

INTRODUCTION

On May 6, 2002, residents, business owners, and politicians staged an anticrime rally called “Take Back Our Streets” in Christopher Park, in New York City’s Greenwich Village.¹ The location chosen was symbolic; the park is located at what had been the center of the uprising at the Stonewall Inn bar, the famed riots of June 1969 that have been central to many legacies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) political organizing.² Yet in recent years the memory of “Stonewall” (as the riots are now called) as a long overdue, passionate expression of selfhood often omits the facts that it was a collective challenge to the police and that it was just the latest clash in an ongoing struggle. Furthermore, the gay liberation organizations that arose in the aftermath of the riots believed that protection from the police would depend on their forming coalitions with other social movements, including Black Power, radical feminisms, and Third World decolonization. This was in contrast to the approach adopted by their immediate predecessors, homophile activists who largely advocated for police accountability through liberal reform measures. Consequently, the refusal of Stonewall’s participants to collaborate with dominant institutions not only marked a rejection of social assimilation (in which, for example, the adoption of gender norms might promise protection) but was also in defiance of the partnership solutions to urban conflict that had been popular with policymakers in the 1960s, such as community policing and War on Poverty initiatives.

Over thirty years later, the 2002 rally had a very different aim in mind.³ It was linked to a broad, ad hoc campaign for the enforcement of quality-of-life laws, which target low-level offenses

such as noise and loitering and had been the hallmark of former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani's anticrime policy.⁴ Proponents included Residents in Distress (RID; the name was inspired by an insecticide), the Christopher Street Patrol (a neighborhood anticrime group supported by the Guardian Angels), block associations (representing residents and business owners), and officials from the local community board (New York's neighborhood-based governing structure). Supporters claimed that boisterous crowds and sex and drug trades were fomenting a threatening culture of crime and violence in their neighborhood, that part of Greenwich Village also known as the West Village.⁵ In meetings, rallies, and media blitzes that would stretch throughout the first decade of the 2000s, residents complained that their neighborhood had been taken over by "the Bloods and the Crips," "the dealers, the hookers, the pimps, the johns,"⁶ "vicious drug dealers and hostile transgender prostitutes," and "rowdies,"⁷ all of whom constituted "an army of occupation" (fig. intro. 1).⁸

The most public members of the campaign were white, and the areas they cited as needing to be cleaned up were the very same places where people of color—many of whom identify as LGBT—long have socialized.⁹ Residents' primary focus were the neighborhood's waterfront piers at the end of the famed Christopher Street, the place of an active, largely black and Latino social scene that had been pushed out of nearby Washington Square Park under resident and police pressure during previous decades.¹⁰ Residents also cited what they considered undesirable activity outside the entrance to the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) train station, which connects the New Jersey cities of Newark and Jersey City (both of which are significantly black and Latino in population) with lower Manhattan;¹¹ some residents were also involved in a campaign against the expansion of PATH exits into a designated Stonewall Historic District.¹²

The fact that residents' primary opposition was to LGBT youth and adult transgender women of color was not only coded in the choice of targeted geography. One public resolution explicitly named the problem as "rowdiness resulting from large crowds of young people, mostly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth of African-American and Hispanic origin."¹³ Although in public venues residents denied that their complaints were "racial," almost all media coverage of the situation—both sympathetic and critical—made it clear that those considered a problem were people of color and that those presumed to be engaged in prostitution were also transgender.¹⁴ Yet residents were also insistent that their efforts were not anti-LGBT. This claim was supported by those who called for the protection of the Stonewall Historic District as well as by those who invoked the history of antigay violence to bolster their fight against undesirable street life. Moreover, resi-



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TAKE BACK OUR STREETS

Date: Monday, May 6, 2002
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Place: Sheridan Square Park
7th Ave. & Christopher St.

RE: Summer's coming! Fight Back against our new neighbors; the Bloods and the Crips plus our old neighbors, the dealers, the hookers, the pimps, the johns, etc. etc.

Sponsored by the Sixth Precinct
Community Council, Chelsea, Greenwich
Village Chamber of Commerce and
Residence in Distress (RID).

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.

Please come and be heard. We need your input. If you are unable to attend, please submit your comments in writing to the Community Board #2, Manhattan office, 3 Washington Square Village, Suite 1A, New York, NY 10012.

Aubrey Lees, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

Arthur W. Strickler
District Manager

Blane Roberts,
Community Board Liaison
Man. Borough President's Office

FIGURE INTRO.1 "Notice of Public Hearing: Take Back Our Streets," City of New York (COMMUNITY BOARD 2, MANHATTAN, NEW YORK)

dents advocated for the use of strategies that have been promoted by LGBT antiviolence activists since the 1970s, from safe streets patrols and community watch efforts to calls for increased police presence and enhanced criminal penalties—tactics that also parallel shifting approaches to urban crime control during these same years. The result is that the demands of Greenwich Village residents and a mainstream LGBT antiviolence movement can look strikingly alike.

Safe Space asks how this neighborhood-based convergence of anticrime and LGBT rights strategies came to pass, and why it matters. Far from coincidental, these overlapping responses to perceived threats bring into focus

an entwined history of LGBT activism, urban development, and U.S. policy responses to poverty and crime. By treating the construction of violence as central to both U.S. LGBT and urban politics, I ask how the ideal of safe space has shaped the transformation of LGBT social movements and the administration of cities where related policies often coalesce.¹⁵ I explore how interpretations of violence and safety have influenced changing concepts of LGBT identity as well as urban policy and social science research on neighborhoods and social deviancy—ranging from War on Poverty programs to quality-of-life laws, and from debates about the so-called culture of poverty to the idea of homophobia. Thus, this book is not a history of gay neighborhoods *per se* but an urban history of the encounters between *gay* and *neighborhood* in U.S. cities and social movements over the past fifty years.

Stonewall Redux?

On the surface, the challenge championed by Greenwich Village residents at the start of the 2000s appeared to be a return to the conditions that had given rise to Stonewall in the first place. In the late 1960s, Christopher Park had been a hangout for youths—many queer and some of color—who used drugs, hustled, and found themselves in trouble with the law. Unlike many other Greenwich Village gay bars, Stonewall opened its doors—if only by a crack—to those active in street economies, as it also did to a steady if small number of the gender nonconforming.¹⁶ These groups stood outside a normative gay culture—often standing outside its literal doors—and they were frequently the recipients of Greenwich Village residents' ire.¹⁷ Right after Stonewall, many gay men and lesbians disassociated themselves from the riots, and reform-oriented organizations like the homophile Mattachine Society beseeched fellow “homosexuals” to “maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the Village.”¹⁸ It was within this context that Stonewall provided the impetus for the founding of a radical organization, the Gay Liberation Front, which sought to forge gay politics within a multi-issue left.¹⁹

Similarly, in the Greenwich Village of the early twenty-first century, many white, middle-class lesbian and gay residents remained silent or absent during community meetings or supported organizations like RID and the Christopher Street Patrol. No major LGBT groups came out on behalf of those targeted, although residents' efforts were countered by the birth of a radical queer youth of color organization, Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE), which became a loud and unrelenting foe. The neighborhood was still seen by many to be a magnet for queer life, but during the day children's strollers had be-

come more visible than hustlers, and Two Potato—once a gay bar with a significant black and drag scene—would become Bar Nocetti, owned by and catering to those native West Villagers who were a part of the Italian community that has long been another dominant aspect of the neighborhood's identity.²⁰

But these two moments are also very different, for reasons that are both obvious and counterintuitive. First, in the 1960s, antisodomy laws still existed in many states, including New York, and crossed racial and class lines—in their letter, if not in their uneven enforcement; in addition, laws against lewdness, vagrancy, solicitation, and cross-dressing were routinely used to target a wide range of sexual and gender nonnormative people.²¹ Thus, an imagined solidarity existed between many of those arrested at the Stonewall Inn.²² Although in its early years the homophile movement had pursued some high-profile campaigns against the entrapment of homosexuals using such charges, gay men and lesbians were still considered a criminal class, and homophile efforts were dedicated to distinguishing them from others in that category.²³

In the years following, things changed. Decades of activism produced innumerable organizations and agencies to deal with “homophobia”—whether expressed by police misconduct, antigay violence, or even unneighborly hostility. Laws against private, consensual sodomy were eliminated as a general criminal category, and LGBT activists largely succeeded in dissociating the generic terms of homosexuality—and, to a lesser degree, transsexuality—from the broad category of the criminal. The enforcement of laws against lewdness, loitering, and solicitation continued to be used against LGBT people, but most often they were applied to those also targeted along other lines—significantly, race and class but also age, gender expression, and sexual subculture.²⁴ Insofar as these laws disproportionately affected LGBT youth, low-income people, and people of color, they were not necessarily still seen years later as shared concerns of white, middle-class, gender normative gay residents. Thus, in the early 2000s there were more organizations than ever prepared to respond to an anti-LGBT situation in an environment that did not appear to many to be anti-LGBT.

