Resilience Of Grassroots Leaders Involved in LGBT Issues at a Catholic University

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This case study examined the sources of resilience utilized by staff and faculty grassroots leaders at a Jesuit, Catholic university addressing the LGBT campus climate. Interviews with 31 grassroots leaders uncovered how self-authorship helped participants reconcile tensions between Church teachings and LGBT concerns, self-efficacy to make a difference contributed to increased confidence, reliance on support networks countered feelings of isolation, and maintaining balance preserved psychological resources.

Homophobia and heterosexism permeate college campuses (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010), so many faculty and student affairs professionals are involved in advocacy to address the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) climate (Messinger, 2011). On religiously affiliated campuses, like Catholic universities, however, administrators often perceive LGBT advocacy to be in conflict with religious teachings regarding homosexuality and gender identity (Maher, 2003; Wolff & Himes, 2010) and act to suppress such efforts (Love, 1998; McEntarfer, 2011). When faced with protracted resistance, faculty and staff can find LGBT advocacy on these campuses to be incredibly frustrating, which may escalate into psychological burnout (Howard-Hamilton, Palmer, Johnson, & Kicklighter, 1998).

To counter these feelings of frustration, staff and faculty LGBT advocates rely on their sense of resilience (Kezar & Lester, 2011) or their ability to cope with and adapt to adversity (Robertson & Cooper, 2013; Seery, 2011). People develop resilience through extrinsic and intrinsic protective factors or sources of resilience that provide them the psychological resources needed to cope with adversity (Kezar & Lester, 2011; Yonezawa, Jones, & Singer, 2011). Identifying sources of resilience may seem somewhat intuitive, but resilience is a process that is both an innate psychological characteristic and an ability that can be developed (Robertson & Cooper, 2013). Very little research has explored the role of resilience in LGBT advocacy at religiously affiliated colleges and universities, let alone broader campus activism and grassroots leadership in general. The purpose of this study then is to examine the various sources of resilience on which faculty and staff at a Jesuit, Catholic university rely to sustain their commitment to LGBT advocacy.

I generally use "LGBT" throughout this article to refer to gender and sexual minority communities, as this version of the abbreviation was most commonly used at my study site, although I do acknowledge this abbreviation is not fully inclusive of the range of identities along gender and sexuality spectra. I make exceptions when referring to study participants, where I use lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning (LGBQ)

as the sample included no transgender participants, and in references to prior literature, I use the abbreviation employed by the authors of those studies.

Literature Review

The LGBT campus climate is a multidimensional construct that encompasses individual behavior toward and perceptions of LGBT individuals as well as institutional history and organizational behavior (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012). Research has found attitudes among students in Catholic institutions toward LGBT individuals have improved in recent years (Maher, Sever, & Pichler, 2008), but scholars have also expressed concern that much work to improve the climate remains (Getz & Kirkley, 2003). Educators at Catholic colleges and universities have been working to improve their campus climates for LGBT individuals for several decades (e.g., Love, 1997; Maher, 2004).

Many of these efforts resemble steps taken in secular institutions such as LGBT awareness programming and establishing LGBT student organizations (Getz & Kirkley, 2006; McEntarfer, 2011). Staff and faculty at Catholic colleges and universities face additional challenges unique to their institution's religious affiliation (Maher, 2003). Church teachings describe homosexuality as "intrinsically disordered" and same-sex sexual activity as "gravely immoral" (Catholic Church, 1994). The Church also exhorts that LGBT people should be able to live their lives free from prejudice and discrimination (Catholic Church, 1994; National Conference of Catholic Bishops [NCCB], 1997). As a result of this tension, students, faculty, and staff work carefully to meet the needs of their campus LGBT communities while representing Church teachings authentically (Getz & Kirkely, 2006; Love, 1997; McEntarfer, 2011). Much of this work involves responding to resistance raised by influential campus stakeholders, especially alumni and religious leaders. Addressing the LGBT campus climate can be fraught with adversity.

