

**Machine of Desire: Race, Space, and Contingencies of Violence in Chicago's
Boystown**

BY

ZACHARY SHANE KALISH BLAIR
B.A., University of Central Florida, 2005
M.A.L.S., University of Missouri at Kansas City, 2006
M.A., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2009

DISSERTATION

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Defense Committee:

Gayatri Reddy, Chair and Advisor
John D'Emilio, History and Gender and Women's Studies
Molly Doane
Mark Liechty
Timothy Stewart-Winter, Rutgers University

For Kathy Robertson
In memory of my mother, Stephanie Diane Kalish Blair.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AIDS** — Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- APA** — American Psychological Association
- BDC** — Broadway Development Corporation
- CAPS** — Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy
- CDOT** — Chicago Department of Transportation
- CHA** — Chicago Housing Authority
- CIN** — Chicago Intervention Network
- CPD** — Chicago Police Department
- CTA** — Chicago Transit Authority
- DHS** — Department of Homeland Security
- DSM** — Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
- FBI** — Federal Bureau of Investigation
- HIV** — Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- HSC** — Halsted Security Council
- IGLA** — Illinois Gays for Legislative Action
- IGRTF** — Illinois Gay Rights Task Force
- IOC** — International Olympic Committee
- LGBT** — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
- LGBTQ+** — Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and other non-normative sexual and gender identities.
- LVCC** — Lake View Citizens Council
- NAMA** — Northaslted Area Merchants Association

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (continued)

NBA — Northalsted Business Alliance

NHSP — North Halsted Streetscape Project

NSMA — Northalsted Street Merchants Association

OEMC — Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications

PFLAG — Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Q2L — Queer to the Left

QTIPS — Queers Together Instigating Pleasure and Sex

TIF — Tax Increment Financing Zone

SUMMARY

This dissertation critically examines gay neighborhoods as spaces that produce racial violence. While both popular and scientific understandings of modern gay neighborhoods position these spaces as sites of resistance, equality, sexual citizenship, and utopian desires, I argue that gay neighborhoods have historically operated, and continue to operate, as productive sites of violence and, particularly, as mechanisms of racial violence. Using Boystown—Chicago’s gay neighborhood—as a lens, I merge Foucauldian and Marxian frameworks to analyze the relationship between gay neighborhoods and racial violence within the context of racial capitalism and biopower. Specifically, I weave historical research and ethnographic fieldwork to demonstrate the ways in which four distinct aspects of the gay neighborhood work synergistically to reproduce racial violence. First, I examine how the popular narrative of Boystown’s formation was constructed through exclusions based on race, class, gender, and sexuality and perpetuates these exclusions from gay neighborhood space. Second, I explore how Boystown's formation narrative works in conjunction with its built space to drive racialized violence through its social and material landscape. Third, I analyze the violent territorialization of Boystown within the context of ongoing gentrification as resident subjectivities are shaped by discourse, material space, and processes of urban development. Lastly, I examine community policing and surveillance within the context of neighborhood crime as practices of ongoing racial violence upon which the gay neighborhood depends. It is through this comprehensive analysis that I posit the gay neighborhood as a machine of racial violence.

I. INTRODUCING BOYSTOWN

"Violence, especially of the liberal varieties, is often most easily perpetrated in the spaces and places where its possibility is unequivocally denounced." Jasbir Puar (2007:24)

1.1 Racial Violence in Boystown

On August 3, 2009, two gay men were violently assaulted in the center of Boystown's entertainment district near the intersection of Belmont Avenue and North Halsted Street.¹ The violent attacks occurred within two blocks and ten minutes of each other at around 4:50 AM. One of the victims, a 30-year old man, was beaten with brass knuckles and a brick and robbed of his wallet, money, and cell phone. The other victim was a 27-year old man, who was beaten unconscious and also robbed of his cell phone. The perpetrators were described by local news outlets as a group of at least four young black men, between the ages of twenty and thirty, with one "whom had light skin and was possibly Hispanic."²

These two assaults occurred just days after five other men were beaten and robbed in

¹ A version of this account of racial violence was previously published in "Boystown: Gay Neighborhoods, Social Media, and the (Re)production of Racism." In *No Tea, No Shade: New Writing in Black Queer Studies*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson, 287-303. Durham: Duke University Press (<https://www.dukeupress.edu/no-tea-no-shade>).

² "Man beaten, mugged in Boystown Monday," *ChicagoPride.com* (August 4, 2009). <http://chicago.gopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/7969249>

Lincoln Park, the neighborhood directly south of Boystown, within a span of four days.³

They also occurred less than 48 hours before Beat 2331's monthly Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) meeting.⁴ Word quickly spread online and throughout the neighborhood that this meeting would be the perfect opportunity for residents to come together to confront the police about their ineffectiveness protecting the neighborhood from crime. While talking with a barista at the Caribou Coffee on the corner of Cornelia Avenue and North Halsted Street about the upcoming CAPS meeting, a man who stood in line behind me joined our conversation. He said,

I have attended CAPS meetings in the past. It's usually just a handful of senior citizens complaining to the police. But it seems like a lot of people are going to go to this one, which is great. But it's sad that it took a wave of crime in our neighborhood for people to want to get involved in their community. I have been complaining about the hood rats that think it's okay to hang out and have a party on the street. Maybe now something will change.

Residents quickly blamed the violent assaults of the two men in Boystown on the large numbers of LGBTQ+ people, mostly black and Latino, who socialized on the streets at night, outside of the area's gay bars and nightclubs.

³ "Top cop: 4 of 7 North Side attacks appear related" *Bob Roberts Reporting WBBM Newsradio 780 AM* (August 5, 2009). <http://www.wbbm780.com/Top-cop--4-of-7-North-Side-attacks-appear-related/4944118>; Davis, Andrew. "Man Attacked in Boystown by Group." *Windy City Times* (August 4); Gerner, Jeremy, Pat Curry, and Deane Williams-Harris. 2009. "North Side Muggings," *WGN9 News* (August 4); "Man Beaten, Robbed on Boystown Strip: Unknown if Robbery is Connected to Attacks in Lincoln Park," *CBS2 Chicago* (August 4, 2009).

⁴ CAPS, a city-wide community policing initiative, began in 1993 in response to rising crime rates. The aim of the initiative was to police neighborhoods more effectively by forming partnerships between the CPD and individual communities. CAPS included multiple strategies, including community meetings, neighborhood-based beat officers, neighborhood-based trainings, and utilizing new technologies to target crime hot spots.

Two days later, on August 5, 2009, the CAPS meeting happened as scheduled. Over two hundred people crammed into Nookies Tree—a popular restaurant located at 3334 North Halsted Street in the center of Boystown. This was the largest crowd ever to show up to a CAPS meeting in Boystown, which usually attracts only around a half-dozen people.⁵ Resident after resident asked Commander Kathleen Boehmer and the officers who accompanied her how they planned to keep the streets of the neighborhood safe. Other residents shared stories of their own experiences with assaults and muggings that took place in the neighborhood, most of which were never reported. One resident asked if they had enough funding to do their jobs in the face of citywide budget cuts. After airing their grievances, the police assured those in the restaurant that they were doing everything possible to find the perpetrators of the muggings and to protect the neighborhood from violence. They said that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) was not understaffed and they had ample resources to keep the streets safe. They pointed to the city's statistics, which showed that neighborhood crime had gone down from previous years.

The meeting was cut short when an officer shouted at the crowd that it was a fire hazard to have so many people crammed into Nookies Tree. Unsatisfied with the meeting and the responses provided by the police, residents left feeling angry and frustrated. These feelings moved residents to organize and take it upon themselves to police the

⁵ While this was the largest CAPS meeting at the time, as crime continued in the neighborhood there was an even larger turnout of residents at the CAPS meeting that took place two years later on July 6, 2011 at the auditorium of the Inter-American Elementary School at 851 W. Waveland Avenue.

neighborhood. As people streamed out of the vestibule of Nookie's Tree, Boystown residents began to congregate on the sidewalk outside. There, various news stations were lined up, waiting for the meeting to be over so that they could broadcast people's reactions.

As people huddled among the spectacle of camera crews and reporters, sign-up sheets were being passed around to initiate meetings between neighborhood residents and business owners, as well as a citizen street patrol to deter crime during peak late-night hours. "We have to do like we did in the 90s with the Pink Angels and protect ourselves," a man said as he passed around blank sheets of paper.⁶ By the time the list made it to me, 32 people had already signed up. More people stood in line, anxiously waiting to add their name and email address to the list.

The next day I received an emailed invitation to join the newly created Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook page, where residents already started to organize a street patrol. Within 24 hours, they were dubbed "community walks" and were scheduled to take place on Fridays and Saturday—the two busiest nights of the week in Boystown. The first one was scheduled for midnight on August 8, 2009. The designated meeting place for all of those interested in joining the street patrol was the parking lot of the 7-Eleven on North Halsted

⁶ The Pink Angels was a local gay citizen watch group who walked the streets of Boystown to prevent violence against LGBT people beginning in 1991 (Baim 2008). Similar groups popped up in gay neighborhoods throughout the country during this time, including Q-Patrol in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle. These groups were inspired by New York City's Guardian Angels, a volunteer organization of unarmed citizen crime patrollers that formed to combat violence and crime on New York City subways and whose members were trained to make citizen arrests. The Guardian Angels grew to become an international organization (Guardian Angels 2016).

Street and West Roscoe Street. I went and joined fifty other people who had gathered to stand in the parking lot. There was an overall sense of excitement amongst the crowd as people observed the large turnout of people who wanted to make their neighborhood a safer place. It quickly became a social event of sorts, as many residents were meeting their neighbors for the first time and engaging with them in a context of shared purpose.

While white men and women made up the majority of those in attendance, people of color and varying non-normative gender identities also participated in the walk. A few of the neighborhood's prominent drag queens showed up not only to participate in the walk, but to also bring attention to it by wearing eye-catching, glittering ensembles and encouraging passerby to join the group. Wearing a black sequins fedora and a fuchsia and green lamé blouse, Miss Kitty Star spoke to me while we stood in the parking lot and waited for the walk to get started. She talked to me about her own experiences with crime in Boystown. She said,

Last week one of my friends who was in drag was beaten and mugged right down the street from Berlin. We have got to take back our streets. That's why I'm here. People need to know about the issues affecting our community.

As if reading from a script, Miss Kitty Star recited the rhetoric that had swept through the neighborhood to become the prevailing way that Boystown residents spoke about crime and their policing efforts. Throughout the organization of the community walks on the Lakeview 9-1-1 page, residents repetitiously used the phrase "take back our streets," especially when discussing the purpose of the walks. This phrase even became a sort of slogan for the community walks. A local bar owner who led the first few community walks, began the first walk by telling the crowd, "Let's take back our streets!" as he directed the walkers to follow him onto the crowded sidewalks along North Halsted

Street.

The police were also present to accompany the walkers and ensure their safety. Since so many people who showed up to join the community walk, the accompanying police officers split the crowd into two groups and directed each to take different routes through the neighborhood. The group I followed turned south on North Halsted Street. While walking, residents continued to exchange stories about the crimes in the neighborhood they had personally witnessed or had been victim to. They paired up to navigate through the crowds, using their phones to share their personal contact information.

As the walking group approached the intersection of Belmont Avenue and North Halsted Street—a space where a predominantly-black, queer street culture thrived during the warmer months of the year—they changed how they interacted with those on the streets. Those participating in the walk started shouting at the young black people who were socializing on the sidewalks to move out of the way, to keep on walking, and that loitering was illegal.⁷ Smartphones quickly became cameras used to photograph the crowds of people hanging out in the street, creating an ambush of resident photographers.

Not wanting to be photographed, people covered their faces with their hands and t-shirts and ran away from the walking group. “Don’t photograph us!” a young black gay man shouted at an older gay white man who jumped up on a lamppost with his large Nikon camera to get a better shot. He was the only one in the walking group with a professional camera.

⁷ At this time, loitering in Chicago was not illegal. Chicago's anti-loitering law was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in *City of Chicago v. Morales*, 527 U.S. 41 (1999), which I discuss in more detail in Chapter V.

“This is a public space!” he angrily shouted back. “If you do not like being photographed, then leave and go someplace private.” Afterwards, he briefly walked alongside me. He turned to me and said that he used to work as professional photographer for a couple of the local gay news publications and was completely knowledgeable about the laws for taking photographs in public.

Jason, a 23-year-old, self-identified gay white man who moved to Boystown from Indiana, was walking on the other side of me. After we turned the corner and started walking down Belmont Avenue towards Clark Street, he said, “These stupid niggers. We should shoot them all.”

After these two incidents, I stayed back to observe how the entire walking group continued to interact with those on the streets and they progressed through their improvised route. We turned down an alley that went behind one of the neighborhood’s newer, mid-rise condominium buildings. Jonathan, a 48-year-old self-identified gay white man who lived in the building, told the crowd,

Now be careful. There are people here at all hours of the day and night, all doing drugs and prostituting. I know because my apartment is right there, so this is my view every night. I won’t even come back here by myself because it just isn’t safe, and the smell of urine is overwhelming.

As we walked a little further we interrupted a black transgender sex worker performing oral sex on one of her white male customers behind a parked car. The police officer who was with us stopped her and asked for her identification as her customer buttoned up his jeans and nonchalantly walked away toward Clark Street. Part of the walking group watched, photographed, and filmed the police officer inaudibly speaking with the woman, who called out to the crowd of onlookers and demanded that they stop. They continued for the few minutes that the episode lasted, which ended when the woman walked away.

The community walk continued.

“See? This is what I’m talking about,” Jonathan said.

Near the end of the walk, I spoke with a man who walked quietly beside me. I asked him what he thought about the walk and specifically group’s reactions to those on the streets. He said,

Whether they are the ones committing the crimes or not, it doesn’t make any difference. Many of them are prostitutes, drug users, and drug sellers. They bring an unwanted element to the neighborhood and [they bring in] people who *do* commit violent crimes. Criminals know they can hide in the crowd so they don’t get caught. We need them gone.

He made it clear that he considered the young LGBTQ+ people of color on the streets to be the root cause of the neighborhood’s violent crime. As the community walks continued and more residents contributed to the Lakeview 9-1-1 page, I learned that his understanding of neighborhood crime was widely shared with other Boystown residents. Through this racist presupposition, the community walks metamorphosed into a collective strategy for residents and business owners to police public behavior, disrupt public street life, and push young LGBTQ+ people of color out of the neighborhood. By positioning these walks as an effective community-based policing strategy required to prevent violent crime, Boystown residents veiled and justified their participating in the violent policing of black and brown bodies.

1.2 Machine of Desire

The community walks represented a new movement against black and brown LGBTQ+ "street youth" that was not unique to Boystown, but that erupted concurrently

in urban gay neighborhoods throughout the Western world.⁸ In San Francisco's Castro District, local business owners and residents attempted to block the Castro Shelter Project in an effort to prevent homeless young LGBTQ+ people from having a visible presence in the neighborhood (Reck 2005, 2009; Peacock 2006). In New York City's Greenwich Village, "Take Back Our Streets" also became the rallying cry used by residents who moved against young, poor people of color in the name of safe space (Hanhardt 2008; Hanhardt 2013). In Manchester, racial minorities were refused access to bars and experienced heightened practices of racial exclusion (Held 2015). The simultaneity and similarity in these anti-youth eruptions in gay neighborhoods suggest there is something about gay neighborhood space that structures this social dynamic in the contemporary moment.

In this dissertation, I argue the gay neighborhood—a particular, modern urban spatial formation situated in late-capitalism—is a machine of racial violence. As machine, I employ a designation utilized by Michel Foucault in his analysis of the Panopticon—a design for a model prison that allowed all inmates to be observed by a single watchman without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they were being watched (1995 [1976]). In his analysis, Foucault described the Panopticon as “a machine for creating and sustaining power relation” (201), “a machine of a furtive power” (203), “a machine to carry out experiments” (203), and “a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may

⁸ Although widely used as an umbrella term to describe young people of varying age ranges who have run away, are homeless, or are in crisis, the use and meaning of “street youth” is contested. Within my own analysis, I use the term loosely as it refers to its use by local social service organizations, specifically the Broadway Youth Center (BYC) as between the ages of 12 and 24.

wish to put it to, produces homogenous effects of power” (202). Influenced by a general skepticism towards modern technological society that permeated French intellectual circles following World War II (Behrent 2013), Foucault used the machine metaphor in numerous other spatial and non-spatial contexts beyond the particularities of the Panopticon (e.g. penal investigation, military, the prison, educational space, and the body) to signify the material mechanisms through which technologies of power are made to function.⁹ In my analysis of the gay neighborhood and racial violence, I utilize machine as a heuristic to triangulate (1) the dynamic of biopower; (2) space; and (3) capitalism in an effort to comprehend the ways that race, class, gender, and sexuality are assembled through, within, and with the gay neighborhood to reproduce racial violence.

First, by claiming the gay neighborhood as a machine of racial violence, I argue that the gay neighborhood is a mechanism of biopower bound to processes of racialization. Foucault’s conceptualized biopower as “a power to foster life or to disallow it to the point of death” (1978: 138). For Foucault, biopower developed into “the great technology of power of the nineteenth century” (1978: 140), became characteristic of modern liberal societies, and represented a power directed toward living beings and concerned with “the task of administering life” (1978:139). In addition to the techniques of discipline and surveillance that Foucault theorized through the Panopticon, biopower points to “the numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations” (1978: 140). Biopower is a broad vision of power relations that encompasses the structures and practices by which political subjects are constituted and

⁹ “Machine” is a direct translation, as it is the same in both English and French.

deployed, along with the forces that have shaped and continue to shape modernity (Cisney and Morar 2015).

Foucault understood biopolitics as a form of biopower that encompasses the disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population (Foucault 1995 [1976]). Biopolitics has to do with the entry of biological life “into the order of knowledge and power and into the sphere of political techniques” (Foucault 1995 [1976]: 141-142), taking the administration of life as its subject “to ensure, sustain, and multiply life, [and] to put this life in order” (Foucault 1978: 138). Biopolitics encompasses the way in which living beings are made into populations and individuals, as well as how governmentality and subjectification shapes modern understandings (Fassin 2009). According to Foucault, the disciplining of bodies and the regulation of the population through biopolitics caused new political struggles around new categories of rights, such as the right to life, a body, health, sexuality, and the satisfaction of basic needs (Foucault 1995 [1976]).

My use of biopower and biopolitics as an analytical framework does not denote a simple return to Foucault, who was inconsistent and elusive in his own application of the terms (Rutherford and Rutherford 2013; Lemke 2011; Prozorov 2013), but instead represents a utilization of a more expansive view of biopolitics that has developed to examine the interrelationship between bodies, racism, sexuality, citizenship, violence, and capitalism (Stoler 1995; Forti 2006; Weheliye 2014; Butler 2004; Repo 2013; Newman and Giardina 2014; Morgensen 2011) and that I continue to develop throughout this dissertation. Contemporary retheorizations posit biopolitics as a politics concerned with life and a politics concerned with death (Agamben 1998; Esposito 2008; Mbembe 2003). The term “life” refers not only to biological existence, but also mankind’s “basic

needs,” “concrete essence,” and the realization of human “potential” (Foucault 1986, 266–267). Didier Fassin’s *biolegitimacy* emphasizes a politics that bring into play differentiated meanings and values to human life (Fassin 2009), providing the foundation for “biological citizenship” (Petryna 2002). On the other hand, the term “death” refers not just to actual death, but also to “all forms of ‘indirect murder,’ such as the exposure of someone to a greater risk of death, political death, expulsion, rejection, discrimination and so on” (Repo 2013; also see Patterson 1982 and Giroux 2007). Thus, as Fassin suggested, biopolitics is about “bio-inequalities”—that is, the inequalities in life that are produced as people’s lives are normalized and the sort of life people may or may not live is decided (2009).

As a study of racial violence in a gay neighborhood, an examination of the intersections between race, sexuality, and space from the perspective of biopower/biopolitics is necessary. As Ann Stoler shows in *Race and the Education of Desire*, race is not marginal to Foucault’s work and is in fact central (1995). In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault describes the intersection of sexuality, degeneracy, and racism within the emergence of the biopolitical state. There, Foucault claims that is not biopower that produces racism, but rather the “calculated management of life” that brought together the “anatomo-politics of the human body” and a set of “regulatory controls” over life of the species in a “biopolitics of the population.” (139). It is within this joining of these two distinct “poles” of biopower that this “technology of power centered on life” produces a normalizing society and a new form of racism inscribed within it (Stoler 1995). In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault describes state racism as constitutive and a function of the modern biopolitical state, and thus an essential

characteristic. Foucault's use of race referred not only to racial classifications based on skin color, but more broadly as a "way of separating out the groups that exist within a population... to fragment, to create caesuras within the biological continuum addressed by biopower" (2003 [1997]: 254). As Alexander J. Weheliye asserted, biopolitics is but an alternative term for racism, defined as the workings of hierarchization and exclusion (2014). As such, Foucauldian frameworks of biopower and biopolitics have made significant contributions to understanding the intersection of race and violence (see Agamben 1998; Giroux 2007; Mbembe 2003; Hardt and Negri 2004; Macey 2009).

Scholars have also acknowledged sexuality's inextricable relationship to race (Feder 2007a; 2007b; McWhorter 2004, 2009). In "The Life Function," Jemima Repo examines this relationship and asserts that Foucauldian analyses tend to examine race in relation to the death function, while overlooking the relevance and relationship that race and death have to the biopolitics of sexuality and life. Asymmetrically, Foucauldian analyses are interested in sexuality as "a discourse produced by biopower to ensure the procreation and optimization of the productive and reproductive capacities of the human species;" or the life function (2013). Repo, acknowledging, provides a more nuanced understanding of the contingent relation between the life and death functions of biopower and the apparatuses (race and sexuality) deployed to carry them out. There, Repo claims that the death-function of race operates so that sexuality may perform the life-function, working together to affirm life. Furthermore, it is through this examination that Repo, following Butler (1996), places homosexuality within the purview of biopolitics showing homophobia as an obvious example of the death function operating through sexuality, as well as the reterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) of homosexuality through the

commodification of pleasure (Katz 2007) and homonormativity (Repo 2013).¹⁰

Similarly, Jasbir Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages* showed how biopolitics delineates not only which queers live and which queers die, but also how queers live and die, specifically through their incorporation into the domains of consumer markets and social recognition in the late twentieth century (2007). Puar said,

...a transition is under way in how queer subjects are relating to nation-states, particularly in the United States, from being figures of death (i.e. the AIDS epidemic) to becoming tied to ideas of life and productivity (i.e. gay marriage and families). The politics of recognition and incorporation entail that certain—but certainly not most—homosexual, gay, and queer bodies may be the temporary recipients of the "measure of benevolence" that are afforded by liberal discourses of multicultural tolerance and diversity. This benevolence toward sexual others is contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege, consumption capabilities, gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity. The contemporary emergence of homosexual, gay, and queer subjects—normativized through their deviance (as it becomes surveilled, managed, studied) rather than despite it—is integral to the interplay of perversion and normativity necessary to sustain in full gear the management of life (xii).

Thus, for Puar, sexual citizenship, or the ways in which "homosexual subjects are folded into life," is a process that runs parallel to a "racialization of queerness" that is materialized through segregation, securitization, disposal and death. My analysis locates this configuration spatially within the gay neighborhood, thus emphasizing how these lived dynamics of sexual citizenship are reproduced through spatial construction and spatial production (Richardson 2017; Pieterse 2015; Bell 1995; Bell and Binnie 2004, 2006; Hubbard 2001).

¹⁰ Repo describes normative and assimilationist modes of homosexuality, intersecting with commodification, but does not name it homonormativity. This emphasis is mine.

While *machine* allows for an expansive understanding of power, its material emphasis also anchors this analysis to material space, attending to local forms of power and their negotiations by individuals. This makes it a particularly useful heuristic for understanding racial violence in the gay neighborhood through a spatial framework. As such, I recognize the gay neighborhood as both a spatial formation where power is technologized through the arrangement and distribution of bodies and an instrument of production through which individuals are created and made subject through race, class, gender, and sexuality. In this recognition, I emphasize space as an integral component of Foucault's formulation of biopolitics. Foucault said,

Political power, before acting on ideology, on the consciousness of individuals, exerts itself in a much more physical way on their bodies. The way in which gestures, attitudes, usages, allotments in space, and modalities of housing are imposed—this physical, spatial distribution of people belongs, it seems to me, to a political technology of the body. (Foucault 1974, as translated in Behrent 2013).

Foucault describes how through the technique of biopolitics, biopower categorizes the individual, makes individuals subjects, and distributes bodies in material space. This joint process of people-making and placemaking has been of particular interest to anthropologists concerned with space as a way to examine the production of identity and alterity as people define belonging through contrasts with other places and people (Gupta and Ferguson 1997; also see Rose 1995; Lipsitz 2007, 2011). It is through this mutually productive relationship that modern space “defines norms and deviants, centers and margins, cores and peripheries, the powerful and the powerless” (Aitchison 2001: 138) and is characterized by post-Enlightenment binary divides and dichotomies (Butler 1990). Thus, the ways in which spaces are embodied defines corporeal relationships and meanings by deeming which bodies have the right to belong and circumscribing others as

trespassers (Puwar 2004: 8). This interpenetration of the body and space (Low 2003) demonstrates how the body is implicated as a tool in the production of cultural and spatial forms (Bourdieu 1977).

While the machine focuses on space, it also centers power within the framework of analysis. The Merriam Webster definition of machine as “an assemblage of parts that transmit forces, motion, and energy one to another...” (Merriam Webster Dictionary 2018) reflects Foucault's understanding of power as multidimensional, relational, and circulating. In his analysis of the Panopticon, Foucault situates the prison not only as an apparatus that “functions by violence” in the structural Althusserian sense (1971), but also as a mechanism that produces power and automatizes it through an internalization of modes of being brought about through certain spatial configurations (Smart 1985). The formulation of *machine* in a Foucauldian sense to analyze the gay neighborhood not only recognizes the gay neighborhood as a set of spatialized and embodied power relations (Csordas 1990), but it also foregrounds his idea of power as diffused, operating in all directions, and permeating all relations within a society. As Henri Lefebvre described, space is “permeated with social relations” (1979[2009]: 186-188). Just as space is active (Pløger 2008) and (re)produces social relations (Lefebvre 2009 [1979]),¹¹ it is contingent upon social relations and is itself the product of social practice (de Certeau 1984).

Furthermore, this elicits particular understandings for subjectification and agency.

¹¹ Here, the term reproduction is used in the classical Marxist sense of the term where “every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction” (Marx 2011 [1867]: 620). Reproduction involves more than the replication of existing production processes, includes continuity and discontinuity in social processes, and its effect is to perpetuate the social structures of capitalism (Wolch and Dear 2014).

Space, here, is an instrument that shapes everyday experiences, social relations, and subjectivities, frames how actors act, think, and feel in ways that are consistent with the limits of the structure (Harvey 1973; Ortner 2006; Bourdieu 1977; Bridge 2001; Soja 1985; Cosgrove 1985; Jackson 1989; Gottdiener 1985; Aitchison 1999; Rabinow 1984; Gupta and Ferguson 1997; Das, et al. 2000). As such, the gay neighborhood elicits the presence of multiple resistances, even as they are stalled, stunted, fractured, coopted, reversed, transformed, and reconfigured. Thus, placemaking is entwined with ongoing historical, political, and economic processes and always implicated in hegemonic configurations of power (Rabinow 1984, 2003; Johnston 2001),¹² while at the same time, as a machine, space remains a mechanism created by humans to redirect nature and shape the world that inherently recognizes humans as social agents.

Utilizing *machine* as a device for analyzing the gay neighborhood also locates the gay neighborhood as a specific material site not upended by recent technological transformations, but rather part of technological change. Gilles Deleuze has argued that Foucault's disciplinary society has become a society of control (1995), where specific sites are disappearing to make way for a "digital web that is woven around us as we are

¹² Across the social sciences, *space* is often distinguished from *place*. *Space* is defined as being more abstract, a location without meaning, whereas *place* on the other hand is conceptualized as a meaningful location (Cresswell 2004; Harvey 1996). *Space* becomes a *place* when people "get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan 1977: 6). *Place* is *space* transformed by people's understandings (Rotenburg 1993) and is defined and produced by people's subjective and emotional attachment to it, which gives it meaning and creates a "sense of place" (Agnew 1987). However, "space" and "place" are sometimes used interchangeably, particularly Lefebvre's understanding of "social space," referencing space that is lived, meaningful, and also producing and produced by social relations (Lefebvre 1991 [1984]). I utilize "space" in this sense.

woven into it” (May 2005: 71), and made possible “only in an age of instance communication” (McWhorter 84). Similarly, in *Forget Foucault* (1987), Jean Baudrillard claimed that virtual realities and immaterial worlds—the hyperreal—have replaced the material world as our living reality. Using this framework, he argued Foucault’s accounts of architecture and corporeal practices are obsolete and passé. Surveillance studies as well, which is relevant to my last chapter, has seen an increased focus on digital data abstracted from its territorial setting (Gandy 1993; Haggerty and Ericson 2000) often ignoring the implications of material space (Browne 2015). Contradicting these postmodern perspectives, I maintain the significance of material space and show the ways in which they are amplified by virtual worlds and other constructions, rather than made insignificant by them.

Lastly, the *machine* also situates my analysis of the gay neighborhood within a political economic framework, representing an effort to conjure Karl Marx’s critique of the capitalist social order where he argued that machines transform human beings into material for capitalistic exploitation and provided the means through which capital exploits wage labor and labor-power (Marx 1990 [1867]). Even the idea for the Panopticon emerged during the industrial revolution as a tool for profit accumulation; a circular structure that would allow a large and unskilled workforce to be managed by a limited number of managers (Semple 1993). As this model was later adopted to serve as a blueprint for prisons and surveillance, the panoptic machine is itself an exemplar of the social permeation of capitalism through spatial production. Likewise, as machine the gay neighborhood becomes situated as both a product of capital and a tool leveraged for its reproduction. As a modern spatial formation, gay neighborhoods cannot be analyzed outside of the system of capitalism. As Jameson said, in today’s world, “there is not space outside of capitalism’s reach” (1992). It is for this reason that Foucauldian frameworks

are limited in their ability to provide a critical framework for analyzing of modern space. As such, I use the *machine* as a heuristic to merge Foucauldian and Marxist perspectives.

Just as Lefebvre understood space as social product, he also proposed the concept of *capitalist spatiality* to emphasize the mutually constitutive relationship between space and capitalism (Lefebvre 2009 [1979]). In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre wrote,

Few people today would reject the idea that capital and capitalism 'influence' practical matters relating to space, from the construction of buildings to the distribution of investments and the worldwide division of labour.... (Lefebvre 1991 [1984]: 10).

While Lefebvre recognized space as part of the means of production, other scholars have recognized capitalism as both a political economic system and a system of social and spatial organization (Castells 1979), which reconstructs localities in very particular ways (McDowell 1999, such as through privatization and market-driven logics (Delgado and Stefancic 2001: 169; Lefebvre 1976; Londoño and Dávila 2010). It is, in part, through capitalism's structuring of space that it structures social relations and becomes enmeshed in daily life (Lefebvre 1980[2009]; Londoño and Dávila 2010; Sassen 1991; Lefebvre 1991 [1984]; Massey 2007; Knopp 1992).

To critically examine this relationship between capitalism and space, specifically in the context of racial violence in Boystown, Karl Marx's revolutionary critique of capitalism provides a foundation. Formed in opposition to colonial capitalism, Marx's critique of capitalism was influenced, in part, by his observations of extreme racial violence. Near the conclusion of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I*, Marx analyzed primitive accumulation within the context of slavery and the colonial enterprise while attempting to describe the historical processes that create the conditions necessary for the emergence of capitalism. In doing so, he emphatically stated that,

“capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt” (Marx 1990 [1867]: 926). While being transparent in his abhorrence of slavery, Marx was more concerned with describing the ways in which violence is a historical necessity in the evolution of capital (Lawrence and Karim 2007) and served as a structure upon which capital reproduction depended.

Marx’s failure to account for the racial character of capitalism was subsequently critiqued by black scholars who continued to interrogate lasting racial oppression using Marxist approaches (Cox 1959). In *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983), Cedric J. Robinson developed the idea that racism and capitalism are inseparable and work together to organize society through economic inequality and racial divisions. Robinson substantiated this theory by critiquing Marx’s claim that capitalism was a revolutionary negation of feudalism. Instead, Robinson argued that the Western feudal order from which capitalism emerged was a system already infused with racism and the persistence of racialism and its permutations is due to its rootedness “not in a particular era but in civilization itself” (Robinson 1983: 28). The idea of racism preceding capitalism in the framework of racial capitalism made possible a new anti-reductionist understanding of race within the system of capitalism that was not dependent on the theorization of class (Pitcher 2012). Instead racism played, and continues to play, a key role in capitalist development.

If Robinson’s perspective of racial capitalism is considered within a Foucauldian framework, the idea of capitalism forming out of a racialized society is aligned with Foucault’s proposition that biopower is what made capitalism possible. In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault posited that capitalism “would not have been possible without the

controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes” (1976: 140-41). Furthermore, according to Robinson, as Western civilization transitioned into capitalism racialism continued to permeate society, showing that racism is not only embedded in the capitalist system, but it is also reproduced through it. Robinson said,

In contradistinction to Marx’s and Engels’s expectations that bourgeois society would rationalize social relations and demystify social consciousness, the obverse occurred. The development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racist directions, so too did social ideology. As a material force then, it could be expected that racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism (1983: 2).

Here again, Robinson’s theory of racial capitalism can be viewed as a theory of biopower, not just in terms of the rise of capitalism but also in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. Like Robinson theorized race and capitalism, Foucault also believed that capitalism supported the intensification and diffusion of biopower (Pickett 2005).

While Robinson’s theoretical lens of racial capitalism was largely ignored for decades, theories of late-capitalism and neoliberalism became the leading critical frameworks in the social sciences for understanding all aspects of modern social, political, and economic life. While late-capitalism and neoliberalism essentially refer to the same post-Fordist, post-Keynesian political economic changes that occurred during the second half of the twentieth century, neoliberalism has become embedded in a more pessimistic and "consistently dark" set of critical narratives (Ortner 2011). As such, neoliberalism critiques the economic philosophy that champions unhindered market forces as the most effective means toward achieving economic growth and guaranteeing

social welfare, particularly through liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and free trade, limiting the U.S. welfare state by discouraging Keynesian policies, and raising corporate profit rates (Hale 2002; Ong 2006; Gladhill 2004; Duggan 2003; Harvey 2005). This political stance developed into a strategy of governance, producing policies that prioritized free-market fundamentalism, corporate governmentality, financialization, and the deregulation of labor and markets (Hayek 1979; Harvey 2005; di Leonardo 2008a). In addition to dismantling the Keynesian welfare state, neoliberal reforms have been shown to have ushered in a social transformation as private interests seized control of social life to maximize profit, leading to widening inequalities and an erosion of democratic protections and political gains (Forman and Tucker 2007; di Leonardo 2008b). Rather than optimize human wellbeing, the neoliberal project restored “an unambiguously predatory capitalism” (Lancaster 2008: xii). Neoliberalism was dubbed “neo” because it describes a resuscitation of the free-market principles of classic nineteenth-century economic liberalism,¹³ denoting a critique of capitalism as a cyclical political economic system of oppression.

Neoliberalism provided a new framework for Marxian anthropologists to scrutinize processes and practices of gay space, for as Duggan noted, neoliberalism has a sexual politics (2003). Following Jeff Maskovsky’s call to analyze lesbian and gay

¹³ Foucault described liberalism as “a way of doing things’ oriented towards [economic] objectives” (1994: 74) that extended “the rationality of the market... to areas that are not primarily economic, for example, family and birth policy, or delinquency and penal policy” (Foucault 1994: 78). Foucault’s understanding of liberalism as a practice more than an ideology (Valencia 2018) is useful for discerning the relationship between political economy, subjectivity, and practice.

neighborhoods in connection with wider neoliberal developments (2002), Martin Manalansan analyzed racial violence through the popular narratives of gay urban spaces within New York City, using an analytical framework of neoliberal gentrification (2005). In this dissertation, I build on this limited body of anthropological work and argue that the dynamic of racial violence in gay neighborhoods demands that we not only view gay neighborhoods in connection with neoliberalism, but also with the overlapping processes of racialization—or in other words, through the lens of racial capitalism. This dissertation represents an attempt to provide a more expansive analysis of the complexity of racial violence in an individual gay neighborhood.

Jodi Melamed's theory of U.S. racial formation, which she developed in *Represent and Destroy* through her application of racial capitalism to literary analysis, provides a useful framework for examining the workings of racial capitalism. Melamed identified what she called "a series of successive official or state-recognized U.S. antiracisms" that made up periods of distinct ideological modes intertwined with shifts in capitalism (Melamed 2011: xv). Of the three periods Melamed defined, I will use the following two as an analytical framework for understanding the ways in which racial capitalism structured people and space in Boystown: (1) liberal multiculturalism and (2) neoliberal multiculturalism. Melamed identified liberal multiculturalism as the second phase of post-war race-liberal hegemony that took place from the late-1960s to 1990s, wherein culture became a materially transformative force for race-based social movements and was deployed by turning it into aesthetics, identity, recognition, and representation. The proceeding phase, neoliberal multiculturalism, began in the 2000s and encompassed "the entire complex of social, political, and cultural norms and

knowledges that organize[d] contemporary regimes of rule and [became] a name for the differentiated experience of citizenship that ensures that governments protect those who are valuable to capital... and that they render vulnerable those who are not valuable within circuits of capitalism" (Melamed 2011: xxi). It is through this framework of racial capitalism that the production and construction of Boystown can be understood within a larger biopolitical context in which bodies are racialized, excluded, and made criminal at the intersection of racism and capitalism.

Critical race scholars have long recognized the embeddedness of racism in US society (Bell 1992) and society's dependence on continual racial discrimination (Hochschild 1984), echoing one of the central tenets of critical race theory which asserts the centrality of race and the integrality, permanence, and indestructability of racism in American society (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Bell 1992). At the same time, social formation theory posits that different systems of power come to be mutually constituted and interwoven in the social fabric, suggesting that race, class, gender, and sexuality are imbricated social processes that are relationally emergent (Weber 2000), back-forming (Massumi 2002), and convivial (Puar 2007), as they operate interconnectedly, symbiotically, cosynthetically, contingently, and multidimensionally (Chang and Culp 2002; Somerville 2012; Collins 2000; Razack 1998, 2005; Bondi 1998a, 1998b). In this study of a gay neighborhood structured in direct and profound ways through race, class, gender, and sexuality, these relationships are central to my analysis. In recognition of the interwoven nature of these social formations, critical scholars utilizing black feminist approaches to analyze modern life have created new conjunctions like "patriarchal racial capitalism" (Aho 2017; Miller-Young 2010) and "white supremacist capitalist

patriarchy” (hooks 2004). However, simply enumerating these signifiers to form an all-encompassing conjunction does not adequately describe the ways in which these social formations operate in relation to one another in the reproduction of power and confuses the ways in which these formations and structures operate independently. Instead, my merging of biopower/biopolitics with the political economic framework of racial capitalism is an effort to emphasize racial capitalism as part of a larger technology of biopower that connects all of the biopolitical techniques of race, class, gender, and sexuality. I also maintain racial capitalism as the analytical framework as these techniques of othering and exclusion utilize the logics of race and racialization.

The merging of the frameworks of biopower/biopolitics and racial capitalism creates a rigorous analytic that counters the perception of the primacy of race, as well as the structural limitations of capital-ocentric studies of institutionality (Gibson-Graham 1996, 2006). Tanja Aho problematized what she called neoliberalcentrist analytics claiming that they: (1) readily posit "neoliberalism as the singular paradigm into narrating a teleological development of history;" (2) "center the supposed novelty of certain phenomena over the *longue durée* of patriarchal, racial capitalism as it has become manifest most recently through liberal democratic systems;" and (3) "tend to ascribe all current woes to neoliberalism because of an inability to think through the co-constitutive nature of various forms of governmentality" (Aho 2017). Taking this critique into account, I not only analyze Boystown as a neighborhood produced through, and situated in, neoliberalism, but I also use the more expansive analytical lens of racial capitalism, as it overlaps with biopower/biopolitics, to attend to the ways in which liberalism produces freedom through exclusion, oppression, dispossession, and death (Erevelles 2013). That

is, through the administration of life and death. By wedding Marxian approaches and Foucauldian approaches to analyze violence within the context of not only gentrifying space (Murray 2015), but also in terms of embodied space (Low 2003) informed by race, class, gender, and sexuality, I am able to critically examine the ways in which both space and the lives within it structure, as they are structured by, relations of power (Oswin 2008).

The ways in which biopower and biopolitics, even in the traditional and limited Foucauldian sense, directly and fundamentally structure contemporary gay neighborhoods can be found in John D'Emilio's seminal essay "Capitalism and Gay Identity." In this essay, D'Emilio theorized that wage labor and commodity production created the social conditions that made possible the emergence of a distinctive gay and lesbian identity. The capitalist social conditions D'Emilio attributed to the formation of gay identity included transformations of the nuclear family, possibilities for individual independence through free wage labor, changes in the ideological definitions of homosexual behavior and the medicalization of homosexuality, and disruptions to traditional patterns of gender relations and sexuality caused by the dislocations of World War II (1983). Thus, D'Emilio's essay, along with concurrent analyses that identified the development of gay and lesbian identities and spaces in the context and aftermath of World War II (see Bérubé), not only provided an opening for analyzing how capital shaped gay and lesbian identity and subjectivities, but also the biopolitical emergence of gay sexuality and urban spaces through family, medicine, capital production, and war. Thus, it is through a biopolitical capitalist (Hardt and Negri 2000; Abbinnett 2007) context that gay urban neighborhoods emerged.

Furthermore, and in direct relation to Boystown, Christopher Reed's architectural analysis of the North Halsted Streetscape Project (NHSP) posits that the neighborhood was structured by sexuality as it operated through the construction of ethnicity. Reed contended that Boystown's distinguishing rainbow-themed architectural makeover represented a convergence of ethnic and sexual identity as it was informed by similar streetscape projects in other neighborhoods defined by their ethnicity. All of these neighborhood beautification projects were initiated during the period Melamed defined as liberal multiculturalism, in which ethnicity is implicated in racialization processes.¹⁴ For Reed, the streetscape was a physical manifestation of what Stephen Epstein called "a new ethnicity" (1987), a recasting of sexuality as a subcultural identity and within the existing social structure (Murray 1979). Richard Herrell in his analysis of Chicago's Gay Pride Parade, claimed that "[b]eing 'ethnic' and having an 'ethnic identity' is a critical part of [the] political map and idiom" (1992: 235). Thus, Herrell posits that urban citizenship and city life, within the context of Chicago, depends on ethnic ordering and belonging. Furthermore, I interject, that the ethnic models of homosexuality emerged during a time when there was a preoccupation with the constructionist-essentialist debated of homosexuality. Evolutionary theories and scientific studies claiming to provide a biological basis for homosexuality enflamed the nature versus nurture debate and were also embraced, to some degree, by some gay men and lesbians to combat

¹⁴ Ramón Grosfoguel theorized "racialized ethnicities" to demonstrate how ethnic identity is enmeshed in racial/colonial power relations (2004). Furthermore, Rey Chow discussed how race and ethnicity continued to be mutually implicated in contemporary identity practices (2002: 23-24).

heteronormative oppression (Epstein 1987). Thus, this discourse, which ultimately was about reproduction and life, structured the spatial distribution of people and the recognition of Boystown.

1.3 Research Approaches and Fieldwork Methodologies

In conjunction with the aforementioned theories that provided the framework for my analysis, my research approach was guided by additional theories and methodological considerations that structured the ways in which my research was conducted and developed. First and foremost, my research approach was broadly and loosely influenced by the anthropological tradition of historicizing culture originally developed by Franz Boas (Bunzl 2004; Teslow 2018), as well as approaches to society that recognize the Durkheimian notion of historical continuity (Misztal 2003), while attending to shifts, fluctuations, unevenness, changes, and alterations inevitable in historical processes (Hawkins 1979). More specifically, my incorporation of local and individual histories utilizes both historical political economic approaches and Foucauldian approaches (Knauff 2017) to create “critical effective histories” (Dean 1994; Foucault 1984) in an effort to understand the ways in which history, power, and materiality collide and are embodied (Fassin 2008). My integration of these historical methods was respondent to the tendency for neoliberalocentric analyses of violence to avoid historical contexts and stipulate contemporary articulations of violence as something new, rather than something transformed and recursive. As Arlene Dávila notes,

there is the trend of summoning “neoliberalism” for processes that may be more contradictory and uneven, and of appealing to neoliberalism as a “thing” rather than as a process, without any specificity about whether we may be referring to a particular ideology, or a technique of government, or a policy, or a financialization regime, or perhaps to all these dynamics at

once (2014).

Dávila emphasizes that there is geographical, cultural, and historical specificity to our contemporary moment. Furthermore, Dávila warns that applying neoliberalism as a shorthand for a confluence of events, developments, and structural and cultural changes weakens analyses and arguments and dilutes the efficacy of critical interventions (Aho 2017).

Historical political economic approaches allow for a study of emergence, an “anthropology of becoming” (Biehl and Lock 2010) that “illuminates desire and possibility” while accounting for the ways in which people’s “actions are contingent without being inevitable, caught in a constricted and intolerable universe of choices” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 321). Historical political economic approaches in anthropology (Roseberry 1990; Lancaster and di Leonardo 1997; di Leonardo 1993, 1998) have sought to metaphorically and physically place anthropological subjects at the intersections of local and global histories (Roseberry 1988; 1990). These perspectives represent the Marxian and feminist tradition that requires recognizing race, gender, class, and sexuality, as well as the role of the state, to sufficiently consider capitalism, power, and structure (Altman 2001; Roseberry 1988). Furthermore, political economic approaches allow anthropologists “to interpret, to make sense, and to contextualize ideologies, just as ideologies interpret, make sense of, and contextualize political economy” (Di Leonardo 1993: 80). Framed by these research goals, my study of Boystown utilizes a historical political economic approach to understand not only the mutual constitution of local spaces and global economies, but also the ways in which global and local transformations reconfigure lives, experiences, meanings, and violence

in the neighborhood, and vice-versa.

In addition to a historical political economic approach, Foucault's genealogical method influenced my examination of power, discourse, and violence within the context of social and spatial transformations, which forms the bedrock of my analysis. Foucault believed that history was a tool that could be leveraged for social critique; to challenge universal claims and institutional practice. Genealogy provided the means by which to do so. For Foucault, genealogy was an examination of both descent and emergence (Smart 1983); a method that reconstructed the origins and evolution of discursive practices within a nexus of power relations, celebrating the "perspectivity of knowledge" (Smart 1983: 77), giving expression to subjugated knowledges, and producing an awareness of the complexity, contingency, and fragility of historical forms and events. As Foucault summarized, it is a "a history of the present" (DP, 31-33) and an attempt to "identify the accidents, the minute deviations... the errors... that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us" (Foucault 1984: 81). It is "a historical causal explanation that is material, multiple, and corporeal" (Gutting 2005: 47). It through genealogical analyses that Foucault understood modern disciplinary society and its scientific-legal complex (DP), as well as sexuality (HS).

Like Foucault's earlier use of the archaeological method which sought "the condition of possibility" (OT, xxii), genealogy recognized that there are "no constants, no essences, no immobile forms, or uninterrupted continuities" (Smart 1983: 77), while also examining constraints (Farrell 2005). This was a contradiction to Marx, who believed that history's necessity and inescapability produced human beings (Marx 2003 [1852]; May 2005). Thus, genealogy is an analysis of contingencies (in the Gramscian sense, see

Laclau 2000a), which demonstrates historical developments as temporary embodiments of underlying power relations rather than inevitable trends. As Foucault said,

There is an optimism that consists in saying that things couldn't be better. My optimism would rather consist in saying that so many things can be changed, fragile as they are, bound up more with circumstances than with necessities, more arbitrary than self-evident, more a matter of complex, but temporary, historical circumstances than with inevitable anthropological constraints (Foucault 1988: 156).

Anthropological approaches to historical contingencies have adopted Deleuzian and Foucauldian approaches that illuminate plasticity, unfinishedness, becoming, desire, possibility, and varying degrees of agency through practice (Biehl and Locke 2017; Knauft 1996, 2017; Hardy 2010). These approaches informed the ways in which I analyzed and interpreted the historical data and material I collected, as well as how I used them to construct local histories and ontologies of how humans apprehend reality and constitute themselves as subjects (Foucault 1983 - the subject and power) to analyze the role of human subjectivity and how it is constituted and constricted by different moments of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Second, in an effort to address the material and immaterial aspects of space in my analysis of racial violence, I utilize the anthropological framework put forth by Setha M. Low in “Spatializing Culture: The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica.” In this article, Low succinctly packaged the theoretical approaches of constructivist structuralism (Bourdieu 1989) and structuration (Gottdinier 1985; Giddens 1984; Aitchison 1999) to encapsulate both the political economic and social aspects of space (2005). Low defined the social production of space as “all those factors—social, economic, ideological, and technological—whose intended goal is the physical creation of the material setting” (Low 1999: 112). The material emphasis to this

approach is useful for describing the historical emergence of Boystown and analyzing its built space. Low also defined the social construction of space as the “phenomenological and symbolic experience of space as mediated by social processes such as change, conflict, and control” (Low 1999: 112). This approach encompasses the transformations of space through social exchanges, memories, images, and the daily use of the material setting and is more concerned with the symbolic meaning of space. Low argues that when used together, the social production and social construction of space contextualize the forces that produce space and demonstrate people as social agents constructing their own realities and meanings. It is through this synthesis that the agency of the individual actor can be accounted for, as well as the ways in which spatial structures influence human behavior, and, conversely, how behavior shapes the experience of space (Low 1999; Gottdiener 1985). Low's comprehensive framework clearly distinguishes the intertwined social, political, and economic processes of place-making and people-making that encompass both the material and immaterial aspects of space, making it useful for examining the complexity of spatial formation.

Third, my formulation of the gay neighborhood as machine was informed by assemblage theory (Venn 2006; Li 2007; Allen 2011; Ong and Collier 2005; Rabinow 2011), which provided a way to coherently forge an analysis of the complexity of racial violence in Boystown. The rudiments of assemblage theory have been attributed to philosopher Gilles Deleuze (DeLanda 2006; Nail 2017; Deleuze and Parnet 2002; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Puar 2012a), who, along with Felix Guattari, used the term "assemblage" (translated from the French term "agencement") to describe wholes constructed from heterogeneous parts and characterized by relations of exteriority. As

such, the concept of the assemblage accounts for synthesis and variation, as well as the link between micro- and macro-levels of social reality. Deleuze and Guattari initially used the term in reference to territory and the territorial assemblage, therefore grounding the concept's particular relevance in socio-spatial, geopolitical analyses (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Phillips 2006; Puar 2012a; Dittmer 2014). As a theory of complexity, assemblages have been recognized as being in perpetual motion, "as interwoven forces that merge and dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency" (Puar 2007), thus redirecting analyses of systems of power away from identity and onto the shifting relationships of power (Puar 2007, 2012; Weheliye 2014).

As such, assemblage theory has the ability to frame a cogent analysis of the imbrications, intersections, and synthesis of race, class, gender, sexuality, political economy, and space, specifically as they historically and contemporaneously change. As Jasbir K. Puar said in *Terrorist Assemblages*,

... assemblage enables attention to ontology in tandem with epistemology, affect in conjunction with representational economies, within which bodies interpenetrate, swirl together, and transmit affects and effects to each other (2003).

It is through the theoretical frame of the assemblage that I was able to analyze the spatial, temporal, and corporeal convergences and rearrangements required for an analysis of Boystown that examined the dynamic and co-constitutive relationships between different social formations and technologies of power; historical, spatial, and human dynamics of a neighborhood constantly in motion; shifting global and local economies; material and immaterial culture; individual and collective experiences, practices, behaviors, affects, and meanings; overlapping co-constitutional relationships; and multiple divergent struggles and contradictions.

When I officially began my fieldwork in 2007, I was excited to explore Boystown as a newcomer, as a visitor, as a resident, and as an anthropologist. To quote Zora Neale Hurston, whose books inspired me to become an anthropologist in high school, “I want[ed] to collect like a new broom” and that is exactly what I did. In order to accomplish my goal of collecting as much data as possible, I used a mixed methods approach, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies over the course of four years. Of my chosen methodologies, the most vital and fruitful was participant observation. Participant observation (Malinowski 1922; Lévi-Strauss 1992 [1955]) became the research method in which all other methods are embedded and analyzed. My two years of residence in the neighborhood allowed me to track the lived experiences of the neighborhood at coffee shops, bars, cafés, restaurants, community centers, neighborhood events, festivals, and meetings, as well as on the streets. It was through this method that I was able to document debates at community meetings, conversations at coffee shops, and engage with people about neighborhood issues in neighborhood bars, community centers, and on the streets. In some instances, participant observation allowed me to document social situations covertly, as just another person in the public sphere. In doing so, I was able to collect data vital to my project that would not have been available through any other research strategy. I always walked around with either my laptop or a notebook and a pencil in my bag so that I could record my observations, as my interactions in Boystown were always full of surprises.

Conducting interviews was my second research strategy. Interviewing was a particularly important research strategy for gaining data on how people understood, remembered, narrated, and constructed the neighborhood, as well as their experience

within it. Interviews allowed me to gain a more in-depth understanding of people's lives and document their subjective experiences. I conducted a total of 96 semi-structured interviews with members of the Boystown "community" over the duration of my project, consisting of neighborhood residents (past and present), local business owners, employees at these businesses, and frequent visitors from other parts of the city. Interviewees also included elected politicians, activists, social workers, and long-term residents, across multiple racial-identities, who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or straight. During the four years of my fieldwork, the sexual and gender identities of some of the participants in this study changed.¹⁵

I met the majority of my interviewees through personal interactions at many of the same places where I conducted my participant observations. I also gained participants through snowball sampling, social media outlets (particularly Facebook), and a number of participants were respondents of two newspaper articles published in local LGBT magazines about my project. Some interviews were more formal than others, with 42 being audio recorded, 5 being video recorded, 36 recorded manually through note-taking, and the remaining 13 recorded indirectly by taking notes after the interview. These numbers do not include the hundreds of casual and impromptu conversations I had throughout the years with different people, which I gained a significant amount of

¹⁵ Identity was not a determining factor for participation in this study; rather it was only one's personal relationship to the neighborhood. In most instances, this relationship was determined by neighborhood residency, past or present. However, it also extended those who worked in the neighborhood or spent multiple days a week socializing in the neighborhood, but lived elsewhere.

information, but only interviews that were scheduled, planned, and that I prepared for. I chose each method of recording interviews on an individual basis, depending on the sensitivity of the information being provided by my informant, my relationship with the informant, what my informant was comfortable with and consented to, and where the interview took place. Interviews took place in my apartment, in participants' homes, in coffee shops in the neighborhood (and outside of the neighborhood), at the Center on Halsted, on the lakefront (when weather permitted), and seven were conducted on-line via Skype and instant messaging platforms. Online interviews allowed me to connect with neighborhood residents who moved outside of the city and state, but who wanted to share their experiences of the neighborhood's development.

In addition to these 96 interviews, I also conducted ten follow-up interviews with those who provided me with oral histories of the neighborhood. These follow-up interviews pertained specifically to clarifying information and answering new questions I had since the original interview took place, whether through other interviews or archival research. I primarily collected follow-up information casually and directly, as I began to form close relationships and friendships with participants over the years and could just ask them a question whenever I saw them in the neighborhood. Furthermore, I hosted four structured group interviews, three at my apartment and one at a participant's apartment, the latter of which was video-recorded.

I was also able to collect qualitative data through a number of other methods. People who did not want to be interviewed but who wanted to participate in the project preferred to answer questions via e-mail. I corresponded with six people via e-mail (these participants are not included in the count of 96 interviewees). These e-mails were usually

brief, lasting only two-to-four cycles. E-mails usually pertained to details about specific events in the neighborhood and gave people who were not able to meet in person an opportunity to participate in my fieldwork. Four of these six people were survey participants who wanted to share additional thoughts as a follow-up from the electronic survey and two people contacted me via e-mail only wanting to participate electronically via e-mail. Fifteen additional people also shared information with me electronically through chat and instant messaging platforms when I solicited survey participation, particularly on Facebook and local gay.com chat rooms.

To collect additional qualitative and quantitative data, I also conducted comprehensive survey, which a total of 378 people responded to and completed. The survey was conducted primarily to supplement information gained from data collected through other means, as well as to gain insight on neighborhood demographics. Due to the way demographic information is collected by local and federal governments, that rely on spatial boundaries that are not aligned with that of current neighborhood boundaries or do not accurately account for those who identify as LGBTQ+, there were gaps in available demographic information that I hoped a survey would fill. These questions asked neighborhood residents basic questions about their lives (e.g. age, sex, race, sexual identity, household income, number of people in household, years residing in Boystown, etc.). Furthermore, I asked survey respondents a series of open-ended questions about what Boystown means to them, their experiences in Boystown, and their concerns regarding conflict and neighborhood change. Survey questions were informed by experiences living in the neighborhood for two years and preliminary fieldwork conducted during my early graduate coursework at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Surveys were hosted online on SurveyMonkey.com and were made available for one year. Throughout the year that the survey was available, I solicited participants by posting flyers throughout the neighborhood, personally handing-out flyers, posting a links to Facebook other online social networking sites, and through articles written about my project in two local gay publications, *The Windy City Times* and *Gay Chicago Magazine*, and one website, *Chicago Now*.¹⁶ I also created a website for the project where participants could access the survey, as well as watch videos, look at photos, and read about project updates through my blog during the duration of my fieldwork. On-line survey participants had the option to remain anonymous or to provide their contact information for participation in follow-up interviews. The survey was also made available in print, although only two people used this option. While the results of the survey I conducted did not provide a statistically representative sample, it did provide additional insight into neighborhood experiences and helped guide interview questions.

Online social media platforms played an important role in my research. Not only did I utilize social networking sites like Facebook and Myspace to gain research participants, but I also used them as resources for ethnographic data. Facebook's popularity grew during my fieldwork. Throughout the years, residents, employees, and visitors created a number of neighborhood-specific Facebook pages, including Lakeview 9-1-1, Take Back

¹⁶ Kennedy, Kerrie. "Boystown the subject of anthropological study" in *Chicago Free Press*, Vol 2 (26), March 4, 2010: 5; "Boystown the Topic of Anthropological Study" in *Gay Chicago Magazine*, Vol. 34 (9), March 4, 2010: 10; and Bill Pritchard, "Boystown the topic of Anthropological Study" in *Chicago Now*, March 1, 2010. <http://www.chicagonow.com/mayor-of-boystown/2010/03/boystown-the-topic-of-anthropological-study/>

Boystown, a Boystown neighborhood page, Boystown Bitch Session, Boycott Spin, and also pages for individual bars, nightclubs, and neighborhood organizations. The people who followed these pages ranged from a few dozen to a couple thousand. In addition to these social websites, blogs, and local news outlets were also used to obtain information on local events. My fieldwork began the same year that the first iPhone was released. As such, applications like Twitter and Grindr, Scruff, and Tindr did not become popular until late in my research. However, there were a number of established ways that gay men and lesbians were communicating publicly online through various dating sites, gay.com, and Craigslist, which I also used to collect information on the neighborhood and the lives of those living in it.

Furthermore, I conducted archival research to answer questions on the social and economic development of the neighborhood from the 1960s onward. In addition to the life history interviews I conducted with long-time Boystown residents and native Chicagoans, I also logged in over 1500 hours conducting historical research in the archives of the Gerber-Hart Library, the University of Chicago Archives, the Daley Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the archival resources available through Interlibrary Loan and I-Share, the Chicago Public Library (Sulzer Regional and Merlo Branches), and the personal archives of my participants. Using these resources, I searched through numerous historical publications (from moldy newspaper clippings to damaged microfiche), read personal letters, and documented random ephemera. In addition, I utilized available electronic databases to access historical texts from prominent local publications like the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times, as well as national publications like the Advocate. During the course of this archival research, a

valuable website was published called *Chicago Gay History*, which houses a plethora of video interviews, biographical information, and other useful supplemental resources about gay history in Chicago.¹⁷ In using all of these resources, I was able to trace the development of Boystown, as well as document the social, political, and economic phenomena that shaped the neighborhood's development and identity as a gay neighborhood, such as the gay liberation movement, the "condo craze," and AIDS activism.

The bulk of my archival research was at the Gerber-Hart Library, which was then located on Granville Avenue right off of the CTA red line. Every day the library was open—for a period of over six months—I was there from open to close going through file cabinet upon file cabinet of old local gay and lesbian publications dating back to the late 1960s. Not only was I scouring the archives for any article that mentioned Lakeview before it was Boystown, but I was also looking for any information that could help me track the northern movement of the city's gay epicenter from Old Town and the Gold Coast during the 1960s and early 1970s to Newtown and eventually Boystown on the city's North Side. I also collected articles detailing neighborhood violence, gender and racial discrimination, and its material development.

Lastly, I utilized existing databases from both federal and civic sources to gain general insight on demographic trends and local crime statistics. I used data from the United States Census Bureau, which collects demographic information through the decennial U.S. Census and the American Community Survey

¹⁷ <http://www.chicagogayhistory.com>

(<https://data.cityofchicago.org/>). To obtain local crime statistics, I used the ClearPath system of the Chicago Police (<https://portal.chicagopolice.org>). I also utilized the City of Chicago Data Portal (<https://data.cityofchicago.org/>), which provides a wealth of statistical information related to administration and finance, buildings, community and economic development, education, and the environment.

In the absence of accurate census data that can be used to track the movement of gay men and lesbians from the 1970s to the 2000s, researchers have chronicled gay neighborhood formation through the establishment and shifting concentrations of gay and lesbian businesses. While this methodology has provided useful insights into the development and movement of lesbian and gay entertainment zones across urban landscapes, it is limited in its ability to accurately depict the residential patterns and social changes that accompanied these spatial and economic shifts. This method for tracking gay neighborhood development also largely ignores the significant variability of economic success across gay and lesbian businesses. This can create inaccuracies when pinpointing moments, or historical snapshots, of when businesses were open, instead of tracking the lifespan of individual gay businesses. Such a task, if pertinent for specific research claims, is particularly important when analyzing histories of transitional urban development. Furthermore, this methodology also reproduces the ideology that gay businesses defined gay urban space, thus strengthening the capitalist mythology that gay urban culture, sexual citizenship, and equality are dependent upon gay business establishment. Thus, in this dissertation I track gay and lesbian businesses not to make any claims about how they signify the parameters of the gay neighborhood, but to give general to provide geographic markers and context in my discussion of space. To more

precisely situate specific spatial transformations in both time and space to tell a story of larger movements.

The consistent goal for all my research strategies, whether interviews, surveys, participant observation, or archival research, was to gain an understanding of what Boystown meant to those who lived, worked, or socialized in the neighborhood. With Boystown being a space defined by whiteness, gentrification, androcentricity, and gay sexuality, I was particularly interested in attending to spatial meanings across sexual, gender, and racial identities. Like neighborhood names and naming practices, neighborhood meanings and subjectivities provided additional insight into how discourse reproduces cultural conceptualizations of Boystown. When I explored subjective experiences and understandings of Boystown through in-depth interviews and participant observation, I discovered a wide range of neighborhood meanings that configured vast social understandings and shaped subject experiences of urban life.

1.4 Logistics: Dynamic Terminologies and Cartographies

As a study of space, culture, and power that spans over decades of immense social, political, and economic change, the complexity of this project requires stating its analytical lexicon and firmly situating the study geographically. My goal in providing this lexicography is to assist with navigating the particularities of identity and space, as I analyze larger social, political, economic, and spatial movements and how they play out geographically and between individuals. This study is not focused on identity, per se, as a category of analysis. It is a study of race, class, gender, and sexuality and providing working understandings of these terms will ensure a cohesive analytical framework.

