

e-Research: A Journal of Undergraduate Work

Volume 1
Number 3 Vol 1, No 3 (2010)

Article 3

September 2014

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

Maria Claudia Brena

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/e-Research>

 Part of the [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies Commons](#), and the [Sexuality and the Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brena, Maria Claudia (2014) "The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County," *e-Research: A Journal of Undergraduate Work*: Vol. 1: No. 3, Article 3.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/e-Research/vol1/iss3/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in e-Research: A Journal of Undergraduate Work by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.

e-Research: A Journal of Undergraduate Work, Vol 1, No 3 (2010)

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [LOGIN](#) [REGISTER](#) [SEARCH](#) [CURRENT](#) [ARCHIVES](#)

[Home](#) > [Vol 1, No 3 \(2010\)](#) > [Brena](#)

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

Maria Claudia Brena

Key words, terms, names, concepts: California Proposition 8, Prop 8; same-sex marriage, gay marriage; Orange County; LGBT rights movement, LGBT community; stigma; boundary construction.

Introduction

Proposition 8 was a California ballot initiative that banned same-sex marriage in November of 2008. The issue of same-sex marriage is usually framed in the media as a political and cultural battle where the two opposing sides argue about the legal and cultural repercussions of the recognition of same-sex unions for same-sex relationships and society. Rather than focusing on the legal implications of the Proposition 8 campaign and its outcome, this paper addresses the campaign's effects in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County. During the campaign many LGBTs became politically active for the first time in their lives, but it was after the passage of Proposition 8 when several LGBT rights organizations were founded and there were a greater number of people who became politically involved. I hypothesize that the Proposition 8 campaign was a socializing process that raised the LGBT community's awareness of social stigma towards the LGBT identity. Political action was a coping mechanism for many LGBTs who saw their actions as means to better their social status. As a result, the campaign shaped the identity and the structure of the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County.

Immediately after the passage of Proposition 8, the LGBT rights movement saw an immense growth in the level of activism in California and the United States. For weeks after the 2008 elections LGBTs and their allies organized protests, rallies, marches and candlelight vigils. Many organizations were formed with the immediate goal to repeal Proposition 8 and the long-term mission to fight discrimination against the LGBT community. Since then, Marriage Equality organizations have empowered activists by training them in the tools of political organizing. All of the political activities in which the LGBT community engaged after the passage of Proposition 8, strengthened the bonds and brought new people into the LGBT rights movement. My experience with Proposition 8 sparked an interest in the topic of my research. While observing others and having an experience of my own, I wondered what this campaign meant for other LGBTs and the LGBT community, and why many felt the need to organize after Proposition 8 passed and not before it passed.

Literature Review

Most of the literature found on the impact of same-sex marriage campaigns focuses on their psychological consequences for LGBT individuals. In "Marriage Amendments and Psychological Distress in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adults" (Rotosky et al. 2009), the authors used an online survey to study minority stress and psychological distress in LGBs after the November 2006 elections. During these elections nine states had marriage amendments on the ballot that restricted marriage to the union of one man and one woman and excluded same-sex couples. According to this study "participants living in states that passed a marriage amendment reported significantly more minority stress (i.e., exposure to negative media messages and negative conversations, negative amendment-related affect, and LGB activism) and higher levels of psychological distress (negative affect, stress, and depressive symptoms) than participants living in the other states"(Rotosky et. al. 2009). In this study, it is argued that campaigns on marriage-amendments create an environment with negative psychological outcomes for LGB

M. C. Brena

individuals. During political campaigns seeking to limit the rights of LGBs, the rhetoric used reinforces stereotypes by using "depravity narratives" (2009) in language and imagery that vilify gays and lesbians.

After the November 2008 elections, Marriage Equality USA conducted a survey to determine the impact of the campaign and the passage of Propositions 8 on the LGBT community. Unlike the literature in psychology, this study was open to transgender and intersex individuals. According to the survey:

- LGBTI people experience increased verbal abuse, homophobia, physical harm and other discrimination associated with or resulting from the Prop 8 campaign.
- Children of same-sex couples express fear due to direct exposure to homophobia and hate and concerns that the passage of Prop 8 means they could be taken from their families and targeted for further violence;
- LGBTI youth and their supporters experience increased bullying at schools as Prop 8's passage fosters a supportive environment for homophobic acts of physical and emotional violence;
- Straight allies experience the impact of homophobia firsthand and express shock and fear for their LGBTI family members and friends and the danger they may experience if they were perceived as gay or an ally;
- Families are torn apart as relatives divide on Prop 8; and
- Communities are destroyed from the aftermath of abusive behavior towards them during local street demonstrations, neighborhood divisions, and the impact of "knowing your neighbor" voted against your family.

Results from the psychological studies of same-sex marriage campaigns and the data obtained by Marriage Equality USA resemble elements of the concept of "stigma". In the book *Stigma* by Erving Goffman (1963), the author defines stigma as an "attribute that is deeply discrediting". Goffman argues that an individual possessing stigma is exposed to varieties of discrimination through which his or her life chances are reduced. In "Conceptualizing Stigma" (2009), Link and Phelan argue that:

"Stigma exists when the following interrelated components converge. In the first component, people distinguish and label human differences. In the second, dominant cultural beliefs link labeled persons to undesirable characteristics-to negative stereotypes. In the third, labeled persons are placed in distinct categories so as to accomplish some degree of separation of "us" from "them." In the fourth, labeled persons experience status loss and discrimination that lead to unequal outcomes. Finally, stigmatization is entirely contingent on access to social, economic, and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories, and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion, and discrimination"(2009).

According to Goffman, stigmatized people tend to gather in small social groups in order to provide support for each other (1963). Those who fall within a category of stigma can refer to each other as a group. The rhetoric and messages shared in these groups shape and define the ideology of the stigmatized identity. Their communication methods voice the complaints, aspirations and the politics of the group and define friends and enemies (1963).

The way in which the identity of a stigmatized group is created resembles the process of identity construction of social movements. According to Gamson, "Collective action cannot occur in the absence of a "we" characterized by common traits and a specific solidarity. Equally indispensable is the identification of the "other" to which can be

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

attributed the responsibility for the actor's condition and against which the mobilization is called" (Gamson 1992). The identity of a group is not only defined by the interactions within the group. It is necessary for the group to have boundaries (1999). Collective identity emerges "out of interactions with a number of different audiences (bystanders, allies, opponents, news media, state authorities)" (2009). To this list Porta and Diani would add "institutions, sympathetic and hostile social groups and public opinion" (1999). In this process, boundaries between the actors engaged in conflict are defined. In the concept of stigma by Link and Phelan, the third component of stigma is the separation of "us" (the stigmatized) v. "them" (those with power and willingness to stigmatize) (2009). According to Goffman, the stigmatized find two sets of sympathetic others: those who share the stigma (the own) and those who are given "courtesy membership" in the group (the wise). Thus, the process of stigma and the process of identity construction of social movements share with each other the interactions and boundaries between their social actors.