Resilience

Most people encounter stressors and adversity during their lives, but some people seem to recover better from these experiences than others (Seery, 2011). Psychologists determined people who cope better with adversity have a higher sense of resilience (Herrman et al., 2011). Initially resilience was understood to be a fixed personality characteristic, but researchers have come to understand resilience as a dynamic process a person can cultivate. Resilience is built through exposure to adverse experiences, followed by a period of recovery that allows a person to reflect on and reframe experiences of stress and hardship (Seery, 2011).

Research has found several psychological and social protective factors—conditions or attributes that bolster a person's resources for coping with adversity—operate as sources of resilience (Rutter, 2006). Herrman et al. (2011) categorized these sources of resilience into three sets of factors. *Personal factors*, like personality traits and cognitive ability, shape how a person makes sense of adversity. *Biological factors*, like brain structures or stress hormones, affect a person's physiological response to stress. *Environmental-systemic factors*, such as family or broader communities, offer support and renewal that restores a person's capacity for resisting environmental risk factors. Personal and biological factors can also be described as intrinsic factors as they operate from within a person, whereas environmental-systemic factors would be considered extrinsic, or external to a person. The effect and interaction of these factors on resilience is complex and varies by person across time and context (Herrman et al., 2011; Rutter, 2006).

Resilience contributes to the retention of K–12 teachers, especially those working in high-need schools. Intrinsic factors like core values and self-efficacy contribute the most to their

resilience (Hong, 2012; Patterson, Collins, & Abbott, 2004; Stanford, 2001). Hong (2012) found teachers with a greater sense of self-efficacy built a stronger sense of resilience than their peers, whose lack of professional confidence led them to leave the teaching profession early in their careers. Faith was especially important for participants in Stanford's study, who were all African American women, as a source of renewal. A sense of vocation, arising from the alignment of teaching with their core values, is also a foundation for teachers' resilience (Gu & Day, 2007; Whatley, 1998)—this sense of vocation provides a deep sense of fulfillment that can be drawn upon during challenging moments.

Educators also rely on extrinsic sources of resilience, including support from family, friends, or cultural groups, but especially access to professional development opportunities (Patterson et al., 2004; Yonezawa et al., 2011). These opportunities provide resources for teachers to improve their practice, and offer a sense of collegiality with other teachers facing similar situations. For grassroots leaders who rely on faith, faith communities are another location people find social support (Stanford, 2001). Resilience is cultivated by the interaction between one's internal psychological coping resources and the presence of social support, meaning that sources of resilience may not be able to be reduced to discrete extrinsic and intrinsic elements (Gu & Day, 2007).

Only a handful of studies have explored sources of resilience among higher education grass-roots leaders. Astin and Leland (1991) examined the experiences of women leaders during the women's movement, Behar-Horenstein, West-Olatunji, Moore, Houchen, and Roberts (2012) portrayed one African American woman faculty member's account of hardship and resilience in the academy, and Kezar and Lester (2011) explored faculty and staff grassroots leadership across multiple campuses. Sources of resilience identified across these studies include support from family and friends, finding balance among multiple personal and professional roles, and drawing energy from involvement in activism on an important cause. This study builds on this work through a focus on LGBT advocacy in a religiously affiliated university setting.

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study is grounded in Kezar and Lester's (2011) model of grassroots leadership in higher education. Grassroots leadership is defined as the process of influencing change from the bottom-up: Grassroots leaders are organizational members who do not hold formal positions of authority and typically do not have direct control over effecting change. Resilience is thus critical to supporting grassroots leaders' efforts to influence change as they encounter power dynamics from campus authorities intended to deter their change efforts, which results in the frustration and discouragement that resilience can help overcome (Kezar & Lester, 2011).

For purposes of this study, I conceptualize faculty and staff working to improve the LGBT climate at a Jesuit university as grassroots leaders, not only because they lack positional authority within the university but also because they lack authority in relation to the university's Catholic identity. Given the potential for conflict arising from the tension between the university's Catholic affiliation and LGBT advocacy (Maher, 2003), the grassroots leadership framework would then be appropriate for this context, given its focus on less confrontational tactics. This model is also especially relevant for this study because it frames grassroots leaders as tempered radicals (Meyerson, 2008): people who value their position within the organization yet simultaneously seek to resist the status quo and influence change on an important issue. Many faculty and staff choose to work at religiously affiliated universities because of their own faith commitments, whether Catholic-identified or not, and their commitment to LGBT advocacy may be directly informed and supported by the values cultivated through their religious affiliations.