One of the most challenging aspects of writing a critical narrative was coming up

with an analytical lexicon that was temporally, individually, and analytically accurate when referring to self-identification, while simultaneously being flexible enough to account for historical, individual, and collective shifts and continuities. Thus, rather than resorting to the universal employment of umbrella terms like “queer” or “LGBT” that often become critically ineffectual and loaded with inaccuracies when employed in diverse contexts,¹⁸ I utilize a compendium of terms to reflect identities in their specific individual and historical contexts in an effort to avoid unintentional anachronisms, incongruity in praxis, and other misidentifications. Doing so requires the recognition of race, class, gender, and sexuality as social, political, economic processes that inform individual identities and subjectivities, rather than categories that reference individual identities and subjectivities. This recognition allows for an analytical shift from standpoints (Collins 1990), intersections (Crenshaw 1991), and identity and towards social and historical ontologies of power (Hacking 2004; Foucault 1984; DeLanda 2006), making room for the shifting fluidity of identities and subjectivities.

The racial identities of those who participated in this study varied and overlapped. They included African American, Latino, White, Black, Asian, Southeast Asian, and Biracial. Gender identities included male, female, transgender, queer, and non-gender binary. Terms that denote sexual identity used in this study also overlap and include, heterosexual, straight, homosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and queer. Terms used also

¹⁸ I reserve the acronym LGBT and term queer to refer to specific political frameworks and friction, representing a political ideology that embraces gender norms and sexual normativities and a political ideology that challenges them.

used refer to shifting sexual identities and collective social movements since the 1960s,¹⁹ which included homophile, gay, gay and lesbian, LGBT, and the contemporary fracturing of sexual and gender identities encompassed in/by the acronym LGBTQ+.²⁰ While the scope of this study encompasses significant changes in how identities have been collectively conceptualized over time, individuals have also expressed fluid and shifting gender and sexual identities during the span of my fieldwork. By laying out these schemata of identities, I do not suggest an essential temporal stability and continuity of the subject or that the subject is simply affected by changing schemes of categorization and discourses of difference. Rather, to bring together identity and subject formation with the question of agency, identity should be conceptualized as a temporary employment, which constitutes and re-forms the subject so as to enable that subject to act (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

In terms of class, classical Marxist approaches have privileged class over all other categories, considering it to be the articulating core around which all identity is constituted. Post-Marxist approaches recognized the contemporary moment as an era of radical contingency, shifting class from an all-encompassing structure to just another

¹⁹ Social movements around non-normative sexual identities have shifted over time. Broadly speaking, the Homophile Movement preceded the 1970s and transitioned into the Gay Liberation Movement. From the 1970s to the 1980s, gay men and lesbians made up the two primary categories of homosexual identity. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Gay Liberation Movement transformed into the Gay Rights Movement and then into the LGBT Movement.

²⁰ I use the acronym LGBTQ+ to acknowledge the multiplicity, expansion, and fluidity of non-normative sexual and gender identities that people used during the course of my fieldwork. Specifically, I use the LGBTQ+ acronym in reference to collectivities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender identities, as well as queer, asexual, agender, bicurious, gender fluid, genderqueer, and questioning.

identity in an enumerative chain of identities; a discursive strategy that addresses the contemporary processes that continue to erode the relevance of old Marxist frameworks, such as rising unemployment, the disappearance of the peasantry, the altering of the balance between rural and urban populations through development of agribusiness, the making of students into a sizeable part of the social structure through the explosion of higher education, and the transformation of gender roles through the incorporation of women into the labor market (Laclau 2000b). I use class as a term that reflects economic identities that are relational and perceived, as they are tied to specific temporal and cultural contexts. In doing so, I purposely limit my use of class to refer to poor, middle-class, upper-middle class, and professional class distinctions made by participants in the context of gentrification. Within the context of fieldwork, these identities were primarily shaped by experiences and observations of housing affordability, homelessness, employment status, and income.

In addition to shifting, fluid, and overlapping identities, I also attend to shifting, fluid, and overlapping space. As such, I distinguish gay neighborhoods from other collective, gay, and typically urban spatial formations, such as gay ghettos, gay enclaves (Abrahamson 1996), gay nightscapes, gay zones (Califia 1994; Bell, et al. 2001), gay villages, gay towns, and so on (Ingram et al. 1997b; Bell and Valentine 1995). I claim that gay neighborhoods, as neighborhoods, are uniquely modern spatial formations with specific meanings (Looker 2015; Ioannides 2013), as well as social, economic, and

political structures that differentiate it from other gay spatial forms.²¹ These meanings and structures shape subjectivities and social relations in distinct ways. While I distinguish gay neighborhoods from other gay urban spatial formations, I also recognize continuity between gay spatial forms, which often also overlap. Therefore, I am not proposing any type of utility in putting forth a typology of gay space.

Furthermore, it is also important to recognize Boystown itself as a subjective space that is constantly shifting. Like most of Chicago's neighborhoods, Boystown has no official borders. As such, understandings have shifted over time of where the gay neighborhood ends and where it begins. These borders are also frequently contested within the context of ongoing gentrification, which slightly shift businesses, populations, and social patterns over time. However, during the bulk of my fieldwork, a collective understanding of Boystown's borders was shared by those who participated in this study who roughly defined Boystown as existing between Lake Michigan to the east, the Red Line of the Chicago "L" or Sheffield Avenue (1000 Block) to the west, West Irving Park Road (4000 Block) to the north, and Barry Avenue (3100 Block) to the south. Toward the end of my fieldwork, I began to see Boystown being increasingly recognized as the much smaller area between North Halsted Street and North Broadway, and W. Belmont Avenue

²¹ In the United States, gay neighborhoods have been recognized as taking root during the post-Stonewall period (Faderman and Timmons 2006; Stryker 2002; Ghaziani 2015), with the period from 1969 to 1978 having been dubbed "The Golden Age" for gay neighborhoods (Reuter 2008). However, as evidenced by the development of Boystown, the neighborhood designation was not used until around the 1990s. Before then, the area was referred to as the gay ghetto and had distinct social meanings and political implications. Gay urban spaces also existed prior to this period (see Chauncey 1994; Beemyn 1997).

and West Grace Street. Boystown's gay businesses rather than its residential blocks defined this smaller area. Regardless of Boystown's borders, North Halsted Street was the neighborhood's central thoroughfare and the location of the city's highest concentration of gay bars, nightclubs, and retailers. North Halsted Street was so important for understanding Boystown, that it was often used interchangeably with Boystown to reference the neighborhood. Its geo-spatial centrality reflected the centrality of the gay marketplace in conceptualizations of the gay neighborhood itself.

Boystown was also referred to by different names, depending on the social and historical context in which the neighborhood was being discussed. Most frequently during my fieldwork, Boystown was referred to as Lakeview, which represents the oldest name of the area. Lakeview (or Lake View) refers to both the community area, as well as the historic township that existed prior to its incorporation into the city of Chicago. Since then, business and resident organizations have divided up the Lakeview community area into West Lakeview, Central Lakeview, and East Lakeview. Within this naming convention, Boystown was referred to as East Lakeview or Lakeview East. During my fieldwork, these names offered a de-sexualized and de-gendered alternative to the popular Boystown name, and thus were predominantly used by in social contexts where "Boystown" seemed inappropriate or had economic consequences.²²

Before the name "Boystown" took hold in the 1990s, the north side's gay area was referred to as New Town. From the late 1960s to the 1980s, New Town included the areas of contemporary Boystown as well as additional blocks south to Diversey Parkway,

²² See real estate practices mentioned in Chapter IV.

which are now considered to be parts of the Lincoln Park neighborhood (see Figure 1). As the moniker suggests, New Town was a new neighborhood created by people who moved north from Old Town. The name "New Town" was gradually phased out of existence as Lincoln Park expanded and developed into a desirable, upscale neighborhood. The gay neighborhood, in turn, shifted north and became known as Boystown.

In addition to the map of the neighborhood and its shifting borders, my analysis of Boystown requires a visual unpacking of Chicago's layered cartographies to provide geographic references used throughout my analysis and situate the neighborhood within the city's larger social and political geographies. First, as previously mentioned, Boystown is located in the Lakeview community area known as community area 6 (See Figure 2). In the 1920s Chicago was divided up into ecological units called community areas by sociologists at the University of Chicago (Sampson 2012; Zangs 2014; Keating 2008). These community areas were based on the residential patterns of homogenous social groups and were designated for conducting urban sociological research. When they were designated, community areas more or less represented ethnic neighborhoods. The university originally classified 75 different community areas, but the annexation of O'Hare Airport in the 1950s created the 76th community area and Uptown and Edgewater were separated in 1980 to create the 77th community area. Even though the social geography of the city has changed dramatically since these community areas were established, their boundaries have stayed the same. As such, they have continued to be used by urban planners, historians, and other scholars to track changes in demographics over time though they no longer represent the same ethnic organization of the city.

Understanding that Boystown is located within the larger Lakeview community area provides historical context for understanding the neighborhood's naming conventions and demographic changes.²³

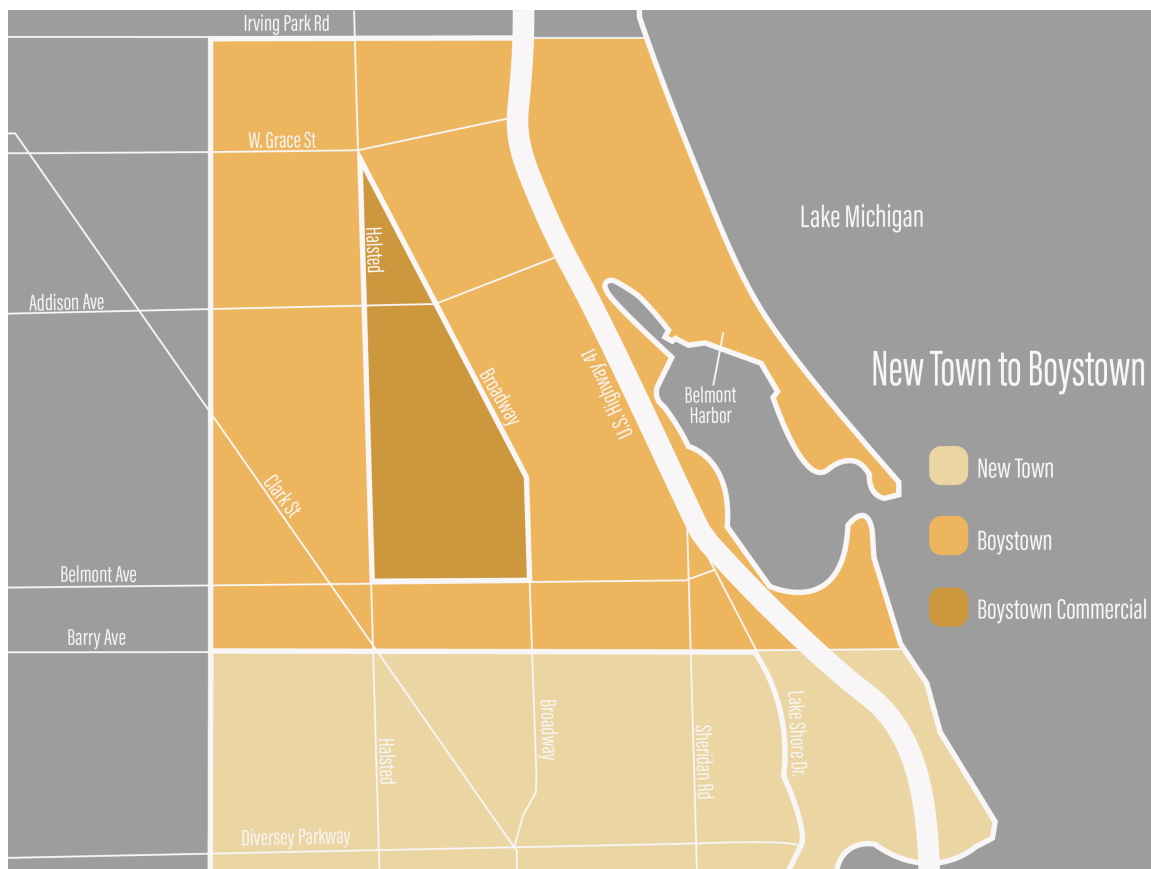


Figure 1. Map of New Town and Boystown: This map of Chicago's gay north side indicates the shrinking of the gay neighborhood as it has transformed since the 1970s. The boundaries of New Town were considered to be as far north as Addison Street and as far south as Diversey Parkway. When New Town became known as Boystown, its southern boundary moved north to somewhere between Barry and Belmont Avenues. Boystown's commercial district makes up the center of the neighborhood and is nestled between N. Broadway Street, North Halsted Street, Grace Street, and Belmont Avenue.

²³ The 2000 census showed the population of the Lake View community area to be 98,814 people, making it the second largest community area in Chicago. Demographic data shows that the population was 79.5% White, 4.42% African-American, 8.72% Hispanic, 5.4% Asian, with the remaining two percent identified as "Other" (Clark, et al. 2007).

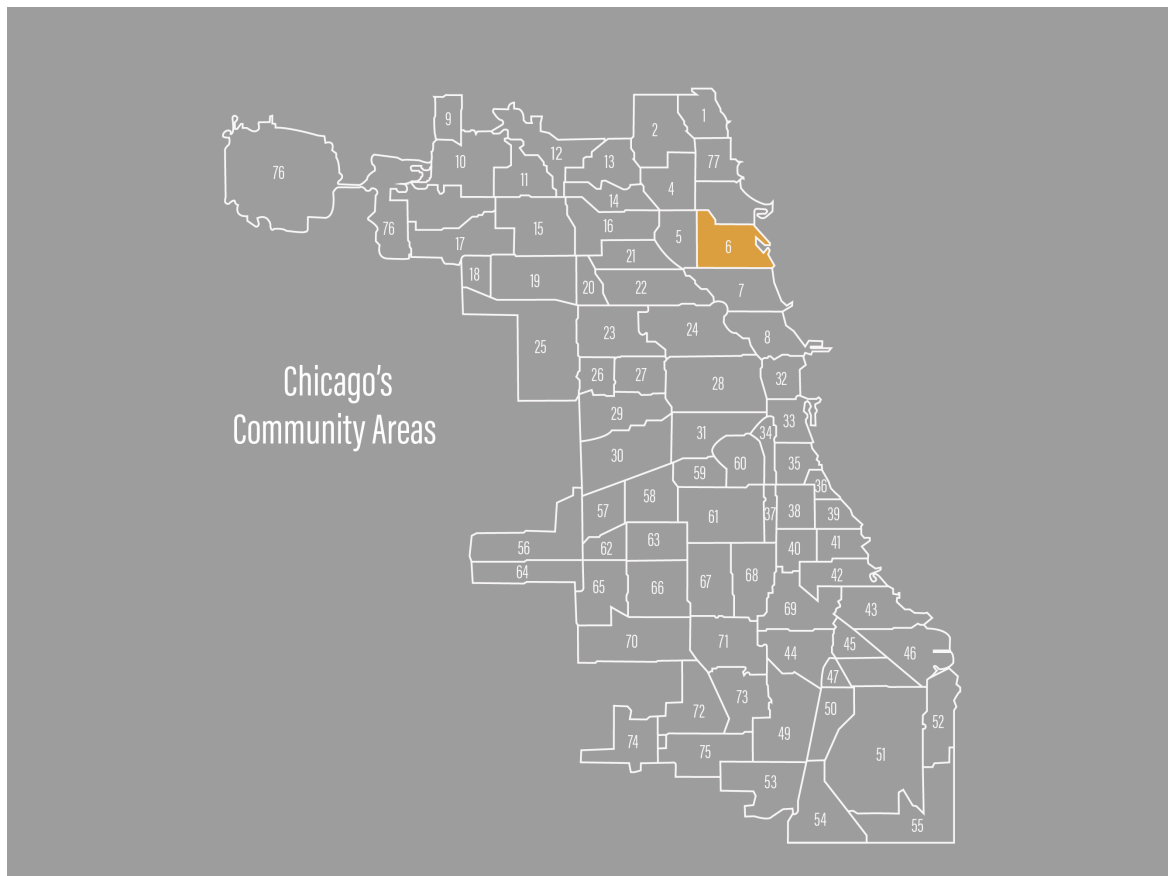


Figure 2. Map of Chicago Community Areas: This is a map of all of Chicago's community areas. Boystown is located in the Lake View community area, which is also known as community area 6 (highlighted in mustard).

Other Chicago neighborhoods will also be referenced throughout this dissertation in relation to Boystown, it is also important to know where these neighborhoods are located, particularly in relation to Boystown (see Figure 3). Boystown is located directly north of Lincoln Park, south of Buena Park, and east of Wrigleyville. These are the neighborhoods that directly border Boystown. Furthermore, Boystown is located about three miles south of Andersonville, known as Chicago's lesbian neighborhood, and less than two miles south of Uptown, a neighborhood also facing gentrification during my fieldwork. Lastly, Boystown is about three miles north of Old Town and the Gold Coast and four miles north of the downtown Loop.

The city of Chicago is also geographically divided into police districts, which are determined partially based on criminal activity and the location of established district stations. These designated areas are broken down into smaller policing zones called beats. During my fieldwork, most of Boystown was located within the boundaries of the 23rd Police District. It was nicknamed the Town Hall Police District since the district station was housed in the historic Lakeview Town Hall Building at the intersection of Addison Street and North Halsted Street. While this district extended north to Lawrence Avenue in Uptown and south to Fullerton Avenue in Lincoln Park—well beyond the confines of the Boystown neighborhood—Boystown was located within three of the district’s nine beats:

2323, 2324, and 2331 (See Figure 4). A small portion of the neighborhood west of Clark Street was located in the 19th Belmont Police District. Thus, police district crime reports offered statistics that were not aligned with neighborhood boundaries. By understanding Boystown's geography of policing, crime data and police interactions presented throughout this dissertation will be contextualized.²⁴

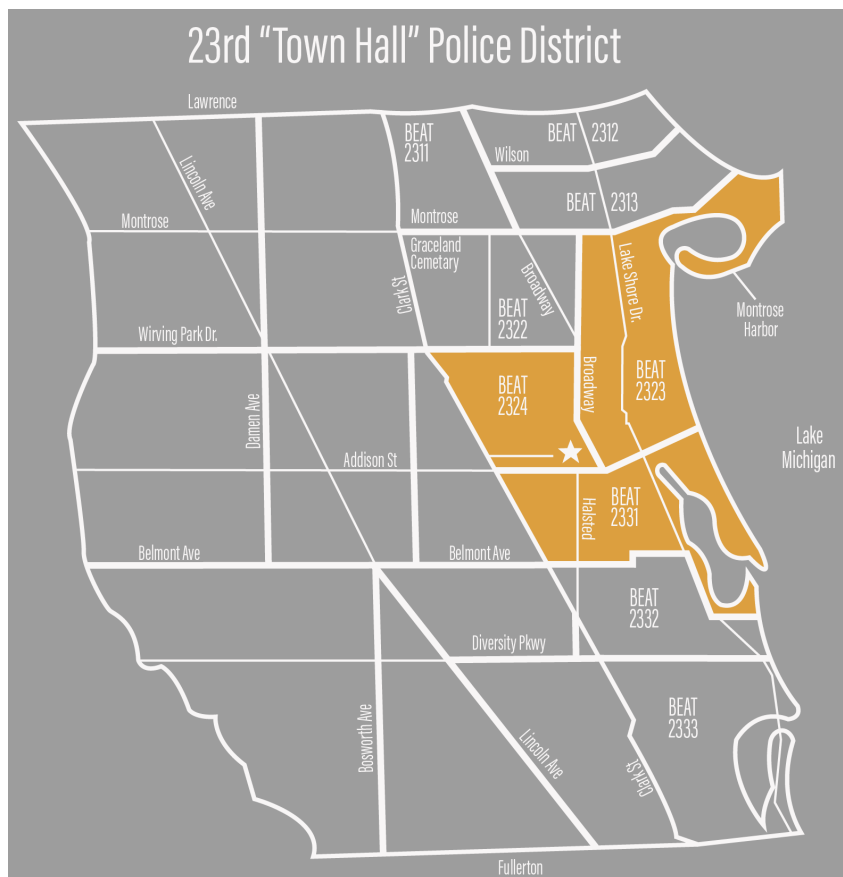


Figure 4. Map of 23rd Town Hall Police District: Map of the 23rd Chicago Police District with beats. Beats highlighted in mustard represent those that cover Boystown.

²⁴ While these policing boundaries stayed the same for the majority of my research, they changed in 2012 when Mayor Rahm Emanuel's cost-cutting plans closed two police stations, merging the 19th Belmont District and the 23rd Town Hall District in what was called district consolidation. See Doyle, Bridget and Jeremy Gerner. 2012. "Chicago Police Districts Close in Cost-Cutting Plan." *Chicago Tribune* (March 3).

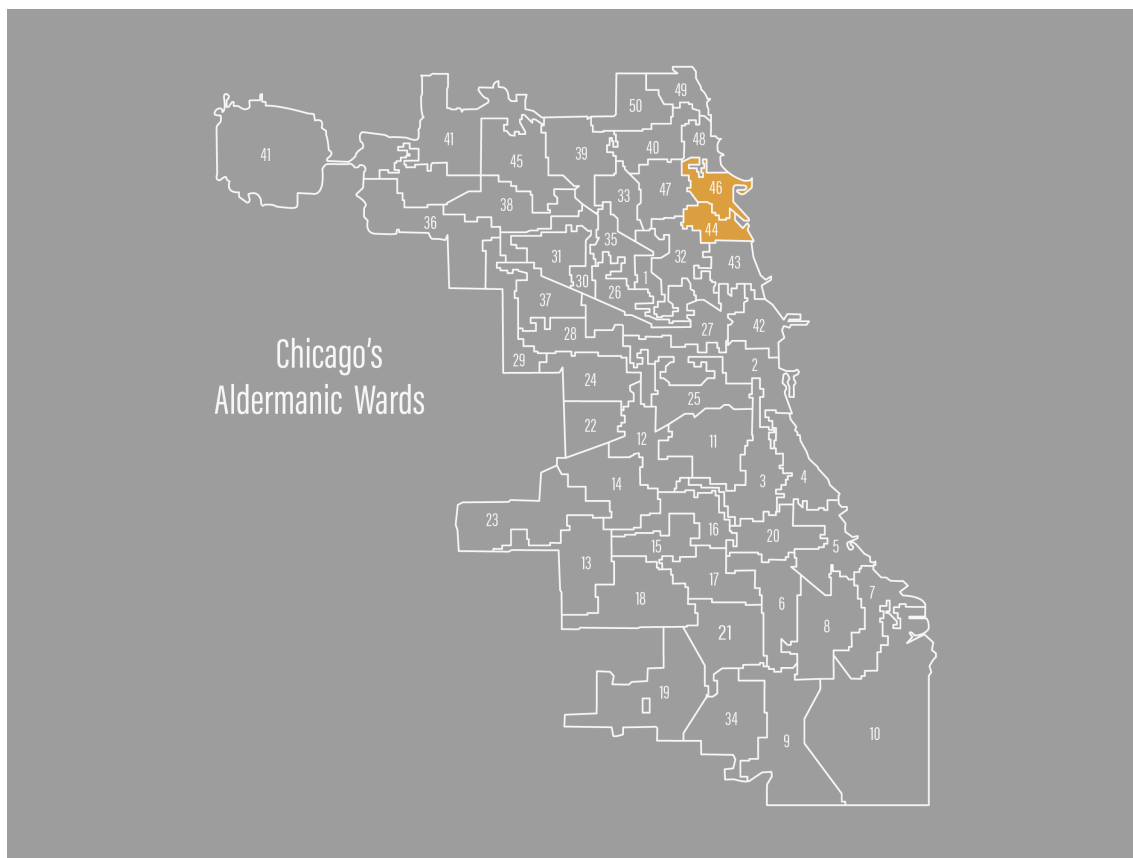


Figure 5. Map of Chicago Wards: Map of Chicago's Wards. The wards highlighted in mustard, 44 and 46, encompass parts of Boystown

Lastly, Boystown is also located in Chicago's 44th and 46th Wards. Since its first municipal charter in 1837, Chicago was divided into geo-political entities called wards. Chicago's current 50 wards were established in 1923 and are also not aligned with neighborhoods, even though ward maps are redrawn every ten years mandated by state law. Residents in each ward are represented to the city government by an elected official, called an alderman, who together make up the city council (Zangs 2014; Fremon 1988). During my fieldwork, Boystown was located in the 44th Ward and was represented by Alderman Tom Tunney—the city's first openly gay alderman, who had been the ward's alderman since 2003 (see Figure 5). A small part of the northeastern side of the neighborhood is represented by the 46th Ward, which during the majority of my fieldwork

was represented by Alderman Helen Shiller who had been the ward's Alderman since 1987.

Gay neighborhoods offer a useful lens for understanding the socio-spatial dynamics of capitalism and biopower across categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality, since all of these apparatuses operate dynamically to produce the modern gay neighborhood and it is within this single space where they coalesce in substantive ways (Nero 2005; Hanhardt 2013). Boystown in particular, as these cartographies begin to show, is uniquely situated to provide an increased understanding of the production of inequalities within these power structures and uneven systems of domination. First, it comprises and is located within a city of pronounced and persistent racial segregation. Chicago, for decades, has maintained its standing as the nation's most segregated city (Cohen and Taylor 2000; Squires, et al. 1987; Rilvin 1992; Little and Ahmed 2008; Glaeser and Vigdor 2012). Furthermore, as "the city of neighborhoods," Chicago's urban landscape is explicitly organized by race, class, gender, and sexuality, not just across neighborhoods but also within them (Sexual Org of City, etc.). As a neighborhood defined and produced by ongoing gentrification that began in the post-World War II period of social and economic restructuring, economic hierarchies of class are enmeshed in Boystown's continued production. Furthermore, Boystown's gendered predilections are denoted by its name; a colloquial moniker that was popularized in the 1990s, established the neighborhood's centrality for gay male sociality, and signified the neighborhood's visible (although temporally shifting) concentration of gay male bodies and sexualities. Lastly,

Boystown developed out of a collective movement for gay liberation in the context of precarity,²⁵ articulated through urban space and sustained and promoted through subsequent movements for gay rights and equality.

By using Boystown as both a lens and object of analysis, I am not only able to analyze the particular ways in which violence is produced through space, but also the lived experiences, social relations, and local subjectivities constituted by this specific space. The level of specificity and locality that Boystown provides allows for new understandings of broad theories of biopower, capitalism, and violence. My argument, that the gay neighborhood is fundamentally a machine of racial violence, posits that gay neighborhood is a space formed through ideologies of exclusion rooted in consumption, while simultaneously serving as a project of liberation and equality. Thus, it sheds light on gay neighborhoods as contested and contradictory sites of struggle, challenging popular conceptualizations of gay neighborhoods as sites of resistance to heteronormative regimes of inequality by incorporating their role in the manufacture of violence.²⁶

As gay neighborhoods have proliferated, so too have their study and they have been increasingly scrutinized in the fields of sociology, geography, urban planning, and

²⁵ If precariousness and precarity are understood as (1) “the potentiality to form non-dominant modes of collective existence that pose a challenge to the constraining, destructible, and unbearable effects of contemporaneous living;” and (2) “an intensification and an increasing normalization of insecurity and instability in our sense of selves, our daily lives,” (McCormick and Salmenniemi 2016: 4), particularly in relation to time, space, and belonging (Butler 2004; Puar 2012b).

²⁶ I understand violence as structural and inter-personal; symbolic and actual, that is, “intimately tied to actions” (Valencia 2018: 35). The racial character of violence takes many forms and includes individual acts of racial profiling, racial bias, and hate crimes, as well as structures of institutional racism, segregation, collective practices of racial exclusion, racial policing, and so on.

anthropology as divisive spaces that privilege some while they operate to silence, conceal, or exclude others (Rushbrook 2002). An expansive academic interest in Boystown has developed since I began my fieldwork, growing from only a handful of scholarly works that explored different aspects of the Boystown's development (Levine 1979; Papadopoulos 2006; Reed 2003) to an ever-expanding collection of books and articles analyzing the neighborhood from sociological, geographical, and urban planning perspectives (Winkle 2015; Papadopoulos 2017; Ghaziani 2014; Greene 2014; Rosenberg 2017; Stewart-Winter 2016; Orne 2017). My work offers a unique anthropological perspective to this growing body of scholarship.

1.5 Structure of the Dissertation

In the chapters that follow, I analyze experiences of violence in Boystown and unpack the complex intricacies that shape Boystown as a productive site of violence. As such, each of the following chapters analyzes individual instances of violence in Boystown and their historical contingencies. I situate these contingencies within the co-constitution of biopower and racial capitalism, attending to the ways in which biopolitical violence is produced through the gay neighborhood. While the structure of this dissertation is mostly chronological in terms of the timeline of my fieldwork, my analysis requires the weaving of overlapping, interconnecting, and intersectional histories throughout to provide historical contextualization and a broader understanding of contemporary political economic processes as they continue to shift, transform, and play out in Boystown.

For Marx, beginnings were important in that they allow one to set up a vantage point from which to see. In this spirit, I begin with an analysis of Boystown's formation from an epistemological perspective, which will provide the foundation for the chapters

thereafter. *Chapter II: Knowing Boystown*, is part a critical analysis of the construction of Boystown and part counter-storytelling effort (Delgado and Stefancic 2001). In it, I critically analyze Boystown's formation with the considerations that "all [spatial] meanings are historically situated" (Rotenberg and McDonough: xiv), beginning with an examination of the popular narrative of Boystown's formation that designates gay men as central actors in its production. Without delegitimizing the role that gay men had in the creation of Boystown, I offer a more expansive view of the neighborhood's production that complicates the popular narrative of the gay neighborhood as a site of resistance by interjecting the role of the State, as well as the roles of racial minorities and women who have been historically excluded from both the physical neighborhood and the discourses about it. Through this nuanced history of Boystown, analyzed through a Foucauldian framework of knowledge/power, I unpack the ways in which the gay neighborhood is both materially and immaterially intertwined with the violence of racial capitalism.

In *Chapter III: Building a Racialized Landscape of Exclusion* I use the prism of racial capitalism and biopolitics to critically reexamine this role of gay men in the creation of Boystown. Specifically, I analyze how gay male capitalists produced Boystown as a site of and for middle-class consumption and look specifically at how the neighborhood's material landscape reproduces violent spatial exclusions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. I bridge Chapter II with Chapter III through a discussion of how the built environment of the neighborhood and its popular narratives are mutually constituted, while provided additional insight to the violence of commodification and the privatization of gay neighborhood space. I argue that racial capitalism's spatial, social, economic, and political restructuring of Boystown redefined citizenship and belonging

through reproducing Boystown as a gay, white, male space.

In *Chapter IV: In Defense of Boystown*, I analyze neighborhood violence in a neighborhood affected by continuous change. With threats of the neighborhood disappearing due to supergentrification and the Great Recession transforming the social and economic lives of residents, Boystown became territorialized by its LGBTQ+ residents in an effort to protect it from change. Within this context of territorialization, larger conflicts of sexuality were fought locally through spatial contestations and practices of exclusion. Through the lens of racial capitalism, I implicate gay men in the processes of supergentrification and privatization at the root of contemporary conflict. I also show how safety, from both interpersonal violence and structural violence, frames territorial practice. The focus of this chapter are the myriad of ways in which race, class, gender, and sexuality cosynthetically produce violence within Chicago's biopolitical geography.

In *Chapter V: Gangs to Gaggles*, I analyze Boystown as a "site of surveillance" (Lyon 2007: 25). Specifically, I examine a new system of community policing and racializing surveillance (Browne 2015) that developed out of a neighborhood crime panic that began in the summer of 2009. While racialized policing and surveillance efforts continued to occur perennially in successive years, coming to a notable eruption in the summer 2011, I chose to focus on the summer of 2009 as a point of departure from the previous years. According to Simone Browne, racializing surveillance is subject to change, as it is dependent on space and time (2015). As such, I analyze contemporary forms of community-based policing and surveillance as both new and recursive, situating them within a history of neighborhood violence. Furthermore, I analyze the development of anti-youth discourse and the ways in which it is leveraged by racial capitalism. My

analysis situates crime, fear, and racialized violence within a historical context of gay-neighborhood-making processes reliant on the continual negotiation of safety.

Finally, in Chapter VI, I offer my concluding remarks, situating my analysis within a Foucauldian understanding of contingency. In asymmetry, I offer examples of acts of resistance as a reminder of contingency and coincidence, while offering some thoughts about the future of Boystown.

II. KNOWING BOYSTOWN: DISCOURSE AND SUBJECTIVITY

"Spaces sometimes lie." – Henri Lefebvre (92)

2.1 A Popular Narrative

The door buzzer buzzed. I jumped up from the couch and stuck my head out of my bedroom window. I looked down from the second floor so I could see who was at the front door of the apartment building. I saw Cee Cee Bloom standing on the walkway below and yelled down to her that I would be right there. I threw on some jeans, put on a pair of sneakers, and checked to make sure Bruiser and Toto had food and water in their bowls. I grabbed my phone, my digital recorder, and my fieldwork bag and ran down the stairs so that I would not keep her waiting too long. When I opened the door, I saw Cee Cee was sitting on the curb between two parked cars.

Something was on her mind. She was sitting in silence and staring up at the apartment buildings across the street. When I approached her, she asked me with her arms stretched out in the air, "Can you believe that all of this was created because of pee pee in the bootyhole?" Two gay men walked past us, overheard her, and smiled in our direction.

"What do you mean by that?" I asked as she stood up from the curb where she sat.

"I mean all of this was created because of gay sex. This neighborhood, this culture, the bars, the sex shops, the rainbow flags..." We started to walk east on Cornelia Avenue towards Lake Michigan. Cee Cee pointed at the rainbow flags hanging outside of Little Jim's, known by most residents as the neighborhood's oldest gay bar.

"Men wanted to have sex with other men," she continued. "We were prosecuted because of it. Brutalized. We had to create a place of our own to survive... and so we could have gay sex, of course."

Cee Cee paused. She put her arm out in front of me to stop me from walking.

“See?” she asked. “Do you smell that?”

“Oh my God, yes!” I replied. The aroma was so foul that we held our breath and picked up our pace to escape the possibility of asphyxiation.

It was the beginning of spring and the Bradford pear trees were blooming. Colloquially known in the neighborhood as the “cum trees,” these pungent angiosperms filled up the block with a scent that was so strong—and so familiar—that it was hard for me not to reflexively gag as we made our way to the lakefront.

“Gay sex. Pee pee in the bootyhole,” Cee Cee exclaimed. “Even the trees know it.”

We continued walking. We crossed Broadway. Within a few minutes, we could see the cars whizzing by on Lake Shore Drive.

“It’s pretty remarkable when you think about it. That there is a neighborhood as large as this one that is so gay. So so *so* gay. A place where gays can be themselves. And in Chicago of all places!” Cee Cee put her hand on her hairy chest.

“They say Chicago is the second city. But really, it’s the first city for America’s second-class citizens.”

I giggled in acknowledgement.

“What do you think will become of Boystown?” I asked as we crossed Lake Shore Drive through an underground tunnel that connected the neighborhood to Waveland Park. Cee Cee did not answer me until we made it out to the other side of the tunnel due to the echoes of a family who rode their bikes past us in the opposite direction.

“Who knows? It will probably be destroyed like gay culture is being destroyed in general. People are selfish. No one has integrity. No one cares anymore. Our

relationships are so transactional. And straight people are coming in and changing the neighborhood. Gay people trying to be straight. The whole city will probably just look like boring, straight, white Wrigleyville. What a shame!”

We headed north towards Montrose Harbor and once we arrived, we sat down on the concrete revetment that looked out onto Chicago’s downtown skyline. Beside us were two gay men who were talking about another man that was standing about 50 feet away from the four of us. They thought he was an undercover cop. Both Cee Cee and I sat in silence as we listened to their conversation.

“You can tell because of that fanny pack he is wearing. Unless you’re a Wicker Park hipster, you’re not going to be wearing a fanny pack,” one of the young gay men said. “So he’s gotta be an undercover cop.”

“Why would there be an undercover cop here?” the other gay man who was sitting with him asked.

“Because that’s the bird sanctuary over there.” He pointed to what looked like a park to the northeast. Both Cee Cee and I turned our heads to see where he was pointing. “That’s where gay men go to hook up. You’re bound to see at least one dick or BJ when you walk through there.”¹

He pointed to another man. “That guy over there looks like he’s cruising right now. He’s *buuurd* watching. I hope he doesn’t get arrested.”

Cee Cee turned and smiled at me.

“See? Gay sex,” she said. “Like I said, we are all here in this moment, in this place,

¹ BJ, in this context, referred to “blow job” as in fellatio or oral sex.

because of pee pee in the bootyhole.”

For 26-year-old Cee Cee Bloom, who self-identified as white and transgender, the neighborhood represented a political, social, and economic achievement in which gay men and gay sexuality played a central role. Cee Cee saw Boystown as an act of resistance; a means for LGBT people to achieve physical safety, economic security, social strength through community, and unprecedented political power within an oppressive heteronormative landscape. As such, producing and claiming gay neighborhood space were arduous and politically radical acts, especially in the face of State-sponsored stigmatization, police brutality, and employment and housing discrimination. Cee Cee saw the gay neighborhood as an apparatus for sexual liberation and citizenship; a space that gay men worked and fought hard to create in the face of unparalleled adversity and violence. For Cee Cee, this idea was elicited through the infusion of gay pride symbols throughout the neighborhood, Boystown’s public cruising spaces, and the paradoxical policing of gay sexuality at the same time as it was celebrated and made visible. It was through these encounters that the meaning and importance of Boystown as a gay space was communicated to Cee Cee and validated.

Cee Cee moved to Boystown from New York City eight months before our walk to the lakefront. Prior to her relocation, Cee Cee never set foot in Chicago. Thus, her understanding of Boystown was framed largely through her knowledge of gay neighborhood formation in Manhattan. While resident there, she learned about the gentrification of Greenwich Village by gay men and the importance of Stonewall for the Gay Liberation Movement through the personal accounts of people who lived there. Once Cee Cee moved to Boystown, conversations she had with Boystown residents confirmed

a similar narrative of gay neighborhood formation that collapsed the popular narrative of gentrification of the neighborhood by gay men with the narrative of the struggle for gay rights. It is through this coalescing of discourse that the urban gay neighborhood became an integral asset for LGBT citizenship.

In November of 2008, eighteen months after my neighborhood stroll with Cee Cee, I met Chris through a mutual friend. A 28-year-old, self-identified straight white man who claimed to "exclusively practice heterosexuality," Chris was temporarily renting out a room in our mutual friend's apartment located on North Halsted Street in the center of Boystown. When he agreed to sit down for an interview, I was ecstatic because he was the first man that I was introduced to who lived in Boystown and identified as straight. During our interview, he explained to me his experience of gentrification in the neighborhood. He said,

I have never felt any hostility for being a straight man living here. I am actually treated quite nicely. There are a lot of straight people here now too, so I think we have all sort of gotten used to the idea that this is actually a diverse area. I am also very respectful to my [gay] neighbors so I don't think they feel that I'm intruding on their space. I'm not one of these guys who is going to complain about the noise from the club down the street or that you are being too loud in your apartment. I am living in your neighborhood that you guys built, I'm not going to be a dick and start telling you what to do and how to act.

Chris made clear throughout our interview that although he identified as heterosexual, he felt part of the neighborhood. While he did not experience feelings of exclusion, he was still conscious of how to socially navigate gay neighborhood while straight. Chris maintained a heightened awareness of how he was positioned as a straight man in gay space and he strategically acted as if he "was a guest in someone else's home," as he described later in our interview. This feeling of being an outsider defined how Chris

interacted with gay men in the neighborhood. For Chris, demonstrating respect for his gay neighbors meant making a conscious effort to restrain himself from telling gay men what to do in a space they created to escape heterosexual domination.

In December of 2009, I met Diana, a 32-year-old married mother of two who had just moved to the neighborhood from Lincoln Park. During our interview, I asked her to tell me about her decision to move to Boystown. She said,

At first, we were worried about moving to the neighborhood. We didn't want to be part of the problem. You know, we didn't want to make anyone angry because we were yet another straight family moving into the gay neighborhood. But we just have the mindset to live and let live. We are very grateful to the LGBT community for welcoming us and creating this beautiful neighborhood that is safe for our family. And we do our part. It's important that our children are exposed to diversity. We support gay pride, gay marriage, and equality for all.

Like Chris, Diana too described what it was like to be straight while living in a neighborhood "created by the LGBT community." Diana said she did not experience any hostility directed to her or her family, however she did not feel like she belonged and consistently positioned herself as an outsider throughout our conversation. She described how she sometimes felt as though she was "walking on eggshells" when she struck up conversations with gay men at Caribou Coffee, particularly about living in the neighborhood. She worried that she might offend someone by claiming that this was her neighborhood as well.

Chris and Diana felt that they were "treated nicely" and "welcomed" in the neighborhood, respectively, yet as straight-identified people they still felt like outsiders in the gay neighborhood. These feelings of being an outsider were not based on their exclusion from physical space but were framed by how they understood Boystown's formation. That is, Chris and Diana's understanding that LGBT people (and gay men in

particular) built Boystown in resistance to oppressive heterosexuality framed their subjective experiences of not belonging due to their own straight sexual identity. Even though they lived in the neighborhood, they felt that they had no claim to it since Boystown was created in opposition to their sexual identity. Furthermore, the ways in which their personal identities were conscripted onto the neighborhood shaped how they navigated and negotiated living and socializing in this space.

Cee Cee, Chris, and Diana each knew and experienced Boystown through a collective understanding of its formation that was known across sexual and gender identities; an understanding that posits that the neighborhood was created through the political act of gentrification by gay men. For Cee Cee, this narrative produced a sense of pride, excitement, and nostalgic reverie by connecting her to queer sexuality and the past social, political, and economic accomplishments of the LGBT community. On the other hand, for Chris and Diana this same narrative produced a sense of ostracism and discomfort. With this narrative in mind, they moved through Boystown with precaution as they negotiated their relationship to gay space and the LGBTQ+ people living within it. The narrative of Boystown's formation elicited feelings of both belonging and exclusion depending on one's sexual identity, producing fractured neighborhood subjectivities and demonstrating the way in which discourse shapes divergent and often discordant experiences of urban space as it is interpreted through identity and positionality.

As new residents to the neighborhood, neither Cee Cee, Chris, nor Diana directly experienced the neighborhood's transformation into a gay neighborhood nor did they witness some of the most significant neighborhood transformations brought by recent gentrification—such as the building of new condominiums on North Halsted Street or the

construction of the Center on Halsted. Yet, they all shared the same understanding of Boystown's formation. For Cee Cee, friends she made while she lived in the neighborhood confirmed her assumptions that Boystown was built from the ground-up by gay men. Chris learned this narrative of Boystown's formation by overhearing conversations between his roommate and his friends. For Diana, her real estate agent told her about the history of the neighborhood when she was looking for her new home. Thus, through casual conversations, people who did not directly experience Boystown's formation were spreading the story of gay neighborhood formation in which gay men were the vanguards of gentrification.

With the narrative of Boystown's formation having such a central role in people's understanding and experience of the neighborhood, the continual retelling of the story of Boystown's development by those newly resident seemed suspect. In an effort to interrogate the narrative of Boystown's formation by those who experienced it first-hand, I explored Boystown's history through interviews with long-term residents who lived through its development. Through these interviews, interviewees shared with me stories that were aligned with the popular narrative of gay neighborhood formation. They described Lake View² in the 1950s and early 1960s, prior to the arrival of a visible contingent of gay men, as being, "run-down," "dirty," "seedy," "blighted," "neglected," "crime-ridden," and "unsafe" —particularly west of Broadway and north of Belmont Avenue. They also shared stories of walking in groups amongst empty, boarded-up

² At the time, *Lake View* was spelled with two words rather than the conjunction *Lakeview*, which was used by Chicagoans during my fieldwork.

storefronts and dilapidated buildings; running to their cars upon exiting the gay bars because the neighborhood felt dangerous and life-threatening, with drug dealers walking the gang-controlled streets; and driving past "prostitutes" hanging out on the corner of Broadway and Belmont Avenue, dancing on the hoods of parked cars and openly soliciting sex. Overall, Lake View before the arrival of gay men was described as a neighborhood defined by its rapid disinvestment, buildings in disrepair, and rampant crime.

I sat down with Gregory at the Center on Halsted. A self-identified gay, white male, he told me about his time in the neighborhood in the late 1960s.

In 1967, before I came out, and I was working in Old Town at the time. And a whole group of people I that I worked with started moving up here. So there were two guys who were gay, they were a gay couple, and they were just the beginning of the [quote] "gentrification" of the area. They were on a street just west of Halsted and they bought this whole house, and a lot of the houses were burnt out and in really bad shape. They were in their late 20s, early 30-something. They were throwing a party and we were leaving after work in Old Town and they said, 'guys, DO NOT COME UP HALSTED STREET. Take the Clark Street bus.' So we all took that route, because of the gangs.

Well, two of the guys that I worked with decided to take the Halsted Street bus and they got off the bus and they got stopped by the gangs because they were on gang turf. He came into the party with blood coming out of his mouth. That's how bad it was in that era.

Gregory considered his gay friends who moved up to the neighborhood during this time as some of the earliest gentrifiers of the neighborhood. They bought and fixed up a home that was falling apart, supporting the popular narrative of gay gentrification through residential renovation and gay-neighborhood making as safe-space making.

Gregory continued to tell the story of Boystown's gentrification by gay men and its eventual transformation into a wealthy neighborhood as a result of their investments.

When gay men started coming to the neighborhood, they really turned it around. Even though the gay center at the time was further south by the Century Mall, a lot of gay men lived up here because it was cheap and close-by. Uptown was still populated by poor Appalachian whites and Native Americans at that time so the gays weren't going that far north. But because the lakefront was pretty wealthy, as was Lincoln Park to the south, this section of Lake View, the part that became Boystown, was like a little pocket. There was gang violence and no one wanted to live near west of Halsted Street, but then gay men came in and expanded the wealthy areas further north and west.

Gregory's narrative of Boystown's formation described a northern movement of gay men out of Old Town to New Town. Drawn in by a large stock of available and affordable housing, the area became an attractive place for gay men to move. Building by building, Gregory claimed, gay men fixed up the deteriorating, barren, and dangerous neighborhood and transformed it into a rebuilt, vibrant, and safe neighborhood defined by the gay sexuality of its new residents, businesses, and institutions.

These experiences of a dangerous Lake View were further corroborated by accounts published in local gay publications. In an article in *Gay Chicago News* published in 1983, author Richard Noland wrote, "A year ago [1982], if you wanted to catch a cab on N. Halsted, you could stand there and petrify."³ Similarly, in an article published in *Gay Chicago Magazine*, Rick Karlin described the area around Little Jim's.

Now-fashionable Elaine Place looked like Berlin after the war, and the streets west of Halsted were even scarier. It was not a place to venture into alone at night (1995).

Elaine Place, a residential block off of North Halsted Street and Cornelia Avenue, became a quintessential symbol of the gentrification of Lake View with long-time

³ Richard Noland. 198. "The Ever-Changing Face of Gay Chicago," *Gay Chicago Magazine* (June 23).

residents frequently using it to describe Boystown's transformation. One interviewee claimed that the section of Cornelia Avenue that cuts through Elaine Place was once referred to as "Needle Alley" due to heavy drug use in the area; another told me that the Latin Kings tried to set Elaine Place on fire during the 1970s; and another stated that during this time, residents tried to make Elaine Place a gated community to keep out the criminal activity of its deteriorating surroundings. During the time I conducted my fieldwork, Elaine Place was far removed from the violent crime and architectural degradation that defined its past. It had the reputation of being one of the most visited residential blocks in Boystown, drawing people to photograph its well-maintained vintage brick buildings and unique public art.⁴

Michael, a self-identified gay white male who visited Lake View on a weekly basis when gay men first started coming to the area also described the neighborhood as a crime-ridden place during that time. In addition to gang activity, Michael also recalled rampant prostitution as he described his shifting feelings of danger and safety in the neighborhood.

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, this neighborhood was very seedy. You didn't want to walk around here by yourself, especially at night. A group of us guys used to all hop in my car to save on gas and drive up from Old Town to go to Little Jim's when they opened. You didn't take the train back then. It was very dangerous. The trains were covered in graffiti. People would even shoot at the "L" from the ground as it passed. When we got to Lake View or New Town—it wasn't called Boystown then—we

⁴ Two metal giraffe sculptures and a matching Nanny Goat sculpture, created by artist John Kearney, stood in Elaine Place. Developer Milton Zale commissioned them in 1978 and 1999, respectively. They were and were removed in 2012 when Zale sold the building to Chicago Apartment Finders. In 2013, the giraffe sculptures were replaced by "Night in Tunisia," a sculpture by artist Ron Gard.

always saw prostitutes in the streets. They were usually quite lively and fun to be around. They actually felt like part of the community in some way. You felt safe around them. But it was the gang members and the gang activity that was more frightening. We still came though, it was kind of like an adventure for us. At the time, I didn't think it was life threatening. I just thought it was a part of city life.

In fact, right by Little Jim's, in the building where Gay Mart is, that building there was where all the hookers lived. Back in those days there were a lot of straight hookers, gay hookers, and transgender hookers. They all lived there. Whenever they would hang out in front of the bar, [the bar owner] would come out and make sure they went somewhere else. I think he had a lot to do with the neighborhood turning around. This place was a complete dump before then.

Through his recollection, Michael posited gay men, and gay business owners in particular, as playing a central role in gentrification and "cleaning up" of the area through the policing of women's bodies made out-of-place. This narrative of gay men cleaning-up an urban space made dirty by crime, disinvestment, and prostitution transformed gay men, and gay businessmen in particular, into the bearers of civility through gentrification.

This understanding of Lake View as a barren site of violence before gentrification by gay men helped to construct gay men as fearless urban pioneers who were willing to brave the dangers of urban decline to care for a neighborhood left derelict; to make sacrificial investments in a neglected urban area for the commendable goal of community building. The "homosexual community" was first recognized in Chicago as "urban pioneers" and the "vanguard" of neighborhood renewal in a report published in 1978 that resulted from a three-month demographic study conducted by the City Club of Chicago, a non-profit civic organization.⁵ The report claimed that gay couples in particular were

⁵ See "Gays called 'pioneers;' 'Back-to-the-city' trend is charted," *Chicago Tribune*

responsible for this urban renaissance, as they moved from the Near North to the North Side and initiated the processes of urban renewal.⁶ As the neighborhood continued to gentrify and gay men became increasingly visible on the North Side, the idea that gay men were the model citizens of urban renewal on the North Side and primarily responsible for the economic revival of Lake View became more widespread.

Gay men accepted and celebrated their new identity as urban pioneers. At the culmination of the Gay Pride Parade of 1983, Little Jim's won the award for best float, which was a covered wagon painted with the words, "We're the Pioneers" (see Figure 7). The covered wagon—a symbol of American Westward expansion and settlers of the American frontier—celebrated the reputation of Little Jim's as the first gay bar on North Halsted Street, as well as gay men, more broadly, as leaders in urban gentrification. The positive reception of this metaphor led to the creation of advertisements for the gay bar featuring the covered wagon that ran in local gay publications for more than eight months after the parade (see Figure 8). The repetitive use of this symbol of American colonization in local advertisements marked the mass retelling and legitimization of this particular narrative of urban development by gay men for the sake of profit accumulation.

(November 12, 1978).

⁶ *Gay Chicago News*. 1978. "Gays Called Pioneers" (November 23).



Figure 6. Little Jim's Pioneer Wagon Float: Photo of the covered wagon parade float used by Little Jim's in the 1983 Gay Pride Parade, which won the award that year for best float.⁷



Figure 7. Little Jim's Pioneer Wagon Advertisement: Advertisement for Little Jim's that featured the covered wagon. In it they state their claim as the pioneers of North Halsted Street and leaders in the area's development.⁸

⁷ *Gay Chicago Magazine* 6, no. 27 (July 21-31, 1983).

⁸ *Gay Chicago Magazine* 6, no. 26 (July 7-17, 1983).

This colonialist narrative has persisted, reappearing over decades in both written and oral accounts of the neighborhood's formation. For instance, in 1997, Boystown was described in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, as a "nowhere place" that was "pioneered by the gay community" and transformed into a vibrant and desired residential and commercial neighborhood.⁹ Furthermore, this narrative has become part of a national narrative of gay neighborhoods and urban gentrification by gay men that have been reiterated in cities across the United States and the West. The stories of sites ruined by urban decay and economic decline, only to be turned around by gay men and transformed into a fabulously gay, economically-thriving, and highly-desirable neighborhoods, have been used to describe the development of the Castro District in San Francisco (Leyland 2002; Castells and Susser 2002) and other gay neighborhoods from coast to coast (Abrahamson 1996; Reuter 2008; Florida 2002; Gates, Ost, and Birch 2004) and across the Atlantic (Giraud 2014). Thus, this narrative has become a larger ideology of gay neighborhood formation and has made Lake View a quintessential example of the historical trends and processes that have uniquely defined Western urban modernity.

The popular narrative of Boystown's formation developed not only as an economic endeavor in terms business advertisement, but it also served important social and political functions as well. Positioning gay men as model citizens and contributors to society made up part of a larger effort for gay men to change the violent heteronormative rhetoric around gay identity and sexuality, as well as gain political clout locally (Stewart-Winter

⁹ Podmolik, Mary Ellen. 1997. "City recognizes gay area on N. Halsted - 'Pride' symbols featured in \$3.2 million face-lift." *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 17).

2016). The making of the gay neighborhood became constitutive of the Gay Rights Movement and an integral part of the struggle for equal rights. In the discourse of the struggle for equality, the profound cultural and historical significance given to the neighborhood through the popular narrative of Boystown's creation that put gay men at the center of its development was demonstrated by the very words used to describe the neighborhood. Between the 1970s and the late 2000s, the gay area of Lake View has been dubbed "a pocket of tolerance" (Chauncey 1998), "an urban Eden" (Clark, et al. 2007), and "Homo Heights" (Lowe 1979), names that connote a larger cultural framework for understanding the neighborhood as a place of relative and confined safety, liberation, and utopian fantasy for LGBTQ+ people. In addition to these monikers, this particular gay space has also been called "The Midwest's most formidable gay ghetto" (Shilts 1978), "The Castro of the Midwest" (Paitowski 2008), "Chicago's gay capital" (Franz 2000), "Chicago's Queer Ground Zero" (Hobica 1995), and "Chicago's gay mecca" (Konkol and Golab 2006), names that emphasize the neighborhood's importance as a gay center through their references to power, capitols, and nation.

Throughout my fieldwork, residents often claimed Boystown as "the first official gay neighborhood in the United States," a designation given to the neighborhood in 1999 (Wockner 1999) with the construction of the North Halsted Streetscape Project (NHSP) and that was popularized through local newspaper stories that chronicled the project's

development.¹⁰ This designation and the stories published about the neighborhood not only perpetuated the popular narrative of Boystown's formation, but also cemented the neighborhood's position of historical import for LGBT liberation in the United States. Written at the time as "Boy's Town," the local moniker became internationally known through prolific media coverage and further emphasized the central role that gay men played in gentrifying the neighborhood.¹¹ With this newly found fame, even the name "Boystown" became part of Chicago's mainstream urban lexicon. Once known locally as New Town and only colloquially as Boystown between gay residents, the use of the name "Boystown" became more widely accepted. During my fieldwork, Google Maps even designated a portion of the neighborhood as "Boystown," further officializing claims to (and about) this particular gay urban space on, and through, the internet.

Boystown's names provide a window into the workings of discourse, knowledge, and power, as well as how discourse produces subjectivities, space, and ideology. In her exploration of naming practices in the Palestine-Israel conflict, anthropologist Julie

¹⁰ Local newspapers published accounts of the NHSP that retold and disseminated the popular narrative of Boystown's formation (For example, see Banchemo, Stephanie. 1997. "Rift Threatens Unity of North Halsted - Plan to Recognize Gay Pride Causes Unease for Residents," *Chicago Tribune* (September 24).

¹¹ See Freeman, Aaron. 1997. "Stating the Obvious." *Chicago Tribune* (August 28); Banchemo, Stephanie. 1997. "N. Halsted to get \$3.2 Million Face Lift - Rainbow Flag, The Gay-Pride Symbol, Is Central Theme." *Chicago Tribune* (August 18); and "At the rainbow's end: a lot of misguided flak," *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 18, 1997). While published references to the neighborhood as Boystown date back to the 1970s, the name did not catch on locally until the 1980s and became popularized in the 1990s. Even the spread of its name is entrenched in the neighborhood's commodification. Randy Franks, owner of the Bad Boys boutique that opened in March 1983 at Aldine Avenue and Broadway Street, suggested that the store created and sold t-shirts that said, "Boystown" on them and may have been responsible for the initial renaming of the neighborhood Franks, Randy. "Good Bye Bad Boys." *boi Magazine*.

Peteet explained how names and their meanings embody ideological significance and reproduce power.

Words to refer to people, places, events, actions, and things are critical building blocks in the linguistic repertoire. Names, and their meanings, form part of the cultural systems that structure and nuance the way we see, understand and imagine the world. As such, they are always more than simple reflections of reality, referencing a moral grammar that underwrites and reproduces power... Naming a place functions as a public claim. Repeating a name, standardising it, and displacing former names normalizes it (2005: 153-154).

As Peteet described, names structure how people conceptualize the world in which they live by constituting spatial subjectivities and meanings. Names embody ideologies, social attitudes, sentiments of belonging, and understandings of the self, which are inherently embedded in the reproduction of power. In this regard, the use of names in everyday communication serves as a practice of reproducing both knowledge and power. Through this understanding of names and naming practices, a web of discourse, knowledge, power, subjectivity, and space takes shape.

Michel Foucault formulated a broad understanding of what constitutes discourse, defining it as “the totality of all effective statements” (Foucault 1972: 27). As such, discourse can be thought to represent all utterances and statements that have meaning and effect, as well as the rules and structures that produce these statements. With this understanding in mind, neighborhood names can be seen, in part, as the “stuff of discourse... verbal vehicles through which knowledge is coded, modified, and most importantly, validated” (Rotenberg 1993b: 20). However, while names make up a part of discourse, the idea of discourse is much more expansive. It refers both to the methods of communication, as well as to “that vast network of signs, symbols and practices through which we make our world(s) meaning to ourselves and others” (Gregory 1994: 11). It is

through this particular understanding that the relationship between discourse and subjectivity is made visible. Furthermore, discourse is particularly important for understanding space, as it is through discourse that spaces are imagined and represented (Said 1978, 2000; Kitchin 2002). In this regard, space can be thought of as fundamentally discursive; a site of knowledge production that defines subjects, constructs knowledge practices, and has its own linguistic codes and reading practices (Rodriguez 2003).

Foucault understood discourse not merely as language, but as a system involved with socially embedded networks of power that structures perceptions of reality and constitutes knowledge. He considered discourse to be “a regulated practice” (Foucault 1972: 80) that functions as a technique of power (Rabinow 1984). Thus, subjectivities and knowledge were products of power relations. Foucault developed this concept of knowledge through his collective works, eventually describing its inextricable link to power in his claim that, “it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Foucault 1980: 52). Foucault understood knowledge as something that is produced and maintained in circulation in societies through the work of many different institutions and practices and as always working in the interests of particular groups in the context of power (Mills 2003). This idea of mutual constitution of knowledge and power was restated by Nigel Thrift, who said, “Discourses produce power relations. Within them, stories are spun which legitimate certain kinds of constructs, subject positions, and affective states over others.” (Thrift 2005: 31). Thus, discourse and knowledge are produced by power relations, as

they work to maintain them.

Despite nuances and disjuncture,¹² Foucault's understanding of knowledge/power was built upon notions of ideology developed by earlier French Marxist philosophers, including Foucault's mentor Louis Althusser. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1970) posited ideology as a distorted, or false, consciousness that obscures people's relationship to their world where the interests and values of the dominant class are reproduced (Rose 1999). This idea was advanced through Althusser's theorization of repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses (1971). Drawing upon the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Jacques Lacan Althusser linked ideology, subjectivity, and domination by understanding state apparatuses, both repressive and ideological, as mechanisms of violence that construct subjects through the indoctrination and the internalization of the values of the dominant class, which are then reproduced¹³. Through his theorization of state apparatuses, Althusser understood ideology as being both imaginary and material, with ideologies masking the exploitative arrangements of capitalist societies while being governed by material practices (1971). It is this constant

¹² Foucault's ideas of power departed from traditional Marxist theories that saw power as something that was possessed and operated to oppress and constrain people, such as the role of the State in oppressing people (Althusser 1984). Foucault, on the other hand, was very critical of the idea that power was something possessed and thought of it as more of a strategy; something that was performed. In *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault put forth the idea that "Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization... Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (Foucault 1980: 98). Power, Foucault conceived, is relational; something that operates within everyday relations between people and institutions (Foucault 1988).

¹³ These ideas were also utilized and advanced by Bourdieu (1977) who proposed that a dominant group's power lies in its ability to control constructions of reality that reinforce its own status. It is through this control of reality that subordinate groups accept the social order and their own place within it.

interplay between the immaterial and the material that must be recognized in the case of Boystown.

Using this framework of knowledge/power, the popular narrative of Boystown's formation can be contextualized within a larger cultural system of knowledge production around gay neighborhoods and the economic system of racial capitalism in which both the narrative and the material neighborhood developed. Gay neighborhoods, particularly in large Western cities like San Francisco, New York, Toronto, and London, have been constructed in both popular and scientific texts as significant spaces and paramount sites for the Gay Rights Movement; as places of diversity, inclusion, and acceptance; and as urban sanctuaries, where LGBT people can (at least temporarily) escape the oppression of a world hostile to sexual minorities (Reuter 2008; Ingram, et. al; 1997a; Bell and Valentine 1997). Through these collective constructions, a narrative of the gay urban neighborhood development has been produced that not only claims the supremacy of these spaces for the Gay Rights Movement, but also claims the centrality of gay men in neighborhood production. The construction of gay urban neighborhoods as being of prime importance for the lives and rights of LGBT people has prompted scholars to produce counter narratives through the examination gay lives and movements outside of major metropolises and in rural environments (Bell and Valentine 1999; Shuttleton et al. 2000; Gray 2009).

With urban concentrations of gay residents and culture having been named, studied, and documented by urban researchers since the 1920s (Heap 2003), there is a rich discourse in the social sciences that, when analyzed, demonstrates the co-development of gay neighborhood understandings and progressive social, political, and intellectual

movements. In 1956, the social sciences began to explore gay communities and spaces outside of the framework of deviance or vice (see Leznoff and Westley 1956). This marked the beginning of an important shift in the way homosexual communities, spaces, and people were discussed, constructed, and studied in the social sciences. However, it was not until the 1970s that scientific studies of the marginal worlds of gay men and lesbians began to flourish (Nardi and Schneider 1998). Esther Newton's *Mother Camp: Females Impersonators in America* (1972) and Carol Warren's *Identity and Community in the Gay World* (1974) were key ethnographic texts that attended specifically to the spaces and culture of gay men. These were followed by Barbara Ponse's *Identities in the Lesbian World: The Social Construction of the Self* (1978) and E. M. Ettorre's "Women, Urban Social Movements, and the Lesbian Ghetto" (1978), which encouraged subsequent studies that focused exclusively on lesbian sociality.