According to social movement literature, when individuals share bonds "solidaristic behavior is a reasonable expectation" (Polletta and Jasper 2009). They share the feeling of being part of a reality much "vaster and more complex" than their direct experience. "It is in reference to this wider community that the actor draws motivation and encouragement to action, even when the field of concrete opportunities seems limited and there is a sense of strong isolation" (1999). Identity production is an essential feature of collective action. "A person whose life is intertwined with the group [through friendship, kinship, organizational membership, informal support networks, or shared relations with outsiders] ... has a big stake in the group's fate. When collective action is urgent, the person is likely to contribute his or her share even if the impact of that share is not noticeable" (Fireman and Gamson 1979, in Polletta and Jasper 2009).

One of the ways to cope with stigma is to seek "acceptance" or "to remove stigma from the differentness" (2009). This becomes a political objective, and hence requires for the group of stigmatized people to advocate for their identity. In a psychological study, Russell and Richards (2003) found that "placing the anti-LGB campaign within a larger and longer term political perspective may have helped respondents to focus on their own efforts and contributions to social change rather than to personalize the events. This broader perspective appeared to reduce feelings of isolation and open the way to collective action. Political participation can provide a sense of community that can assuage the negative feelings of minority stress." Stigmatized groups will use resources available to them in order to resist being stigmatized (1963).

Methodology

The methodology used in this paper includes the use of qualitative research-participant observation and interviews; interview questions are presented in Appendix A. My observations informed the process of creating a set of questions for the interviews I would later perform. My experience with the LGBT community began in the fall of 2008 as a class assignment for a Social Movements class. Since then I have made many acquaintances by participating in rallies and attending support and advocacy group meetings with LGBTs and heterosexual allies from the Orange County area. I was also part of support groups for LGBTs and their families and Gay- Straight alliances. While there was an advocacy component to these groups, many of their members did not participate in political action. Their emphasis was on providing emotional support and raising awareness of LGBT issues. My involvement put me in a position of trust with most of the participants in this research.

My intent was to interview people who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or, the more general term, queer. The requirements were that they had to have lived in Orange County during the campaign in November of 2008. They did not have to be politically involved. I interviewed people both in social support groups and LGBT political advocacy groups so I would get responses from non-activists as well as activists. I started my interview by asking a very open-ended question such as: "What are your feelings towards proposition 8?" Then, I asked questions regarding their social environments and how they were affected by Proposition 8. The social environments I considered were school, workplace, nuclear and extended family, city, county and LGBT community. In the case of activists, I asked about reasons for political participation and the impact of this process. My questions also involved LGBTs perceptions of the "Yes on 8" campaign and its supporters.

M. C. Brena

I chose to narrow the geographical area of my study to the Orange County area based on my observation of the movement. I observed that activists who belonged to organizations were from all areas of Orange County. The most prominent organizations in Orange County are the Orange County Equality Coalition, Equality California-Orange County Chapter and Team Courage OC from the Courage Campaign. All these organizations were founded after the passage of Proposition 8. Although Orange County is in close proximity with West Hollywood (a popular LGBT-friendly area in Los Angeles County), I chose to conduct my research in Orange County since it is more socially conservative and had more "Yes on 8" visibility than "No on 8". Popular LGBT areas are less representative of the U.S. than Orange County.

My intent was to have a diverse sample in terms of race, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression and religion. This diversity would show the interactions between different social identities within the LGBT community.

My interviews lasted from 1 hour to two hours. My interviewees signed consent forms that allowed me to record their voices. I also took notes. Since I was dealing with a sensitive subject, I informed my interviewees that they could stop the interview at any time or not respond to a question if it made them uncomfortable.

Data and Discussion

Participant Observation

My involvement with the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County began as part of an assignment for a sociology class in Social Movements. My classmates and I decided to study the LGBT rights movement and to research PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Gays and Lesbians). We attended some of their meetings at a local church. We also attended meetings hosted by the Chapman University Queer Straight Alliance. In the case of PFLAG, emotional support was provided not only to LGBT members but also to their families. In both groups coming out stories and Proposition 8 were topics of discussion. Personal stories were intertwined with the history of the group, creating a personal L, G, B, or T identity linked to the LGBT collective identity. Through attending these meetings we discovered that both groups functioned as support groups as well as advocacy organizations. Before Proposition 8 passed, these were the kinds of resources available to LGBT rights activists. Some organizations that combined support and advocacy were The Center in Orange County, a chapter of the Human Rights Campaign and PFLAG. After the elections, Orange County organizations that focused solely on LGBT rights began to emerge. They will be discussed later in this paper.

Before Proposition 8 passed, I attended several rallies that were organized by small LGBT-supportive churches, democrat organizations and individuals. A volunteer's job consisted of waving "No on 8" signs while standing on the sidewalk. People who attended were gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and also heterosexual. Those belonging to the LGBT community often brought along their heterosexual friends, relatives, children or pets. But there were heterosexual people who participated in rallies on their own. While talking to rally participants of different ages I discovered that young LGBTs found it hard to believe that they had to rally for the right to get married. Older LGBTs found it outrageous too but at the same time, they had a greater appreciation of marriage being an option. For older LGBTs the idea of protesting this marriage proposition was a small setback, but it also signified the progress that the LGBT community had made during their lives.

During the rallies, volunteers received support from people driving by in their cars. They honked and smiled. Some of them waved signs of support out the window. Volunteers cheered and found encouragement in these types of gestures. When some volunteers left, they usually drove by and honked to the volunteers that remained at the rally. People discussed how they heard about the event, and their reasons to be there and to support marriage equality. These rallies and the positive interaction among volunteers shaped the ideology of the movement and reinforced the sense of belonging to a larger community.

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

In contrast, the negative responses that volunteers encountered when interacting with the opposition shaped the way in which the "Yes on 8" campaign was perceived. During rallies, people from all ages waved "Yes on 8" signs from their cars and yelled "Yes on 8!". People often used derogatory terms to refer to LGBT people, assuming that we were all LGBT regardless of the presence of straight allies. In the beginning I was shocked by the level of anger that people exhibited towards us. I was also astounded by the regularity by which these events occurred. But after attending several rallies, the use of pejorative words against rally attendants became commonplace. Since many of these interactions were charged with homophobia or stereotypes towards LGBTs, the campaign was perceived to be anti-LGBT in nature.

Many rally attendants shared stories about their encounters with the opposition. A woman told me she had been spat on by someone in a car that passed by next to her. I also witnessed similar situations. Once I was at a rally and a man drove very close to where I was standing. He threw plastic or metal discs at us with quotes from the Bible inscribed on them. Many of us were scared because we did not know what he was throwing, but cheered after he got pulled over by a cop who had witnessed his actions. References to the Bible were often used by the opposition when expressing their disagreement with the rally participants. This interaction helped to characterize the opposition as people who opposed same-sex marriage on religious grounds.