Methods

Given the focus of this study on the process by which people construct meaning of adverse experiences, I grounded this study within a constructivist interpretive framework (Patton, 2015). A constructivist framework assumes knowledge is socially constructed by individuals; thus knowledge about reality arises from areas of consensus among individual constructions. As a result, a qualitative methodology was best suited for the design of this study (Creswell, 2013), and specifically I selected a case study approach because of my research interest in a contemporary phenomenon set within its real-world context (Yin, 2014). Case studies are valuable for understanding the influence of a specific situation or context on a process (Creswell, 2013), and are useful for testing and extending theory (Yin, 2014). Although case study findings are intentionally context-specific, these findings lead to analytic generalizations that can be transferrable to other contexts (Yin, 2014).

The setting for this case study is Chardin University (a pseudonym), a small, master's comprehensive, Jesuit university located in a mid-sized city. I selected a Jesuit university for this study because the unique manner in which they have made advances on LGBT issues (Spencer, 2013), while maintaining their affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church, would provide both successful and unsuccessful examples of LGBT advocacy, especially among long-serving staff and faculty. I selected Chardin for this study as it represents a *typical* case among the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the country (Yin, 2014): The university is not located in an urban center, which could make the university appealing to LGBT students and employees, but also because the university offers LGBT campus resources provided by many Jesuit universities, such as an LGBT student organization, an LGBT-inclusive nondiscrimination policy, and an LGBT campus resource office (Hughes, 2015).

Data Sample

This case study is drawn from a larger study on grassroots leadership at Chardin University, including faculty, staff, students, and administrators (Hughes, 2015); this particular article focuses on the ways faculty and staff grassroots leaders cultivate the resilience needed to remain committed to improving the LGBT campus climate. Participants were recruited using criterion and snowball sampling methods (Creswell, 2013). I first contacted and invited faculty and staff at Chardin I knew prior to the study and then, through these initial participants, requested introductions to other grassroots leaders on campus. Participants were also recruited via flyers distributed around campus through student affairs offices and campus e-mail listservs.

The sample includes 13 staff members, 16 faculty members, and two long-serving administrators who were identified as having employed grassroots leadership. Eight of the staff members were directly employed in student affairs and one previously worked in a student affairs role. Eight faculty and six staff members identified as a sexual minority (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, or queer); five faculty members, eight staff members, and one administrator identified as Catholic. Five LGBQ participants identified as Catholic, and three identified with a non-Christian faith. See Table 1 for a profile of the participants.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with participants during late summer and mid-fall 2014. Interviews lasted approximately an hour in length, and one major section of these interviews focused on participants' sources of resilience in their work. Participants were asked questions like, "Where do you find resilience in order to remain committed to your change efforts?" Interviews were then transcribed verbatim for use in analysis and coding.

Table 1

List of Participants by Pseudonym

Pseudonym	Sexual orientation	Gender Group[*]	Student Affairs
Staff members			
Jesse	Bisexual	Woman	X
Tom	Straight	Man	X
Kyle	Homosexual	Man	X
Sebastian	Heterosexual	Man	X
Ariel	Heterosexual	Woman	X
Brandon	Gay	Man	X
Tammy	Heterosexual	Woman	X
Zachary	Heterosexual	Man	
Ben	Gay	Man	
Hannah	Straight	Woman	
Claire	Heterosexual	Woman	
Liz	Heterosexual	Woman	
Emily	Pansexual	Woman	
Faculty			
Lola	Straight	Woman	
Samantha	Lesbian	Woman	
Aubrey	Bisexual	Woman	
Grace	Heterosexual	Woman	
Olivia	Heterosexual	Woman	
Joy	Bisexual	Woman	
Naomi	Straight	Woman	
Matthew	Heterosexual	Man	
Paul	Heterosexual	Man	
Anthony	Heterosexual	Man	
Monica	Bisexual	Woman	
Lee Ann	Lesbian	Woman	
Margaret	Heterosexual	Woman	
Lilian	Lesbian	Woman	
Barbara	Queer	Woman	
Kevin	Gay	Man	
Administrators			
Esther	Heterosexual	Woman	
William	Heterosexual	Man	

*All participants identified as cisgender.