It was during the 1970s, spurred by a growing Gay Liberation Movement, that gay neighborhoods became widely visible and the term "gay ghetto" became part of the vernacular of gay culture—what has been called "gayspeak" (Cox and Fay 1994; Hayes 1976) or Gay Men's English (Leap 1996; Rodgers 1972). Carl Wittman's "Refugee's from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto" (1970), a seminal document of the Gay Liberation Movement, described the development and meaning of the gay ghetto.

We have formed a ghetto, out of self protection. It is a ghetto, rather than a free territory, because it is still theirs. Straight cops patrol us, straight legislators make our laws, straight employers keep us in line, straight money exploits us... We are refugees from Amerika. So we came to the ghetto - and as other ghettos, it has its negative and positive aspects. Refugee camps are better than what preceded them, or people never would have come. But they are still enslaving, inasmuch as we are limited to being ourselves there and only there... Ghettos breed exploitation: Landlords realize they can charge exorbitant rents and get away with it, because there is a limited area which is safe to live in. The Mafia control

of bars and baths in New York is only an extreme example of outside money controlling our institutions for their profit. In San Francisco, the Tavern Guild is in favor of maintaining the ghetto, because it is through the ghetto culture that they make a buck. We crowd their bars not because of their merit, but because of the absence of any other social institutions... Our ghetto... is not ours - capitalists make money off us, police patrol us, the government tolerates us as long as we shut up, and daily we work for and pay taxes to those who oppress us (Dynes and Donaldson 1992: 297-309).

Wittman's critique exposed the ways in which gay ghetto residents remained subject to an oppressive capitalist system and the role of the gay ghetto in reproducing this system. For decades, the social sciences and popular understandings of gay urban locales ignored this Marxist critique and the narrative that caught on instead was the story that was conducive to the reproduction of the system of capitalism—the story of safe space and the harnessing of gay power to carve out a place of our own; stories of gay empowerment that served to legitimize and mask the violence within gay ghetto, while promoting a narrow politics of sexual identity.

Social scientists were quick to adopt the term *ghetto* to refer to gay and lesbian urban enclaves, which would later become known as gay neighborhoods. As pointed out by geographer David Harvey, "We are, however, forced to concede that 'scientific' enquiry takes place in a social setting, expresses social ideas, and conveys social meanings" (Harvey 2001: 40). This lexical swap marks a mutual constitution between scientific knowledge and cultural discourse. In 1972, Laud Humphreys defined the *gay ghetto* as a neighborhood characterized by marked tolerance of homosexuality and a clustering of gay residences and bars (1972: 80-81). In 1974, sociologists Martin S. Weinberg and Colin J. Williams used the term *lavender ghetto* to describe areas with a "large concentration of homosexuals and their institutions" (1974: 61). In 1979, sociologist

Martin Levine set out to validate the construct of the *gay ghetto*, by evaluating numerous gay urban spaces around the United States based on Robert E. Park and Louis Wirth's definitions of a ghetto. Levine concluded that a gay enclave was officially a gay ghetto if it contained "gay institutions in number, a conspicuous and locally dominant gay subculture that is socially isolated from the larger community, and a residential population that is substantially gay" (1979: 185). Levine's study included New Town, the northern portion of which would become Boystown.

The term *ghetto* provided a legitimizing construct for the analysis of these spaces based on well-established research on Jewish ghettos (Wirth 1998 [1928]) and African American ghettos (Park 1928; Drake and Cayton 2005 [1945]; Clark 1965). Since the 1920s, early urban ecological perspectives conceptualized the ghetto as a form of socio-spatial isolation, as well as liberation. Louis Wirth described ghettos as "separate cultural areas" produced by intolerance elsewhere, "where one obtains freedom from hostile criticism and the backing of a group of kindred spirits" (Wirth 1928: 20). Furthermore, he considered the ghetto to be a "social institution," "an instrument of control," and "not only a physical fact; [but] also a state of mind" (Wirth 1928: 4-8). It was through this understanding of the ghetto that connections were made between space, oppression, and subjectivity, constructing the urban landscape through a binary notion of ghetto/nonghetto through which pleasure, threat, opportunity, and community could be understood (Ingram 1997).

As gay men and lesbians became increasingly viewed as mobile populations who moved in and out of gay ghettos and created new spaces throughout the city, the term *ghetto* became analytically incongruous (Altman 1983). Words like enclaves, villages,

communities, and neighborhoods replaced *ghetto* and came to signify LGBT residential and business concentrations rather than areas of forced isolation. In *Metropolitan Lovers*, Julie Abraham chronicled the rhetorical shift in the use of *gay ghetto* in both cultural and scientific contexts, connecting its contested use to competing politics (2009). According to Abraham, in the 1970s *gay ghetto* began to serve as “the basis for differentiating between a radial gay politics derived from gay liberation (then identified with that ghetto) and an emerging gay conservatism committed to improving the status of gays at the expense of the status of the city” (Abraham 2009: 243). Abraham argues that gay liberationists sought to distance themselves from dominant cultural stereotypes of homosexuals and create a new conceptualization of the gay community.

This political strategy of reconstructing the *ghetto* as a zone of liberation expanded beyond the cultural context of the gay liberation movement and into the social sciences where studies on gay urban spaces began to proliferate (Abraham 2009). Academic critiqued gay urban spaces as sites of sexual vice, deviance, perversity, and moral degradation (see Boyd 2003), as well as stereotypes of gay male promiscuity that proliferated during the HIV/AIDS epidemic (see Shiltz 2007), reflecting the discourse of the growing gay social movement. Anthropologist Esther Newton, who conducted much of her fieldwork in Chicago for her ethnography entitled, *Mother Camp: female Impersonators in America*, claimed that “Homosexuals are not accepted as 100 percent Americans, and they are certainly considered perverse” (1972: 2), showing the prerogative of scientific endeavors to create new biopolitical discourses that dissuaded violent oppression against sexual minorities and supported sexual citizenship.

The rhetorical shift away from the use of *gay ghetto* and to *gay neighborhood*

occurred at the interstices of political, economic, and social change that was reflected in this particular reformulation of gay urban space. Analyzing a visible British gay community during the 1970s, Jeffrey Weeks described how the merging of the Gay Liberation Movement with the global capitalist economy altered the way in which the gay ghetto was conceived. Weeks argued that the “conditional integration of homosexuality into mainstream heterosexual culture” and the commercialization of the gay movement and “homosexual subculture,” marked a “coming out” for the gay ghetto (Weeks 1977: 222). This “community economic and political development” (Lauria and Knopp 1986: 161) was part of a new strategy to gain political power through new forms of economic involvement, such as purchasing and running gay-owned bars and businesses (Baim and Keehan 2011a; Baim and Keehan 2011b). In this regard, the use of *gay neighborhood* instead of *gay ghetto* was a discursive signal that represented a subjective shift within an emerging liberal multiculturalism, where gay claims to space aligned with the production of a more commercialized and “mainstream” urban space. This did not occlude the usage of campy alternatives, like *homo haven* and “glitter gulch,” which gay men used to refer to Chicago’s gay neighborhood.¹⁴ During my fieldwork, some gay male Boystown residents continued to refer to the neighborhood as a *gay ghetto*, usually jokingly or pejoratively, but Boystown was overwhelmingly referred to as the gay neighborhood or, more affectionately, as the *gayborhood*.

While the construction of gay urban space changed, the analytical framework for understanding these changes continued to expand. In the 1970s and 1980s, historians,

¹⁴ “Takin’ it to the Streets of Lakeview.” *GayLife* 10, no. 3. (July 19, 1984).

sociologists, and anthropologists congruently theorized gay ghettos as sites of liberation and resistance (Read 1980; Warren 1974). These understandings were built upon prior theorizations of gay bars that were produced as early as the 1950s and 1960s when sociologists and anthropologists constructed gay bars as places of collective support, social acceptance, and a means to mediate the hostility lesbians and gay men were subjected to elsewhere in society (Westley and Leznoff 1956; Hooker 1965; Simon and Gagnon [1967] 1998; Achilles 1967). This theoretical framework was later applied to gay neighborhoods, propelled by both a continued need to scrutinize violent oppression, and a new politics for gay equality that embraced efforts to de-sexualize gay urban life. Thus, gay neighborhoods were positioned as "sites of cultural resistance" (Myslik 1996) working against social stigmatization, homophobic repression, and perpetual regulation, rather than merely the result of individuals seeking same-sex sexual partners (Heap 2000). This framework has continued to expand not only in its application to later gay spatial forms, but also in terms of its theoretical grasp. Gay urban neighborhoods continue to be understood as safe spaces (Hanhardt 2013; Whittle 1994; Pritchard, Morgan, and Sedgley 2002; Morgensen 2009) that played a crucial role in the advancement of gay culture and gay community formation (Abraham 2009).

Thus, the popular narrative of Boystown's formation, which follows the script of gay neighborhood formation more generally, not only shaped the subjectivities and social interactions of neighborhood residents, but it did so at the expense of other neighborhood narratives and histories that were ignored in the process. While gay men continued to utilize their stature as urban pioneers for political and economic power, histories that problematized the claims of gay men to gay neighborhood space were erased and taken

out of circulation. As a result of the popularization of this singular narrative, certain assumptions have been perpetuated about how gay neighborhoods are produced. For instance, the belief that spatial production is primarily a concern for gay men and less so for lesbians continues to persist, with claims that women are instead involved in the production of non-territorial interpersonal networks rather than place-based politics (see Adler and Brenner 1992). However, as I will show, lesbian spatial production in fact laid the foundation for gay neighborhood production and the invisibility of lesbian space is, in part, due to the production of knowledge and not necessarily due to gendered spatial practices. Moreover, I demonstrate how gay neighborhood formation is made possible not exclusively through the renovations and investments by gay men or lesbians, but through the participation of many of the usual players of gentrification across sexual identities.

For Foucault, the production of knowledge was not just a matter of narrative creation and popularization, but rather it was also a practice of continual exclusion. In “The Order of Discourse,” Foucault claimed that a discourse exists because of a complex set of practices that keep some statements in circulation and other statements out of circulation (1981 [1970]). Foucault claimed that by attending to these discursive exclusions in the excavation of knowledge, “the insurrection of subjugated knowledges” is made possible (Foucault 2003 [1997]: 35). Defined as the “historical contents that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systematizations” (Foucault 2003: 7), subjugated knowledges were used to reproduce the social order (Weber 1978). It was this idea that legitimized Foucault’s genealogical work as critiques of institutions, discourses, and hegemonic histories (Medina 2011). It is through this framework that the

disjuncture between popular discourse and lived experiences, as well as the workings of power, can be understood (also see Pickles 1988, 2004; Gregory 1994).

2.2 Histories Ignored

I sat down with Paul in the art gallery on the second floor of the Center on Halsted, a quiet space I often used to meet those who responded to an article written about my project that was published in *Gay Chicago Magazine*.¹⁵ Spread across a large wooden table, I had my digital recorder, notepad, and a folder containing extra un-signed consent forms. Paul began telling me about his life as a college student in Chicago when young people began moving into New Town, before the neighborhood shifted north to encompass what would become Boystown. He visited the neighborhood during his breaks from college in the late 1960s and 1970s, which also encompassed the periods of his life in which he lived as both a straight man and a gay man. He did not openly identify as gay until the early 1970s.

During his interview, Paul talked about the neighborhood's progressive politics as a factor that drew gay men and lesbians up from Old Town and the Near North Side.

You have to remember that when the gay neighborhood started moving north from downtown there was a lot going on. Young people were very political at that time, especially here in Chicago. They were protesting the government, the Vietnam War. You of course can't recall the 1968 Democratic National Convention here in Chicago, but that will give you a sense of the kind of attitudes that a lot of young people had during the late 60s and [early] 70s. New Town as they called it was a very progressive space...

¹⁵ "Boystown the Topic of Anthropological Study" *Gay Chicago Magazine* 34, no. 9 (March 4, 2010).

Paul described New Town, which he defined as the area east of Clark Street from Diversey Parkway to Addison Street, as the most politically active and progressive neighborhood in Chicago; a place that attracted young people who were critical of the government and who wanted to be part of larger political movement against the State.

As I continued to interview Paul, he started to repeat the phrase, "the straights were the ones who created this neighborhood." It was clearly a point he was eager to emphasize. After three reprises, Paul explained to me in more detail how straight people gentrified Lake View and *not* gay men or lesbians.

People think the gays created this neighborhood, but really, it was straight people. There was this yuppie class of young people who were gay, straight, whatever, who were moving out of their parent's houses in the suburbs and moving into the city to start their lives. It wasn't just gay people. They were hippies, yuppies, radicals, activists, feminists, and people who were pretty progressive. All of us collectively changed the area that we now know as Boystown. Gays only made up a portion of the people who were moving into the area. There were just as many straight bars and businesses as there were gay ones, if not more, and they existed side-by-side.

Most gay businesses had a short life-span. They closed soon after they opened. There wasn't much stability. I don't remember lot of gay people buying properties and such, at least not in my circle. There were some later who bought condominiums, but many of us were just renters. The people who were really doing the buying were the heterosexual investors and developers.

Paul was adamant about resisting the popular narrative of Boystown's formation. He wanted me to make sure that I understood that despite what I may have been told, gay men were not the most significant players to reshape the neighborhood and transform it into a gentrifying gay neighborhood.

I interviewed Paul at a time when white gay men were being singled out as the neighborhood's gentrifiers, responsible for the ongoing displacement of the

neighborhood's poor, working-class women and people of color. The popular narrative of gay men gentrifying the neighborhood had become a story that implicated gay white men in the reproduction of oppressive inequality. So, I was skeptical of his recollection of Boystown's development that placed straight people at the forefront of the neighborhood's gentrification and considered it a possible ploy to get white gay men off the hook for their role in displacement, blockbusting, and exclusion. This alternative history of Boystown's development that Paul was telling me seemed to be an effort to shift the blame for contemporary injustices away from the neighborhood's white gay men, which Paul was. According to Paul, even though gay men shaped the neighborhood and profited from transforming New Town into Boystown, their investments in the neighborhood's revitalization were incomparable to and eclipsed by those made by heterosexual developers, entrepreneurs, and homeowners.

My interview with Paul was a turning point in my fieldwork that pushed me to look deeper at the historical development of Boystown by spending a year with a strict focus on conducting more in-depth life history interviews, as well as dedicating more time specifically to archival research. The bulk of this research involved six months spent at the Gerber-Hart Library and Archives, where I went through every single issue available of the *Gay Chicago News* and *Gay Chicago Magazine* (1976-1989), *GayLife* (1975-1985), *Blazing Star* (1975-1979), *Lavender Woman* (1971-1975), and *Chicago Gay Crusader* (1973-1976). At the Gerber-Hart Library and Archives, I also combed through various printed issues of the *Windy City Times* published in the 1980s and 1990s. This research was supplemented by further archival research conducted through the Daley Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where I could access microfilm of *The*

Advocate for articles related to Chicago's gay community published throughout the 1980s, as well as digital archives of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The neighborhood branch of the Chicago Public Library, the John M. Merlo Branch, housed historical documents specific to Lake View, including the original publications of the *Lake View Saga* (1974, 1985, 2007).¹⁶ Furthermore, interviewees also provided me with their own personal archived documentation of Boystown and its development, including newspaper clippings, organization records, and legal documents from the 1950s through to the 1990s. Through this research, I found that the story of Boystown's formation was immensely more complex than posited by the popular narrative of gentrification by gay men.

In the late 19th Century, the Lake View township was known as a sparsely populated home of wealthy elites of European descent, with sprawling lawns and mansions. However, this changed in 1889 when Lake was incorporated into the city of Chicago. The area's wealthy and white demographic was rapidly disrupted as the township's incorporation ushered in a new era of urbanization. The construction of apartment buildings, commercial buildings, and recreational facilities brought working-class residents into the area (Clark, et al. 2007). By the 1940s a significant number of Eastern European Jewish residents lived in the area's lakefront, many left the poor Maxwell Street area where over 80% of Chicago's Jewish population lived in 1930 (Cutler 2006

¹⁶ The *Lake View Saga* is a local publication that chronicles the history of the neighborhood, written and sponsored by current members of the Lake View Citizen's Council, a neighborhood organization. It was originally written by Stephen Bedell Clark and Phillip L. Schutt and published in 1974. Updates were written by Patrick Butler and published in 1985, as well as by Bill Breedlove and Wayne Allen Salle in 2007.

[1973], 2009).¹⁷ Those who could afford to move to Lake View were primarily successful Jewish entrepreneurs and they transformed East Lake View with new synagogues, delis, and Jewish owned-businesses. Jews remained a significant demographic of Lake View until post-World War II suburbanization drew out both Jewish and white residents as part of a larger citywide exodus that constituted the development of new Jewish and white communities in the suburbs.

During this period of post-war suburbanization, Japanese Americans moved in. Fleeing racism and internment camps on the west coast and drawn to Lake View because of its cheap rents and newly available housing stock, it has been estimated that about 25,000 Japanese Americans settled in the area around the intersection of Clark Street and Belmont Avenue.¹⁸ It is around this intersection that Japanese Americans opened numerous businesses, including restaurants and import shops. During my fieldwork, J. Toguri Mercantile Co.—a large Japanese import shop located at 851 W. Belmont Avenue—remained open and served as a prominent reminder of the neighborhood's Japanese past. The store's claim to fame was that it was owned by the parents of Iva Toguri D'aquino, a famous Japanese spy known as "Tokyo Rose" who worked at the

¹⁷ Evidence of the neighborhood's Jewish population could be seen during my fieldwork by the areas remaining synagogues, including: Anshe Emet Synagogue, Temple Shalom of Chicago, and Anshe Sholom Bnai Israel Congregation.

¹⁸ Rosenberg, Larry. 1981. "Sampling the Clark Street smorgasbord" *Chicago Tribune* (October 9).

store from the 1950s until her death in 2006.¹⁹

In addition to Japanese Americans being drawn to Lake View from the West Coast and other parts of the city, urban redevelopment projects also pushed a significant Puerto Rican population into the area from the city center. During another life history interview I conducted with a former long-time resident of Boystown, I was told the story of how the redevelopment of the city center pushed people to Lake View. John, is a self-identified gay white man who grew up in Chicago and during his interview he recounted the redevelopment of the Near North during the 1950s and 1960s.

I remember as a little boy, my dad telling me that those buildings were built to separate the blacks from the whites. Kind of like a fence. It was a buffer zone to keep what they called “blight” out of the high-brow Gold Coast.

John began describing the construction of the Carl Sandburg Village, a private 16-acre complex for residence, consumption, and work bounded by North Avenue and LaSalle, Clark, and Division Streets. The Carl Sandburg Village, which opened in April of 1963, was comprised of apartments, townhomes, shops, private swimming pools, tennis courts, underground parking garages, walled parks, and a private security force. The Carl Sandburg Village represented a new concept for urban revitalization; a fortified enclave (Caldeira 1996, 2000) that was designed to provide a young professional class with an all-inclusive urban oasis completely protected from the dangers of city life.

Mid-twentieth century Chicago was a city shaped by decades of institutionalized

¹⁹ The store was once located further south on Clark Street but moved north to its Belmont location as New Town developed, where it remained for decades. The neighborhood's Japanese American population shrunk by the 1980s, leaving only a small fraction of the Japanese restaurants and shops that once defined the neighborhood.

ethnic and racial segregation through exclusionary zoning, steering by real estate agents, and bank redlining that kept the North Side primarily white. At the same time, public housing and urban planning initiatives led to the ghettoization of the city's African American residents in the city's South Side, creating what was then referred to as Chicago's Black Belt. This pattern of geographic, economic, and social stratification and racialized hierarchy (Drake and Cayton 1945) was reinforced in the 1960s through federal subsidies that allowed public agencies to "modernize" Chicago through slum clearance, the construction of expressways, and the building of public housing projects (Bruegman 2008). The Carl Sandburg Village was one of many of Mayor Richard J. Daley's modernization projects that served as efforts to redevelop the downtown area to keep Chicago's white middle-class population largely intact, representing the Daley administration's open commitment to racial segregation through urban renewal projects. (Cohen and Taylor 2000).²⁰ The Chicago Land Clearance Commission spent \$110 million of mostly federal money to acquire and raze blocks of old buildings to make room for the Carl Sandburg Village. Originally pitched as an apartment complex for lower-to-middle income people already living in the community, by the time the complex was completed the rents were priced too high for the area's existing working-class residents. As a result, thousands of residents were displaced in the process, many of

²⁰ Another of such urban renewal projects was less than a mile south of the Carl Sandburg Village and entailed the redevelopment of the 156-acre area adjacent to the University of Illinois campus on the New West Side. This project became the largest slum-clearance project in the city (See Schwieterman, Joseph P. and Dana M. Caspall, "Chapter 5: Renewing the City." In *The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago*. Chicago: Lake Claremont Press).

them Puerto Rican.

Rapid disinvestment in the urban core as a result of white flight and suburbanization was rapidly transforming other Midwestern cities like Detroit, Kansas City, Cleveland, and Saint Louis. The Carl Sandburg Village was built to prevent this from happening to Chicago by stopping the movement of people and money and revitalizing the urban core by investing in new housing designed to attract white, middle-class professionals back to the city. However, the Carl Sandburg Village was also an attempt to shield the predominantly white Lincoln Park and Gold Coast from the feared block-by-block expansion of the black community around Cabrini-Green Homes. Initially constructed by the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) in 1942 as a public housing project for people of Italian ancestry, Cabrini-Green was massively expanded in 1957 and completed in 1962 when the majority of its residents were black. This 70-acre housing project became known for its overcrowded conditions, extreme poverty, sensational crimes, clashes between residents and police, gang activity, gun violence, and prevalent drug abuse.²¹ Thus, the Carl Sandburg Village served as a physical buffer between wealthier white lakefront communities to the east and the massive black housing project to the west.

With the construction of the Carl Sandburg Village to the east and Cabrini Green to the west, Old Town—the neighborhood nestled in adjacent to these two divergent

²¹ Cabrini Green was in the process of being demolished and replaced with mixed-income housing units during my fieldwork, with the last building demolished on March 30, 2011.

experimental housing projects—became known as a gentrifying slum during the 1960s.²² In addition to the area razed for the Carl Sandburg Village, rapid development in Old Town also displaced a significant number of Puerto Ricans who moved to Humboldt Park, Lincoln Park, and Lake View. The Puerto Ricans who moved to Lake View from Old Town and the Near North side, resided mostly west of North Halsted Street. As Puerto Ricans joined Lake View's Jewish and Japanese population, North Halsted Street earned a reputation as being one of the most ethnically diverse streets in the city, marked by its few remaining Jewish Deli's, Japanese restaurants and import shops, and Latino businesses and institutions, including Arroyo's Liquor and the Hull House Spanish Outpost (a small Latino resource center) at North Halsted Street and West Roscoe Street. The neighborhood's Japanese and Puerto Rican populations were so significant that the Christian Fellowship Church at 912 W. Sheridan Road held services in Spanish, English, and Japanese. By the mid-1970s, what was once known as a Swedish area around Belmont and Sheffield Avenues had become a Latino district (Pacyga and Skerrett 1986).

As Japanese and Puerto Ricans began moving into Lake View, real estate developers and investors with deep connections to Chicago's political machine began buying out Lake View's lakefront property east of Broadway. This lakefront land grab of the 1950s was the result of optimistic population forecasts and speculation. It was further propelled by a 1957-zoning ordinance that allocated large swaths of land for high-rise

²² In "Old Town's Well Street Booms with New Nightlife," Alex Small describes the rapid pace of Old Town's gentrification. He discussed Old Town as "a place which seemed inexorably sinking into decay [that] suddenly acquired new vigor." *Chicago Tribune* (September 29, 1963).

apartments.²³ These luxury apartments built along Lake Shore Drive rapidly transformed the lakefront skyline, increased the lakefront's population density, and attracted young urban professionals. Drawn not only by the new high-rise apartment buildings, the convenience of Lake Shore Drive for commuting downtown make Lake View a prime location for those working in the city center. Even with this influx of young professionals to the lakefront, continued suburbanization and white flight led to an overall population loss in Lake View that left the area west of Broadway with affordable, spacious apartments that not only attracted working-class Japanese and Puerto Rican families, but also young cohabitating singles. By the early 1960s, the community east of North Halsted Street was reported to have the largest concentration of young single people of any neighborhood in the country.²⁴ With this new booming demographic, Lake View became known as the city's "straight singles center" (Fremon 1988: 291).

The growing population of Lake View's young professional class and the continued construction of high-priced, high-rise buildings along Lake Shore Drive spurred high-density development projects beyond the lakefront. The neighborhood's old greystone buildings that lined the side streets between North Broadway and Lake Shore Drive began being demolished and replaced by "four-plus-one" apartment buildings. This type

²³ See: Fuller, Ernest. 1955. "Apartment Sites on Lake Front Scare." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (March 28); Gavin, James M. "Mack, Sher Pick Briar Pl. Site for Tall Apartment." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (January 6); "Gavin, James M. 1965. "Skyscraper Planned for Lake Shore." *Chicago Tribune* (June 8); "Work to Start on Condominium Site." *Chicago Tribune* (January 30, 1966); Schwieterman, Joseph P. and Dana M. Caspall, "Chapter 7: Protecting the Neighborhood: Downzoning and Density Controls." In *The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago*. Chicago: Lake Claremont Press.

²⁴ Clark et al., *Lake View Saga* (2007).

of apartment building was designed for maximum land use with four residential floors of typically small apartments and one additional ground floor that was sunk in the ground for parking. By the early 1970s, Lake View had one of the highest concentrations of four-plus-ones in the city.²⁵ The neighborhood's housing stock transformed quickly to keep up with its shifting population and these new forms of housing continued to make Lake View an attractive destination particularly for young, single, working city dwellers.

The same forces that pushed Puerto Ricans away from the city center and pulled them to Lake View were the same forces that moved working class lesbians and gay men to follow the same northern trajectory. The center of gay life in Chicago during the 1950s and 1960s was concentrated in the Near North Side, particularly in Old Town and parts of the Gold Coast. Wells Street, Old Town's main thoroughfare, was known to be inhabited at the south end by poor African American families, Puerto Rican gangs, beatniks, and gay men and lesbians—all drawn there by low rents and its proximity to downtown (Baugher 2011).²⁶ The southern end of Wells Street was close to Bughouse Square, a public park that was once one of the city's most popular gay cruising spots (Nicosia and Raff 1977).²⁷ Wells Street was frequently compared to the city's other north-side nightlife district, Rush Street, as well as New York's Greenwich Village. However, it was often

²⁵ "Those Four Plus Ones," *Chicago Tribune* (July 26, 1971).

²⁶ When referring to Wells Street in Old Town, Chicagoans understand it to be the segment of North Wells between Division and North Clark and Wisconsin Streets.

²⁷ Bughouse Square was the colloquial moniker. The registered name of the park is Washington Square Park.

touted as being more "artsy, "beatnik," and gay.²⁸

Encouraged by a developer-friendly zoning ordinance passed in 1954, aggressive real estate development in the Near North began rapidly transforming the city's gay center (Papadopoulos 2006). After witnessing the transformation of New York City's SoHo district, real estate developers quickly began investing in the warehouse district, known later as River North, to create a similarly trendy neighborhood of lofts and boutiques (Karlin 1999). Similarly, Old Town's development followed the revitalization of other city's gaslight districts into art and cultural centers, most notably St. Louis' Gaslight Square (Kent 1984; Fuegner and Roth 2010). With an established tourist attraction, The Old Town Art Fair, the neighborhood rapidly transformed through tourism and commercialization, with Wells Street shifting from a decaying and vacant strip to a booming spot for retail and nightlife. By 1962, Wells Street had a wax museum and the first Crate and Barrel. Neighborhood organizations, such as the Old Town Triangle Association, collectively worried that speculators would destroy the neighborhood for their own profit and pushed for home renovation as opposed to residential clearance.²⁹ As early as 1969, "forces of urban renewal" were displacing established gay institutions, including the The Inner Circle—a gay bar located on Wells Street.³⁰

Peter, who self-identified as a gay white man, used to hang out in Old Town during

²⁸ "It looks as if Wells Street is on the way to becoming Chicago's imitation of Greenwich Village." Small, Ibid.

²⁹ See *Old Town Newsletter* (December 1962), published by the Old Town Triangle Association.

³⁰ See "Through the Swinging Doors," *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (January 1969).

this period of rapid redevelopment. While I interviewed him in the lobby of the Center on Halsted, he described the transformation of Old Town and the Near North from a run-down gay ghetto and warehouse district to a popular tourist destination.

No other area in Chicago was developing like [Old Town]. During the 1960s and 1970s, it was where most of the gay bars, bookstores, and cruising areas were. Old Town quickly went from a really run-down place to a popular tourist district. There were parts that were getting too expensive for current residents to afford, and there were parts that were getting very trashy and undesirable, with a lot of crime... People just wanted to get the hell out of there for both of those reasons.

Peter described the development of Old Town as part of a larger process of uneven development (Trotsky 1932; Harvey 1975; Smith 2010 [1984]) in Chicago, where some parts were highly desired and others pockets were left alone. This created an environment that was both unattainable and undesirable for the area's working-class residents. As a result, the city center was not the only place affected by the various urban revitalization projects that took place there. The numerous areas outside of city center where people moved to were also being transformed.

Peter continued to discuss how Chicago's segregated landscape steered the gay men and lesbians living in Old Town northward to New Town. "The only place[s] to go were the working-class neighborhoods. The ghetto was west and south, and the lake was to the east. The only place to go was North. So that's where we went." According to Peter, the movement of white gay men and lesbians out of the Near North was the result of gradual displacement caused by urban renewal, as well as a more immediate, agentic, and racially motivated move away from the crime and poverty associated with Cabrini Green's poor black population. Thus, the movement of gay men and lesbians to Lakeview was partially an intra-urban movement of white flight.

Charles, another gay white man I interviewed who lived through the transformation of Old Town and the northern movement of lesbians and gay men to Lake View, said:

[At first] Young gay men didn't want to come up to this shit hole. They aspired to live in the Gold Coast where the wealthier, older gay men were. They came here [to Lake View] because it was cheap, progressive, and this was the closest place to go to on the North Side [due to development in Old Town]. It became the gay ghetto pretty quickly... more and more people came out of the closet and moved here.

In addition to Lake View's cheap and available housing stock, the area became known as a politically progressive space. While the city's racial geography funneled Old Town's displaced and fleeing white gay men and lesbians northward, Lake View's combination of affordable housing, growing population of young singles, and progressive politics drew this population in.

Carl, a self-identified gay man who frequented the neighborhood during the 1960s, continually referred to the area that would become Boystown as an "alternative" and "radical" neighborhood as I interviewed him in the lobby of the Center on Halsted. He described Lake View not only as an ethnically diverse neighborhood, but as a neighborhood that was full of young people across sexual identities.

New Town was a mixed community of gays and straights. It was primarily young, white, emerging Baby Boomers. It was a destination for those coming-of-age who migrated from the suburbs and from really all over the Midwest to experience the big city.

When I hit my teens, it was like the height of what I call The Beatles Era or The Hippy Era. So I started hanging around the north side of Chicago, because I was like gay and hip and liked the Beatles. All of us kids were like the Mod kids. Some of us were gay, some of us were not gay. But the neighborhood had this very Bohemian atmosphere.

Carl claimed that Lake View's young population brought with them the progressive politics that would define the area.

As such, Lake View became known as the center for Leftist intellectual activism, artistic production, and a shared counterculture, whose residents opposed the Vietnam War, cared little about money, supported women's rights, and fought for human liberation (Enke 2006). Political and social rebellion produced new frameworks for young people to defy social and sexual norms, including living in non-traditional households by forming collectives, living alone, or sharing apartments between roommates. Lake View's progressive political environment was defined by establishments like the Guild, a Leftist bookstore located on the 2100 block of North Halsted Street near the center of New Town. Further north on West Belmont Avenue, in what would become the center of Boystown, young "self-style revolutionaries" of Rising Up took to the streets to get the young working-class people of Lake View to "serve the people, smash the state" (Clark, et al. 2007). It was this progressive counterculture that later earned residents and politicians in this part of Chicago the nicknames "lakefront liberals" and "independent Democrats."

As gay businesses opened up along the North Broadway Corridor and concentrated in New Town around the intersection of Broadway, Clark Street, and Diversey Parkway, the eastern portion of Lake View continued to gentrify. At the same time, the area west of North Halsted Street was marked by continued disinvestment and decline. With its significant Latino population, this western portion of Lake View comprised of small industrial areas that provided a declining number of jobs. In 1969, all along North Halsted Street from Fullerton Avenue to Uptown, residents began to actively organize against racism, housing discrimination, and gentrification that came with development along the lakefront and the influx of white young urban professionals. The Young Lords,

a local youth gang, took over the Lakeview Methodist Church to start the People's Church as a statement for the need of a space for organizing. They also held other neighborhood sit-ins and takeovers of area institutions throughout the North Side protesting their displacement by Mayor Richard J. Daley's urban renewal policies (Baugher 2011). At a time when neighborhood-based activism defined the city's local politics, urban development and gentrification forced poor people and people of color to build coalitions across neighborhoods. La Gente, a coalition of minority youth gangs, formed to use community organizing as a method for resisting police brutality and the structural and psychological effects of government-sanctioned segregation.

Newly resident white gay men residing west of Broadway feared Latin gangs and the possibility of their violent resistance against gentrification. During an interview with Rick, a self-identified gay white male and long-time Boystown resident who lived in the neighborhood throughout the 1970s, he said,

When I moved to the Boystown area in 1974, people asked me, 'You feel safe west of Halsted?' The area was pretty sketchy, but I don't think it was as dangerous as people made it out to be... Pissy, older and rich queens lived on the Gold Coast and the more hip rich gays lived on Lake Shore Drive in Belmont Harbor or similar buildings. Rents were cheap and affordable. \$125 a month for a one-bedroom at Barry and Broadway. I paid \$225 for a two-bedroom coach house with a garage. Latin gangs were a real problem in the 1970s. In 1976, there was a lot of tagging going on in the neighborhood... I remember sleeping on my back porch because of the fear that gangs were gonna set my house on my fire.

These fears and expectations of violence did not prevent Rick from remaining in the neighborhood for decades nor did they stop his gay friends from moving up from Old Town. The threat of Latin youth gangs disappeared as Lake View's Puerto Ricans were pushed further west, clearing the way for gay white men to move more comfortably west of Broadway and the area surrounding North Halsted Street, an area known at the time as

the neighborhood's transitional zone.

While gay men and gay male businesses were concentrating a few blocks south in New Town and east along the Broadway Corridor, the Women's Liberation Movement nurtured the development of women's spaces along North Halsted Street in the area north of Belmont Avenue.³¹ In 1969, *Pride and Prejudice*—a feminist bookstore, collective, and community center located at 3322 North Halsted Street—became one of the first women's spaces to open in the area and operated as the neighborhood's "Women's Center" (Enke 2006). Following *Pride and Prejudice*, more feminist and lesbian activists settled in the neighborhood and formed new organizations, collectives, community centers, and bars throughout the 1970s and even into the early 1980s. Some of the neighborhood's early established women's spaces included the *In-Between*, a popular lesbian bar located at 3729 N Halsted that opened in 1972 and became *Augie's* in 1973;³² the Chicago Women's Liberation Union which opened in 1973 at 852 W. Belmont Avenue;³³ and the Lesbian-Feminist Center located at 3523 N. Halsted Street. Before any gay male organization or bars opened their doors on North Halsted Street north of Belmont Avenue—what would become the center of Boystown—this area was known as being the center of the Women's Liberation Movement and of the lesbian "universe" (see Figure 9).

³¹ Wooten, Amy. 2009. "Lakeview was almost Girlstown: Feminists and Gays Cope with the '70s" *Chicago Free Press* (June 4).

³² During my fieldwork, Bobby Love's was the gay bar at this location since 1999.

³³ *Lavender Woman* 2, no. 4 (June 1973).

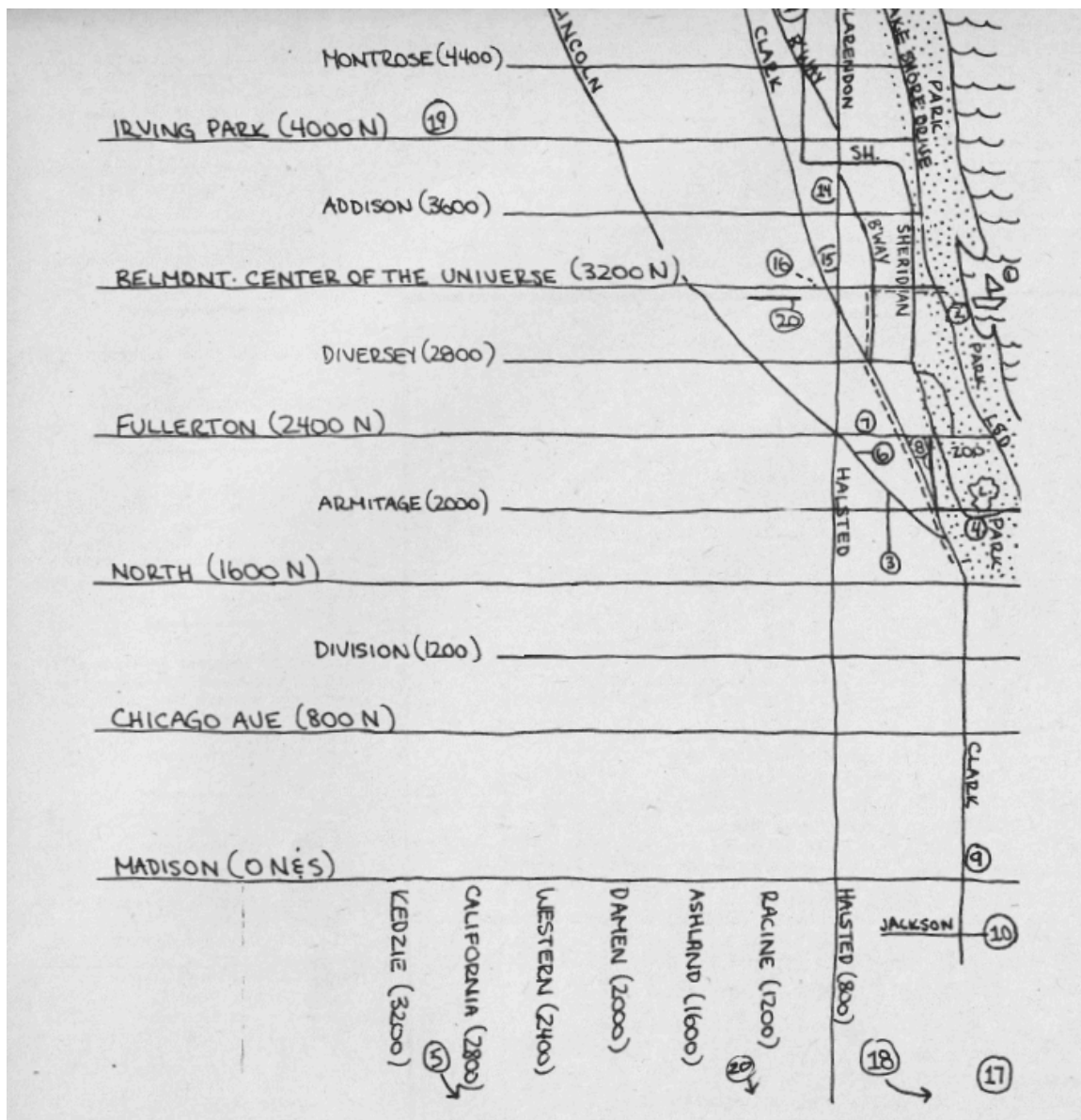


Figure 8. Map of the Center of Lesbian Universe: Hand drawn map of Chicago's lesbian spaces depicts the southern portion of New Town. This map was published in *Lavender Woman* in 1973. This portion of the map depicts lesbian spaces in Lake View, including the In-Between (14), Women's Center (15), Belmont Harbor (2), and the Chicago Women's Liberation Office/Center. Belmont Avenue is labeled as the "Center of the [Lesbian] Universe."³⁴

³⁴ *Lavender Woman* 2, no. 4 (June 1973).

Women's and lesbian spaces continued to open throughout this northern portion of the neighborhood through the 1970s and into the early 1980s, including the Chicago's Lesbian Community Center (LCC), which was founded in 1978 and located on the second floor at 3435 N. Sheffield;³⁵ the Closet, a mixed lesbian and gay male bar located at 3325 N. Broadway opened in 1978; and Studio, a lesbian bar that opened in 1981 at 3474 N. Clark Street. Many of the women's spaces that opened were relatively short-lived due to funding, the cost of space, swift organizational changes, and rapid dissolution resulting from internal conflicts that were characteristic of the blossoming feminist and lesbian movements. Susan B., the city's first feminist restaurant owned by lesbian Eunice Millitante³⁶ opened in November of 1973 at 3730 N. Broadway and closed two years later in August of 1975.³⁷ After a few years in operation, Pride and Prejudice became the Women's Center only to lose its lease in October of 1973. The next month, it moved into the Women's Storefront Chicago (also known as the Women's Building) at 3519 1/2 N. Halsted with two other groups, Woman Art and the Counseling Resource Center for Lesbians. After one week, the Women's Building moved from to 3523 N. Halsted. In 1974, it became the Lesbian-Feminist Center³⁸ and by 1977 it was closed.

The closure of some lesbian spaces was not always due to the financial insecurity and political instability of the organizations they housed, but rather the direct result of the neighborhood's development and increasing popularity. His N' Hers, a lesbian and gay

³⁵ *The Advocate*. "Chicago Lesbian Center Now Two Years Old" (March 5, 1981).

³⁶ Eunice Millitante was co-founder of the Sister Center, which became the Northside Rape Crisis Line.

³⁷ *Lavender Woman*, Volumes 1-4 (Also see Brody 1985).

³⁸ Tem Horwitz, *Sweet Home Chicago* 1st Edition (1974).

“mixed-bar,” celebrated inclusion and was among the first bars in the area to offer live entertainment, moved from its Lincoln Avenue location in 1976 to a building at 944 W. Addison under the Addison Red-Line stop. It was forced out by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) in 1987 and was replaced by an expanded station that served the increasing transportation demands of Cub fans using the red line to visit Wrigley Field.³⁹

Gentrification also affected lesbian and gay sociality in another way. While spaces like His N’ Hers celebrated the mixing of genders, the Women’s Liberation Movement also nurtured a lesbian separatist movement that pushed for separate lesbian spaces and disassociation from gay men. This movement was made evident in 1971 when the Gay Woman’s Caucus rejected the men of the Chicago Gay Alliance and moved to form their own independent lesbian organization. They published the following statement in

Lavender Woman:

We of the Gay Women’s Caucus, like other oppressed people, have chosen to work on our liberation independently – in our case, independent of gay men. We hesitate to call you brothers as long as you participate in our oppression. We had hoped that you would appreciate this need, analogous to that of blacks during the first stages of their liberation

As women, we are imbued with the slave mentality our sexist fathers, brother, and educators have passed off on us in order to perpetuate our oppression. We need the ABSOLUTE SAFETY AND FREE SPACE of an all women’s group to work out and recognize these trends, to get them out of our systems....

We lesbians need to work apart from you, and have our own center. We are not putting down your work toward your own liberation. We simply feel that our Liberation as women and Lesbians, must take an independent direction at this time and will not benefit from your support since you

³⁹ See Harper, Jorjet. 2008. "A 'Cheers' for Chicago: His N' Hers." In *Out and Proud Chicago*, edited by Tracy Baim, 172. Chicago: Surrey Books.

continue to evidence racist and sexist attitudes of the oppressor. There may be some day when we can work together. There may be some day too when we can all work together with all people – female, male, black, brown, white, gay, and straight. That time is not now. The seeming similarity of our sexual preferences clouds and covers the real and deep differences between us, which only time, hard work, and critical self-examination can begin to resolve.⁴⁰

This statement not only portrays the tensions that existed around gender and sexuality, but also around racism that defined social relations in gay space and led to a fracturing of the gay community, as well as the Gay Liberation Movement. Throughout the 1970s, lesbian separatism continued as a reaction against male-domination in the Gay Liberation Movement and the Left, as well as against homophobia in many feminist organizations. It was also marked an agentic effort amongst lesbians to create new identities, subjectivities, and collective spaces separate from gay men (Harper 2008).⁴¹

As gay men continued to move north into the North Halsted Corridor, the ideology of lesbian separatism informed territorial conflicts that resulted as gay men encroached upon lesbian space. For example, as gay men moved further north on North Halsted Street, they began patronizing Augie's in greater numbers and women felt that men were taking

⁴⁰ "Why We Left the Chicago Gay Alliance." *Lavender Woman* 1, no. 2 (December 1971).

⁴¹ For example, during Gay Pride Week in 1973, Chicago Lesbian Liberation sponsored a talk by Jill Jonston of the Village Voice and closed the event off to men. See, "Letters to the Editor," *Gay Crusader*, July 1973(3): 2. Also, the Lesbian-Feminist Center at 3523 N. Halsted welcomed all women and prohibited men who were asked to leave if they came in. In 1975 and 1976, lesbians hosted their own separated Lesbian Pride Week, See *GayLife*, July 9, 1976, "Commentary" by Grant. L. Ford (6). In September of 1976, in recognition of this shift and in an effort to lessen separatist sentiments, the Gay Pride Week Planning Committee officially changed its name to the Gay/Lesbian Pride Committee.⁴¹ Similarly, that following year, Gay Pride Week changed to Gay/Lesbian Pride. See "Gay and Lesbian Pride Week." *Blazing Star*. May 1977 3(3).

over the bar. In June of 1975, approximately 20 women signed a petition and called for a meeting with the owner of Augie's to discuss barring men from the bar. The petition read,

We the women of the lesbian community strongly register our complaint against the violence directed towards our sisters at Augie's club on May 25, 1975 by a male patron.

We demand that the past policy of the bar be enforced and that any person who assaults physically or verbally a woman patron be outlawed from further admittance into the bar.

Because of our interests in our community and its establishments, we want to meet with the owner of Augie's Club in order to discuss issues that pertain to the bar and its clientele.

The action that you, the owner of Augie's take concerning our safety and the safety of our sisters in your bar will determine whether we continue to patronize Augie's Club.⁴²

Even though men were never formally banned from Augie's, this petition represented women's separatist efforts to push against the encroachment of gay men into women's spaces. Women-only spaces and lesbian businesses began to disappear from the neighborhood as a direct result of gay men moving into the area and pushing women out. These new vacancies often became gay spaces, leading to the development of Boystown's "patriarchal male centeredness," which continues to diminish the presence and importance of women and lesbians in the neighborhood (Pritchard, Morgan, and Dedgkey 2002).

I interviewed Nancy, a self-identified lesbian and Boystown resident who worked at numerous gay bars in Old Town throughout the 1960s and 1970s, even after she moved to New Town in the early 1970s. While telling me about her own move from Old Town

⁴² *Lavender Woman*. June 1975 4(3): 11.

to her apartment off of Belmont Avenue, Nancy described the northern movement of gay men and lesbians. She said,

I would say that the majority of gay people moved out of Old Town and into New Town by the mid-1970s. They arrived before all the gay businesses on North Halsted Street did... A lot of people were just looking for a more affordable place to live. The neighborhood was changing... Everything was changing. Gay men were first concentrated south of Belmont and it wasn't until the late-1970s that they moved north of Belmont.

With the lack of historical census data that can be used to track the northern movement of Chicago's gay population, there is an over reliance among researchers to track the movement of gay and lesbian populations through the movement of businesses and community organizations and then inferring a corresponding residential pattern. Nancy's own move northward and her memory of the demographic shift describes an initial residential shift, followed by commercial development, and then proceeded by more lesbians and gay men moving into the area and further north. By the mid-1970s, the name "New Town" marked the collective exodus of Old Town residents to their new northern location in Lake View and this area, particularly from Diversey Parkway to Addison Avenue, became recognized as the city's new gay area (Levine 1979).⁴³

As a new gay social scene developed in this northern locale,⁴⁴ Chicago's prominent gay social scene remained in Old Town and the Gold Coast until the early

⁴³ The New Town neighborhood name disappeared from use in the 1990s, as Lakeview and Boystown became used to designate the neighborhood.

⁴⁴ I use locale referring to Anthony Giddens' conceptualization of the term as the use of space to provide "settings of interaction" in which "the properties of settings are employed in a chronic way by agents in the constitution of encounters across space and time" (1986: 118-119).

1980s.⁴⁵ During this transitional period, gay and lesbian New Town residents continued to commute to the city center to participate in the established scene located there. However, urban development there brought increased policing and the violent harassment of gay men on the streets that made even visiting the area a risk.⁴⁶ Between 1978 and 1979, shifting police boundaries and new police commanders overseeing the Old Town area led an increase in police surveillance and crackdowns in the area around Bughouse Square and Lincoln Park in an effort to dismantle and erase the area's gay public cruising spaces.⁴⁷ This ongoing hostile policing of gay men and lesbians was part of a larger effort of urban development, which included pushing gay men and lesbians out of the area and it proved to be effective. Gay men and lesbians gradually abandoned the old gay enclave and, inspired by the politics of the Gay Rights Movement, worked to build a visible community in the northern areas in which they lived. The visible presence of gay men on North Halsted Street north of Belmont Avenue began with the opening of the Beckman

⁴⁵ In 1983, Dugan's Bistro—the Midwest's oldest and longest-running disco at the time, located at 420 N. Dearborn and established in 1973—was demolished as part of Chicago's North Loop redevelopment project and a Canadian firm purchased the property. The owner of Dugan's Bistro, Edward Davidson (who went by the name Ed Dugan), was one of a handful of gay entrepreneurs who followed the northern movement of gay men and lesbians and moved their business from Old Town to New Town. At 2848 N. Broadway Street, the site of the former Phoenix Bar, Davidson opened Paradise Island. See *Gay Chicago Magazine*. "Dugan's Bistro Slated to Close May 31st; Disco Victim of Redevelopment Project." May 6, 1982: 10. When I began my fieldwork in 2006, only a few gay businesses remained in Old Town, including Gentry, a gay piano bar, and the Baton, a popular drag bar.

⁴⁶ See "Selective Enforcement: The Harassment of Gays in Chicago Streets, Or... How I Got Thrown Into Jail Because I'm Gay." November 18, 1977.

⁴⁷ See Stephen Kulieke, "Police/Caucus Meeting Ends Abruptly" and "Police Hit Lincoln Park" in *GayLife* 4, no. 47 (May 18, 1979); also *Gay Chicago* 20 (October 6, 1978).

House—a gay community center located at 3519 N. Halsted Street that opened in April of 1974.⁴⁸ It was not until the following year that North Halsted Street saw its first gay male bar, Little Jim's at 3501 N. Halsted Street.

The growing number of gay men throughout the eastern portion of Lake View coincided with Lake View's population boom. By 1973, the eastern portion of Lake View was reported to have had a higher population density than Manhattan with 73,000 persons per square mile (Pacyga and Skerrett 1986). The area's population of young straight singles continued to overshadow the prominence of gay men and lesbians in the area. In his comparative study of gay ghettos, Martin Levine concluded that New Town was only a partially developed gay ghetto only because it lacked "a markedly gay population" (1979: 199). Even as late as the 1980s, New Town was recognized not exclusively as a gay neighborhood, but rather as a neighborhood of both singles' bars and gays bars.⁴⁹

The continued gentrification of Lake View and the northern expansion of Lincoln Park's "upper crust" pushed gay businesses and gay people further north from what was once the center of New Town. Businesses like Big Reds and Bad Boys clothing store

⁴⁸ The Beckman House was named after Barbara Beckman, a lesbian activist. The Beckman House served as a replacement for the Chicago Gay Alliance Community Center, Chicago's only gay community center located just south of Old Town at 171 W. Elm, which opened in 1971 and closed in September of 1973 due to lack of funds and staff.⁴⁸ What began as a small storefront, the Beckman House grew to serve as a place where people could drop-in to meet people or get local information, complete with a coffeehouse area, a library, and a patio. Gay Orientation classes were offered to introduce people to Chicago's "gay subculture, explaining everything the gay community has to offer and where to find it."⁴⁸ It also became the birthplace of Chicago's "Gay Switchboard." In less than a year, the community center was turned over to Gay Horizons, Inc., which gave way to the Center on Halsted.

⁴⁹ Rosenberg, Larry. 1981. "Sampling the Clark Street smorgasbord." *Chicago Tribune* (October 9).

moved to the North Halsted Street Corridor in 1986 and 1996, respectively, from their locations further south on Clark Street. As gay men continued to open up businesses along North Halsted Street, eventually creating what became known as Boystown, lesbians also moved further north to do the same along Clark Street to ultimately transform Andersonville into Chicago's lesbian neighborhood.⁵⁰

As life history interviews and archival research show, the making of Boystown involved the creation, dissolution, shifting, and merging of multiple neighborhoods in Chicago's city center and North Side from the 1950s to the 1980s. These shifting social and economic geographies were shaped by political movements that brought new identity-based claims to space across categories of race, gender, class, and sexuality; interconnected political economic processes of uneven development; and coterminous migrations (Goldberg 2009; Nash and Gorman-Murray 2014) that resulted from war, global inequality, racialization, racism, and the regulation of sexuality. As noted by anthropologist Micaela di Leonardo, "shifts in built environment spatiality are innately connected to shifting patterns of human (labor) migration" (2008: 12). As such, the process of gay neighborhood formation can be situated within a larger framework of biopower, in which bodies are made subject through their spatial distribution on the basis

⁵⁰ Andersonville was a historically Swedish neighborhood that became known as Chicago's lesbian neighborhood in the 1990s. During my fieldwork, Andersonville also became known for its shift from being Chicago's lesbian neighborhood to its second gay neighborhood due to its increasing population of gay men and gay bars. It was thought that Boystown's gay male population were continuing to move north to Andersonville due to cheaper rents and displacement. However, gay male populations and institutions were present in Andersonville prior to the 1990s. For example, the neighborhood's gay bathhouse Man's Country was established in 1973 (and closed in 2017 as the oldest gay bathhouse in the city).

of biological and, fundamentally, the administration of life.

2.3 Episteme

Gay neighborhoods are sites that produce gay liberation nostalgia and utopian desires (Bennett 2010; Duggan 1992). The popular narrative of Boystown's formation, of a barren neighborhood revitalized primarily by gay men, reflects a larger and persistent understanding of gay neighborhood production (e.g. Castells 1983; Winters 1979; Kinsman 1996; Armstrong 2002; Warner 2002).⁵¹ Furthermore, this narrative is central to informing how contemporary residents understand the neighborhood, their place within it, their relationship to others in this space, and their relationship to other spaces. As with the process of gentrification it describes, the narrative of Boystown's formation was predicated on a history of settler colonialism (Morgensen 2010) and specifically American expansionism. It is through the embrace of Westward Expansion that the gay men were able to transform the production of the gay neighborhood into an American endeavor, remake themselves by claiming new identities, and perform citizenship as they struggled for liberation, freedom from violence, and equal rights. Furthermore, it is through the story of Boystown that gay neighborhood production gets incorporated into the American tale of middle class wealth attainment by a disadvantaged class of people, forming a new bootstrap narrative of simultaneous economic achievement and nation building through urban gentrification; a redemption narrative through participation in the system of capitalism. It is through this discourse, made possible by their fiscal

⁵¹ See "Gays Still March as Urban Pioneers." *Chicago Tribune* (December 10, 1995).

contributions to the urban economy, that gay men made their claim as part of the American social fabric.

Establishing this narrative not only became a strategy that gay men used to claim their position as model citizens of the modern city (Abraham 2009), but it also countered a competing cultural discourse that denigrated gay men in the realm of perversion, vice, and immorality. The making of a national cultural narrative where gay men were pioneers of the urban renaissance situated gay men at the forefront of the spread of urban culture, wealth, social betterment, and modernity. It also situated gay men within a blossoming narrative of gentrification in American cities that conjured images of Westward expansion and the settlement of the new urban frontier (Smith 1996), making gay men distinguished players in processes of urban revitalization across the nation. The narrative was thus not just a matter of performing citizenship, rather it served as a discursive pathway to citizenship through a classic American trope marking the production of a new homonationalism.

In “A Transnational Feminist Critique of Queer Tourism” Jasbir Puar states that the claiming of gay space, including the claiming of queer space, is “a process informed by histories of colonization... operating in tandem with the disruptive and potentially transgressive specifics at hand” (2002: 936). In the case of Boystown, the narrative of its formation not only demonstrates how gay neighborhood production is constituted by larger mythologies of colonialism and nation, but it is through the reclaiming of this colonial past that the connection between the roles of gay men in urban gentrification and global capital imperialism is made obvious; both in terms of reproducing colonial claims to space and the role of gay men in the displacement of others. That is, the production of

Boystown represented a type of gentrification steered by a culturally engrained logic of colonialism. This colonial logic deemed a residential neighborhood uninhabited and uninhabitable and aimed to transform it into a viable, profit-making marketplace through the strategic production of a new gay cultural economy.

The uneven network of power is exposed as gay men adopted of the logic of colonialism, which “advocates violence as a legitimate mechanism of transformation necessary to establish a new and just order” (Lawrence and Karim 2007: 8), in their own struggle against oppression. Boystown’s business owners and gay residents alike embraced a sort of settler ideology and propaganda history of frontier settlers as crusaders of freedom rather than a force of invasion and imperialism. What appears as a business slogan and singular marketing campaign was part of a widely circulated and persistent discourse that overshadowed all other local histories. Gay residents and businesses men alike embraced the gay urban pioneer and colonization became a seemingly innocent metaphor for modern processes of gentrification. As shown by Marx, the capitalist mode of production corresponds to the emergence of the colonial mission. As shown by Boystown, it is through the colonial mission that capitalism is reproduced.

However, it is important to also recognize discourse not through local and popular narratives, but also within the context of the larger process of knowledge production that considers popular discourse, local knowledge, and institutional knowledge as reproductive and "interacting cultural systems" (Abbott 2001: 3). Doing so highlights how knowledge production, or discourse production, is informed by multiple political endeavors to create a gay neighborhood ideology, understood as “a set of shared beliefs, inscribed in institutions, bound up with actions, and hence anchored in reality” (Boltanski

and Chiapello 2018: 3). It is through this ideology that the power to control gay neighborhood space is leveraged. As Patricia Hill Collins said, "Taken together, the supposedly seamless web of economy, polity, and ideology function as a highly effective system of social control" (Collins 1990: 5).

Highlighting the mutually constitutive relationship between social movements and scientific knowledge is not an effort to claim understandings of gay neighborhood production as lacking legitimacy, but rather to show knowledge production as a process that reconstructs, emphasizes and ignores, remembers and forgets. In other words, I do not posit resistance and oppression as being mutually exclusive within the same spatial context, but rather emphasize how resistance and oppression work together on multiple planes and axes to shape and reshape subjectivity. Furthermore, this is also an acknowledgement of the political context in which all knowledge, including this dissertation, has been produced. Even as gay neighborhoods continue to be understood as mechanisms for resistance, community, safety, and equality in popular culture, they have been increasingly scrutinized and critiqued in the social sciences (Puar 2003; McDowell 1999; Nash 2006; Nast 2002; Tucker 2009; Oswin 2005; Rushbrook 2002; Pile and Keith 1997; Manalansan 2005).

The production of this gay neighborhood ideology, through the production of knowledge, depends on the complete dismissal and erasure of the raced, gendered, and classed lives, practices, and processes of displacement, dispossession, exclusion, and uneven development entailed in the production of the gay neighborhood. By ignoring these embodied processes of gentrification (Kern 2012, 2015), the popular narrative of Boystown's formation not only omits the local histories of racial minorities, women,

investors, and the State, but in doing so, it also decenters the role of capitalism as it overstates the role of gay (white) men as sole creators of the gay neighborhood and leaders of urban revitalization. Thus, the ideological project of gay neighborhood formation is part of a larger project of constructing a citywide landscape of difference through the construction of the neighborhood (Fincher and Jacobs), which involves the simultaneous construction of Otherness and the constructing of Others out of place (Puwar 2004). It is through this project and its narrow revisionist history (Delgado and Stefancic 2001), which places white gay men at the forefront of cultural production, that specific claims to the gay neighborhood are made; claims that allow for discursive exclusions to materialize (also see Brown 2007, Meko 2007 and Hogarth 2006). It is through the gay neighborhood that sexuality becomes entrenched in an economic system of racial oppression and social power relations are materially reproduced. The widespread acceptance of the narrative of Boystown's formation provides the ideological foundation for residents to act to keep Boystown white, male, and gay.

Lastly, my juxtaposition of the popularized narrative of Boystown's formation by gay urban pioneers with those histories that have been ignored, forgotten, and omitted does more than provide a nuanced understanding of Boystown's development. Rather, it provides an opening for uncovering the relationships between racial capitalism and gay neighborhood production and construction; for understanding that ways in which gay neighborhoods are interconnected with, and implicated in, the reproduction of a racialized social, political, and economic system as operational within and through biopolitics. When Cee Cee said, "We had to create a place of our own to survive... and so we could have gay sex, of course," she offered a window into how sexuality structures

life spatially, while her limited narrative reminds us how racial capitalism works to destroy public memory (Giroux 2014); it simultaneously structures space for profit accumulation while erasing the local histories of people of color, women, and the poor. This process also works through the gay neighborhood to violently exclude these populations from fully participating in the joint process of neighborhood and capital production or living in spaces deemed for gay men. According to David Harvey, capitalism proceeds through uneven geographic development, creating extreme volatility and increasing stratifications (2005). The erasure of certain Boystown histories and the popularization of a gendered, raced, classed, and sexualized narrative of its formation are part of a larger process of modern urban spatial production that upholds hierarchies and reproduces violence.

The national discourse of gay neighborhood formation that posits gay men as the protagonists of the urban neighborhood resurgence through gentrification endures, in part, through the persistence of such local narratives. Didier Fassin's conceptualization of *the embodied past* (2008) is useful for understanding how these narratives are embodied.

Fassin described the embodied past as:

the way in which individual trajectories and collective histories are transcribed into individual and collective bodies, in terms of affects and emotions, disease and comfort, mourning and pleasure. In other words, it is the way through which social structures and norms inscribed in the long term of historical changes impose themselves on men and women, both in their everyday existence and in the meaning they give to their life and actions... It is the physical mark left by history in terms of deterioration, wearing, fatigue, illness, violence... It is the psychic trace left by memory in terms of the interpretation of the social world and its course, in terms of individual and collective narratives reconstituting local truths. (Fassin 2008: 316-17).

For Fassin, the embodied past involves the historical condition, conceived as the

“inscription of social structures in bodies and lives; and the experience of history, understood as the elaboration of representations, discourses, and narratives accounting for the course of events” (Fassin 2008: 312). When applied to the history of Boystown and the popular narrative of Boystown's formation, it shows how subjectification shapes subjectivities and practice.

I want to reiterate that my analysis of Boystown's discursive and material formation is not an effort to discredit the role of gay men in gay neighborhood production, but rather to uncover concurrent narratives and situate Boystown, materially and immaterially, within a larger political economic framework that shows Boystown not as the product of any particular movement or group of people, but rather the result of multiple, intersecting movements and processes. In the following chapter, I examine more closely the role gay men played in Boystown's material production. I also simultaneously continue to explore racial capitalism as a force that structures the neighborhood, local subjectivities, and social relations. I build off this chapter to analyze how Boystown's popularized narrative and its built space are mutually constituted, chronicling transformations to Boystown's physical environment as local marketing strategy went from the Gay Pride Parade to the architectural landscape. In an era of blossoming liberal multiculturalism, the gay neighborhood took on new meaning as it physically transformed to promote a new way of life under global capitalism.

III. BUILDING A RACIALIZED LANDSCAPE OF VIOLENCE

“A whole history remains to be written of spaces—which would at the same time be the history of powers—from the great strategies of geopolitics to the little tactics of the habitat”— Michel Foucault, (quoted by Gordon, 1980: 149).

