

Stressor and Resilience Factors for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals Confronting Antigay Politics

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When lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people encounter antigay campaigns and elections, they face explicit and implicit homophobic attacks. In order to understand the points of stress and the bases for resilience in the face of these attacks, we developed a 130-item quantitative survey on the basis of results of an earlier qualitative study. Three hundred, sixteen Colorado LGB people endorsed items representing sources of stress and sources of resilience associated with the campaign for and passage of an antigay referendum. Factor analyses of the results suggested 5 sources of stressors and 5 sources of resilience for LGB persons and their communities.

KEY WORDS: gay; gay and lesbian; antigay election; homophobia; stressor factors; resilience factors.

INTRODUCTION

Americans have decided on more than 60 state and local ballot measures related to equal rights for lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals since 1974 (Smith, 1997). Antigay political campaigns reflect what participants on both sides of the issue have called a “cultural war” (e.g., Gallagher & Bull, 1996; Herman, 1997). As in many types of conflict, the cultural war being waged against lesbian, gay, and bisexual⁴ (LGB) people inflicts wounds, some at the individual level and some at the level of the LGB community. LGB people who have participated in these campaigns, as well as outside observers, have offered anecdotal descriptions of their psychological toll (Booth, 1992, 1993; Gallagher & Bull, 1996;

Gonsiorek, 1993; Johnson, 1992; Keen & Goldberg, 1998; Moses-Zirkes, 1993; Pharr, 1996). However, there has been limited systematic study of the effects of antigay campaigns on LGB people. The present study adds to the existing research using an instrument anchored in the words of LGB people exposed to antigay politics.

Context for the Study

Antigay campaigns occur in the context of the pervasive homophobia and heterosexism that characterize U.S. culture (see Herek, 1992a, 1992b, 1994, 1996a, 1996b). Public debates related to the question of equal rights for LGB people occur at federal, state, county, and municipal levels. Other, less formal debates take place in corporations, educational institutions, and other settings. All such campaigns draw from cultural homonegativity, and they add to it as well (Russell, 2003).

The present study has its roots in a statewide anti-gay ballot measure. On November 3, 1992, Colorado voters endorsed Amendment 2, a popularly initiated amendment to the state’s Constitution. The amendment denied legal recourse to LGB people (but not to heterosexual people) who encountered discrimination based on sexual orientation. In effect, Amendment 2 legalized discrimination against LGB people

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⁴While acknowledging both the value of including transgender issues and individuals in equal rights efforts and the likelihood that transgender people are affected by antigay campaigns, this study was based on reactions to a constitutional amendment that would have given lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals no recourse in the face of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender individuals per se were not included in the study.

(Smith, 1993). Because of a legal challenge mounted against Amendment 2, the measure never took effect. It ultimately was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court on May 20, 1996 (Bettelheim & Booth, 1996).

Stressors Associated With Antigay Campaigns

As has been the case with antigay campaigns elsewhere (Bradley, 1992; Conrad, 1983; Davies, 1982; Douglass, 1997; Eastland, 1996a; Heider-Markel & Meier, 1996; McCorkle & Most, 1997; Sarbin, 1996; Smith, 1997), the Colorado contest was marked by significant acrimony (Cornett, 1992; Keen & Goldberg, 1998; Russell, 2000). Colorado for Family Values (CFV), the group advocating for the amendment, made extensive use of materials that cast LGB people in a decidedly negative light (for descriptions of such materials, see Douglass, 1997; Moritz, 1995; Russell, 2003).

Misinformation and distortions about LGB people were prominent in CFV materials. LGB people were presented in a flat, stereotyped fashion that carried the suggestion that the group consisted of a homogeneous collection of people, any one of whom could represent the entire group (Russell, 2003). Threatening connotations accompanied the depictions of LGB people (Davies, 1982; Douglass, 1997; McCorkle & Most, 1997; Moritz, 1995; Smith, 1997). The portrayal of LGB people in CFV's campaign materials, as in antigay campaign materials elsewhere, conveyed that they were different, threatening, and repulsive—in effect the “other” (see Bullis & Bach, 1996; Donovan & Bowler, 1997; Douglass, 1997; Eastland, 1996a, 1996b; Russell, 2003; Whillock, 1995).

These types of messages undermine the basic value and humanity of LGB people. It is reasonable to expect that exposure to such materials and to discussions about LGB rights can constitute a stressor for at least some LGB people, even when specific election outcomes favor LGB rights. When election outcomes do not support equal rights for LGB people, an additional set of stressors may come into play. An antigay electoral decision suggests to LGB people that they are not full members of the community; it may increase legal concerns in matters of employment and housing; it raises concerns that antigay votes will unleash broader forms of harassment and violence (Booth, 1992; Spring, 1992; Stepanek, 1992). In addition, some LGB people, especially those who tend to

deny the pervasiveness of homonegativity, may find their denial compromised (Russell, 2000).

Resilience Associated With Antigay Campaigns

Despite the stressors of antigay campaigns, anecdotal reports have suggested that they may carry some positive consequences as well. Antigay campaigns may become the occasion for significant personal work on the part of LGB individuals and significant organizing within the larger LGB community. A number of political observers have suggested that antigay campaigns serve to galvanize LGBs (e.g., Gallagher & Bull, 1996; Keen & Goldberg, 1998; Smith, 1997). Such campaigns may provoke LGB people to come out, choosing to disclose rather than to hide their sexual orientations (e.g., Keen & Goldberg, 1998; Nash, 1992). Further, they often have had the effect of garnering and focusing heterosexual support for the LGB civil rights movement (e.g., Bradley, 1992; Keen & Goldberg, 1998).

The present study represents an outgrowth of an earlier study of 663 Colorado LGBs that was conducted after the passage of an antigay amendment, Amendment 2, in 1992. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses suggested a broad range of negative and positive consequences for LGB people in Colorado (Russell, 2000).

In an effort to pinpoint these responses further, the present follow-up study was designed to take place within a month after the Supreme Court's 1996 decision in the Amendment 2 case.

