing how they might feel as an LGBTQ person in a given situation. One participant noted that the training was giving them "…some empathy and an understanding to their [LGBTQ people's] perspective of who I am and what I can do to help them and how society views them and how to bridge that gap." When asked to put themselves in an LGBTQ community member's shoes, someone explained, "… as the victim, I think one of the things is that I would feel angry or concerned about what occurred, or maybe even scared or embarrassed. … Maybe not so much about who I am as a person, but what they are calling me. I might be fearful of being judged or of retaliation." Others commented about the statistics presented and stated, "I really thought that the suicide [statistic] was terrible. It's sad for anyone, but especially for a young person. To be at the crossroads like that … it's just too bad."

Within the subtheme *thinking about unique considerations for LGBTQ people*, participants considered how their treatment of LGBTQ people might change based on unique circumstances. This was especially relevant when exploring how to work with transgender suspects. One officer noted, " … Talking about searches, and dealing with strip searches. Policy states they have to have same gender, so this presents unique challenges for transgender individuals." Law enforcement also displayed *recognition of law enforcement officer's need for improvement in working with LGBTQ people.* One person asked of the trainers and the group, "Is it a training issue? Is it someone not doing what they are supposed to? Are we getting full cooperation? Let's look at these numbers to see what we're doing well and what we are not."

Overall, the subthemes in this theme encompassed some of the most powerfully receptive statements including an understanding of oppression and prejudice, expressions of empathy, thoughts about how to best work with and support LGBTQ people, and reflections about the areas in which law enforcement officers could improve.

Appreciation for the Training. Two subthemes were present within this theme, including *recognizing learning gained from training.* Participants offered reflections about the changes in their thought process and possible actions as a result of the training. For example, one person stated, "before I would have thought it's not my business … having this information changes your perspective." During a discussion about intervening when witnessing verbal harassment, an officer explained, "My first instinct was to do nothing, watch the nonverbals and see where it goes. My colleague said that she would take action. But then I thought that maybe we should because a lot of people are watching and perceiving the officers as inactive or just not caring." Another participant talked about helping victims move forward with reporting and noted, "If someone is already feeling ostracized, outside, doesn't fit in … can be a big roadblock to getting the bad guys getting prosecuted and sent to jail. Maybe some degree of [officers] having knowledge and awareness can help us work with that person [the victim] toward a successful outcome." Participants also shared their *appreciation* with the training team, explaining, "we've been hit hard the past five to six months, so its nice to hear that your subset of people generally appreciate us and value the job we're doing."

Helping the Training Succeed. Participants displayed receptiveness when they participated in ways that helped the trainers and the overall training succeed. This included active participation with each other and the trainers, helping each other understand the training materials and providing examples of their work that supported the training. In one subtheme, *naming law enforcement officer's defensiveness,* a participant noted, "Does it sounds like we're being defensive. I feel like we are. No one wants to hear that we're not being sensitive." Participants also *actively participated in small and large group activities* by answering questions the trainers posed, engaging with each other, and interacting with the training materials. This included answering questions about

how they learned about gender and sexuality from the media, family, and peers growing up, conversations about the statistics, role-play scenarios, and experiences they might have had with the LGBTQ community. Many of the officers actively participated in activities, conversations, and role-plays. Participants shared about their experiences, shared insights, and shared examples of things that they had done well and things that they hope to improve on in the future.

Helping other law enforcement officers understand training material or LGBTQ oppression is another subtheme that was present within this theme. This included officers speaking directly to each other, challenging one another, and providing examples that might help fellow officers understand the nuances of the training materials. One participant engaged with another officer, explaining, "I don't think the point is that we're gonna do it the same way, but we should all be respectful." Another officer tried to help others understand the difference between tolerance and acceptance, stating, "I would note that we live in [name of state], but we don't have gay marriage. We are considered to be a liberal place. There is a difference between tolerance and acceptance. We live in a liberal state; imagine going to another state that is more conservative." In a conversation about transgender people in jail, one participant explained a bit about the intake process and responded to another officer by saying, "… but what they're trying to do is point out that this is another way [transgender] people are marginalized and feel on the outside." Participants also *provided professional examples to help elucidate the training content.* Some participants commented when a training scenario was similar to what they had experienced while on duty by explaining what they had done in a given scenario. For example, two participants shared some ways that they were sensitive to the needs of transgender people, including choosing not to use pronouns when the person's gender presentation was unclear and offering a transgender person the option of being searched by either a female or male officer.