Second, during the late 1960s, solutions to the problems of so-called juvenile delinquency were still at least somewhat influenced by the analysis of poverty put forth by Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin's differential opportunity theory, which was the basis of the 1961 Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Offenses Control Act. The theory argued for structural rather than individual solutions and called for increasing institutional opportunities for low-income youth.²⁵ It was first put into practice in the organization Mobilization for Youth, which was based in New York's Lower East Side, not far

from Greenwich Village. The organization provided the model for the Community Action Program that was part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. The program exemplified the ongoing call for "community control" that was central to the War on Poverty; this ideal also led the charge for the development of neighborhood-based community boards in New York City during the mid-1960s.²⁶

Although by the end of the decade War on Poverty programs were under attack, and, in many cases, critiques of unequal social and economic structure were cast as indictments of unhealthy kinship and intimate relations (and used to uphold the normative valuation of liberal citizenship), the Stonewall-era response to youth and crime stands in contrast to the conservative rational choice approach that has supported the "zero tolerance" youth policing and education policies popular since the 1990s.²⁷ Furthermore, the broad influence of ideologies based in the primacy of the free market have worked in neighborhoods with rising rents to further secure the use of liberal institutions like community boards as mechanisms to protect property rights. As a result, community board members in Greenwich Village in the early 2000s often used the terms of community in order to restrict membership in the neighborhood. In addition, programs that serve LGBT youth have been unevenly developed across race and class lines in school districts and neighborhoods and are often concentrated in white, middle- and upper-income areas like Greenwich Village.²⁸ Thus, although youth who socialize on the streets of Greenwich Village have always been racially and economically mixed, by the last decades of the twentieth century the neighborhood was serving a crucial function for young people from areas without LGBT services from across the New York City region. The fact that this neighborhood was the ground zero for new draconian policing strategies—for example, quality-of-life policing in the city was initiated in Greenwich Village—must be understood as part of this broader cultural and economic geography.

Third, after Stonewall, Greenwich Village's reputation as a gay enclave grew, despite the fact that its queer history long preceded the riots.²⁹ By the end of the 1970s, the area's gay identity was not only a product of its gay residents and nightlife denizens, but also of its commerce, as more gay-owned and gay-oriented businesses were established there. Since then, Greenwich Village's gay identity has lasted despite the fact that many gay businesses have not, pushed out since the 1990s by rising rents and antisex zoning restrictions.³⁰ In 2007 the *New York Times* declared on its front page that gay neighborhoods were "passé" and had, in places like San Francisco's Castro District, "gone from a gay-ghetto mentality to a family mentality."³¹ Nonetheless, for many of these neighborhoods, their gay reputations have been durable enough to continue to attract local visitors and tourists. New York

City's largest LGBT community center is based in Greenwich Village, and when the city's tourism marketing agency launched the international Rainbow Pilgrimage campaign centered on the fortieth anniversary of Stonewall, its website heavily featured Greenwich Village spots.³²

As a result, although the neighborhood's gay identity continues in some ways to decline and many (although not all) of the residents who spoke up against LGBT youth in recent years were not publicly identified as gay, many observers saw the actions of the local community board as representing the viewpoint of a gay neighborhood.³³ Thus, regardless of the actual identities of the key actors, the dominant identity of the neighborhood supported both a broad assumption that a residents-based campaign against LGBT youth and transgender adult women of color was not anti-LGBT as well as a counteractivist argument that residents' efforts fundamentally represented white, middle-class, lesbian and gay interests that collude with those of the police.³⁴ The fact that residents deployed the same tactics as LGBT antiviolence activists—and often declared their actions to be in the name of gay protection—further cemented the latter association. It is this dualism—in which LGBT politics and property politics can be so indistinguishable—that outlines the history between the 1960s and the contemporary moment that I tell here.

Although the cross-temporal juxtaposition of the growth of radical liberation movements and the entrenchment of rearguard actions on behalf of property owners in Greenwich Village does not tell the whole story behind the politics of sexual identity, violence, and neighborhood, it does point to a significant overlap. The call for safe streets has been a rallying cry of social minorities and property owners in the eras of postwar urban decline and neoliberal development in the United States. In the early twenty-first century, this call became louder as national protection entered the center of U.S. public debate. The increased attention paid to security has revealed the disparate understandings of threat held by those considered representative of and marginal to the national body politic. This disjunction points to the need for deeper knowledge about violence and the quest for safety within local communities and contemporary social movements.

Whether to prevent crime, allay political uprisings, or assert the right to equal mobility, the fight against urban violence has been waged by the state and the disenfranchised alike—crossing lines of race, class, gender, and sexual identity—and has inspired much urban research since the tumult of the 1960s.³⁵ Scholars have focused on the conditions leading to and following the riots of the 1960s: some frame the problem of violence in terms of police

repression and the conditions of racism and poverty; others cast the city as the site of violent crime with, since the 1970s in particular, women, out-of-towners, and a generalized white, middle-class populace as its victims.³⁶ Studies on formal LGBT efforts to combat violence have been few. Historians have discussed the informal ways in which LGBT communities have fought back against physical threat as well as the legacy of homophile and gay liberation opposition to zealous policing, but the latter has been in the frame of entrapment more than violence, and there has been little coverage of the response to violence since.³⁷ Sociologists have given some attention to the official LGBT antiviolence movement begun in the 1980s and its advocacy of laws against hate crimes (crimes motivated by bias), and psychologists' studies of the rates, causes, and impacts of violence have supported policy efforts to name and address the problem of anti-LGBT violence.³⁸ Yet this empirical research is more likely to assess the effectiveness of advocacy than the ideologies of activism, and it almost never considers the broad context of the urban environment in which most of these movements have been staged.³⁹ Queer theory has provided a key framework for understanding how violence or the claim of injury has structured left and queer politics. Nonetheless, the majority of this scholarship is based on readings of narrative or visual representation, the law, and normative political claims.⁴⁰ Although this approach has been invaluable, there is less work that provides a kind of "thick description" of how grassroots and national movements construct the agents and victims of the violence that they hope to prevent and the spaces that they aim to protect.⁴¹

An analysis of the goal of LGBT safety in the city is important to understanding not only the transformation of LGBT politics since the 1960s, but also the development and management of space at various scales during the decline of a certain model of liberalism in the United States.⁴² Since the late 1960s, the state-based policies of social welfare and economic regulation that characterized postwar liberalism have been targeted by the ideals (if not always the practice) of a pure free market championed by neoliberalism.⁴³ One feature was the continued decimation of and then selective reinvestment in central cities, a process that has been repeated over the years.⁴⁴ Recurrent, too, in this cycle has been the declaration by policymakers and political pundits that (white) gay populations might hold the key for the rejuvenation of struggling metropolitan areas. In the 1970s, gay men were extolled for saving declining cities as vanguard members of the vaunted back-to-the-city movement; in the late 1990s and early 2000s, gay populations were invoked as enticements for the creative class of workers to settle in, and thus revitalize, restructured urban regions.⁴⁵ In each example, gay men (and, to a lesser degree, lesbians) are seen as the arbiters of risk,

their vulnerability to violence—or their protected presence—a measure of an urban region's vitality.⁴⁶ Thus, central to this history is the assessment of risk—the risk of violence associated with gay vulnerability that calls for crime control, as well as the risk of lost profit associated with real estate speculation—and how it shapes the conditions of possibility for normative gay community belonging and the land market.

Ultimately, this book argues that in mooring a dominant understanding of sexual identity to place, the promotion and protection of gay neighborhoods have reinforced the race and class stratification of postwar urban space. As I show, this has been enabled by the simultaneously flexible and fixed language of threat, in which violence is imagined as the central risk—and thus the defining feature—of gay visibility: the key term of mainstream LGBT politics since the 1970s. It is therefore impossible to understand LGBT political history outside of the social and spatial restructuring of U.S. cities during this time.⁴⁷ Nor can one fully understand changing spatial development patterns apart from LGBT politics, especially as white gay men continue to be invoked as arbiters of quality in urban life. Finally, these dynamics are not restricted to cities or to the United States, as they speak to both the global processes and the local effects of uneven development alongside the travels of U.S.-centered models of LGBT identity and social movements.

But this book is not only a story of the vexed legacies of postwar liberal policy and triumph of neoliberal ideology; it is also an analysis of organizations that struggled with and against each of those in imagining LGBT and queer futures in all sorts of places. Although I assert that mainstream LGBT political discourse has substantively transformed the category of anti-LGBT violence from the social to the criminological, and that this shift was grounded in privatized claims to neighborhood, the process was neither foretold nor total. Activists debated different definitions of violence and staged their critiques in varied contexts—in cooperation with civil rights leaders and in solidarity with revolutionary nationalists, alongside feminists as well as crime victims, through public agencies and in radical collectives, in the name of state-based redistribution and for the end of the U.S. nation-state. Although my coverage is far from complete, I signal the existence of a wide mix of LGBT and queer-identified urban activist responses to the pointed theme of violence.