METHOD

Participants

Three hundred sixteen self-identified lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals participated in this study. Contacts were made at a variety of gatherings that attracted significant numbers of LGB participants, including a Pride fair and a PFLAG (Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) conference. In addition, respondents were recruited through the snowball technique. Because surveys were distributed without return postage, in most cases respondents were required to complete and return the survey at the point of distribution. Of the 350 surveys distributed, 316 were completed and returned; this represented a 90% return rate. The sample of

Table I. Characteristics of 316 LGB Survey Respondents

	Mean	SD	Range
Age	35.7	10.3	14–67
Years of education	15.6	2.4	6–19
Sex/gender	<i>Percentage</i>		
Female	58.1		
Male	41.9		
Sexual orientation			
Homosexual	2.6		
Bisexual	7.8		
Gay	43.6		
Lesbian	41.0		
Queer	1.3		
Other	3.6		
Race/ethnicity			
White	86.0		
Latino	8.8		
Indian	1.0		
Black	1.6		
Biracial	2.3		
Other	0.3		

316 respondents included 58.1% women and 86% Whites. Demographic characteristics of the sample are detailed in Table I.

Instrument

The instrument for the present study was a four-page questionnaire that included 130 items in addition to several demographic indicators. The demographic items were open-ended so that respondents used their own language, rather than preassigning categories, to provide this information (Table I). The survey generally requested respondents to consider their entire experience with Amendment 2, from the original campaign and election in 1992 to the aftermath of the, then, recent Supreme Court decision in May, 1996. All of the items for the present survey were drawn from the comments made by Colorado LGBs about Amendment 2 in an earlier qualitative study (Russell, 2000), and thereby represented a case in which qualitative methods were used to “lay the groundwork for the development of culturally anchored quantitative methods and measures” (Banyard & Miller, 1998, p. 497).

The survey items were divided along two dimensions representing (a) problems and negative experiences related to Amendment 2 (70 items), and (b) sources of support and resilience related to the amendment (60 items). Prior to its use in this study,

Table II. Presence and Intensity Means for Stressor and Resilience Items

	Presence		Intensity	
	Mean	% endorsed	SD	Mean rating
Stressor	56		0.17	1.66
Resilience	74		0.18	3.52

Note. Participants rated intensity of stressor and resilience items using a 5-point Likert scale. Anchors for stressor/resilience items were 1 (*not much of a problem/not at all positive*) and 5 (*extreme problem/extremely positive*). An intensity rating of 0 (*not a problem at all*) was assigned when presence of an item was not endorsed.

earlier drafts of the instrument were piloted on 12 individuals, and recommended changes were incorporated into the final version.

Examples of items in the problem dimension included “felt shocked by the hostile nature of the campaign”; “had a sense of being hated by people who don’t know me”; “LGB people went into the closet”; and “some LGB people were ‘too radical.’” Examples of items in the support and resilience dimension included “had opportunity to deal with my negative feelings about being LGB”; “felt supported by heterosexual public figures who came out against Amendment 2”; “LGB community understands more about other oppressions (racism, sexism, etc.)”; and “increased LGB community’s visibility through publicity and media coverage.”

For each item in the survey, participants were asked for two distinct responses: (1) to indicate whether or not the problem or source of support was present (presence), and (2) using a 5-point Likert scale, to indicate the degree to which the phenomenon was present (intensity). Intensity ratings for stressor items were coded from 1 (*not much of a problem*) to 5 (*extreme problem*). Ratings were designated as 0 (*not a problem at all*) when presence of the item was not endorsed. Intensity ratings for resilience items were coded from 1 (*not at all positive*) to 5 (*extremely positive*). Ratings were considered missing when presence of the item was not endorsed. Mean presence and intensity ratings for the two (stressor and resilience) dimensions are presented in Table II. The present study focused exclusively on the presence of problems and supports, not on participants’ intensity ratings.

RESULTS

A series of exploratory factor analyses were proposed to identify latent stressor and resilience factors.

Table III. Interfactor Correlations Among Stressor Factors

	Encounter with homophobia	Community divisions	Making sense of danger	Failed witnessing	Internalized homophobia
Encounter with homophobia	1.00	.31	.40	.32	.13
Community divisions		1.00	.15	.12	.11
Making sense of danger			1.00	.26	.15
Failed witnessing				1.00	.23
Internalized homophobia					1.00

Preliminary analyses resulted in 24 of 70 stressor and 8 of 60 resilience items being discarded for redundancy or failure to load adequately on a single factor. Independent exploratory factor analyses were conducted separately on the remaining 46 stressor and 52 resilience items using a principal factor extraction followed by a promax (oblique) rotation. Four criteria were considered in determining the number of factors to retain: the scree test, the variance accounted for by each factor, the presence of simple structure in the factor pattern, and the interpretability of the factors. The initial minimal factor pattern loading score for an item to be included on a factor was .30.

The exploratory factor analysis of stressor items resulted in five factors being retained, accounting for 40.5% of the variance in the data. Tables III, IV and V present the interfactor correlations, the rotated factor pattern loadings (standardized regression coefficients), and the factor structure loadings (correlations) for the latent stressor factors. The five factors demonstrated simple structure with a few exceptions. One item ("Felt like I was being thought of only as a sexual being.") was retained in the first factor for conceptual consistency despite a reduced loading weight in the final analysis. Five items (regarding the relationship between LGB people and the heterosexual community) were retained in the third factor for conceptual consistency although each loaded on another factor as well.

The exploratory factor analysis of resilience items also resulted in five factors being retained, accounting for 39.9% of the variability in the data. Tables VI, VII and VIII present the interfactor correlations, the rotated factor pattern loadings (standardized regression coefficients), and the factor structure loadings (correlations) for the latent resilience factors. The five factors displayed simple structure with one slight exception. Two items retained in the first factor (again regarding the relationship between LGB people and the heterosexual community) also loaded to a lesser degree on another factor.

The stressor factors contained items that focused on five distinct sources of distress for LGB respon-

dents. These stressor factors (Table IX) emphasized the difficult and sometimes shocking realization of how widespread homonegativity is, the divisions that exist within LGB communities, efforts to make sense of the sources of antigay bigotry, difficulties with families of origin, and LGB people's internalization of negative messages about themselves. The resilience factors represented respondents' perceptions of sources of personal support and community well-being in the face of antigay politics. Items included in the five resilience factors (Table X) focused on the value of placing antigay politics in a broader political perspective; the value of LGB people's personal confrontation with internalized homophobia; the activating potential of expressions of affect, especially anger; the benefits of acknowledging support from heterosexual persons; and the benefits that accrue to LGB people from contact with the LGB community.