Mixed Responses

Both resistance and receptiveness were present throughout the training, and occasionally both were present in a single statement or behavior. The responses that were coded as both resistance and receptiveness were analyzed to look for patterns in the data. For these mixed responses, the resistance was often coded as *unclear* and not included in the subthemes or themes. The content of the resistance was often difficult to label because the words or tone implied resistance, but the type of resistance was unclear. The mixed responses also tended to include receptiveness codes labeled as *active participation.* A participant might be answering a question posed by trainers, providing examples of their work with the community, or offering suggestions, however, the tone or wording may have seemed negative or challenging. Some of the mixed results also came from observations made by scribes. A scribe

might note that while most people were actively participating in small-group activities, some were texting, engaged in off-topic conversations, or otherwise not participating—these were also coded as both resistance and receptiveness. These segments of data with mixed codes occurred infrequently (an average of two to three mixed codes for each of the four training sessions offered) as compared to resistance codes, which were noted an average of 33 times per training, or receptiveness codes, which were noted an average of 40 times per training.

In general, there seemed to be a dynamic interplay between participants' receptiveness via active participation and the resistance that was still present in their comments. This combination of both resistance and receptiveness seem to suggest that while participants might be struggling with the material or the topic, they were still actively engaged in the process and at least trying to make sense of the information being presented.

Discussion

The goal of this project was to study empirically types of responses that surface during diversity training, including resistance and receptiveness. Using literature from both diversity education and human resources, we were able to identify reactions to training of employees to work with a diverse public. We had the unique opportunity to systematically identify aspects of resistance and receptiveness toward LGBTQ diversity in the context of training law enforcement officers. Few studies have focused on resistance or receptiveness in diversity training broadly, or for either of these populations, specifically. This study provides an in-depth analysis of reactions that surfaced in an employee training and the following explores implications, limitations, and future directions for research.

Some of the themes identified in these training sessions are similar to what is generally found in the diversity training literature. For example, participants denied having any biases, disengaged from the training, used non-verbal body language, and challenged the information provided, all of which have been identified as types of resistance in diversity education and training (Mildred & Zúñiga, 2004; Schmitz et al., 2001; Vasquez, 2006). These results are meaningful because they help diversity trainers anticipate potential sources of resistance that they might encounter that have been described in the literature and found empirically though this study. Knowing about common forms of resistance might make it easier for diversity trainers to prepare for this resistance and respond to it in ways that help to reduce the resistance.

Further, LGBTQ specific resistance surfaced in similar ways to what others (e.g., Hill, 2008) have noted, including comments about LGBTQ people wanting special treatment. Previous research suggests that there is often resentment for what some understand as "special treatment" for LGBTQ people, which seems to be a common source of frustration (Hill, 2008), as we

found in the present study. Participants described LGBTQ people as wanting to be treated the same as everyone else, but explained that LGBTQ people feel they have "extra rights" and complained of a sense of "entitlement" among sexual and gender minorities. Challenging information is another way for individuals to push back against diversity training efforts. This type of resistance is typically directed at the training materials or the trainers directly, as was seen in this study when participants questioned statistics and the validity and potential biases in the information being presented. Vasquez (2006) detailed one participant who expressed his anger and talked about how "…he could produce evidence, statistics, and reports that showed everything we were reporting about racism or sexism was a lie. He then demanded the sources of our information" (p. 185). Some participants seemed to have a difficult time believing that the statistics could be an accurate representation of LGBTQ people's experiences or the LGBTQ community's perceptions of law enforcement.

Vasquez (2006) also suggests that participants may also challenge the notion that some groups have to struggle against oppression and often face harassment and discrimination. A participant might argue that discrimination against a particular group does not exist, or they themselves are the victims of discrimination, reverse racism, or some form of oppression. For example, "In his refusal to accept the information, he purported instead that he and other whites were the real victims of racism as evidenced by hiring quotas and affirmative action" (Vasquez, 2006, p. 185). This study found similar results, including law enforcement officers' concern that LGBTQ people who allege discriminatory practices to get out of trouble were hurting officers' careers.