As I attended more rallies, I developed a connection with other participants. Even if I had not met them before the rally, if they were verbally attacked, I felt attacked as well. The occurrence of one single act of discrimination would bring up a string of negative events in my mind that did not only extend to my own experiences but encompassed the experiences that other rally participants had told me. As the campaign progressed, any "Yes on 8" sign felt like a direct attack even if it was passively standing in front of someone's house. It can be assumed that other people disliked the signs since "Yes on 8" signs were constantly stolen.

During the campaign I noticed that there were several religious groups that contributed to the "No on 8" campaign, whether it was by organizing a rally or lending their space for a phone-bank. I found it surprising that many faith communities accepted homosexuality, supported same-sex marriages and celebrated same-sex unions. Many LGBTs found this surprising as well because they had grown up in more social conservative churches or had no religious upbringing. During the campaign, I went back to Catholic Church. One of the few times I attended, the priest recommended that the congregants voted "Yes on 8" in order to "protect the institution of marriage and the family". There was a popular belief in the LGBT community that the Catholic Church and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints contributed to the "Yes on 8" campaign financially as well as providing a structure for the "Yes on 8" campaign. After the elections, I found one protestor who was directing people to a website to sign a petition to remove the tax exempt from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Another protestor responded that he did not want the LGBT community to be remembered as one that had taken away funding from a religious institution. Some people protested outside of Churches after the passage of Proposition 8. But not everyone agreed with protesting at a house of worship or to take any measure against religious organizations.

On the night of the election, there was a Chapman University Queer Straight Alliance meeting. We watched CNN live online and followed the presidential election. On the screen, there was another window open that followed propositions, including Proposition 8. Although members were excited about the democratic candidate for President, Barack Obama, winning the race, they were very upset about Proposition 8. Later that night I met other LGBT people on Facebook that were basically clicking refresh on a website with the campaign results until early in the morning. They were hoping results over Prop 8 would change.

The next day a friend called me in the afternoon and offered to give me a ride to a protest in Los Angeles. We were four people in her car and I was the only one who did not identify as heterosexual. During the ride there, we talked about our reasons for going to the protest. When we got to L.A., we joined the protests and carried signs. There were many angry people in the crowd. We met people there from Orange County as well. People were venting their frustrations but overall it was a peaceful protest. There were thousands of people chanting and expressing their support for the LGBT community. There were LGBT people and straight allies. When one person chanted,

M. C. Brena

others would follow and if that person stopped, someone else would pick up. By the end of the night, protestors were not as angry as they were when they began to march; rather their frustration had turned into hope because of the sense of community that we felt, and because there were organizers passing out fliers and talking about further political action.

In terms of the structure of the LGBT rights movement in Orange County, several organizations were founded, remain active and work together in Orange County after the passage of Proposition 8. These organizations are activist organizations that could be points of reference to communities of support, but which are not communities of support in nature.

After Proposition 8 passed, the Orange County Equality Coalition was founded by activists that had worked during the Proposition 8 campaign and new volunteers who wanted to work to repeal the measure. They held monthly meetings at an LGBT-friendly Christian Church in Irvine. I encountered people that I had met at PFLAG meetings in OCEC. In every OCEC meeting that I have attended, there has been an update on legal issues surfacing after Proposition 8. For instance, there were lawyers speaking on the California Supreme Court's hearing and the federal case pending to repeal Proposition 8. There were also presentations from diverse local activists such as a feminist activist from the National Organization for Women, a former soldier discharged for being gay, fighting for the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and a member of the "California Faith for Equality" organization who explained the importance of organizing faith communities to support same-sex marriage. OCEC has a storytelling team that works on crafting stories that explain their reasons to support same-sex marriage. This organization has connected with the LGBT community and fostered its relationships through the organizing of symbolic events such as rallies, candle-light vigils, OC Pride, and fundraisers.

After the election, the Courage Campaign, a progressive organization in California, organized Camp Courage in West Hollywood, an activist training event for people who wanted to work towards repealing Proposition 8. In this training, coming up with a story of self was emphasized. The story of self is a story that talks about one's personal reasons for supporting same-sex marriage that can be used to talk to people who are not entirely supportive or in opposition to same-sex marriage. People from Orange County attended that event and became Team Leaders for the Team Courage Orange County. Later, more Orange County volunteers would join their canvassing efforts.

Another organization that has worked on canvassing efforts and phone-banks in Orange County is the Equality California - Orange County Chapter. The Orange County field officers are founding members who were active in both OCEC and Team Courage Orange County. EQCA recruits members at LGBT events such as OCPride, interfaith gatherings promoting support for same-sex marriage, colleges and gay bars. Since the OC chapter is part of a national organization, EQCA volunteers in Orange County also work to support the national LGBT community by participating in phone-banks for "Get Out the Vote" operations when LGBT measures have been on the ballots in other States.

OCEC organized a rally in Santa Ana for "Day of Decision". It was a day when protests were held in many California cities against the California State Supreme Court's decision to uphold Proposition 8. During the protest there were counter-protestors who I had seen at the L.A. protest carrying signs that said "Homo-Sex is Sin" and other messages with religious undertones. One of the protestors held a Bible in his hand. In the beginning, people were yelling back at them but then others stood up in front of them blocking their view from the rally. The event became very symbolic when same-sex couples began sharing the stories of their marriages and their families, or their wishes to get married and have a family. While they were talking, the counter-protestors yelled "repent from your sins", "it's not a marriage", etc. After the rally we marched to another spot where members of clergy expressed their support for same-sex marriage. At the rally I met people who were going to a protest in Fresno called "Meet in the Middle". This protest was programmed on the weekend of "Day of Decision". The Orange County Equality Coalition has a website where discussion boards can be created to organize specific events. One member organized caravans and she put me in touch with one of the people I had met at the rally. I talked to him online and two other people decided to join. We spent hours in the car on the way to Fresno and shared stories about each other. When we got to Fresno we stopped at a gay bar that did not look like a gay bar from the outside;

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

no rainbow flags flying outside. Inside the bar, I saw a friend and member of the Orange County Equality Coalition and founder of Courage Team-Orange County who offered me a place to stay that night since I did not have accommodations until then. The next day we all went to march, there were about 6,000 people there. We marched to Fresno City Hall. There were several booths and people handing out fliers for different organizations. One of the booths was from OCEC. After the march, I called every OCEC member that I knew in order to get a ride. Most of them were also carpooling with other people. One of the Team Courage Orange County members told me about a group of buses that were leaving from Fresno to different cities. I was able to catch a ride with the Latino Equality Alliance, an organization in Los Angeles that fights for LGBT rights. During this trip I counted on the support from a network of activists not only because they knew me-- some of them had not have more than two conversations with me-but because we were joined by the same cause.