DISCUSSION

Factors Viewed as Stressors

First Stressor Factor: Encounter With Homophobia

The first stressor factor contains items related to LGB respondents' efforts to come to terms with the fact that not only could their rights be subject to popular vote, but their rights could be rejected by the majority of the voters. Many LGB Coloradoans, including 79.7% of the present sample, were greatly surprised by the election outcome. Their preelection expectations undoubtedly were rooted partly in polling data that had strongly suggested that the voters would reject Amendment 2 (e.g., Finley, 1992; Zeman & Meyer, 1992). In addition, qualitative data from the earlier studies of LGB people indicated that many were shocked more generally by how widespread homonegativity was and by its hostile expression in the campaign and election (Russell, 2000). They felt that they were seen exclusively as sexual objects, and that they were judged and hated. In the view of

Table IV. Rotated Factor Pattern (Standardized Regression Coefficients) for Stressor Factors

Stressor Item	Encounter with homophobia	Community divisions	Making sense of danger	Failed witnessing	Internalized homophobia
Felt the heterosexual community failed to understand the impact of A2 on LGBs	.64	.02	-.01	.05	-.06
Understood how widespread homophobia is	.45	.09	.09	-.13	-.08
Felt shocked by the hostile nature of the campaign	.53	-.28	.08	-.05	.08
Felt shocked by the passage of A2 on 11/3/92	.67	-.15	-.01	-.14	.08
Felt anger at CFV	.69	.02	-.05	.07	-.14
Felt anger at fundamentalist Christians	.63	.15	.01	.03	-.04
Felt scared of the power of the religious right	.71	.00	.04	-.02	-.03
Felt people judged my morality	.63	-.08	-.16	-.04	.20
Felt anger about media portrayals of LGBs	.45	.09	-.05	.05	.14
Felt anger about media portrayals of A2 issues	.34	.19	.00	.08	.15
Felt like I was being thought of only as a sexual being	.27	.13	.14	.08	.23
Had a sense of being hated by people who don't know me	.61	.07	-.05	.03	-.13
Felt sad following the election on 11/3/92	.57	.06	.12	-.09	.01
Felt a lost sense of safety	.38	.03	.27	.19	-.02
Felt sad about divisions in LGB community based on sex, race, etc.	-.05	.54	-.04	.05	.18
Disagreements about best strategies for change	.16	.65	-.01	-.02	-.07
Disagreements between rural/urban LGBs about political strategies/power sharing	-.11	.64	-.03	.11	-.03
LGBs no chance to grieve losses associated with A2	-.06	.35	.03	.17	-.03
Disagreement re: proper ways to protest A2	.15	.59	.02	-.09	-.05
Disagreement re: boycott of CO in general	.07	.48	-.02	-.14	-.09
Differences between out and closeted LGBs	-.01	.59	.00	-.04	-.15
Apathy among LGBs	.06	.61	-.03	-.01	.12
Racism in LGB community	-.03	.74	-.02	-.10	.17
Sexism in LGB community	-.07	.74	.04	-.06	.09
Felt lack of connection to heterosexual community	.20	.03	.28	.29	-.15
Felt lack of support from heterosexuals	.15	.07	.31	.41	-.22
Felt anger at heterosexuals	.03	-.07	.44	.37	.02
Felt anger at heterosexuals who say they support LGBs but don't do anything	.08	.12	.27	.29	-.01
Felt anger at Christians in general	.01	.11	.43	.16	.14
Lost faith in the world being a good place	-.06	-.14	.89	-.11	.02
Lost faith in the world being fair	.00	-.13	.85	-.09	.03
Lost faith that people are good and moral	-.10	-.04	.85	-.09	.05
Felt more upset by anti-gay graffiti, comments, and jokes	.28	-.01	.26	.03	.15
Felt suspicious of people and their feelings about LGBs	.05	.17	.50	.04	.20
Felt a lot of rage in general	.10	.13	.59	.05	.10
Felt anger at CO and/or Coloradoans	.23	.05	.32	.07	-.07
Felt lack of connection to family of origin	-.11	-.02	.11	.80	-.09
My family of origin failed to understand the meaning of A2	-.01	-.02	-.11	.77	.05
Felt lack of support from my family of origin	-.07	.01	-.02	.81	.09
Felt sad because family members voted yes on A2	.14	-.29	-.13	.51	.24
Increased my use of alcohol and/or drugs	-.01	.06	.15	-.08	.31
Questioned my own religious values/beliefs	-.10	.04	.18	.01	.36
Increased my own negative feelings about being LGB	.02	-.04	.05	-.02	.69
Became less out	.12	-.16	.07	.00	.54
Felt shame as a LGB person	.00	.06	.06	.05	.70
LGB community looked foolish	-.08	.19	-.18	.12	.42