Resistance can also be expressed via nonverbal body language, which might include a closed body posture or negative facial expression (Schmitz et al., 2001). In one study, the author noted that participants squirmed in their chairs, sighed loudly, and acted agitated during discussion about racism, classism, and sexism following the video *The Color of Fear* (Vasquez, 2006). This type of resistance may be an indication of discomfort with the material or an active attempt to indicate disagreement without having to speak up. Silence can be another form of nonverbal resistance, which may indicate a similar discomfort or disagreement with the training (Jackson, 1999; Thomas & Plaut, 2008); however, silence may also indicate that someone is processing the material and thinking carefully about what is being presented. Participants may display a quiet, or even silent refusal to participate fully in activities, conversations, small-group discussions, or the training in general. In a study about training on transgender issues, there was a more general lack of engagement between Australian police officers and the training materials (Miles-Johnson, 2016).

However, it is likely that not all of the nonverbalized forms of resistance in this study (i.e., chatting, texting, leaving the room) were actually resistance. Thomas and Plaut (2008) describe the ways in which some students

"turn off" during topics of diversity that include being tardy, absent, or otherwise disengaged. Some of these behaviors may have indicated disengagement, though it is really unclear what was happening for the participants. Previous research suggests that resistance encountered during diversity training may include denying the relevance of the diversity training to one's work (Mildred & Zúñiga, 2004), which then provides justification for participants to "tune out" during the training. We found similar results, especially within the perceptions of law enforcement theme and corresponding subthemes explaining that law enforcement officers were already doing a job and the training wasn't necessary or relevant. As Mildred & Zúñiga (2004) suggest, participants might have been disengaging or "tuning out" given that some perceived the training as unnecessary or irrelevant.

Some of the receptiveness displayed in the training was similar to what is seen in the diversity training literature, though the literature on receptiveness is much more limited than the literature that describes resistance. The results show that participants were actively engaged in the training activities and group discussions, displayed empathy for marginalized groups, considered the costs of oppression for marginalized groups, and expressed their appreciation for the training (Goodman, 2001; Vasquez, 2006). These factors may help to mitigate the resistance that surfaces in training and provide a more positive environment for the participants.

There were a few key distinctions and new areas of resistance that may be unique to working with law enforcement and doing LGBTQ-focused diversity training. For example, some participants were concerned about how they would be portrayed in the media. Some were worried that if the community found out about the training, they might think that law enforcement did something wrong to necessitate such a training. This finding demonstrates how important it is for trainers to understand the experiences and concerns of participants, organizational culture, and the larger sociopolitical context.

Another LGBTQ-specific type of resistance that was not found in the literature included a reluctance to intervene in situations where LGBTQ individuals were being harassed or when hearing derogatory hate speech toward an LGBTQ person. Participants provided various reasons why they might not intervene; however, when coupled with participants' beliefs that language should not be taken so seriously, it seems that the reasons for not intervening on behalf of LGBTQ people are multifaceted and may include the perception that derogatory language toward LGBTQ people is simply not that important. Similarly, officers seemed reluctant to pursue the possibility that a crime was potentially a hate crime. Research suggests that some LGBT individuals who reached out to law enforcement report an inadequate response or further victimization, both of which lead to reluctance to report crimes (Wolff & Cokely, 2007). This reluctance to intervene on behalf of LGBTQ people or to pursue a crime as a hate crime may contribute to lack of trust and negative perceptions of law enforcement.

The forms of resistance and receptiveness captured in the training provide some insight into the reactions and work that law enforcement do when they encounter potentially challenging situations in the community. Some of these areas of resistance were specifically about how officers do their jobs, which may be part of systemic or organizational issues rather than individual law enforcement officers' biases.

Similar to the focus of the literature on diversity training, what initially stood out most to the research team, both during the training and while coding, was the resistance participants displayed toward the training topics. However, we began to realize that focusing solely on the resistance failed to tell the whole story of the training and the reactions of the participants. The reactions of the officers were far more complex and nuanced than simply being resistant. Participants often displayed clear receptiveness or a mixed response to the training material that seemed to indicate they were grappling with the materials and trying to incorporate the new and potentially challenging information into their previously held beliefs. It became clear that we needed to code the data, looking specifically for law enforcement officers' receptiveness to the training. We found a more complete and complex story when we began focusing on both resistance and receptiveness. In fact, data analysis yielded more codes reflecting receptiveness than resistance per training.