3.1 Spatial Transformations

“Of course this is a gay male space, look at the giant rainbow dicks on the street!”

Brittany smiled as she smoked a cigarette while sitting on a tabletop on the patio of Caribou Coffee at the intersection of North Halsted Street and Cornelia Avenue where she worked as a barista. She pointed across the street to one of the twenty priapic, Art Deco spires that line seven blocks of North Halsted Street and mark the neighborhood as gay.¹ It was a common practice for both women and men to jokingly emphasize the phallic design of the 23-foot-tall, rainbow-ringed pylons. Throughout my fieldwork, they were referred to as "giant rainbow dicks," "penis pillars," "golden dildos," and "street erections" more often than they were called *pylons*—the relatively non-descript architectural term these markers were given when they were initially designed in the late-1990s. Colloquial nicknames that emphasized the phallus were so widely used that when I referred to the pylons as *pylons* during interviews, not one Boystown residents who I interviewed under the age of twenty-six knew to what I was referring. These widely-used euphemisms were more than silly architectural criticisms, but they were also affirmations that Boystown was a gay male space. They underscored the rainbow pylons as symbols

¹ The pylons are intermittently spaced along North Halsted Street, from Clark Street (around the 3100 block of North Halsted Street) to West Grace Street (around the 3800 block of North Halsted Street).

of the visible presence, contributions, and power of gay men.

Brittany went on and described how she felt as a lesbian in this male-centered neighborhood. She said,

But I feel like this is my neighborhood too. I feel more connected to the entire LGBT community here than in any other neighborhood in the city. I think Boystown attracts a more diverse population because of everything the neighborhood has to offer. Lesbians have created their own neighborhood in Andersonville, but it's not this obvious. You could drive right past it if you weren't looking for it. You could easily think you're in the city's Swedish neighborhood and not in the lesbian one. But it's changing too.

I see lesbians and gay men becoming more spread out now than we used to be. We can live anywhere in the city we want to. I know a lot of lesbians who are moving to Lincoln Square, Edgewater, Rogers Park, and even Evanston. Really, the only reason to come to Boystown is to work or party. Besides work, I only come here [to Boystown] to go to Spin on lesbian night and to The Closet. Sometimes Roscoe's.

Even though a separate lesbian neighborhood developed north of Boystown and lesbians were visibly residing in numerous different areas of the city, Brittany thought that Boystown still had important functions and meanings as a visible gay neighborhood. Brittany thought that even though Boystown was a gay male space, or perhaps because of this, it was also the central hub of Chicago's LGBT community. As such, the neighborhood served as a place where she was able to feel part of a larger community. At the same time, Brittany also contradicted her own understanding of Boystown, claiming that employment and entertainment were the only reasons she came to the neighborhood. Through these contradictions, Brittany was beginning to wrestle with the promise of the gay neighborhood for community and the reality of its limitations, particularly for working-class lesbians.

At the time of this conversation, Brittany worked in Boystown but lived in

Andersonville. She was looking for an apartment in Boystown for her and her girlfriend and soon moved to the neighborhood. However, once her lease expired after a year, Brittany moved out of Boystown. On April 10, 2010, three years after our initial conversation, I spoke with Brittany again. At this time, she no longer worked in the neighborhood and moved to Edgewater. During this follow-up interview, she said.

There aren't any real lesbian spaces in Boystown anymore. I used to love going to the Closet on Broadway. It was actually one of my favorite places to go in the city and I used to go pretty often. It used to always be majority lesbian, but now it's full of gay men. I'm actually surprised it's gotten so popular with guys because it's not really near all the other gay bars on Halsted Street and it's a pretty small place. Last week, my friends and I were the only lesbians there, except for the bartender. Lesbians are boycotting Spin now too, so there isn't really any place to go. I just stay up in Andersonville and go to T's. There's really no reason for me to come to Boystown anymore.

My follow-up interview with Brittany came at a time when lesbian spaces in Boystown were being dominated by gay men, new gay bars were opening in Andersonville, and lesbian spaces throughout the city were closing.² These simultaneous incursions onto lesbian space challenged Brittany's understanding of Boystown and made her reconsider her relationship to the gay neighborhood and its meaning. She now understood gay male spatialization as oppressive and patriarchal, rendering her unable to enjoy Boystown as she once did. She felt a new sense of exclusion and that she no longer belonged there. As a result, she quit her job at Caribou Coffee and abandoned both Boystown and Andersonville to avoid spaces being dominated by gay men.

² In 2005, the Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn and Children—a nationally known lesbian-feminist music venue that opened in 1975—closed its doors. In 2008, Lost & Found—the city's longest-running lesbian bar—also closed down. At the beginning of 2010, Star Gaze—one of Chicago's last full-time lesbian bars—closed.

Through her conversations with me, Brittany made a direct connection between the material production of Boystown and the exclusion of women. Boystown's physical and architectural landscape operated as a mechanism for gay male domination, which was compounded further by social practices of exclusion. In addition to Brittany's observations, there were also spaces where women were not permitted, faced discriminatory practices, or were made unwelcome through other practices of violence. Women residents who I interviewed reported that they were not allowed in particular clubs after certain times or were charged a substantially higher cover for admittance, particularly the late-night businesses that remained open after 2 AM. Once inside, women also faced harassment as they faced accusations of being voyeurs, fag hags, and out-of-place. Steamworks, the neighborhood's centrally-located gay bathhouse, was able to legally exclude women through its operation as a membership-based private men's club. The looming presence of the architectural phallus, the lack of women's spaces, the long-standing concentration of gay male spaces, and the perpetual exclusion of women from gay spaces within the neighborhood, all worked to continually reproduce an androcentric neighborhood.

As Brittany pointed out in our initial conversation, the rainbow pylons were one of the ways in which Boystown's androcentricity was produced through the neighborhood's-built space. The pylons ability to shape women's subjectivities and experiences of Boystown came, in part, vis-à-vis their design and function. Pragmatically serving as a type of street lamp, the pylons illuminated the ordinary, dour landscape of Lake View with the spectacle of towering, harlequin phalluses. Thus, the vibrant rainbow pylons operated as architectural symbols—monuments—representing a history of the

neighborhood where gay men were central to its revitalization and contributing to the verisimilitude of the popular narrative of Boystown's formation. In this sense, the pylons have permanently affixed the popular narrative of Boystown's formation, discussed in the previous chapter, into the neighborhood's-built landscape. Thus, it is through the built space of the neighborhood that the popular narrative of Boystown's formation materializes to oppress women. However, the violence of the rainbow pylons extends beyond their symbolism, discourse, and affects. It is also rooted in their very production, situated in a global system of racial capitalism.

The rainbow pylons were built as part of the North Halsted Streetscape Project (NHSP), a \$3.2 billion city-funded effort to brand Boystown as Chicago's gay neighborhood and sponsor the gay marketplace through symbolic architecture, beautification, and structural improvements.³ Formally dubbed as a neighborhood beautification project, the NHSP also lined Boystown's main thoroughfare with widened sidewalks and twenty new street markers that took the form large concrete planters topped with 12-foot-tall iron trellises. The largest architectural features of the NHSP were two golden towers at West Briar Place and Grace Street, matching the pylons and marking the southern and northern boundaries of the gay entertainment district (see Figures 9a and 9b).

³ As an urban development project paid for by the City of Chicago, the NHSP was a way in which the State reproduced and legitimized the popular narrative of Boystown's formation through built space. As the city "officially recognized" the gay neighborhood with the construction project, city authorities reaffirmed the narrative that gay men built an economically thriving neighborhood from the ground up through commemorative speeches.



Figure 9. Photographs of North Halsted Streetscape Architecture: Photographs of (a) a rainbow pylon on North Halsted Street, as well as (b) one of two golden structures that mark the entrances to the gay entertainment district. This tower sits in front of the gates of Faith Tabernacle Church, the pastor of which was vocally opposed to their construction.⁴

⁴ Kaiser, Robert L. 1997. "Gays Only One Part of Halsted Mix." *Chicago Tribune* (August 20).



Figure 10. Rainbow Pylon and Gay Pride Parade Onlookers: Rainbow pylon and gay men overlooking the Gay Pride Parade from condominium balconies on North Halsted Street.

The NHSP was more than just an expensive thank you gift by the mayor in recognition of the leading role gay men (and lesbians) played in Chicago's revitalization. It was part of a larger strategy to make Chicago a competitor in a changing global economy by embracing liberal multiculturalism. The NHSP was one of more than twenty other neighborhood-remodeling projects that took place during the 1990s and made up

part of the \$2 billion *Neighborhoods Alive!* capital improvement program.⁵ This program was a citywide investment strategy to capitalize off areas designated as principle commercial districts (Sather 1992). As part of the *Neighborhoods Alive!* program, Greektown received new building façades that resembled Greco-architecture; Humboldt Park received two fifty-nine-foot-tall Puerto Rican flags made of steel that served as the gateways to Paseo Boricua, “the Puerto Rican Promenade;” Chinatown, Bronzeville, and Andersonville also received prominent ethnic architectural markers, such as pagodas, historical markers and monuments, and a water tower with the Swedish flag painted on it, respectively. Together, these city-sponsored projects built multicultural neighborhood consciousness into the landscape of the city, conscripting difference onto Chicago's built environment (Clark, et al. 2007; Reed 2002) in an effort to transform Chicago into the “city of neighborhoods” and capitalize off this new “urban persona” (Harvey 2010: 168), its cosmopolitan diversity, and historic patterns of segregation (Quilley 1997; Binford 2008; Boyd 2008; Shabazz 2015).

This economic strategy to transform the commercial districts of ethnic neighborhoods into cultural capital represented what sociologist Sharon Zukin described as cultural consumption (1995) and was part of a larger process of Western deindustrialization and the rise of the entrepreneurial city (Harvey 1987). As global, post-industrial cities competed for business, corporate headquarters, investment capital, international tourism,

⁵ The *Neighborhoods Alive!* program was part of a larger city beautification project called the Streetscape and Urban Design Program, run by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and aimed specifically at improving commercial streets in ethnic neighborhoods that were in decline, while celebrating diversity and multiculturalism.

conventions, and residents (Short 2006; Lipman 2007), neighborhoods were transformed in sterile spaces of consumption and cultural marketing assets (Bryman 1999, 2004; Warren 1994; Zukin 1995; Ritzer and Liska 1997). Technological developments, the deskilling of labor, and lower transport costs allowed manufacturing production to be undertaken around the world. The net effect is the relocation of manufacturing, a global shift that has seen the decline of older manufacturing cities in the capitalist-core economies, including Chicago (Koval, et al. 2006). As cities became reliant on producing new means for capitalist expansion, urban spaces became commodified, packaged, advertised, and marketed as much as any other product in a capitalist society (Dear and Wolch 1989: 14).

As post-industrial economic strategy, the *Neighborhoods Alive!* program was part of a larger state antiracist project of liberal multiculturalism, where culture was celebrated and turned into a materially transformative force or aesthetics, identity, recognition, and representation (Melamed 2011). It is through this project that capitalism was able to create new forms of citizenship predicated upon its shifting of the way people understand their lives and the lives of others through redrawing boundaries, neighborhoods, and lives (Duggan 2003). Anthropologist Micaela di Leonardo referred to these shifting mentalities as the “neoliberalization of consciousness” (2008b: 192) and the racialization of gay identity into an ethnic framework (Reed 2003, 2005; Herrell 1992) was part of this subjectification process. As part of the *Neighborhoods Alive!* program, the NHSP was a small piece of a larger, city-wide economic stimulus project that depended upon the

middle-class consumption of the spectacle and commodification of multiculturalism (Reed 2003).⁶ “It’s basically a business thing,” Daley said. “We are doing landscaping, lighting. It is a huge retail, a huge shopping area.”⁷ As neoliberalism’s erosion of labor organizations and progressive social movements pushed these ameliorating forces to the political periphery, the remaking of Boystown and other ethnically-defined neighborhoods through significant investments in the cultural aesthetics of their commercial districts transformed the city to turn its citizens into passive consumers (Lancaster 2008a).

Chicago's *Neighborhood's Alive!* program became one the city's largest investments in marketing and tourism through neighborhood "beautification." The redevelopment of only Boystown's main business thoroughfare—the center of the city's gay nightlife—and not the neighborhood as a whole, marked an effort to expand the urban economy and make an effective and lasting global tourism marketing scheme by building it directly into the city's physical landscape (Quilley 1997). By bolstering its image as an urban

⁶ During the time on the streetscape's construction, one resident was quoted saying, “It’s all aimed at gay yuppies. What about the homeless people lying in allies, gay and straight? This is all about money.” See Johnson, Dirk. “Chicago Celebrates Gay, Lesbian Neighborhood” in *Star Tribune* (August 31, 1997).

⁷ Kaiser, Robert L. "Gays Only One Part of Halsted Mix." *Chicago Tribune* (August 20, 1997). As I will describe in the following paragraphs, local business owners were key players in this development project. The executive director of the Northalsted Area Merchants Association at the time told the *Chicago Tribune*, “We wanted to do something to help bring daytime business back into this area. We wanted to create a pedestrian-friendly feel so people from all over Chicago will come down here to do business.” Marking the neighborhood development as always being an economic project first and foremost, benefitting both the State and local capitalists. See, Stephanie Banchemo, "N. Halsted to get \$3.2 Million Face Lift - Rainbow Flag, The Gay-Pride Symbol, Is Central Theme." *Chicago Tribune* (August 18, 1997).

center of cultural innovation and diversity through ethnic-themed neighborhood improvements and redevelopment projects, Chicago harnessed both its competitive legacy as the second city and its enduring legacy of segregation to rebrand itself in the global market as a multicultural tourist destination. This making of the city of neighborhoods placed Chicago in the portrait of the United States as a multicultural, post-racist democracy (Melamed 2011), with Mayor Richard M. Daley front and center as one of the most progressive mayors, and this picture was for sale to the world. The nation's "second city" became home to the first "officially recognized" gay neighborhood in the world (Wockner 1998).⁸ Through transforming Boystown into a state mechanism for capital accumulation, the "city of neighborhoods" gained global recognition as an inclusive, progressive, multicultural, and world-class destination; paradoxically, as it made continued investments in the city's uneven racialized development.

Even though the *Neighborhoods Alive!* program represented a new urban political economic strategy in a new global economy, it was also a continuation of historic processes of urban development and segregation that had been used to save the city from disinvestment. Mayor Richard J. Daley, who served as mayor from 1955 until his death in 1976, was committed to racial segregation through various urban development projects (Cohen and Taylor 2000). When he took office, the city was experiencing a demographic shift that dwarfed the Great Migration, a period from about 1916-1930 when thousands of black southerners moved to Chicago for industrial jobs and to escape social and political

⁸ Podmolik, Mary Ellen. 1997. "City Recognizes gay area on N. Halsted." *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 17).

deterioration in the Southern United States (Boyd 2008; Hirsch 1998). During what became known as the Second Great Migration, a record number of poor blacks from the rural South moved to Chicago to seek a better life and escape Jim Crow segregation. Between 1940 and 1960, Chicago's black population grew from 277,731 to 812,637 (Hirsch 1998). This rapid influx of black residents merged with continued employment discrimination and led to the expansion of Chicago's black ghetto.

This same period was marked by a decreasing urban population and white flight, as over 401,816 whites fled Chicago proper between 1940 and 1960 (Hirsch 1998), encouraged by racism, newly paved highways, low-cost government mortgage programs, and a shifting suburban economy (Boyd 2008; Pacyga 1995). These demographic movements rapidly transformed many of the city's middle-class white areas into black slums as their residents moved to the suburbs. To save the city of Chicago from the threat of economic decline resulting from a shifting economy, suburban exodus, and territorial violence around race that other major cities in the Midwest were experiencing (i.e. Kansas City, Cleveland, and Saint Louis), Mayor Richard J. Daley led numerous development projects that maintained racial separation and championed ethnic neighborhoods in order to keep the white working class in the city. "The neighborhoods are the backbone of the city. Revitalizing and protecting them is the first and main job of an administration centered on the people of Chicago," Daley once said (Cohen and Taylor 2000: 134). Mayor Richard J. Daley's philosophy was passed on to his son, Mayor Richard M. Daley, who while in office (from 1989-2011) continued his father's legacy to

make the city's neighborhoods a central focus of Chicago's urban development and was arguably even more involved in neighborhood development.⁹

Daley's investment in Boystown cannot be explained solely as the result of a progressive urban politics or a municipal economic strategy thrust upon the neighborhood. Rather, it was also a collaborative effort between the city of Chicago and the neighborhood's business owners who fought to have it built for their own profits. Initiated by Mayor Daley during a meeting with business leaders in May 1997, the refurbishment project was made possible by the leading role of the Northalsted Area Merchants Association (NAMA)—the neighborhood's most prominent business organization that consisted primarily of the owners of the long-standing gay businesses along North Halsted Street. For months the NAMA worked with city planners and architects from DeStefano & Partners to design and develop a plan for the streetscape.¹⁰ Together, they pitched the project as an investment in local businesses, claiming that the features of the new design for were aimed at enhancing the commercial district in order to bring daytime and weekday business back into the area and making it more pedestrian friendly. The streets were redesigned to create a pleasant environment that would attract middle class people from all over the city to do business and a visible safe haven for gay

⁹ See Hornung, Mark N. "Daley Chooses 'Urban Village' Vision." *Chicago Sun-Times* (April 9, 1993). Also, Barlow, Gary. "Former Ald. Recalls Reform Era." *Chicago Free Press* (November 27, 2012).

¹⁰ "Rainbow's End? Keith O'Brien recounts Mayor Daley's Boys Town fiasco." *New City* (October 23, 1997).

and lesbian visitors.¹¹ This original proposed design for the safe and enhanced commercial environment included two large rainbow "gateway structures," new street lights, widened sidewalks, 180 newly planted trees, green spaces with new benches, and nearly 200 rainbow ringed and lit flag posts.

When this design was unveiled in the summer of 1997 at Market Days, one of the neighborhood's largest gay street fairs, city officials received both positive and negative feedback from verbal opinions and questionnaires.¹² Shortly after its release to the public, residents and concerned Chicagoans elsewhere voiced their arguments against the plan to cement gay pride into the urban landscape at local neighborhood meetings and in city newspapers. The NHSP quickly became a public controversy that brought to the surface the undercurrent of homophobia that LGBTQ+ residents were continuously up against, the tension between the neighborhood's gay and straight residents, and the contested nature of gay space even within the gay community. During this period of intense debate, four main arguments were articulated against the streetscape. The first, positioned by religious values and overt homophobia, argued that the city should not "celebrate perversity"¹³ or "salute an alternative lifestyle" with "over the top"¹⁴ architectural

¹¹ Banchemo, Stephanie. "N. Halsted to get \$3.2 Million Face Lift - Rainbow flag, the Gay-Pride Symbol, is Central Theme." *Chicago Tribune* (August 18, 1997).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Gay Pride Set in Stone." *The Economist* (August 23, 1997).

¹⁴ Frisch, Suzy. Gay-Pride Theme on Halsted is Protested - Opposition to Plan Dominates Community Meeting." *Chicago Tribune* (September 4, 1997).

features.¹⁵ The second, feared that have a gay-themed streetscape would lower property values and send a message that the neighborhood was only for homosexual residents, limiting the local market's appeal, lowering the resale value of homes, and alienating the neighborhood's straight residents.¹⁶ The third argument, made primarily by gay men and lesbians, claimed that a gay-pride theme would reinforce intolerance and segregation by "ghettoizing" it and making it a formal "Gaytown."¹⁷ At a time when North Halsted Street became the site of a spate of anti-gay hate crimes, they feared the design would attract more gay bashers to the neighborhood.¹⁸ The fourth argument against the streetscape project claimed that the neighborhood designation was too late and a waste of money, since most of the neighborhood's lesbians and gay men moved out of the neighborhood, could no longer afford to live there, and were living all over the city.¹⁹

Media coverage of the streetscape project and the conflict surrounding it played an important role in shaping local discourse and subjectivities. The project quickly became a public relations nightmare (O'Brien 1997). As Chicagoans publicly clashed over the streetscape's proposed design, city officials began communicating the goals of the

¹⁵ "Tolerance on Halsted Street." *Chicago Tribune* (August 19, 1997). After receiving 7,000 letters and petitions vilifying the project, Mayor Daley was quoted for having proclaimed, "I won't let homophobes run this city." Harris, Greg. "In Dedication to...." *Windy City Times* (November 26, 1998).

¹⁶ Banchemo, Stephanie. 1997. "Rift Threatens Unity of North Halsted - Plan to Recognize Gay Pride Causes Unease for Residents." *Chicago Tribune* (September 24).

¹⁷ Mitchell, Mary. "Dividing Lines clear in the 'City of Neighborhoods.'" *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 24, 1997).

¹⁸ Frisch, 1997.

¹⁹ Johnson, Dick. "Chicago celebrates gay, lesbian neighborhood." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, MN) (August 31, 1997). Also, "Here Goes the Neighborhood" by Louis Weisberg. *Windy City Times* (November 26, 1998).

divisive redevelopment project differently. Originally positioned as a mayoral "thank you gift" by Mayor Richard M. Daley to recognize the gay and lesbian business people who flipped the neighborhood and turned it into a viable commercial area (O'Brian 1997; Grahnke, 1998), the North Halsted Streetscape Project turned into a social justice imperative.

With other Chicago neighborhoods receiving themed streetscapes of their own, Boystown's streetscape became an issue of "fairness;" a means of recognizing and giving back to the gay and lesbian community in an equal manner as the city did for Chicago's ethnic groups (Reed 2003).²⁰ The conflict positioned the city to take an official stand against homophobia, marking its progressive politics and supporting its larger political economic strategy. As Mayor Daley was openly criticized for using the gay pride theme to score political points with the gay and lesbian community,²¹ city officials defended the project and blamed homophobia for opposition to it, claiming it was just another "local flavor to a neighborhood."²² Those working on the project also countered complaints about the rainbow symbolism of sexual identity by emphasizing that the rainbow flag

²⁰ See O'Brian, 1997 "Rick Garcia, director of the Illinois Federation for Human Rights, "As long as the city recognizes racial, ethnic, and cultural groups it has a responsibility to recognize the gay and lesbian community as well." Also, Smallwood, Lola, "Gay-Pride Halsted Street Project Ends in Harmony." *Chicago Tribune* (November 15, 1998).

²¹ *The Economist*, published an article claiming the "final plan reflects the shrewd politics of Mayor Richard Daley, who has shown a prodigious ability to add partners to his political coalition." See, "Gay Pride Set in Stone." *The Economist* (London). August 23, 1997: 36.

²² Podmolik, Mary Ellen. 1997. "N. Halsted streetscape plan drawing attention." *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 26, 1997).

really represents diversity and inclusion.²³²⁴ They also downplayed the rainbow architectural motif and justified the city's use of public money to pay for the project by emphasizing the infrastructure improvements that were part of the project, such as planting trees, widening crumbling sidewalks, and installing new street lights; improvements that were the city's responsibility.²⁵ These improvements additionally quelled concerns of anti-gay violence through their promise of creating a safer environment (Weisberg 1997). This discursive shift in how the NHSP was debated masked the economic forces and goals that spearheaded it. Rather than promoting the neighborhood's gay business district, city officials concealed the economic motivations of the project with the rhetoric of "community," making the North Halsted Streetscape Project about gay and lesbian urban citizenship and equality.²⁶ Thus, the project's political discourse overshadowed the project's economic intentions and marked the formal incorporation of the LGBTQ+ people into the political machine as a constituency

²³ See Kaiser, Robert L. 1997. "Gays Only One Part of the Mix." *Chicago Tribune*. (August 20); "Gay-Pride Theme on Halsted is Protested - Opposition to Plan Dominates Community Meeting." *Chicago Tribune* (September 4, 1997).

²⁴ San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker designed the first rainbow flag used as a gay symbol in 1978, with the original colors of the rainbow representing sex, life, healing, sun, harmony, art, serenity, and spirit. The rainbow became the global symbol of gay pride and has also come to symbolize diversity of the LGBT community, although this was not the original intent (Hogan and Hudson 1998).

²⁵ Sheldon Watson, Council chair of the city's gay and lesbian advisory council said "The \$3.2 million is not a gift. It's the city taking care of infrastructure." Similarly, Mary Morten, the city's liaison to the gay and lesbian community said, "The Infrastructure piece is being overshadowed... These are improvements that the it would have done nonetheless" (See Podmolik, Marry Ellen. "N. Halsted Streetscape Drawing Attention, *Chicago Sun-Times*, August 26, 1997).

²⁶ Mayor Daley was quoted saying at the dedication ceremony that he "knew from the beginning this was about fairness...to the community." See *Lake View Saga* (2007).

of the Daley administration, representing the assimilation of LGBT people into the city's mainstream politics (Chauncey 1998).

Ultimately, intense public debate and a petition against the project that garnered 100 signatures caused the city to reconsider the streetscape's design. By early November in 1997 the city scrapped the project's original design and proceeded with a "toned down" version that included only 11 pairs of 23-foot tall, Art Deco-style columns, rather than the original 200 neon-lit rainbow pylons that were slated to line North Halsted Street.²⁷ The proposed green spaces with benches and the 25-foot tall rainbow gateway structures that were to be erected over the middle of the street were also removed from the plans.²⁸ Relative to the initial design, the downscaled version of the revised plans received very little pushback. The City put the project up for bids and the \$3.2 million contract was awarded to G&V Construction Company in April 1998.

Despite the conflict around the NHSP and worries about its negative impacts, the NAMA worked diligently to get the city to make such a significant investment in the gay marketplace. In this regard, the NHSP marked a historic consorted capitalist effort to produce gay space between Boystown's gay businessmen and the state. It also represented the culmination of decades of pro-business activism that defined American politics, as well as new forms of social organization and spatial formations shaped by local business interests. That is, the North Halsted Streetscape Project marked a shift in the way

²⁷ Banchemo, Stephanie. 1997. "City Offers Toned-Down North Halsted Plan." *Chicago Tribune* (November 13).

²⁸ Tucker, Ernest. "'Gay Pride' street markers get a toning-down." *Chicago Sun-Times* (November 1, 1997).

architecture was used by this State-business venture to produce the gay neighborhood through the gay marketplace and the inscription of the popular narrative of Boystown onto the space through architectural symbols.

On November 14, 1998, following a year of construction, the NHSP was formally unveiled during a dedication ceremony that took place at the intersection of Roscoe Street and North Halsted Street. During the ceremony, Mayor Richard M. Daley labeled the project "a labor of love."²⁹ He described the gentrified neighborhood to a crowd of nearly 300 people as "...an example of neighbors working together to improve your community. It's a wonderful contribution from the gay and lesbian community."³⁰ Saluting the near completion of the NHSP, Daley also claimed that the project was a mayoral thank you gift to the gay and lesbian community, saying, "I am thanking you for what you have done for North Halsted Street for many, many years."³¹ Onlookers cheered as the gay and lesbian community was recognized by the mayor of the city of Chicago for their work in transforming the neighborhood.

While speakers continued to address the crowd, a photo of Matthew Shepard dangled from one of the new iron trellises that were built as part of the NHSP. The dedication ceremony took place less than one month after the funeral of the slain University of Wyoming student, whose highly-publicized murder altered the national consciousness of anti-LGBT violence. It also took place during a period when the neighborhood saw a rash

²⁹ Clark, et al. *Lake View Saga* (2007).

³⁰ Grahnke, Lon. 1998. "Mayor, Lake View neighbors celebrate street renovations." *Chicago Sun-Times*.

³¹ Clark, et al. *Lake View Saga* (2007).

of reported gay bashings. So when Greg Harris—who served as a mayoral liaison and was Alderman Mary Ann Smith's chief of staff at the time—spoke to the audience, he addressed the violence and adversity that gay men and lesbian faced in their quest for equality. He said,

Throughout our city, throughout our history, countless men and women have fought to live the American dream. To be successful in their chosen profession. To have a nice home and improve their neighborhood. To contribute to their community. To live peacefully with those they love. These are pretty modest hopes. Yet for many of us, we have had to fight to be able to live them. Because of the color of our skin. Our country of origin. Or those we love. For all the women and men who have fought to preserve and strengthen these ideals –all those people who ran a copier, passed a petition, marched in a vigil, joined a block club, and in some cases, gave their lives – to me, this project is for them.³²

With this speech, Harris marked the connection between the gay neighborhood project, anti-LGBT violence, and the struggle for citizenship (Richardson 2015). The rainbow pylons came to the gay and lesbian fight for equality and their efforts to fulfill the "American dream," defined through capitalism as access to labor, home ownership, and the ability to claim and gentrify a neighborhood. The NHSP came to represent a milestone of the American gay and lesbian experience, marking the sacrifices and achievements of gay men and lesbians who worked their way into the multicultural fabric of American society.

A decade after the NHSP was completed, the conflict around the project was realized. This branding of Boystown and the commodification of the neighborhood itself facilitated conflict as it created new interactions between tourists and residents. The

³² Harris, Greg. "In dedication to..." *Windy City Times* (November 24, 1998).

rainbow pylons continued to produce conflict and division along the lines of sexuality. I sat on Caribou Coffee's outdoor patio with Oscar, as a trolley of tourists drove by as they were touring the neighborhood. When it slowed down as it approached the stop sign at the intersection of Cornelia Avenue and North Halsted Street, Oscar jumped up, waved both of his middle fingers in the air, and screamed "FUCK YOU!" When he sat down he was flushed with anger.

Chicago is supposed to be this modern and progressive city. How long has it competed with New York City? For like a hundred years? And here we are. Sitting in Boystown on this quite lovely day, if I don't say so myself. But here we are, in the second city, in a nation that tells us we're second-class citizens who can't get married. How can we be equal when we are gay minstrels for straights to gawk at. We are just a modern-day attraction. We're just the next stop after Greektown. I wonder if they are going to the South Side next. They can see some real shit down there.

Oscar felt that the trolley full of tourists peering out at us in hanging out in the gay neighborhood was demoralizing. For Oscar, the making of Boystown as a tourist destination only served to further subjugate gay men as objects of spectacle.

During an interview with Katrina, a 26-year-old black transgendered woman, about her experiences in Boystown, she also talked about being a spectacle for straight people's consumption.

One thing that I don't like about Boystown, is like a lot of straight people feel like it's kinda like the petting zoo. Like they just drive through and they wanna point and [say], Oh! Look, look! There's one! There's a gay person, you know. There's a tranny! That's a man! You know. And it's kinda like, we don't drive through your area like, Oh! Look at that straight girl. You know.

Thus, the spectacle of the pylons had lasting implications for reproducing conflict. Tied up in the vision of the liberal multicultural city was the idea that people would love to share and consume spaces defined by difference in the name of cultural diversity.

However, the branding and officialization of the gay neighborhood that marked Boystown as a global tourist destination, solidified its designation as a gay and lesbian entertainment district, as it continued to develop into a residential one. The pylons contributed to the reproduction of violent conflict as they brought together residents and tourists of varying identities within the context of lasting social inequality.

3.2 Gay Business Proliferation

In 2009, I interviewed Linden—a gay man in his 40's who lived in Boystown from 1995 to 2001, when he moved to Edgewater with his partner. Boystown's gay businesses and their owners were the central topic of our conversation, as he saw them as key players in the transformation of East Lakeview into Chicago's official gay neighborhood.

If it wasn't for the area's gay businessmen, Boystown would not even exist as it does today. They are the ones who pushed for the neighborhood. I mean the streetscape and all that. And their businesses anchor the neighborhood, especially when so many gay people have moved out to other parts of the city. They still invest in the neighborhood. They put a lot of money into Market Days every year and Pride. It's because of them we even still have a Boystown. They are really the ones who put Boystown on the map. If you want to understand the gay neighborhood, you have to understand the [neighborhood] business association.

As Linden claimed, the history of the development of Boystown's gay businesses represents not only the rise to power of Boystown's gay businessmen, but also the ways in which gay businesses and business owners shaped the neighborhood through commodification, commercialization, and privatization.

Beginning in the late 1960s, significant numbers of gay men and lesbians were on the move. In addition to intra-urban movement between different neighborhoods within the city of Chicago, which I discussed in the previous chapter, life history interviews suggest

that there was also a significant movement of gay men and lesbians from both the suburbs and other states in the Midwest. This migration to urban centers across the United States up until the early 1980s was described by anthropologist Kath Weston as a Great Gay Migration and included thousands of lesbians, gay men, and sexual explorers who sought to relocate to big cities throughout the United States (1995). This movement not only structured gay subjectivities and defined what it meant to be gay, but it also defined the city as the object of pilgrimage and led to the construction of a new gay community (Weston 1995). As gay men and lesbians concentrated in urban centers, this period was marked by unparalleled social and political change, including an explosion of gay and lesbian political organizing and culture in American cities, as claims to spatial inclusion and visibility came to the forefront of gay and lesbian socio-political projects (Casey 2004; Hennessy 1994; Mitchell 1995). The Gay Liberation Movement “provided a vague ideological framework for appreciating the importance of groups and crowds in public space” (Grube 1997), making gay and lesbian spatial formations key social and political endeavors.

From the 1930s to the 1960s, social movements had been shaped by welfare state liberalism. However, beginning in the 1970s, social movements across the United States encountered a new pro-business activism that was built on earlier antistatist conservative activism that were long marginalized by the New Deal coalition (Duggan 2003). The Gay Liberation Movement as it took shape in Lakeview was no exception. Pro-business activism was fully embraced by gay liberationists who saw gay-business ownership as a method for dismantling the oppressive network of Mafia-owned-and-controlled gay bars that were historically characteristic of Chicago’s gay nightlife (*see* Baim and Keehan

2011a and b).³³ Furthermore, within the system of capitalism, profit accumulation provided a clear pathway to power and sexual citizenship (Bell and Binnie 2004).

With the political promise of entrepreneurial endeavors brought to the fore by a forming neoliberal ideology, pro-business activism quickly converged with the politics of gay liberation, encouraging gay men and lesbians to invest in entrepreneurial pursuits as a method for achieving equality and political clout. As the city's population of gay and lesbian residents grew and concentrated in Lake View, businesses that catered to the newly resident gay men of the New Town neighborhood began opening up on Broadway and North Halsted Street near Diversey Parkway, while lesbian businesses, collectives, and organizations formed on Halsted Street north of Belmont Avenue. In the late 1960s, there were only a handful of businesses that advertised to gay male consumers in New Town. In 1966, a men's clothing shop called The House of Man located at 3142 N. Broadway advertised in the *Mattachine Midwest's* monthly newsletter saying, "You MODS must see it to believe it!"³⁴ In 1968, bookstores also advertised the sale of male

³³ In 1972, Chicago's crime syndicate made headlines as the federal government descended upon the city. Members of Even Prio's gang were skimming illegal profits from gay bars in Old Town, New Town, the Near North Side, and areas of Roger Park (Wiedrich 1972). In 1973, federal investigators studied police corruption in the Town Hall (19th District), which includes the heavily gay Clark and Diversey area. Those arrested during these raids were typically charged with disorderly conduct and their names, ages, addresses, and occupations were promptly published in the *Chicago Tribune* - often resulting in employment loss. Once gay men started to own their own businesses, they still were forced to deal with the mafia, police corruption, and ongoing police raids that continued into the 1980s.

³⁴ *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, July 1966 2, no. 7.

art and nudist merchandise at 2927 N Broadway and 5550 N Broadway.³⁵ However, by 1976 gay and lesbian bars were serving up drinks up and down Broadway, including at the Broadway Limited (a disco located at 3132 N. Broadway), The Closet (a "mixed" bar located at 3325 N. Broadway), and Carol in Exile (a gay bar located at 3510 N. Broadway, also the location of Broadway Konfusion).³⁶

The feminist collectives that defined the North Halsted Corridor as the center of the lesbian universe were rapidly replaced by privately owned gay businesses as the area developed into a male-dominated gay neighborhood. The capitalist economic system that already privileged white men and increasingly supported for-profit business models made gay bars, nightclubs, and retail shops owned by gay white men both more possible and viable. At the same time, recession, inflation, social conflict, and discriminatory policing became ongoing challenges for gay entrepreneurs to attain long-term economic success. While most gay- and lesbian-owned businesses stayed in operation for only a few months to a few years, a handful owned mostly by gay white men were able to firmly establish their businesses along the North Halsted Street corridor. It was this small group of mostly white gay male entrepreneurs who worked to create a gay neighborhood that was fit for profit accumulation. Chicago's existing neighborhood construct provided a political, economic, and social framework in which to model the synthesis of gay community, identity, and private business. Within this framework, grassroots gay community

³⁵ *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, July/August 1968, May 1968, and November 1968.

³⁶ See maps published in *GayLife* 1, no. 17 (February 4, 1976). Also, listings in *Sweet Home Chicago* 2 by Tem Horwitz (1977). Chicago: Chicago Review Press.

development necessitated gay entrepreneurship as a means of producing and controlling private capital for a collective cause.

The proliferation of gay-owned and operated bars and nightclubs in the 1970s provided a new framework around which gay and lesbian workers and bar owners could organize. On July 26, 1976, the Tavern Guild of Chicago formed. Patterning itself after its San Francisco counterpart,³⁷ the Tavern Guild of Chicago was an organization created by employees, bartenders, and bar owners in the metropolitan area and was open for all gay and lesbian workers in the liquor industry. Even though gay and lesbian bars were concentrated in both New Town and Old Town, the Tavern Guild was not specific to any one area of the city. More than a business organization, the Tavern Guild of Chicago served as a gay community organization for those working in the liquor industry, committed to helping others by organizing collective fundraising efforts and helping unemployed members find new jobs within the organization's network.³⁸

Just as the number of gay bars exploded, the number of gay businesses outside of the liquor industry also grew. These included other kinds of gay gathering and retail spaces, such as bookstores, restaurants, community centers, and retail stores (Gorman 1992). With the development of an increasingly visible and successful gay and lesbian economy, gay business owners recognized organizing as a profitable endeavor and sought to do so in a more expansive way that found strength in numbers and brought in businesses outside of the liquor industry. Pushing the Tavern's Guild model of collective labor

³⁷ *Gay Chicago News*, December 31, 1976. "News: August 1976": 4.

³⁸ "Tavern Guild of Chicago" in *Gay Chicago News* (July 29, 1977) and "Tavern Guild Organizes," *GayLife* 2, no. 6 (September 3, 1976).

organization aside to exclude workers, business owners led the creation of the citywide Metropolitan Business Association (MBA), which formed in May of 1978 and whose Board of Directors included Chuck Renslow, James "Jim" Gates, and James Flint, perhaps Chicago's most well-known gay businessmen.

As Chicago's gay and lesbian businesses began concentrating in the New Town area, particularly along the North Broadway Corridor, inflation and recession throughout the 1970s ravaged local businesses. As rents increased, buildings fell into disrepair, and crime scared off customers from the area,³⁹ business owners formed the Broadway Development Corporation (BDC) in an effort to stabilize the neighborhood through promoting businesses on Broadway. Unlike the MBA, the BDC included business owners across sexual identities and was instead defined by the area in which these businesses were located. After the establishment of the BDC and as the economy slowly recovered, the number of gay and lesbian businesses along North Broadway grew. Among them were Victor/Victoria (a "female impersonator" bar), the Pleasure Chest (a shop specializing in "somasochistic gear"), the Other Side, Roz's Unisex Hairstyling, Augie/C.K.'s (a gay bar at 3726 N. Broadway), and the Second Story All Male Emporium (Fremon 1988). By the early 1980s, Broadway not only became New Town's main artery, but it also became known as "Gay Way" because of its flashy signs, window displays, well-kept buildings, and gay businesses. By 1982, there were 50 members of the BDC.

As gay-owned businesses proliferated on North Broadway, more gay businesses rapidly opened their doors on North Halsted Street north of Belmont Avenue. In 1975,

³⁹ 1980. "Damski & Criss' Words & Pics." *Gay Chicago News* 3, no. 5 " (February 7).

this northern section of Halsted Street had one gay bar and one lesbian bar, Little Jim's, and Augie's. Gay men saw this northern stretch of the gay ghetto⁴⁰ as a place reserved for warehouses and car repair shops, "with just a smattering of small businesses, restaurants, and the occasional bar."⁴¹ However, by the late 1970s, gay and lesbian business began to proliferate here as well (Levine 1979; Shilts 1978). By 1977, these businesses included Bushes at 3320 N. Halsted, Little Jim's at 3501 N. Halsted, Idyl Adult Books Arcade at 3511 N. Halsted, Augie's at 3729 N. Halsted, Snake Pit at 2628 N. Halsted; and Touché at 2825 N. Halsted.⁴²

In 1980, the businesses that opened along North Halsted Street followed the organizational model of the successful BDC and founded the Northalsted Street Merchants Association (NSMA). At first, this small group consisted of retailers within the four-block radius on Halsted Street between Buckingham and Cornelia. However, this number grew as more businesses opened on North Halsted Street between the 3100 block and 3800 block, earning the moniker, the "Hot Halsted Strip." By 1984, the NSMA was comprised of 38 member businesses, representing roughly 80% of the business on

⁴⁰ In "Beckman House Expands" in *Gay Crusader* 12 (May 1974), the article described the location of the Beckman House as "in the heart of Chicago's 'gay ghetto,' one block west of Broadway and a short block South of Addison St." The boundaries of the gay ghetto were never officially defined or marked. Written accounts during the 1970s situate the gay ghetto as being south of Addison Street and concentrated around Diversey Parkway. The intersection of Broadway Street, Clark Street, and Diversey Parkway became known as "the crossroads of gay Chicago" by 1977. See advertisement for Big Red's in *Gay Chicago News* 10 (June 15, 1977).

⁴¹ *GayLife* (August, 9, 1984).

⁴² Augie's was the only woman's/lesbian bar at this time on North Halsted Street north of Belmont. Before it was Augie's, it was a lesbian bar named the InBetween.

this segment of North Halsted Street. In 1986, this northern section of North Halsted Street had over twelve bars and nightclubs, as well as additional businesses that catered to the neighborhood's gay residents. These included, The North End (3733), Big Red's (3729), Loading Dock (3702), LA Connection (3700), Christopher Street (3458), Rick's Retreat (3445), Buck's (3439), Men's Room (3359), Sidetrack (3349), Bushes (3320), Irene's Diamonds (3169), Windy City (3128), and Flashy Trash (3521).⁴³ As the numbers of businesses increased, so did the NSMA and it attracted business owners across sexual and gender identities to strengthen the growing commercial district.⁴⁴ To account for this expansion, the organization changed its name from Northalsted *Street* Merchants Association (NSMA) to the Northalsted *Area* Merchants Association (NAMA) as it incorporated businesses beyond the boundaries of North Halsted Street. It later dropped the signifier altogether and just became the Northalsted Merchants Association. It kept this name until 2009, when, representing over 100 businesses, it rebranded itself as the Northalsted Business Alliance (NBA).

⁴³ 1986. *Gay Chicago Magazine* 31 (July-August): 6; 1986. *Gay Chicago Magazine* 20 (May 15-25): 5-6.

⁴⁴ In its early days, the NSMA hung up signs on lampposts introducing people to the neighborhood, printed brochures that highlighted member businesses, and participated group advertising. Later, the NAMA created a formal street beautification program, which included street and sidewalk cleaning, professional landscaping, and a façade incentive program that helped businesses repair and renovate their storefronts.



Figure 11. Pro-Business 1980 Gay Pride Parade Float: The confluence of pro-business activism and the Gay Rights Movement is demonstrated by a float that was pulled up North Halsted Street in 1980 during the annual parade. It represented the neighborhood's new business organization, the NSMA, and the merging of gay community with business community. The rise of gay entrepreneurship came to represent a turning point for the gay community and for gay rights, promising economic, political, and social strength.

The rapid proliferation of gay businesses and the concurrent post-industrial economic transformation did not go unnoticed by those who were witnessing these changes first-hand. In *Chicago Gay News*, well-known local columnist John-Henri Damski wrote,

In the last ten years, we have become what the experts call a "service society." More people work in services than they do in heavy industry. More people like Big Macs than they do big cars or big steel. Also, the country no longer divides between North and South, but between the dying Northeast and the Midwest industrial cities, and the rising Southwest Sun Belt.

It will be some time before society accepts gays as gays, but for a long time society has accepted gays as servants. It is a little harsh sounding a first, no one grows up wanting to be a servant, but gays do dominate the service industries: waiters, waitresses, cooks, stewards, hotel clerks, busboys, hairdressers, airline ticket agents, nursing, paramedics, computer operators and teachers of all kinds.

The dying cities are being rebuilt by gays; they are the new, the small businessmen of the big cities...⁴⁵

Damski not only critiqued the low-paying jobs that gay men and lesbians overrepresented in the new service-based economy, but also described gay male entrepreneurship as the force revitalizing urban economies. This understanding further legitimized the liberatory politics of pro-business activism that became enmeshed with the new Gay Rights Movement and also constituted the popular narrative of Boystown's formation discussed in the previous chapter.

Businesses that were gay-owned and gay-operated were seen as a way for gay men and lesbians to get out of their low-paying service-industry jobs through new opportunities for entrepreneurship in disinvested urban areas. The irony was that these economic opportunities were limited and disproportionately attainable, particularly along the lines of race, gender, and class. Furthermore, it ignored the reality that the majority of profitable gay-owned businesses, as cultivated by the post-industrial economy, were in the service industry and reproduced the same low-wage, "servant" labor. This widespread pro-business activism that transformed the Gay Liberation Movement into an endeavor for capital

⁴⁵ Damski, Jon-Henri. 1981. *Chicago Gay News* 4, no. 7. "Nothing Personal: Tight-Assed Times." (February 26, 1981).

accumulation did not only permeate and inform sexual cultures and movements to reconstruct the everyday life of capitalism, but it also formed part of a larger political and cultural project in the United States that laid the foundation for neoliberalism (Duggan 2003) and encouraged the commodification and privatization of the gay neighborhood.

The relationship between commodification and the politics of gay rights, and how these shaped the daily lives and subjectivities of gay neighborhood residents, is made explicit through various pro-business political endeavors that have taken shape in the gay neighborhood, namely the Gay Dollar Campaign, the Gay Pride Parade, and Market Days. The Gay Dollar Campaign was initiated in 1986 by two tavern owners in New Town and Andersonville, Marge Summit of His n' Hers Bar (944 W. Addison) and Frank Kellas of the Gold Coast bar (5025 N. Clark)⁴⁶ to make visible the expansive purchasing power of Chicago's gay and lesbian population. The Gay Dollar campaign urged gay men and lesbians to stamp their money, checks, and credit card slips with the words, "Gay \$," as part of a larger effort to gain civil rights protections and pass a gay rights ordinance in Chicago.⁴⁷ Rubber stamps were distributed to gay-owned businesses throughout the city and New Town's businesses were eager to participate. Stamped currency circulated throughout the city and beyond, initiating a legal battle over the "defaced" bills.

While the Gay Dollar Campaign was not confined to Lake View, it helped shape how the gay marketplace was understood. The campaign also created a new understanding of

⁴⁶ The Gold Coast bar was originally located in the Gold Coast at 501 N. Clark Street.

⁴⁷ "Owners of gay bars to defy federal order." *Chicago Tribune* (December 10, 1986).

money, power, and gay activism through consumption that would come to define neighborhood subjectivities. Gay and lesbian residents were beginning to be bombarded with a new commercialized gay world, with advertisements covering the pages of local gay publications and where spending money meant supporting the gay businesses and the growing gay community. Distinguishing "buying gay" from all other possible habits of consumption, created a new division in the marketplace defined by identity politics that distinguished gay shopping from straight shopping. This new economic competition and sexual bifurcation of consumption mirrored and exacerbated conflict around sexual identity, while expanding it outside of the social realm by bringing it into the marketplace. Thus, some critical of the increasing role of capital in the struggle for gay rights saw the Gay Dollar Campaign as a gimmick to attract customers to local gay-owned businesses, monetizing sexual politics and conflict and transforming it into a lucrative entrepreneurial endeavor.

Not only did the gay marketplace depend on social conflict around sexual identity, but it also depended on crafting and maintaining a particular construction of the gay consumer. Thus, local businesses engaged in practices to create a web of interdependencies within the system of capitalism. Local gay publications, increasing in popularity and distribution, depended on an increasing number of advertisements from local gay businesses in order to be viable. This trend is unmistakable when comparing contemporary issues of *Gay Chicago Magazine* and *Windy City Times* with those that were published during the early days of the Gay Liberation Movement, such as the *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* and the *Lavender Woman*. In addition to the bevy of advertisements that helped fund local gay publications for decades and transformed them

into profit-making entrepreneurial enterprises, guides to gay retail stores, bars, and nightclubs became a gay publication mainstay (See Figure 12).

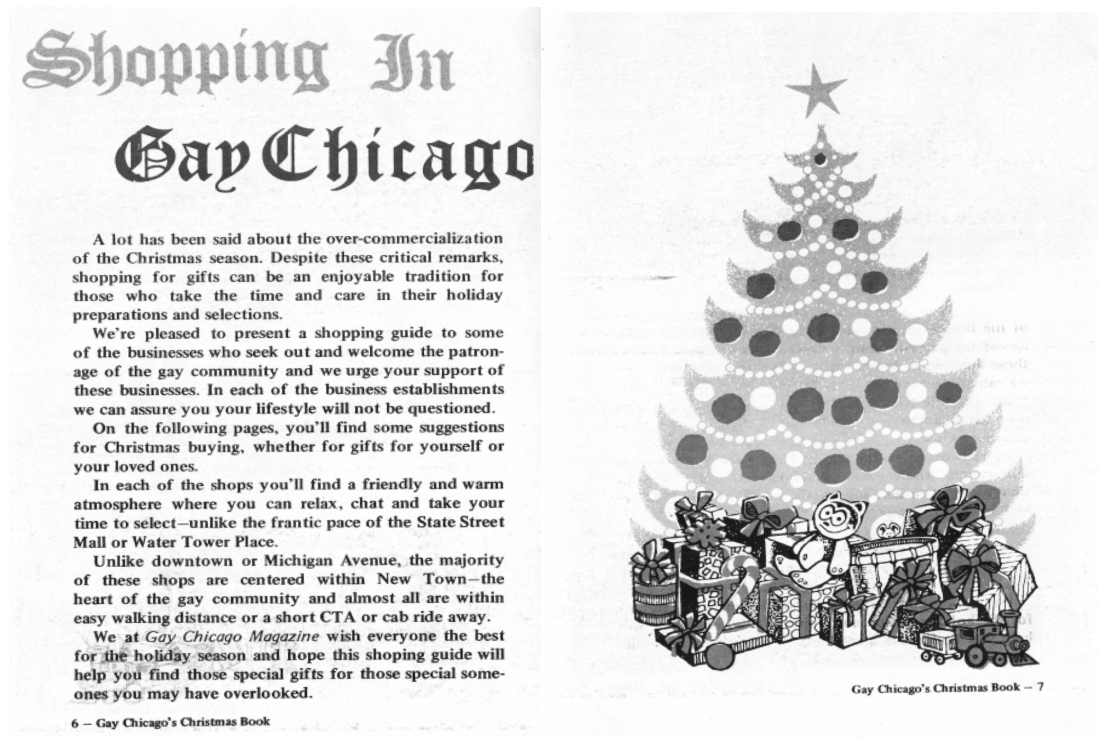


Figure 12. Christmas Shopping in Gay Chicago: A special Christmas edition of *Gay Chicago Magazine* included a holiday shopping guide (1980).

Pro-business activism became embedded not only in terms of gay and lesbian businesses but expanded to incorporating the gay and lesbian community into the larger economy. Efforts to assimilate into the mainstream economy by constructing gay men and lesbians into powerful consumers were initiated in Boystown. In 1989, Boystown even became home to one of the first market research and polling firms in the United States to specialize in the gay, lesbian and HIV+ consumer market segments, publishing reports of the affluence of gay men and lesbians as making up the quintessential double-

income-no-kids (DINK) consumers.⁴⁸ The specter of potential profits encouraged corporations to market towards gay and lesbian consumers and make strategic investments in Boystown. This myth of gay affluence, having its origins in Boystown, has been sustained for decades and has infiltrated gay culture globally, shaping the political, economic, and social lives LGBTQ+ people who lived in the neighborhood and beyond. Boystown, in this regard, can be considered one of the sites from which, what Lisa Duggan dubbed the new homonormativity (2002, 2003), emanated. Furthermore, it continues to be reproduced through the same biopolitical frameworks that produced it, where the sexual citizenship imperative functions through racialization and racism, as defined, produced, and constituted through space. Boystown's existence depended on reproducing the gay neighborhood as a site of visual delectation where everyone appears to be middle class. In a society where class is often interpreted along racial lines, in Boystown, this increasingly meant reproducing the neighborhood as white through patterns of consumption.

During my fieldwork, the neighborhood served as an attraction where gay nightlife brought both residents and visitors out on the streets to participate in this particular version of gay culture. As I walked up North Halsted Street to the Center on Halsted one day, someone who was standing on the sidewalk handed me a directory for the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. This organization, which promotes

⁴⁸ The information I received on Overlooked Opinions, "The Gay Market Experts" came from flyers and other documents that were given to me by participants from their personal archives. This marketing firm led the production of the discourse of gay affluence that shaped the commercialization and corporatization of gay culture and of Boystown. They were located at 3162 N. Broadway.

LGBT-owned and -friendly businesses throughout the Greater Chicago Area, was hosting an event in the gymnasium of the Center on Halsted.⁴⁹ Printed on the cover of their annual directory was their slogan for the 2009 edition, “Don’t Just be Gay... Buy Gay.” On another summertime stroll in the days preceding the neighborhood’s annual Market Days festival, I walked past the Broadway United Methodist Church and noticed that their sign solicited a quote from television evangelist Tammy Fay Bakker, “I always say shopping is cheaper than a psychiatrist.” From local business organizations to neighborhood churches, the rhetoric to consume gayness was everywhere (See Figure 13).

Market Days is a stunning example of how pro-business activism shaped the commodification of the neighborhood and transformed its public spaces into a gay marketplace. Market Days itself provides a window into the mutual constitution of local capital accumulation, gay community, and global capitalism. What started out as an effort to give North Halsted Street a gay identity and to raise funds for street improvements, the NSMA organized Market Days as a sidewalk festival in 1982. Drawing about 5,000 people, festivalgoers were sequestered to the sidewalks and the spaces designated for street parking since the city refused to close Halsted Street for the event. However, the increase in the number of festivalgoers each year, drunken chaos, and clashes with the motorists and police provided business owners the leverage they needed to convince the city to permit

⁴⁹ The Center on Halsted is also referred to locally as “The Center,” which I will use from this point forward.

the NSMA to close the street down completely for the festival.⁵⁰ Market Days became one of the largest neighborhood events in the city and even the largest street fair in the Midwest, drawing vendors, consumers, and tourists from around the world to participate in Boystown's gay marketplace.⁵¹

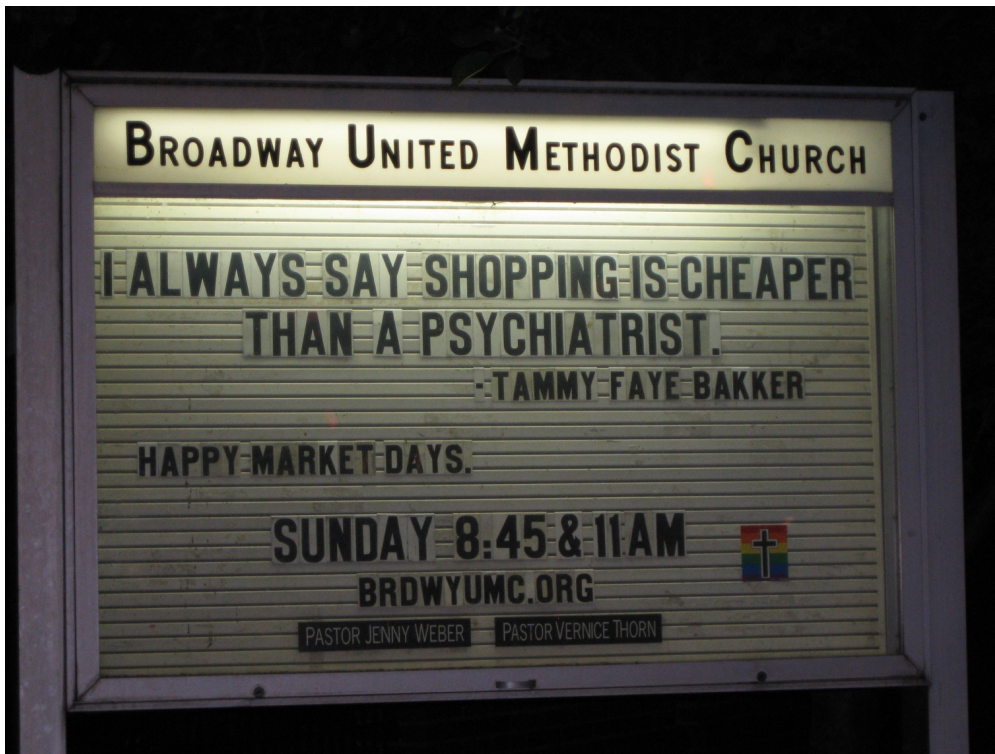


Figure 13. Broadway Methodist Church Sign: During the Market Days street festival in 2009, The Broadway Methodist Church located at 3338 N Broadway Street posted this quote reminding passersby to spend money at local businesses during the event.

Boystown's other popular event, the Gay Pride Parade, also provides insight into the mutually constitutive relationship between sexuality and capitalism. Initially a march through the city center in 1970, Gay Pride began as an effort to

⁵⁰ de La Croix, Sukie. 2010. "Gay Chicago Timeline." *Gay Chicago Magazine* (August 5-11).

⁵¹ In 2010, 250,000 people were expected to attend North Halsted Market Days.

publicly acknowledge and make visible the places of political and cultural significance for gay men and lesbians in Chicago. The route of the march was created so that it passed all sites of symbolic importance to Chicago's gay history. It began at Bughouse Square, passed the Chicago Avenue Police Station, Lawson YMC, and ended at the grassy plaza near the Water Tower on Michigan Avenue.⁵² The following year, the march moved north to Lakeview and soon transformed into a parade, marking the cultural, political, and economic shifts that were occurring in the neighborhood. In addition to the annual increase in the visibility of gay businesses participating in the parade through floating advertisements, the parade route itself continually shifted to follow the moving concentrations of gay businesses in Lakeview (see Appendix B). As gay businesses opened further north and closed along Broadway Street, the Gay Pride Parade also continued to shift north and to North Halsted Street so that it would pass by as many of the city's gay businesses as possible. Many factors went in to configuring changes in the parade route,⁵³ particularly as the parade grew to attract hundreds of thousands of people each year. Still, chosen routes ensured the neighborhood's gay businesses could maximize their profits off the passing parade and steady stream of participants outside their storefronts.

In 2001, neoliberal multiculturalism pushed the Gay Pride Parade to a reliance on

⁵² *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, June 1970.

⁵³ The Gay Pride Parade is organized each year by a planning committee that is an organization distinct from other neighborhood organizations, including the neighborhood's business organizations.

corporate sponsorship. As the planning committee prepared for the Gay Pride Parade for the following year, the city changed its parade ordinance. As Chicago's parades grew in size and number,⁵⁴ the city, which previously absorbed all of the expenses of the Gay Pride Parade, stopped paying for many of the costs associated with putting on parades throughout the city.⁵⁵ As a result, organizers had to find new ways to pay for the increasing costs for cleanup, public portable restrooms, security, and barricades. While the Gay Pride Parade's organizational committee was prepared for some increased costs following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the costs to put on the parade skyrocketed as it became one of the largest parades in the city, attracting over 350,000 people that year. Not wanting to hire a private security company, the organizational committee hired a gay-owned event company that provided crowd control in a non-threatening way. While the NAMA paid for some of the cleanup costs and security for after the parade, the remainder of the costs was paid through corporate sponsorships, primarily liquor companies. Since then, corporate sponsorships and participation in the parade provided the funding necessary for the parade and its growth in participants. The visibility of corporations in the parade fostered intimate connections between LGBTQ+ participants and corporations under the guise of equality, rather than profit-making.

The interconnected intricacies of pro-business activism, gay business organization and proliferation, and gay cultural commodification demonstrate the multiple ways in

⁵⁴ There were over thirty parades in the city at this time.

⁵⁵ Whereas the city once paid for a majority of the parade costs, after 2001 it committed to paying for only a portion of clean-up costs, while providing only a fraction of the barricades required for the lengthy parade route.

which Boystown has become embedded in the system of racial capitalism, to create new privileged subjects and racialized exclusions. The marketing of Boystown as the city's gay neighborhood and its commodification and privatization provided a social and material framework for reproducing racism and sexism, preventing women and LGBTQ+ people of color from fully participating in the neighborhood's commercialized social scene. Practices of racial and gendered exclusion were also supplanted by the neighborhood's ongoing gentrification, as neighborhood businesses increasingly catered to a young, white professional class. In a neighborhood structured by consumption, denied entry to these businesses or forced expulsion through discriminatory practices meant the exclusion from full participation in the neighborhood itself. Black and Latina women have historically been denied entry to white-owned gay and lesbian bars, taverns, and nightclubs throughout Lake View. Discrimination through unreasonable ID requirements were such a widespread concern that the Chicago Gay Alliance and Chicago Lesbian Liberation worked together in 1973 to survey and investigate bars' business practices and policies.⁵⁶ Most notably, CK's Lounge, located in New Town (south of present-day Boystown) at 1425 W. Diversey, was accused of racial discrimination in December of 1974, only months after it had opened, after women of color were asked to produce as many as five separate pieces of identification to gain entry, while white women were required to present one or two IDs.⁵⁷

Throughout my fieldwork, over three decades after the incidents at CK's Lounge,

⁵⁶ 1973. "Hazards, Bias in Bars to be Investigated." *Gay Crusader* 7 (November): 1.

⁵⁷ 1975. "Discrimination?" *Blazing Star* 3. (May 1).

double and triple-carding practices (requiring multiple types of ID's for entry) continued to limit the entry of women and people of color to gay bars and clubs in Boystown. In February of 2010, lesbians boycotted Spin Nightclub after the nightclub's manager made discriminatory comments before a women's hip hop event that headlined Kid Sister, a female rapper from Chicago.⁵⁸ In the weeks leading up to the event, promoters and DJs were asked not to play an exclusively hip-hop music set so that the music did not avert the nightclub's core clientele. During the event, it was alleged that the manager told event organizers that "Those West Side lesbians can keep their money" and that "We don't want those kinds [Latina] lesbians in our club."⁵⁹ In segregated Chicago, references to a particular side of the city were code to indirectly denote race or socio-economic status—a reflection of the racial antagonisms of Chicago's segregated landscape (Wilson and Taub 2006). Following the event, club promoters began a Facebook page calling for a boycott of Spin. Over 600 hundred people, across racial and gender identities, joined and began sharing stories of the discrimination they experienced at Spin Nightclub. Boycott organizers focused on steering customers away from Spin and toward venues in Boystown they perceived as more welcoming.

Discrimination was not limited to the neighborhood's gay bars. The gentrification of the neighborhood brought to Boystown numerous retail corporations, including one of

⁵⁸ Andrew Cruzatti and Maria Wiesmore of A&C Productions, the party promoting company, sued Spin Nightclub shortly after the event for breach of contract. They dismissed the case almost a year later in 2012. This same year, the manager who was accused of racial prejudice and discrimination was fired after a former employee filed a lawsuit against him alleging repeated sexual harassment and unfair treatment.