Several months later, I attended "Outwest Bootcamp", an activist training event in Los Angeles. When I got to the event, I met the Equality California-Orange County field officers at the training. There were organizers, activists and supporters from Orange County mingling with activists from the Los Angeles area. This seems to be a pattern in my observation of the movement in Orange County. While now, after Proposition 8, there is more structure in Orange County and it is not necessary to go to Los Angeles to organize or rally anymore, trainings that are held in LA provide an opportunity to meet with activists near the LA area. This enhances a sense of belonging to the larger LGBT community. During the training, there were diverse activists ranging from feminists, Latino activists, and faith outreach leaders. In this training, as well as in other trainings I have been through, organizers refer to the flaws of the previous campaign and emphasize the importance of making a personal connection with voters through canvassing, "sharing our stories", and fair representation of the LGBT community in the media.

Almost a year later after Prop 8 passed, a phone-bank was held by Equality California in Orange County. This effort was in support of the "No on 1" campaign-the Maine version of "No on 8". Members and volunteers of Team Courage, OCEC and Equality California organized and participated in this event. Although these Orange County organizations focus on different strategies to achieving equality and their members have different opinions on important issues they were founded, communicate with each other and support each other's efforts after the passage of Proposition 8. There is a strong relationship among the organizations because their founding members worked together on the "No on 8" campaign, for many of them it was their first time as activists. For example, one of the Orange County Field officers for Equality California used to be part of OCEC, and the second Orange County Field Officer had founded Team Courage Orange County before he took his current position. Therefore, after the Proposition 8 campaign there a stronger network of activists and more LGBT rights organizations were created. Their missions and therefore, identity as an activist community has been shaped by their marriage equality efforts.

Interviews

I conducted interviews with eleven LGBTs about their experiences during the campaign. While some of them were organizers, others had only participated in a couple of rallies after the campaign. Only one of my interviewees did not participate in rallies or protests. I was not able to conduct interviews with Transgender people. This is due to the fact that I encountered only two people willing to concede an interview. I had conflicting schedules with the first person. I met the second person too close to the time of finishing my research. Also, I did not feel comfortable trying to identify people as transgender when they did not identify as such first.

During my interviews I observed patterns developing in people's responses. The first and most important pattern that shaped the perception of the interviewee's environments was that none of them believed the intention of the "Yes on 8" campaign was to protect the family institution or the institution of marriage. Instead all interviewees believed that the intent of the measure was to exclude LGBT people and was based on anti-LGBT bias. Interviewees made reference to the fact that the institution of family was already diverse.

"But there's already so many different combinations of families like some people live with their aunts or their uncles, some people live with their grandparents, some people choose not to have children so I don't see how me being gay and marrying someone of the same sex has anything...

M. C. Brena

or does anything worse to change the normal, you know, the so-called normal establishment of the family. It's already like so diverse."

Religious arguments in support of the heterosexual definition of marriage, or references to the "sanctity" of heterosexual marriage were dismissed by many interviewees as contradictory to the current status of civil marriage in society. Interviewees referred to the high divorce rate and the legality of couples with no faith background to enter marriage.

"marriage isn't just, you know, in the bible and all that stuff... because I have relatives who are atheists and did not plan on having children and yet they can still get married and of course all the divorce and that happening and that you know, declining anything that says about the "sanctity of marriage".."

Furthermore, interviewees felt uncomfortable about the words "protect", the word "family" and the phrase "protect the family" because it portrayed them or their relationships as threats or it excluded them from society's ideal vision of family. The idea that LGBT people should not be portrayed in families was reinforced by the lack of representation of LGBT families in the "No on 8" campaign's imagery

""Yes on 8, protect the family" I'm like: "What am I doing to a family? I'm not doing anything, I'm just here. I'm just gay... like I'm not, it's not like I'm kidnapping siblings and separating them, it doesn't make sense to me, like: "protect the family" and I assume they mean like families have to be I guess opposite sex couples and a man and a woman and they have to have children."

"So the imagery, I don't even know, I didn't even know how to react to it 'cause I was... We're a family so that's... protecting what family? What family are you protecting?! I don't even know... What are you attacking?! What are you trying to defend? I have a family. Wanna protect marriage and my family? Let me get married! Want me to be a family, a good wholesome family? I'll get married then..."

In terms of their social environments, the campaign provided the interviewees with the opportunity to identify support and opposition towards same-sex marriage when conversations about the elections came up, or by being exposed to campaign material. Since the interviewees believed that the attempt of the "Yes on 8" campaign was to exclude LGBT people, approval for same-sex marriage was translated into full acceptance of the LGBT identity. Conversely, disapproval meant that someone was not fully accepting of LGBT people.

Interviewees encountered relatives, friends, co-workers and clients that were supportive of Proposition 8. Only two interviewees, out of eleven, did not have conversations about same-sex marriage with those in favor of the same-sex marriage ban. One of those two, however, knows that a co-worker is supportive of "Yes on 8" and is now more hesitant to reach out to that person. The rest of the interviewees had conversations about same-sex marriage, in many cases leading them to depart from these relationships. One of them took the approach of keeping the relationship in order to make a difference in that person's perspective of LGBT people, which in the interviewee's perspective was a form of political action to achieve acceptance. Those who had conversations with people supporting "Yes on 8" both with family and friends had different approaches to their relationships after the argument. While interviewees have managed to restore relationships with relatives, some of them have chosen to drop relationships with friends, clients and co-workers.

"It definitely hurt my business. It hurt me financially because I was very out and vocal at my business. I took the stand that... I am going to tell everyone and express myself and demand my rights. And I will express why I want my rights to everyone and some of my clients left. Even though they were... some of them, some I had had for years. They left. Because they... because I was such a supporter of same-gender marriage."

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

"I did lose several friends over it, some people I'd known since I was in 1st and 2nd grade who...they... had always just stuck to their religious views... who never... They are also the same people who never questioned authority, like the best description I have is that they were like a sponge, who would just absorb whatever is given to them. So...I just, I'm just the kind of person who... I don't block everything out but... if so many years of friendship between us and you can't support me, you can't love me for who I am... I'm just like there's no point in me really thinking about you anymore, like what's done is done."

"I got a text from one of my friends that said "I love you, I respect you, but I'm voting Yes on Prop 8". And I said "Ok. Then we are not gonna be friends anymore." Because what if I was like... "I don't like you 'cause you're white... I respect you. But I don't like you because of something that you can't control." That would be outrageous. But what she did to me... was somehow acceptable. I still haven't talked to her, I don't plan on it. You learn from people. They'll teach you amazing things. Sometimes they are disappointingly amazing, sometimes they are amazingly disappointing.... Prop 8 was like a friend- sorter in my life."