Data Analysis

First, an *a priori* codebook was developed based on the study's conceptual framework to point to elements of grassroots leadership, including intrinsic and extrinsic sources of resilience. Next, transcripts were stripped of identifying information through the assignment of pseudonyms and uploaded into MaxQDA qualitative analysis software for organization and analysis. Interviews were read several times to identify emergent codes, and then all interviews were coded using the refined codebook in a manner open to capturing emergent themes. To ensure coding consistency, I maintained and refined definitions for each code within the codebook, and, after all transcripts were coded, I double-checked the coding of the first 10 transcripts and examined all data within each code.

To aid in my analysis, I extracted data into matrices to display data within each theme (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), especially for the process of clustering participants with similar responses, to paint a more detailed portrait of the manner by which participants cultivated resilience. Matrices were also useful for exploring potential cross-case syntheses to see if responses differed by participant groups, such as religiosity or campus constituency group (e.g., faculty, staff).

To ensure trustworthiness of my analysis, I paid heed to issues of consistency, transferability, and credibility (Merriam, 2009). Consistency was maintained through the development of a case study database to organize all study documentation and to maintain an audit trail of steps taken throughout the research process. Transferability was assured through the use of thick description throughout my write-up of the study findings. Credibility was ensured through member-checking, allowing participants to review their interview transcripts as well as early drafts of my findings to confirm my representation of their statements reflected their meanings and interpretations of their experiences.

As the researcher is the primary instrument for analysis in qualitative research, I maintained reflexivity throughout the process by critically reflecting on my own positionality. I approached this study as an *inside-outsider* (Patton, 2015). Because I hold undergraduate and graduate degrees from Catholic universities, my *inside* knowledge of Catholic higher education helped me cultivate rapport with participants in a way that someone with less experience with Catholic education might not, but I was an *outsider* with respect to the community with which I conducted this study. I also identify as openly gay and Roman Catholic, both of which aided my development of rapport with study participants and informed my understanding of the issues at hand in this study. Maintaining an awareness of these experiences during data collection and analysis allowed me to be reflexive with respect to the potential for bias shading my data collection and interpretation, keeping me focused on participants' accounts and meanings.

Limitations

A primary limitation of this study is that this analysis is a secondary analysis of a set of data collected for a different, broader purpose: Resilience was a minor focus of the overall project. An explicit focus on resilience may have produced a richer dataset on this particular topic but having access to the broader dataset from the full case study allowed me to better contextualize and situate participants' experiences to this specific sub-focus of our interviews. My position with regard to my familiarity with Catholic higher education, as well as with several participants in this study, is a potential secondary limitation. Although my positionality was critical to gaining access to and rapport with participants, a researcher with less familiarity with the setting or the participants may have identified other aspects of the case or phenomenon of interest as novel that I may have been sensitized not to notice.

<center>Findings</center>

Participants relied on various sources of resilience in order to remain committed to their grassroots efforts to improve the climate at Chardin for the LGBT community. These sources of resilience helped them persevere in spite of both the LGBT climate itself as well as power dynamics exercised by influential organizational actors in resistance to their grassroots efforts.

Campus Climate

Most participants described the climate as generally welcoming, but longer-serving participants commented on how the climate had changed over time. Two participants in particular worked at Chardin for several decades and witnessed a great deal of change in the climate experienced by the campus LGBT community. Lilian, who identifies as lesbian, described how attitudes toward the LGBT community shifted in two important ways, from being repressed, to becoming a political flashpoint, to finally being embraced:

> When I first came, I would say most of that community was pretty underground. [Then under the previous administration], that was just such a difficult period to even describe. It really polarized faculty. People who would describe themselves as liberal religious found themselves being allies with people who were probably agnostic and non-religious, but didn't want to have anything to do with [what the former administration] was selling. ... After that, it was just very much more open and relaxed. The whole environment of the university had changed.