⁵⁹ Quoted during an interview with one of the boycott organizers.

only two 24-hour Starbucks coffee shops in the city. Located at the corner of Belmont Avenue and North Clark Street, this particular coffee shop attracted a large late-night crowd, especially on weekends. DePaul University students would frequently come up Clark Street from Lincoln Park to study for exams. Suburbanites would swing by following Chicago Cubs games at Wrigley Field, particularly those who made their way drinking and eating down Clark Street as they walked through Wrigleyville. Among these populations, this particular Starbucks was known as being a prime spot for "people watching." Its large storefront windows were lined with seats that looked out towards the Dunkin' Donuts parking lot, which had been a late-night, hang-out spot since the 1980s when it was nicknamed Punkin' Donuts and frequented by "punks" who visited the punk and goth bars that were once on Clark Street. During the time of my fieldwork, this parking lot was a popular spot for young LGBTQ+ people of color to gather and spend time.

While the ways in which racial discrimination permeated the neighborhood were clear to me throughout my fieldwork, one incident in particular marked the ways in which these practices were part of the continual process of gay neighborhood production through gentrification. It was 2:00 AM and I had just finished my third cup of coffee. I had to pee. I put my laptop in my backpack and got up to go to the bathroom. Propped up on the floor in front of the bathroom door was a hand-written piece of paper taped to a plastic, yellow "wet floor" caution sign that read, "BATHROOM OUT OF ORDER." The barista was on the other side of the store putting chairs on the tops of tables and mopping the floor. I did not know if he had put the sign out earlier when he started cleaning the bathroom or if the toilet was just not functioning. I asked him, "Is the

bathroom still closed? Is it broken?"

"Oh no," he replied. "You can go on in. We just put that sign out to so the homeless people don't just come in to use it and make a mess. It's for paying customers only." His response came without hesitation.

The "homeless people" he was referring to were predominantly the black and brown LGBTQ+ "street youth," many of them under the age of 21, who hung out in the busy streets, while patrons of the neighborhood's bars and nightclubs made their way door-to-door. An hour before I went to use the bathroom myself, three young, black transgender women walked in exclusively to use the bathroom. As two of the young women stood by the entrance, one approached the bathroom but turned around once she saw the sign and walked out with her friends. Once she made it out, she shouted at her friend who was getting ready to cross Belmont Avenue, "The bathroom is out of order, don't even bother. Let's just go in the alley." They all walked back towards the Belmont "L" station on the frozen sidewalk; it was the middle of January. The bathroom sign served as a diversion to keep unwanted people out of the store. To keep customers happy, it was just a part of business to force people to go to the bathroom outside in the middle of winter. Since I had paid around \$2 for a small cup of coffee, I was able to purchase the privilege of access to the Starbucks bathroom.

The bathroom was only one example of how the homeless and the poor were prohibited from this particular space of consumption. In the summer of 2008, "Buy Something or Leave" became a mantra that was frequently uttered by baristas who took on the role of policing the coffee shop, particularly at night. One warm evening in late-August at 10:38 pm, the police were called to throw out black and brown LGBTQ+

"street youth" who congregated in the coffee shop. The police came in the Starbucks and calmly explained to the young people in conversational tone that "the managers are complaining, no one is buying anything, and people are here to study. You all are being too loud." Without rebuttal, the teenagers immediately got up from their tables and left in what seemed like a familiar experience of removal. However, the policing of Starbucks did not always come without confrontation. On April 22, 2009, I walked past the coffee shop and noticed that the large window by the front door had been completely shattered. The space where the glass one hung was boarded up with a large sheet of plywood. The barista told me that a homeless man kicked it out after he was told to leave the store, resulting in him being shocked with a Taser, handcuffed, and taken to jail.

Outside of Starbucks, gay cisgender men of color were also subjected to forms of racial segregation structured by the neighborhood's commodified social environment. Martin, a 26-year-old, self-identified black gay man, claimed that the Boystown he experienced was a neighborhood of exclusion and homogenization. During an interview, he said,

Boystown is full of clones. Nearly everyone is unfaithful there. It's all about bathhouses, online hookups, and no church. But I see why people like it. If you're gay, white, wealthy, and mainstream it's probably the best place on earth. But if you're not, it's not this welcoming safe space that everyone makes it out to be. It's not even a place of sexual possibilities, really. Because if you're not white, you're invisible... Here [in Boystown], I'll never be any more than the token black guy. When I walk into a bar and see a sea of whiteness, that's really my only option.

Martin lived in Boystown for two years before moving north to Andersonville, drawn to the neighborhood because of the cheaper rent and the existing gay and lesbian community. He was also pushed out of Boystown by his experiences with other gay men. Martin dreamed of getting married in the future and during the time he lived in Boystown

he was unable to form a long-term romantic relationship with anyone he dated. While the neighborhood provided Martin with a vast selection of gay men to date, he felt that Boystown's large dating pool supported promiscuity among gay men. Thus, he felt that the neighborhood was not conducive to his desire to form a monogamous, long-term bond with another man. Furthermore, Martin also saw his inability to form romantic relationships with those in Boystown being tied directly to the city's racial segregation. For him, the lack of black bodies in the white neighborhood caused him to be ignored, feared, or fetishized when he went out to the neighborhood's nightclubs.

Violent discrimination based on gender and race and structured by the neighborhood's commodification and privatization was not confined to Boystown's privatized spaces of consumption but was also experienced on the streets. Harold became a familiar neighborhood face to me, as we would often pass each other while walking on North Halsted Street and saw each other repeatedly at neighborhood events. My chance to interview him came as we both sat at different tables across from each other in the lobby of the Center on Halsted and struck up a conversation. Harold self-identified as black and gay. Born and raised in a single-parent household on the South Side, Harold was 19-years old and lived with his mother in Bronzeville. Harold came to Boystown nearly every day. Although he did not work or live in the neighborhood, nor was he old enough to patronize Boystown's bars and nightclubs, he dreamt of working at the Center on Halsted in the future and regularly visited the neighborhood to be involved in the gay community, make new friendships, access youth services, and volunteer at different neighborhood organizations.

During our interview, Harold talked to me about his experiences with discrimination

in Boystown and detailed the racialized violence he faced in the neighborhood. He said,

I think they [Boystown residents] just see me hangin' out on the streets [of Boystown] and think that I'm homeless or some shit. But I'm none of those things. I'm just not old enough to drink legally at the bars and that's not really my scene... So what else is there for me and my friends to do? I feel like I'm forced to hang out in the streets and then I feel like I'm constantly being judged for being a street youth.

I just wish there were more things for us to do after hours. All we can really do is hang out in the streets. That's how a lot of people get into trouble. And then we get a reputation and the people that live here don't want us here because they think we are the problem. They just see a black kid runnin' around the neighborhood startin' shit. No one's tryin' to get to know me.

I see how they [white gay residents] look at me. When they walk by they look away or cross the street. They don't even wanna make eye contact with me. They wanna to avoid me at every chance they get. And this is in a neighborhood where literally every gay guy is checkin' out some other gay guy. That's literally why they come to Boystown. But black guys... We aren't welcome here. We aren't even wanted here.

Since Harold was younger than the legal drinking age, he was excluded from the neighborhood's commodified gay social scene—composed primarily of the bars and clubs on North Halsted Street. Harold's inadmissibility pushed him onto the streets, along with many other young LGBTQ+ people of color who came to the neighborhood from other parts of the city. As a result, congregations of black and brown bodies pushed onto the streets of Boystown, particularly at night when youth service organizations closed and the entertainment nightscape became more active. This economy of exclusion exacerbated experiences of racial prejudice as neighborhood residents feared and shunned the concentrations of black and brown bodies on the street.

Around midnight, Harold would make his way back to the South Side. To ensure his safety while en route to Bronzeville, Harold took the Clark Street bus for most of the way to limit his interactions with others and avoid being on the Red Line alone late at

night. I asked Harold why he continued to visit the neighborhood with such regularity when faced with such racial prejudice and risk. He said,

On the South Side, I am targeted for being gay. Here, I blend in. There's a bunch of us. Safety in numbers I guess. It's one less thing I have to worry about. It's still dangerous on the streets, but it's different. [In Boystown] it's more about getting mixed up with the wrong group of people than about getting shot or beat for being gay or trans. I have friends who have gotten beat up and stabbed in Boystown. They don't call the police because they don't want to get into more trouble, so none of that ever gets reported. I don't have an issue with the police because they know me.

Harold developed a relationship with the police stationed at the Town Hall District, through the Center on Halsted's youth program. During our hour-long conversation, two police officers walked by us and Harold greeted them by name. They said hello to him and asked him how he was doing before continuing on with their patrol route.

Harold's story was not unusual. As the city's gay neighborhood, LGBTQ+ people imagined Boystown as a beacon of queer community, joy, sexual possibilities, social services, and safety. For young, LGBTQ+ people in particular, the neighborhood also provided an expansive and centrally located area of the city to regularly socialize en masse and in public without the same threats of violence faced elsewhere in the segregated city. When the climate would permit, a vibrant perennial street culture developed among people of color along Belmont Avenue from the Red Line to Halsted Street. Traveling to Boystown from the South and West sides, they came to partake in this unique queer social scene on the streets.

This collective experience of inclusion was accompanied and produced by experiences of exclusion. Fleeing violence and exclusion from elsewhere in the city, young, LGBTQ+ people of color came to a neighborhood structured by the same discriminatory ideologies informed by race, gender, class, and sexuality. As a result,

young, LGBTQ+ people of color were pushed onto the streets as they were prohibited from participating in Boystown's privatized marketplace as consumers. While racial discrimination operated as one barrier to admittance into the capitalist social world, age and money also served as barriers to Boystown's marketplace. The neighborhood's bars and nightclubs were constantly policed for under-age drinking. After one bar was fined, temporarily shut down, and at risk of losing its liquor license, all of the bars in the neighborhood became overly observant of admittance policies. Bouncers and club managers refused to let anyone in who under twenty-one or who were without a valid government ID. The commodified gay social scene was inherently inaccessible for those who could not afford to participate, whether that meant paying for cover charges or drinks or food within the neighborhood's nighttime businesses. Those who were drawn to the neighborhood by the programs and services geared specifically for them at the Broadway Youth Center and Center on Halsted, were pushed onto the streets once these social service organizations closed for the day.

Young, LGBTQ+ people of color were also excluded from working in the neighborhood's commercialized social scene. Boystown's economically insecure marketplace offered a finite number of employment opportunities for potential workers, even as the neighborhood attracted LGBTQ+ people seeking work from around the city, seeing jobs in the neighborhood's service industry as being less stressful than jobs in the service sector elsewhere, as gay work environments were viewed as being free from heteronormative biases and more communal. Potential job candidates were often drawn from employment pools created by the established social networks of current employees, limiting the expansion of any available employment opportunities to young, poor,

LGBTQ+ people of color. This dynamic led some minority employment-seekers to only apply for limited paid positions at local social service organizations where they felt welcomed. Others turned to the illegal economies of the streets for daily subsistence, as the gay nightscape provided concentrated opportunities for sex work and the selling of illegal drugs. The neighborhood provided underpaid workers in the service industry, particularly drag performers who relied predominantly on tips, with alternative ways to supplement their incomes, as well as alternative ways to make money for those unable to get a job with the neighborhood's social service organizations or in its service economy.

In the face of this disproportionate exclusion, being out on the streets of the neighborhood became a norm, a way of life, and a foil to the indoor social scene that dominated the North Halsted strip. The privatization of the gay neighborhood and the commodification of gay social life reproduced racial segregation within the gay neighborhood, not in way that served as a microcosm for the patterns of residential segregation that persisted and even expanded throughout the city of Chicago, but in an entirely new way that created two distinct yet overlapping racialized sexual-social worlds. One was distinguished by its reservation for primarily gay white men and middle-class modes of consumption and the other left open, but highly regulated and circumscribed, for young and poor people of color. Thus, through sexuality, capitalism transformed not only the physical landscape of the neighborhood, but also its social landscape as it structured gay social relations by age, race, and class.

Central to Boystown's development has been the dismantling of the neighborhood's gay public social spaces not intersected by capital, while retaining public spectacles for consumption. While the NHSP fundamentally altered the aesthetics of the

neighborhood's most popular public space, the North Halsted Strip, the spaces not central to the neighborhood's cultural economy have gradually disappeared, creating a space of violence for LGBTQ+ people of color. On June 28, 2009, the annual Pride parade made its way through the neighborhood during one of the major neighborhood events when LGBTQ+ people took over the streets. The theme of the parade was "Stonewall: 40 Years After" and Abraham Lincoln was a prominent symbol throughout the parade, marking the bicentennial of his birth and the production of belonging through LGBT cultural nationalism. The two-story float of the Lake View East Festival of the Arts had murals of the 16th President of the United States draped across both sides. A large moving truck representing the Illinois Bar Association also drove down the street with a portrait of Lincoln wrapped around it's sides along with the message, "Illinois has a history of some pretty good lawyers. We're out to keep it that way." These images of President Lincoln were supplemented by a plethora of American flags, which were tacked on numerous floats and flown alongside rainbow flags. A giant American flag that was as wide as the street was carried by dozens of people down the entire parade route as one of the grandest symbolic demonstrations of citizenship and another practice of making national identity through multiculturalism.

For the first time in the parade's history, an elementary school marched in the parade. Nettlehorst Elementary School, located in the center of Boystown on Broadway Street between Melrose Street and Aldine Avenue, had a contingent of children and parents that marched near the beginning of the parade. Following the group of young children, the PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) contingent passed. Cee Cee Bloom screamed, "Get out of our neighborhood!" as they walked by her. Following

PFLAG, a group of marchers carried a banner that stated, “Gay Pride Means Fight Cops; Bash Back!” and not too far behind them, ironically, was a float representing the Chicago Police Department upon which about a dozen men and women in police uniforms stood smiling and waving back to cheering onlookers. The conflicting politics presented at the parade did not go unnoticed by onlookers.

When the parade came to an end, I walked north on Broadway Street with a small group of people, most of whom I had just met earlier in the day. We were in the middle of the street and surrounded by a dense crowd of parade goers. Many were intoxicated and adorned with the colors of the rainbow, including beads, face paint, body paint, tie dye t-shirts, and some wearing rainbow flags as capes. A man who was walking next to me began to laugh and shout as he pointed at a barefoot woman walking towards us. Wearing only her underwear and a pair of stickers that covered her nipples, she sashayed down the middle of the Broadway Street as if it was a fashion runway, waving a rainbow flag in the air to music that was blasting out of someone’s apartment window. Once she passed us, she screamed “Gay pride! Equality for all!!”

We continued to make our way north to someone’s apartment near Irving Park Road for a house party at Boystown's northern end. As some of the people in the group began talking with some others in the streets, I sat on the edge of the sidewalk and watched a young, drunk, shirtless, white man leave the pride festivities and hop on a swing set in the playground across the street at Gill Park. Gil Park is one of only three public parks within Boystown, not counting the northern stretch of Lincoln Park that lines the lakefront. Located at 824 W. Sheridan Road at Clarendon Avenue, Gil Park is the largest of the three with a small t-ball field, some green space, an outdoor playground, and an indoor

recreational facility called the field house. The other two public parks include Evergreen Park and Wendt Playlot Park, two gated playgrounds located on Belmont Avenue and Roscoe Street, respectively.

Within five minutes, the shirtless man was surrounded by two cops. They questioned him for about 10 minutes, asked him for his ID, and then handcuffed him and took him away in a police van. By this time, there was a small group of parade goers who had stopped in the street to watch the arrest. The entire ordeal was relatively quick, quiet, and uneventful. There was no struggle. There was no yelling. There was no element of resistance. There was no abusive behavior by the police. It was just a quick and simple arrest. Witnessing this moment, I was stunned by the irony of it occurring at the conclusion of such a massive pride parade, with its ardent slogans and symbols of resistance, equality, and LGBT citizenship.

I asked a man who was standing next to me and watching the arrest unfold, “Do you know why they are arresting him?” He replied,

I don’t think adults are allowed in playgrounds without being accompanied by a child. I know adults are not allowed to be on the swings or on any of the playground structures, there are signs that say no adults allowed. I think they do that to make sure pedophiles and the homeless don’t hang out there and abduct children or whatever. They are probably arresting him for that, but it could also be for something like public indecency or drunken disorderly conduct or trespassing. Who knows? He was just sitting there on the swing by himself. The entire park is pretty empty so it’s not like he was dealing drugs or bothering anyone. Maybe he had a warrant out for his arrest...

Chicago Park District Code (7.B.3) prohibits any adult to use playground equipment, which are restricted to children under the age of twelve. While we never found out if this was the reason for this man's arrest, it was made clear to all of the onlookers that the neighborhood's playgrounds, and thus, the majority of the neighborhood's public parks

outside of the lakefront, were off-limits to gay men.

Another man who was standing on the other side of me and who was also watching the arrest take place joined the conversation.

I just can't believe they are arresting him! Obviously, there are going to be drunk people all around here during pride. Today should be an exception. He wasn't messing with anyone. Who cares if he was on one of the neighborhood's playgrounds? Where else is he supposed to go? There's not much else around but playgrounds... They should have just told him to move along or sit somewhere else if he's not supposed to be on the swings. This is gentrification for ya... We should be allowed everywhere in Boystown. This is what happens when breeders turn your neighborhood into kid-friendly bullshit

For this spectator, the arrest was an affirmation that the violent removal of Boystown's gay residents was a direct result of gentrification.

The development of children's spaces has been anathema particularly to Boystown's gay male residents, as gay men have been historically stereotyped as perverts and pedophiles and the public expression of non-normative sexual identity has been constructed as perverting and corrupting childhood innocence.⁶⁰ In Boystown, children's playgrounds have been built, reclaimed, and renovated at the same time that the neighborhood's gay public spaces have disappeared. As public park spaces off-limits to LGBTQ+ people without young children in tow, the neighborhood's streets provided the

⁶⁰ In his column "Chicago Gay History: Every Kick is a Boost" in the *Windy City Times*, John D'Emilio explores how a local sex panic about "a national homosexual ring... trafficking in young boys" in 1977 led to the increased police harassment of gay men and shut down 34 adult bookstores (December 3, 2008). Last accessed on December 30, 2008. <http://www.windycitymediagroup.com/lgbt/HISTORY-Every-kick-is-a-boost/19958.html>; Also see Palmer, David. 2007. "Normal Politics: Negotiating Sexuality and Child Endangerment in 1977 America." Thesis. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Department of History.

most accessible public space for LGBTQ+ people to socialize in the neighborhood.

Boystown's public spaces were not always relegated to off-limit playgrounds and hostile streets and, in fact, it was once home to one of the largest public gathering spaces in the city for gay men and lesbians. Nestled between the Nike Missile Base and the Lincoln Park Gun Club was the Belmont Rocks: a grassy lawn between Belmont Avenue and Lakeshore Drive that pushed up against large limestone rocks that lined the shores of Lake Michigan. The large limestone rocks that were brought up from Indiana in the 1920s provided a public space for LGBTQ+ people for decades. From the late 1960s until 2002 when they were closed for construction, the Belmont Rocks served as a leisure space of gay cultural production across race, class, gender, and sexuality (Ischar 2009), “The Rocks,” as they were affectionately called, perhaps most notably served as a summer-time cruising spot for gay men and provided the gay neighborhood’s only public space where LGBTQ+ people could gather, socialize, and openly express their sexuality *en masse*, in public, and without monetary barriers.

An interview with Harry, a gay man who hung out at the Belmont Rocks every summer during the 1970s and 1980s, described what the Belmont Rocks were like at that time. He said,

There were two beaches that gay men went to in the summer, Oak Street Beach and The Belmont Rocks. As gays moved to New Town, the Belmont Rocks won out. Geographically, it was closer and it was secluded from the bicycle path. It was like hiding in plain sight. Before the advent of the Walkman in 1979, boom boxes were all tuned to the same radio station. WDAI in later years. It made for an open air surround sound and encouraged communalism versus the later isolation of the Walkman.

Patchworks of blankets would grow as friends arrived, mostly on bicycle or walking from home. Food and beverages were packed into backpacks and was always shared. Blanket-hopping socialization was common. In the “off” hours, in the early morning and late at night, it was more cruisey.

Boats would pull up and anchor and people would swim out to them for sex. I remember the "Miss B Haven." Straights would wander in from the path and mostly just walked by. It was fun to see them coming and try to guess when they would figure out where they were and see what their reaction would be.

Harry described the Belmont Rocks as a place of sexual liberation, where gay sexuality could be explored out-in-the-open. It was a perennial soiree that gay men across the city looked forward to participating in every summer. Local gay publications published throughout the 1970s, highlighted the importance of the Rocks for gay life in Chicago and celebrated the gay public space. Headlines and articles about the Belmont Rocks read, "It's that time of year when the New Town area's daily summer activities are dominated by fun in the sun at the Belmont Rocks;"⁶¹ "Belmont Rocks: A Hot Place for Tanning and Looking;"⁶² and "[where] Life is worth living as long as there are this many fine examples of humanity around pursuing the great American tan."⁶³

The first threat to the Belmont Rocks occurred in 1971, when the United States Army dismantled the Nike Missile Base and gave the land back to the Chicago Park District. Gay men in Lake View grew concerned about what was going to be done to the land, as proposals were put forth that it would be turned into an arts-and-crafts center and a playground. The playground was seen as a direct threat to this unique gay public space.⁶⁴ Neither the arts-and-crafts center nor the playground were ever built and the Belmont Rocks were able to develop into a thriving queer public space. Experienced as a

⁶¹ 1977. "Broadway Limited News." *Gay Chicago News* 1, no. 9 (May 9).

⁶² Thomas, Jim. 1975. "Coming Out." *GayLife* 1, no. 1 (June 20): 6.

⁶³ Noland, Richard. 1983. "On the Rocks/Short Runs" *Gay Chicago* (July 7-17): 5-6.

⁶⁴ See "Off the Rocks?" by William B. Kelley in *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (June 1971).

liberating public space, the Belmont Rocks was also a public leisure space of relative racial and gender inclusion. During an interview with Betty, a self-identified lesbian who lived in Boystown since the 1970s, she said, "Lesbians usually kept to their own area of the Rocks. It was definitely dominated by men, but women claimed their own space and completely took [the whole place] over during Gay Pride." She described how the Belmont Rocks, while diverse, was segregated by gender. Gay men and lesbians claimed and occupied different territories, with lesbians preferring the northern side of the Rocks.⁶⁵

Beginning in 1972, lesbians took over the space on the day of the annual lesbian barbeque, potluck, and picnic. This event began as a feminist alternative to the Gay Pride march and grew into the Belmont Rocks Party—a black Pride event that grew to be the second largest black gathering in Chicago (Enke 2007). In the discriminatory environment of the gay neighborhood, The Belmont Rocks Party served as a place outside of the white- and male-dominated gay neighborhood where women and people of color could socialize and party without being subjected to violence.⁶⁶ As the gay neighborhood continued to gentrify, the Belmont Rocks Party continued to grow until surrounding neighborhood businesses and organizations moved to push the party out.

While the Belmont Rocks was always subject to ongoing if intermittent policing as long as it was a gay public space, one of the first major racialized policing injustices to garner public attention occurred at the Gay Pride Picnic in 1987. Police came to the scene

⁶⁵ Noland, Richard. 1983. "Open Loops: On the Rocks/Short Runs." *Chicago Gay Magazine* (July 7-17): 5-6.

⁶⁶ Such as discriminatory identification carding practices.

following complaints that the parking lot exit of the Belmont Harbor Yacht Club was being blocked and claimed that a group of gay black picnickers "appeared to be preparing to hold a concert without a license."⁶⁷ The police dispersed the group and arrested fifteen of them for disorderly conduct and public drinking. Peggy Barker, Mayor Harold Washington's advisor on gay and lesbian issues, publicly stated that she believed the police acted inappropriately and that they "may have been reacting to the fact that many of the picnickers were black and gay."⁶⁸

In 2001, Alderman Bernie Hansen of the 44th Ward pushed to have the Belmont Rocks Party permanently shut down. Hansen wrote two letters to the Park District Superintendent David Doig complaining about the Belmont Rocks Party. In the first letter, written in January shortly after the Belmont Rocks Coordinating Committee President Michael O'Connor was given a permit, Hansen wrote, "I hope I do not have to pursue alternative avenues to prevent this group from again wreaking havoc on our neighborhood." Hansen also indicated that 23rd District Police Commander Richard Guerrero agreed. In the second letter, Hansen claimed that the non-Pride event drew "unruly and raucous people into the neighborhood who have shown a blatant disregard for the residents of my ward and their property" (Hawkins 2001). As a result of Hansen's efforts the event's park district permit was revoked and the Belmont Rocks Party was forced to move north to Montrose Harbor. Many participants did not know about the move and had to walk over two miles up Lake Shore Drive from the area south of

⁶⁷ Brune, Tom. 1987. "Arrest of black gays called 'inappropriate.'" *Chicago Sun-Times* (July 1).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Belmont Avenue to Montrose Harbor.

Within the next three years, the Belmont Rocks were on the city's docket to be destroyed as part of a new revetment project, triggering protest from neighborhood residents. Multiple neighborhood groups fought to preserve the limestone rocks that had artwork sketched on their surfaces and keep the space as a public park. The South East Lakeview Neighbors group came up with the slogan, "S-O-S, Save Our Stones," while the Lake View Citizens Council fought to preserve the Belmont Rocks as a neighborhood greenspace. These two neighborhood groups joined with Save Our Shore and the Lincoln Park Advisory Council to draft a proposal for the planned revetment renovations to increase recreational potential, rather than reducing it, and to ensure that the renovations were as user-friendly as possible. While neighborhood organizations and protests pressured city engineers to design shorter steps and include access points to the water in their design so that it would not impede the space's recreational usability, the project still moved forward with only minor alterations to the original plan.

The Diversey Revetment Project, which was the formal name for what would destroy the Belmont Rocks, was one of the final phases of a larger \$301 million and fifteen-year long project to repair and restore eight miles of Lake Michigan's shoreline to protect Lake Shore Drive from storm and wave damage. Using money from two presidential administrations, both Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush, federal construction funds that had to be spent by 2005. This deadline pushed Mayor Richard M. Daley to tell residents in May of 2003 that he was not willing to delay the project and would only look at alternatives if residents were able to find the money for them. Later that year, the Diversey Revetment Project began. Led by the Army Corps of Engineers, the limestone

rocks were replaced with concrete steps and a metal retaining wall.⁶⁹

In 2002, the same year that the Belmont Rocks were permanently closed for construction and removal, the City of Chicago gave \$350,000 to the Center on Halsted for a capital campaign to raise funds for building a new, state-of-the-art LGBT community center in the heart of Boystown. This money provided by the city doubled the project's initial seed money that the Northalsted Merchant's Association (NMA) gave the previous year when the Center on Halsted Project launched. The investment by the city was followed by \$6.5 million by the State of Illinois and millions of other dollars by both private and public funding sources, including \$1.25 million from the federal government through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Center on Halsted was the country's only gay community center built from the ground up by a partnership of government, private, and business funding. The simultaneous efforts to build the Center on Halsted and demolish the Belmont Rocks represented a new, neoliberal structure where liberatory public spaces were replaced by quasi-public spaces that operated to maintain racial inequality through the reproduction of a social, spatial, economic order of people and place.

The Center on Halsted was born out of the Midwest's largest LGBT social service agency, Horizons Community Services. Gay Horizons began in 1973 as a volunteer-run

⁶⁹ LGBTQ+ people claimed Hollywood Beach (formerly known as Kathy Osterman Beach) as their new lakefront summertime hangout following the closure and destruction of the Belmont Rocks. Located north of Boystown in Edgewater where W. Hollywood Avenue meets the shores of Lake Michigan, the new gay public beach followed the northern movement of Chicago's LGBTQ+ residents.

organization with an informational “helpline” for gay men and lesbians. It quickly developed a clinic, counseling programs, and youth programs, the latter of which was the topic of Gilbert Herdt’s *Children of Horizons* (1993). Renting a space in the Hull House at 3212 North Broadway Street, services expanded in the 1980s. The organization provided support for those affected by the AIDS epidemic and developed anti-violence projects, LGBT sensitivity training, Southside youth outreach, and programs for older LGBT adults. In 2000, when an old building at the corner of North Halsted Street and Waveland Avenue used for storage by the Chicago Park District became available, Horizons worked with the City of Chicago to acquire the property that Mayor Daley offered financing for. Once the property was secured, the transition into the Center on Halsted began.

In 2003, Horizons Community Services officially changed their name to the Center on Halsted and building construction began in 2005 at 3756 N. Halsted Street. By the time the doors opened in 2007, the \$20 million, 65,000 square-foot, eco-friendly facility was one of 160 gay community centers around the country. The Center on Halsted also housed a technology center, a rooftop garden (dedicated to Mayor Richard M. Daley), gallery space, a senior reading room, a full-size basketball court, numerous meeting rooms and office spaces, and a 175-seat theater. Once operational, it provided numerous valuable community services that benefited people throughout the Chicago area. It was home to the Anti-Violence Project’s 24-hour Crisis Line; a Community Technology Center with staff who provided workshops on computer basics, resume writing, and job searching; SAGE (Services and Advocacy for gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Elders) programs that included weekly lunches, book clubs, movies, and fitness

programs; free and anonymous HIV rapid testing; legal seminars, mental health counseling and support group meetings; social events, fundraisers, theatrical performances, academic conferences; and youth and transgender programs that included open-mic nights, meetings, and discussion groups. As the largest gay community center in the region and with its innovative green architectural design, the Center on Halsted was built for tourism and bringing money to the city as much as it was built to provide services to local LGBTQ+ residents.⁷⁰

Just as the Gay Pride Parade grew to rely on corporate sponsorships to pay for the costs of the running the event, The Center also depended on corporations to offer and expand their services. Decreased state and federal funding during the Great Recession made community organizations and non-profits like the Center on Halsted expand their dependence on corporate and business finance. As a result, advertisements of corporate sponsors were visible throughout its lobby. I recorded the advertisements I observed as I sat at a table near the entrance. “Safe Haven: For a Safer Neighborhood. Safe neighborhoods are everybody’s business. Safe and sound. Allstate.” As I looked up at the television monitors that were playing a slideshow of different events that were scheduled at The Center, different corporate advertisements appeared between each event. “Orbitz Supports the Center,” “Comcast,” and “Whole Foods” all shifted across the screen that was playing on a loop. Whole Foods served as a retail anchor. Housed inside the building

⁷⁰ Mayor Daley said that the Center on Halsted was "an inspiration.... a labor of love... and a safe space and a catalyst" for all members of the gay community. See Hawkins, Karen. 2007. "Chicago wants to be a destination for the gays." *Associated Press* (June 24).

and securing The Center on Halsted's operating costs, it also attracted shoppers, and gives the prices at "whole paycheck" as it is colloquially referred to, wealthy shopper, from throughout Chicagoland.

While I was sitting in the lobby of the Center on Halsted, which doubled as an eating space for people who got their lunches from the buffets at Whole Foods, I observed two straight white men who sat down at a table while their wives shopped in the grocery store. When a group of five young black transgender women walked through the lobby, one of the men said, "Oh my God! Here come the transvestites." Noticing their gaze, one of the women flipped her hair in acknowledgement of their stares, communicating that she refused to be bothered by them. For young LGBTQ+ people of color, this mixed-use corporate setup made the Center on Halsted a site of constant surveillance. The mix of high-end grocery shoppers and those needing the social services provided by the Center, also made the Center on Halsted a contested space of reoccurring conflicts over the use of shared spaces within and around the building.

The neighborhood's loss of public space and the increasing reliance on private, retail spaces for sociality shaped the social dynamics of the neighborhood in a way that had violent repercussions for the lives of women and people of color. Unlike public spaces which were not subject to the same level of privatized control, retail and consumer spaces in Boystown provided a structural framework for monitoring, disciplining, and excluding, especially for women, people of color, the homeless, and the poor.

At the very beginning stages of my research, I met and befriended Blake, a 26-year-old gay white male who worked part time at Berlin – a gay bar that has been a neighborhood fixture since 1983. Blake had lived and worked in the neighborhood for

three years. Shortly after meeting him, I asked him if he would be willing to be interviewed for my project. He agreed and I found myself sitting across from him recording his every word at The Chicago Diner—a popular vegan restaurant on North Halsted that had also been a neighborhood staple since 1983. As we drank vegan milkshakes, I asked him, “What do you think is the biggest issue in Boystown?” He replied,

I think the biggest problem is that we have no place to go. We have an entire neighborhood, but no place to go. Boystown is really just a nightspot. That is why you don’t see as many gay men out during the day. When it’s light outside, all you do see a few nannies pushing baby strollers. It’s like a gay ghost town. All the gay men are either sleeping from partying the night before or they are at work. No wonder why there is a drug and alcohol problem in our community. If you’re going to hang out with your friends in Boystown and you don’t want to go to a bar, where do you go? I can only hang out at a coffee shop for so long. And that’s the problem. There is no place to just go and hang out. Every place requires you to buy something or closes before Boystown really pops off.

Other than Boystown's streets and sidewalks, there were no other public spaces where LGBTQ+ people could openly socialize, particularly after 11:00 PM when the nightly closure of Lincoln Park ends with a police sweep forcing people to leave.⁷¹ The neighborhood had evolved into a place only for middle class consumption. The lack of public space to "just hang out" within the neighborhood prompted another participant to say, “Isn’t there anything else to do in Boystown besides waste money at bars or on food? If I keep living here I’m going to become an overweight alcoholic.” The neighborhood’s

⁷¹ While Lincoln Park spans all the way north to Ardmore Avenue in Edgewater and as far south as Ohio Street Beach in Streeterville, Belmont Harbor is directly adjacent to Boystown and greatly minimizes the amount of lakefront park space. While the LGBT people can be seen strolling up and down this middle stretch of Lincoln Park during the warm months, it’s not a popular gathering place for LGBTQ+ residents.

increased commodification and economic development changed the physical and social landscape of the neighborhood, legitimizing and forcing privatized spaces of consumption as the exclusive sites for LGBTQ+ sociality.

The lack of public space affected the neighborhood's black transgender residents in a different way. During an interview with Monika, who a 25-year old who self-identified as black and transgender, she told me:

A lot of people see trans people hanging out on the street and they automatically assume we're hos. We can just be outside a bar talking to our friends or on the phone and people assume we workin' the corner. We guilty for just existing out here. It's worse when you alone. That's why I'm always with my friends when I go out here.

Monika was often mistaken for a sex worker on the streets of Boystown, particularly when she was dressed up to go out to the bars. To avoid being harassed by primarily white gay men, she would never leave her apartment alone. She lived near Irving Park Road, so she had a few blocks to walk before she would make it to her favorite bar: Mini Bar. Monika's experience shows that the commodification of the neighborhood created a milieu where consumers did not consider public space for socializing, but rather designated it only for the illegal marketplace; the place designated for the economic activities prohibited in the bars and clubs. The result was a transformation of the public arena into a site that produced racism and racist practices.

3.3 Convergence

The transformation from liberal multiculturalism to neoliberal multiculturalism is explored in this chapter, particularly through capitalism's convergence with built space. It is this convergence that created a new discursive architecture and a privatized neighborhood through the swift commodification of the gay neighborhood and the

gradual destruction of gay public space. This was made possible, in part, through a shifting ideology that merged with the Gay Liberation Movement, offering citizenship through full participation in the capitalist economy. Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello called this the new spirit of capitalism.

In fact, the quality of the commitment one can expect depends upon the arguments that can be cited to bring out not only the advantages which participation in capitalist processes might afford on an individual basis, but also the collective benefits, defined in terms of the common good, which it contributes to producing for everyone. We call this ideology that justifies engagement in capitalism “spirit of capitalism.” (2018: 8).

This ethos not only reframed citizenship, but also delineated deserving and underserving subjects through their relation to consumption (Ong 2003; Lipsitz 2006).

The concentration of gay and lesbian businesses created an identifiable and cohesive gay marketplace, making the production and reproduction of the gay neighborhood a key business strategy. Creating and maintaining profitable businesses and an active organization of business owners was also instrumental in gaining political clout (Stewart-Winter 2015). This further enabled the marketing of the neighborhood as a gay nightlife and tourism destination, providing consistent consumers and expanding revenue from a global industry. This strategy has allowed a handful of Boystown’s gay bars and nightclubs to persist longer than gay businesses in other part of the city. In turn, this strategy has made possible a shift in understanding gay businesses, rather than gay residents, as the anchor of the gay neighborhood. This legitimized the importance of the neighborhood’s gay businesses, particularly as gay residents moved out of the neighborhood, and encouraged decades of pro-business activism.

It is important to affirm the ways in which the discourse of gay neighborhood formation worked to maneuver the making of Boystown's physical landscape. The NHSP

was structured by the idea that gay men (and to a lesser extent lesbians) were the leaders of gentrification and revitalized a neighborhood that was once barren into an economically viable marketplace. It was precisely this version of history that propelled massive investments in making the gay neighborhood. The transformation of objects into profit by associating them with narratives that foreground their traditional character, national rootedness, and heritage are what Boltanski and Chiapello named an “economy of enrichment” (2018: xii), which draw their substance from the exploitation of the past. Through its formation narrative, the gay ghetto was turned into the profitable gay neighborhood, showing how knowledge production and spatial production are a joint process entangled with capitalism.

As the gay ghetto transitioned into the gay neighborhood, a new commodity from which wealth could be extracted was created. As the NHSP shows, the State was an integral part of this capitalist enterprise. The production of Boystown as commodity was not exclusively the result of gay white male entrepreneurs, but depended upon residents and consumers across racial, gender, and sexual identities, as well as their joint partnership with the State. Even as Boystown helped produce a new politics of Americanization through consumption practices tied to the rise of discourses of multiculturalism and diversity (Puar 2007), it also operated as an agent to reproduce current power relations through socio-spatial organization (Kitchen 1999) that were central to Chicago's urban economy. The process of gay-neighborhood making was a reconfiguration of belonging that solidified claims to space rooted in historic processes of city-wide segregation. As a space of “commodity patriarchy” (Nast 2002), it also reproduced gendered urban exclusions (Spain 1992; McDowell 1999).

The confluence of pro-business activism, gay business proliferation, discursive architectures, the destruction of gay public space, and the commodification of the neighborhood transformed the Boystown's built and social environment into a site of middle-class consumption hostile to racial minorities, women, and the poor. As the movement for sexual liberation produced spatialized articulations of gay and lesbian visibility and viability through its alignment with the hegemony of liberal multiculturalism (Melamed 2011), efforts to reap the benefits of capitalism became folded into the struggle for sexual citizenship. As consumption and profit accumulation became the *modus operandi* of the struggle for gay and lesbian equality, reshaping the Gay Liberation and Lesbian Feminist Movements, placemaking practices required the reproduction of racialized exclusions, leading to what Jasbir Puar (2007) and Rey Chow (2002) called "an ascendancy of whiteness." Thus, the production of Boystown uncovers sexuality as a central site for processes of racialization (Bérubé 2001), particularly through neighborhood practices of distinguishing citizens from non-citizens by including some in the political neighborhood project while excluding others. It is within this framework that citizenship can be understood as a crucial form of population control that is biopolitical in scope (Schinkel 2010). The convergence between gay political power and gay affluence drove a wedge between local political coalitions, especially with people of color and the poor, as entry into the marketplace privileged gay white men in the quest for equal rights and citizenship through capital accumulation.

Practices of neighborhood inclusion and exclusion were part of a larger post-industrial reorganization of the city around consumption (Zukin 1998) that divided individuals into consumers and non-consumers (Clark 2003; Burrington 1998; Hubbard

2006; Leitner, Peck, and Sheppard 2007). When citizenship is defined through processes of inclusion and exclusion (Bell 1995) and capitalism creates abject bodies in space and even layers of abjection (Bell, et al 2001), gay neighborhood production works to limit citizenship through spatial exclusion through the tactics of race, class, gender, and sexuality that maximize the profitability of space. As Boystown became another place on the world map where consumer architectures celebrate minority cultures (Hubbard 2006), the exclusion of people of color, women, and the poor helped create a more profitable gay consumer environment. These bodies were marked out as trespassers and “circumscribed as being out-of-place” (Puwar 2004), while predominantly white middle-class consumers were deemed as having the right to belong. Even LGBTQ+ minimum wage workers without a discretionary income faced economic barriers to fully participating in the neighborhood’s gay social scene. Access to gay social spaces was limited to consumers, while racism and sexism provided additional barriers to entry. As shifts in the global economy reconfigured Chicago’s gay and lesbian residential concentration into a gay marketplace, a new neighborhood sociality emerged that reproduced rigid ideas of acceptability and inclusion informed by race, class, gender, and sexuality.

By analyzing the role of shifting global capital in the development of the gay neighborhood, and conversely, the gay neighborhood’s role in the development of shifting global capital, Boystown is uncovered as an active agent in the reproduction of capital rather than an urban space in/on which capitalism plays out. This analysis also dispels the myth that the gay neighborhood developed from the ground up, solely through the private investments of gay men and lesbians eager to transform a disinvested area of

the city into a utopian community. While community desires, collective social movements, and a biopolitics that divides populations (Butler 2004) undoubtedly brought LGBTQ+ people together in Boystown, the contestations inherent in gay space and its continual fractures work to reproduce violence exclusions. In the next chapter, I take a closer look at this continuation and examine how complex power relations and neighborhood change structure new forms of violence.

IV. IN DEFENSE OF BOYSTOWN: TERRITORIAL BIOPOLITICS

"A society unsure about the survival of its mode of being develops the mentality of a besieged fortress." - Zygmunt Bauman, 2007 pg. 129

4.1 Disappearing Acts

On December 10, 2007, at the onset of what would become known as The Great Recession, I walked out of my apartment and went across the street to Caribou Coffee. Before I opened the door to the coffee shop I remembered that Keith, who I met when I moved to Chicago, called me earlier that morning and told me to grab a *Red Eye*—the free daily news magazine created by the *Chicago Tribune*. Luckily for me, there was a well-stocked magazine stand across the street. I walked over, grabbed a copy, and immediately peered down to read the cover page. Plastered across the front page of the publication was a photograph of one of Boystown's pylons with a badly photo-shopped smearing of its rainbow colors. The doctored visual effect was meant to make it look as if the pylon's rainbow was being blown off, with the colors dissipating into the air. The headline read: "There Goes the Gayborhood: With more families moving in and more longtime residents moving out, some say Boystown is losing its gay flavor." I walked back across the street, purchased a small coffee, sat down next to the coffee shop's fireplace, and read the publication from cover to cover.

Inside were stories titled, "Culture Clash: Boystown Shifting as More Families Move In" and "The Gay Migration." They reported "the infliction of family values on the business of Boystown," the neighborhood "losing its character... as new neighbors move in," young families moving in who "are a bit too conservative for the area," and how "everyone wants to live in Boystown" (Kyles 2007: 6). These stories represented a small

fraction of articles that chronicled the contemporary demise of gay neighborhoods published in major newspapers throughout the United States that year.¹ With the proliferation of these articles, an apocalyptic narrative developed about the disappearance of gay neighborhoods due to continued gentrification led by wealthy straight families, made easy by a greater social acceptance of LGBTQ+ people and their assimilation into mainstream society, as well as the de-sexualization of LGBTQ+ identities. This doomsday prophecy shaped popular and academic discourse on gay neighborhoods in the United States for the next decade (Collins 2004; Ruting 2008; Rosser, West, and Weinmeyer 2008; Ghaziani 2014; Doan and Higgins 2011; Lewis 2013; Brown 2014; Squires 2014; Varnell 2002; Brown 2007; Elsworth 2006), and within the neighborhood, it shaped subjectivities and social interactions that reproduced conflict between Boystown's LGBTQ+ and straight residents.²

Later that day, Keith called me again to confirm that I obtained a copy of the *Red Eye*. Keith was 28-years old and self-identified as a gay, white male. He had lived in multiple neighborhoods throughout the city of Chicago for the last 4 years, switching

¹ For examples in the news media, see Buchanan, Wyatt. 2007. "S.F.'s Castro District Faces an identity crisis; as straights move in, some fear loss of the area's character." *San Francisco Gate* (February 25); Leff, Lisa. 2007. "There goes the gayborhood." *Associated Press* (March 13); and Brown, Patricia Leigh. 2007. "Gay Enclaves Face Prospect of Being Passé." *New York Times* (October 30).

² When I spoke to long-time neighborhood residents about the reports of gay neighborhoods disappearing, one man laughed and claimed that the gay neighborhood had been disappearing since the 1980s. Decimated by the AIDS epidemic and demographic movements out of the neighborhood, he thought Boystown was already a "shadow of what it once was" and had been for decades. Another said, "people have been saying that for years, especially when they proposed the Streetscape Project. As long as the Merchant's Association is around, there will be a Boystown."

apartments multiple times a year. He had four different apartments just in Boystown during his tenure in Chicago. His familiarity with Chicago's neighborhoods made them a topic he loved to discuss. I knew he was looking forward to talking to me about this issue of the *Red Eye* since he knew I was studying gentrification in the neighborhood, so I asked him if he wanted to meet for dinner and an interview at the Chicago Diner. He agreed and met me there.

Shortly after ordering two black bean burgers and a chocolate vegan milkshake, Keith began talking about Boystown.

The gays came in and fixed up the neighborhood, which no one wanted to live in, and now we are being kicked out or priced out. It's not right. This is our neighborhood!

The popular narrative of Boystown's formation informed how Keith interpreted contemporary processes of gentrification and understood sexual inequality. Additionally, it guided how he perceived his own place within the neighborhood and the city, as well as his unequal and subordinate socio-economic position in relation to newly resident heterosexuals.

Our waiter, Payton, and a man who was sitting at the table next to us joined our conversation. The man appeared to be in his late 30s. He sat with two women who listened silently to our ensuing dialogue. Without introducing himself, he looked at us and said,

We built this community out of ashes and now it's just too expensive to live in this neighborhood. If you are renting the rents are getting higher and higher, if you own, the taxes are getting higher and higher. There's no other way but [to move] out.

Payton, who was 27-years-old and self-identified as a white gay man, replied,

I just moved here [from another Chicago neighborhood]. I had a tough

time finding an apartment, but I finally found one I could afford. It's at the top of my price range and on top of Hydrate, but once you get used to the noise, it's not that bad. There definitely was not much to choose from. Most of my gay friends can't afford to live here so they got apartments in Rogers Park or Logan Square.

Keith interjected,

I'm just not a big fan of the idea of families attempting to realign the style and color of the community to meet their needs. If they didn't come here and try to change us, I probably wouldn't mind. But it's like, every day, I have to protect our way of life... IN OUR OWN neighborhood.

For Keith, Payton, and the man who sat at the table next to us, Boystown's increasing cost of living as a result of gentrification was the reason for recent demographic shifts. They all shared a collective understanding that Boystown was a gay rights achievement and part of a continuing struggle for sexual, political, and economic equality. They believed that the development of the gay neighborhood was central to gay community formation and collective organizing. Furthermore, it was through the gay neighborhood, they believed, that LGBTQ+ people were able to gain political clout, economic security, and personal safety. Framed by these beliefs, Keith thought that the influx of straight residents and wealthy families, in particular, was a direct assault on the gay community and culture. Thus, it was imperative for him to defend Boystown as a gay space.

The closing of gay neighborhood businesses became the next subject of our conversation, as these closures were interpreted to signal the impending doom of Boystown's gay culture by way of gentrification. Longstanding gay businesses that were considered to be permanent neighborhood fixtures, including Bad Boys, a men's clothing store at 3352 N. Halsted, and Gentry, a gay piano bar at 3320 N. Halsted, both became empty storefronts that year. As Keith and I sat at a cramped table eating our vegetarian entrées, the storefront windows of Bad Boys were covered in paper and the lights were

out at Gentry with a sign posted near the front door that it was closed (See Figure 15).

"It's ironic that Gentry is now closed because of gentrification," Keith laughed. "I guess we are no longer considered the gentry."



Figure 14. Gentry Closed Sign: Sign posted outside of Gentry in October of 2007. Gentry ended up being replaced by a more popular gay bar named Scarlet, named after the color that was purportedly used to signal homosexuality in the 1920s when worn.

The term gentrification was coined by Ruth Glass to describe the re-settlement of working-class neighborhoods in London by middle-class suburbanites, who, in turn, displaced the original residents of these central city neighborhoods (1964). During the 1970s and 1980s, this specific form of gentrification, along with other variations, was documented in urban centers around the developing world (Gale 1979; Smith 1979; Rose 1984; Lees, et al. 2008). Around the turn of the century, a new wave of gentrification was recognized. Named “super-gentrification” (Lees 2000, 2003; Butler and Lees 2006),

“ultra-gentrification” (Dangschat 1991; Atkinson 2000), “financification” (Lees 2000, 2002), and “second generation (re)gentrification” (Butler and Robson 2003), scholars created a new lexicon to describe the transformation of already gentrified neighborhoods through higher financial investments (Lees, et al. 2008). Within this framework, the development of Boystown as a middle-class, gay neighborhood from the 1970s through the 1990s could be considered to be the first-wave of gentrification. Contemporary transformations and displacements resulting from the movement of wealthy heterosexual families into the neighborhood would be considered to be part of a new process of supergentrification, defined by high-end grocery stores, posh restaurants, higher-cost housing, and the disintegrating of affordable-living standards for those in the city’s median income range.

While the distinction between gentrification and supergentrification provides a useful level of abstraction that allows for a critical analysis of a new era of global economic expansion, uneven development, and profit accumulation, scholars have pointed out the importance of understanding contemporary articulations of gentrification as part of a continuous process of urban development that reflects this shifting political economy, as opposed to an entirely new process (Lees 2003; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008). To account for both local variations and shifting articulations in the neoliberal era without creating a new terminology, geographer Neil Smith provided an expansive definition of the term gentrification, describing it as “the reinvestment of capital at the urban center, which is designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than currently occupies that space” (Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008: 9). While gentrification is no longer relegated to urban centers (Bridge 2001; Markley 2018), as Smith describes, the core idea that it is a

process of development in which space is shaped by relative class relations. Specifically, gentrification involves both an urban hierarchy and profit accumulation through urban development (Hackworth and Smith 2001; MacLeod 2002; Smith 2002; Smith and Graves 2005; Brown-Saracino 2009).

The continued gentrification of Boystown was quite apparent to its LGBTQ+ residents. They witnessed the razing of the neighborhood's vintage buildings to make room for modern townhomes and the demolition of abandoned warehouses, housing co-ops, and SROs to make room for luxury condominiums and new retail spaces. In addition to an expanding stock of high-end housing, they also observed a changing local economy as an influx of national and international restaurant and retail chains moved in, including Chipotle Mexican Grill, Designer Shoe Warehouse, Whole Foods Market, Starbucks, and Marshall's. As these companies expanded to the gay neighborhood, they attracted middle-class consumers with the familiar consumer experiences and products they offered and took business away from the existing stores that were unable to compete in an increasingly corporatized marketplace. Furthermore, as LGBTQ+ residents moved out of their apartments in response to increased rents they were surprised by the number of young heterosexual families who showed up to scheduled apartment showings. This growing interest among heterosexual families to live in the gay neighborhood became increasingly visible, particularly with a highly publicized "renaissance" of the neighborhood's public elementary school (Edelberg and Kurland 2009) and a perceived increase in the number and visibility of strollers on Boystown's sidewalks.

These shared experiences and observations of neighborhood change confirmed that rich, white, heterosexual families were altering the gay neighborhood. When combined

with nostalgic imaginings of the gay ghetto embedded in the popular narrative of Boystown's formation (see Chapter II) and the post-gay rhetoric of the disappearance of gay neighborhoods, Boystown's transformation supported the belief that the vibrant gay neighborhood was turning into an economically unattainable heteronormative residential space. Tyler a 27-year-old self-identified gay white man who moved to the neighborhood in 2004 described to me how Boystown was losing its gay culture and identity. While he discussed changes in the neighborhood during an interview, Tyler said,

It used to be so much gayer. Like, you never saw a stroller on the street. Now you can't walk down the street without seeing one. Ever since they built the Center on Halsted and the Whole Foods, everything has changed. It's just turning into a neighborhood that not many gays can afford. We are being priced out of our own neighborhood. They [straight families] are taking over... Not all, but a good number of the married couples are trying to change the neighborhood that they moved into... They're the same people who would buy a house at the end of a runway and then petition to close the airport.

For Tyler, the construction of the Center on Halsted paradoxically marked a turning point in the movement of wealthy, heterosexual families into Boystown. The Whole Foods Market upon which the LGBT community center depended attracted wealthy consumers to Boystown, perhaps most notably those who were new parents in pursuit of healthy and organic food for their young children.

Similar to those I spoke with at the Chicago Diner, Tyler perceived this movement not as a benign migration, but rather as an invasion with detrimental consequences. He believed that the movement of wealthy heterosexuals into Boystown was an exercise of power that would result in the imminent death of Boystown as a gay neighborhood, which meant a loss of the neighborhood's gayness, the closing of gay businesses, and the displacement of LGBTQ+ residents out of the neighborhood. For

LGBTQ+ residents, the death of Boystown meant the loss of a historically and culturally significant space. This belief in the destruction of Boystown vis-à-vis the gentrification by wealthy heterosexual families was not only indicative of the lasting importance and meaning that the gay neighborhood had for its LGBTQ+ residents, but also signified how the neighborhood had become embodied and territorialized. The new current of gentrification represented a form of “[t]erritorial invasion... where those not entitled to entrance or use nevertheless cross the boundaries and interrupt, halt, take over or change the social meaning of a territory” (Lyman and Scott 1970: 99-102). Resistance to such a “take over” or gentrification developed a rhetoric that was anti-family, anti-children, and anti-heterosexuality.

The modern territoriality (Delaney 2005) of Boystown not only shaped human interactions and social and political conflict, but it also served in the reproduction of the larger urban landscape of difference through placemaking practices that established notions of inclusion, exclusion, and belonging. The making of neighborhood territories was most dramatic when borders were crossed, for example, between Boystown and neighboring Wrigleyville, a neighborhood defined by its heteronormative sports culture. One such crossing occurred on October 17, 2009, when I joined hundreds of LGBTQ+ protestors in the 11th annual Matthew Shepard March to stop violence against LGBT people.³ While we marched up Clark Street and approached Wrigley Field, straight men began to run out of sports bars to watch. As we saw the doors swing open, some of them

³ The march was planned to highlight Officer Richard Fiorito, a cop who was accused of framing, verbally harassing, and physically assaulting lesbian and gay male motorists in Boystown. See Chapter 4.

screamed "faggots" and booed at us as we marched past. Others, already standing on the sidewalks, pointed, laughed, and screamed inaudible remarks to the crowd as we chanted, "What do we want? Equality. When do we want it? Now!" While none of the marchers confronted the homophobic remarks, the hostile shift from Halsted Street to Clark Street did not go unnoticed.

As Boystown became Boystown, Wrigleyville too saw significant redevelopment and investments to make it a neighborhood anchored by Wrigley Field and sports bars that catered to the crowds of Chicago Cubs fans. With Boystown right next door, the neighborhood's transformation from "Westside" to sports-centered Wrigleyville was one steeped in both sexual and spatial distinction. The bifurcation of the gay neighborhood and the straight neighborhood was central to the ongoing processes of gentrification that capitalized on these stark cultural distinctions. In addition to increasing tensions and conflict, this type of identity-based neighborhood-making designated certain people to specific neighborhoods, producing new forms of multicultural segregation based on sexualized cultures and ideas of exclusion/inclusion. Neoliberal multiculturalism's ability to bifurcate people and space was evident through its ability to divide people and space based on sexuality through exaggerated modes of consumption centered around sports and gay nightlife. The violence that Boystown residents experienced when they crossed into Wrigleyville strengthened the gay neighborhood's territorialization as those experiences served as reminders of what it would mean if Boystown was lost. In the eyes of gay Boystown residents, this made defending the neighborhood an act of resistance.

During an interview with 25-year-old Scott, a self-identified white gay man, he began talking critically of his love/hate relationship with Boystown, where he had been living

for just a year.

They say Chicago is the city of neighborhoods. It's also the city of big shoulders, limp wrists, and 30-inch waists. There are a lot of gay men all over this city... [But] Boystown is the last real gay stronghold. I mean, if you're young and gay, it's a very important space. Moving here helped me be comfortable with myself and find my [gay] identity. It's how I made gay friends in the city. It's really the only safe place where you can express yourself and be who you are. Having a safe space is very important when you are trying to figure out your sexuality and your place in the world.

For Scott, even though he considered the city as whole to be very gay-friendly, Boystown still represented the only place in Chicago where gay men could experience gay culture, sexual freedom, and gay visibility. Boystown was something special and enabled him to become part of a larger community. His perception of Boystown was not shaped by any particular experiences of interpersonal violence, at least not directly, but rather the structural oppression that he experienced when he was outside of the neighborhood.

Fassil, a self-identified gay man who lived in the neighborhood for 6 years, told me during an interview,

Boystown is still a very important place for the LGBT community. It's a sanctuary for queers everywhere in Chicago. Think of all the social services people get here. Think of all of the community organizations that are here. I mean, we really have a sense of community. We all know each other. It's like a small town feel in the big city. That's why we have to keep Boystown gay. We have to protect our neighborhood. It's the only one we've got. It would be impossible to recreate it anywhere else in the city.

Fassil expressed the various ways in which Boystown is communicated, positioned, and experienced as a space of liberation, safety, and diversity. These meanings reflected the popularized discourse of gay neighborhoods I discussed in the previous chapter. It was precisely these meanings that also contributed to Boystown's territorialization and its defense by a gay resident. They provided gay residents with justification to act upon the fear of losing the gay neighborhood in resistance to heteronormative hegemony. This

created a new social milieu of conflict and contested space, riddled with everyday confrontations between neighbors.

In the era of neoliberalism, the "tropes of utopia and apocalypse" (Bennett 2010) came to define how gay culture and gay neighborhoods were understood. The confluence of the cataclysmic discourse of the demise of the gay neighborhood with the popular narrative of Boystown's formation, reproduced the neighborhood as a territorialized space where LGBTQ+ residents claimed the power to distinguish who belonged in gay space and who did not and produced a sense of urgency in policing gay space. While the ideology of gay neighborhood formation produced subjective claims to neighborhood space, the ideology of neighborhood decline produced an impetus for residents to act against perceived threats to the neighborhood. The understanding that Boystown was created by "the gays" formed the idea of an authentic gay neighborhood that was being destroyed by a new population of residents and visitors. This intersection of narratives produced both a nostalgic conceptualization of Boystown as a threatened gay heritage site, as well as subjects determined to defend the gay neighborhood from the threat of heterosexual encroachment and continued oppression. As such, the popular narrative of Boystown's formation not only shaped experiences of supergentrification, but it also shaped responses, or resistance, to it. The popularized narrative of Boystown's formation by gay pioneers was central to its territorialized conflicts that were shaped by gentrification as it provided LGBT people, and gay men in particular, with the framework for making spatial claims. Gay territorialization through narrative production happens not only in response to sexual conflict, but also in response to changing material space that splinters residential solidarity.

My first experience with such conflict occurred on February 14, 2009, during what was designated as National Condom Week. There were condoms everywhere. Quite literally. There was a glass fishbowl bowl full of them sitting next to the cash register at the Caribou Coffee shop across the street. There were two 18-gallon plastic storage bins half-full of condoms laid out at on the front desk at the Center on Halsted, all free and for the taking. Local drugstores had special displays advertising certain brands on sale. Competing with the numerous sex toy shops in the neighborhood, the Walgreens on North Broadway Street and Belmont Avenue had an entire aisle dedicated to condoms along with different brands and varieties of lubricant. There were even giant condoms over the rainbow pylons that line North Halsted Street, reaffirming their phallic symbolism (see Figure 16). The visibility and access to condoms throughout Chicago's Boystown was an effort to spread safe-sex awareness and practices.



Figure 15. Pylon During Condom Awareness Week: Photograph of a large condom replica over one of the rainbow pylons on North Halsted Street, adorned as part of Condom Awareness Week and a larger national effort to promote "safe-sex" practices.

Within this milieu, I was surprised when I walked out of my apartment door and saw an unused condom taped to a note hanging in the shared stairwell that read:

GUYS, THIS IS GROSS USED OR NOT, IT'S GROSS! WHETHER IT'S YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS, IT'S NOT FAIR TO US TO WALK

OUT AND SEE THIS IN THE STAIRWELL!!! IT'S CALLED BEING
CONSIDERATE TO YOUR NEIGHBORS!!

This note (shown in Figure 17), was written by my downstairs neighbor who moved into the apartment below me soon after the previous tenant moved out. The previous tenant, a single straight woman in her 20s, lived in the building before I moved in. I became friends with her after her dog escaped the apartment building one night and got hit by a car. I ran downstairs to hail her a cab that would take her and her dog to the emergency veterinarian clinic I found the address to online. She moved to Uptown when her lease was up and the apartment was empty for only a few weeks before the new tenants moved in.

From 2007 to 2009, I lived in the same apartment on Cornelia Avenue near the intersection of North Halsted Street. My apartment was on the second floor of a three-story walk-up, a type of building common to Boystown and Chicago's other residential neighborhoods. There were only three apartments on my particular side of the building. Since I was living alone in my apartment at this time, I knew that the note was addressed to me and my upstairs neighbor—a gay man in his late 30s. My downstairs neighbor, and the author of this note, was the matriarch of a young family, a new mother of an infant boy, and the wife of a man who worked in a downtown office.

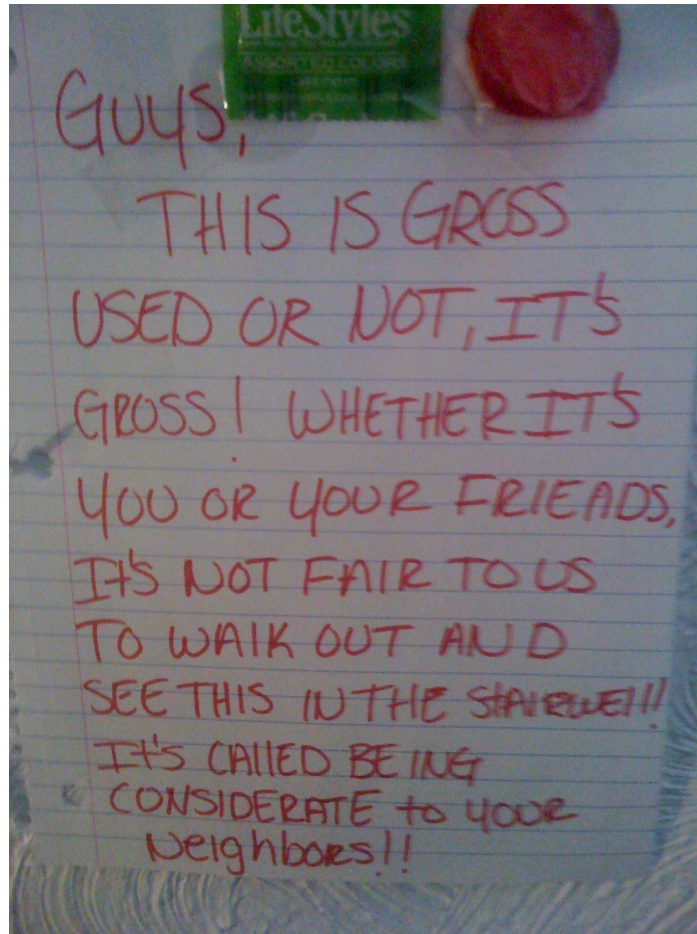


Figure 16. Neighbor's Note: Photograph of the handwritten note my downstairs neighbor posted in the stairwell outside of my apartment door, with the condom she found on the floor taped to the top of the note.

Our only interaction prior to this passive aggressive posting happened a few days after she moved in on September 1, 2008. As I was walking out the door, the woman pushing her baby stroller was coming down the sidewalk.

“Excuse me!” she yelled in an effort to get my attention.

“Hello,” I said, as I held the door open for her.

As she entered the building, she asked me, “Do you move furniture all night long? I don’t know what you are doing up there, but it is so loud! My husband, my son, and I can’t sleep!” She said angrily as her hands started to shake from the self-inflicted anxiety

this confrontation was causing her.