Sex and the City

Recent scholarship in queer studies has rightly set the city to the side, underscoring that the central place afforded to a privileged urbanity in dominant lesbian and gay cultures and their historiography has created, to use

Judith Halberstam's term, a "metronormative" ideal that is applied to all other places not at equal scale.⁴⁸ Scott Herring specifies the operations of metronormativity as based in "the narratological, the racial, the socio-economic, the temporal, the epistemological, and the aesthetic" and argues that it "facilitates the ongoing commodification, corporatization, and depoliticization of U.S.-based queer cultures."⁴⁹ Depoliticization might be interpreted as a rather precise form of politics—one that, in this case, values an exclusive cosmopolitanism or consumer power.⁵⁰ In addition, as Herring agrees, those excluded from—or critical of—the metronormative promise often live well within city lines. A critical analysis of a politics of the city not only goes out of town; it also asks to whom the city belongs.

The narrow dominance afforded to the city (and to only certain cities, at that) is also reflected by the fact that many contemporary national LGBT organizations trace their roots to groups or campaigns founded in two U.S. urban centers—New York and San Francisco—in the 1970s and 1980s. This is particularly so in the case of violence: in the 1970s, the prevailing story may have held that the so-called gay ghetto provided salvation from an inhospitable small town and alienating suburb, but to many this also made it a clear target. Lesbian and gay activists took on the problem of street violence and developed theories and strategies that shaped the national approaches still in use today. This line of influence has been sustained even as some of the most well-publicized cases of anti-LGBT violence in recent years have taken place in small cities situated in more rural and midcontinent regions, such as the murders of Brandon Teena in Humboldt, Nebraska, in 1993 and of Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1998.⁵¹ In many ways, these events affirmed the dominant movement's claims of coastal urban refuge while confounding its reliance on models of protection based in threats imagined to lurk in East and West Coast central cities.⁵² Although this might be explained as the very contradiction of the metronormative, the facts that Shepard and Teena were white, their killers' hatred of them explained as products of self-perpetuating cultures of poverty, and their deaths used to advocate for the passage of hate crime laws and the application of the death penalty—all features of the history that I tell here—demonstrate that these issues are less related to urban form *per se* than to other modes of differentiation.⁵³ Nonetheless, the stubborn focus on the urban in early national movement building has meant that a variety of local responses to anti-LGBT violence—which have their own, albeit less institutionalized, histories—often have had to contend with models forged far from their social worlds.⁵⁴ These activist solutions are sometimes perpendicular, rather than parallel, to the story I tell here.⁵⁵

Today many national activist visions look not only metronormative but also homonormative—Lisa Duggan's term for gay politics rooted in the

ideal of privatization—insofar as they focus on individual rights, ask the state to adjudicate, and maintain faith in the equalizing power of the free market.⁵⁶ This is the case despite the fact that many of the first activists to challenge violence did so as part of movements in the late 1960s and 1970s that highlighted systemic inequality. Moreover, prior to that period, homophile organizations did not strategize to address individual violence as much as they responded to police abuse and broad anti-lesbian and gay sentiment. And among sexual and gender outsiders not in organizations, the reaction to one-on-one street violence was often more informal, with a direct return of violence such as that described by Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis in their study of working-class lesbians in Buffalo, New York, in the 1930s through 1960s; or by Susan Stryker about trans women at San Francisco's Compton's Cafeteria in the mid-1960s.⁵⁷ In other words, even as a dominant, national movement has sought privatization through the homogenization of people and state- and market-based solutions, a wide mix of individuals inside and outside the city have pursued safety through strategies of discretion, individual self-protection, and varied, often unofficial group measures.⁵⁸

This book argues for the centrality of the city, not as a natural or preferred place for homosexuality or for LGBT identities, but as a critical nexus for analyzing how politics, policy, and property have indelibly shaped LGBT social movements, in particular in response to violence. And it also contends the reverse: the defining function of violence within LGBT politics has influenced the life of U.S. cities.

There is a rich archive to draw on here. Since at least the nineteenth century, cultural production, academic research, and social policy in the West have associated sexual nonnormativity with the urban vice and alienation assumed to be negative by-products of industrialization. Julie Abraham describes Charles Baudelaire's *lesbiennes* and *flâneurs* in the streets of nineteenth-century Paris and Friedrich Engels's fear that industrialization's factories might turn women into prostitutes (even as he defended cities themselves).⁵⁹ In his famed essay "Capitalism and Gay Identity," John D'Emilio argues that it was the growth of the industrial city that produced the conditions of possibility for homosexual identities and, later, gay and lesbian communities.⁶⁰ And artists, scholars, and politicians have continued to hold up the vice-ridden city as the preeminent site of sexual perversion. This characterization has not only been used to discipline; the traction of the urban-homosexuality connection was also used to forge a sense of community. George Chauncey writes: "The men who built New York's gay world at the turn of the century and those who sought to suppress it shared the conviction that it was a distinctly urban phenomenon."⁶¹

Yet homosexuality is not the only marker of identity presumed to be in a relationship of equivalence with the city, especially in the United States since the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. *Black* and *urban* are often treated as interchangeable adjectives, based on a correlation that has been most strongly asserted in periods of urban growth (such as the Great Migration); contraction (such as postwar urban renewal and suburbanization); and crisis (such as the uprisings of the 1960s). As Hazel Carby, Roderick Ferguson, Kevin Mumford, and Marlon Ross have shown, the enterprises of urban sociology and progressive charity emerged in part by interlocking sexual, racial, and gender regulation in efforts to control the forces of social disorganization in the city.⁶² Reform and research took family and neighborhood as key sites of intervention for a variety of supposed deviancies, and racial hierarchies were often asserted through sexual discourses of normalization. As Ferguson notes, these associations also drove professionalized approaches to mapping the city: “While sociology established an epistemological proximity to blackness and homosexuality, vice districts helped to render them as materially proximate.”⁶³ Siobhan Somerville charts the entwined and contradictory discourses of racial and sexual deviance that were present not only in social research and the law at the start of this period, but also in diverse forms of cultural production, such as literature and film.⁶⁴ Unsurprisingly, then, sites of leisure were among the most studied and targeted; but, as Shane Vogel demonstrates in his look at the cabarets of the Harlem Renaissance, they were also places in which performances that refused the paired imperatives of respectability and knowability were, quite literally, staged.⁶⁵

From the late nineteenth century onward, the U.S. city also was a preeminent site for the regulation of other racialized migrant populations, and the impoverished neighborhoods to which they were confined were often described by those in power as spatial expressions of residents’ “true nature.” Nayan Shah shows how places like San Francisco’s Chinatown were treated by municipal managers as physical manifestations of the “perversions” of Chinese immigrant men and women—whose domestic patterns were, in part, shaped by the restrictions mandated by the 1875 Page Law and 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.⁶⁶ And starting in 1952, the Urban Indian Relocation Program of the Bureau of Indian Affairs moved Native Americans into urban centers just as the white middle class was taking flight to the suburbs.⁶⁷ Arriving in cities like Chicago and Los Angeles with limited economic opportunities, many Native people would soon be living near to or in—and then increasingly associated with—areas described as skid rows. These are but two of numerous examples of how racial segregation and economic stratification have been charted as biological and cultural phenomena.⁶⁸

Although the correlation between homosexuality and vice has appeared in many contexts, most organized activism on behalf of lesbians and gay men has been dedicated to tearing this association apart. After World War II, homophile activists slowly—yet inconsistently—moved to distinguish homosexuality from other forms of social deviancy, especially those associated with the racialized poverty of the city. By the 1970s, in the midst of a much-hyped crime crisis, activist efforts to assert that lesbians and gay men were victims rather than perpetrators of crime widened the distance. Although this book argues that the process of distinguishing between gay identity and racialized ideas of urban disorder must be understood in the context of the restructuring of central cities and the expansion of the penal state, it also outlines this dynamic as a product of activist engagement with federal policy. As Margot Canaday demonstrates, it was during the World War II era that the federal government began to constitute homosexuals as an explicit category to be regulated in immigration, welfare, and military policy. Prior to that point, homosexuality had been policed by the state alongside other social problems such as “poverty, disorder, violence, or crime.”⁶⁹ In this book, I trace how the disaggregation of homosexuality from other social problems was pursued by activists eager to create a new political identity in similarly separate terms—a strategy adopted, for example, by early homophile organizers who directed their actions both against and in collaboration with federal powers. Furthermore, the emergence of homosexuality as an autonomous regulatory category did not mean that others marked deviant, such as the racialized poor, were no longer criminalized and subject to policing. Nonetheless, these *other* outsiders were not uniformly considered a part of a new social movement that would largely be cast in terms of identity, respectability, and rights—rather than the refusal of normalization that might be in affinity with what Cathy Cohen describes as “deviance as resistance.”⁷⁰