Table V. Factor Structure (Correlations) for Stressor Factors

Stressor item	Encounter with homophobia	Community divisions	Making sense of danger	Failed witnessing	Internalized homophobia
Felt the heterosexual community failed to understand the impact of A2 on LGBs	.65	.21	.25	.24	.04
Understood how widespread homophobia is	.47	.22	.24	.03	-.03
Felt shocked by the hostile nature of the campaign	.47	-.10	.25	.13	.12
Felt shocked by the passage of A2 on 11/3/92	.58	.05	.21	.07	.12
Felt anger at CFV	.68	.22	.23	.25	-.04
Felt anger at fundamentalist Christians	.69	.34	.29	.25	.07
Felt scared of the power of the religious right	.72	.22	.32	.21	.07
Felt people judged my morality	.56	.11	.12	.16	.24
Felt anger about media portrayals of LGBs	.49	.25	.18	.23	.22
Felt anger about media portrayals of A2 issues	.45	.32	.21	.25	.23
Felt like I was being thought of only as a sexual being	.43	.28	.32	.27	.32
Had a sense of being hated by people who don't know me	.61	.24	.19	.20	-.04
Felt sad following the election on 11/3/92	.61	.24	.33	.13	.09
Felt a lost sense of safety	.56	.21	.47	.38	.12
Felt sad about divisions in LGB community based on sex, race, etc.	.14	.54	.06	.13	.24
Disagreements about best strategies for change	.34	.69	.13	.08	.01
Disagreements between rural/urban LGBs about political strategies/power sharing	.12	.62	.05	.14	.05
LGBs no chance to grieve losses associated with A2	.12	.36	.10	.20	.04
Disagreement re: proper ways to protest A2	.31	.63	.14	.02	.01
Disagreement re: boycott of CO in general	.15	.47	.03	-.09	-.06
Differences between out and closeted LGBs	.14	.57	.05	-.01	-.10
Apathy among LGBs	.25	.64	.10	.11	.19
Racism in LGB community	.18	.73	.07	.01	.22
Sexism in LGB community	.17	.73	.12	.04	.15
Felt lack of connection to heterosexual community	.40	.16	.42	.39	-.01
Felt lack of support from heterosexuals	.40	.19	.45	.49	-.05
Felt anger at heterosexuals	.31	.05	.54	.49	.16
Felt anger at heterosexuals who say they support LGBs but don't do anything	.32	.22	.39	.39	.12
Felt anger at Christians in general	.29	.22	.52	.32	.26
Lost faith in the world being a good place	.23	-.04	.82	.08	.10
Lost faith in the world being fair	.28	-.01	.81	.12	.12
Lost faith that people are good and moral	.21	.05	.79	.10	.13
Felt more upset by anti-gay graffiti, comments, and jokes	.42	.14	.41	.22	.23
Felt suspicious of people and their feelings about LGBs	.34	.29	.58	.25	.31
Felt a lot of rage in general	.41	.26	.68	.27	.22
Felt anger at CO and/or Coloradoans	.38	.16	.42	.21	.02
Felt lack of connection to family of origin	.18	.05	.26	.77	.10
My family of origin failed to understand the meaning of A2	.19	.06	.09	.74	.20
Felt lack of support from my family of origin	.19	.09	.17	.80	.26
Felt sad because family members voted yes on A2	.19	-.18	.05	.54	.32
Increased my use of alcohol and/or drugs	.09	.10	.18	.04	.32
Questioned my own religious values/beliefs	.04	.08	.20	.11	.38
Increased my own negative feelings about being LGB	.12	.05	.15	.16	.69
Became less out	.17	-.06	.17	.16	.55
Felt shame as a LGB person	.15	.15	.18	.23	.73
LGB community looked foolish	.01	.21	-.09	.17	.43

Table VI. Interfactor Correlations Among Resilience Factors

	Movement perspective	Confronting IH	Expression of affect	Successful witnessing	LGB community
Movement perspective	1.00	.37	.26	.29	.19
Confronting IH		1.00	.28	.21	.21
Expression of affect			1.00	.25	.11
Successful witnessing				1.00	.14
LGB Community					1.00

these respondents, heterosexual people did not understand the meaning that Amendment 2 held for LGB people.

In the face of shocking circumstances, people typically try to make sense of what has occurred (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). LGB people identified who was/were responsible for Amendment 2. They focused their anger on CFV (the political group who had campaigned for the measure), on fundamentalist Christians in general, and on the media. LGB respondents felt sad about the passage of Amendment 2. The election, having awakened many LGB respondents to the power of the religious right, also evoked their fear.

The items in this first stressor factor are very consistent with issues raised in the literature on the processes underlying antigay campaigns (e.g., Douglass, 1997; Eastland, 1996a, 1996b; Herman, 1997; Keen & Goldberg, 1998; Moritz, 1995; Russell, in press). These campaigns make use of the homophobia and heterosexism that are widespread in society (Herek, 1996a, 1996b). They employ images and narratives that portray LGB people as dangerous and different, thereby objectifying and marginalizing them (Bullis & Bach, 1996; Davies, 1982; Donovan & Bowler, 1997; Douglass, 1997; Eastland, 1996a, 1996b; Smith, 1997; Whillock, 1995). LGB people react to such materials with shock, sadness, fear, and anger (Eastland, 1996a; McCorkle & Most, 1997; Pharr, 1996; Russell, 2000).

Second Stressor Factor: Community Divisions

It is perhaps not surprising that, when LGB people feel overwhelmed by antigay forces, they turn to the community for help and comfort. In some cases, LGB people are disappointed with what they encounter in their own communities. This second stressor factor contains items focused on the divisions that exist within the LGB community. These include divisions secondary to racism and sexism as well as those associated with differences between out and closeted

LGB people, differences between LGB people in urban and rural areas, and disagreements about the strategies to use in combating antigay actions. Divisions exist within the LGB community under the best of circumstances (Gallagher & Bull, 1996; D'Augelli & Garnets, 1995; Osborn, 1996). When the community faces direct instances of hostility, these divisions may increase, as may the negative consequences associated with the various divisions. Individuals under stress because of antigay oppression need the protective functions of a strong LGB community at such times. It is perhaps a cruel paradox that individual need is highest when the community is most under attack. (As we shall see under the section on resilience factors, LGB communities may constitute a significant source of resilience for LGB people facing antigay politics as well.)

Third Stressor Factor: Making Sense of Danger

The items contained in this factor parallel some of the cognitive substrates associated with facing highly stressful events in general (Herman, 1992; Janoff-Bulman, 1992). LGB respondents in this study reported that the campaign and election challenged deeply held beliefs about the nature of the world—its being fair and good—and about people's being good and moral. In the face of having these beliefs challenged, LGB respondents were angry; their anger was directed at groups they viewed as (at least indirectly) responsible for Amendment 2—Christians, Coloradoans, and heterosexual people in general. It is not surprising that this factor also includes items suggesting that LGB respondents were more aware of antigay jokes and graffiti. As has been observed in other contexts (e.g., Herman, 1992), having one's assumptions about the world's and other people's goodness challenged tends to make one vigilant. In addition, it is not surprising that this factor includes items suggesting that LGB respondents became suspicious of heterosexual people's feelings about them, even when heterosexuals offered apparent support

Table VII. Rotated Factor Pattern (Standardized Regression Coefficients) for Resilience Factors