Participants generally perceived the climate as welcoming, but more recently hired LGBQ faculty and staff spoke about personal concerns regarding their safety on campus. Kevin, a faculty member who identifies as gay, stated, "I came in, and it became clear that my chair was rather homophobic ... even if that threat is real, or just perceived and not real, it really influences in a negative way. That's what for me felt like I was back in the closet." His situation improved after his chair left the university. Emily, a staff member, faced an incident where a colleague issued a complaint with her dean over a post on social media about being polyamorous. Her dean assured her, "Okay, you and I both know I have absolutely no problem with this. What you do in your own personal time is your own personal time, and frankly, you're happy, so I don't give a shit." Emily was pleased she had the dean's full support but also recognized that another dean may not have been as sympathetic. Even though the overall climate seems to be fairly welcoming, incidents such as these are still a present concern at Chardin.

Power Dynamics

Since homophobia and heterosexism remain present at Chardin, grassroots leaders engaged in a number of tactics to address the climate, including professional development programs such as a Safe Space program, events and speakers to provide opportunities for intellectual engagement, inclusion of LGBT topics in the curriculum, and campus resources such as an LGBT center. Participants encountered a number of power dynamics from internal and external actors exercised in opposition to their efforts. Faculty recalled several instances under previous university leadership where speakers and events on gender and sexuality were cancelled out of concern for the university's Catholic image, such as whether *The Vagina Monologues* could be performed on campus, a common source of controversy at Catholic universities. Silencing behaviors have become far less common, but less overt controlling behaviors persist at Chardin. One of these is a requirement to have a Jesuit priest involved with any LGBT programming to respond to concerns pertaining to the university's Catholic identity. This requirement began as a tactic to address resistance, but, as Matthew, a faculty member, described, "We have to have a Catholic priest around to deliver a 'balanced message.' Other student groups can

have people come in and say things that you know are not LGBT-inclusive, and we haven't had to have someone else in the room to give a 'balanced message.'"

Staff and administrators did not experience power dynamics to the same extent as faculty, as staff were less likely to employ confrontational tactics. Two long-serving administrators, William and Esther, described power dynamics they had experienced under previous university administrations. These included controlling behaviors, such as when William was denied approval to apply for grant funding from an LGBT foundation, and intimidation, as Esther experienced when she was given a copy of the Catechism because "a former director of campus ministry was concerned about how my programming was maybe not in alignment with Catholic doctrine." Even though these experiences are increasingly rare, staff members like Tammy still encountered fairly benign, but nonetheless frustrating, resistance. She had laid a t-shirt with a pro-LGBT message on the back of a chair in her cubicle, and her supervisor at the time asked her to put it away as "she didn't want any employers or students to be offended." Her current supervisor, on the other hand, encouraged her to attend Safe Space training and post the placard at her cubicle.

A second source of power dynamics were external constituents who hold influence over university governance. As a private university, these constituents include alumni, a major source of philanthropic support, who express disagreement with activities they perceive to conflict with the university's Catholic identity, like an article in a university publication that featured an openly lesbian, married faculty member. Even more influential is the local bishop, as he is tasked with mediating the university's standing as a Catholic-affiliated institution. In the Catholic hierarchy, a bishop is an ordained leader who oversees a diocese or archdiocese, and all Catholic institutions located therein, and serves as a representative of the Church (Catholic Church, 1994). Many faculty participants pointed to a recent event where the bishop intervened to cancel a speaker he perceived had come to campus to promote marriage equality. As a compromise, Grace proclaimed, "It was agreed that the bishop's letter [on marriage] would be printed and handed out to everybody as they came in. I was very upset about that because it was the [LGBT] students who were put in that position. This is organized self-hate!" She and other faculty felt his concerns were unwarranted, as the speaker came to share her personal story, not for political advocacy.

Sources of Resilience

In the face of these conditions, participants relied on multiple sources of resilience that provided them the resources to persevere in their efforts to influence change. Three major themes regarding the process by which participants' resilience was cultivated were identified in this study. These themes include reframing adversity through self-authorship, self-efficacy through making a difference, and relying on support networks.