“I’m sorry. I don’t know what you are hearing, but I definitely don’t move furniture around late at night. I don’t hear anything and I’ve never had any complaints before from previous tenants.” I became friends with the tenant who lived there before, a young straight woman who had to move out after she became pregnant to live with her partner.

My neighbor continued. “Well it sounds like you are moving furniture – until 3 or 4 in the morning every night! And I don’t know if it’s you or the guy above you but there are constantly people going in and out of the building at all hours as well. It’s like we are living in a brothel.”

Her passive aggressive way of calling me a whore totally caught me off-guard. “Sounds like something you should take up with the Madame in apartment 502,” I replied and giggled. After my silly riposte, I left the vestibule where we were standing and let the heavy metal entry door slam shut.

Considering this previous confrontation, I was not surprised when I came across the note she left outside my door six months later. Nor was I surprised when she came up to my apartment a few hours after posting the note to confront me again. She began the conversation by saying, “This is a big deal. It’s disrespectful and disgusting to have to walk outside of my door and see a condom! Maybe we just have different views.”

“Maybe.” I replied.

I was quite curt and to avoid further dialogue, I turned my back to her, locked the door, and walked right past her to Caribou Coffee across the street. In the shadow of the condom-draped pylon, I told the store manager about the whole encounter. A friend of a friend, I had formed a close relationship with him by being a regular customer and living

across the street. When I finished reading the contents of my neighbor's note to him, one of the baristas who was working the espresso machine said,

They shouldn't even be living in this neighborhood. It's not like it was a used condom. That's ridiculous. It's homophobic and insulting! Did you tell them it was condom awareness week? At least we are using condoms. They should use a condom and stop reproducing. Should I get offended every time I see a baby? This is totally offensive.

You should grab a condom from that bowl right there, put some melted chocolate on it and then see what happens. Maybe fill it up with some tapioca pudding and leave it on their door knob. Be as revolting as they are. I swear.

I did not take the barista's advice. However, a few months later I was doing laundry late one night in our shared basement-level laundry room, located directly under my neighbor's apartment. Cee Cee Bloom had been temporarily living with me for a month and came down to keep me company as I folded the clothes out of the dryer and to help me carry everything back up to my apartment. Cee Cee had a few brief interactions of her own with my neighbor while passing by her in the vestibule of the apartment building and referred to her as our "rude" neighbor. We overheard the woman arguing with her husband and yelling.

I can't handle this place anymore. It's too loud! People are screaming outside our windows at all hours of the morning! Why can't we just move a few blocks down on the other side of the "L" in Wrigleyville? I know you wanted to be close to the train but this is just getting ridiculous. I'm sick and tired of this gay shit, all of the time. I'm sick of it!

Both Cee Cee and I were looking at each other with our necks cocked, with one ear facing the ceiling. "Can you believe this woman?" I asked Cee Cee. She replied, "Don't worry. She won't be in our neighborhood much longer. I had sex in the back stairwell last week and used her baby's blanket to wipe all the cum off our bodies. And I left it there where I found it... on top of her stroller. That bitch is in for a surprise." Within two

months, the family broke their lease and moved out of the building.

Spatialized conflicts around sexuality occurred everywhere in Boystown from the corridors and vestibules of apartment buildings to the streets of the neighborhood and were part of a constant power struggle to define and control space and the bodies and sexualities within it. One such struggle was around the censorship of homosexuality, which had been a highly publicized and contentious neighborhood issue for years before I began my fieldwork. Attempts at censorship included complaints over window displays at adult-only boutiques, like Tulip Toy Gallery, Batteries Not Included, RAM Bookstore, Leather Spot, and Cupid's Treasures, which often had non-normative sexual imagery, sex toys, and risqué underwear and leather gear prominently on display. These complaints were always made by the parents of young children, who claimed the storefronts were too provocative, inappropriate for young children, and not family-friendly. Although these complaints about the overtly sexual and homoerotic storefront window displays were nothing new to the employees and business owners who ignored them, some employees reported individual instances to local publications and, it is through their publication that these private conflicts became derisive neighborhood issues.⁴

During a conversation with an employee of one of the sex-toy stores on North Halsted Street, he told me about a mother who came into the store earlier that day to complain

⁴ See Yates, Jon. 2006. "Adults-only window displays brings a spell of concern." *Chicago Tribune* (March 26). Also, Parker, Mike. 2006. "New Sex Store Upsets Some Chicago Residents: Pleasure Chest Creating Controversy in Upscale Neighborhood." *CBS 2*. June 16.
<http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/Pleasure.Chest.Lakeview.2.329353.html>

about the visibility of its merchandise from the sidewalk and noted the frequency in which such complaints were made.

She told me to be mindful that there are a significant number of children who walk by the store every day to get to school or to the playground down the street. She requested that I put the mural of Marlena Dietrich back up and basically wanted me to reassure her that the table of dildos wouldn't be seen from the sidewalk.

At the time of our conversation, the store's window display was in the process of being swapped out. The employee attached different products to metal fence-like room divider that temporarily lined the back of the window display. The gaps between the metal panels made all of the sex toys inside the store visible to passersby.

The conflict around storefront censorship created a heightened awareness among LGBTQ+ residents of this particular type of practice by heterosexual mothers in the neighborhood. This produced an atmosphere of distrust and practices of constant protective surveillance by gay residents while they were on the streets. When I walked with Daryl down Halsted Street after seeing his new apartment in Buena Park, which he moved to because it was much cheaper and larger than his apartment in Boystown, the streets were full of people all funneling towards Addison Street to get to Wrigley Field. As we crossed Addison Street, Daryl said,

Look! There's a mother right there covering her child's eyes. That is so insulting. All these suburban families that are going to Wrigley Field love to park in Boystown. They think the train is too dangerous, uncomfortable, or inconvenient. So they park here and feel all uncomfortable. Just don't park over here. It's not like you don't know what you're getting into. It's pretty obvious this is a gay neighborhood. You can kind of expect what you and your kids might see here...

After Daryl pointed out to me the mother censoring what her young son saw, I watched as they continued to walk in front of the Mexican restaurant, Las Mañanitas. It was here

that the mother saw that there were no other gay window displays in sight and she removed her hand from over her son's eyes.

The censorship of sexuality in public space was not just restricted to the neighborhood's storefront window displays. On July 11, 2009, I walked with Carlos down North Halsted Street. We were walking behind Clint, Gino, and Robert who we met at the Gay Pride Parade two weeks prior. As we walked past Tulip, a lesbian-owned sex-toy store that markets itself as being woman-centered and sex-positive, they began to openly discuss sex. As part of this conversation, 27-year-old Clint said, "I wouldn't have sex with someone under twenty-one."

Gino responded, "You're telling me that if you were not really horny, you would not fuck a nineteen-year-old?"

"Be quiet! There is a family walking by," Robert shouted loud enough so that we all could hear him, while he nudged Gino with his left elbow. A mom, a dad, and two young boys, each holding one of their parent's hands walked past us.

Gino angrily erupted,

I'm not going to censor myself for whatever hetero family walks by and hears sex talk. They have the whole entire rest of the city. We have one street that isn't even a mile long. This is our neighborhood bitch! I can say what I want!

No one responded to Gino right away. The five of us continued to walk our way down Halsted Street, but in total silence until we arrived at Roscoe's where we split a pitcher of Long Island Iced Tea. I sat down with Gino at the bar and asked him what he thought about gentrification in the neighborhood.

I am just so tired of doing everything that straight people want us to do in our own damn neighborhood. It's like, fuck! They don't want us out in the street being loud and partying. They don't want us to have loud music

even inside of our clubs. They don't want us to have our sexuality on display because of the children. They want to shut us down and shut us up. They just want us to be invisible. Not seen, not heard. Fuck that! Why do they move here if they want to change everything? This is our culture. This is who we are... If you have a problem with late night noise, don't buy a condo in the middle of Boystown and then expect us to change our lives over your stupid decision.

For Gino, straight residents in Boystown were the harbingers of oppression of heteronormativity. As more straight people invaded and took over gay space, Gino thought gay culture and gay sexuality became increasingly at risk of being policed and oppressed. He saw gay sexuality itself as under attack by new residents seeking a more family-oriented environment. Their efforts to condemn homosexuality and normalize heterosexuality in the name of childhood endangerment needed to be resisted.

One way that this resistance took shape was through a growing anti-stroller rhetoric. Strollers represented not only the reproduction of heterosexuality, but also notions of suburbia that conflicted with urban life. They reminded gay residents that not only were straight people bringing with them their sexuality, they were also bringing their suburban ideology and ways of living. Thus, the stroller in the gay neighborhood served as the ultimate symbol of gentrification as oppressive heteronormativity and represented the convergence of multiple conflicts, pitting the heterosexual suburban family against the urban gay man. During an interview, Phillip, a 27 year-old self-identified gay Asian male who lived in the neighborhood for 2 years, said,

I've noticed there has been a change in the number of strollers present in the neighborhood, not only on sidewalks, but on stairwells, porches, and even in the Center on Halsted. They are everywhere. Imagine getting stuck behind one of those with no way to get around it. These suburban women just move to the city because their husband gets a better paying job and they don't realize where they are moving to or what city life is even like.

Some of us [gay men] might be double-income-no-kids, but what

difference does it make when these families moving into the neighborhood are double income, making six figures each, and have one kid? They still have more expendable income, or at least more access to money. That one kid is not sucking up all their wealth like a fucking leech. That's why during the week you don't see gay men out and about, drinking at the bars in the middle of the day like you do on the weekend. Instead you see a steady stream of women pushing strollers up and down Halsted. They are the only signs of life because Monday through Friday, from nine to five, this place is a ghost town [everyone is at work]. The only people you'll see [here] are the nannies pushing those kids to the Center on Halsted. Don't even get me started on that. In the next five years, this neighborhood is going to look like the suburbs.

For Phillip, baby strollers not only became a symbol of Boystown's supergentrification, but they were an offensive omen of the ultimate demise of the gay neighborhood and urban culture more generally. He was critical of the idea that gay men, particularly those who were partnered, were more economically privileged because of their status as DINKS (double-income-no-kids)—a common stereotype based on the myth of gay affluence that has been used to explain urban gentrification by gay men (Hollibaugh and Weiss 2015). Phillip and his partner were both graduate students, living off of student loans, and accruing more debt as they were barely able to afford their rent together. It was important for them to live close to the gay community, so they knowingly chose to be in a situation where they struggled to pay rent.

Phillip saw wealthy heterosexual families as taking over every aspect of the gay neighborhood, from the sidewalks to the community center. His stroller criticism also included a jab at the nannies who used the Center on Halsted as a childcare facility and a socializing space, particularly during the winter months when the Center's climate-controlled children's play area offered an alternative to the neighborhood's public outdoor playgrounds. Phillip believed that the nannies paid by wealthy neighborhood families should not be taking up space at the Center on Halsted reserved for LGBTQ+ people or

using their resources. He feared that it was being transformed to resemble something that he dreaded: a suburban neighborhood.

Resistance to Boystown's perceived invasion of heterosexuals also revolved around marriage. On May 4, 2009 at 7:00 pm, I stood on the rooftop garden of the Center on Halsted with four other gay men. Three of them I met that evening at an event at the Center and a fourth, Charlie, I had known since I moved to Chicago. We looked down at a crowd of people in the street below. It looked like the nightclub Circuit was having a special event as gay men lined the street and waited to get into the establishment. A group of eight women stuck out from the crowd as they approached the line. They wore black dresses adorned with white satin sashes that spelled "Bachelorette" in hot pink letters. The bride wore a large tiara that sparkled under the light of the rainbow pylon street lamp.

"Why are all of those white straight girls going into the gay Latino bar?" Charlie asked.

"That's offensive!" one of the other guys said. "Don't they know that gays aren't allowed to get married?"

Just six months earlier, on November 5, 2008, California voters passed Proposition 8—a ballot proposition that amended the state constitution to "eliminate the rights of same-sex couples to marry." For many same-sex marriage supporters, this was a huge defeat, particularly because the California Supreme Court had ruled California's previous

ban on same-sex marriage unconstitutional earlier that year.⁵ Prop 8, as it became known as, was evidence that LGBT rights could be taken away as quickly as they are won. It became a reminder of the second-class citizenship of LGBT people and that homophobia, LGBT oppression, and the tyranny of the majority still prevailed in even the most progressive of states. As such, the passing of Prop 8 had a significant influence on shaping local LGBT subjectivities, particularly in the context of supergentrification. It caused a feeling of resentment and anger amongst gay residents, particularly when they encountered local anti-gay marriage sentiments in the neighborhood (see Figure 18).

⁵ Proposition 22, which passed in 2000 and banned same-sex marriage in California, was confirmed to be unconstitutional on May 16, 2008, allowing same-sex marriage to be legal as early as June 17, 2008.



Figure 17. Illinois Needs a Proposition 8 Poster: This is a photo of an anti-gay marriage sign posted over the face of Ru Paul on a bus stop advertisement for the show *Ru Paul's Drag Race*. The sign read, "Marriage =" followed by images representing a man and a woman. At the bottom of the sign was the message, "Illinois Needs A Proposition 8."

In response to the passage of Prop 8, supporters of same-sex marriage in Boystown responded by staging multiple protests and marches.⁶ Cocktail Lounge received national attention for banning bachelorette parties in protest of the prohibition of gay marriage and straight privilege, posting signs outside the front door that explicitly stated, "No

⁶ It is important to note that gay marriage was a contentious topic between LGBTQ+ people and in Boystown there were also various queer protests that criticized the gay marriage movement.

Bachelorette Parties” (See Figure 19).⁷ Despite the public attention that Cocktail Lounge received as a result of this ban, the practice of banning bachelorette parties from gay bars was not widespread. Other neighborhood gay bars like Kit Kat Lounge and Circuit continued to rely on bachelorette parties for a significant portion of their business and advertised that bachelorette parties were welcome, so they would not lose any money as a result of the highly publicized divide over the issue and the exclusion of bachelorette parties from the bars.



Figure 18. Sign Banning Bachelorette Parties Ban at Cocktail Lounge: Signs banning bachelorette parties outside of Cocktail Lounge at 3359 North Halsted Street.

While the exclusion of bachelorette parties was an uncommon and symbolic practice

⁷ See, Nair, Yasmin. "Gay Bars and Bachelorettes, Oh My!" *Belerico Report*. May 3, 2009. http://bilerico.lgbtqnation.com/2009/05/gay_bars_and_bachelorettes_oh_my.php; Nair, Yasmin. "Bar None: Gay Clubs Reject Bachelorette Parties." *Windy City Times*. April 29, 2009; *Associate Press*. "Gay bar says 'I don't do bachelorettes.'" June 16, 2009.

of resistance, it also continued a history of the exclusion of women from Boystown's androcentric environment (see Chapter II). Prop 8 justified gendered exclusions the banning of bachelorette parties represented another method of excluding women from gay space. Prop 8 allowed gay men to reframe the exclusion of (straight) women as resistance to heterosexual oppression. As such, it became a validator for misogynistic practices of reproducing the gay male neighborhood in other spaces. Women, who were not celebrating a marriage and who previously felt welcome in gay bars, were faced with new confrontations by gay men who wanted them gone.

Prop 8 not only reframed how straight women were understood in the gay neighborhood, but it also reframed how people of color were understood by Boystown residents. Dustin, a 33-year-old self-identified gay white male who lived in the neighborhood, said during an interview:

It wasn't just straight people who got Prop 8 to pass. I was just reading something about how Prop 8 passed largely because of African Americans voters. There is a lot of homophobia amongst the African American community. Even here [in Chicago]. That's why so many of them come up [to Boystown] from the South Side. It's too dangerous for them down there.

News reports claimed that black voters were largely responsible for the passing of Prop 8,⁸ reproducing the idea that homophobia and violence against LGBT people was disproportionate among black people and that the South Side represented a barren black landscape marked by vocal opposition to homosexuality (Best 2005) and violence against LGBT people. This perspective positioned Boystown as a type of white-savior sanctuary

⁸ See Vick, Karl and Ashley Sudan. "Most minority voters backed Calif.'s prop. 8." *Washington Post*. November 7, 2008.

space and interpolated black bodies as both the victims and perpetrators of violence.

4.2 Uncovering Accomplices

Just as this new narrative of Boystown's supergentrification and disappearance became widely circulated, the Great Recession began reshaping local LGBTQ+ livelihoods and lives. A heightened feeling of financial insecurity due to job loss, under employment, and diminished income as a result of the recession extended across class divisions. This precariousness reshaped how Boystown residents spent their money and made them reconsider where they lived. LGBTQ+ residents reduced the amount of money they spent at local bars, restaurants, and retail stores, diminishing the profits earned at Boystown's gay-owned businesses. As a result, a number of local businesses closed with business owners citing a reduction in consumer spending. Amongst those that stayed open, business owners became apprehensive about their financial futures and reduced the number of employees they hired. For local workers who were able to keep their jobs at neighborhood establishments, their income was significantly affected particularly among service workers who relied heavily on tips to supplement their relatively low wages.

This cloud of financial insecurity across class divisions led many LGBTQ+ residents to relocate to other parts of the city, choosing instead to live in cheaper, gay-friendly neighborhoods like Rogers Park, Uptown, Edgewater, and Logan Square. Some condominium owners lost their homes to foreclosure. Renters were forced to break their leases when they could no longer afford their rent due to the loss of income or a roommate moving out. Some LGBTQ+ Boystown residents who did not see a loss in income preemptively moved to cheaper apartments elsewhere in the city when their

leases expired to avoid being caught in a situation where they could not afford their rent if they lost their job.

The new narrative of Boystown's supergentrification and disappearance completely ignored the Great Recession as a causal factor in the closure of gay businesses and the movement of LGBTQ+ residents out the neighborhood. The Great Recession's uneven impact locally complicated accepted notions of gay marginality and displacement, challenging the idea of a cohesive narrative of the LGBTQ+ experience of economic collapse. The downturn created new openings for investors and developers to purchase vintage buildings at depressed prices for new construction. At the same time other construction projects stalled for months, years, or were abandoned altogether. Successful gay business owners were able to take over the vacant storefronts of those that closed and opened new gay bars, expanding their entrepreneurial grasp in the neighborhood. Furthermore, while some of Boystown's LGBTQ+ residents were economically displaced from the neighborhood, others countered the economic impact of the Great Recession and maintained residency in Boystown by opting to form non-traditional living arrangements or turning to sex work to earn a more stable income.

Paul and José lived in the heart of Boystown and, prior to the recession, purchased a condominium for around half-a-million dollars in a recently-built building right on North Halsted Street. Living off of two professional incomes, their 3-bedroom, 2.5 bath unit featured stainless steel Kitchen Aid appliances, twelve-foot ceilings, central air conditioning, a heated garage, and a terrace that was almost as large as their living space. On the opposite end of the neighborhood, Sheila, Julie, and Maria shared a studio apartment in a vintage building that was once an SRO hotel on Belmont Avenue. They

not only shared their apartment with each other, but they also shared it with two Chihuahuas and a Shih-Tzu. Three twin-sized mattresses were strategically placed in three corners of the shared living space so that they did not block the front door, the closet door, or the entryway to the separate kitchen. The mattresses were laid directly on the scratched oak floor and made up the only furniture in the apartment. Their walk-in closet overflowed with colorful blouses, wigs, and scarves that the three women shared. To be able to afford to live in Boystown, they pooled their money together from a combination of sex work and part-time retail jobs and evenly divided the costs of rent and utilities amongst the three of them.

Relatively affordable efficiency apartments and studio garden apartments were being rented for \$500-600 per month, but only in certain vintage buildings sprinkled throughout the neighborhood. For LGBT people working and living in the neighborhood, particularly young people who worked in the local service industry as bartenders, doormen, performers, waiters, or who were students, these apartments were their only options for independent living. Even with these relatively low rents, the cost of living and socializing in the neighborhood made it a norm to live from paycheck-to-paycheck. Rocco, who lived in a studio, had a job working in retail at a large department store in the Gold Coast during the day and also worked as a bartender at night to make enough money to live in the neighborhood on his own. Most of the gay men who participated in this study who were over the age of 50 owned condominiums, especially those who were long-term Boystown residents. While some complained of rising taxes, they often did not face the same housing insecurities that newer and younger residents faced. Those of this demographic who no longer lived in the neighborhood typically moved out in the late-

1990s, before the Great Recession and at the onset of the current wave of supergentrification.

After years of saving, Tanisha, a 25-year-old, self-identified African American transgender woman, was ecstatic when she was able to finally afford the move to Boystown. She felt it was safer and more convenient to live in the neighborhood where she performed and hosted parties at the local bars and clubs, rather than risk the dangers of a nightly commute while scantily dressed to party. However, she did not make enough money working at the neighborhood's bars to pay for her rent and bills. Thus, she supplemented her income with sex work, having money left over to put aside for a future breast augmentation. Glenn, a 35-year old self-identified gay white male, could no longer afford to live in Boystown on his own. He moved to a cheaper apartment in Andersonville and while there, he found himself becoming less social. Being single, Glenn wanted to move closer to Boystown's gay social scene to increase his chances of meeting a partner. So, when his 12-month lease expired, he moved in with a friend who was renting out a room in his 3-bedroom condominium in Elaine Place. For \$400 a month, utilities included, Glenn was able to move back to Boystown at the height of the recession.

While wealthy, heterosexual families and individuals newly resident to Boystown were targeted as the villains in the narrative of Boystown's supergentrification and gentrification, other actors who facilitated the process were omitted from the popular discourse. This included local real estate agents and developers who used unethical sales tactics to sell Boystown's luxury homes to this particular demographic. To avoid potential buyers noticing the rainbow pylons that marked the neighborhood as gay, some

high-end real estate agents would avoid taking North Halsted Street when showing properties to potential buyers or would provide them with directions that avoided Boystown's main thoroughfare. Developers avoided any mention that their homes were situated in the city's gay epicenter and instead stressed how desirable the neighborhood was because of its restaurants and location, highlighting its proximity to transportation, the lakefront, and downtown. In brochures, advertisements and other promotional materials, they also projected heteronormative values onto the neighborhood by using words like "residential" and "family-friendly" to describe it. As a result of these practices, there were heterosexual residents who claimed that they moved into the neighborhood without knowing it was a gay neighborhood. There was an increase in complaints about street closures, overcrowding, and noise due to neighborhood festivals, political events, and the nighttime social scene. When gay bar owners discovered that local developers were doing this, they demanded meetings with them to stress the importance of informing future residents of the neighborhood's gay history and culture so that potential buyers would not be surprised when they moved in nor be inclined to try to change the neighborhood.

In addition to contemporary economic forces and actors other than wealthy, heterosexual families, the historical roles of real estate agents, developers, and even gay men were also omitted from the discourse of Boystown's supergentrification and demise. This omission conceals gentrification as a continual process (Lees 2000; Slater, and Wyly 2008) rather than a force reanimated by contemporary inequalities working to upset a settled and stable gay neighborhood. Beginning in the 1950s, investors bought and remodeled old apartment buildings in New Town to be rented out to the new population

of young people who were flocking to the area. Investors who did not wish to become landlords restored or razed three-flats to make room for a new option for urban living: the condominium.⁹ To help encourage this particular kind of redevelopment in Lake View, ordinances were put in place that would allow the city to declare designated sections of the city as "blighted commercial areas" and make it easier for new construction permits to be approved. As a result, redevelopment proposals for different parts of the neighborhood began pouring in.¹⁰

As this North Side lakefront community was seeing unprecedented investment in high-rise condominiums geared to a young, professional, white demographic, the South Side of Chicago was seeing a new kind of development as well for its poor, predominantly black population: high-rise public housing projects. The passing of the Housing Act of 1949 provided substantial federal funding for public housing and the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was eager to spend this money to safeguard the city's economy. Housing projects allowed the city to maintain the system of segregation upon which the urban economy depended, preventing the complete suburban exodus of middle-class white residents from Chicago's North Side due to white flight by keeping black populations on the South Side. These public housing projects were larger than previous designs not only due to their height, but also through the way in which they were grouped into superblocks. These projects proliferated throughout Chicago's South

⁹ *Lake View Saga*. Clark, et al. 2007.

¹⁰ One of such proposals was for the 3600 block of North Broadway Street (at the intersection of Waveland Avenue), which housed parking lots and a vacant supermarket building.

Side and included Grace Abbott Homes, Stateway Gardens, and Robert Taylor Homes, which was the largest public housing project in the United States. In 1968, the federal government stopped funding high-rise buildings for public housing due to the risks they posed to the safety of their residents and the ghettoization of Chicago's black population.¹¹ However, by then the bifurcated housing infrastructure that distinguished Chicago's South Side from its North Side already solidified the city's segregated urban landscape by race and class, creating an enduring socio-economic structure that continued to shape race relations in Boystown throughout my fieldwork.

Meanwhile in Lake View, the rapid pace of condominium construction and conversion increased into the 1970s, during a period that became known as the "condo craze." With the addition of new high-rise condominiums, the neighborhood's-built landscape and housing stock went through another transformation that provided Lake View residents with a new pathway to home ownership and profit accumulation. Between 1977 and 1979, 13.8% of Lake View's housing stock (7,816 units) converted to condominiums. Home ownership in Lake View doubled from 11.7 percent in 1970 to 23.3 percent in 1980.¹² The Broadway Corridor also transformed as a result of the neighborhood's growing population of homeowners. Once defined by empty storefronts, junk shops, pawn shops, liquor stores, warehouses, car repair garages, and run-down "mom and pop" shops, it became known for its record stores, bookstores, clothing stores, and gift shops catering to young urban professionals, as well as its proximity to the

¹¹ *Gautreaux v. Chicago Housing Authority*, 296 F. Supp 907 (1969).

¹² Melaniphy and Associates 1982.

lakefront's high-rises. This "back to the city" movement ushered by the steady process of urban revitalization occurring in neighborhoods throughout Chicago, brought into the city the first wave of corporate businesses that sought to replicate suburban modes of consumption in urban neighborhoods.

This particular incarnation of rapid development brought demographic changes that threatened the burgeoning gay neighborhood and the newly formed gay spaces within it. A classifieds advertisement published in the *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* in 1973 demonstrated such a sense of peril brought about by the movement of straight residents into a New Town apartment building:

Gay apartment house in danger of going straight because of lack of gay tenants three apartments are vacant. Four large rooms, heated, three blocks north of DePaul University. Couples are welcome.¹³

Written by gay residents, this classifieds advertisement shows the inherent anxiety around the loss of gay space. This anxiety not only highlights the fragility and contested nature of gay space, but also the importance of gay space for gay neighborhood residents. Furthermore, this fear of its disappearance due to gentrification and heterosexual encroachment has endured since the early-1970s.

To resist these changes brought about by development, Lake View residents across race, class, gender, and sexual identities organized and took action against the builders and developers they accused of changing the character of the neighborhood by altering its housing stock and increasing its residential density. At a time when lesbians and gay men were just starting to establish institutions along North Halsted Street in the

¹³ "Classifieds," *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* May 1973, pg. 23.

1970s, Lake View residents formed citizen groups, such as the Campaign to Control High Rises, to fight against government-sponsored development and rid the neighborhood of R7 and R8 zoning districts that allowed for building structures that were much taller than most existing buildings. Listening to his constituents, Dick Simpson, then Alderman of the 44th Ward, created the *community zoning board*—a volunteer group that reviewed all proposed zoning changes, held public hearings to solicit citizen input, and advised the alderman.¹⁴ Responding to this resistance, Mayor Richard J. Daley sponsored legislation to limit development in Lake View, including eight amendments drafted to downzone portions of the 24-block area bounded by Diversey Parkway, Addison Street, Broadway Street, and the lakefront to more restrictive R6 and R5 categories (Schwieterman and Caspall 2006). These amendments were approved in 1975.

Through this organized resistance, Lakeview residents developed a new discourse for defending the neighborhood against undesirable high-density development. This anti-development discourse was framed by ideas of neighborhood defense, preservation, and protection. As they worked to slow down development and support new neighborhood planning initiatives, residents became vocal about preserving the neighborhood's character and protecting residents from temerarious developers who were working with corrupt politicians to craft new urban development schemes, alter zoning regulations, and

¹⁴ The board was successful enough that in 1974, Simpson sponsored an ordinance to create similar entities in all 50 wards throughout Chicago. Although defeated, many aldermen voluntarily created community-zoning boards to address similar issues of development that residents were facing elsewhere.

attain government subsidies for their own profits.¹⁵ This discourse represented a notion of a neighborhood under threat and a way of life that was in decline, which social scientist Robert J. Sampson in his study of Chicago neighborhoods referred to as "the ideology of community lament" (2012: 44). As the development of Lake View and the shifting fear of neighborhood decline show, this insecurity and fear of uncertainty is a condition of capitalism that is continually reproduced (Thrift 2005).

However, just as there was resistance to development in Lake View, there was also a push by gay men and lesbians to gain entry into this new and growing housing market. With the struggle for gay rights entwined with that for full economic citizenship (see Chapter III), equal participation in the gay ghetto's burgeoning condominium market became an imperative gay rights issue. With investors converting existing apartment buildings to condominiums, renters throughout Lake View found themselves in situations where condo conversion forced them to choose between buying their apartment at a higher price than market value, moving out and paying a higher rent elsewhere in the neighborhood, or moving out of the neighborhood altogether. By 1977, city officials worked to pass a consumer protections condominium ordinance that regulated conversions and protected those who faced displacement by them.¹⁶ Amendment S.B. 59 and H.B. 153 provided that tenants in buildings subject to condominium conversion had

¹⁵ One of my informants mentioned rumors of white envelopes of cash payouts being passed to alderman and other officials for building and zoning approvals. Also see Gardiner, John A. 1993. "Corruption in Chicago's Zoning and Building Programs" In *Chicago's Future: In a Time of Change*. Ed. Dick Simpson. Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing. pp. 165-177.

¹⁶ *Gay Chicago News*. November 18, 1977. "Metro Briefs: Condo Conversion" 2

to be notified at least 120 days in advance, to which they had 30 days to notify the developer whether or not they would stay the remainder of their lease, renew their lease (if offered), leave, or buy their unit.¹⁷ While this legislation did not prevent the gradual displacement of renters from Lake View, it prevented the immediate removal of tenants and temporarily quelled anger over oppressive neighborhood development that displaced residents.

Housing discrimination against gay men and lesbians became more apparent as condominium conversion and construction took hold in the neighborhood. The upheaval of the Lake View's renters created a high demand for apartments, allowing property owners to discriminately choose whom they wanted to rent out their apartments to. At the same time, a new and largely unregulated real estate market was established and transactions in the making, buying, and selling of these private residences opened up new possibilities for housing discrimination. Responding to these calls from gay and lesbian residents, Alderman Martin Oberman of the 43rd Ward and Dick Simpson of the 44th Ward included language in the ordinance that specifically outlawed discrimination based on an individual's sexual preference or orientation, in addition to race, creed, national origin, and sex.

When passed on December 21, 1977, the ordinance was recognized as the first in the city's history that protected citizens from sexual orientation discrimination and was considered a major advance in the struggle for equal rights for the gay men and lesbians

¹⁷ Houslon, Jack. "Thompson acts to tidy Condo act." *Chicago Tribune*. September 25, 1977. Real Estate 1C Section 12.

living in Chicago. Similar legislation introduced in the past to ban discrimination based on sexual preference had never been passed by the city council, but the injustices of rapid urban development pushed residents to demand the passing of condominium regulations. The new law, which went into effect on January 1, 1978 along with nineteen other state laws regulating condominiums, was both a response to historic and recurrent discrimination in housing against gay men and lesbians. However, it was also an effort to expand access to new forms of urban homeownership to newly resident working professionals. While the new law was an important step towards future anti-discrimination laws, discrimination based on sexual orientation was still permissible in employment and rental housing,¹⁸ making it clear that the granting of gay rights was permissible only in relation to expanding consumption. A population drop (Pacyga and Skerrett 1986), inflation, and recession stalled the local housing market, so in a recovering economy opening up the market of condominiums "priced for quick sale" to the areas gay men and lesbians was sound economic policy.¹⁹

The expansion of gay and lesbian participation in the local condominium market shows how rights were won through specific forms of middle-class consumption, which disproportionately privileged white gay men while less affluent residents across race, gender, and sexuality were driven to less expensive neighborhoods (Herrell 1992). Furthermore, the condominium ordinance not only marked a significant win for sexual orientation anti-discrimination law, but it also marked a significant way that the

¹⁸ *Gay Chicago News*. December 23, 1977. "Sex Bias in City Condo Conversion: Gay Breakthru." 1

¹⁹ See *Gay Chicago Magazine*, July 19, 1979 2(29).

professional class of gay men and lesbians were welcomed to participate in a real estate market that would eventually displace them.²⁰ Even at this time, gay men and lesbians pushed to participate in the economy that was changing local demographics through neighborhood development. Condominiums were already recognized as serving a key role in the "back to the city" movement, attracting people from the suburbs who were no longer able to afford single-family homes there.²¹ This highlights a key paradox in the gay neighborhood marketplace, recognizing the role of gay men (in particular) in as consumers, and therefore participants, of the capital processes of gentrification that led to the neighborhood's since increasing housing costs. In other words, gay men participated in the very processes that they would later protest as changing the gay neighborhood, supporting M. Jacqui Alexander's claim that white gay capital, at times, follows the same path of white heterosexual capital (1997). Furthermore, this participation marked a turning point in political gay rights, distinguishing very particular beneficiaries of the early political wins of the gay rights movement. This was a time that redefined the relationship between gay men and property ownership in Chicago.

During a life history interview with Gary, a gay white man who was a New Town resident in the 1970s and 1980s, he described how the neighborhood's changing housing stock changed the demographic makeup of the neighborhood along the lines of class and ultimately caused a shift in local gay sociality. He said,

²⁰ I refer to displacement here as a general process that encompasses multiple causes and timelines for moving out of the neighborhood.

²¹ See Feyder, Susan. "Chicago to weigh new condo laws" *Chicago Tribune*. September 25, 1977. 1C Real Estate Section 12.

Gentrification has always been a problem in Lake View. During the condo craze, a lot of the neighborhood's renters moved out. So the neighborhood establishments [bars and nightclubs] started attracting a more professional set of people. I don't think the gays owned most of the properties. But the condos made even the rents go up. So you could still see a shift in the patrons of the gay bars. Even if they weren't property owners, there were still more professionals going out... the neighborhood was getting more expensive to live in. Working-class people were drawn to other bars further north, like Pepper's or Mike's [also known as] the Anvil.

For Gary, the introduction of the condominium to Lake View transformed the gay ghetto into a new gay neighborhood for the urban professional class. Continued development not only altered the social dynamic of Lake View, but reconfigured and remapped gay sociality throughout the city based on transitional spatialized class configurations.

By the 1980s, the racial and class composition of the neighborhood had notably transformed and was composed of a majority of white, professional-class residents. Responding to decades ravaged by inflation and recession, local columnist Jon Henri-Damski welcomed in the new decade by writing,

The 80s are going to be a hell of a time for those who can afford to live through them. Ten years ago, if your income was \$3,000, you were poor, and on \$10,000 you were middle class. But as the 80s [begin], on \$10,000 a year you are poor; you have to get somewhere between \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year just to fight to stay in the middle class. No recent decade has started out with more panic and gloom.... The economy is in a mess, and the world is in a mess... the truth is: you can barely raise a cat or a dog on one salary, let alone a son or a daughter in this inflated economy. People are scared, nervous; they feel bad because they are not making it, and they don't know why.²²

By 1984, gentrification had turned single-family homes that sold for \$20,000 to \$25,000 in the 1950s into homes that sold in for \$100,000 to \$300,000 (Myers 1984). In 1987, it

²² Damski, Jon-Henri. 1980. "Jon-Henri Damski's Nothing Personal." *Gay Chicago News* 3, no. 1 (January 1): 18-21.

was reported in the *Chicago Reporter* that "[t]he seemingly steady foothold that minorities cling to in Lake View appears threatened however, by the upward mobility sweeping the neighborhood."²³ Gay men and lesbians moved north to live in new concentrations in Andersonville and Buena Park, the neighborhood between Boystown and Uptown. In 1989, an advertisement in *The Windy City Times* billed Buena Park as an affordable "architectural gem... flourishing with renewed interest in preserving the beauty and elegance of a bygone era."²⁴ With this movement of both people and capital, gentrification led to a rebranding of the neighborhood as New Town lost its traction against the neighborhood's older name Lake View East.

Gentrification continued through the 1990s and 2000s, bringing even higher housing costs. As Boystown transformed into an upscale neighborhood, surrounding neighborhoods also faced gentrification and a rising cost of living including Buena Park and Uptown to the North, Wrigleyville to the west, and Lincoln Park to the South. During the economic expansion of the late-1990s and early-2000s, low interest rates brought a new wave of condominiums and corporate retail stores, as well as a hot real estate market where new properties and resales sold within a couple days of being put on the market often at prices higher than the asking price. Real estate agents and developers identified East Lakeview as a bargain neighborhood, providing all of the amenities of Lincoln Park without the lofty prices (\$180 per square foot in Lakeview, versus \$220 per square foot in Lincoln Park).

²³ Pick, Grant. 1987. "Lake View: It Ain't What it Used to Be; As Yuppies Come, Others Go." *Chicago Reporter* (September 1): 8.

²⁴ *Windy City Times*, June 22, 1989.

One such proposed condominium development was unveiled in December of 1996 by Chicago Urban Properties. Their plan was to build twin six-story towers at 3200 N. Halsted Street. Like previous arguments against development in the neighborhood, residents and gay bar owners complained that the project's size was out of scale with existing buildings and that it would literally overshadow North Halsted Street. However, they also feared something new: the possibility that an influx of straight residents could vote the district dry by placing a moratorium on liquor sales through the Illinois Liquor Control Act of 1934. Noticing the exodus of LGBTQ+ residents leaving the area, the idea of putting a couple hundred condominiums in the middle of the gay commercial strip meant risking it being completely shut down. Working with the Lakeview Citizens Council and other major neighborhood associations, the developer scaled back the project to include 157 residences and made it four stories instead of six. To appease area businesses, they also added more parking and commercial space and ensured marketing materials would reference the neighborhood's gay nightlife to weed out potential homophobes and complaints.

Just as the neighborhood's gay businessmen were working to solidify the neighborhood as gay through the North Halsted Streetscape Project (NHSP), the threat that heterosexual residents could shut down their businesses and destroy the gay neighborhood became a possibility with a clear pathway to reality. The reality of the gay neighborhood and its gentrification was no longer about contested space and the everyday conflicts that went along with it, but city law made the threat of tyranny of the majority a reality within the confines of the changing gay neighborhood. While the 44th Ward was never voted dry, the construction of condominiums in the heart of Boystown's nightlife

district continued to shape conflict and gay social life. Noise complaints surfaced as more high-end residential units were built along North Halsted Street. The most prominent complaints came from residents across sexual identities of the Dakota building: a condominium built on top of Circuit, the city's largest gay dance club.²⁵ Located in a commercial zone, the building of the Dakota condominium directly on top of the nightclub was only made possible by the developers receiving a zoning variance.²⁶

In response to the residents' complaints over the intolerable noise coming from the club, the city's Department of the Environment came out to inspect the building 21 times since 1998 and never found any violations. In addition, the owner of Circuit spent \$200,000 to upgrade their soundproofing system. Still, the complaints continued throughout the years and residents actually collected signatures on a petition for a referendum to vote the precinct dry. This outraged local bar and businesses owners, since the precinct included Boystown's nightlife center and the complaints of residents in a single building boiled over to become a neighborhood issue. As the Dakota noise complaints were publicized through local media, additional noise complaints from residents throughout the neighborhood started to become the norm. People who lived next door to local bars, clubs, and even social service organizations began to complain not only about the music being emitted from the businesses, but about the noise from the patrons leaving them late at night. Nightclubs responded by posting signs near their

²⁵ Prior to Circuit, the space was a club and pool hall named Vortex.

²⁶ Isaacs, Deanna. "The Nightclub Next Door." *Chicago Reader*. August 19, 2004. Accessed on February 3, 2010. <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-nightclub-next-door/Content?oid=916405>

entryways to "Please respect our neighbors." Bouncers asked people to be quiet as they left the building and told them that they were not allowed to hang-out in front of the bar, especially after they closed for the night in the early-morning hours.

Just like the conflicts around censorship, the conflicts around noise were not relegated to the neighborhood's gay businesses and often spilled out into the streets. Once complaints in the neighborhood extended beyond issues of overt sexual display, they became disproportionately directed at the public lives of people of color. In 2007, as I walked back to my apartment from the Berlin nightclub at 3:00 AM, I passed a group of black women blasting music out of their car and dancing on the sidewalks on Cornelia Avenue, across the street from Hydrate. Once I got up to my apartment, I sat on the windowsill and watched them on the sidewalks below. After fifteen minutes, Amy, my neighbor who lived across the street, came downstairs and yelled at the women, telling them she was going to call the police if they did not leave. Inaudible yelling pursued. In response to Amy's command, the women hopped in their car, turned off the music, and Amy went back inside. As the front door to her apartment building closed, one of the women yelled from the car, "You straight parasite bitch! I hope your titty falls off!" She and her friends then backed out of the parallel parking space and drove off, peeling-out on Cornelia Avenue.

4.3 Environmentality

The gentrification of Boystown that I witnessed during my fieldwork dramatically altered its housing stock, creating a neighborhood of particularly upscale condominiums and modern townhomes. While the prices of these single-family residences prevented many LGBTQ+ people from moving into the neighborhood, rising rents also pushed

many residents out of the neighborhood. Some struggled to maintain residency through shared living arrangements with friends, roommates, and partners. At the same time, long-time gay residents who were also homeowners did not feel the same pressures of neighborhood change. Regardless, the challenges faced by many LGBTQ+ residents due to Boystown's increased cost of living, exaggerated the economic insecurities of the Great Recession and inflamed existing hostilities towards straight-identified residents; particularly, wealthy heterosexual families who were seen as being the cause of neighborhood change. This contemporary process of gentrification in Boystown was part of a larger, global metropolitan pattern in which urban centers, including Atlanta, New York, Washington DC and Paris, witnessed a "geographic inversion," becoming home to more affluent populations with the city's poor pushed to the suburbs and outskirts of the city (Ehrenhalt 2008; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008; Dumenco 2010). City-wide census data showed demographic trends indicating whites moving closer to the city center and minorities moving outward to more suburban destinations, where lower cost housing and jobs were more plentiful.²⁷ For Chicago, this trend represented a movement that has continued since the 1950s, which is how the formation of the north side gay neighborhood even came into being due to the push of gay men and lesbians out of the Near North, Old Town, and Gold Coast (see Chapter II).

When gentrification is viewed as a continuous process, however, gay (primarily white) men are implicated in contemporary transformations of the gay neighborhood as

²⁷ See Golab, Art. "Census shows minorities moving outward, whites moving closer to Loop." *Chicago Sun-Times*. January 9, 2011.

they were key players in the expansion of the condominium market, the production of new forms of housing that have continuously priced-out residents since the 1970s, and the privatization of the neighborhood. Thus, gentrification can be understood as a hegemonic process that thrives on the systematic inequalities of society (Atkinson 2003: 2349), as well as one of the many ways in which capitalism works to continuously reproduce inequality by producing desires for middle-class wealth attainment and the constant endeavor of capital accumulation (Bhattacharya 2017). Furthermore, gay (primarily white) men can be situated as accomplices (Puar 2007) in the reproduction of normativizing violence through their active participation in the processes and practices of gentrification and gay neighborhood production.

In Boystown, a shift occurred when anti-gentrification discourse became framed around sexual identity, positioned as anti-heterosexual rather than anti-developer. By shifting the target of gentrification *resistance* towards wealthy heterosexual families, LGBTQ+ residents departed from neighborhood movements in the 1970s against unchecked development wherein residents collectively organized to change zoning laws and drive out developers who were positioned to profit the most off of the neighborhood's gentrification. However, as more gay residents and business owners became active participants and beneficiaries of neighborhood development, gentrification became less of a nefarious project and was viewed more as the only means to securing LGBTQ+ wealth, safety, convenience, and overall well-being. Thus, even contemporary gentrification resistance has been reshaped through capitalist desires and the folding in of the LGBTQ+ consumer into the greater political economy. Rather than an anti-capitalist agenda, the idea that heterosexual residents were the threat to the gay neighborhood was

resurrected and exacerbated through neoliberal precarity (Butler 2004) and social crises (e.g. crises of family, crisis of childhood innocence, crisis of gay space, crisis of gay identity, etc.).

Heteronormativity's pitting of heterosexuality against homosexuality and non-normative gender expressions nurtured the culture of conflict and division within the borders of Boystown. It is within this social milieu that the gay neighborhood is often produced as spatialized act of resistance to ongoing efforts to discipline bodily performances of non-normative sexualities and genders (McDowell 1999; Nash 2006), allowing for new or alternative subjectivities and identities to operate (Forest 1995; Pile and Keith 1997; Bailey 1999; Mitchell 2000). Gay neighborhoods have relied upon the ways in which individuals subvert spaces to allow for homosexual visibility and render the meaning of the space as expressly homosexual (Bell et al. 1994). Claiming the gay neighborhood, in this regard, is a political act for LGBTQ+ people that reproduces the logic of capital.

It is also within this social milieu that the gay neighborhood is negotiated and contested. Antagonisms around the politics of sexuality have produced Boystown as a site of inherent conflict, where the reproduction of the gay neighborhood depends upon the reproduction of difference. This perpetual tension has contributed not only to the claiming of gay space, but also to the territorialization of gay space as the gay neighborhood (Davis 1995). That is to say, that the neighborhood is a territorial configuration; a way in which space is ideologically and materially transformed into "a place to be defended" and that can be invaded (Cohen and Taylor 2000: 18), along with the practices and behaviors that are produced by this understanding (Altman 1975;

Delaney 2005). Territorial configurations shape human interaction and social life by producing understandings of belonging, inclusion, exclusion, conflict, and social order. This ideological transformation of the neighborhood into gay territory is a highly moralized and securitized way of looking at the neighborhood. The neighborhood often operates as a territory within the context of larger urban landscapes of power. The emphasis of the territoriality of neighborhoods provides a window into understanding how power operates within the borders of the neighborhood, as well as in relationship to other neighborhoods and the larger urban landscape. Geopolitics, in this context, is a set of socially constructed practices and ideas through which international political economy is realized geographically and discrete territories are regulated materially and represented intellectually (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). Territory, in turn, informs identities as it shapes and is shaped by collective social and self-consciousness (Delaney 2005). Furthermore, these conflicts maintain the meaning and importance of Boystown, as a gay neighborhood, allowing it to be continually framed and reframed as a space of resistance and a project of gay power.

Through the popular narrative of Boystown's formation that positioned gay men as the founders of the neighborhood, Boystown's LGBTQ+ residents, and gay men in particular, were able to make a territorial claim to the gay neighborhood. These claims to the gay neighborhood empowered and justified LGBTQ+ residents to oppose heteronormative oppression elicited by the encroachment of their new heterosexual neighbors and their efforts to discipline and control LGBTQ+ lives. Claims to space were further compounded by differences outside of the neighborhood. Liberal multiculturalism through the construction and production of the landscape of difference (Fincher and

Jacobs 1998), the “city of neighborhoods,” structured violent practices of territorialization as people were assigned to neighborhoods and established spatialized modes of belonging. The sexual bifurcation of Wrigleyville and Boystown, in particular, exacerbated violence as they served as what Lefebvre called “spatial reference points” (1984), which structured antagonisms, produced “exclusionary territorial practices” (Harvey 2001: 126), and created space invaders (Puwar 2004).

As a result, overt displays and practices of homophobia within Boystown’s boundaries were often met with fierce resistance. Cee Cee, for instance, was quite vocal in her opposition to the mere presence of heterosexuals in the gay neighborhood.²⁸ In this light, gentrification brings to light the complexity of gay space and dismantles the presupposition of homogeneity, revealing its contested nature, practices of exclusion, violence, and social tensions (Rushbrook 2002). This is antithetical to the meaning of the neighborhood, which encompasses ruminations of neighborliness, civility, homogeneity, and cohesiveness. Furthermore, it also shows how the gay neighborhood continues to produce both identity and alterity, signaling the inherent frictions embedded in placemaking and community formation (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Heterosexual residents struggled to control the gay neighborhood through continued efforts to inhibit sexual expression (Warner 2000 [1999]) through shaming practices (Irvine 2009) and childhood endangerment rhetoric (Weeks 1977). These practices of

²⁸ Cee Cee made clear at every moment she could that she would resist the heterosexual takeover of Boystown. At the 2009 Gay Pride Parade, Cee Cee screamed, “Get out of our neighborhood!” at the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) contingent, speaking to the (presumed heterosexual) parents of LGBT children that were marching in the parade.

discipline and control that arose out of the spatial contestations is an example of Jasbir Puar's notion of environmentality; a concept that encompasses governmentality in the Foucauldian sense,²⁹ but which emphasizes the mutually reinforcing "habitations of discipline and control, regulations and regularities" (2007: 117). Environmentality provides a spatial framework for scrutinizing individual subject formation alongside subjectification through population construction within the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. For LGBTQ+ residents, it was through these practices of discipline and control that the salience of the gay neighborhood for LGBTQ+ people was staked out in the continued struggle against heteronormative oppression.³⁰

It is precisely through the dynamic struggles over space, inclusion, and exclusion that sexual subjectivities and resident subjectivities are simultaneously produced. These inherent frictions and power struggles were only inflamed when popular discourse positioned the gay neighborhood as being under threat, resulting in an eruption of conflicts around condoms, window displays, censorship, noise, or bachelorette parties. These conflicts reinforced the biopolitical struggle over space, as well as ideas about who should belong and who should not. In the next chapter, I will show how these

²⁹ Judith Butler defined governmentality as "a mode of power concerned with the maintenance and control of bodies and persons, the production and regulation of persons and populations, and the circulation of goods insofar as they maintain and restrict the life of the population" (2004: 52).

³⁰ National and global biopolitical struggles also compounded local resistances against heteronormative practices of discipline and control. In addition to gay marriage, on December 18, 2008 the United States refused to sign a United Nations referendum that confirmed support for human rights protections to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Furthermore, annual FBI Hate Crime Statistics reports from 2006-2009 led to annual reports that hate crimes against LGBT people were continually on the rise.

subjectivities, discourses, struggles, and the increased territorialization of the neighborhood, created a social environment ripe for the reproduction of overt racial violence through racializing surveillance and new forms of community policing.

V. FROM GANGS TO "GAGGLES:" TRANSFORMATIONS IN CRIME AND POLICING

*"We dreamed of utopia and woke up screaming" — Roberto Bolaño, Manifesto of
Infrarealism (1976)*

5.1 A New System of Community Policing and Racializing Surveillance

On August 5, 2009, the same day as the unprecedented CAPS meeting at Nookie's Tree (see Introduction), a story was being shared on Facebook by neighborhood residents about a heroic taxi cab driver who chased down two teenage pickpocket suspects after they stole a man's wallet at the Belmont "L" station. The police described one of the culprits as being, "a man clad in a dress, wearing makeup and carrying a purse."¹ The next day it was reported that the two suspects were caught and charged for robbery, aggravated battery, and aggravated battery to a police officer. Demeaning, dehumanizing, and transphobic follow-up stories were shared on Facebook that published the teenagers' mugshots and identified them as two black "West Side teenagers," with one being "the cross-dressing suspect."² While the technologies that made breaking news stories like this immediately accessible—like digital photography and the Internet—were ubiquitous, the Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook page was something new to Boystown residents. Launched within 48 hours of the CAPS meeting, it allowed residents to create a new audience of

¹ Schorsch, Kristen and Jeremy Goner. "Cabbie bearhugs pickpocket suspect." *Chicago Breaking News* (August 5, 2009). Last accessed on August 5, 2009 at <http://www.chicagobreakingnews.com/2009/08/cops-nab-makeup-wearing-robber-partner-after-l-station-pickpocket-robbery.html>

² "2 teens charged in robber, beating on Belmont." *Chicago Pride* (August 6, 2009). Last accessed on August 6, 2009 at <http://www.chicagopride.com/news/article.cfm/articleid/8002969>

neighbors, rapidly and easily share these stories and photos to this targeted audience, and craft and interject stories of their own into a collectively curated page about local crime.

The new web page not only facilitated the exchange of visual media through emerging social technology, but it also created a digital network of Boystown residents who were all interested in tracking, recording, and sharing information about crime in the neighborhood. This created a spectacle of Boystown's violent crime that was being consumed by a new and growing local audience.³ Within 7 days, the number of users swelled to 598. By August 25, 2009 there were over 1,300 fans of the Facebook page.

Resident Facebook users had plenty to share on the Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook page. Neighborhood crime in Boystown and in neighboring Lincoln Park became a novelty for local news outlets. Multiple articles appeared daily on the page's wall, chronicling mostly muggings, robberies, and theft as they happened. These included headlines like, "Chicago's Boystown organizes in response to mugging and robbery upsurge," "Another strong-arm robbery in Lincoln Park," "North Side Attack Spark Concerns: Packed Meeting and Midnight Marches on North Side," "2 Teens Charged in North Side Robbery," "Woman attacked, robbed in Lincoln Park alley," and "Boystown Fights Crime with Undies." These posts were followed by discussions of personal experiences of similar crimes, questions about the crimes, and comments providing additional

³ Boystown residents initially made up the majority of people using the Lakeview 9-1-1 page, however visitors and people who lived outside of the neighborhood eventually became engaged in the page (see Greene 2014). The comments and exchanges that I attend to in this work pertain to people who I knew were resident in Boystown. I either knew them personally, gleaned this information from their profile, or from their own postings and interactions on Facebook.

information and follow-up stories.

In addition to stories of crime within Boystown and its immediate vicinity, violent crime in Chicago became the focus for national and international news organizations following the city's bid for the 2016 Summer Olympics. CNN began extensive coverage of violent crime in an effort to uncover Chicago's extreme violence and inequality as the city tried to portray itself as world-class and a viable competitor for the international competition. Headlines like "Minority youngsters dying weekly on Chicago Streets" and "What's Fueling Chicago's violence" highlighted what was being covered on television.⁴ Their coverage only increased after the city made it to the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) shortlist on June 4, 2008.⁵ On August 23, 2009, CNN News Anchor Don Lemon claimed that Chicago was a "war zone" where more people were being killed than troops in Afghanistan.⁶ On September 24, 2009 high school student Albert Derrion was brutally beaten and killed on his way home from school and the video footage of his murder went viral, drawing even more attention to violence in Chicago.⁷ Criticism began to be directed at President Barrack Obama for not addressing crime in his home town

⁴ Mattingly, David. 2009. "Minority Youngers dying weekly in Chicago Streets." *CNN* (May 8); Cooper, Anderson. 2009. "What's Fueling Chicago's Violence?" *CNN: Anderson Cooper 360* (May 7).

⁵ Anti-crime protests in North Side lakefront neighborhoods coincided with protests against the 2016 Olympic bid, merging community resistances against racially charged anti-crime efforts and progressive anti-capitalist political fights. See, "Neighbors to Protest Violence in Uptown; Street Fights Were Reported Several Days Last Week." *CBS* (August 14, 2009); Jackson, Cheryl V. "Cops speak in Uptown on spike in violence." *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 19, 2009).

⁶ "First Family on Vacation; Chicago's Deadly Streets; Tackling Chicago Violence Nationally" CNN Newsroom. Don Lemon. August 23, 2009.

⁷ See "2016 Olympics: Did Derrion Albert Beating Footage Kill Chicago's Dream?" *CBS* (October 2, 2009).

quickly enough.⁸ On October 2, 2009, Chicago lost the Olympic bid and Rio de Janeiro was declared the winner.

While Boystown residents were riled up about crime happening in their own neighborhood, they were used to hearing about crime on Chicago's South Side—a part of the city that the majority of participants in my study who were Boystown residents never went to. Many of these stories never made it to the Lakeview 9-1-1 Page. However, on October 24, 2009 the kidnapping and murder of the mother, brother, and nephew of celebrity and gay icon Jennifer Hudson sent shockwaves through the local gay community and affirmed that no one was safe from the violence taking place in Chicago. In the nights following this high-profile murder that I spent at Roscoe's Tavern, the crime was continually brought up in conversations I had with other gay men. The “wave of violence” that was being reported seemed to be engulfing the entire city and taking with it the North Side neighborhoods where crime used to be able to go unnoticed.

After the Lincoln Park robberies in early August of 2009 (see Introduction), it seemed as though every violent crime that occurred in Boystown was sensationalized, covered by multiple sources, and became the talk of the town. This was amplified by digital multimedia, which provided stories, photos, and video being professionally produced by established local and national news organizations, as well as by emerging YouTube content creators who recorded crimes as they were happening and quickly posted these videos online. However, contrary to the flood of information and the perception of

⁸ "Chicago Crime: Obama's Failure Tied to Windy City's Violence." *Law Enforcement Examiner* (October 3, 2009); "Commentary: Obama's Silence on Chicago Crime." *CNN* (October 2, 2009).

increased crime in Boystown, statistics showed that reported crime⁹ actually declined from previous years in the 23rd District—the police district that covered most of Boystown at this time. This localized decline reflected an overall decline in reported crime throughout the city.¹⁰

In fact, in 2009 Boystown saw the lowest number of aggravated assaults and batteries, burglaries, motor vehicle thefts, and murders than had been reported in the previous three years. While reported robberies were lowest in 2006 and 2007, there were 23 less robberies in 2009 than there were in 2008. The only crime category that increased in 2009 was criminal sexual assault, which jumped from 21 in 2007, to 31 in 2008, and 43 in 2009 (see Appendix A). According to these official statistics (ClearPath), Boystown was one of the safest neighborhoods to live in the city proper.

Still, fear permeated the neighborhood. Among those in Boystown, there was an elevated feeling of endangerment that was exacerbated by their constant bombardment with reports of neighborhood violence. Gay men and lesbians who worked in the neighborhood, but who did not live in it, felt particularly vulnerable to walk to public

⁹ I distinguish *reported* crime here because many crimes committed against LGBTQ+ people are not reported to the police. Therefore, crime statistics do not always provide an accurate representation of crimes where LGBTQ people are victims, which in a gay neighborhood like Boystown we can assume are a significant portion of victims identity as LGBTQ. However, when looking at year-to-year-trends, the existence of such discrepancies does not affect my overall analysis.

¹⁰ On August 3, 2009, The *Chicago Sun-Times* reported that crime hot spots were shifting with north side districts seeing spikes in murders and other violence, even though the Town Hall District saw a nearly 9 percent decrease in crime from 2008 with a total of 1,558 crimes reported. The article also noted that the safest police districts in Chicago had women commanders. See, Konkol, Mark J. "Crime hot spots shifting: New Trends: Citywide rate is down, but W. Side, N. Side are seeing spikes in murders, other violence." *Chicago Sun-Times* (August 3, 2009).

transportation stops late at night after work. Social interactions between gay residents in the neighborhood that usually ended with a "goodbye" or some other friendly farewell, were being replaced with the warning to "be safe." More than that, residents developed strategies to prevent becoming the victim of a violent crime, which fundamentally altered the way they went about their daily lives. Residents began walking through the neighborhood in pairs or groups, especially at night employing the same tactics that black and brown transgender residents had already been using to avoid harassment by gay white men (see Chapter 3). Walking alone late at night became almost taboo. My fieldwork required me to frequently walk around the neighborhood alone late at night and in the early hours of the morning. Typically, this involved my usual route home from different neighborhood bars, clubs, or the 24-hour Starbucks that served as one of my offices and remote field stations. In August and September of 2009, I had four different interactions with strangers on the street, with different men saying to me, "Look he's scared cuz he's walking alone;" "You shouldn't be out here on these streets. It's dangerous;" "Should you be out here by yourself?" and "Do you want me to walk with you?" In the previous years that I lived in and visited the neighborhood, I never had any of these types of interactions.

In this context of fear, the Lakeview 9-1-1 Page became a valuable source of information and participation in the page was just another safety strategy for residents. The woman who initially created the Lakeview 9-1-1 was moved to do so after the CAPS Meeting on August 5, 2009 where she heard stories of unreported neighborhood violence that other residents shared. "We can't wait a month [until the next CAPS meeting] for an update from the police department to hear about the violence that is happening now," she

said as she passed around a sign-up sheet to the crowd that gathered outside of Nookies Tree. I also overheard her having conversations with other people crowded on the sidewalk about the need to inform residents about the times and locations of neighborhood CAPS meetings. Many residents were voicing their confusion about the CAPS meetings because Boystown had two different police districts, with Clark Street being the dividing line with the 23rd District to the east and the 19th District to the west, in addition to numerous different beats (see Figure 4).

Once Lakeview 9-1-1 was up and running, Boystown residents crafted a mission statement that stated the purpose of the page was to “bring together the Lakeview community to promote safe living through the involvement of our residents and local businesses.” As such, it was envisioned to serve as a digitized neighborhood watch program, offering a platform for residents to connect with each other and directly share the latest information on neighborhood crime. Thus, it was meant to operate as a sort of community-building platform that provided a more effective method of communication about local criminal activity than what was being offered by the CPD. Angry with the local police for allowing violent crime to permeate the neighborhood, the Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook Page also served to unseat the CPD as the only source of information about local crime and a method for creating an alternative, grassroots policing strategy.

Lakeview 9-1-1 was not only demonstrative of the dissatisfaction that residents had with the police, but also reflected police violence in the neighborhood and the CPD's contradictory relationship with Boystown's LGBTQ+ residents. Oscar, who lived a couple blocks north of the Town Hall police station and worked a couple blocks south of it detested the police. Unfortunately for him, he had to pass the station at least twice a day

as he traversed between his apartment and his job. Every time that he did, he would shout insults at the police if there were any officers outside the building. "Pigs!" "Disgusting swine!" "Sick motherfuckers!" He hurled these insults at police officers just loud enough so that they could hear them, but often looking in a different direction to avoid any type of confrontation. The police never responded to his verbal insults or even acknowledged him. Each time they ignored him and continued walking to wherever they were going, whether it was the police station or to their vehicles that were parked nearby.

The first time I walked with Oscar past the Town Hall station and witnessed his vocal disdain for the police, I was afraid that we would get arrested. I hushed him, pulled him by his arm, and increased my stride until we were out of the audible bounds of the police station. He laughed at me. I had no idea that this was part of his daily practice. He then told me how he felt about the police. He said,

The gay community's relationship with the police is like a grown-ass adult's psychotic relationship with their abusive father. They are old enough to speak out against them when they have done wrong and continue their abuse, but the rest of the time they are constantly seeking their approval. When the police are just present for them, they shower them with this contrived adoration and gratitude. "Oh, thank you for protecting us at the parade. Thank you for being here to show your support and make sure we're safe." No! They don't deserve that. That's the job they signed up for. They get paid to protect everyone and over and over again they abuse their power. I say, every day, those pigs can go fuck themselves!

Oscar's feelings about the police signified the ongoing conflict that LGBTQ+ people in Boystown had with the police, based on a long history of continued abuses on the one hand and the desire to be kept safe on the other.

Although most gay residents did not express the same level of disgust for the police as Oscar did, many were fearful of the police who continued discriminatory

policing practices. Of the gay men who participated in this study, eight reported to me that they became victims of violent crime during my four years of data collection, all being muggings where they were either beaten and robbed at gun-point or knife-point. None reported these crimes to the police. In their explanations of why they did not file a police report, all of them mentioned that they did not want to risk ill-treatment by officers. In addition, they also provided other explanations such as the inconvenience of dealing with the bureaucratic experience of crime reporting and not wanting to deal with anyone after experiencing such traumatic violence and just wanting to go home.