Resilience item	Movement perspective	Confronting IH	Expression of affect	Successful witnessing	LGB community
LGB community better understands impact of homophobia	.50	-.05	.19	-.06	-.04
LGB community understands more about other oppressions	.65	-.07	.05	-.15	.00
Increased potential for building coalitions with other oppressed groups	.42	-.08	.10	.16	-.02
Increased LGB community's visibility through publicity and media coverage	.45	-.14	-.06	.30	-.04
Opportunity to see LGB civil rights movement as part of larger civil rights movement	.46	-.11	.04	-.01	.22
Taking a stand as a community	.42	-.05	-.06	.14	.21
LGB community increased dialogue with heterosexual community	.52	-.02	.04	.18	.00
Increased pride in the LGB community	.38	-.03	.12	-.14	.26
Increased coming out as a community	.44	.14	-.03	-.29	.22
Increased political activity as a community	.65	-.04	-.11	-.09	.08
Had a positive impact on LGB adolescents	.48	.12	-.06	-.38	.14
Opportunity for heterosexuals to see how intense homophobia can be	.42	.04	-.10	.29	-.10
Opportunity for all members of LGB community to work toward a common goal	.35	.12	.00	.07	.07
Better working relationships between men and women in LGB community	.58	.11	.02	.07	-.02
Opportunity for LGBs to learn facts and dispel stereotypes about LGBs	.54	.25	-.01	.12	-.15
Increased sensitivity about LGBs to ethnic minority issues	.64	.19	-.15	-.13	-.16
Opportunity for LGB comm. to deal with/understand neg. feelings about being LGB	.49	.30	-.04	.11	-.17
Learning that the community has heterosexual allies	.49	-.12	-.03	-.01	.33
Opportunity for community to get support from heterosexuals	.39	-.18	-.11	.22	.33
Opportunity to focus LGB community's history of anger about homophobia usefully	.54	.04	.04	.11	.10
Finally grasped how homophobia has impacted me personally	-.03	.46	.15	-.15	.11
Felt less shame as a LGB person	-.07	.50	.08	.09	.23
Increased my self-understanding	.00	.50	.15	.05	.25
Forced me to look at my beliefs about self community, politics, etc.	.16	.47	.07	.00	-.17
Helped partner(s)/lover(s) and me to come together	-.03	.39	.19	.01	.06
Came out at work	-.01	-.56	-.03	.07	.02
Came out among friends	.03	.68	-.19	-.04	.30
Came out to family of origin	-.08	.59	-.16	-.01	.23
Has opportunity to feel stronger as a LGB person	.11	-.45	.12	.22	.12
Had opportunity to deal with my negative feelings about being LGB	-.02	-.73	-.01	.01	-.14
Had opportunity to confront fears about being out as a LGB person	.15	.66	.13	.01	-.10
Questioned own religious values/beliefs	.06	.51	.00	.01	.08
Had opportunity to take a stand against A2	.22	-.24	.41	.23	.10
Vented anger at CFV	.06	-.04	.78	-.10	.06
Vented anger at Christians	-.02	.00	.77	-.04	-.04
Vented anger at fundamentalist Christians	-.01	-.09	.83	.12	.01
Vented anger at heterosexuals	.02	.05	.65	-.11	.03
Vented anger at media	-.15	.14	.64	-.01	-.02
Vented anger at CO and Coloradoans	-.11	.07	.61	-.10	.03
Had opportunity to express anger in general	.10	.31	.48	.02	-.10
Let myself grieve sad aspects of A2	.11	.26	.39	.14	.06
Family of origin offered me understanding and support	-.07	.24	-.07	.38	.09
Opportunity for my heterosexual family members to act on behalf of LGB rights	.12	.10	.18	.53	.15
Heterosexual friends offered understanding and support	-.06	-.04	-.01	.74	.04
Opportunity for heterosexual friends to understand homophobia	.03	.08	.05	.69	.01
Opportunity for heterosexual friends to act on behalf of LGB rights	.07	.02	.11	.71	-.01
Felt supported by heterosexual public figures who came out against A2	.18	-.07	.12	.35	.01
Felt relief about judicial decisions	.01	.05	.25	.42	-.06
Had more contact with other LGBs	.01	-.03	.09	.02	.81
Learned more about other LGBs because of more contact	-.01	.12	-.02	.03	.78
Increased support from LGB community	.09	.22	-.03	.05	.48
Had chance to make positive impact on LGB community	.07	.16	.13	.24	.36

Table VIII. Factor Structure (Correlations) for Resilience Factors

Resilience item	Movement perspective	Confronting IH	Expression of affect	Successful witnessing	LGB community
LGB community better understands impact of homophobia	.51	.16	.28	.12	.06
LGB community understands more about other oppressions	.60	.16	.16	.04	.10
Increased potential for building coalitions with other oppressed groups	.46	.14	.23	.29	.08
Increased LGB community's visibility through publicity and media coverage	.46	.07	.09	.39	.05
Opportunity to see LGB civil rights movement as part of larger civil rights movement	.47	.12	.15	.14	.29
Taking a stand as a community	.47	.16	.09	.27	.29
LGB community increased dialogue with heterosexual community	.57	.22	.22	.34	.13
Increased pride in the LGB community	.41	.17	.21	.03	.32
Increased coming out as a community	.45	.28	.08	-.11	.29
Increased political activity as a community	.60	.17	.04	.08	.18
Had a positive impact on LGB adolescents	.42	.23	.03	-.21	.20
Opportunity for heterosexuals to see how intense homophobia can be	.47	.21	.08	.39	.02
Opportunity for all members of LGB community to work toward a common goal	.43	.28	.16	.21	.18
Better working relationships between men and women in LGB community	.64	.35	.22	.26	.13
Opportunity for LGBs to learn facts and dispel stereotypes about LGBs	.64	.44	.22	.31	.02
Increased sensitivity about LGBs to ethnic minority issues	.61	.32	.02	.04	-.03
Opportunity for LGB comm. to deal with/understand neg. feelings about being LGB	.59	.46	.18	.28	-.01
Learning that the community has heterosexual allies	.50	.12	.10	.15	.40
Opportunity for community to get support from heterosexuals	.43	.05	.04	.32	.39
Opportunity to focus LGB community's history of anger about homophobia usefully	.62	.29	.23	.30	.24
Finally grasped how homophobia has impacted me personally	.16	.48	.24	-.01	.19
Felt less shame as a LGB person	.21	.57	.26	.23	.34
Increased my self-understanding	.28	.60	.33	.23	.38
Forced me to look at my beliefs about self community, politics, etc.	.32	.51	.22	.14	-.03
Helped partner(s)/lover(s) and me to come together	.18	.45	.30	.14	.16
Came out at work	.22	.57	.15	.18	.14
Came out among friends	.22	.67	.02	.09	.40
Came out to family of origin	.14	.56	.01	.08	.32
Has opportunity to feel stronger as a LGB person	.40	.60	.35	.39	.28
Had opportunity to deal with my negative feelings about being LGB	.42	.69	.18	.14	.01
Had opportunity to confront fears about being out as a LGB person	.41	.74	.35	.22	.09
Questioned own religious values/beliefs	.11	.47	.11	.09	.01
Had opportunity to take a stand against A2	.32	.03	.47	.35	.17
Vented anger at CFV	.24	.20	.77	.11	.14
Vented anger at Christians	.16	.19	.75	.14	.04
Vented anger at fundamentalist Christians	.21	.17	.83	.30	.09
Vented anger at heterosexuals	.19	.22	.65	.07	.10
Vented anger at media	.06	.26	.63	.13	.05
Vented anger at CO and Coloradoans	.06	.18	.58	.04	.08
Had opportunity to express anger in general	.32	.47	.58	.22	.04
Let myself grieve sad aspects of A2	.36	.45	.53	.33	.20
Family of origin offered me understanding and support	.13	.30	.09	.41	.17
Opportunity for my heterosexual family members to act on behalf of LGB rights	.05	.14	-.04	.49	.19
Heterosexual friends offered understanding and support	.15	.10	.15	.72	.12
Opportunity for heterosexual friends to understand homophobia	.27	.25	.25	.72	.13
Opportunity for heterosexual friends to act on behalf of LGB rights	.25	.16	.08	.70	.09
Felt supported by heterosexual public figures who came out against A2	.29	.11	.24	.42	.09
Felt relief about judicial decisions	.21	.20	.36	.48	.03
Had more contact with other LGBs	.19	.17	.18	.15	.82
Learned more about other LGBs because of more contact	.19	.28	.11	.15	.81
Increased support from LGB community	.27	.36	.12	.18	.55
Had chance to make positive impact on LGB community	.30	.35	.30	.38	.46