Reframing adversity through self-authorship. The ability to mentally reframe experiences of adversity into opportunities for growth was cited by several participants as a key source of resilience. Reframing adversity required reliance on one's "inner voice" in a manner suggestive of self-authorship, or "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations" (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 269). Three participants specifically cited reframing as an important process they used to sustain their commitment to change efforts, especially those like William, who had been engaged in advocacy at Chardin for several years: "I've been doing this a long time. I've seen a lot of shit. My resilience is around believing that shit is compost, and that compost is fertilizer, and that fertilizer will help things grow." For both William and Esther, reframing helped them become better administrators, as they reflected on these adverse encounters as learning opportunities. Self-authorship was most evident,

though, in participants' descriptions of reliance on their faith systems or spirituality as a source of resilience.

Many participants found practicing their faith to be an important source of resilience, either through prayer and reflection or as operating frameworks through which to reframe adverse experiences. Self-authorship was most evident in the manner in which Catholic participants resolved the tension between Church teachings and their personal stance toward LGBT rights. Kevin and Lilian, who identify as Catholic and LGBQ, joined faith communities whose practices reflected Catholic tradition but were outside formal Catholic communities. Kevin chose to join an Episcopal congregation because "I've been looking for a faith community that would support me. I have struggled here. Some have been overtly negative; you just don't feel that welcomed. At [my church], they are extremely welcoming, inclusive of a wide variety of people." Self-authorship allowed participants to transcend the tensions encountered in addressing LGBT issues at Chardin by appealing to a well-defined personal set of values.

Self-efficacy through making a difference. A second process that cultivated participants' resilience was their sense of self-efficacy to effect change on LGBT issues. One of the grassroots leadership tactics employed by faculty and staff was mentoring and supporting LGBT students. For several student affairs participants, observing these students' growth and development, confirmed participants' ability to make a difference on campus. Sebastian, a student affairs practitioner, told the story of a gay student he helped overcome personal challenges:

> What a moment to be celebrated—graduated from a Jesuit university, someone who had very tough experiences [here] but now is out there, working for a not-for-profit—and he will be a prophetic voice. I can rest assured he will be an agent of change. I trust that that student is going to be a living witness to what we are about.

Two faculty members also spoke about being able to assess their impact through the experiences of former students, including Olivia, who had been central to efforts to measure and address the climate on campus. She recounted what one of her students reflected back to her about the ways the LGBT campus climate had changed:

> What my graduate assistant said to me at the beginning of this semester was so refreshing. I'm surprised how much I draw from [the fact] that he feels like the campus has changed. And not that I think I've been the catalyst for that—I think that I played maybe a small role, but I'm not trying to take any credit for it. But the fact that somebody comes in and says things do change makes a big difference.

Self-efficacy in making a difference also reaffirms one's sense of vocation for education, which contributes to resilience. Margaret, a faculty member, rated helping others as her ultimate professional goal as a professor, calling it "life-giving work." Tammy, a staff member, described, "When [LGBT students] come in, and they just sit down and smile and say, 'Things are so much better now,' or whatever, it's like, all right, this is good. This feels good. This is where I'm supposed to be right now." These experiences then lay the foundation for involvement in further LGBT advocacy.

Relying on support networks. Support networks of colleagues and friends were a critical source of resilience because they provided participants a sense of community at work and outside the university. Aubrey and Naomi, both faculty members, felt their circles of friends were critical because of their shared commitment to social justice issues. Liz and Tammy, who both work in student affairs, provided examples of the support received from their colleagues, such as the consideration Tammy's supervisor gave her when she needed time off to help her openly gay son through a crisis. Matthew, a faculty member, and Tom, a student affairs practitioner, identified their

broader professional networks as critical. Olivia described one of her colleagues as a role model from whom she drew inspiration, while Grace recalled:

> Once people started to arrive here on the faculty who were identified as feminist … we're reading the same books—you've read some of the books I've already read. It was just really so reassuring that I'm not out here by myself, but there are these other people doing this kind of work.