Thus *Safe Space* looks to the city not only because of its connection to the now dominant LGBT movement it studies, but also because of whom this movement has defined itself against. When the antigay-marriage Proposition 8 passed in California in November 2008, many white gay commentators suggested that it was African Americans’ fault. The assumption that people of color of all economic classes are more *homophobic* than whites has been durable within mainstream LGBT politics—a view often held across racial lines—and this book argues that these ideas are linked to how LGBT organizations imagined their relationship to low-income people of color within urban centers in the early years of the consolidation of the LGBT rights movement.⁷¹ Furthermore, this association was sutured in place by the central role of social science research in postwar liberal politics, which

provided an explanation—and a mode of quantification—for inequality in cultural pathology and damaged psychology and thus outlined its terms of proper social and personal remediation. The result today is that even as organizations and scholarship have expanded to include the experiences of LGBT and queer people of color in the United States and around the world, the idea that poverty and/or nonwhiteness is at the crux of homophobia and thus outside of idealized LGBT identities has been central to mainstream LGBT political discourse.⁷²

The implications of this cultural map for homophobia within anti-violence politics cannot be overstated; two of the primary activist solutions to anti-LGBT violence since the 1970s—the establishment of protected gay territories and the identification of anti-LGBT violence as a designated criminal category—must be paired with two of global capital's own “spatial fixes”: gentrification and mass imprisonment.⁷³ These are processes that have involved the containment and exclusion of the racialized poor: in neighborhoods marked for cycles of disinvestment and then selective reinvestment, and, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore has shown, in prisons built to absorb surpluses of labor, land, and capital.⁷⁴ By the 1980s anti-LGBT violence had become most recognizable as hate crimes, and the risk of anti-LGBT violence was increasingly understood as the risk of being a crime victim. In gentrifying neighborhoods in which the speculative risk of investment was lessened by the elimination of those deemed criminal, the fight against anti-LGBT violence might achieve such an effect. As the dynamics of criminalization are not reducible to economic structure alone, those indicted by mainstream homophobia discourse constitute a simultaneously broad and precise group that accommodates shifting dynamics of racialization. Furthermore, spatial-temporal fixes operate as part of uneven development on a local and a global scale. Thus, although laws against hate crimes emerged in the context of the primacy of antiblackness within devalued U.S. central cities, they also have become a part of efforts to outline as a threat racialized migrant and religious groups in multiple spatial contexts across the globe.⁷⁵

This is not to say that anti-LGBT violence is not a problem, nor is it to downplay the effects of violence, especially among those who are left out of dominant LGBT politics. The violence of poverty and white supremacy carry a brutal force for those who also stand outside heterosexuality or gender conformity, and the very acts of consolidating and parsing identities can constitute a kind of epistemic injury. Furthermore, I do not mean to suggest a mere reversal: that low-income or of color communities are never homophobic, or that LGBT organizations should not fight various forms of anti-LGBT violence. What I hope to stress, instead, is that the history of criminalization and spatial development must be considered as part of the

equation. This is because as the category of what constitutes a crime has grown to become more inclusive, it has also condensed what counts as violence so that those things that are not legible within juridical modes are not acknowledged at all.

Thus, another key piece of this book is to analyze the role empirical evidence has played in legitimizing injury. One of the antiviolence movement's most significant contributions was the formalization of independent and U.S. Department of Justice mechanisms for reporting hate crimes. These annual reports both replace and supplement narrative understandings of violence. The effect is to narrow the field of focus through a figuration of all that it hopes to make "visible"; as Mary Poovey writes of statistical representation, "it . . . both limits what it will depict and necessarily produces an uncontrollable excess."⁷⁶ The consequences I explore include the ways in which the social science of cause and effect can transform the field of radical politics into a rubric for social service delivery. Furthermore, in a liberal analytic that sees group inequality to be based on an enumeration of individual injuries, key terms of distinction—such as between individual self-help and group self-determination—become increasingly blurred.⁷⁷ This book narrates the history of LGBT liberalism as one fundamentally indebted, then, to the elaboration of the social sciences.

A Tale of Two Cities

My critique of empiricism follows José Esteban Muñoz's call for a "utopian hermeneutics" as I reach across time and geography to mark the past in the present, and to find the future there as well.⁷⁸ As a result, this book is not a singular, progressive history of the formal LGBT antiviolence movement founded in the early 1980s, nor is it a comparative urban study. Rather, the book sketches a light and jagged line for analyzing LGBT activism against violence as framed by questions of neighborhood and crime. Through case studies, I examine campaigns against violence since the 1960s—the years in which organized lesbian and gay activism against the police began to gather broad, public momentum—and outline their ideological and organizational links and breaks. I highlight moments in which violence functioned as the principal term of organizing, as well as when it was used as shorthand for other concerns. In addition, I focus on aspects of the formal LGBT antiviolence movement that have rarely been included in the secondary literature, such as the influence of small, grassroots activist groups as well as related forms of urban crime control and economic policy. Although I ultimately trace the emergence of a mainstream LGBT movement, I set it within a complicated history of political developments that imagined a variety of

solutions to the problem of violence. This includes homophile activists who considered poverty and state violence as important points of intervention. I also look at organizations from the late 1970s and early 1980s that inverted the terms of antiviolence organizing by critiquing calls for gay territory and refusing the promises of police protection. Often centered in people of color and lesbian feminist collectives, these efforts developed across the country and pursued goals outside the visibility mandate. Finally, I consider contemporary groups that draw on the legacy of antiracist, multi-issue organizing and that maintain a troubled relationship to the goal of inclusion. As much of the scholarship on LGBT movements has emphasized visibility, coalitional groups or those with other goals have received less attention. Indeed, an unintended development of the literature on homonormativity is the overshadowing of long-standing challengers to homonormative political visions. Thus, although its full scope is beyond the reach of this book, I gesture toward a genealogy for activism against violence that has sought strategies outside of state protection and property and that has been forged in small collectives, often outside my featured cities.

That noted, the book is focused on New York and San Francisco, the two cities most key to the career of mainstream U.S. LGBT antiviolence organizing. Although Los Angeles has played an equally significant role in LGBT activist history as the other two cities, it was not as central to the antiviolence movement's origins and subsequent national consolidation. This is due, in part, to the status of San Francisco and New York as pedestrian-oriented cities with strong community responses to street violence. In neighborhoods across New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960s social movements were bound up with local solutions to violence and crime.⁷⁹ Activists and residents alike responded to the call of President Johnson's Great Society, hoping that the promise of militancy might be realized alongside local liberal reform. It is interesting, then, that it was during this period that some of the earliest sustained LGBT activist efforts to challenge violence in designated urban areas began. Other cities that shared San Francisco's and New York's dense development, neighborhood campaigns, and active LGBT politics—such as Chicago and Philadelphia—did not make as early a mark on the national antiviolence movement.⁸⁰ This is not to say that responses to violence, both formal and informal, did not flourish in these and other cities, small towns, and rural regions. Rather, it is to highlight the fact that the formal movement was initiated in the cities that would continue to be so centered in LGBT political activism and history. To this day, New York's and San Francisco's antiviolence projects are among the largest and most developed, and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs shares an office with the New York Anti-Violence Project.⁸¹

There are many risks to my approach. First, it keeps the field of what constitutes politics narrow, excluding a range of activities that do not announce themselves as LGBT activism. This book, for example, does not analyze the broad range of cultural productions that radically rearticulate the political sphere.⁸² It also does not include activism that advocated for sexual justice without ever naming LGBT subjects.⁸³ It thus accepts the limited terms of social movements, even as it does so to gesture toward and even highlight other interpretations. In many ways this tack can affirm that which the dominant approach has already affirmed: to tell a story about the mainstream and its critics is to leave the former in the center.⁸⁴ These are some of the dynamics Karen Tongson describes through which the literature of LGBT studies creates the very parameters by which it recognizes the queer subject in space. Tongson points to the narrow dominance of New York and San Francisco in LGBT history, and she shows how easily a description of a given city's particular features can slip into a naturalization of that city's supposed "cultural style" and its "quality of queer life" as "a prototype for the exemplary queer."⁸⁵ This book addresses this issue by considering the antiviolence movement as a locus for the institutionalization of a "special character" of gay politics—which I dub militant gay liberalism—that found particular momentum in the 1970s around the question of violence in the gay enclaves of New York and San Francisco.⁸⁶