for LGB rights. Stressful events—especially those that are human-induced—tend to evoke a vigilance about one's world and the potential for emerging dangers in that world. In addition, the optimistic nature of the preelection polls coupled with the actual vote called into question the consistency between voters' (most of whom are heterosexual, of course) stated intentions and their actions.

Fourth Stressor Factor: Failed Witnessing

All four items comprising this factor referred to LGB respondents' relationships with their families of origin. Under highly stressful circumstances, people routinely seek social support. So central is this support that some experts in trauma studies have suggested that traumatic situations contain, in addition to a victim and a perpetrator, a third agent—the witness (e.g., Herman, 1992). The witness functions to highlight the reactions of others to the victimization. In the best of situations, the witness validates that a trauma has occurred and offers support and a moral alternative to the perpetration (Staub, 1993). In less positive situations, witnesses fail to acknowledge the existence of a perpetration and/or they fail to intervene on the victim's behalf. For some LGB respondents facing Amendment 2, family members failed to provide successful witnessing. That failure, when it occurred, seemed to constitute a significant stressor.

Fifth Stressor Factor: Internalized Homophobia

The final stressor factor contains items related to the internalization of homonegative messages by LGB respondents themselves. Internalized homophobia stands as a potentially significant problem for LGB people at any time (Brown, 1986; Gonsiorek, 1995; Malyon, 1982; Margolies, Becker, & Jackson-Brewer, 1987; Shidlo, 1994; Sophie, 1987). As other observers have noted (Eastland, 1996a; Pharr, 1996), it is hardly surprising that some LGB people would internalize negative statements made about them over the course of a year-long campaign, and even less surprising when such messages culminated in a vote that legalized discrimination against LGB people. The items in this factor demonstrate the fluid nature of the relationship between LGB respondents and their communities. Respondents endorsed feeling shame and other negative feelings about being LGB at the individual level, and they also endorsed the notion that

Table IX. Stressor Factors

First stressor factor: Encounter with homophobia

- Felt the heterosexual community failed to understand the impact of A2 on LGBs
- Understood how widespread homophobia is
- Felt shocked by the hostile nature of the campaign
- Felt shocked by the passage of A2 on 11/3/92
- Felt anger at CFV
- Felt anger at fundamentalist Christians
- Felt scared of the power of the religious right
- Felt people judged my morality
- Felt anger about media portrayals of LGBs
- Felt anger about media portrayals of A2 issues
- Felt like I was being thought of only as a sexual being
- Had a sense of being hated by people who don't know me
- Felt sad following the election on 11/3/92
- Felt a lost sense of safety

Second stressor factor: Community divisions

- Felt sad about divisions in LGB community based on sex, race, etc.
- Disagreements about best strategies for change
- Disagreements between rural/urban LGBs about political strategies/power sharing
- LGBs no chance to grieve losses associated with A2
- Disagreement re: proper ways to protest A2
- Disagreement re: boycott of CO in general
- Differences between out and closeted LGBs
- Apathy among LGBs
- Racism in LGB community
- Sexism in LGB community

Third stressor factor: Making sense of danger

- Felt lack of connection to heterosexual community
- Felt lack of support from heterosexuals
- Felt anger at heterosexuals
- Felt anger at heterosexuals who say they support LGBs but don't do anything
- Felt anger at Christians in general
- Lost faith in the world being a good place
- Lost faith in the world being fair
- Lost faith that people are good and moral
- Felt more upset by anti-gay graffiti, comments, and jokes
- Felt suspicious of people and their feelings about LGBs
- Felt a lot of rage in general
- Felt anger at CO and/or Coloradans

Fourth stressor factor: Failed witnessing

- Felt lack of connection to family of origin
- My family of origin failed to understand the meaning of A2
- Felt lack of support from my family of origin
- Felt sad because family members voted yes on A2

Fifth stressor factor: Internalized homophobia

- Increased my use of alcohol and/or drugs
- Questioned my own religious values/beliefs
- Increased my own negative feelings about being LGB
- Became less out
- Felt shame as a LGB person
- LGB community looked foolish

