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Research Brief One-Sheet No.8: The Impact of Police Crime on LGBTQ+ People

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Research Brief *One-Sheet* – No. 8

The Impact of Police Crime on LGBTQ+ People

Philip M. Stinson, Sr.

Background

This research brief provides a summary of a research presentation at the *Forum on 21st Century Policing: Protecting the Rights of LGBTQ+ People* held by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services at the U.S. Department of Justice, on July 21, 2016, in Washington, D.C.

Methods

The project object-relational database included records of 11,889 arrest cases of 10,024 sworn law enforcement officers, each of whom were arrested during calendar years 2005 through 2016 for committing one or more crimes. The arrested officers were employed by 3,846 state and local law enforcement agencies located in 1,585 counties and independent cities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Full-text searches of the digital imaging component of the project database were conducted on a variety of search terms. The primary data searched were news reports and court records in cases where police officers across the United States have been arrested. Themes were developed through inductive content analysis of the documents identified through the full-text searches.

Findings

The full-text digital imaging database searches yielded information on 84 police crime arrest cases that involved either (a) victims of the police crimes who identify as LGBTQ+ persons and/or (b) sworn law enforcement officers who identify as LGBTQ+ persons. Seven themes were identified that center around concepts relating to police misconduct and violence, police sexual violence, harassment, retaliation, and/or discrimination. The themes are broadly stated as: (1) police violence against transgender women, (2) sexual assaults of transgender men by police officers, (3) police violence against gay men, (4) police taunting and harassment of gay men, (5) police harassment of lesbians, and (6) numerous instances of police officers sending each other homophobic emails and text messages. A seventh theme involved the treatment of LGBTQ+ police officers within their own law enforcement agencies in the form of pranks, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation by other police officers.

Implications

The themes developed in this qualitative study demonstrate the need for further research and development of specific strategies, best practices, and policies related to policing and the challenges of gender, sexuality, and protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

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