Although our data reinforce some of the literature on participant responses to diversity training, our findings also challenge some extant ways of thinking about this topic. First, the attention to receptiveness is a departure from the more typical focus only on resistance. Furthermore, we acknowledged that we could not code some participant responses as pure forms of resistance or receptiveness, and we labeled these as mixed responses. It is important to go even beyond the limitations of data analysis to whether our original working definition of resistance, which was drawn largely from the extant literature, necessarily described actions that revealed participant negativity toward diversity training. It is possible that participants display behavior that could be interpreted as resistance when they are engaging with the material to advance their understanding. This topic warrants further theoretical and empirical attention.

In addition to furthering understanding of specific reactions of law enforcement to LGBTQ diversity training, this study offers insight into resistance and receptiveness to diversity more broadly. The tendency of the researchers to focus on resistance, as well as our ability to identify receptiveness when we sought it, is an important reminder that our assumptions and research questions shape our understanding of phenomena. In order to understand reactions to diversity, it is important to consider a range of possible responses. Furthermore, clear articulation of the content of reactions can help us conceptualize ways in which resistance to diversity training may be in line with structures of power inequity, just as articulation of receptiveness may reflect "resistance" in the sense of challenging dominance (Vinthagen, 2015).

Limitations

There were some limitations worth noting. First, the training was mandatory for all sworn officers. Given that this was a mandatory experience, there were no concerns about how to reach law enforcement officers, encouraging them to come, or getting the word out about the training. This was helpful given that all training sessions were well attended and we could expect 30 to 40 officers to be present for each of the four sessions. However, because it was mandatory, there were people who may have been resistant from the outset. Even though we had access to the officers, it was still important to conduct an effective training once they arrived to reduce the resistance some were already experiencing. The results provide an example of resistance and receptiveness that exists when there is access to officers when conducting a mandatory training. However, more research is needed to identify the barriers that might exist when there is limited access to law enforcement, or how resistance and receptiveness might emerge in an optional training.

Second, although four scribes who were present at the training attempted to capture as much verbal, nonverbal, and context data as possible, there were limitations to how quickly they could each type, and how much context they captured. The training sessions were not audio or video recorded, and the data are as accurate as the scribes could capture. Further, some scribes captured more of the nonverbal body language, side conversations, and texting than other scribes. Though there may be some human error in the scribing process, the sentiment and general words used in the scribed material were as accurate as possible. Video recording could have provided a better representation of body language, facial expressions, and precise conversations; however, it is likely that participants would have not felt as comfortable participating or expressing their concerns with the knowledge that they were being audio or video recorded. Member checks were not conducted, and it may have been difficult to do so as the scribed material captured multiple perspectives.

Future Directions for Research

Just as it is important to know how resistance and receptiveness surfaces in diversity training, it is also important to know how to increase receptiveness and how to respond to resistance as effectively as possible. Additional research is needed that focuses on how the trainer's responses to the participants might increase or decrease the resistance or receptiveness during the training. Literature on responding to resistance suggests that trainers may need to roll with the resistance, explore it, or honor participants' experience to reduce the likelihood that additional resistance will surface (Karp & Sammour, 2008). However, future research might explore how well these interventions work with the various forms of resistance that tend to surface, and how receptiveness can be cultivated.

Attitudes toward sexual minorities differ by subpopulation (Herek, 2002), so it seems reasonable that participants' reactions to LGBTQ diversity training might vary depending which subpopulation is the focus. In the current study, it was difficult to distinguish among reactions to subpopulations as many reactions were not specific to a particular group. Furthermore, the reactions that did reference a specific group were typically expressed in response to a scenario that was presented, making it difficult to interpret whether reactions were population specific or only expressed circumstantially in the context of the material presented by the facilitators. Thus, for the purposes of this study, we did not attempt to identify or interpret differences among the reactions to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer populations; however, it may be informative to explore such distinctions in future research. For example, researchers might focus on how law enforcement officers' reactions differ when presented with information or scenarios about LGB individuals as opposed to transgender individuals, or between men and women in LGBTQ communities.