Table X. Resilience Factors

First resilience factor: Movement perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGB community better understands impact of homophobia • LGB community understands more about other oppressions • Increased potential for building coalitions with other oppressed groups • Increased LGB community's visibility through publicity and media coverage • Opportunity to see LGB civil rights movement as part of larger civil rights movement • Taking a stand as a community • LGB community increased dialogue with heterosexual community • Increased pride in the LGB community • Increased coming out as a community • Increased political activity as a community • Had a positive impact on LGB adolescents • Opportunity for heterosexuals to see how intense homophobia can be • Opportunity for all members of LGB community to work toward a common goal • Better working relationships between men and women in LGB community • Opportunity for LGBs to learn facts and dispel stereotypes about LGBs • Increased sensitivity about LGBs to ethnic minority issues • Opportunity for LGB comm. to deal with/understand neg. feelings about being LGB • Learning that the community has heterosexual allies • Opportunity for community to get support from heterosexuals • Opportunity to focus LGB community's history of anger about homophobia usefully
Second resilience factor: Confronting internalized homophobia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally grasped how homophobia has impacted me personally • Felt less shame as a LGB person • Increased my self-understanding • Forced me to look at my beliefs about self, community, politics, etc. • Helped partner(s)/lover(s) and me to come together • Came out at work • Came out among friends • Came out to family of origin • Has opportunity to feel stronger as a LGB person • Had opportunity to deal with my negative feelings about being LGB • Had opportunity to confront fears about being out as a LGB person • Questioned own religious values/beliefs
Third resilience factor: Expression of affect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had opportunity to take a stand against A2 • Vented anger at CFV • Vented anger at Christians • Vented anger at fundamentalist Christians • Vented anger at heterosexuals

Table X. (Continued)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vented anger at media • Vented anger at CO and Coloradans • Had opportunity to express anger in general • Let myself grieve sad aspects of A2
Fourth resilience factor: Successful witnessing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family of origin offered me understanding and support • Opportunity for my heterosexual family members to act on behalf of LGB rights • Heterosexual friends offered understanding and support • Opportunity for heterosexual friends to understand homophobia • Opportunity for heterosexual friends to act on behalf of LGB rights • Felt supported by heterosexual public figures who came out against A2 • Felt relief about judicial decisions
Fifth resilience factor: LGB community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had more contact with other LGBs • Learned more about other LGBs because of more contact • Increased support from LGB community • Had chance to make positive impact on LGB community

the LGB community looked foolish. Two of the items in the factor concerned behaviors that may be related to internalized homophobia—being less out as a gay person and increased use of alcohol and drugs. The placement of closeted behavior in this factor makes sense when one considers that the choice to be in the closet may reflect the internalization of homonegative beliefs as well as rational considerations of safety (Bradford & Ryan, 1987). The inclusion of the item related to the increased use of alcohol and other drugs in a factor focused so clearly on internalized homophobia indicates that the putative relationship between substance abuse and internalized homophobia suggested by others (e.g., Bickelhaupt, 1995) warrants further exploration.

Factors Viewed as Sources of Resilience

Moving to consideration of resilience factors represents a shift from focusing on sources of distress to focusing on measures that can be helpful to LGB people confronting antigay politics.

First Resilience Factor: Movement Perspective

The first resilience factor includes 20 items representing what are, at first glance, rather broad

considerations. Taken together, these items suggest a single theme: the ability to put an antigay action into an expansive, political context. Cognitively, this move suggests a shift from seeing the particular antigay action as central to seeing the action as one aspect within the more central movement for equal rights for LGB people.

The factor suggests several subthemes within this overarching one. One subtheme focuses on the LGB movement as part of a larger movement for civil rights for all people. Two distinctive considerations emerge here, both of which again demonstrate the interdependence of LGB individuals and the LGB community. The first concerns cognitive aspects associated with resilience and includes the community's increased understanding of the impact of homonegativity and its ability to better understand negative feelings about being LGB. The more behavioral consideration that emerges in this movement subtheme captures an enhanced sense of efficacy in the community. This efficacy is expressed in a variety of ways, including the community's having common goals, taking a stand, and being more visible. At the individual level, increased coming out by LGB persons signals and expresses this efficacy.

A second subtheme in this factor is contained in items related to the relationship between LGB people and other communities. If LGB people are to understand themselves and their interests to represent a movement for civil rights, then it stands to reason that they will come to view and react to other forms of oppression with new understandings. Increased sensitivity to ethnic minority groups and building coalitions with other oppressed groups suggest this subtheme. In a related vein, if LGB people constitute a political collective, then so do heterosexual people. Put another way, when LGB people develop a political analysis of the LGB movement, that analysis carries implications for how heterosexual people are viewed. It becomes clear that some heterosexual people also can learn about homonegativity, and they are potentially sources of successful witnessing and support for LGB people.

For LGB people, the ability to adopt a broad perspective into which to place an antigay election shifts their focus away from the election to their own efforts and efficacy. This political framework serves as a context for understanding a painful personal experience as a political phenomenon—thus, decreasing the sense of isolation, alienation, and powerlessness so prominent in highly stressful experiences (Herman, 1992) and opening the way to collective action (Root,

1992; Russell, 2003; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). The perspective carries implicit guidance for understanding and interacting with members of other oppressed groups as well. In view of these advantages, it is not difficult to see how these items collectively emerge as a factor providing resilience to the LGB respondents in their confrontation with antigay politics.

Second Resilience Factor: Confronting Internalized Homophobia

A number of observers have noted that antigay actions frequently have resulted in the growth of the LGB community (e.g., Gallagher & Bull, 1996; Keen & Goldberg, 1998; Smith, 1997). What has been less obvious has been how antigay politics have spurred LGB individuals toward psychological growth. Such growth is captured quite explicitly in the items that constitute the second factor related to resilience for LGB respondents confronting antigay actions. These actions, while posing a danger for LGB people, also offer the opportunity for them to look more acutely at themselves and at how their lives have been affected by homonegativity. In confronting the impact of homonegativity, LGB respondents use antigay politics as the occasion for understanding and decreasing their own internalized homophobia and its effects on their lives. This process is suggested in items focused on broad themes (for example, looking at beliefs about self, community, politics, etc.) as well as on very specific themes (for example, feeling less shame about being LGB). This confrontation eventually emerges in LGB respondents' decision to disclose their sexual orientation in family, friendship, and work spheres.