"We just got into this huge heated argument because they said "it's not you, it's the situation". "But no, it is about me specifically because I am your sister, you know, and you keep saying that I don't have the same rights". So we got into this huge gigantic fight and I was in my room and they were standing outside and my friend was in the room with me. And we were yelling back and forth. My sister's boyfriend was in between us. It almost got into a physical altercation and, I know I shouldn't have, but I spit... I spit on my sister... because... no, they were getting... It was the two of them against me and they were trying to come into my room, to push into my room and I was like: "Screw this." So I spit on them because I felt attacked. I now look back and I know that it was not right but I was very upset. And they are like "oh, my gosh!" like freaking out "You freaking spit on me". And I'm like: "You spit on me figuratively when you tell me that I don't deserve the same rights that you do, that is spitting on me. So now you know exactly how that feels literally."

By identifying support and lack of support for same-sex marriage, the LGBT community began to construct boundaries within their own social circles. In many cases, the need to cross these boundaries and reach out to the opposition was perceived as a form of political action, such as when LGBTs have conversations with relatives who opposed same-sex marriage, or when activists canvass neighborhoods with a majority of "Yes on 8" voters.

Interviewees had conversations with relatives, friends, co-workers and clients who were against Proposition 8. In many cases, interviewees referred to the support for the "No on 8" campaign as support for the LGBT community and themselves.

"Fortunately my closest friends didn't share that same attitude. But all in all my experience with individuals outside of myself dealing with Prop 8 is that they didn't like Prop 8 and that they would vote "No on 8" so that made me really happy."

"We talked with my partner's family who were all over California. Her twin sister is hardcore republican, or was until Prop 8 came up and actually changed her party designation because of it, so that was encouraging. And one of the brothers was incensed that there were people that would take our rights away and the other brother we couldn't really talk to him about it because he's really whacky right wing. Her mother jumped on the Courage Campaign van wagon and actually went to her church and talked about it so that was comfort, that was really nice to know. And she had been formally against us years ago so for her to make that change was a big deal."

M. C. Brena

Aside from the interactions that the interviewees had with relatives, friends and co-workers, they also identified support or lack of support for same-sex marriage in their neighborhoods or cities through campaign signs and rallies. The interviewees' responses to the "Yes on 8" signs varied. But a pattern that was repeated among them was a negative reaction that stopped the flow of their regular activities. This pause would serve to remind them of their thoughts on the campaign itself and their views of the opposition.

"I saw some Yes on 8 stickers, living in Garden Grove, still in Orange County, I saw some Yes on 8 stickers. When I started my job right before election day, I started my new job in Irvine on the third of November and there were people who were picketing at the intersection of Mc Arthur and Main in Irvine for "Yes on 8" in all four corners, so I had to drive... I had to sit at a stop light and wait so I could turn to go into my building watching all these people and watching people go: "woohoo" and all this "Yes on 8" stickers around me so that was... that made me shake my head."

"And I made note almost every single time of what business is it in front of, what house is it in front of? So I know that I'm avoiding that house and I'm not going to connect with this person. I don't want to support someone, a business that supports that particular political outlook so I paid attention but it was also really icky to drive past them."

"While it was voting season, my friend and I would drive around Orange County and steal "Yes on 8" signs in front of people's houses because it was just like... blatant hate. It was acceptable hate, I feel. And I've heard so many explanations from that side of Prop 8 that are just scathing and hurting and they make you feel like you are not a human being anymore."

On the other hand, interviewees expressed positive feelings after seeing support for the "No on 8" campaign in the form of signs and at rallies.

"Similar to the feeling of wincing and feeling uncomfortable seeing Yes on 8 signs, the opposite was true when I saw "No on 8" signs and people out supporting "No on 8", it was affirmation to see folks out there and being visible and honking and yelling and carrying signs in large groups. It felt really good to know that there's a community of support even though it's not always visible, I know that in spirit it's there."

Interviewees who were active in religious practices disagreed with their churches' views on the issue of same-sex marriage. Many interviewees expressed a conflict between their LGBT and faith-based identities.

"I'm going to church less, and I know part of that has to do with the fact that around election time there were all these preachers talking about sin and... being gay, you know, just pulling passages out of the bible it says that homosexuality is an abomination.

Was this at service?

Yeah.

And you were present?

Yeah. On the Sun Light theatre they had... they had a thing, like a service, and I know a Chapman student went, and they gave her a bible and they highlighted every single passage where they said homosexuality was immoral."

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

"(My partner) and I, we went to a Christian church, not LDS just because sometimes you need a little church in your life, whatever... so we decided to go. It was a pretty big church, we walked in, we were holding hands, you know and we were getting all these stares and this was right before the election, the weekend before the election. We went and we sat down and right when the service started they started talking about marriage between a man and a woman and everybody was looking at us and we just got up and left because it made us feel really, obviously, really uncomfortable..."

"For me, as a member of the religious community and the LGBT community, it's almost as if they were mutually exclusive, almost. If I voted Yes then I would be considered very Catholic. If I voted No, I would be considered really gay. It was just really strange in my mind. Whatever my choice was, it would mean a lot about who I was. And I think that my identity being tied in with a legal proposition... it got really confusing. "

Other interviewees found faith communities that were accepting of LGBT people and that supported same-sex marriage through the process of becoming politically active. Others found members of Churches supporting Proposition 8 that were against their churches' position and were in favor of same-sex marriage.

"When did you start learning about these new churches that were accepting...?"

Most of the phone-banks that were held for Prop 8 were at the Universalist Church. I've met with a couple of California Faith for Equality Leaders and Episcopalian priest and church leaders."

"After getting involved with repealing Prop 8 I have seen a lot of great things from religious institutions, the UCCs, the FCCs, all the groups that are working for equality for all people, regardless of their sexual orientation. It's opened my eyes to "hey this could be something that I could get involved with at some point in my life""

"I went to telling our stories (an interfaith gathering for same-sex marriage). That was really cool because there was an LDS guy, the guy who actually is spoke is the great great grandson of a very, very big figure in the church and he's obviously for NO on 8 and seeing that helped me say "ok, not all Mormon people, not all LDS people have this exactly strict points of view about gay people"

With the exception of one interviewee, all interviewees participated in rallies and protests. For most of them, it was their first time at rallying for a political issue. They expressed that Proposition 8 was a wake-up call for the LGBT community. They also experienced a sense of community with other LGBTs when they participated in rallies or protests.

"But I think at the same time it really did help to put a fire under the LGBT community's ass, you know, to get people a little fired up and like Prop 8 was the first time I'd ever protested and for me, it got me really involved, it got me really caring about the gay rights and trying to actually, you know, get this overturned."

"It was empowering to see how many people believed in the issue and the importance of the issue and not just like... "oh look at all these gays" but the fact that there are all the straight allies with us. I know specifically in the circle, there's a guy that is 14 who was absolutely adamant about it. I was like: "son, you crazy" (laughter) And he was like: "I've been here for 8 hours" and I was like "I don't know how the hell..." He's like: "oh, and I'm pretty hungry". I'm like: "go get food" you know and it's just like... this sense of community that there is for the GLBT and within the GLBT community. Ha! Oh, and there were trannies at the protest. I was like: "Trannies are

M. C. Brena

here; it's official gay, it's official gay protest." And so... it's just... the more the merrier. And so, it was empowering. It made me feel that I was making a difference and showing my face in those protests."