Context is a key consideration for research in this area. For example, law enforcement roles and expectations differ by country and by level (local, state or regional, national), leadership of law enforcement agencies may role model or advocate various approaches to working with LGBTQ and other marginalized communities, and an area may have a particular history of community relations with law enforcement, all of which can influence the reactions law enforcement has to diversity training on LGBTQ issues. In the current study, preparatory discussions at briefings, collaboration in developing the training, and a survey of LGBTQ perceptions of and experiences with law enforcement provided insight into the local context. Future research should consider taking such steps in order to guide training design, data collection approach, and interpretation of results.

Prior to the training, we had collected data regarding local LGBTQ community members' positive and negative experiences with and perceptions of law enforcement. These data were integrated into the training. We noted that participants drew on the data on positive experiences to argue that training was not necessary because they were already doing a good job. This resistant response to identifying positive law enforcement behavior may dissuade some trainers from noting positive behaviors of the group receiving the training. Although we do not have data to substantiate this, it seemed as if the focus on positive aspects of law enforcement's behavior helped some participants to be more accepting of the trainers and the content. This could be an important area for future research.

Implications for Diversity Training

The results of this project may provide guidance for preparation and implementation of diversity training. For example, during the planning process, it may be helpful for trainers to gain an understanding of the community

context and the climate for law enforcement. In this study, local law enforcement officers had received negative media attention in the months prior to the training, which may have contributed to their concern about how this training would be portrayed to the community. Participants were worried that the community might assume that they were undergoing mandatory training because of something they had done wrong, which was not the case. Some defensiveness may have stemmed from this fear of additional scrutiny. Considering the larger political and social climate, as well as institutional and organizational context of participants, can be helpful for understanding the types of resistance and receptiveness that may be present among groups of students, executives, employees, or whole organizations.

It was also helpful for the trainers to anticipate some of the resistance that might surface during the training and to help frame the training in ways that would address the resistance. For instance, we anticipated resistance as outsiders providing training for law enforcement. In anticipation of this resistance, the officers we collaborated with on the design and content of the training offered their verbal endorsement at the beginning of the training. One of the trainers also made a point to mention that his parents were law enforcement officers in order to establish credibility. Some of the specific resistance themes identified in the current study may help trainers anticipate and reduce particular areas of resistance. For example, participants articulated a variety of reasons not to intervene when they witness verbal harassment. If trainers identify these concerns and address them proactively, law enforcement may feel like trainers understand their perspective, which may serve to neutralize some resistance.

During the training, it can be helpful for trainers to be open to resistance. The participants are often grappling with difficult material that may be challenging their worldview. Resistance can be expected and the trainers might be most effective by allowing participants to work through resistance, rather than trying to shut it down completely. Trying to control or shut down resistance may also result in missing opportunities for receptiveness to emerge. Furthermore, some useful information may be expressed in the form of resistance. For example, some of the resistance helped the trainers to understand what specific barriers officers may perceive stand in the way of LGBTQ-affirming practices so they could attend to these barriers.

Just as it can be helpful to acknowledge the resistance and barriers that may be faced in diversity training, it is also important to consider the ways in which participants might be receptive to the training. Focusing on the potential positive reactions, or the receptiveness, can change the relationship trainers have to conducting diversity training and to the trainees who participate. Anticipating receptiveness may also help trainers consider ways of engaging participants in positive ways. Some participants were a great resource for countering the resistance coming from other participants. When the topic of officers not wanting to intervene or step in when hearing anti-LGBTQ slurs

arose within the group, other officers responded with suggestions and examples of how they handle these situations while on patrol. It can be helpful to set the groundwork for this early and to structure the training in a way that not only allows, but also encourages participants to share with one another throughout the training. Structuring training in this way also means that the trainers are not the only ones responding to resistance or general questions, which allows participants to display their receptiveness as they help others understand, especially through their examples.

Conclusion

This study identified types of resistance and receptiveness expressed by law enforcement officers during training on LGBTQ issues. It builds on the extant literature on resistance to diversity training and offers the first empirical investigation of receptiveness to diversity training. Furthermore, it offers insights on a specific diversity focus (LGBTQ issues) and a specific diversity training audience (law enforcement). Being aware of the types of resistance and receptiveness may be especially helpful for those who are conducting diversity training, teaching about diversity, or engaging in research about diversity training. Human resource personnel, managers, and others may encounter resistance and receptiveness to diversity outside of training settings, as well, and this study may help them recognize and navigate employee reactions to diversity. Moreover, the study offers insight into one approach to developing a workforce that is prepared to engage effectively with LGBTQ communities.

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