We saw in the stressor factors that antigay politics carry the danger of increasing internalized homophobia among LGB people. Here, we see that, if LGB respondents can directly confront the homonegativity, as it touches their lives, they can transform that homonegativity into the grounds for enhanced self-understanding and the courage to be more out. Using oppression as a springboard to individual growth and collective action, while not a new idea (see, e.g., Freire, 1993; Martín-Baró, 1994; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999), is a tremendously important one.

Third Resilience Factor: Expression of Affect

We saw in the discussion of the first stressor factor that affects, especially anger, could be construed

as a negative correlate of antigay politics. Here, we see how anger—especially if it is enacted in some purposive fashion—can be a source of resilience. Anger and sadness are reasonable responses to violations and losses. When left unexpressed, they go nowhere and may even be disruptive to individual functioning. When expressed, however, such affects can mobilize a person to action and, as such, suggest the use of adaptive coping strategies (e.g., Moos, 1986).

Fourth Resilience Factor: Successful Witnessing

We introduced the notion of the importance of having stressful experiences witnessed in the discussion of the fourth stressor factor. Here, we see the positive side of witnessing. LGB respondents identify successful witnessing as a source of resilience when facing an antigay action. Items contributing to this factor included witnessing at the close interpersonal level (from family members and from friends), at the political level (from public officials who are heterosexual), and at the judicial level, in the form of judicial decisions against Amendment 2. Successful witnessing seems to reduce the isolation and powerlessness experienced by many LGB people facing political attack. It connects LGB respondents to the larger community and counters the tendency, shared by people under threat, to fail to discriminate among individuals who are members of the privileged/oppressor group.

Fifth Resilience Factor: LGB Community

The final factor focuses on the role of the LGB community in the lives of LGB respondents facing Amendment 2. This factor's emphasis on the community as a source of resilience is consistent with other research that has shown that LGB people benefit from integration into the gay community (e.g., Crocker & Major, 1989; D'Augelli & Garnets, 1995; Garnets, Herek, & Levy, 1992; Kurdek, 1988). For some, contact with the LGB community provides a source of information about LGB people, information that often is not accessible through other means (see Plummer, 1975). The community further represents a source of support as well as a medium in which LGB people can feel efficacious.

Sample Characteristics

As is the case with any convenience sample, it is difficult to know the degree to which the sample in this

study is representative of LGBs in Colorado or elsewhere. Accordingly, generalizations about the findings from this study should be made conservatively. The sample includes more women than men as well as individuals who as a group represent a relatively high level of educational attainment. A large proportion of the sample resides in the Denver metropolitan area, with relatively few sample members residing in rural areas of Colorado. In terms of mean age and proportion of LGB people of color, this sample approximates the mean age and percentage of people of color for the state of Colorado as a whole (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992).

CONCLUSION

The results of the two factor analyses used in this study suggest some of the important stressor and resilience dimensions encountered by LGBs who confront political actions. While it is important to keep in mind the limits to the generalizability of these findings, it also is significant that the findings, as a whole, are quite consistent with the results of prior research on sources of stress and sources of resilience, including research conducted specifically with LGBs and research conducted with other groups.

Concerns about generalizability notwithstanding, the findings from this study have important implications. As it becomes increasingly clear that antigay politics act as a psychosocial and political stressor for LGB people, a variety of theoretical models provide frameworks for understanding how such stressors operate. Models of stigma management and of minority group stress are of potential relevance to LGB people confronting antigay politics; indeed, a number of these models have been referenced in this article. At the same time, it is important to understand the differences as well as the parallels between the psychosocial stressors encountered by LGB people and those encountered by members of other stigmatized groups (for further discussion, see Bohan & Russell, 1999). As one example, one of the key stressors for many LGB people is family rejection; such rejection is less likely to occur as a stressor for members of other groups, who often find support and solace within the family. Conversely, people of color, whether LGB or not, do not have access to many of the sources of privilege that most White LGB individuals enjoy.

At the level of praxis, the results of this study underscore the necessity for persistent attention to a number of issues within LGB communities, not only

at times of antigay political incursions but on an ongoing basis. Factors in both the stressor and the resilience dimensions of this study strongly point to the importance of a movement perspective—a view that sees LGB experiences as part of a larger social and political movement. In the first place, adopting a movement perspective is helpful to LGB people in the political realm. For example, it supports the creation of coalitions with other oppressed groups and provides a historical framework within which to understand a particular event as but one element of an enduring movement for social change.

It is equally noteworthy that the adoption of such a perspective is helpful to the mental health of LGB individuals (for parallels with other stigmatized identities, see Miller & Major, 2000). Adopting such a perspective allows LGB people to understand the relevance of homonegativity to their own lives, thereby decreasing the likelihood that they will be shocked by the overt presence of antigay political rhetoric and actions. Having a movement perspective also allows LGB people to place some undeniably painful experiences—rejection by family members, for example—into a broader and perhaps less personalized context.

The results of this study further suggest that one of the more difficult consequences of antigay politics is LGB people's internalizing the homonegative messages that are central to such political campaigns. The problem suggests the "cure"; as these data indicate, active confrontation of internalized homonegativity can reduce the negative consequences of antigay politics. Indeed, such confrontations carry broad, positive potential for LGB people in a number of realms (see Russell, 2000, for further discussion). From these data it appears that dealing with internalized homophobia is best seen as an ongoing community endeavor as well as a personal matter for LGB people.

The results of this study also bear implications for the role of heterosexual allies in the movement for LGB rights. The presence and active participation of heterosexual allies in opposition to antigay politics not only play an important role in the resistance to antigay political initiatives, but also challenge LGB individuals and the LGB community to reconsider monolithic understandings of heterosexual people and to recognize the presence of crucial—if perhaps unexpected—sources of support. The participation of heterosexual allies also serves to highlight the movement perspective—i.e., the awareness that the LGB rights movement is not simply about or for the benefit of LGB people—and offers LGB

people an alternative to the potential isolation of exclusionary identity politics.

The stressor and resilience factors highlighted in this study represent themes that warrant consideration by LGB people (and their allies) who confront antigay politics. Efforts to minimize the stressors and capitalize on the resilience factors promise the potential not only for interrupting the damaging consequences of antigay politics but also for actively building a stronger movement on behalf of equal rights for LGB people.

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