Only one of my interviewees did not experience going to a rally or protest and encountering fierce opposition. Other interviewees had experiences of their own and during rallies heard the experiences of other people who encountered opposition.

"Well, just the fact that leaving the campus to go to a rally in the town of Orange, and to get such negative feedback from like passerbying drivers that went around. Some people drove around us like, really fast, like it was kind of freaky, like it was almost in a way... like I felt that we were only standing, it wasn't like we were like going out into the road or anything crazy. Like, it was people's reactions that were kind of crazy, like shouting at us, yelling, laughing, you know, flipping us off, things like that, like it was really negative, you know, it was really uncomfortable but at the same time it made me feel better about myself or more like sure of myself for being there like if people were going to act negatively well, I'm just gonna keep standing here and they'll just have to take that because they can't change who I am, I can't change who I am, how are other people going to?"

"Actually the other side was very very aggressive, and very very mean and very hurtful and yeah, I could yell at somebody and call them a bigot but it's a completely different feeling than someone screaming and yelling at me and calling me a dyke or a faggot. And I've actually had that happen while I was protesting. There were kids in Yorba Linda that somebody came by and started throwing hot-dogs at them and I don't really know what that was supposed to mean. I heard of a kid at Anaheim who had somebody like throw pee on him. I was in a protest and some kids drove by in a van and like opened up the van and sprayed water all over everybody and like the derogatory terms that came after people's mouths were horrible... and even after prop 8, you know, I was at Cal State Fullerton on the corner trying to get people to sign a, it was a protest to repeal the defense of marriage act. And I was standing out there and it was actually funny because it was all lesbians except one straight ally and these guys drove by and were like you fat dykes like screaming at us and we're just like do you really think that after everything that we've gone through with Prop 8 that one little comment like that is gonna stop us?"

Because of these interactions, interviewees characterized the opposition in several ways. Primarily they thought supporters of Proposition 8 did not know individuals who were openly LGBT. They also characterized Prop 8 supporters as biased, religious, conservative, republican, heterosexist, and/or homophobic.

"I don't think some of these people ever met a gay person. And I just don't think they've ever interacted with them. I think that their mind is full of stereotypes of what they think a gay person is and they just don't have anything to compare it to."

"And there are assumptions that I have about people who voted Yes on 8 as like maybe they are really religious and close minded, maybe it's fear of same-sex parents raising children because of those ads that were on TV, maybe it's just bigotry and hatred, finding people to not like, people to hate. So those signs represented that to me, so every time I saw a sticker on a car or one of those lawn signs it just made me kind of cringe inside to pass it."

"Who would you identify as them?"

I don't want to generalize and say the heterosexual community, but... because we have allies but "them" the supporters of Prop 8.

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

And for you, when you say the supporters of Prop 8, are there any groups that you relate to it?

Religious Groups, Mormons, specific companies..."

Out of the ten interviewees that participated in protests and rallies, three became political organizers, two changed the way they worked to incorporate more LGBT issues, and to see starting conversations about same-sex marriages as political action.

"We volunteered in Silver Lake for a phone bank, we... it was me, my mom and three other people. That was it and that was August 4th. And our job was to get more volunteers to work on phone banks, to get donations and call people. But I couldn't get anyone from Orange County to go to Silver Lake so I said: "Where's the Orange County phone bank?" So we don't have one, there isn't one in Orange County. So I said: "How do I... Let's start one. What do I have to do?" And then I started a phone bank and then I was running a whole campaign in Orange County. And it was insane and snowballed into then after the election and everyone called me and said what are we gonna do and had people meet at my studio, "Anybody wants to work on it, be involved? Meet at my studio." A hundred-something people showed up. And we founded Orange County Equality Coalition so... still going (Laughs). I met amazing people and... frustrated and excited and a learning experience and tumultuous and devastating and insane... just, that was my experience, life-changing that's for sure. Altered the course, my course completely, changed a whole bunch of directions."

"So this has changed the way you work now?"

Oh, absolutely. I will no longer tolerate politicians or anybody involved in politics that isn't open to be for my rights. So that's a big change."

"Has your level of activism changed at all?"

Yes. I would say given this year when I first walked into my position and my position is a very activist role. I heard that there were comments made around race and sexual orientation more often than any other identity group that I've heard of at the beginning of the year and given that LGBT identity seemed to be the most attacked identity that I was hearing about, it was the group that I focused on the most this year particularly education and awareness. Both personally and professionally I've become involved in LGBT identity.

As a result of the things that you were listening...?"

Along with the campaign and what I saw during the campaign, seeing the protests on television and hearing about people getting into fights in Los Angeles. That definitely leads me to prepare some education and some awareness and hopefully have some compassionate understanding for people, even if you don't agree at least be compassionate."

Another pattern was that the interviewees mentioned the importance of coming out and talking about the issue of marriage as a means to gain both legal acceptance and marriage equality

"I need to talk to people of the Mormon Church and the leaders of the Mormon church. We had Steve Young that is an elder, he's a politician, I really enjoyed when he came to speak with the Orange County Equality Coalition, fantastic speaker, answers everything with a directly related story about his life and... he was opposed to Proposition 8, all the elders in his church in their

M. C. Brena

particular parish. They were all opposed to it, they did not support... they did not tell their congregants to support... So, there was a Mormon church that didn't support it.

So how do you feel about the fact that certain people are targeting the church?

I'm opposed to it. That's why Steve Young, the elder in the church, he said: "Don't attack the church. You need to talk to the church. You need to talk to people. Arrange meetings. There has to be an education bridge built and conversation. You have to expand your network. Don't shut them down and make them demons. Invite them in, you know, keep your friends close, keep your enemies closer. Get to know your enemies and find out what it is that is really bothering them.

"I mean, there was the week of the elections and I felt like the community had done a good job. And the only time it really hit me that we might not have done our best, or at least that I hadn't was when I went home to vote and as I was standing in line, I saw a bunch of my neighbors, or my parents neighbors, and I realized that they don't know that I'm gay and they, they all had really religious conservative views, they are all Hispanic, just sort of like in the Hispanic community alone there's this huge stigma about being gay and I just remember in my mind saying: "shit, those are ten votes of people who I know love me and who would change their votes to see me happy and I never talked to them about it." But I was also like: "it's just 10 votes, they can't be that impactful"...or I'd ran into someone who maybe was just an acquaintance or maybe just someone that I had just met recently and who didn't know anything about me and be like: "Could I have changed that person?" Basically it became an issue of what did I do wrong? What could I have done to get more votes? And it just made me wonder whether I was fully out of the closet or not. Because Harvey Milk says the best way to fight for gay rights is to basically be out of the closet and... it just made me wonder whether I was or whether I was just telling myself that I was."