In spite of the positive benefits of relying on colleagues and friends, Naomi expressed concern that surrounding herself with like-minded colleagues may also affect her perception of social problems: "I feel like I'm so in a bubble. . . sometimes I worry that's all I see and so I start to minimize the problems that really exist." She recognized she needed a balance of perspective between support from her colleagues and friends and awareness of social issues: "My friends are what keep me tethered, and then injustices are what make me want to continue the fight."

Family members, including parents, spouses/partners, and children, were another important source of resilience for participants. Ben, Samantha, Joy, and Hannah indicated partner or spousal support as an important source of resilience, and Hannah even received a text of encouragement from her husband during our interview. Lee Ann's new girlfriend was an important source of support since Lee Ann's recent divorce, and Emily, who is polyamorous, identified her broader family unit, or her "pod," saying, "My pod dinner night: family dinner is hugely important to me. I would say, about three times a month, we all get together and we bullshit and we talk. And it's wonderful, and it's awesome." Claire pointed to her children as a source of resilience because her involvement in LGBT issues contributes to a campus environment more supportive for them:

> Knowing that someday they may be walking onto a campus, whether it's this one or another one, and however they're going to identify, or whatever their orientation is, when they figure out who they are and how they want to be in the world, I want them to find it a welcoming place. I don't want them to find their dorm room door defaced—I want them to find love, and I want them to find it in the best possible environment. And so knowing that whatever I can do now to create that environment then, every day, that's the goal.

Participants thus did not solely cultivate their resilience independently but rather through both internal processes as well as reliance on social support networks.

Discussion

The purpose of this article was to examine the sources of resilience staff and faculty grassroots leaders at one Jesuit, Catholic university—Chardin University—relied on to sustain their commitment to improving the LGBT climate on campus. The findings demonstrated how reframing adversity through self-authorship, developing self-efficacy by making a difference, and relying on support networks all contributed to participants' resilience.

The proposed connection between self-authorship and resilience may be the most important contribution of this study. Seery (2011) argued resilience was developed through a process of meaning-making to cope with adversity, but no research has yet postulated the role of meaning-making capacity in this process. Participants' experiences appeared to demonstrate a capacity for self-authorship is crucial: Cultivation of one's "inner voice" requires the ability to integrate multiple, often competing, sets of values (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Thus a person's inner voice allows them to reframe adverse situations into opportunities for development, like how Esther and William found adversity tested them in ways that made them better administrators. Findings from previous research are suggestive of the role of self-authorship in cultivating resilience; new teachers in urban K–12 schools also rely on their sense of personal values and/or vocation to sustain their commitment to their work (Hong, 2012;

Patterson et al., 2004; Stanford, 2001). In this study, self-authored faith in particular helped participants integrate their personal support for LGBT rights with their faith commitments.

Self-efficacy also appears to be developed during this period of recovery after an adverse experience, aiding in the cultivation of resilience (Seery, 2011). Self-efficacy reflects one's perception of their ability to perform the tasks necessary to achieve a desired goal (Bandura, 1977, 1997), and in this study, several participants mentioned observing the difference they made confirmed their sense they were able to influence change. Hong (2012) also found self-efficacy to be an important factor contributing to the resilience of K–12 teachers: those with lower self-efficacy expressed lower confidence in their ability to teach and were more likely to leave the profession within their first five years. These findings regarding self-authorship and self-efficacy should be tested in future research to confirm their contributions to resilience.

This study also lends further support for Gu and Day's (2007) argument that sources of resilience may not be able to be reduced into discrete intrinsic or extrinsic categories. Reframing adverse experiences is an intrinsic source of resilience but also involves participants' support networks—people rely on their family, friends, and colleagues to make sense of stress at work (Astin & Leland, 1991). Support networks aid in the development of self-efficacy or self-authorship by reinforcing a person's inner voice through strengthening their core values, especially within LGBT-supportive faith communities (similar to Stanford, 2001). I do not mean to conclude Kezar and Lester's (2011) or Herrman et al.'s (2011) categorizations are meaningless, but resilience is built through the interaction of internal and environmental factors. In this sense this study responds to popular perspectives on resilience, especially those regarding "grit," which emphasize the individual dimensions of the construct (Gray, 2015; Sehgal, 2015): Resilience does not develop in isolation.