Boystown residents continued to experience violence at the hands of the police. In February of 2009, Officer Richard Fiorito was first accused of making a false DUI arrest of a gay driver who was not intoxicated.¹¹ Throughout the year, controversy ensued as more and more lawsuits were filed against Fiorito for making false DUI arrests and targeting gay and lesbian drivers in Boystown. By November, there were a reported 37 plaintiffs in federal and civil lawsuits against Fiorito. This incident spurred queer anti-policing protests and caused a resurfacing of distrust that LGBTQ+ residents had for the local police. Residents, thus, also used the Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook Page to monitor the police, posting photographs of police cars parked at the Dunkin' Donuts at Belmont Avenue and Clark Street and videos of police cars driving past crime as it happened.

At the same time and in an effort to improve police-resident relations, it was common practice for gay business owners and leaders of local LGBT community service

¹¹ Wooten, Amy. 2009. "Joint suit filed against alleged anti-gay, racketeering cop." *Chicago Free Press* (August 6).

organizations to frequently praise the police for the work they were doing to make the neighborhood safe. Many officers were actively involved in the Center on Halsted's Youth Program, where they would play basketball and get to know some of the teenagers who were out in the streets. Openly gay police officers also walked through the neighborhood during the day and made acquaintances with many of the employees of business on the North Halsted Strip. Rather than take a stand against the police, this made some residents clamor for increased policing, voicing concerns instead over furloughs and inadequate police funding due to the economic recession.

The Lakeview 9-1-1 site quickly created a new culture of citizen surveillance and morphed into a space specifically for racialized surveillance (Browne 2015), where residents surveilled the neighborhood's homeless population, sex workers, and people of color who hung out on the streets (see Appendix C). In *Dark Matters*, Simone Browne defined racializing surveillance as "a technology of social control where surveillance practices, policies, and performances concern the production of norms pertaining to race and exercise a power to define what is in or out of place" (2015: 16). Through consumer surveillance technologies, including cameras and smartphones, residents not only surveilled people on the streets, but they also documented their lives in the neighborhood and shared this information publicly. The practices included the creation of dehumanizing posts meant to publicly shame unwanted behavior and move residents to rid the neighborhood of these behaviors and the people responsible for them. Invariably, these targets were racialized black and brown bodies.

Unlike gentrification by wealthy heterosexual residents, which Boystown's gay residents felt was out of their control, they felt empowered to control black and brown

bodies through surveillance practices and thwart crime through community policing. Crime surpassed concerns over gentrification and provided a framework of safety that worked to unify Boystown residents across identities against what they perceived as a common threat to their lives. It was within this framework that Boystown residents and local business owners responded to neighborhood crime with a campaign to "take back" the neighborhood. The crimes merely provided a catalyst for those living in the neighborhood to band together against the change they were seeing in the neighborhood, while collectively embracing the criminalization of the poor and people of color.

Thus, in addition to stories produced by local and national news organizations, residents shared stories of their own. While walking around in neighborhood parks on August 16, 2009, one Boystown resident took photographs of homeless people to show them "taking up space" to his digital audience. He strategically sequenced his posts, mixing photographs of black homeless people and drug paraphernalia that littered the sidewalks (i.e. empty small plastic bags with remnants of what appeared to be tobacco and a disposed heroin needle) with captions that allowed him to craft a visual story that connected the neighborhood's homeless population to both drug use and a deteriorating neighborhood that was unsuitable for families. These captions, which read, "Someone rolled a blunt here," "Dime bags left in Kelly Park," "A family trying to enjoy the park," "Homeless, not harmless," and "One of our local homeless," were geared towards shaming the neighborhood's homeless population. His photographs were part of a post that said, "As the weather warms, we will see an increase in all the undesirable activities we all complain about. Let's keep up the pressure, and keep our streets and parks safe." Such surveillance practices aimed at maintaining neighborhood safety became the

techniques for reproducing racism.

In post after post, residents shared discriminatory images detailing their personal experiences of violence. Together, these posts portrayed a neighborhood inundated with violence, while redefining crime and criminalizing black and brown bodies as the perpetrators of violence. Within this digital arena, residents openly focused their blame on young LGBTQ+ people of color for making the neighborhood unsafe, un-welcoming, and inhabitable. Even though loitering was not a crime as defined by the city of Chicago during the time of my fieldwork, it was the most contentious issue facing Boystown residents and business owners who banded together to stop it. As one resident posted on the Lakeview 9-1-1 page, "The kids outside of Pie Hole are being loud and disruptive. It's bad for business." In an effort to police loitering, residents made the case that it was through loitering that all other crimes were made possible, from drug dealing to violent assault.

On September 4, 2009, one resident posted a photo of a young black woman squatting next to a pile of trash. The resident said, "Our alley, as we've said before is home to MANY of the prostitutes (or at least a dark alley long enough to turn a trick) this one has made it his/her changing closet as well." On September 9, 2009, another resident shared a photo of a blood-splattered sidewalk and said,

These are the groups of people that keep getting complaints, on here, to the police, at the CAPS meetings etc. They were not underage, they had not been at an establishment, they were just "hanging" out on the street in a group of 15-20 at 2:45 am. As seen time and time again, these groups carry weapons, albeit a knife, it is still a weapon and obviously they are not afraid to use it. Is this really what we want happening on the street? OUR STREET? Yes, they maybe aren't the ones mugging people, but they are part of the problem nonetheless.

Following this post, on September 20, 2009, a different resident shared a photo of a

shattered car window and claimed, "Last night in front of my home a gang of kids vandalized 8 cars on the bock of Sunnyside and Hazel!"

The most frequent photographs and videos were aerial shots, taken from the windows and balconies of the apartments and condominiums that towered over North Halsted Street and Belmont Avenue. Videos of large crowds of young black bodies hanging out in the streets and voguing down the sidewalks were posted, as was footage of fights breaking out on the streets; representing the policing of black joy (Smith 2015) and the simultaneous condemnation of blackness (Muhammad 2010). A Boystown resident and prominent drag queen posted a video of young black people hanging outside the neighborhood's late-night Subway sandwich shop across the street from his apartment and said, "Garbage ghetto Whores... allowed to litter up our neighborhood. I wonder if the press would be interested? What is so great about subway? This is EVERY NIGHT.... GO HOME. It's raining you loud mouthed idiots." In another post, another Boystown resident asked, "Since when did Boystown become the Gay Southside?... seiously! bitchez is too po' and young ta get in da clubz so dey make da streetz dey club :P!" To which, another resident replied, "i noticed that on sundays too. just gaggles of hoodlums at every corner acting all loud and crazy."

On August 22, 2009, I decided to go for a bicycle ride on the lakefront path. Usually, I used the pedestrian tunnels that connected the neighborhood to Waveland Park. However, on this day, I opted to bike down Belmont Avenue—a direct street route to Belmont Harbor that avoided the summer pedestrian traffic of the sidewalks that connected to the lakefront. As I passed Broadway Street, the intersection was backed up with a string of automobiles lined up bumper to bumper at a complete stop. Six cop cars,

with their lights flashing, along with a news van, were huddled in front of the Broadway Youth Center (BYC)¹² blocking traffic in both directions. The police lined up a large group of young people of color along storefront windows of Chipotle, while diners peered out from the other side as they glutinously ate their overstuffed burritos. I stood at the corner amongst other pedestrians and employees of local businesses who stepped outside to watch what was unfolding. I asked if any of them knew what was going on and no one had any idea. Once the police and news crew left the scene and the young people went into the BYC, I also left without knowing what actually happened.

By the time I got home a couple hours later, Facebook users were already posting about the incident on their personal profile pages, as well as on the Lakeview 9-1-1 page. These posts prompted comments and threads condemning the neighborhood's "street youth" as a source of gang violence in Boystown. Later that evening, similar sentiments were shared amongst patrons at Roscoe's Tavern who also talked about the incident. While sipping on a rum and coke, one man huddled around his friends and told them that he heard a gang fight broke out between two kids from the South Side, leading to numerous arrests and the temporary closing of the center. This gossip prompted me to contact Jennifer, a self-identified white lesbian who worked at the BYC, as soon as I got home.

I asked her if she was aware of what happened and if she could give me more

¹² The Broadway Youth Center, located at 3179 N. Broadway Street, was a community center that offered drop-in services, STD/HIV testing, medical services, and counseling to people aged 12-24, providing a "safe space" for young people experiencing homelessness.

information. Although she was not at the BYC at the time of the incident, she found out from a co-worker that it was a minor altercation between two teenagers. She said,

Some youth were having a fight outside. There were a few staff members there trying to deescalate the situation. Fights happen sometimes, but the staff is really good at intervening. Apparently, someone in the neighborhood called the cops and reported that there was gang activity. So all they came and lined everyone up, including the staff who were out there, and patted them down. Luckily, they didn't arrest anyone.

People in the neighborhood, especially local business owners are really hostile towards youth. My co-worker told me that they are even trying to close down the BYC and The Center on Halsted's Youth Programs, which seems like it would be pretty difficult to do, but who knows?

Jennifer assured me that the gossip that was circulating through the neighborhood, both digitally and on the ground, did not accurately reflect what really happened in front of the BYC.

The anti-youth rhetoric incorporated anti-social-service rhetoric both online and on the streets as residents worked to solidify Boystown as a space for middle-class (white) consumption. Conversations between residents that took place openly in neighborhood coffeeshops, bars, and community centers not only placed blame on Boystown's "street youth" for the neighborhood's increase in violent crime and the deteriorating safety of Boystown's residents. But they also pointed to the neighborhood's social service organizations as the root cause. At Sidetrack, I overheard a man say to his friends, "These so-called community centers are bringing in all kinds of unwanted elements into our neighborhood." A conversation ensued between the group of gay men about the need to increase policing in the neighborhood and start making arrests for loitering.

Tensions between Boystown's "street youth" and neighborhood residents across

race, class, gender, and sexuality had been steadily growing since the completion of the Center on Halsted in 2007, which served as a resource for young LGBTQ+ people in need from throughout the city. From 2007 to 2008, during the Center on Halsted's first year in operation, participation in the Youth Program grew from 292 to 646 individual participants, 25% of whom were homeless.¹³ As a result of the success of its youth outreach and social programming, which resulted in a larger presence of young black and brown bodies in the neighborhood, the Center was singled-out and condemned by Boystown residents as the conduit for criminal activity and the reason why the neighborhood was disintegrating into violent chaos.

In March of 2009, months before warm weather brought the perennial issue of increased neighborhood crime, I interviewed my neighbor Tad, a 26-year-old self-identified gay white man who had lived in the neighborhood all of his life. While discussing gentrification and how the neighborhood has transformed over the years, he discussed how the Center on Halsted changed the racial dynamic of the neighborhood. He said,

Something has definitely changed in the past two years. Ever since the Center on Halsted opened, you see a lot more people come here [to Boystown] who do not live here. More than ever before. A lot of people who live here don't like that. Not just straight people, but gay people too. They just don't feel safe in the streets. I'm not saying that the queer youth, or whatever, who hang out in the streets are the problem, but there are a lot of people who seem to think that they are.

Even though Tad was aware and even critical of the racialized animosity surrounding

¹³ Center on Halsted *2008 Annual Report*; Center on Halsted *2009 Annual Report*; Center on Halsted *Centerfolds: Fall 2009*.

young people of color in Boystown, he still believed that the Center on Halsted had altered the racial dynamics of the neighborhood.

Residents began to believe that young criminals would hang out at the Center on Halsted during the day and then wait to rob people leaving the bars and clubs at night. Rumors swirled about the youth programs and the problems they were causing, within both the neighborhood and within the Center itself. During a conversation with a gay male employee at a local boutique, he said,

They act like how they are treated in their own neighborhoods and they try to intimidate white gay men. It's a continuous cycle. When you police them, they act like criminals and then they are further treated like outcasts by some of the community. These black street youth disrespect establishments. They were stealing the new Macs in the Center [on Halsted] and they had to have a security guard nanny them for the first four months. There's also a group of them that comes by here and they hit and spit on the windows over and over again. It's like they do their rounds and the cops don't do anything.

I don't care if they come to our neighborhood for social services, but they should at least be respectful.

By linking criminal activity in the neighborhood to purported criminal activity within the Center on Halsted, this employee was building a case against the Center on Halsted, while positioning theft from the Center, as a theft from the community.

Residents also spread rumors that the Center on Halsted's youth programs and staff were racist. During an interview I conducted with Joseph, a 33-year old white gay male resident of Boystown, he asked me, "Did you know that the Center on Halsted makes all of the black kids in their youth group use the back door, so that the rich white people don't have to see them?" When I first heard this accusation, it came as a shock to me since visiting the Center on Halsted was an almost daily ritual for me. I volunteered at the Center on Halsted's senior program, conducted many of my interviews there, and used

the lobby as a site for participant observation. However, after hearing the same rumor from four other participants within a couple of weeks, I decided to look into it and ask one of my informants who was a director at the Center on Halsted.

It turned out LGBTQ+ young people did in fact use the back door. However, it was not because the Center wanted to make the lobby a more comfortable space for the "rich white people eating their prepared meals from Whole Foods," as one participant explained. Rather, it was because many of these people were not open about their sexuality, gender identity, or status as HIV-positive. The back door served as an alternative entrance to access youth services that could be used to reduce the risk of being outed or feeling uncomfortable walking through the public, and often very busy, lobby. they could use for additional privacy if they chose to do so. Residents inherently understood the workings of neoliberal racial capitalism and were using its logic to frame the Center on Halsted through these small attempts to discredit the institution and its youth programs.

Attempts to incriminate the vulnerable population of young LGBTQ+ people who came to the Center on Halsted for its services were not limited to rumor and rhetoric. Residents also organized to protest the organizations that offered them support. In late July of 2009, parents of children who attended the Inter-American Elementary Magnet School at 851 W. Waveland Avenue posted flyers on cars that were parked around the Center on Halsted that read,

You may have witnessed on Tuesday evening, July 28, 2009 at approximately 7:15 p.m., a large fight consisted of approximately 10-20 men reupted on Waveland Avenue, between Freemont and Halsted Streets. An innocent girl was knocked to the ground. Fortunately, she was not injured but was emotionally stressed.

The fight was partially a result of ongoing loitering and drug problems brought about by the Center on Halsted and the individuals gathering daily/nightly outside the Center. These individuals loiter in front of the Center on Halsted, primarily along the Waveland Avenue side, making it very uncomfortable and often scary to walk by. They also travel in groups down Waveland and Freemont Streets and congregate in front of and behind the Inter-American School...

The loitering and the crime associated with the center is directly affecting the quality of life in OUR neighborhood. Individuals living near the Center are seriously considering a move because of the noise, nuisance and vulgar behavior that are exhibited on a daily/nightly basis. Families are afraid to walk with their children near the Center for fear of what may erupt or words that may be heard...

Something needs to be done to control these issues, making our streets safe again for neighborhood families and residents... (See Appendix E).

This example of resident-crafted "scare literature" (Davis 1998: 230) not only typified young LGBTQ+ people of color as dangerous invaders, but also marked the beginning of an intensifying trend for neighborhood residents to organize against young LGBTQ+ people, particularly those of color who needed social services. This movement against young LGBTQ+ people of color *and* the neighborhood's social service organizations was also spreading on the Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook page (See Figure 21).

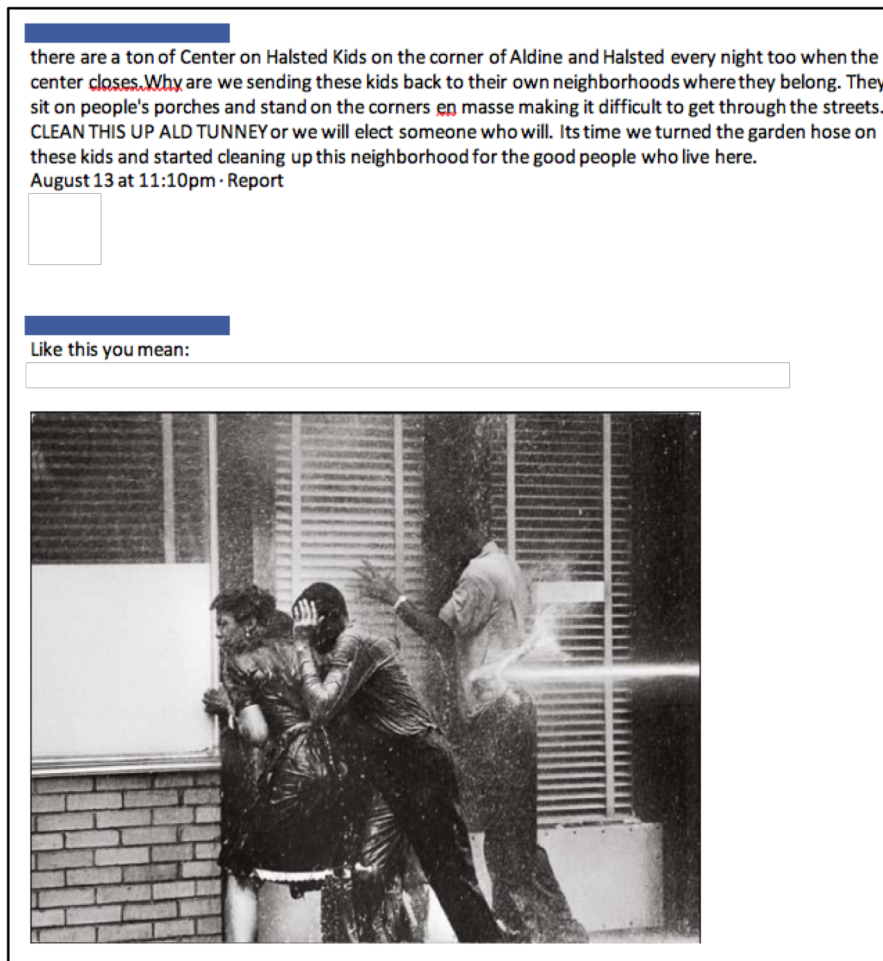


Figure 19. Racist Post on Lakeview 9-1-1 Facebook Page: Facebook posts on the Lakeview 9-1-1 Page, demonstrating one of the ways in which racist rhetoric and imagery was shared. The names of the Facebook users have been redacted.

As this discourse infiltrated the neighborhood and the consciousness of its residents, all of the neighborhood's well-known social service organizations that provided services to LGBTQ+ young people of color faced threats from neighborhood residents. These discursive practices not only reinforced a very specific mode of capital production where only consumption is acceptable, but they also worked to dismantle fragile, long-standing social welfare organizations. Another organization that residents moved to remove was the Night Ministry. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, especially during warm nights of the year, the intersection at Halsted Street and Belmont Avenue was often

crowded with homeless people and at-risk youth (Dwyer 2014) who used the services provided by the Night Ministry. For decades, this bus parked near the intersection and provided food and services to those in need, including the distribution of personal hygiene products and condoms, HIV-testing, and support services to homeless LGBT youth. It was in the milieu of Boystown being threatened by crime that the Night Ministry was framed as the cause of neighborhood crime.

This anti-crime and anti-youth discourse facilitated and sustained action on the ground, which took the form of late-night community walks, the first of which I detailed in the introduction. These performances, led by suited police officers, were ineffective in curtailing crime.¹⁴ However, the walks continued though because, as one police officer said, "it's a feel-good thing" that made residents feel empowered. This feeling of empowerment through community action was expressed by Rochelle Montel, a prominent African American drag queen. As I approached my apartment after the first walk, I stood outside of Hydrate with a small group of gay men who also participated.

¹⁴ As an example of the ineffectiveness of these walks in deterring crime, on July 2, 2011, during a community walk that was met with significant protest, a group of people beat up a young man who, badly injured, ended up in the same parking lot where the walking group and protestors were located. When the ambulance arrived, he refused medical care (see Barlow 2011). Additionally, 24-hours after the "dramatic showdown" (Sosin 2011) between walkers and protestors and only a block south, a 25 year-old African American gay man was walking down Halsted Street at 11:54 p.m. when he was approached by a small group of gay young adults who called him a "gay slur." After a heated exchange of words, the young man was attacked, stabbed five times in the stomach, and beaten so hard he suffered a collapsed lung. A Boystown resident filmed the attack from the safety of a condominium patio and he quickly posted it to YouTube. The video went viral and gained national attention.

There, we talked to Rochelle Montel, who shared with me her perspective of the community walks through her understanding of the power of drag. She said,

We are all running around here scared and we need to be visible. The cops see me when they speak to the owners of Hydrate. They know me because I stand out. I'm visible. Therefore, I use it to my advantage and the cops don't bother me. They don't mean the same thing to me as they do for other people. It's the power of presence.

Rochelle Montel's understanding of the community walks reflected the ideology of the Gay Rights Movement that there is power in visibility, and in this particular application, visibility produced the power to prevent crime in the neighborhood. The idea was, by having a visible presence on the streets, criminals would be less inclined to commit a crime.

Similarly, before the second community walk was held, the Executive Director of the North Halsted Business Alliance, explained what the community walks were to someone on the Facebook 9-1-1 page:

... the walks involve residents, business owners or employees, and the police. We walk up and down both sides of Halsted in a show of solidarity to let any potential criminal element know that they are being watched. We ask people not to confront anyone if they see something, but to point it out to the police who are with us so that the authorities can deal with it.

It was through this feeling of solidarity that the walks also provided participants with a feeling that they were doing something good for the community. It was in essence a practice of community service. This feeling of community, of all being active participants in the safe neighborhood project together, emboldened some participants to act on their racism, as they felt supported by the community. At one point during the community walk, a man turned to me and asked, "Doesn't it just feel great that we all came together to protect our neighborhood from outsiders who want to do us harm? That we are all here

because we care about our neighborhood?" Thus, it is through these practices that community-making and its affects, like placemaking, are bound to processes of racialization and racism.

Within a week these community walks were renamed "positive loitering" in direct opposition to the practices of loitering that residents were so eager to control. Boystown residents borrowed the name from similar movements that were blossoming in Uptown after a video depicting a gang fight went viral. With the name change, the failed goals of deterring crime and raising awareness through visibility that were associated with the community walks transformed into having a "positive presence" in the neighborhood, which was fixated on changing the public behaviors of young LGBTQ+ people of color who were out on streets of Boystown. One resident even suggested passing out "nice, brand-name clothes so that the poor and homeless youth can at least look like they fit in" as an alternative method for making the neighborhood feel safe for white consumers, making black and brown bodies non-threatening through by performing familiar cultural modes of consumption. This discursive change in community policing not only marked the full integration of racist ideologies into the neighborhood's methods of community-based policing, but it also showed the power of neoliberal multicultural subjectivity to shape life within the neighborhood.

5.2 The Anti-Youth Movement's Subtle Racial Shifts

The racist rhetoric that emerged during the summer of 2009 has persisted since the 1980s as the focus of crime against gay men in New Town continued to transition away from gang violence and towards young men, more generally. In 1986, the Director of Research for the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force was quoted in the *Chicago*

Tribune as saying,

My impression is there has been a fairly constant level of anti-gay violence for the last several years. It's centered, so far as we get information, in the New Town area the center of the gay ghetto of Chicago. There are gaggles of young men, not necessarily gangs, who attack gay men."¹⁵

This quote not only points to the perpetuity of violent crime in New Town, but it also demonstrates how contemporary racist subjectivities and community policing strategies as based on historical contingencies. The shift from gangs to gaggles is not merely a rhetorical one but also represents a historical shift in the way that racialized bodies have been locally constructed as violent threats. The perception that any young man, not just young men with gang affiliations, pose a threat to do harm upon gay neighborhood residents represents an ongoing expansion of those locally defined as threatening, which has continued to expanded to include LGBTQ+ people of color.

During an interview with Shane, self-identified gay Chicago native who lived in the neighborhood his entire adult life, he explained to me what the neighborhood was like as gay men first started coming up from Old Town in the early years of the Gay Liberation Movement following the Stonewall Rebellion. He said,

In the early 1970s, there used to be this gentleman who had a bar called the Glory Hole down in Old Town. He decided he was going to open a bar, this is early 70s, right at the intersection of Clark and Belmont... He was open for probably about a week and he got a warning from one of the gangs. They didn't want to find a bar up here. And he just ignored it and didn't bother telling the police. So, um, the next time they came in, they walked in the door, they went up to one of the, uh, patrons sittin' at the bar, grabbed his ear, and with a knife cut off just the tip of his ear. He

¹⁵ Coates, James. 1986. "AIDS Backlash Gets Violent, Gays Say." *Chicago Tribune* (October 26).

closed the bar and left. He told the police and he never re-opened... That was really early 1973... 1974. So the gangs were still here then.

Shane and I sat at Melrose Restaurant, an iconic vintage diner at the intersection of Melrose Avenue and North Broadway Street that was known for its pancake specials.¹⁶ We drank coffee and talked, while people consistently interrupted the conversation—from the waitress, to neighbors who stopped by the table for a brief chat. Despite the interruptions and the loud clanging of dishes and silverware, Shane managed to tell me about the mindset of coming up to the dangerous parts of Lake View, including North Halsted Street, from Old Town and the Near North.

Shane continued to describe how he and other gay men navigated the neighborhood in the midst of fear and violence. He said,

You just kind of knew that certain neighborhoods you didn't go in... there were certain areas. It was something you just accepted. You just knew you didn't go west of Broadway. It was just something you didn't do. And if you did, you took a cab or you went to an intersection. And then when that part cleared up, then you still didn't go west of Halsted Street. It was just that era.

According to Shane, the neighborhood started to feel safe enough to walk around in in the late 1970s, once gentrification started to change the feel of the neighborhood and the gangs were gone. As more bars opened-up along North Halsted Street, it felt safer to take the side streets and to walk west of Broadway Street. Personal and collective safety was one of the anticipated benefits and purposes of this kind of gay visibility achieved through the gay neighborhood project.

However, this feeling of safety through gentrification was fleeting. As the

¹⁶ The Melrose Diner closed in 2018.

increased visibility of lesbians and gay men came to define Lake View, experiences of anti-gay violence in the area increased. While the gangs that once claimed the area did not pose the same threat they once did along North Halsted Street and Clark Street, gay men in the neighborhood identified a new threat: young men and teenage boys. The first front-page crime story to make headlines that I was able to uncover in the archives at the Gerber-Hart Library appeared in *GayLife* on August 29, 1975. The article featured sketches of two men who repeatedly mugged gay men outside of different bars in New Town (see Figure 22). The article described the two men in quite flattering terms:

Two young men... ages approximately 19 and 20... The one called "David" is slender, medium height, has very dark hair, a clear complexion, and a slight beard. He is considered extremely good looking, and tends to be violent at times.... They both dress extremely well...¹⁷

According to this article, the two men would enter gay bars, pretend to be quarrelling lovers or drug dealers, and entice gay men out of the club to mug them. As gay sociality became more defined by gay bars and gay visibility, ruses like the one these men played to attack gay men created a new sense of caution within gay spaces as gay men negotiated their safety within developing gay spaces of consumption.

¹⁷ *GayLife* 1, no. 6 (August 29): 1.

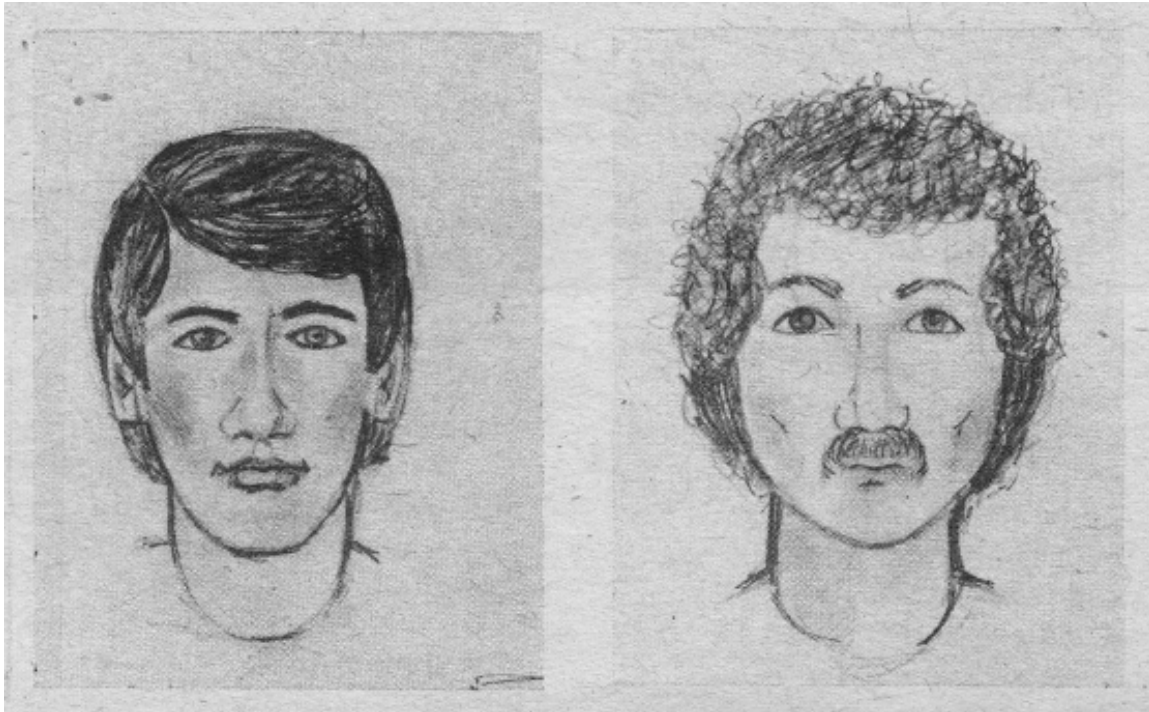


Figure 20. Sketches of Muggers: Sketches of muggers published on the front page of *GayLife* on August 29, 1975.¹⁸

Between 1978 and 1979, local news coverage of anti-gay attacks increased. Stories of brutal muggings and attacks on gay men were reported in all of the city's major gay publications and they increasingly included references to the young ages of those who perpetrated the crimes. A more direct anti-youth rhetoric developed as violent crime committed against gay men in New Town became a central issue. The following three excerpts from *Gay Crusader* and *GayLife* chronicled a few crimes that took place along

¹⁸These sketches are a stark comparison to contemporary mugshots that are often published within hours of a criminal suspect being taken into custody, marking a shift in how visual media around criminality has become increasingly racialized through visual communication technologies (e.g. digital cameras, surveillance technologies, and the Internet). These technological changes have fundamentally altered how crime is reported to the public and have provided a new way through which bodies are racialized, criminalized, and dehumanized.

the North Broadway Corridor in New Town and describe their young assailants:

August 25, 1978¹⁹

Four youths who attacked two men at 2935 N. Broadway on August 22 at 12:10 am were apprehended through the cooperation of the police and a whistle-blowing bystander. Observing the attack, the passerby blew his whistle and attracted the attention of an unmarked police car. The police arrived on the scene and took both victims on a tour of the area in an effort to identify their assailants. The four youths were apprehended at 3001 N. Pine Grove; four others who participated in the attack escaped by fleeing east on Oakdale. The four defendants have been charged with battery.

December 1, 1978²⁰

A New Town resident was attacked on Nov. 25 for the second time in three weeks by area youths. The man was walking west on Barry between Broadway and Pine Grove at approximately 10:30 pm when approached by four youths asking for money; three of the youths were described as Caucasian and one Hispanic, all about "15 – 16 years of age." When he refused to "loan" them funds, the victim was taunted and struck with sticks. He later filed a police report and was treated at Columbus Hospital for cuts and bruises. ... In the early morning hours of Sunday, Nov. 5, the same man was attacked in a similar incident which also occurred on Barry Street; the assailants in the two incidents, however, were not the same individuals.

May 18, 1979²¹

Two men were attacked on Sunday May 13 at Broadway and Wellington after attending the evening service at the Good Shepherd Parish/Metropolitan Community Church. Gary Phillips and Chuck Patterson had left the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ at 615 W. Wellington (where MCC meets) and were walking north on the east side of Broadway when a car approached them. Four youths jumped out of the vehicle, grabbed the two men and struck and kicked them while calling them "faggots" and other abusive terms...."

The proliferation of gay publications like *GayLife*, *Gay Crusader*, and *Gay Chicago*

News allowed for a new publicization of local anti-gay attacks and their accounts. It also

¹⁹ *Gay Crusader*.

²⁰ *Gay Crusader*.

²¹ 1979. "'ZG 3996' Attacks two men." *GayLife*, (May 18).

put lesbians and gay men in control of the narrative, which gradually shifted away from accounts of violence that identified criminals as gang members towards accounts of violence that identified criminals as young men generally.

In a city ravaged by inflation, the increase in urban crime led young people to be singled-out as an urban problem. To solve this problem, city leaders began developing new ways to criminalize, police, and prosecute young people who engaged in criminal activity. In 1977, Alderman Richard F. Mell of the 33rd Ward pushed for a special court to deal with cases involving youth gangs and violent crime. "It has been witnessed that young thugs are a plague to many areas of the city in perpetuating vandalism and obscenities not only on the gay population, but the general public as well."²² This push was the direct result of a new crime panic that was spreading through the gay community, (see Figure 23), as gay men in New Town feared and confronted white teenage "fag beaters" resident in the neighborhood.²³

As this crime panic spread, shock waves were sent through Chicago's gay community in December of 1978 after the bodies of 27 boys and young men were uncovered from the Norwood Park residence of serial killer and rapist John Wayne Gacy.²⁴ As it became known that Gacy preyed on gay men and allegedly visited gay bars throughout the city, the Cook County Sheriff's Office used local gay publications to publicly solicit for help

²² 1977. "Chicago Edits: Youth in the City." *Gay Chicago News* (August 12): 2.

²³ Damski, Jon-Henri. 1980. "Jon-Henri Damski's Nothing Personal." *Gay Chicago News* 3, no. 31 (August 7): 6-8.

²⁴ Additional bodies were recovered from Gacy's residence, however the excavation of bodies was temporarily postponed due to severe winter snowfall and resumed in March of 1979.

identifying Gacy's victims.²⁵ In 1979, it was reported in *GayLife* that one of Gacy's victims was Russell Nelson, a gay man who was last seen in 1977 on the 3100 block of North Broadway Street.²⁶ As the horrific details of these murders came to light after Gacy's confession and the resulting investigation, anti-gay violence became part of a new national awareness.

²⁵ Kelley, William B. 1979. "Tribune alters policy of Gacy coverage in response to IGRTF." *GayLife* 4, no. 29 (January 5): 3.

²⁶ "Two Gacy victims reported missing in *GayLife*." *GayLife* 4, no. 30 (January 12, 1979): 3.

Nothing Personal

VIOLENCE IN NEW TOWN

by Jon-Henri Damski

"I don't like what's going on in New Town. It scares me."

"What do you mean?"

"All these beatings, the violence I read about in the gay and straight newspapers."

"Have you ever been attacked?"

"No. But now I'm scared I might be. I don't wear my jewelry anymore when I go out. A friend of mine knows a guy who was attacked up near Montrose. They cut his arm with a broken bottle. And now he has lost the use of his right arm."

"Was he attacked because he was gay?"

"No. They wanted his money and jewels. But I have heard and read about Blondie, and the gangs that beat up gays in New Town."

"But the police arrested Blondie, didn't they? He's been put away."

"I don't know. I've never read that. I just know there are a lot of toughs out beating up on gays."

"OK. But if you never have been attacked, and none of your friends ever has been attacked, why are you scared?"

"It's reading about the violence every week, headlines in the newspapers. And in our own gay newspaper. I'm an American. I work in advertising in the Loop. I'm 43 and look much younger. I'm in good shape. I can pass in most crowds and no one ever knows I'm gay."

"But, the other night on Clark Street, a kid was walking with his girl friend and they both called me 'fag'. It scared me. How did they know?"

"Perhaps, it was because you were a single male walking alone in the gay ghetto. A

lucky guess."

"Yes. But that means I'm not safe on the streets anymore. They know."

"You don't have to play it alone. There's WhistleSTOP."

"Yes. I went to one of their meetings. And I just didn't feel comfortable. They are not me. I mean the people there. Most of them seemed to be unemployed, or fully occupied in gay causes. I couldn't identify with them. It's good they are protecting themselves, but I just didn't feel they were protecting me. I really couldn't trust them."

"I see your point. I don't know if I can trust them either. I know they are working for the cause and think they are doing right. And somebody has to do it, be our leader, talk to the police, etc. . . ."

"I've been on the streets all my life. There always is violence. A year and a half ago, my friend got beaten up, a broken arm, by a fag hater and owner of a well-known restaurant in New Town. He has sued and prosecuted the man. He tried to get his story published in the gay newspaper. They wouldn't publish it. A minor incident, a personal affair, they said. But now, they are publishing all kinds of stories, beatings of both gays and straights, both inside and outside of the ghetto. Gay violence has become the new wave fad in journalism."

"I agree. And I suspect they are over-reporting it."

"And another point. Frankly, all these imperatives turn me off. 'If attacked, do this. Don't do that! Call this number! Take down that number!' It's like going to bed with a guy who keeps saying: 'Turn on the lights. Turn off the lights. Don't kiss me on the lips.' It's the imperative attitude of our leaders that turns me off."

"And, ironically, I think they've got their story out of focus. Just as we are winning our sexual freedom, just as homosexuality is being tried, practiced, or tolerated by the majority of the young, a few impotent thugs come out to bully and bluff us. And what do our leaders do? Embellish the boogie man stories and scare us back into old morality."

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Figure 21. Damski Violence Column: Jon-Henri Damski's "Nothing Personal" column from *Chicago Gay News*, which detailed perceptions of anti-gay violence in New Town and includes a critical perspective of how a culture of fear developed in New Town. (August 13, 1978).

However, biased reporting that identified Gacy as a “homosexual” led to additional worries of homophobic violence. Occurring only five years after American Psychological Association (APA) removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), lesbians and gay men organized to combat homophobia spread through reporting bias. The Illinois Gay Rights Task Force (IGRTF) held a news conference to “present a gay and lesbian perspective of the John Gacy case.”²⁷ At this conference, speakers distinguished between consenting sex between adult partners and sexual assault in an effort to differentiate homosexuality from criminal behavior. They also discussed the victimization of gay youth by “dangerous drug dealers, exploiters, and criminals, including murderers” and asked for increased funding for alternative social settings and meaningful social services specifically for gay youth. Thus, while an anti-youth rhetoric was developing to combat crime in New Town, lesbians and gay men worked to differentiate gay youth and spotlight their victimization.

New Town’s gay residents had a contentious relationship with the police at the time. The Town Hall police district, which patrolled New Town, became notorious for their police raids, corruption, and general hostility towards gay men and lesbians. In 1967, the *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* reported that any gay man walking near the Town Hall precinct was likely to be arrested and charged with loitering.²⁸ The following year, over 300 people protested an officer who continued to work at the precinct after he was

²⁷ Kulieke, Stephen. "IGRTF Presents Gacy Perspective." *GayLife* 3, no. 30 (Friday January 12, 1979).

²⁸ *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* 2, no. 10 (October 1967).

indicted for murdering a 19-year-old New Town resident.²⁹ In 1973, the Town Hall police district was investigated by the federal government for police corruption after repeated complaints from gay groups, particularly Mattachine Midwest, of alleged prostitution and public indecency frameups.³⁰ As a result, 24 policemen were federally indicted in connection with alleged tavern shakedowns.³¹ Warnings and exposés about the police targeting gay men and lesbians were regularly published in local gay publications throughout the 1970s (see Figure 24).³² Despite this exposure, the CPD continued systematically harassing Chicago's gay community well into the 1980s.³³

²⁹ *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter*, "Town Hall is on Fire," July and August 1968: 5 and September 1968: 2.

³⁰ *The Advocate* 122 (October 10, 1973): 18. At this time, the Town Hall Police District was also known as the 19th District.

³¹ *The Advocate*. 1973. "Gay Payoffs: Evidence Furnished in indictments of Chicago cops."

³² See "Two cops notorious among gays," *Gay Crusader* 3 (Jul 1974): 3; "Beware of Hot Weather Spots" by William B. Kelley July 1970; "The Arrest of the Homosexual in Chicago" by Chris Hansen (December 1971): 5.

³³ In 1983, the CPD began to work with the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force to enhance the relationship between the police and gay men and lesbians. See "Police seminars set." *GayLife* (March 17, 1983): 4.

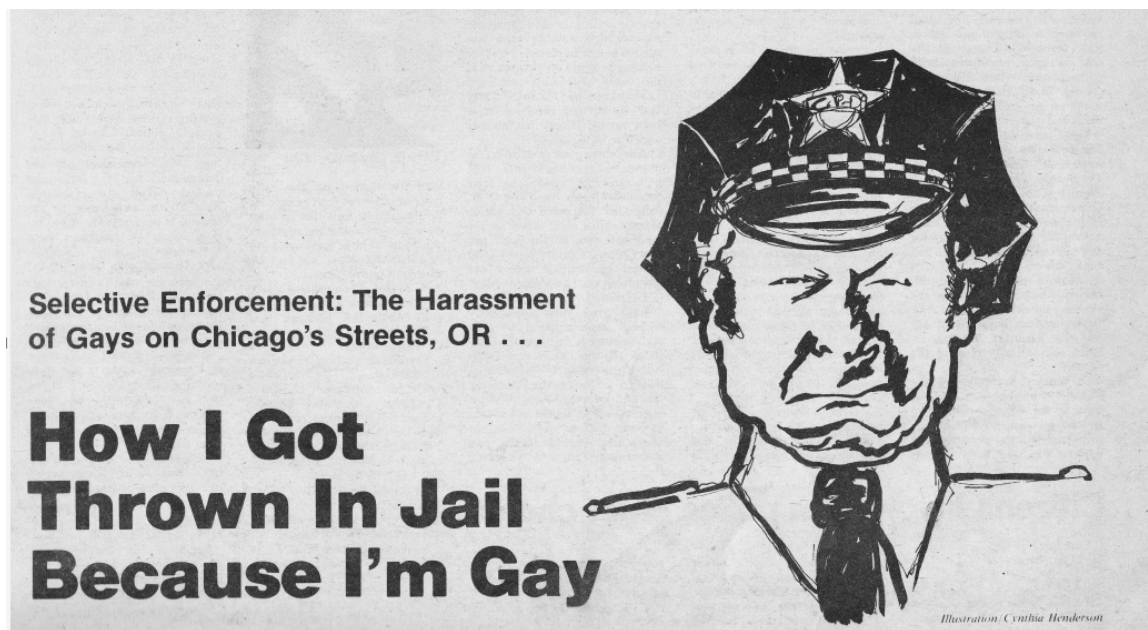


Figure 22. Police Violence Headline: Headline of a front-page exposé that chronicled police abuses targeting gay men in Chicago published in *GayLife* in 1977.³⁴

With lesbian and gay residents being distrustful of the CPD, calls from gay business owners in New Town for increased policing were met with resistance from gay residents. One such contestation occurred in 1979, when the owner of Merlyn's Lounge on Broadway Street alleged at a meeting of the South East Lakeview Neighbors Council that his business suffered from the rampant prostitution that took place on the street and gay vigilante groups who preyed on his customers. In an article entitled, "Socializing not Prostitution," published in *GayLife*, columnist Ira Jones chronicled the meeting and published part of a letter written by activist Bill Kelley in response to the meeting. In it, he detailed how community leaders began to distinguish between "transvestitism," gayness, and prostitution, as well as between street socializing, strolling, and loitering for

³⁴ 1977. "How I got Thrown in Jail Because I'm Gay" *GayLife* 13, no. 11. pg. 1 V. 3. N11-A.

the purpose of identifying lawful and unlawful behavior. The letter also stated:

...Because of the very fact that large numbers of gay and lesbian persons frequent Broadway, we have a strong interest in abating crime there. At the same time, for our own self interest as well as for the sake of social justice, we cannot endorse crime-control methods that abuse citizens rights, and we trust that this consideration will be borne in mind by all persons involved. In addition, we hope that as all too easily can happen, the extent of male (i.e. gay) prostitution in the overall Broadway prostitution picture will not be exaggerated since doing so would only fuel anti-gay prejudice, and we have no evidence to show that male prostitution is the major part of such prostitution as does occur along Broadway.³⁵

It was through the issue of prostitution on Broadway Street that gay men in New Town negotiated what constituted crime, permissible behavior in gay space, behaviors requiring policing, and acceptable methods for policing. Furthermore, issues around crime and policing were also fought around who was allowed in gay public space, shaping not only notions of criminality, but also of belonging.

In addition to negotiating crime and policing, during my interview with Peter (see Chapter II), he talked about the ways in which New Town residents negotiated their safety within the context of ongoing street violence and targeted police violence. He said,

This neighborhood was always dangerous. But back in the 70s and 80s, you felt a sense of kinship, even with the hustlers on the street. You felt protected. There was a sense of community. You could walk down the street in Boystown in the warm weather, hear the Divine Miss M blaring from an apartment and actually shout something to the person in the window and start a conversation. That was not happening in the straight streetscape. And that just doesn't exist now. Now you have to rely on the police. Back then, they were the last people you wanted to depend on.

Peter described a sense of collective responsibility for lesbian and gay safety as the gay neighborhood developed. Since lesbian and gay residents felt they could not turn to the

³⁵ 1978. *GayLife* 4, no. 48 (May 18): 19.

police for protection, they organized to create new programs to combat anti-gay violence.³⁶ One such program was the WhistleStop Program, which provided whistles for purchase to neighborhood residents to be blown if they were to witness a crime. This program was actually created through the coordination between neighborhood organizations, the Volunteers for Human Rights, and the Chicago Police Department.

Despite these efforts, violence persisted in New Town and anti-gay crime continued to define the area. By the 1980s, spring in the gay neighborhood became colloquially known as "fag bashing season."³⁷ In an article published in *Gay Chicago Magazine*, author Paul Reich described New Town as a place where, "Action [was] in walking range, as long as you're armed to the teeth. You need only pick up any Chicago gay publication and read who's doing whom on page 1, and who's murdered whom on page 2."³⁸ Reports of robbery, rape,³⁹ shootings,⁴⁰ and murders⁴¹ lined the pages of *GayLife* and *Gay Chicago Magazine*.

The reported resurgence in gang violence throughout the city led to a mounting hysteria and tough-on-crime, tough-on-youth dogma that defined Chicago's policing policies and strategies. However, with federal budget cuts established by President Ronald Reagan, city leaders had to find alternative policing solutions to address gang

³⁶ 1978. "Antiviolence Meeting" *GayLife* 4, no. 5 (July 21).

³⁷ 1983. "The Fag-Bashing Season is here." *GayLife* (May 4, 1983): 4.

³⁸ Reich, Paul. 1982. "Surburban Scene." *Gay Chicago Magazine* 5, no.7: 28-32.

³⁹ Kulieke, Stephen. 1982. "Man Raped in Alley; Two Attacks in Lakeview area reported." *GayLife* 7, no. 30 (January 8).

⁴⁰ 1982. "North Side shooting leaves one dead, one wounded." *GayLife* 8, no. 20 (October 28).

⁴¹ "Murdered" *Gay Chicago Magazine* 9, no. 11 (March 13): 55.

violence without increasing costs (Washington and Gilliam 1993 [1986]). In 1984, following the murder of Benji Wilson—a prominent black high school basketball star who was a victim of gang violence—Mayor Harold Washington established the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention. This task force promoted community responsibility and citizen participation by forming a relationship between relevant governmental agencies, the private sector, and community representatives and volunteers. By March of 1985, the Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention developed a comprehensive program for policing and addressing youth violence, which included street intervention workers, victim assistance, alternative youth programming, and neighborhood watch activities. The task force also established the Chicago Intervention Network (CIN) Coordinating Committee and nine neighborhood advisory councils (Walker 1991). Thus, federal funding cuts and the established need to police gang violence led to a new citywide culture of community policing that expanded policing responsibilities to other government agencies, private businesses, and private citizens.

Between 1987 and 1989, following the shocking death of the first African American to be elected as mayor of Chicago, people of color were being harassed by the cops and systematically expunged from the gay neighborhood. The southwest corner of the intersection of Belmont Avenue and North Halsted Street was home to a disco named Club LaRay, which served a mostly black clientele. Housed in a large building located at 3150 N. Halsted Street, Club LaRay had two bars, a dance floor, and a “Staircase to Nowhere” that abutted against the ceiling. Being one of the largest dance clubs in Boystown, it was a popular spot for black drag queens who performed songs by Patti Labelle, Tina Marie, Grace Jones, and Gladys Night. However, being located across the

street from the office of the alderman, Club La Ray was targeted by police and patrons were frequently harassed by cops, which dissuaded people from going there. In 1988, Club LaRay was raided by the police after complaints from neighbors. As a result, five men, including the bar's co-owner, manager, and bouncer were all arrested for narcotics violations after five packets of cocaine were confiscated from the nightclub's office.⁴² Following the closure of Club LaRay, other clubs at this intersection served a predominately black clientele, including Eons on the northwest corner and Pangaea on the northeast corner.⁴³ However, these clubs were short-lived.

By 1992, the policing strategy known as “sweeping” (Chang 2005) came to Chicago in the form of the nation’s broadest anti-loitering law, marking a new era of racialized policing that specifically targeted young people of color. Those who drafted the law were influenced by Los Angeles’s gang injunctions, making it illegal for anyone to simply stand on the street with a person “reasonably believed” to be in a gang. Within two years, this law led to the arrests of 45,000 young Chicagoans, mostly Black and Latino. As a result of this anti-loitering law, the Cook County gang database became more than two-thirds black. The law was so broadly dismissive of basic liberties that it was declared unconstitutional by a conservative U.S. Supreme Court in 1999 (Chang 2005: 390).⁴⁴

At the same time, Boystown residents grappled with continued anti-gay violence. In

⁴² "5 Men Arrested in Raid on Tavern." *Chicago Tribune* (March 10, 1988): 2.

⁴³ The intersection of Belmont Avenue and Halsted Street became a popular spot for gay black men during the late-1980s with the gay bars that appealed to this particular demographic. This pattern of racial segregation within the neighborhood continued during my fieldwork, decades after these bars had closed, as this intersection remained as the place where LGBTQ+ people of color congregated to socialize.

⁴⁴ *City of Chicago v. Morales*, 527 U.S. 41 (1999).

July of 1991, the gay community faced the reality that another serial killer was in its midst after detectives discovered that Jeffrey Dahmer murdered Matt Turner after meeting him at the Gay Pride Parade in Boystown and inviting him to Milwaukee where the slaying took place. Another one of his victims, Jeremiah Weinberger, lived across the street from the 7-Eleven at Roscoe and North Halsted Street and met Dahmer at Carol's in Old Town. On August 24, 1991, weeks following Dahmer's confession, an estimated 200 people marched through New Town "protesting anti-gay/lesbian/bisexual violence by bashers and police." The Stop the Violence March, which began at Belmont Avenue and Broadway Street and continued up North Halsted Street, was the first in a series of protests against "racist, sexist, AIDS-phobic and homophobic brutality." In an article chronicling the march published in that year's September issue of *Outlines*, author Tracy Baim outlined the ways in which the Boystown residents were grappling with violence. She said,

But gays and lesbians are not just angry at alleged police and media homophobia in the Dahmer case. They are also angry at the over all increase in anti-gay/lesbian violence, and angry at not only apparent police insensitivity on gay-related crimes, but also on alleged police harassment targeting gays (for example, the violent police response to ACT UP members during the American Medical Association protests in June). In related news, police are still investigating what they view as unrelated murders of single men along Chicago's north lakefront. As reporting in *Outlines* last month, police at Area 6 violent crimes say there are "many" such murders, but few clues or suspects. One such murder is that of Spencer Powe, a Black gay man, 35, killed in late June in his apartment at 4550 N. Clarendon.⁴⁵

In response to these crimes, lesbian and gay residents formed the Pink Angels—a

⁴⁵ Baim, Tracy. 1991. "Chicagoans March Against Violence." *Outlines* 4, no. 4 (September): 23.

volunteer group who patrolled the streets of the neighborhood in small groups. In 1992, the Anheuser-Busch beer company was the official sponsor of Market Days and proceeds from all outdoor Budweiser beer sales were donated to the Pink Angels.⁴⁶ This relationship between the Pink Angels and Anheuser-Busch marked the neoliberalization of community policing efforts in the gay neighborhood.⁴⁷

The continued gentrification of Boystown and its transformation into a tourist attraction for middle-class consumption erased its long history of violence as it was conscripted into being one of the safest neighborhoods in the city. Bolstered safety was both an anticipated outcome and a primary motive for the North Halsted Streetscape Project (Weisberg 1997). Building a safe space was a prerequisite for creating a neighborhood meant for tourism and middle-class consumption. No one believed this more than women who lived in the neighborhood during the period in which my fieldwork took place. Of the 81 women who responded to my survey and lived in the neighborhood, 43 (53%) said safety was the main reason they chose to move to Boystown.⁴⁸

One of such women was 20-year-old Samantha who moved to Chicago from Milwaukee in 2005 and decided to live in Boystown because of the neighborhood's

⁴⁶ 1992. *GayLife* 7, no. 4 (June 18).

⁴⁷ Gay men and lesbians in Boystown organized a long-term boycott of Coors, one of Anheuser-Bush's competitors.

⁴⁸ The second reason was the neighborhood's location, defined in terms of its proximity to transportation, work, downtown, or things to do. Thirty-three women, or 41%, gave one of these reasons for moving to the neighborhood. Five women (14%) listed the gay community and diversity as top reasons why they moved to the neighborhood. Of these five women, three of them self-identified as lesbian, queer, and pansexual.

safety and proximity to DePaul University. Samantha self-identified as straight and loved living in the neighborhood so much that she planned on staying in Boystown until she graduated. With student loans and financial help from her parents, she could afford to live on her own in a one-bedroom apartment on North Halsted Street. During my interview with Samantha in 2008, she said, "I moved here because I'm going to college and I live alone. I thought, if it's safe for you guys, then it's gotta be safe for me." Samantha's understanding of her own safety was shaped by her belief that gay men were a particularly vulnerable subset of the population and were more susceptible to violence than women. Her feelings of safety were also supported by the fact that she never witnessed or otherwise experienced crime of any kind during her three-year tenure living in the neighborhood.

Samantha's perception that the gay neighborhood was a safe haven for women ignored the violence that other women in the neighborhood experienced. Between April and August of 2007, six women in and around Boystown were violently attacked, raped, or victims of an attempted sexual assault.⁴⁹ In response to these crimes, the Town Hall police district issued an alert, extended bike patrols, put up additional street cameras, and sent out more undercover police.⁵⁰ From the community, a handful of volunteers passed

⁴⁹ Parker, Mike. 2007. "Police Seeking Man After Lakeview Assault Attempt." *CBS Chicago* (August 8). Accessed August 8, 2017.

<http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/attempted.sexual.assault.2.338908.html>

⁵⁰ McCall, Katie. 2007. "Police Put Women on Alert After N. Side Assault: 1 Sexual Assault, 1 Attempted Sexual Assault Within One Week." *CBS Chicago* (July 29). Accessed July 29, 2007.

<http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/sexual.assault.wrigleyville.2.338728.html>

out pepper spray.⁵¹ Alderman Tom Tunney said he would work with taxi cab companies so drivers would watch women upon getting dropped off at their homes to make sure they were able to get inside safely.⁵²

At the same time, the neighborhood was statistically one of the safest neighborhoods in the city for all of its residents. During my fieldwork, the Town Hall district was led by Commander Kathleen Boehmer, the district's first woman leader who maintained a visible presence in the neighborhood through her active involvement with local businesses and neighborhood events. Boystown's LGBTQ+ residents were pleased with the district's new leadership and thought a woman commander would help strengthen the relationship between the LGBT community and the police. In 2008, when Boehmer was appointed as the new commander by Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis, in what was one of the biggest police department shakeups in decades, Sidetrack held a meet-and-greet event for local business owners to welcome her to the neighborhood.⁵³ From the day that Boehmer began her new post, she stressed that violent crime and LGBTQ+ youth issues were her primary concerns.

Prior to the summer of 2009, there were numerous other particularly violent crimes that took place during my fieldwork that warranted putting the community on alert.

⁵¹ Hartman, Kristyn, Katie McCall, and Alita Guillen. 2007. "3rd Woman Attacked in North Lakefront Neighborhood: Volunteers Passing Out Pepper Spray." *CBS Chicago*. (July 31). Accessed August 1, 2007.

<http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/Clark.Street.Deming.2.338674.html>

⁵² Schulte, Sarah. "Woman Attached in Lakeview, Second Recent Assault in Neighborhood." *ABC WLSTV-Chicago*. July 30, 2007. Accessed August 20, 2007. <http://abclocal.go.com/wls/story?section=news/local&id=5523415>

⁵³ See Wooten, Amy. 2008. "Town Hall Police Gets First Woman Leader." *Windy City Times* (March 3).

Between January 21, 2006 and February 3, 2006, a series of thirteen strong-arm robberies occurred in Boystown and the surrounding area. In these incidents, men in their mid-20s to early 40s were targeted.⁵⁴ In July of that same year, a teenage boy was shot on Belmont Avenue near the nightclub Berlin and a couple weeks after that incident, a different teenager was stabbed to death near the same location.⁵⁵ Even in 2008, when violent crimes spiked in the 23rd District, Boystown residents largely remained silent. Of all of the violent crimes that occurred between 2006 until August of 2009, none of them moved residents to take a racist stand against Boystown's LGBTQ+ young people of color. However, the crimes that occurred in late-summer 2009 and afterwards created and sustained a new movement against this very specific and vulnerable population. This is because Boystown residents saw previous crimes as isolated incidents and did not see these crimes as an assault on the neighborhood. Continued gentrification reshaped collective experiences and perspectives of neighborhood crime, marking a new embodiment of the neighborhood where personal threats were also threats to the neighborhood.

By 2009, Boystown's LGBTQ+ residents were positioned to defend the gay neighborhood against any and all intruders. In a neighborhood divided, the violent crimes gave neighborhood residents a chance to bridge differences, muffle conflict between

⁵⁴ Guillen, Alita. 2006. "Robberies Strike Lakeview, Uptown Areas." *CBS Chicago* (February 8). Accessed August 20, 2009. <http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/robberies.Lakeview.Roscoe.2.324702.html>

⁵⁵ Sun-Times News Group Wire. 2007. "Teenage Boy Shot at Belmont and Sheffield, Boy Stabbed Nearby on Belmont Earlier This Month." (July 16). Accessed August 20, 2009. <http://cbs2chicago.com/topstories/Belmont.Avenue.Sheffield.2.330310.html>

them, and organize as a community around protecting the neighborhood from a commonly perceived threat. I sat at the Starbucks at Broadway Street and Aldine Avenue next to Hershel and Alvin, two gay Boystown residents in the mid-20s who were studying for college exams. Hershel identified as Italian American and grew up on the South Side of Chicago, whereas Alvin identified as Asian American and moved to Boystown from the suburbs. In 2007, Hershel was mugged on Belmont Avenue, two years before crime became the hot-button issue of the neighborhood. From the window, he pointed to the spot where it happened. While describing how he felt that Boystown residents were being hypocritical in their actions, Alvin interjected and said.

Yeah, it's just a part of city life like racism is just a part of city life. Let's be real, this isn't about crime or fear or safety. This is about keeping black people out of the neighborhood. White people have gotten very comfortable with this city's segregation. To the point where the only thing that makes them uncomfortable in their day-to-day lives is a black person in their neighborhood. Especially if it's the same place that they socialize.

Think about it, they can go all day without really having to interact with poor people of color. They put their headphones in, go to work, zone everyone out, and then come back. It's when black people are engaging with them on the streets, while they are trying to continue to ignore inequality and have a good time that it becomes a problem. They are threatened and intimidated in their own neighborhood—that they pay a lot of money to live in—by people who don't even live here. They think of them as trespassers, really.

For Alvin, contemporary racist community policing practices were normalized by enduring racism and quotidian crime. It was neither surprising or out-of-the-ordinary. Just another day.

5.3 The Intensification of Racial Violence

Racializing surveillance and community policing efforts expanded both on Facebook and materially within the neighborhood. The success of Lakeview 9-1-1 in

getting residents actively involved in reporting, sharing, and discussing violent crime on Facebook spurred the creation of other neighborhood-based Facebook Pages, including the Boystown Bitch Session page, the Boystown neighborhood page, and the Lakeview page. In 2011, Lakeview 9-1-1 was succeeded by a similar page dubbed the Take Back Boystown page. Within a year, this page had 4,219 members.⁵⁶ Expanded practices on the ground included a texting program for crime reporting dubbed, "Lincoln Park/Lakeview Safe and Sound;" an increased number of late-night patrols; new bicycle patrols, particularly at night on the North Halsted strip; the use of small four-wheel all-terrain vehicles by the police to increase their mobility and ability to monitor North Halsted Street (Barlow 2010); the hiring of private security firms by the Northalsted Business Alliance (NBA) to patrol the street (Merevick 2012); increased private surveillance systems sponsored by the NBA (Simonette 2008); and a new blue light surveillance camera, which expanded Chicago's city-wide surveillance infrastructure.⁵⁷ In addition, business owners also developed a number of practices to create a secure neighborhood. Each night, a couple of restaurants on North Halsted Street poured ice on their stoops and stairways after locking up for the night. The melting ice deterred people from sitting on the stoops and congregating in front of their businesses.

The policing and exclusion of bodies made out-of-place by neighborhood residents

⁵⁶ During the course of my fieldwork, Facebook's page settings and platform iterations had different labels for users who joined or followed a page. These included *fans*, *members*, and *followers*.

⁵⁷ Chicago's blue lights are operated and monitored primarily by Chicago's Office of Emergency Management (OEMC) and used by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

and business owners is nothing new. The history of Boystown is one in which the formation of the gay neighborhood has depended upon exclusion. What is new, however, is the magnitude in which Boystown's residents joined together to discipline and control young people of color in the neighborhood, as well as the expansive digital policing and surveillance practices that were utilized by residents. This new expansive system of community policing and racializing surveillance (Browne 2015) in Boystown developed during an era of globalization that has been defined by the proliferation of borders inside the State and increased surveillance globally (Valencia 2018). Boystown's reproduction as a modern gay neighborhood entrenched in the system of racial capitalism depends upon these practices. Furthermore, the biopolitical imperative to protect life from threats was infused with a system of racial capitalism that worked to criminalize people of color, creating new enemies out of young LGBTQ+ black and brown bodies. Threats to physical safety and life become enmeshed with threats to consumption and profit accumulation. This resulted in the boundaries and interiors of Boystown to be heavily policed and surveilled to protect the visions of safety they proffer. It is through the discourse of neighborhood security that violence against people of color became normalized.

This new system of racializing surveillance and community policing would not have been possible without the confluence of swift technological changes with established practices of racialized exclusion. The proliferation of personal and digital surveillance technologies changed the ways in which crime was reported. Digital photography changed how accused criminals were represented to the public by enabling the public release of mug shots within hours of arrest. This provided dehumanizing portraits to

crime stories, which were then used to shame accused perpetrators online and reproduce collective racism. Furthermore, as LGBTQ+ residents relied on privatized spaces and, increasingly, the digital world of dating and hookup apps, there was no longer a desire for a public street culture (e.g. cruising) among middle-class residents. As a result, loitering became an issue that LGBTQ+ residents could rally against.

The ubiquity of smartphone and social media provided a mechanism for transforming Boystown into an intrusive and omnipresent police and penal apparatus. Not only did social media platforms create direct links between individual residents for sharing neighborhood information on-location and in real-time, but they also allowed residents to create digital constructions of the neighborhood giving them the power to shape local subjectivities of crime. Through the curated display of images and photographs that displayed a racialized narrative of neighborhood crime, social media provided a framework for residents to create a new racialized discourse of neighborhood crime. This "coding of youth bodies" (Wilson and Grammemnos 2005) is reproduced through the gay neighborhood and represents a process that places white residents in the center of both discourse production and proliferation as stories are shared on live news feeds, real-time updates, panic peddling, false accusations, and the control of black images (Nero 2005). The movement against young LGBTQ+ people of color required the cultivation of outsized fears by neighborhood residents through their participation on social media, consumption of news media, and efforts to sensationalize and racialize crime stories, even as crime rates had fallen. These neoliberal multicultural subjectivities, which assemble who belongs and who does not on the basis of their value to capital, also worked to destroy social service organizations through crime, fear, and community policing. This situates

one of the most notable effects of neoliberalism, the destruction of the social welfare state, within the realm of the practices of individual neighborhood residents rather than the workings of the economy.