"That's where it started to become a more personal thing for me and at that point I started understanding, wow, you really have not done a very good job of countering the "Yes on 8" messages in an effective way, all the way across the board, frankly in my opinion...

Was there anything, anything in particular that made you realize that you had to become politically active?

Yeah, the conversations I was having with my friends. It made me realize that I needed to start talking with more people and bringing that particular subject up. Even people who I did business with because I tend to have pretty close relationships with these people and so it's important to form friendships and a certain level of a bond and a lot of them knew that I'm gay and so we would talk about politics and that kind of stuff. And I work at the inland Empire, which is not necessarily a liberal bastion (laughs) so... and it became very apparent that it was important to get the message out and that was the way to become most politically active at that point. "

All interviewees said that they remained hopeful about the future of LGBT rights, including same-sex marriage. Some of them expressed that the experience of Proposition 8 was not over yet.

"I have full confidence than by the time... in the next 20 years, the places I will be living in will... like gay marriage will be legalized and recognized."

"There will be a campaign in 2010 but I think it will be... it will end when we have a federal same-gender rights, when we're federally, in the federal government mandates that all states and territories recognize same-gender marriage...

Do you see that happening?

I do. I do see that happening."

"I think that marriage equality ultimately will win, truth will win, love will win ultimately because as a species no matter how many roadblocks we throw out for ourselves just like plants turn towards the sun, we turn towards growth and towards love."

"Are there any positive outcomes to this entire experience?

I don't know... I, I can't say that there are because I don't think the experience is done because I don't think it will ever be done until we are equal... like I think it's another benchmark in the process. We had stonewall, and then we took a slight step backwards with Prop 8 and then whatever comes next is whatever comes next. I just don't think it's an experience that's never fully over, at least not for me."

"I've met a lot more people because Prop 8 passed. Our sufferings or our trials bring us together and because of that we can rise up and we can do so much more, that eventually we'll elect a gay president."

Throughout the campaign, LGBT people were able to identify who was supportive of their identity and who was not by someone's or an institution's position on same-sex marriage. It was not necessary to go to a rally to encounter opposition. People saw opposition in their neighborhoods, churches, workplaces and social circles. At the same time, support was also identified. The process of the campaign was a process of boundary construction for the LGBT community. However, to many it was clear that overstepping these boundaries was the only way to achieve acceptance, and this step was taken as a form of political action.

Conclusions

According to the definition of stigma by Link and Phelan, the first component of stigma distinguishes and labels human differences. The "Yes on 8" campaign portrayed an ideal family that differed from many existing types of families (e.g., divorced parents, families with no children). Ideal families were defined as mother, father and children in the imagery of the "Yes on 8" signs. Rather than depicting all kinds of families that differed from this picture, the proposition targeted same-sex relationships and the families composed by them. LGBT people are exposed to or come from a variety of diverse families, including their own. Therefore, LGBTs did not believe that it was "differentness" that was being targeted, rather the value put on the specific differentness of their community. The fact that LGBT people were not represented in the imagery of the "Yes on 8" campaign and the "No on 8" campaign as well was a sign that they had to be set apart from the rest of society, that they could not be as visible from those not labeled LGBT. After reviewing interviews and field notes, I concluded that the rhetoric and imagery used by the "Yes on 8" campaign carried messages that reminded the LGBT community of their exclusion from society's institutions because of their sexual orientation. While their differentness was labeled before the campaign, the campaign provided a platform for conversations about same-sex marriage which represented the full acceptance, tolerance or exclusion of LGBTs. The campaign and, moreover, its outcome became a tangible measure of society's low value and the stigma placed on the differentness of sexual orientation.

Before the campaign, there were many opportunities to identify acceptance or exclusion towards LGBT people. But the campaign brought many more opportunities to identify it, since it is socially acceptable to discuss politics-in

M. C. Brena

this case whether LGBT people should take part of the marital institution. Therefore, there were lawn signs, bumper stickers, TV ads, internet ads, media commentary and conversations about voting decisions and elections that, for LGBTs, represented dialogues about their acceptance into, or exclusion from society. The messages from the "Yes on 8" campaign and those opposing same-sex marriage while attending rallies, interacting with others in church or other social spaces presented a dominant ideology in conflict with the ideology of the LGBT community. Erving Goffman (1963) argues that a stigmatized group possesses an ideology that differs from that which the ones with power to stigmatize possess. LGBT people consider themselves equal to heterosexual people. The LGBT ideology is that a same-sex relationship is of the same worth as an opposite-sex relationship. The rhetoric used in messages such as "protect the family" and "protect marriage" was in conflict with the ideology of the LGBT community. Most LGBT couples do not consider their relationships or their families as posing any threat, harm or danger to the institution of family and marriage. Most LGBTs that I encountered while researching the community agree that there is no proof that LGBT relationships do not provide a safe environment to raise children. The American Psychological Association agrees in this respect with the LGBT community. It has argued that:

"Fears about children of lesbian or gay parents being sexually abused by adults, ostracized by peers, or isolated in single-sex lesbian or gay communities have received no scientific support. Overall, results of research suggest that the development, adjustment, and well-being of children with lesbian and gay parents do not differ markedly from that of children with heterosexual parents" (Paige 2005).

Rather, ideas of LGBT couples providing unsafe environments to raise children stem from unfounded public beliefs and stereotypes. In the second component of the stigma concept identified by Link and Phelan (2009), dominant cultural beliefs link labeled persons to undesirable characteristics-to negative stereotypes. Throughout the campaign, "protecting the family" was therefore perceived as an example of a cultural belief based on biases towards LGBT people.

When the "Yes on 8" campaign succeeded, it represented the degree to which these stereotypes were accepted by society. Many LGBT people who had not participated in rallies before the election began to protest and became volunteers in newly formed LGBT Rights organizations in Orange County. The conflict between ideologies of the stigmatized and the ideology of stigma was present during the campaign, but winning the campaign became a symbol of success for the ideology that stigmatized LGBT people. While LGBTs were aware of the fact that the LGBT community was stigmatized, they did not understand the degree to which the community was stigmatized until after the elections.

Because the "Yes on 8" campaign represented a measure of stigma for LGBTs and the "No on 8" campaign represented acceptance, many LGBTs began to identify allies as well as opposition, and to construct boundaries in their social environments. According to Link and Phelan (2009), one of the components of stigma is that "labeled persons are placed in distinct categories so as to accomplish some degree of separation of "us" from "them."" According to Erving Goffman, the stigmatized have two sets of sympathetic others, "the Own" and "the Wise". In the case of Proposition 8, these corresponded to the LGBT community and heterosexual allies, respectively. In the language used by interviewees, support for Proposition 8 was linked to lack of support for the LGBT community. Those opposing same-sex marriage were considered as contributing to the stigma process of the campaign. Encounters with fierce opposition enhanced the awareness of differentness and its low value. LGBT people became closer to the LGBT community through political organizing or rallying and, at the same time, withdrew from certain relationships in which they found their identity not supported. The "us" v. "them" dynamic, therefore was not only created by the persons with power to stigmatize. Rather, it was a process where both groups mutually excluded each other.