Tongson's critique highlights the limitations not only of a mainstream lesbian and gay politics but also of a queer antinormativity that figures itself in opposition to the *other* of the suburbs. Pointing to suburbs as not only homogeneous spaces of white wealth but also as home to working- and middle-class people of color, Tongson questions the neat divisions made between that which is supposedly critical versus the allegedly complicit, between the fashionable and the out of it. Although not the focus of this book, Tongson's observation here is crucial, given that the waves of gentrification in U.S. cities since the 1970s have been in part responsible for the flip (often via the "flipping" of real estate) in land values between urban core and periphery. Cities like San Francisco and Washington, D.C., for example, are small seas of speculative growth marked by pockets of intense poverty, both of which are defined along racial lines. Inner suburban rings have become the sites of capital flight and the places where poor and working- and middle-class people, both of color and white—and inclusive of LGBT people—increasingly may be found.⁸⁷ (In New York, the core of Manhattan and near parts of Queens and Brooklyn are contrasted to the outer boroughs, which also function somewhat like close suburbs.) These are also the places where strip bars, prostitution and drug houses, adult bookstores, and gambling clubs are increasingly located. Thus the investment in a hip queer urbanity

must be seen as a rejection both of purportedly earnest and unfashionable suburbanites and of those other queer subjects that tend to be deemed *risks* for capital investment and *at risk*, in need of social intervention.⁸⁸ In these cases, the race and class markers associated with the city are shown to be less about urban form than about patterns of racial segregation and capital investment that prescribe who lives where; this is in part why the word *ghetto* is now used as often as a free-floating, derogatory term for a racialized class position as it is for a race- and class-bounded urban area.

As a national political agenda item, antiviolence activism has not been primarily associated with neighborhood history or spatial development regimes. Rather, since the 1980s, the LGBT movement has combated violence by demanding the inclusion first of sexual orientation and later of gender identity as protected categories under local and federal statutes against hate crimes. My research considers the history of cities alongside the move to legislate violence and, in doing so, argues for a link that is rarely acknowledged. Here I hope to demonstrate that the connection between neighborhood transformation and antiviolence ideologies is both conceptual and organizational. Conceptually, I show that urban politics since the 1960s has hinged on the operation of violence as an individualized threat that then justifies calls for forms of state violence, such as criminalization and privatization. Thus, certain lesbians and gay men, as they move out of the category of criminal and turn to the language and strategies of state protection (in the call for rights or responsive policing) necessarily play a key role in this urban transformation. These links between neighborhood and antiviolence activity have also been demonstrated on the level of the activist organization: the earliest movers and shakers of the formal antiviolence movement learned from the examples of safe streets patrols in the so-called gay ghettos of New York and San Francisco in the 1970s.⁸⁹ Founded in opposition to homophile activists who had followed a more quietist approach to piecemeal state reformism, as well as to gay liberationists who refused a gay-only focus, these efforts inaugurated a shift from multi-issue organizing against state abuse to a vigilant concern with individualized threats found on the streets. The fact that this fear and strategy continued to circulate in gay enclaves like New York's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Castro demonstrates the central role violence has played in defining neighborhood as one of the most prized expressions of LGBT community.⁹⁰ In unraveling this history, this book asks some of the less common questions put to these movements: How is violence assessed? What counts as safety? Who is part of the LGBT community? And in what social collectives and physical spaces does belonging bring security?

The book is structured to engage key moments in LGBT activist history without drawing a straight or progressive line between them (both puns intended). It also brings together a range of literatures, including the history of U.S. LGBT activism, postwar cities, and left/liberal social movements; the sociology of urban development and crime; critical debates about race, capital, and space; and queer theoretical takes on identity, normativity, and political cultures. This approach manifests the benefits and limits of a mode of scholarship that leads with questions and seeks answers across disciplines. My hope is that a wide variety of readers might find themselves in conversation with me, although I invariably do not do justice to the full breadth of scholarship on each topic or from a given field. My goal, instead, is to forge connections between areas of study and to elaborate what emerges from those intersections. Thus, rather than provide an introduction to the book with an overarching framework for any one or all of these contexts, I open each chapter with a review of the most relevant background needed for the reader to understand its case studies. Nonetheless, the book's key arguments are cumulative, so although each chapter stands alone, it refers to the histories and analyses outlined by the previous ones.

It is also important to note that insofar as I tell and dislodge a story of homonormativity, this book is in many ways a gesture of recovery, itself a visibility claim made legible by historical narrative in particular. Indeed, that is the structure that organizes and propels this book; one of the main contributions I offer is a historical, social movement-centered analysis of questions that are often taken up by more literary-critical queer studies scholarship. But should you make it through to the end of this book you will find yourself in another register of academic ordering, one that tries to address the moment in which it is written. As I describe later in this introduction, the book's research began near the point at which it ends, and thus it constitutes not only improper history but, I hope, a push back at social movements' singular end-driven impulses.⁹¹ Along the way, I strive to make the road bumpy, refusing stories of constant improvement as well as those of determined demise: claims that LGBT or queer activism has gotten more inclusive or more exclusive, less radical than ever or less strategic than it could have been. I try to paint a picture that is at once messier and more in focus, not only so that I may mix my metaphors and my methods, but also so that I might ask what has changed, what has remained the same, and why we might care.⁹²

My first chapter features two campaigns from the mid- to late 1960s that included the leading participation of homophile activists in San Francisco's Central City. In the first, homophile activists collaborated with other social

reformers to demand that the neighborhood be designated a target area under the Community Action Program of the Johnson administration's War on Poverty. They did so in part by asserting that one part of the Central City—the Tenderloin—was a “white ghetto” of “prostitutes,” “transsexuals,” “hotel loners,” and “homosexuals” who faced the same problems as did people in low-income areas where people of color were the majority. In the second case study, homophile activists were among those who banded together to found Citizen's Alert, one of the nation's first citywide, homosexual-inclusive police watchdog organizations. In this chapter I show how the mid-1960s San Francisco fight against poverty and state violence provided an opportunity for white homophile activists to participate in forms of cross-identity coalition at the same time as they leaned on a limited analogy between the social regulation of (white) sexual “outcasts” and people of color. In particular, I examine how the focus on psychology central to the legacy of postwar racial liberalism facilitated these connections and provided the groundwork for a model of gay liberalism that would prove lasting in the decades to come. The chapter also considers the activities of a small radical youth organization, Vanguard, which both inverted and replicated many of the terms of homophile activism.

Because none of these coalitions were exclusively focused on homosexuals and they took place during the years that the homophile movement has been described as fading, they have received little attention until recently.⁹³ Moreover, the combination of social justice theology, Saul Alinsky-style community organizing, countercultural expressions, and varying degrees of state-sponsored uplift delegates these efforts to an indeterminate, if also familiar, place in 1960s left/liberal politics. This is especially the case since the key players did not abide by many of the standard definitions of *radical* and *conservative*, collaborating with activists who called for the end of state institutions at the same time as they forged state-participatory solutions, or advocating assimilation while assailing cultural norms. To be sure, these seeming oppositions were a product of the conflicted promises posed by the War on Poverty's emphasis on community participation. They also reflected many of the debates that marked the history of the civil rights movement, which Central City activists held as a model. Ultimately, I argue that these dynamics demonstrate the contradiction involved in consolidating gay identity while gaining recognition from a federal antipoverty program; a process that unhooked, even as it depended on, the links between homosexuality, transsexuality, and other categories of deviancy associated with urban poverty as well as the shared experience of state violence among a variety of marginalized city dwellers.

In contrast to the homophile drive for state recognition, gay liberation-

ists at the end of the 1960s refused to accept what they saw as the placating efforts of urban social policy, despite a shared conviction that violence was linked to unchecked police power. Early gay liberation was closely linked to the New Left and, in general, stood in solidarity with anti-imperialist, revolutionary nationalist, and radical indigenous activism. These political movements tended to focus on a critique of state violence and to support self-determination and place claims. Gay liberationists extended this stance through an interpretation of violence as that both practiced and sanctioned by the state, and they trumpeted the reclamation of gay neighborhoods from Mafia and police control. But as this was increasingly conjoined by a call to see gay men and lesbians as on the side of the law rather than as criminals, individual violence remained an amorphous category, as did the potential locales (urban and rural) for new gay territories. Chapter 2 opens with a discussion of the shifting definitions of and approaches to violence held by gay liberationists, and it shows how, in particular, analogies between race and sexuality were used to theorize the problem of violence and to stake land claims.

