

Gay Rights at the Ballot Box. By Amy L. Stone. Minneapolis and London: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2012. 234 pp. \$22.50 paper.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Kosbie, Department of Sociology and School of Law, Northwestern University

Amy Stone's timely book offers fresh insight into how the lesbian and gay movement has mobilized around ballot measures. It should be required reading for academics and activists interested in the history of the lesbian and gay response to anti-gay ballot measures between 1974 and 2009. Drawing on interviews with key activists and rich archival data, Stone offers a compelling argument about how activists developed a set of "model campaign tactics."

After an initial chapter on the history of the Religious Right's use of the ballot box, the core of the book provides a historical analysis of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) responses. During the 1970s and 1980s, activists responding to anti-gay initiatives experimented with tactics and organizational forms. After the "No on 9" campaign achieved a surprising victory in Oregon in 1992, its tactics were identified as "model campaign tactics" by the growing national LGBT organizations. Stone then focuses on a winning streak from 1997 to 2003, using a case study of Michigan to highlight how model tactics operated. But after this winning streak, Stone identifies key challenges raised by anti-same-sex-marriage initiatives. She concludes with a chapter on secondary marginalization within LGBT campaigns. While her book speaks directly to an audience interested in legal mobilization, the historical narrative keeps the reading light and relevant for a more general audience.

Stone's key contribution comes in identifying the role of victories and defeats in shaping campaign tactics. Activists attributed victories and defeats to the tactics used, minimizing other explanations based on broader social and political factors (p. 67). In particular, Stone shows how unexpected victories provided tactical lessons while defeats were "cautionary tales, warning activists against complacency" (p. 57). Challenging existing scholarship on how countermovements innovate in response to each other (Meyer & Staggenborg 1996: 1647), Stone shows how LGBT ballot box campaigns embraced the model tactics despite tactical innovation by the Religious Right.

Model campaign tactics were not only spread because of their assumed role in campaign victories. The development of a national LGBT movement infrastructure also played a key role in diffusion of these campaign tactics. HRC (Human Rights Campaign), National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and Gay

and Lesbian Victory Fund (GLVF) trained local activists, donated money to support local campaigns, and even provided paid staff to campaigns. In her case study of Michigan ballot measure campaigns, Stone effectively illustrates how this interplay between the national and local organizations helped spread model campaign tactics. Unfortunately, the national LGBT organizations appear largely as external actors in Stone's book. While the internal debates at HRC and NGLTF around ballot box tactics were surely outside the scope of Stone's project, I wondered what insight we would get from seeing them.

The rich descriptions in Stone's book also tell us how organizational form influenced tactical choices. Model campaign tactics like narrow messaging and voter identification may have been identified as the road to victory given the constraints of the ballot box, but they were also easy to adapt with strong national funding and minimal staff. In Stone's analysis, we see how some of the groups that questioned or rejected these model tactics drew on deeper grassroots organizing in their local communities.

The book also makes a strong contribution to our understanding of interactions between individual campaigns and broader social movements. Stone carefully explains, "ballot measure campaigns are short-lived political campaigns that arise to support or defeat direct legislation . . . A social movement, on the other hand, operates on a larger scale" (p. xvi). Stone shows the complementary and contradictory relationship between the two. Campaigns build organizations and draw in activists that can become part of a movement. But campaigns also draw resources and undermine broader movement goals. In particular, the model tactics discouraged broader coalition work and marginalized people of color and transgender people: "campaign politics is rarely queer politics" (p. xxviii). Stone's historical analysis provides a rich narrative of how campaigns understood these strategic tradeoffs.

In Stone's final substantive chapter, she focuses on secondary marginalization of people of color and transgender people. While this chapter effectively pulls together a theme that is present throughout the book, I wondered why it was not more integrated into the book. Through the book's focused historical narrative, Stone achieves her primary objective of showing how model campaign tactics developed. We understand how disputes over these tactics took place under the constraints imposed by ballot box initiatives. But we have less sense of how transgender people and people of color actually participated in these disputes.

Stone can only hint at the question of how recent ballot box wins might influence future model tactics. For example, will key ballot box wins in the 2012 elections undermine the previous consensus that LGBT activists should avoid placing their own pro-gay

measures on the ballot? Stone's rich empirical description of the organizations she studies provides a strong example for other scholars that take up these new questions.

Reference

Meyer, David S., & Suzanne Staggenborg (1996) "Movements, Countermovements, and Political Opportunity," 101 *American J. of Sociology* 1628–60.

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Rebels at the Bar: The Fascinating, Forgotten Stories of America's First Women Lawyers. By Jill Norgren. New York: New York Univ. Press, 2013. 268 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Judith A. Baer, Department of Political Science, Texas A&M University

Jill Norgren, the author of *Rebels at the Bar*, is a political scientist. But she has produced more than political science. Those members of the profession who are devoted to quantitative methodology might question whether this book counts as political science at all. Studies of "first" women rarely lend themselves to quantitative methods. The experimental group is dwarfed by any possible control group. Norgren presents biographical sketches of eight lawyers, and mentions about 20 more. Comparing them to their male counterparts, to women their age with similar backgrounds, or to twenty-first-century women lawyers would have been an exercise in futility. The story Norgren wanted to tell required depth more than breadth, thinking more than counting. Her history and biography have produced a valuable study that transcends disciplinary boundaries and should have wide appeal outside academia.

Norgren's subjects were born between 1830 and 1862. Predictably, most had middle-class, if not affluent, backgrounds. Myra Bradwell, rejected by the Illinois bar, was a judge's wife. Mary Greene of Boston belonged to a first family of Rhode Island. Belva Lockwood, the subject of a Norgren biography, was the exception. The daughter of "farmers who eked out a modest living," she quit school at 14 to help support her family (p. 74). All were Christian and Caucasian. Mary Ann Shadd Cary, the only African-American woman mentioned, "likely" entered Howard Law School in 1869 as "one of the country's very first women law school students" (p. 35).