Implications

These findings hold important implications for student affairs and faculty grassroots leaders alike and for academic leaders concerned with increasing campus capacity for leadership through cultivating grassroots efforts. Campus leaders need to be willing to allow the organization to change. Participants at Chardin noted university leadership was especially influential, as the current administration was more willing than previous administrations to support their efforts and even stand up to resistance from external constituents. Resilience is already necessary for longer term advocacy work such as addressing the LGBT campus climate; navigating institutional power dynamics adds further psychological strain.

LGBT advocates at Catholic and other religiously affiliated universities will likely face resistance given the perception that LGBT rights conflict with religious teachings (Maher, 2003; Wolff & Himes, 2010). Previous studies have shown that external constituents, especially alumni and benefactors, can be a barrier to LGBT organizing on Catholic campuses due to these stakeholders' investment in the university's Catholic identity (Love, 1998). University leaders may therefore be cautious to support activities that could threaten sources of revenue. As a result, grassroots leaders will need to employ more covert tactics to mitigate resistance to their efforts and limit their exposure to adversity (Meyerson, 2008).

Tenured faculty tend to be in the best position to start building these networks because they enjoy academic freedom, even at Catholic universities (Pope John Paul II, 1990), and tenure protects their employment status to a greater extent than their staff colleagues. At Chardin, faculty grassroots leaders were the most vocal on issues of gender and sexuality and engaged in more confrontational tactics such as organizing speakers and other events. As faculty make themselves visible on campus as LGBT advocates, staff and students have a greater sense of who their allies are in terms of building networks of support.

Staff participants in the study, as well as faculty, also indicated relying on like-minded colleagues through their broader professional networks, especially professional associations. These networks provide an important source of support to strengthen their resilience and serve as channels for information on new approaches to LGBT advocacy on campus. Encouraging staff to cultivate formal and informal professional networks allows them to draw on psychological resources necessary to persevere in their change efforts.

Central to resilience, though, appears to be the development of self-authorship. Self-authorship helps individuals make sense of seemingly contradictory situations in life, such as the tension posed when addressing the needs of LGBT students on religiously affiliated campuses. Navigating this tension may provide the type of challenge that requires self-authoring, and involvement in campus and professional networks offers the support necessary to make the shift to internal meaning-making (Baxter Magolda, 2008). Participants relied on their ability to self-author to reconcile their support for LGBT rights with their commitments to Catholic and other faith traditions, as well as to make sense of their encounters with organizational power dynamics to become more effective campus advocates. Self-authorship helped provide participants with a coherent set of values that transcended the ideological tensions they navigated. Graduate preparation and professional development could also provide structured opportunities for staff and faculty to cultivate a sense of self-authorship through engaging students with these types of dilemmas.

This study raises several questions to be addressed in future research. First, the relationship between self-authorship and resilience should be tested and established. Previous research indicated that meaning-making is essential for resilience, but further elaboration in relation to epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development is necessary. Second, this study should be expanded to other types of Catholic and sectarian universities: LGBT issues may be more readily addressed in a Jesuit university setting than in other settings, which would add depth to what we know about how grassroots LGBT advocates remain resilient. Finally, grassroots leaders and campus activists remain active addressing a number of issues facing higher education communities, such as racial justice, immigrant rights, and universal design. Future research using a grassroots leadership lens could uncover both the visible and invisible work of our colleagues engaged in resistance against oppression.

Conclusion

Sustained resistance to anti-LGBT oppression on a Catholic campus is psychologically taxing. In addition, when critical incidents occur, such as the recent Orlando nightclub massacre that claimed the lives of 50 primarily Latinx LGBT individuals, members of targeted communities may feel a heightened sense of despair and/or fear, especially on campuses where they already feel vulnerable. Cultivating a sense of resilience is critical for grassroots leaders intending to influence change toward an LGBT-inclusive climate at religiously affiliated universities. This study explored the experiences of faculty and student affairs staff at one Jesuit, Catholic university working to improve the climate for the LGBT community on campus. By relying on their various sources of resilience, these everyday campus leaders sustained their commitment to addressing persistent issues faced by their LGBT colleagues and students, contributing to a more welcoming, diverse learning environment.

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