As the 1970s continued, lesbian and gay organizations multiplied, as did divisions between them. Activists debated core ideological issues, including multi-issue versus gay-centered approaches, the place of communist and socialist visions, and the role of race and gender in structuring anti-LGBT oppression. Chapter 2 considers the growth of a new gay rights model in the mid-1970s that I call militant gay liberalism, which combined the militancy and countercultural performativity of gay liberation with a gay-focused, reform-oriented agenda. Neither far to the left nor complacent in their liberal goals, these organizations arose to address a range of issues that activists understood to directly and uniquely affect all gays and lesbians, such as street violence and the need for designated neighborhoods. The chapter focuses on a series of gay safe streets patrols—such as the Lavender Panthers in San Francisco’s Tenderloin, the Butterfly Brigade in that city’s Castro, and the Society to Make America Safe for Homosexuals in New York’s Chelsea—that postdated the heyday of gay liberation and predated the consolidation of national civil rights organizations. These patrols ranged from quests for self-determination to ad hoc gatherings of self-proclaimed vigilantes, all of whom hoped to assert and protect *gay space*.

Here the book also explores the parallels between social-scientific studies of urban violence and poverty and the growing circulation of the term *homophobia*. I examine how the lasting influence of the psychological bases of postwar liberalism—in particular, their sedimentation in the culture of poverty thesis—shaped the consolidation of the new discourse of homophobia through a shared emphasis on the psychopathologies of damaged masculin-

ity and low self-esteem. During these same years, community policing in the form of neighborhood patrols became popular among both middle-class communities and gay activists. I consider how these patrols were inspired by the participatory ideals of postwar liberalism but took shape in the 1970s in the context of the rising influence of conservative rational choice theories, which take crime as a given and shift the focus to punishment and the management of victims. Thus, gay safe streets patrols were part of a broad process that saw the transformation of gay spaces from places of residential concentration to expanding visible niche markets for retail commerce and real estate speculation, each firmly in place by the end of the 1970s.

Gay safe streets patrols learned from feminist models, in particular anti-rape activism. Yet at the time, many lesbian feminist organizations were taking a very different approach to issues of violence and urban space. Around the same years as militant gay liberal visions were congealing and achieving some power—most famously with the 1977 election of gay supervisor Harvey Milk in San Francisco—others were pointing to the contradictions inherent in trying to solve street violence by relying on crime control and the protection of gay neighborhoods. This was a critique sustained by a variety of organizations, especially LGBT groups whose members were also active in other movements, including the black freedom struggle, radical feminisms, anti-imperialism, and Marxist-Leninist and Maoist parties. Chapter 3 begins by returning to the time of Stonewall and then moving quickly through the 1970s to identify organizations that focused on analyses of race and gender in their explanations for LGBT marginalization. The chapter then homes in on 1980, around when many of these trajectories merged and gained traction in a series of organizations that theorized the place of race, gender, and sexual identity in public contestations over antigay violence and gay participation in gentrification. I show how these groups pointed to the contradictions of militant gay liberalism as part of the history of criminalization and uneven development, while they also posited models of activism outside the instrumentalism of scientific measurement, social reform, and dominant leftist visions.

Organizations such as the Third World Gay Coalition in Berkeley, Lesbians Against Police Violence in San Francisco, and Dykes Against Racism Everywhere in New York, among others, were also key for how they challenged economic programs that pushed ahead with the election of Ronald Reagan. Reagan's policies of privatization and market freedom helped to formalize the U.S. role in the global ascension of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism not only transformed the structure of accumulation under capitalism, but it—along with the attendant growth of financialization—also reshaped the ideologies of everyday life to naturalize the market and downplay group

inequality. The organizations featured in this chapter claimed identity while disavowing its singularity, called on structural analyses while refusing the will to tabulate, and, therefore, helped to point to the crisis in liberalism during those years. Furthermore, I show that these examples of radical lesbian and gay organizing should not be dismissed due to their admittedly short life and small scale. Rather, by considering these groups cumulatively, I suggest that they constituted a social movement that has not only been lost in the archive, but that has been disaggregated in its narration into false camps that place identity and culture on one side and class structure and organized movements on the other. The groups profiled in this chapter insisted, for example, that white identity held economic value in an urban land market, while they also saw a sweaty softball game to be part of the struggle. Activists would follow a protest against the police with a poem, not only so that they could then hand it out at the next rally but also as a way to talk about how language makes history.

Also at the start of the 1980s, activists who had become frustrated by the limits of grassroots organizing—including some members of the street patrols described in chapter 2—were central to the founding of a new wave of policy-oriented antiviolence organizations, such as Community United Against Violence in San Francisco and the Chelsea Anti-Crime Task Force (which eventually became the New York Anti-Violence Project). Chapter 4 marks the birth of these organizations and their influence on the founding of the national antiviolence movement in the 1980s. Although the impetus for local campaigns came from on-the-ground action, the institutionalization of antiviolence politics was fueled by a reliance on social research. The inspiration for many studies was the National Gay (and Lesbian) Task Force and their (Anti-)Violence Project, which was established in 1982 to address the issue of antigay violence nationwide. Federal policies and agencies protecting crime victims also first came into effect during these years—for example, the federal Office for Victims of Crime was established in 1983. Fighting for laws that target hate crimes soon became a top priority of the antiviolence movement. In this chapter, I sketch a history of this movement, considering how advocacy for sexual orientation-inclusive (and, later, gender identity-inclusive) hate crime laws took center stage.

One of the ambiguities of hate crime designations is proof of intent; language tends to be the main determinant. Yet another factor is geography, and how the location of violence, coupled with the identity of the accused, might prove violence has been spurred by bias. As a result, hate crime designations are effectively in the position to label certain areas as “gay” and certain individuals as insiders or outsiders. Chapter 4 looks at how gay visibility was cast as a goal and a risk of neighborhood growth, and how this dual set

of assumptions helped to define the essence of antigay violence as a crime. This convergence of ideas was aided by two of the leading partnerships formed by the lesbian and gay antiviolence movement in the 1980s: with the National Organization for Victim Assistance and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. The former group helped to provide a framework for understanding that the injury of the individual crime victim was also an attack on a broader group, and the latter developed the model legislation for hate crime laws. It is also important to note that the antiviolence movement's collaboration with the Anti-Defamation League occurred at the same time that the league expanded its campaigns on college campuses to assert that many emerging critiques of Zionism constituted anti-Semitism. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's talking tours during these years gestured at this link, citing as shared between gay and Jewish people the experience of the Holocaust, life with invisible marginalized identities, and the need for safety in protected territories. I analyze the implications of these connections to the development of a national antiviolence movement.

Also central is the fact that although the first hate crime statutes mandated government documentation of bias, by the early 1990s the thrust had shifted to the enhancement of punishment. Chapter 4 analyzes the significance of empowering the state to arbitrate hate. By considering hate crime laws as but one strategy of constructing uneven geographies, this chapter forces discussions of violence in a culture of bias to include—in the plainest of terms—a history of real estate. The chapter ends in the early 1990s, highlighting how the understanding of anti-LGBT violence as first and foremost a crime had become so widespread as to be central to otherwise varied political visions. Specifically, I look at the activities of groups spun off from the organization Queer Nation that were modeling new patrols after the Guardian Angels in the streets of gay enclaves and gentrifying counter-cultural zones in San Francisco and New York (among other cities). I mark here the founding of another safe streets patrol—the Christopher Street Patrol—that remained active in New York's Greenwich Village in the decades to follow. Primarily run by residents and business associations, the Christopher Street Patrol emerged as nonaffiliated yet often complementary to activist-oriented patrols like the Queer Nation-affiliated Pink Panthers.

Over the next decade the Christopher Street Patrol's targets narrowed. By 2000 Greenwich Village residents were making heated claims that social service providers and nonresidents were to blame for residents' low quality of life and lack of safety, and calling for police crackdowns on minor infractions like noise and loitering. Those most targeted were LGBT youth and transgender adult women, both of color—who saw gay enclaves as

providing the safety of community and anonymity. But Greenwich Village residents were not without opposition; chapter 5 looks at the challenges put to them by activists associated with the group Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment (FIERCE). The 1990s saw the founding of numerous community-based organizations in the United States dedicated to racial, sexual, economic, and gender justice that often kept issues of violence and neighborhood at the top of their agendas. This was also the period in which there was a substantial growth in transgender activism, and the vulnerability of trans and gender nonconforming people to violence became a major activist theme. Organizations such as the Audre Lorde Project in New York and TransAction in San Francisco were initiated in 1994 and 1997, respectively, just as the national antiviolence movement was sharpening its focus on penalty-oriented hate crime laws. In the early 2000s groups such as FIERCE, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and the Trans-Justice Project of the Audre Lorde Project—all in New York—and, later, a retooled Community United Against Violence in San Francisco, provided alternatives to the dominant script of violence and safety circulating in the mainstream movement. This chapter looks closely at FIERCE and its campaigns in Greenwich Village, demonstrating how activists extended the kinds of critiques of violence featured in chapter 3.