The difference between the two groups in the Proposition 8 campaign was that those supporting the ban held enough social, economic and political power to restrict access to a social institution. While the LGBT community had the economic power to run the "No on 8" campaign, they did not have the social and political power to win it. In the fourth component of Link and Phelan's concept of stigma, "labeled persons experience status loss and

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

discrimination that lead to unequal outcomes. Finally, stigmatization is entirely contingent on access to social, economic, and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories, and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion, and discrimination"(Link and Phelan 2009). In terms of the Propostion 8 campaign, the LGBT community suffered status loss by being exposed to the messages of the opposition and by blunt attacks that reminded them of the stereotypes attached to their identity. As explained above, stereotypes served to create different categories of legal recognitions of coupling based on sexual orientation while excluding LGBTs from the social institution of family.

Link and Phelan (2009) argue that one of the objectives of the stigmatized is to remove stigma from differentness. Goffman identifies this as a strategy in the management of spoiled identity or stigma. During the Proposition 8 campaign, many LGBTs chose not to rally. As I stated before, there was not a clear measure of the value of differentness before Proposition 8 passed. In other words, LGBT people were not aware of how stigmatized they actually were. The experience of the campaign and, most importantly, the passage of the proposition were a measure of the degree of LGBT stigma. This explains why so many LGBT people became politically active after the passage of Proposition 8. Political action was a way to cope with stigma. Through these actions, LGBT people were able to express their emotional responses to the campaign in a safe manner and externalize rather than personalize their experiences.

The LGBT Rights Movement is tied intrinsically to personal identity for those in the LGBT community. Political action has also been taken to the realm of personal social relationships. The LGBT activist community has made "telling our stories" a political strategy. Several interviewees defined political activism as the act of having conversations and develop relationships with those not entirely accepting of same-sex marriage. Although this is not the only political strategy of the activists, it seems like the "story telling" strategy is emphasized over other types of political action such as the pursuit of legal equality through the courts and lobbying to representatives.

It could be argued that Proposition 8 has contributed to creating the infrastructure for the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County since many LGBTs and their straight allies against Proposition 8 founded LGBT rights organizations after the passage of Proposition 8. The formation of these organizations came about after the process of a campaign that created an environment where support and lack of support for this stigmatized identity was visible through the use of rhetoric and imagery. This delineated the boundaries between the LGBT and heterosexual ally community, and the out-group composed of institutions, organizations and individuals that oppose same-sex marriage. While this boundary was created, the "storytelling strategy" emphasizes the idea of crossing the boundary to achieve the deconstruction of LGBT stereotypes. These stereotypes were latent but became active arguments during the Proposition 8 campaign. Their power was manifested in the "Yes on 8" campaign's success. Through observations and the analysis of interviews, I conclude that what compelled many LGBTs to resort to political mobilization was the success of a campaign that measured a level of LGBT stigma which conflicted with LGBT perception of its degree of stigmatization and the community's ideology of being equal to heterosexual members of society.

References

Chananie-Hill, Ruth A. 2007. *"Framing and Collective Identities in the Legal Setting: Comparing*

Interracial Marriage and Same-Sex Marriage." Department of Sociology in the Graduate School Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Della Porta, Donatella and Mario Diani. 1999. *Social Movements, an Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

M. C. Brena

Fireman B, Gamson WA. 1979. *Utilitarian logic in the resource mobilization perspective*. In *The Dynamics of Social Movements*, ed. M Zald, J McCarthy, pp. 8-44. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop .

Gamson, William 1992. *Talking Politics*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Prentice-Hall.

Laraña, Enrique, Hank Johnston and Joseph R. Gusfield. 1994. *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*. Temple University Press.

Link, Bruce G., and Jo C. Phelan. 2001. "Conceptualizing Stigma." *Annual Review of Sociology*. (Annual 2001): 363. [General OneFile](#). Gale. Chapman University. 11 Oct. 2009
<<http://find.galegroup.com.libproxy.chapman.edu:2048/gps/start.do?prodId=IPS>>.

Paige, R. U. 2005. Proceedings of the American Psychological Association, Incorporated, for the legislative year 2004. Minutes of the meeting of the Council of Representatives July 28 & 30, 2004, Honolulu, HI. Retrieved November 18, 2004, from the World Wide Web <http://www.apa.org/governance/>. (To be published in Volume 60, Issue Number 5 of the *American Psychologist*).

Polletta, Francesca and James M. Jasper. 2001. "Collective Identity and Social Movements" *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 283-305 (doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.283).

"Prop 8 Hurt My Family: Ask Me How." [Marriage Equality](#). 17 Mar. 2009. Marriage Equality USA. <http://www.marriageequality.org/uploads/REPORT%20TWO_PROP_8_HURT_MY_FAMILY_FINAL_VERSION.pdf>.

Rotosky, Sharon S., Ellen D. B. Riggle, Sharon G. Horne, and Angela D. Miller. 2009. "Marriage Amendments and Psychological Distress in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB) Adults." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 56 (1): 56-66.

Russell, Glenda M. 2000. *Voted out : the psychological consequences of anti-gay politics*. New York: New York University Press.

Russell, Glenda and Jeffrey M. Richards. 2003. "Stressor and Resilience Factors for Lesbians, Gay Men, and Bisexuals Confronting Antigay Politics." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 31: 313-28.

Appendix A: Interview Guide

- 1) What was your experience with Proposition 8?
- 2) How do you feel about the signs, commercials and messages from the "Yes on 8" campaign?
- 3) Did Proposition 8 affect you legally?
- 4) Did you have any involvement fighting Prop 8 before it passed? Why? Why not?
- 5) Did you have any involvement fighting Prop 8 after it passed? Why? Why not?
- 6) Were you emotionally affected by the campaign? How so?
- 7) Are you more concerned about LGBT rights after the Proposition 8 campaign?

The Effects of Proposition 8 in the LGBT Rights Movement in Orange County

-
- 8) Do you feel closer to the LGBT community? Why?
 - 9) Did your views of religious institutions change after the Prop 8 campaign?
 - 10) Did you discuss Prop 8 with friends/ colleagues/relatives during the campaign and after it passed?
 - 11) Have any of your relationships changed due to these discussions?
 - 12) Were there Yes or No on 8 signs around your neighborhood?
 - 13) Has your perception of your neighborhood changed because of the signs?
 - 14) Did the Prop 8 campaign made you more aware of anti-LGBT violence?
 - 15) If you went to protests, why did you do so? What did you feel? What was your experience of that?