Chapter 5 also considers how FIERCE activists rewrote (and sustained) many of the terms of urban reform that frame this book. Specifically, the chapter places the debates between residents and activists over who can make claims to Greenwich Village within a history of neighborhood-based governance. It demonstrates how the 1960s liberal reforms with which the book opens can provide the very mechanisms through which marginalized populations continue to be excluded from an increasingly privatized urban landscape. I analyze this in the context of policy claims that gay tolerance—presumably a measure of safety—increases the success of the so-called new (now old) economy in U.S. cities. Ultimately, I show that the uneven value attributed to safety by activists and residents in Greenwich Village underscores the tenuous, rather than commonplace, understanding of violence and the unstable link between individual and group benefit behind both hate crime laws and neoliberalism. In the book's conclusion, I examine how some of the primary themes of this book—place claiming and uneven development, risk and speculation, social services and social movements, vulnerability and visibility—continue to be mobilized together and torn apart, and I speculate about how queer organizing that takes on the terms of violence and safety might redefine those structures of injury and belonging that I have traced.

Looking “Backward”

Although the book’s case studies unfold in chronological succession, they were captured through a process of tracing history backward and of marking what some would deem to be backward or shameful history.⁹⁴ My interest in the topic first began with two small case studies of lesbian bars in gentrifying neighborhoods—the first in San Francisco, in 1996; the second in Brooklyn, New York, in 1999—that were using the terms of safety to advocate for new development and policing, respectively. Several years later, I again found myself in community meetings that were debating the same issues in New York’s Greenwich Village. I set out to find the backstory, so to speak, of these recurring conflicts. This investigation would send me on innumerable trips to archives to find the records of earlier activist campaigns. These archives included collections at both New York City’s main public library and its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center; crowded repositories of lesbian “herstory” and new transgender movement artifacts in lived-in homes from Brooklyn, New York, to Northampton, Massachusetts; established archives at New York University and Cornell University; early community archiving projects such as the June Mazer Lesbian Archives and ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, both in Los Angeles, and the Rainbow History Project, in Washington, D.C.; the massive collections of the San Francisco Public Library and that city’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society; and the small holdings of nonprofits like the Women of Color Resource Center in Oakland, California, and those of numerous individuals.⁹⁵ Along the way, I interviewed Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who founded the first lesbian organization in the United States; gay safe streets activists from the 1970s, many of whom became leading players in the fight against AIDS in the 1980s and 1990s; lesbian feminists from the 1980s who have traveled down roads much wider than I could have ever imagined; LGBT policy advocates from the 1990s who continue their hard work in diverse milieus; and contemporary queer youth organizers who are, to this day, reinventing the politics of gender and sexuality. I also had discussions with activists, archivists, nonprofit workers, and fellow researchers—on phones, in homes, on panels, and on street corners—whose stories enlivened the policy documents, correspondence, meeting minutes, and other ephemera I found. Throughout this process, I would return to my home in New York, attending rallies and direct actions and helping organizers carry bottles of water to youth-run speak-outs and protests.

When I began to write up this research, I found the following words I had written in italics and set aside from my innumerable pages of notes taken while I was in various archives: “*There is no way to deny the intense*

emotional response of someone's murder, their lover's loss, a sense of community injury. I'm trying to capture this feeling." The desire to capture this feeling was not because emotions were absent from my research process. More often than not, feelings of anger and upset would alternate with those of excitement and optimism as I moved between studying political cultures that I found deeply troubling and those that I found incredibly meaningful (and, of course, those that were not so simple to categorize). Rather, I wrote these words because it had become easy to minimize the pain of individual violence while crafting a critique of what I often understood to be organized retribution, and I needed to remember that these two things were not the same. In refusing to write a singularly celebratory story of LGBT history, I also wanted to resist a drive to shame those whose actions I might analyze in ways different than they do.⁹⁶

This is not only because of a desire to maintain empathy in the context of study. Rather, many of the political actors I encountered were passionate about the rights not only of LGBT people, but also of numerous individuals at the dominant culture's margins. Although this book sometimes differs in its analysis of the consequences of certain movement actions, it does not doubt the genuineness of activists' individual intentions. It is thus necessary to state clearly that this is not a history of individual activists per se, but a historical study of collective, public action. I conducted original interviews with twenty-one individuals, and I draw on additional interviews done by others.⁹⁷ I use this material to highlight activists' individual experiences, which are often downplayed by the collective form of activism. But those of us who have participated in social movements know that many actions do not represent individual beliefs, and that in retrospect good ideas can seem . . . well . . . less so.⁹⁸ This is one of the risks of the model of participatory democracy that most of the organizations I studied followed.⁹⁹ Furthermore, I spoke with a broad political spectrum of individuals whose interpretations of events—let alone memories of them—can diverge and have changed. For all of these reasons and more, the majority of my narrative is culled from archived documents and ephemera, as I focus my lens on actions, mission statements, meeting minutes, correspondence, strategy sessions, manifestos, and policy reports.¹⁰⁰ That noted, in those cases in which there is an absence of accessible written materials, I rely more heavily on interviews, including activists' narration of their own private collections.¹⁰¹ In sum, this book hopes to avoid an approach that flattens the dynamic struggles of movement actors and that takes frozen targets out of context, while also contending that a focus on the individual activist's intention too can provide for a limited reading. And, importantly, I want to note that many of the people I interviewed have since died and others fight

in political struggles with marginal support every day.¹⁰² They plan actions with limited resources, and they do not always get the opportunity to debate analyses with each other, let alone with academic audiences.

The method I adopt also extends into the final chapter, which features political campaigns that are still ongoing. In 2003, while a graduate student, I affiliated with FIERCE as an “ally,” meaning someone who is supportive of the group’s aims but not a member of its named constituency—in this instance, queer youth of color. My role mostly involved administrative support in the office and logistical assistance at events, which were useful tasks for someone with the skills and schedule of a full-time student. I also participated in the planning (mostly silently) and execution (often loudly) of rallies, marches, and other actions. But I did not do a sustained study of the organization and its members. Furthermore, the organization assigned me, in my role as ally, the task of speaking to other researchers about how we might work to support rather than only advise or study the group. As a result, this final chapter is based in a combination of observations I made at public protests as well as public meetings hosted by residents and business owners (with and without the presence of FIERCE), in addition to municipal documents, journalistic coverage, and interviews, many conducted years after I was most actively involved with the organization.¹⁰³ I also draw from the extensive written and visual materials produced by FIERCE. Thus, this chapter, like the others, does not seek to be a representative look at the lives of those creating political arguments in the West Village but, rather, a study of how those arguments took shape in the public sphere.¹⁰⁴

Violence, Safety, and Risk

This book is fundamentally concerned with the tricky character of both queer and left politics and, especially, the messy places in which they meet. The liberal state has denied homosexuals some of what full citizenship implicitly promises, and for many activists otherwise committed to a leftist critique the terms of equality have been hard to refuse.¹⁰⁵ In turn, leftists have not in general incorporated a critique of normalization and of the family and have, as a result, supported liberal gay agendas despite the contradictions they represent to anticapitalist analyses.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the assault since the 1970s on the institutions central to liberal democracy have been joined by the rise of what Wendy Brown, among others, calls “neoliberal rationality,” with its voracious appetite for “all aspects of social, cultural and political life.”¹⁰⁷ One outcome is that LGBT and queer leftist visions vary widely between seeing liberal political reforms such as rights or social welfare programs as complicit with neoliberal agendas or as something that must be

saved. This also underscores the fact that the supposed line that marks what is included in the category of neoliberalism cannot be drawn so neatly. A key theme of this book, then, is to trace the transformation of liberal politics as they have found expression in LGBT/queer social movements. I begin with a look at the influence of racial liberalism on homophile advocacy in the 1960s and the emergence of militant gay liberalism in the 1970s; I also examine how LGBT politics transformed itself, and was challenged, first in the context of Reaganism and later in the current security era.

Political responses to violence are particularly difficult here because, as Frantz Fanon and others have noted, violence is the means by which power is often both asserted and resisted.¹⁰⁸ And because of violence's ability to undo a person, the response to violence can often cloud its scenes of address. In this book, I do not theorize the paired concepts of violence and safety as much as I trace their variable use. That said, I strive to be consistent, but the contradictory mentions of these terms in other sources means that I am at times precise and at others admittedly vague. In general, I use *violence* for acts that cause immediate bodily harm. LGBT antiviolence activist discourse frequently folds hateful language into its definitions of hateful violence or recasts both under the general category of *victimization*. When discussing such examples, I try to parse language from physical acts without denying either the fact that a verbal threat can be the first stage of physical violence or the injurious power of words. To not acknowledge the latter would be to accept the dominant epistemology that constructs the psyche and the body as separate, even opposite, affects. Furthermore, the logic of cause and effect, a product of this same worldview, has itself shown that emotional harm can lead to bodily disintegration; thus, to imagine the distinction between immediate and delayed harm is significant is to forget that time is but a constructed relation. In addition, the structure of language is itself part of the administration of knowledge and power. All that noted, in order to effectively show how different activisms have built their arguments, these distinctions are helpful. In addition, while the aggregation and disaggregation of data that claim to distinguish among categories of injury is more often than not the ruse of statistics, I want to avoid leveling particular harms into universalized claims of shared vulnerability.

My use of the term *state violence* is similarly both straightforward and complicated. I use it to mark the routineness of police and prison brutality as well as the fact of incarceration through the circuit that runs from the law to policing to imprisonment. The inclusion of law and incarceration might confuse some readers, since both are within the terms of the state's social contract and many of my other examples of violence point to acts outside those terms. I say *many* here, since much violence is tacitly accepted; for

violence to count as violence against a person, those bodies must be understood as belonging to humans, and we cannot assume that all people are granted their humanity. And the immediate enforced immobility and stolen bodily autonomy involved in arrest and caging cannot be made null by arguing that it is justified, for that is to accept the belief that crime categories and the idea of crime itself are just.¹⁰⁹ Finally, I describe racism and poverty (together and separately) as premised in the promise of injury. Most effective is Gilmore's definition of racism: that which puts certain groups at greater "vulnerability to premature death."¹¹⁰ Vulnerability to death that is premature but not always immediate is a much better way to get at exploitation and harm and its temporal features than the word *violence* alone; nonetheless, I often do refer to these structures as *violence*.

Safety, and by extension *safe space*, are even trickier concepts. James Baldwin often spoke about safety and its status as an "illusion" on which the dominant society depends.¹¹¹ I, too, am not convinced that safety or safe space in their most popular usages can or even should exist. Safety is commonly imagined as a condition of no challenge or stakes, a state of being that might be best described as protectionist (or, perhaps, isolationist). This is not to say that the ideal of finding or developing environments in which one might be free of violence should not be a goal. Most liberation movements call for freedom from such exploitations of power, and Baldwin saw the role of the artist as one who must "disturb the peace."¹¹² Ultimately, I argue that the quest for safety that is collective rather than individualized requires an analysis of who or what constitutes a threat and why, and a recognition that those forces maintain their might by being in flux. And among the most transformative visions are those driven less by a fixed goal of safety than by the admittedly abstract concept of freedom. This is all, I might add, to say nothing about the benefits or limits of a stance of nonviolence.¹¹³

Safety is a key term in LGBT politics, colloquially as well as in political organizing and social service provision. At many colleges and universities the mere words *safe space* on a sticker on a door may signal that those inside are sympathetic to LGBT students without naming those very identities. And then there is *safe sex*: some public health advocates like to clarify the point that no sex is without risk and thus prefer the term *safer sex*.¹¹⁴ Yet this nomenclature does not displace the idealization of safety; for sexual conservatives, it can translate into a call for abstinence (the only truly safe sex is no sex); for sex-positive activists, as they are often called, sex is then cast as a project of risk management.¹¹⁵ Tim Dean takes on the politics of risk as it relates to HIV as part of a broader cultural "imperative of health" that finds its roots in a moral discourse of responsibility over oneself. Moreover,

as Dean argues, the elaboration of scientific knowledge has “not produced a greater sense of security but, on the contrary, a heightened sense of risk.”¹¹⁶ Today, life in the so-called West is full of risk; as Anthony Giddens puts it, there have long been hazards, but this “is a society increasingly preoccupied with the future (and also with safety) which generates the notion of risk.”¹¹⁷ At the same time, risks as dangers are more and more uneven in their distribution.¹¹⁸ One result is that individuals are asked to manage their own risks while relying on the rule of the expert to determine what is a threat.

The call for self-control and deference to the sciences of social explanation must be considered alongside another use of risk: as the central term for economic regimes that have led to the financialization of everyday life.¹¹⁹ Here risk taking is both celebrated and stigmatized: you are either a successful speculator or a stupid spender. (Take, for example, the narrative of the mortgage crisis in which the deregulation that fostered wild market speculation, that in turn inflated the housing market bubble, is cast as a lost gamble, while those people who were sold subprime mortgages and later lost their homes to foreclosure are represented as having made irresponsible purchases.) As a result, marking the queerness of risk taking is difficult. Is it displacing the very idea of risk by dispensing with the idealization of futurity or safety? Or is it embracing risk so as to reap speculative rewards?¹²⁰

Given all this, a central contention of this book is that violence and safety have been the not-always-spoken-about yet defining motors of mainstream LGBT political life since the 1970s. Paralleling the approach of this book, this claim is based in history and in theory. First, as I show in chapters 2 and 4, the antiviolence movement was the first model of gay activism to receive public and corporate monies, and it was following these initiatives that other forms of LGBT politics entered the streams of nonprofit and private funding.¹²¹ Second, throughout this book I outline how the threat of violence has functioned as a sort of moral bookend to queer deviancy that promises redemption, if only for some. The dual insistences that the lesbian or gay man is not the criminal and that antigay violence is the act of the criminal have largely succeeded in making lesbians and gay men not otherwise associated with criminality into legitimate subjects, although it has not removed the threat of violence for many people who identify as gay or who participate in same-sex sexuality.¹²² I exclude transgender here since those so identified have not achieved the same legitimacy; nonetheless, transgender activism too can claim a totalizing experience of abjection and violation, with similar if not parallel political results.¹²³

The resorting of criminality has happened while leaving intact its attendant categories and geographies, in particular those defined by race and class. The result is to quite literally secure the definition of *lesbian* and *gay*

as those threatened by illegitimate violence and to find solution in risk negotiations: as calls for self-regulation, scientific experts, and open financial markets. Furthermore, the assessment of rational choice has been central to liberalism's individualism and profit motive. Thus, of central importance to this book is the argument that LGBT political goals based on the terms of protection and safety are inextricable from spatial development and crime control strategies in which U.S. urban regions have played a leading role. This is not to suggest that gay identity per se is complicit with urban-centered capital accumulation and criminalization—here it is worth remembering that D'Emilio's field-defining argument about the industrial city and gay possibility concludes with a socialist feminist vision—but that political goals that call for these forms of state protection must be understood at least in part as expressions of the risk management that is central to those processes.¹²⁴

The dynamics of risk are also why the comparison to AIDS activism is so useful. In the late 1980s and 1990s many chapters of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) focused on vulnerability, by highlighting whose bodies were vulnerable to the vagaries of the medical establishment and federal policy but also by using the vulnerability of their own bodies in dramatic direct actions. Of course, vulnerability can be used as another word for risk, but it doesn't have the same link to probability and thus statistics. Judith Butler has argued that being human involves a primary vulnerability—one present even before individuation—and so the recognition of vulnerability might, in a way, be an acknowledgment of one's status as human.¹²⁵ ACT UP's die-ins, in which activists lay as if dead in public streets, or their political funerals, in which the bodies of recently passed loved ones were brought to protests in caskets, could be seen as making a demand for such a recognition. Butler argues that in critiquing humanism, one need not dismiss the question of who is made human; yet the example of ACT UP also raises the question of how those excluded from the category might make a variety of political claims that exceed the limited terms of recognition.¹²⁶

The issue of recognition is important, though, because the majority of people who are most vulnerable to violence are not held up by policymakers, LGBT organizations, or even queer collectives. Furthermore, the experience of violence is often invoked as an equalizing mode of identification even as different LGBT people are made more or less vulnerable to it. And the *it* of violence remains an amorphous category, the definition of which may, in turn, define who is included in LGBT.¹²⁷ In an early interview, Butler praised ACT UP's die-in model as resisting a kind of easy legibility: "The act posed a set of questions without giving you the tools to read off the answers."¹²⁸ In the context of antiviolence organizing, contemporary grassroots organiza-

tions continue to try to create alternative systems of protection, but they often struggle to understand vulnerability in ways that neither flatten difference nor rely on the impulse toward knowable identity. In other words, the solidarity of a more inclusive *we* may collapse important differences when the act of naming identity as contingent is done only to reorganize it, or when the celebration of actions demeaned as inchoate transforms them into types of affirmation that are just as distancing.

To turn one more time to Baldwin: “Any real change implies the break up of the world as one has always known it, the loss of all that gave one an identity, the end of safety.”¹²⁹ I must repeat that this is not a book about the history of violence against LGBT or a range of other sex/gender non-conforming or nonnormative people, on the street or by the state. I do not restage scenes of brutality experienced in schools, homes, workplaces, and other institutions, or on street corners. But it is through the effort to write a history of activism and not an account of violation that I strive to contribute to broad-based efforts to make the operations of violence legible for critique, without fixing those whom violence targets.¹³⁰ And I consider that which is driven by the confident promise of what is simply not yet.¹³¹