The new system of racializing surveillance and community policing that developed in Boystown demonstrates the biopolitization of security that is part of a larger discourse of racialization tied to the commodification and privatization of space. These discourses and practices were shaped by the enactment of normative divisions within the population, a characteristically biopolitical effect (Rutland 2015) that is accentuated through racial capitalism. Additionally, this new system of surveillance and policing was framed by a liberal regime of rationality that posits one population in need of protective care and another as eminent threats. Thus, the reproduction of Boystown can be seen as a set of strategic configurations that work to reproduce racial capitalism through violence.

VI. BOYSTOWN AS MACHINE: CONTINGENCIES AND CONCLUSIONS

“Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.” – Michel Foucault (1978: 95)

6.1 Contingencies

In the previous chapters, I have shown the numerous ways in which Boystown is shaped by biopower, embedded in a larger system of racial capitalism, and produces racial violence. Through my examination of the convivial relations (Puar 2007) between spatial production, racialization, securitization, surveillance technologies, capitalism, homonationalism, and social movements, I demonstrate how the construction and production of the gay neighborhood produces multiple forms of violence, which ultimately work synergistically to reinforce racial violence. I argue that is precisely through the interconnected processes of knowledge production, the production of built space, territorialization, and neighborhood defense that the contemporary gay neighborhood reproduces racial violence. Thus, I argue that the gay neighborhood is not a merely a site in which the violence of capitalism takes place, but rather it is both a product and producer of racial capitalism that thrives on (and is dependent upon) the reproduction of racial violence. As a machine of racial violence, the gay neighborhood further exposes the infusion of race in American society, the relationship between race and sexuality, and the ways in which social space is shaped by racial capitalism.

The claim that gay neighborhoods are a machine of racial violence emphasizes the ways in which power operates in all directions, confirming Boystown as a site of multiple interacting struggles, contradictions, resistances, and oppressions. While the crime panic and resulting collective movement to keep Boystown white that began in the summer of

2009 was the result of nearly four decades of practices and processes of gay neighborhood production and construction—which included the popularization of discourses of Boystown's formation informed by settler colonialism, privatized and commercialized spaces that redefined belonging and exclusion, and the territorialization of the neighborhood which created a space of complex conflict—recognizing these as contingencies leaves room for the possibility of an alternative gay neighborhood. As the neighborhood and its residents reproduced the inequalities endemic to the system of racial capitalism, there have also been people fighting against this violence the entire way. Just as liberal understandings of gay neighborhoods as sites of resistance miss its underlying violence, queer critiques of gay neighborhoods that identify them as sites of assimilation, desexualization, cultural sanitization, and commodification miss the undercurrent of anti-capitalist, anti-racist resistance that takes shape in and through the neighborhood. While I discussed some of these within the preceding chapters, I wanted to readdress resistance as a means to emphasize contingency, situate agency, and reframe processes of subjectification as uneven. It is a social justice imperative to recognize this particular type of agency, as it often goes ignored exacerbating violence and divisiveness along the lines of race, class, gender, and sexuality.

6.2 Rage Against the Machine

Throughout my archival research, a number of protests, marches, and boycotts were documented that served as critiques of capitalism and worked to promote unfettered liberation. One of these that was directly against the neighborhood's gentrification included, in 1972, tenants in an apartment building located at 540 Surf Street formed a Tenant Association in protest against serious building code violations, irresponsible

building management, discrimination against single young men (specifically single young gay men) and blacks, and repeated theft in the building. As the group pushed for non-discrimination in renting, on the grounds of race and sexual orientation, it gained support from Aldermen Singer and Simpson, as well as local neighborhood organizations including the Lake View Citizens Council and the Southeast Neighbors.¹

In 1998, the same year that the North Halsted Streetscape Project (NHSP) was completed, the 3rd Annual Dyke March moved from Boystown to Andersonville in resistance to the neighborhood's exclusionary architecture, androcentricity, and commercialization. In 2000, a Chicago-based queer group called Queer to the Left (Q2L) created a comic to protest Boystown's assimilationist politics (See Appendix G). Printed under the name QTIPS (Queers Together Instigating Pleasure and Sex) and titled, "Pylon Pride," the comic was meant to parody *Chick Tracts*, Evangelical Christian cartoons by John T. Chick that typically chronicled the interactions between at least one Christian and non-Christian. Similarly, the "Pylon Pride" comic contained a series of illustrated scenes that depicted different social interactions in Boystown during the Gay Pride Parade that pointed to its de-sexualization, normalization, and commodification. In addition to this comic, from 1999 to 2004 Q2L organized housing and anti-gentrification activism, including town hall meetings, campaigns against high-end condominium construction and "residential encroachment," and protests for tenant rights against Halsted Street

¹ 1972. "Gay Ghetto Tenants Unite." *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (September 8).
1.

businessmen.²

During my fieldwork, I witnessed other queer resistances to the gay neighborhood's biopolitical bordering and exclusions based on race, class, gender, and sexuality. Early in my fieldwork, during the summer of 2008, racial tensions in Boystown spurred a "Unity March Against Racism and Harassment" organized by the Coalition for Justice and Respect, where approximately 20 people gathered at the corner of North Halsted Street and Belmont Avenue to hear speakers address racism in the neighborhood.³ In 2010, lesbian residents became increasingly concerned over Boystown's domination by gay men. As the practice of banning bachelorettes gay clubs became publicized, more subtle forms of exclusion and discrimination affected women in gay space across sexual identities. Some of these resulted in resistances like the SPIN Boycott (discussed in Chapter III), which were also highly publicized, but others went largely unnoticed. While I was walking around the neighborhood at 2:00 AM, I saw the message, "WE ARE HERE – THE LESBIANS" written in graffiti and spray painted in large white letters on the red brick wall of Gerber Collision and Glass on North Halsted Street. Although it was removed by the time I woke up the following afternoon, the graffiti was demonstrative of a collective sentiment that lesbian residents shared with me about the loss of lesbian spaces, the invisibility of lesbians, and Boystown's growing male-exclusivity.

Volunteers and employees at the Broadway Youth Center and the Center on Halsted were privately vocal in their opposition to the racist anti-youth hysteria that developed in

² Information from "Gentrification Keywords" by Queer to the Left (2004).

³ Nair, Yasmin. 2008. "March highlights Boystown tensions." *Windy City Times* (June 25).

the neighborhood. However, their voices were often silenced in public forums so as to not anger the business owners and residents who the organizations they represented depended on for continued financial support. This marked one of the ways in which neoliberal multiculturalism silenced voices against oppression. Still, they created programs that allowed young LGBTQ+ people to publicly share their experiences with neighborhood residents in an effort to promote conversation, understanding, and acceptance. One such program was a homeless and formerly-homeless youth art show, where participants shared their stories of homelessness with the public. At this forum, a 21-year-old black woman told the story of how she was illegally evicted from her apartment after being locked-out for falling behind on her rent payments, landing her on the street; a young black man talked about how his family struggled with homelessness his entire life, but his mother's drug addiction caused him to become homeless and alone; a Filipino 18-year-old man discussed how he was abused by his stepfather for being gay and ran away to the streets; and a 21-year-old black male told those in attendance how he became homeless after his mother and father died from AIDS. While the audience was small, the art show had a profound impact on those who attended.

Doug Brandt, the owner of Pie Hole Pizza, was actively and publicly anti-racist as he was one of the few businesses on North Halsted Street who openly welcomed LGBTQ+ young people of color to his business during peak late-night hours. Offering employment and open-mic nights, he gave this population a public platform to vocalize their experiences of oppression. Neighborhood non-profit organizations also organized against numerous development projects in an effort to prevent the over-development of the neighborhood and overcrowding. After 40 years of operating as an established resident

organization, Belmont Harbor Neighbors was shut down after a costly legal battle with developers to prevent the construction of the OUT Hotel at 3343 N. Halsted Street. Based out of New York, the owner of the hotel was looking to expand to Chicago.

Organizations outside of Boystown also challenged the neighborhood, its violence, and the commodified gay culture it represented. Chances Dances, a Chicago queer collective, started to offer a monthly queer dance party, framed as providing an alternative to Boystown's homogenized, sexist, racist, strip of bars geared almost exclusively to masculine gay white men. These dance parties were typically held in different locations around Wicker Park.⁴ While queer resistance continued to make its mark on the neighborhood, sadly, sustained anti-capitalist and anti-racist ideologies failed to dismantle Boystown's mechanisms of reproducing racial violence.

6.3 Paradox and Possibilities

Queer movements against the neighborhood and the processes and practices of its reproduction show how Boystown is a site loaded with complexity. Throughout my dissertation, I tried to attend to the multiple ways in which the practices and subjectivities of those across identities failed to create cohesive experiences of the neighborhood as defined by race, class, gender, or sexuality, while also maintaining a coherent narrative for understanding how the neighborhood produces racialized violence. Rather, experiences and subjectivities were often contradictory, inconsistent, and continually

⁴ Heidemann, Jason A. "Manic Mondays: An all-inclusive new GLBTI night out offers a Boystown Alternative." *TimeOut Chicago* (February 5, 2005). <https://www.timeout.com/chicago/gay-lesbian/manic-mondays>

unfolding. Even as Boystown produces racial violence, as a social and spatial formation is also continues to save and enhance the lives of those made vulnerable. Most notably during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, the concentration of gay and lesbian organizations and people within New Town allowed for the mass mobilization of efforts to care for those infected with the virus. These included fundraising at local bars, new specialized medical care and housing facilities within the neighborhood,⁵ and the rapid spread of information required to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS through various local efforts. In 1983, Richard Nolan, writer for *Gay Chicago Magazine*, said,

The new gay spirit will have to be bold, strong, and willing to educate the masses. We can't hide in the ghetto right now... We will survive. Not just survive but thrive.⁶

Boystown continues to provide the social and spatial structure necessary to provide those in need with the adequate social and medical services, particularly when state funding for these services is increasingly made scarce. In 2014, the Center on Halsted and the Heartland Housing Alliance (a non-profit for sustainable and affordable housing) combined the neighborhood's historic police station and a new apartment complex to create the city's first LGBT-friendly senior housing facility.

Thus, as a site of paradox, Boystown can be defined thorough both its inclusions and exclusions, as well as a site of both oppression and resistance. Its tendencies towards exclusivity and divisiveness are paired with its ability to form collective identities. Its

⁵ Facilities included the Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center and the Chicago House (a residence for people with AIDS).

⁶ Nolan, Richard. 1983. "Open Loops: Gay and Lesbian Pride Comes of Age." *Gay Chicago Magazine* 6, no. 25: 5-7.

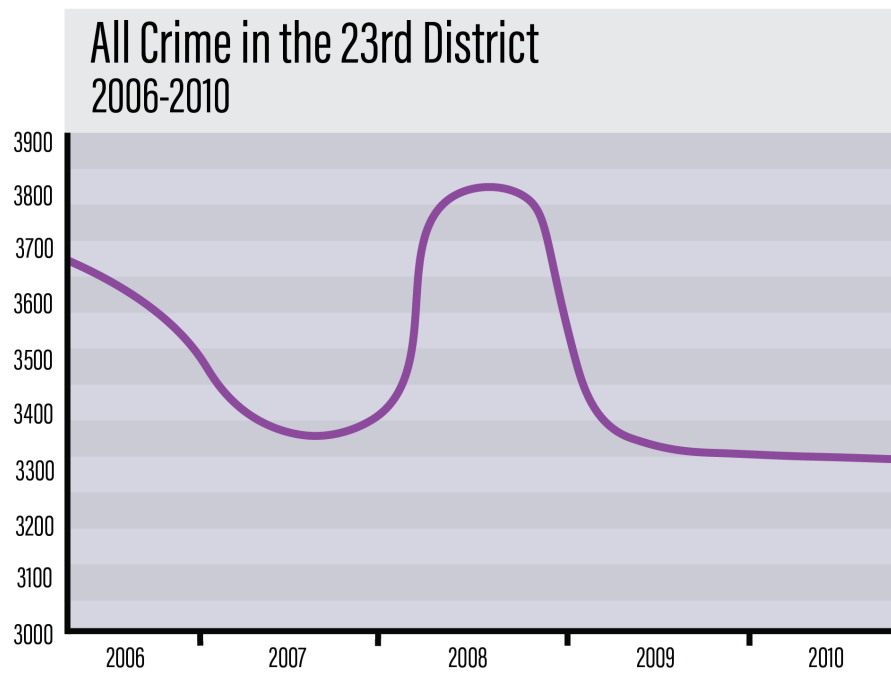
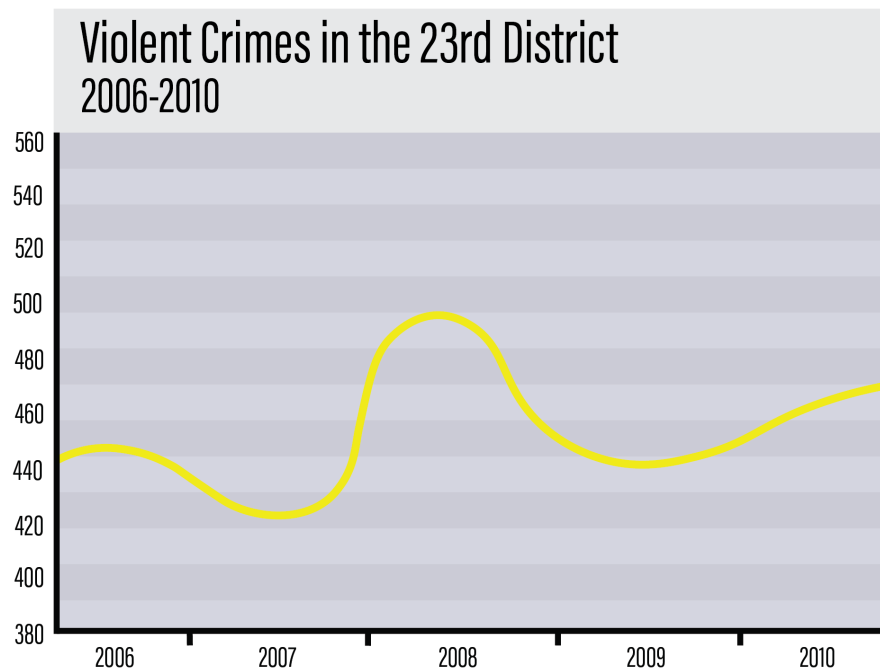
continual reproduction of hegemonic power structures is also bound to its inherent resistances. Foucault's understanding of power allows for this paradoxical dynamic, where equality and inequality can be produced and reproduced simultaneously. It is within these power struggles that the reproduction of racial violence is perpetuated. However, it is also within these fissures that the possibilities exist for power to be leveraged to shape social space in alternative ways.

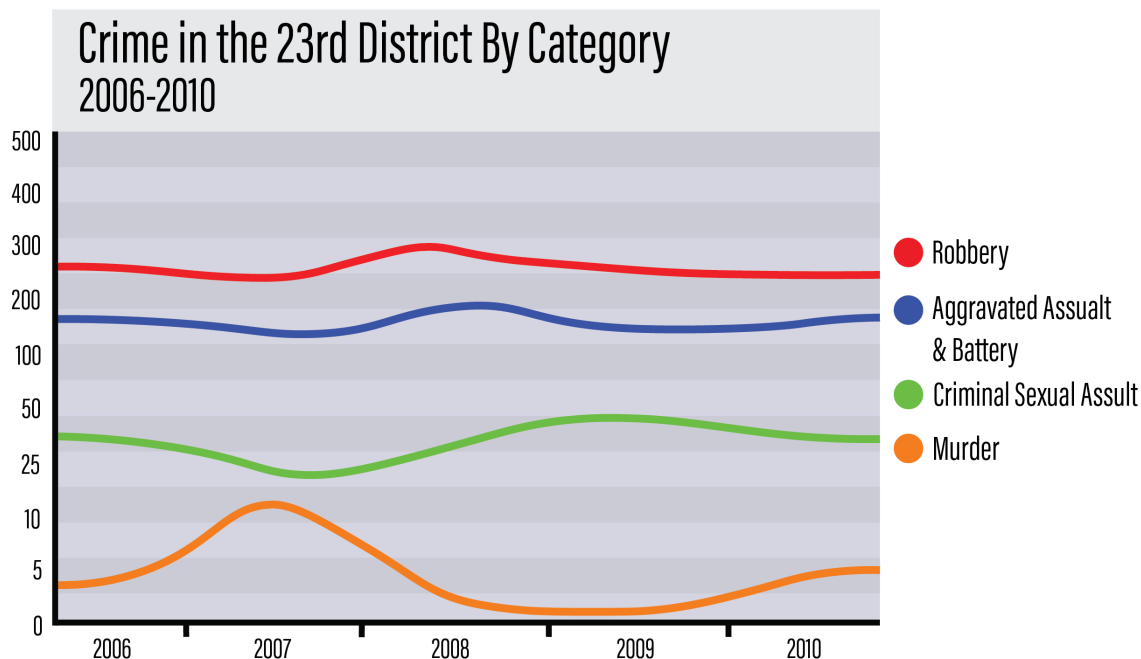
Boystown provides insight into how LGBT social movements for equality in the United States have been bound to, and have depended upon, the reproduction of violence, specifically racialized violence. This process of reproduction cannot be reduced to the inextricable relationship between sexuality and race alone, but rather must be understood through the many ways in which biopower and racial capitalism work together to define bodies, administer life, and distribute people in space. Claiming that Boystown is a machine of racial violence does not negate the importance of gay neighborhoods for LGBTQ+ lives across divisions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. It has provided the spatial foundation for community and business organizing that ultimately led to increased political power, economic inclusion, and social cohesion. Furthermore, Boystown provided spaces required for collective organizing and fundraising to save the very lives of LGBTQ+ people in the face of oppression and active discrimination. However, ignoring the dynamic through which equality and violence operate cosynthetically (Reddy 2011), shaping the very spaces in which we live, means reproducing the very power structures that liberation seeks to demolish.

Boystown demonstrates that future liberation movements must maintain their anti-capitalist stance or seek to revolutionize capitalism in dramatic ways. They must also

attend to the workings of biopower that operate independently, but in tandem, with capitalism, as it is precisely through this interaction that the violence of racial capitalism is reproduced. Thus, rather than seek a nostalgic return to the resurrection of tools from the past that have been destroyed through capitalism (e.g. anti-capitalist collectives), a more expansive effort is required that disrupts the ways in which people are spatially organized. Liberation requires new ways of thinking about ourselves in relation to others and, therefore, seeks new ways of being.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Crime Statistics



Crime in the 23rd District 2006-2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Murder	3	11	2	1	5
Criminal Sexual Assault	35	22	31	43	35
Robbery	235	232	275	252	252
Aggravated Assault & Battery	170	163	187	148	175
Burglary	437	381	440	330	284
Theft	2442	2308	2610	2368	2320
Motor Vehicle Theft	294	252	267	223	254
Arson	11	6	2	2	1
Totals	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Violent	445	427	495	444	467
Property	3184	2947	3319	2923	2859
Total	3629	3374	3814	3367	3326

Crime statistics were reported in Chicago's ClearPath system. These statistics were also published in the *Windy City Times*. See Demarest, Erica. 2011. "Lakeview crime: The numbers." (July 27, 2011). Last accessed January 6, 2012.

<http://windycitytimes.com/gay/lesbian/news/ARTICLE.php?AID=32974>

Appendix B: Shifting Gay Pride Parade Routes

Shifts in the annual Gay Pride parade not only show the northern movement of gay men and lesbians in the city, but the constant reorganization of the parade route also shows the movement of gay businesses and how even the gay pride parade is structured around the neighborhood's gay businesses.

The route of first Gay Pride march went through the Near North Side, the Gold Coast, and the Loop. This route was chosen for its symbolic significance as it went through the city's historic gay enclave and past symbolic sites of the gay community. The march began at Bughouse Square—a known cruising and hustling spot that symbolized "the secrecy and repression of the past."¹ Marking the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, it was at this location that about 200 people gathered with flags and signs in protest of discrimination against homosexuals. From there, marchers trekked down Dearborn Street to Chicago Avenue, east past the Chicago Avenue police station, the Lawson YMCA, to the Water Tower and the upscale retail space of Michigan Avenue. With the newly built John Hancock Center, this space was meant to connote "gay persons' new openness and seizure of their own rightful place in society." Escorted by the Chicago Police Department, the march continued south on Michigan Avenue, down State Street, Randolph Street, and finally ended with a rally at the Civic Center Plaza.²

¹ Rich Larsen, 1970. "Gay Pride Week Rally and March." *Chicago Gay Liberation Newsletter* 7 (August).

² "Gay Liberation Stages March to Civic Center." *Chicago Tribune* (June 28, 1970): A3; Stienecker, David. 1970. "Several Hundred Gays march in Chicago pride

The route of the first Gay Pride march was mapped out because of particular significance of the locations in which it went through or passed. In an effort to recognize the goals and gains of the Gay Liberation Movement, it also was close to the city's center of gay nightlife, which in 1970 remained concentrated in Old Town and the Near North. However, the next year, in 1971, the Gay Pride parade shifted north to New Town to the "heart of Chicago's Gay ghetto,"³ beginning at Diversey Harbor, moving west on Diversey Parkway to Clark Street, and then south on Clark Street to the Free Forum at the LaSalle Street extension in Lincoln Park where the march ended with a short rally.⁴ In 1972, the parade shifted further north beginning at the parking lot between Belmont Harbor and the Belmont Rocks.⁵ Participants marched west on Belmont Avenue, south on Broadway Street to Clark Street, south to West LaSalle Drive, and then rallied at Lincoln Park Lagoon.⁶ Reports of the parade this year were keen to note the importance of the three-mile parade route through, "the most notorious avenues of Chicago's 'Gay Ghetto,'" "the heart of the Midwest's largest

celebration." *Advocate* 38 (July 22-August 4); Kelley, William B. "Gay Pride Week' June 21-28." *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (June 1970); Stanley, Bob. 1970. "Gay Pride Week, 1970 – That was the Week that Was" *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (July).

³ "In The News: Chicago Celebrates Gay Pride Week" in *Chicago Gay Alliance Newsletter* (July-August 1971).

⁴ Stanley, Bob. 1971. "Gay and Proud in Chicago" *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (June); Toni D. 1971. "Gay Pride Week: June 19-27." *Chicago Gay Alliance Newsletter* 1, no. 7 (May).

⁵ Sara Thompson. 1972. "Gay Pride Week Celebration." *Lavender Woman* 1, no. 4: (June): 4.

¹² *Chicago GayLife* (June 20, 1975): 8; Thompson, Sara. 1972. "Gay Pride Week Celebration." *Lavender Woman*, no. 4 (June): 4.

⁶ George Alexander and Marie Kuda *The Paper* (July 1972): 2-4.

single concentration of gay residents," and "Chicago's north side Gay ghetto."⁷

By 1973, the route of the Gay Pride parade through the gay ghetto was finalized through the politics of Gay Liberation.

It's out of the closets and into the streets for Chicago's fourth annual Gay Pride Parade... Planners feel that the Parade should be a celebration for gay people rather than an exhibition for straights. Instead of marching down State Street, the Parade will proceed through the streets of the "gay ghetto" on Chicago's Mid-North Side. Michael Bergeron, coordinator of the Committee, said, "It's 'our' celebration: by us and for us. It's time for us to come together in gay Love, Gay United, Gay Power, and Gay Pride."⁸

A slight change to the parade route occurred in 1975, when parade participants gathered at the intersection of Belmont Avenue and Halsted Street rather than assembling on the lakefront. However, the parade followed a similar route down Belmont Avenue to Broadway Street, south down Clark Street to Fullerton Avenue and past the Lincoln Park Zoo on Stockton Drive. This route was used until 1979,⁹ when a new parade route began further north at North Halsted Street and West Addison Street to make its way down the new gay thoroughfare that was developing along North Halsted Street.

As gay businesses proliferated on North Halsted Street and closed further south near Clark Street and Diversey Parkway, the 1979 parade route remained until 1990. It

⁷ Dick Galliette, "Gay is Good! Gay is Bad? Gay Pride Week" *Mattachine Midwest Newsletter* (August 4, 1972); "Chicago parade draws wide support" *Advocate* 90 (July 19, 1972): 19; "Classifieds/Notices." *Chicago Reader* (June 16, 1972): 12; "Gay Pride Week." *Chicago Gay Alliance Newsletter* 2, no. 3 (June 1972): 11-12.

⁸ "Big Plans for Chicago," *Gay Crusader* 2 (June 1973).

⁹ O'Conner, Meg. 1974. "But few raise eyebrows: Gay parade stops traffic." *Chicago Tribune* (July 1).

was at this time that the parade shifted to include an additional northern section of the Northalsted Strip, extending up to the 3800 block at West Grace Street. With this new route, the parade passed by businesses like the North End bar, Dandy's, and Cell Block. Throughout my fieldwork, the parade continued with this general route until 2011, going north on Halsted Street, east on Grace, and then south on Broadway Street. The expanded parade route also made room for the growing number of participants and spectators, which increased from several hundred in 1970 to 350,000 in 2000. Since 2013, estimates suggest that the Chicago Pride Parade has consistently drawn over 1 million people each year.

Appendix C: Selected Lakeview 9-1-1 Posts from August 2009

All of the selected Facebook posts below are copied from the original and appear as they were written on Facebook. Typographical and grammatical errors are those of the author. Although this was a public forum, names of individual users were replaced with initials to mask their identity. Business and place names were left unchanged to provide geographic and political economic context. A few edits are provided in brackets for the ease of reading and notes are provided for context. Posts are in chronological order.

P. D.

“Last night outside of Spin a group of sketchy looking loiterers were hanging out. The doorman at Spin flashed his flashlight at them and demanded that they keep moving. If you see a doorman doing this, *please* thank him or her. We need to keep up the pressure so the hoodlums know they’re not welcome any longer!”

A. C.

“How Can I keep my neighborhood safe? Anyone? Do we need neighborhood vigilante group of something?”

G. B.

“This is so sad – I am interested as a long ago former resident. Doin’t give in-fight for your rights” (response to article posted about August 13, 2009 mugging of man leaving CVS).

J. L. S.

“I moved to Lakeview 1 1.2 years ago from Garfield Ridge and I am amazed that I left a safer neighborhood (on the South Side).”

S. L.

“I cannot believe Lakeview is not as safe as it used to be ;-(my heart breaks.”

B. A. B.

“Maybe we’ve finally reached market saturation on liquor licenses in this part of Chicago. Between drunks making bad choices and drunks being easy targets and drunks being violence prone morons – maybe Alderman Tunney will revisi his longstanding support of every single request to sell booze in our community...”

J. F.

“44th Ward Alderman Tom Tunney says he is satisfied with the number of cops on patrol in Lakeview after the midnight hour. However, officers already on the graveyard shift say they are short-staffed. Traditionally, this has been a safe neighborhood. But, it begs the question, is it still safe?”

Pie Hole Pizza Joint

“We’d like to invite everyone to our ‘Soul in the Hole’ Open Mic Night. We know there are members of the community who feel that Pie Hole contributes to the ‘issue,’ so we’d like everyone to experience the magic that happens on Tuesday nights... and even talk about it as a group! Everyone is welcome – bring the and experience the vibe....”

Pie Hole Pizza Joint

“Two Pie Hole employees witness a fight on Roscoes between Beatnix and Roscoes at approximately 3 am Saturday morning (Friday night.) According to them, four to five men were involved, and one man ultimately punched another man out cold – flat... our employees didn’t call the police, unfortunately... But they did say that a cop car drove past the incident while the guy was apparently unconscious, but the officer(s) didn’t seem to notice anything nor stop to investigate. Anyone else witness this event?”

D. R. M.

“I actually did witness this event and separated the crowd police were right down the street at the same time just by MiniBar dealing with another incident. A police vehicle did drive by and kept driving by and did not observe the incident. I tried summoning them, but they couldn’t hear me. The male was knocked out cold on the street by another male and eventually came to and the group dispersed.”

J. L.

“Remember when we used to go out and sing show tunes and have a gay old time,, I fear that one day soon this street will turn in to the gunfight at the OK Corral.”

P. M.

“It seems to me no one really noticed/paid attention to the mugging and violence that have been happening in Lakeview until there were muggings in Lincoln Park.

For someone that lived (recently moved) in “Boystown” for over 15 years,... I can tell you first hand that the Police in Lakeview are useless. Unfortunately it is going to take an innocent person getting murdered on the street before the Police, NAMA and the Triangle Association take a greater leadership role in the community by protecting residents and patrons that frequent local businesses in the neighborhood.

When walking the streets of Lakeview at night, think of yourselves as prey. Do not walk alone, take cabs, zig-zag from block to block and or walk on the street along the bike path if you feel uncomfortable on the sidewalks of Halsted Street.

Another thing I might suggest is that the building owners/residents along Halsted st. call 911 when there are rowdy people outside of their buildings...”

J. L.

“As someone who has lived right on Halsted for 9 years, believe me I call the police often, I definatly agree that the prob gets worse and worse. I dont know what it takes, but we have to keep calling 911 and keep demanding change from our Alderman. The starting of this page is a great way to convince everone to get involved, and make a difference so that the residents of boystown aren afraid to even walk down their own street at nights.”

R. C.

“I have the same problem on Belmont with people singing and dancing, drug dealing, and prostituting. I've contacted the police department and Mr. Tunney and the only response I get is that Chicago doesn't have a law for loitering. I think its pathetic. Something needs to be done.”

G. I.

“Ok, so I hope I'm not in the minority here, but is this bugging everyone because they are hanging out, talking, dancing, or because they are doing all that while black? Seriously, somehow I suspect that if there were a group of twinkie white boys on Halsted late at night doing the same damn thing that there would be fewr people complaining. That ... Read Morestrip of Halsted St is a bar strip, anyone who lives there certainly should have realized that before moving in, therefore made the reasonable assumption that there'd be people loitering as and after the bars close. I fully believe that the race card gets played in our society too often, however, in this case I find it very hard to believe race is not a factor...”

J. L.

“To answer your question, yes I would agree most people who live on Halsted knew the bars existed,, some like myself even go to them. And yes the race card is used to

often. Trust me when I tell you that If a group of White, Indians, Chinese , or any other group you wish to mention stood under your balconay at 4am screaming at the top of there lungs you would be annoyed too. The people who go to the bars go In the bars, when they leave, they leave. These are people who dont even go to the bars. These are people who walk up and down Halsted , some even having a taigate party out of their car. And have turned the sidewalks into their own party... No,, it would not be acceptable to have even a bunch of Twinks screaming , harrassing people as they walk by, blocking the sidewalk when you are trying to go to work at 6am. Hope I clarified this for you a little better.. and by the way , the only one who brought up race at any time I beilieve ,, was you.”

B.D.

“To answer your question, [J. L.], yes these are young LGBT's -- primarily people of color. People had previously been hesitant to complain for fear of racism labels, but the crime and nuisance has grown exponentially. I've witnessed more fights, drug-dealing, prostitution, thefts, muggings, etc. in the last year alone than in the last 10 years combined.”

K. O.

“See... I was just bout to walk to the store but something like hold up... then I see someones facebook talking bout they got mugged... its bad when you live in the good neighborhood and still gotta be scared.”

J. V.

“OMG!!! This happened just a min ago. A black man (late 30s) broke into my place (Melrose and Halsted), he ran away when he saw me and I ran behind him, once he was

outside, he still tried to get back inside but I was fast enough to shut the door on his face, and I called the police immediately. Watch out everyone.... Even during the daylight time.

P.s. The officers were very nice and helpful. I'm surprised =)"

M. R.

"A bum in Kelly Park just threatened my sister. WE really have to work on getting rid of all of them. It's not safe for her to even water the plants over there anymore. Call the police EVERY time yo use them drinking please."

B. A. B.

".... I agree that understaffing is a huge problem – but the bigger problem is CPD's poor (to put it mildly) relationship with the Joe Citizen population. Getting staffing – AND getting citizens engaged in their own safety is what the families of the fallen heroes AND your other heros still-standing families deserve – not text messaging BS and more cameras."

D. K.

"The thing is this, thre police are severly short on patrolmen. This is because the city would rather put a camera on a pole than hire more police...."

D. K.

"Also there is nothing in the law books that says you can't defend yourself. Since this crumby city doesnt want law abbideing citizens to carry a ceonceived wepon, and that rule seems to work out really well among gagbangers. I suggest carrying a bottle of pepper spray... Just don't be like my fiance and keep it barried at the bottom of her purse. Keep wit within eas[y] reach...."

D. B.

“Thursday evening (Friday morning, Aug 7, really) a female impersonator was beaten sometime after performing at Roscoe’s. and hospitalized for various injuries sustained in the attack. I don’t see this reported anywhere, though? The police were probably not called because of the discrimination factor, I assume, which is a shame. But didn’t anyone in the community witness the fight?...”

D. B.

“Lets be careful that what is happening in Philly doesn’t happen in Lakeview: can we please be careful to appropriately target INDIVIDUAL perpetrators and not profile groups? Doesn’t anyone recall the day when gays were lambasted for child molestation, bestiality and the spread of AIDS? Halsted, Boystown , and the colors of the Pride flag are meant to bring together a mix of gay people. I, for one, am just as frustrated walking through a gang of smokers, bachelorette parties, and suburban gays trying to decide which bar to go to first as I am walking through a bunch of kids dancing on the sidewalk. I’d rather have the police focus first on the actual violent muggings than shooing kids away for coming to a safer neighborhood where they are less likely to be beaten than in their own neighborhoods. So let’s continue to focus on violent crime so that Boystown doesn’t make NBC national news like the country club in Philly. And let’s remember, not all who wear turbans are terrorists.”¹⁰

¹⁰ This is a reference to Araiza, Karen. 2009. "Pool Boots Kids Who Might 'Change the Complexion.'" NBC 10 Philadelphia. July 17. Last accessed on July 30, 2017. <https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/archive/Pool-Boots-Kids-Who-Might-Change-the-Complexion.html>

D. B.

“there are a ton of Center on Halsted kids on the corner of Aldine and Halsted every night too when the center closes. Why are[nt] we sending these kids back to their neighborhoods where they belong. They sit on people’s porches and stand on the corner en masse making it difficult to get through the streets. CLEAN THIS UP ALD TUNNEY or we will elect someone who will. Its time we turned the garden hose on these kids and started cleaning up this neighborhood for the good people who live here”

J. G.

“... I’m really unsettled by the flagrant undertones of “get ‘them’ out of ‘our’ neighborhood.” A few posts down, a guy on here suggested turning the garden hoses on the kids leaving the Center on Halsted in the evenings. The parallel between that comment and the fire hoses people were sprayed with in the 60d and 70s is undeniable, and I can’t believe that some people can be so small-minded.”

M. G.

“‘Where they belong’? really? I didn’t realize lakeview had an exclusive membership obligation now.”

D. K.

“I work at Blum Animal Hospital at Clark/Belmont. I have to arrive at work at 6:30 every morning. I go to Dunkin Donuts before work each day and I’m soooo tired of crawling over all the freaking tranny’s every morning to get some coffee. I can’t take this crap anymore. Blum Animal Hospital actually had to have a spiked fence built around the back staircase last year because a pack of trannys decided to make rooftop home! It left me having to confront them every morning to shoo them off the roof! Talk about

uncomfortable and potentially dangerous! Someone need to send them away!”

J. T.

“Here’s a great idea... HIRE MORE POLICE... tell the city to quit spending \$ on O’hare, and start hiring police.”

J. T.

“I’m so tired of walking from the train home worried some psychos, gangbangers, or those tranny prostitutes will try to cause harm to me. I can take them on, but I will continue to call 911 every time I can on them, this neighborhood has gone to shit. This was not like this 4 years ago and prior. I say get Military Recruiters all over Halsted and have them start signing up these kids... Oh wait, we need to get DADT [Don’t Ask Don’t Tell] overturned 1st!”

Appendix D: Letter from Alderman Tom Tunney

The following letter was copied from the original. All typographical and grammatical errors are original.

August 2009

Dear Neighbors,

My office has recieved a number of calls from concerned constituents about the two most recent attacks that took place early this morning. We have had ongoing safety issues in the Belmont-Sheffield Area for years and have been working closely with the police to mitigate the problems and build solutions. It is my belief that we have the resources to handle the issues of loitering, prostitution, drug dealing and more recently robberies, however sufficient resources are not on the street during the midnight shift when these crimes are being committed.

During my tenure as Alderman, I have consistently worked with the police to identify this area as a hot spot for criminal activity, installed police cameras at the major intersections, improved lighting on residential and arterial streets, and have stimulated positive economic development in the area. These are some of the most effective tools to fight crime.

Most importantly I want to ensure that all of my residents are kept safe at all hours of the day. Please be alert when walking late-night and avoid walking alone. Call 911 whenever you see suspicious activity on the street, and give the best possible description to the call taker including an address.

My office will continue to work with police, CAPS and residents. We are setting up additional Safety Seminars and CAPS meetings to address these issues and we have been on several late-night walks with police and residents - as recently as last Friday's midnight walk. Information is also regularly updated on our website at www.44thWard.org and through our e-news blasts to the community.

I am committed to doing all I can to address these issues and am confident that working together with the community, businesses, police and CAPS we can improve safety in this area.

Sincerely,

Alderman Tom Tunney
44th Ward

Appendix E: Flyer, "Serious Issues Involving 'Center on Halsted'"

SERIOUS ISSUES INVOLVING "CENTER ON HALSTED"

E-mail us at centeronhalstedissues@gmail.com to voice your concern, tell us your stories and get involved.

You may have witnessed on Tuesday evening, July 28, 2009 at approximately 7:15 p.m., a large fight consisting of approximately 10 - 20 men erupted on Waveland Avenue, between Fremont and Halsted Streets. An innocent girl was knocked to the ground. Fortunately, she was not injured but was emotionally stressed.

The fight was partially a result of ongoing loitering and drug problems brought about by the Center on Halsted and the individuals gathering daily/nightly outside of the Center. These individuals loiter in front of the Center on Halsted, primarily along the Waveland Avenue side, making it very uncomfortable and often scary to walk by. They also travel in groups down Waveland and Fremont Streets to congregate in front of and behind the Inter-American School. Police have pointed out that drug arrests in this area have dramatically increased since the Center opened in 2007.

The loitering and the crime associated with the Center is directly affecting the quality of life in OUR neighborhood. Individuals living near the Center are seriously considering a move because of the noise, nuisance and vulgar behavior that are exhibited on a daily/nightly basis. Families are afraid to walk with their children near the Center for fear of what may erupt or words that may be heard. Children are intimidated to play in the park behind Inter-American School because of the spillage of crude individuals coming from the Center and the drug problem that is present around the Center and School. To re-emphasize, the Police have indicated drug arrests in this area have increased dramatically since the Center opened. Our neighborhood has witnessed groups of these individuals walking back and forth from the Center to the School, selling drugs, smoking drugs and making loud, crude comments.

The street fight that erupted on July 28th must be the final straw. **Something needs to be done to control these issues, making our streets safe again for neighborhood families and residents.** The Center is not a "safe and nurturing environment" as their mission statement reads. It has become a nuisance and threat to OUR neighborhood and homes.

Please help us in our efforts and call the following entities to voice your concern:

Community Policing Office at 312/744-8320

Alderman Tom Tunney/Bennet Lawson at 773/525-6034

Chicago's Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) at 312/744-0064

Police Emergency 911 ANY TIME an issue or situation arises!!

Just as important, we understand the police are meeting with the principal of the Inter-American School, Dr. Vernita Vallez, in mid-August to discuss the posting of no trespassing signs around the school in an attempt to clean up the area and make arrests easier. **Please contact Dr. Vallez at 773/534-5490 or email at vmvallez@cps.edu to voice your support for the new signage. Thank you.**

Appendix F: Selected Timeline

The following timeline was created to provide an easy reference to the overlapping and intersectional histories presented in this dissertation:

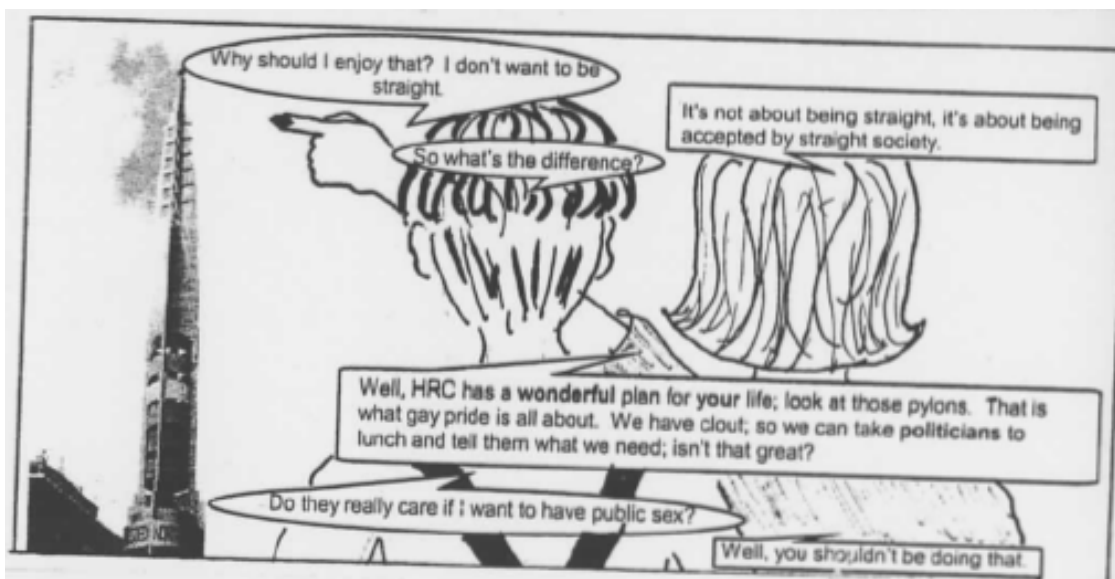
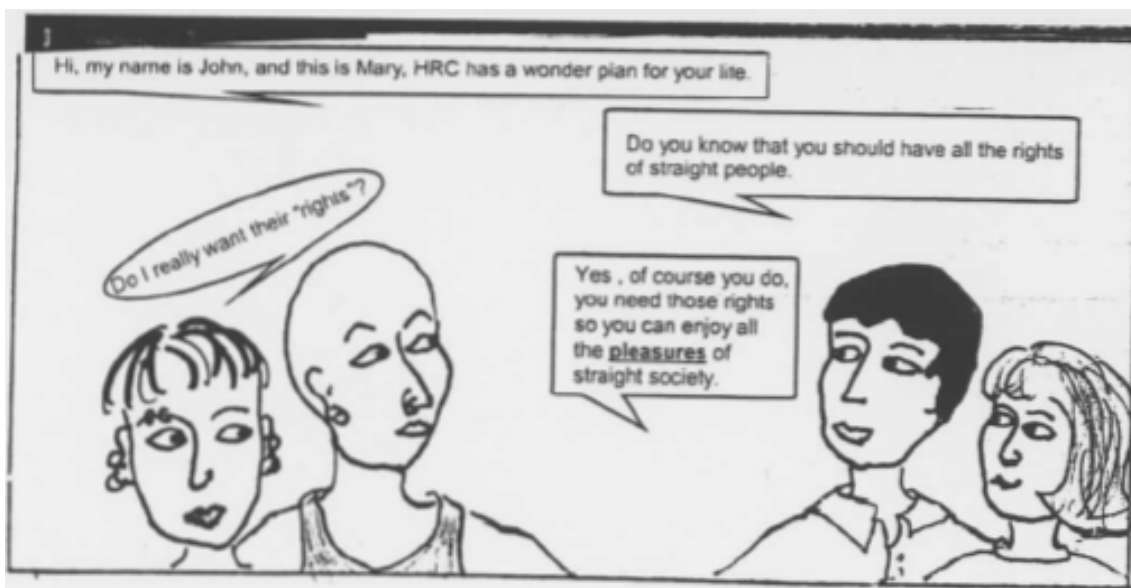
- 1955** Richard J. Daley is Mayor of Chicago (until death in 1976)
- 1961** Illinois became the first state to decriminalize sodomy
- 1963** The opening of Carl Sandburg Village (April 19)
- 1968** Democratic National Convention (August 26)
- 1973** Economic recession caused by the 1973 Oil Crisis and 1973-1974 stock market crash (November 1973 – March 1975)
- 1974** Beckman House at 3519 $\frac{1}{2}$ N. Halsted Street
- 1975** Little Jim's Opens
- 1976** Michael Anthony Bilandic is mayor (until 1979)
- 1976** Increased police surveillance reported in Old Town and Clark/Diversey and Broadway (October)
- 1976** Augie's Lounge (Women's bar) at 3729 N. Halsted (October 15)
- 1978** CK (Carol Kappa) and Augie opened new disco and lounge where Darche was once located at 3726 N. Broadway. (July 19)
- 1978** Serial killer John Wayne Gacy arrested and police began excavation. Murdered young men from 1972 to 1978 (December 22)
- 1979** Jane Byrne is elected as Chicago's first (and only) female mayor on February 27 (until 1983, when Harold Washington is elected mayor)
- 1980** Short “double dip” economic recession resulting from elevated unemployment and the Federal Reserve’s raised interest rates (January 1980 – July 1980)
- 1980** The North Halsted Merchants Association forms
- 1981** The Unicorn bathhouse opens at 3246 N. Halsted Street (June)

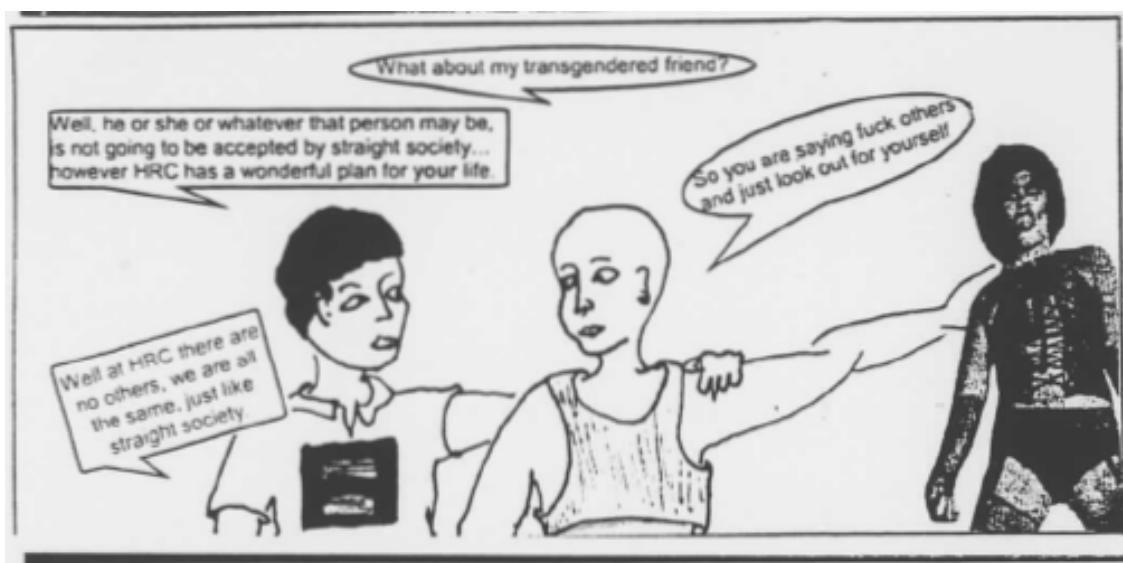
- 1981** Economic recession resulting from increased oil prices and monetary policy in the United States geared to control inflation (July 1981 – November 1982).
- 1982** Sidetrack opens at 3349 N. Halsted (April 22)
- 1982** First Northalsted Market Days (August)
- 1983** Harold Washington is mayor (until his death in 1987)
- 1983** Little Jim's Pioneer advertisements begin appearing in Gay Chicago Magazine (July)
- 1986** Gay Dollars Campaign (September)
- 1987** Jim Ludwig buys Roscoe's Tavern on Good Friday (previously a convenience store) (April)
- 1987** The death of Mayor Harold Washington (November 25)
- 1987** Eugene Sawyer is mayor until 1989 (elected by city council to complete Mayor Washington's term)
- 1988** City passed the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance banning discrimination against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals in employment, housing, and public accommodations (December 21)
- 1989** Richard M. Daley is elected mayor (until 2011, being the city's longest serving mayor)
- 1990** Economic recession resulting from the 1990 oil price shock, debt accumulation, and consumer pessimism (July 1990 – March 1991)
- 1991** Pink Angels begin policing neighborhood (through 1992)
- 1997** NHSP Plans Debated (August - November)
- 1998** Completion of NHSP Celebrated (November 14)
- 1998** Dyke March (3rd annual) moves to Andersonville. Prior to this, the march was in Boystown.
- 2001** Economic recession resulting from the collapse of the dot-com bubble, a drop in investments, and the attacks on September 11· 2001 (March – November)
- 2003** Belmont Rocks Revetment Project begins

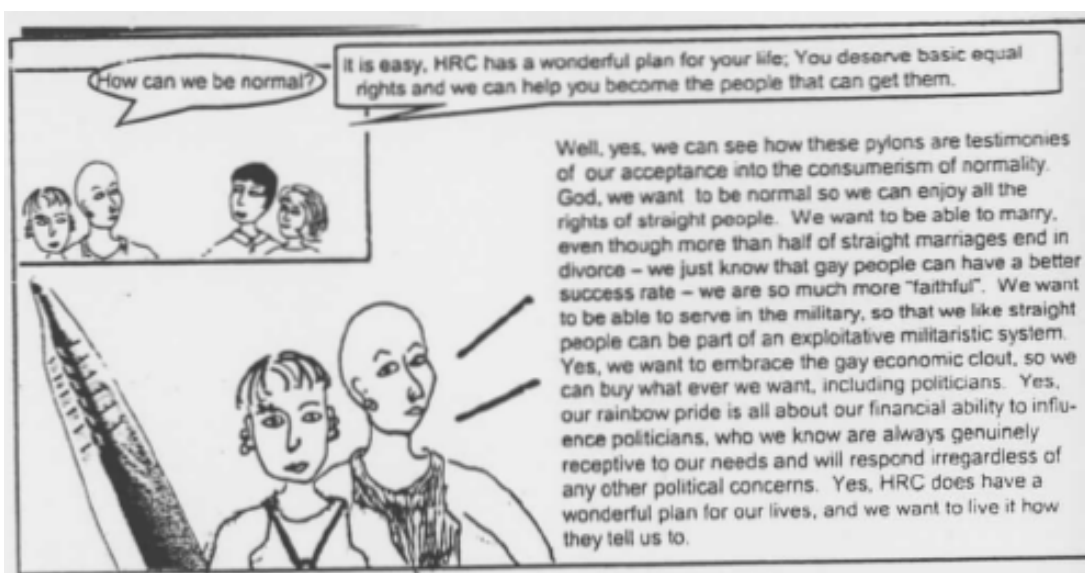
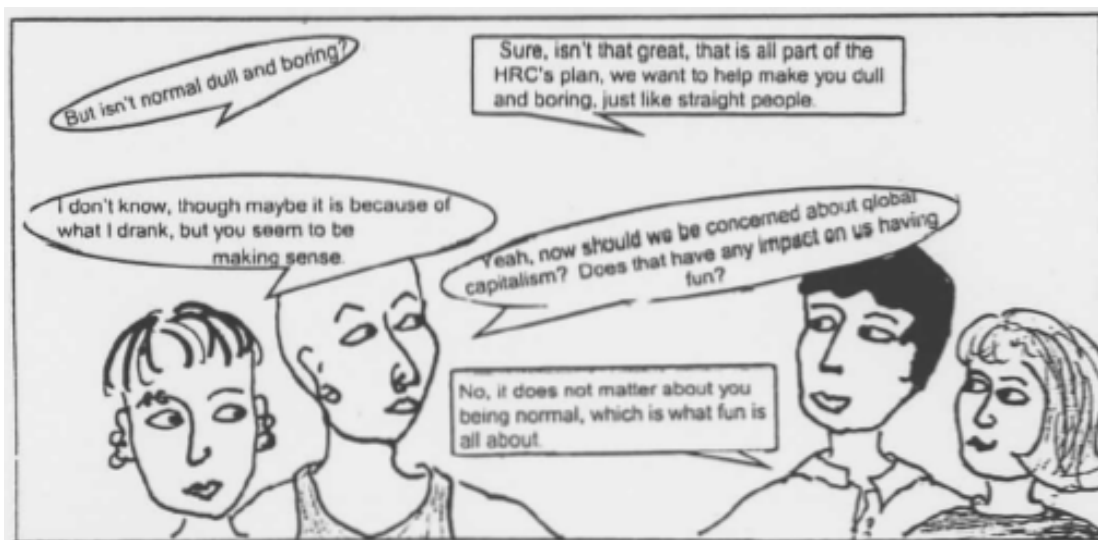
- 2003** Tom Tunney election as the 44th Ward alderman and becomes the first openly gay alderman in Chicago.
- 2005** Senate Bill 287 extends current hate crime legislation to include harassment through electronic communication. (August)
- 2006** Chicago hosted the Gay Games VI Sports and Cultural Festival, 12,000 athletes competed (July)
- 2007** Center on Halsted Opening (official ribbon-cutting ceremony) (June 5)
- 2007** Center on Halsted Opened (July)
- 2007** The Great Recession, resulting from subprime mortgage lending and the collapse of the United States housing bubble (December 2007 – June 2009).
- 2008** Chicago became a finalist in its bid to host the 2016 Olympics
- 2011** Rahm Emanuel is elected mayor (Chicago's first Jewish mayor)

Appendix G: Q2L's "Pylon Pride Tract" Comic Excerpts and Ephemera











HRC HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE!

What **you** can do to be part of the gay/lesbian movement and be just like normal straight people.

- 1) Accept HRC as your personal Lord and Saviour.
- 2) Give HRC money (the more the better)
- 3) Dress/act/look as normal as you can be (khakis and Gap polos are a good start).
- 4) Only have sex in the context of a long term committed relation – also, when in a long term committed relationship, never have sex with anyone outside of that relationship – that is what straight people do.
- 5) Wear and use rainbow colored things (this will be the only difference between us and straight people)
- 6) Give HRC money so they can help you do all of the above.

Housing is a Queer Issue

For low-income lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (lgbt) people being displaced by gentrification and cutbacks in public housing, housing is an issue.
 For lgbt youth tormented by their parents and neighbors, with nowhere to go, housing is an issue.
 For lgbt youth on the streets, with nowhere to go, housing is an issue.



For people living with AIDS living on a fixed income watching rental units disappear and prices rising as Chicago neighborhoods gentrify, housing is an issue.
 For people living with AIDS and other disabilities who have special needs that neither the market nor public housing address, housing is an issue.



For lgbt victims of domestic abuse needing a safe space, housing is an issue.
 For lesbian or bisexual woman trapped in a heterosexual relationship because they cannot afford to leave and live on their own, housing is an issue.
 For lgbt seniors living on fixed incomes in neighborhoods where they have built community for themselves over many years now facing skyrocketing taxes and rents as Chicago neighborhoods gentrify, housing is an issue.



For lgbt people of color who face racial discrimination from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.
 For transgendered people facing transphobic discrimination from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.
 For lgbt people who face homophobic discrimination from landlords, neighbors, lenders, and real estate agents, housing is an issue.

For lgbt people who believe that the struggle for sexual freedom requires building coalitions with others fighting for social justice, housing is an issue.



Queer to the Left
 Getting over the Rainbow for 5 Years

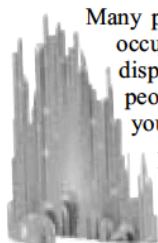
Will Halsted Go the Way of Oz?

Instigated by new high-end condo owners' complaints of noise, garbage, and congestion, Lincoln Park's **Oz Park Festival** was moved from its 17-year home in Oz Park to a lake-front location. After two years at the lake-front, the Oz Park Festival is no more. And in other parts of Chicago such condo-mania has brought about the closing of **Karma** and **Elixer** and is threatening **Crobar**.



On Halsted, Circuit's liquor license is now being threatened by condo owners in the newly built **Dakota**. There are on-going concerns about **Steamworks** in relation to the large condo complex next to it. Another new condo is being built at Halsted and Cornelia near the long time home of **Little Jim's**, **Manhole**, and the **Ram**. And yet another condo is to be built behind **Cell Block** and **Kit Kat**. These places of entertainment are important parts of the vibrancy of Halsted Street and its special unique character.

Halsted Street condo-mania threatens its nightlife.



Many people find the vibrancy of an urban quality of life appealing. Unfortunately there is a growing occurrence in Chicago (and other cities) of urban life being obliterated by a gentrification trend which displaces or drastically alters such staples of urban life like festivals, nightlife of entrainment strips, and people just walking down public streets—recent complaints have resulted in a police sweep of lgbtq youth off Halsted Street, a place that should be welcoming to them.

Lgbtq people live and socialize in many neighborhoods in Chicago and its suburbs. North Halsted Street is one of those places and is viewed by some to be one of the primary gathering places for lgbtq people. The disruption of the North Halsted Street entertainment strip and its related businesses would result in the loss this special and unique element in Chicago-area lgbtq life.

Not only is nightlife threatened, the struggle against Halsted Street condo-mania is part of a larger struggle against gentrification, which pushes long-term residents out of their neighborhoods. Many people are finding it harder and harder to afford housing in the neighborhoods like Lakeview, Uptown, and Edgewater where they have been living for many years.

For the past 4 years, Queer to the Left (Q2L) has been engaged in this struggle most recently working on low cost housing in Uptown, which is home to the city's largest population of people with AIDS (according to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, 1/3 of PWAs in the city has experienced homelessness at some point). At the same time Q2L has helped to challenge city subsidies to high-end condos and to a national chain bookstore whose presence will threaten nearby independent bookstores that have long histories of serving lgbtq people (without public subsidies).

Fueled by the appeal of sky-rocketing property values, high-end condos are going up on Halsted Street and the nightlife of the entertainment strip is being threatened because Alder(tin)man Hansen wants it that way. This situation can only change by getting involved. Your individual and collective voices need to be heard.

Be informed. Be involved. Be part of the solution.

See the reverse side of this flyer for details.

Queer to the Left
Getting over the Rainbow for 5 Years

Whose Neighborhood Is It, Anyway?

The Chicago City Council will soon vote on whether to give a \$5.25 million subsidy (from local tax dollars) to a private developer to transform the former Goldblatt's Department Store at Lawrence and Broadway into a two-story Borders Bookstore, with high-priced condominiums (\$155,000-\$330,000) on the upper floors. Not only is this welfare for the rich, but the proposed development fails to address the needs of neighborhood residents!

What's At Stake?

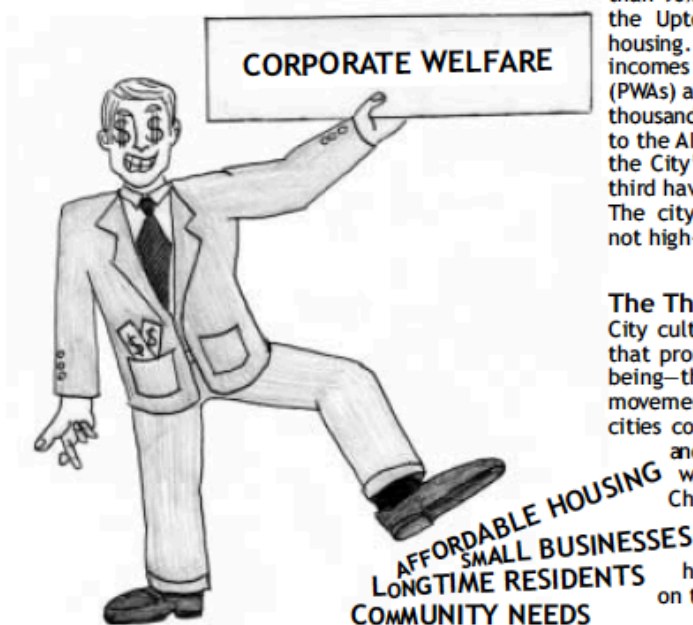
The Threat to Independent Booksellers:

Borders is a national, corporate chain which already has a number of stores in the Chicago metro area. The proliferation of chain bookstores in the past decade has resulted in the loss of over half the country's independent booksellers. Locally, Women and Children First in Andersonville, and Unabridged Books in Lakeview have long histories of serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. This proposed Borders will threaten the economic viability of these two currently-thriving bookstores.

The Threat to Affordable Housing:

Uptown has lost thousands of units of affordable housing in the last decade. That explains why more than 75% of Uptown voters supported a 1999 "Affordable Housing Referendum" that called on the City to do everything in its power to preserve and increase affordable housing in Uptown. The developer's plan for the Goldblatt's building, with public subsidy, does ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to address this expressed will of the people. Not one of its "affordable" units would be affordable to families who send their children to Uptown's public schools (more

than 90% make under \$22,000 a year), yet they are the Uptown residents most in need of affordable housing. In addition to people of low and moderate incomes in general being affected, people with AIDS (PWAs) are also hard hit. There are currently almost a thousand PWAs in Uptown and Edgewater. According to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, more than half of the City's PWAs live below the poverty level, and a third have been homeless at some point in their lives. The city should subsidize more affordable housing, not high-end condos!



The Threat to Urban Vitality:

City cultures are about heterogeneity, about spaces that promote different kinds of self expression and being—that's why the lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer movement in the US started in big cities, and why cities continue to draw LGBTQ people from suburbs and rural areas all the time. The sort of gentrification we see taking place on the North Side of Chicago is a threat to city culture—it demands and creates homogeneity—homogeneity of households, homogeneity of race and class, homogeneity of retail businesses, homogeneity on the streets and in other public places.

What You Can Do

- **Speak Out at the Next Public Meeting on this Proposed Development:** Tuesday, January 8, 2 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, City Hall (121 N. LaSalle, 2nd Floor). Come at 1:45 p.m. and sign up to speak!!
- **Fill out an accompanying postcard to Mayor Daley and the Commissioner of Planning and Development**
- **Contact Queer to the Left** at queertothelleft-owner@yahooogroups.com

Appendix H: Excerpt of Duke University Press Publication Agreement

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VITA

Zachary Shane Kalish Blair

<http://www.zachary-blair.com>

zblair2@uic.edu | zachary.blair@me.com

Department of Anthropology
University of Illinois at Chicago
1007 West Harrison Street, M?C 027
Chicago, Illinois 60607-7139

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Chicago	Doctor of Philosophy, Anthropology, 2018
University of Illinois at Chicago	Master of Arts, Anthropology (Gender and Women's Studies concentration), 2008
San Francisco State University	Graduate certificate, National Sexuality Resource Center Summer Institute, 2007
University of Missouri at Kansas City	Master of Arts in Liberal Studies, Race, Gender, and Sexuality, 2006
University of Central Florida	Bachelor of Arts, Anthropology (with university honors), <i>summa cum laude</i> , 2005

Dissertation: Machine of Desire: Race, Space, and Contingencies of Violence in Chicago's Boystown

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Cultural anthropology; urban anthropology; social geography; political economy; critical race theory; queer theory; historical methods; violence; subjectivity; urban space; gentrification; and social movements.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2013-present	Director of Research and Development, Academic Innovation Department, Full Sail University
2012-2013	Senior Director of Academic Research and Development, Academic Innovation Department, Full Sail University
2011	Senior Curriculum Developer, Academic Affairs Department, Full Sail University
2011	Researcher, Academic Affairs Department, Full Sail University
2007-2010	Graduate Research Assistant for John D'Emilio, History/Gender and Women's Studies Departments, University of Illinois at Chicago
2007	Field Worker, City of Chicago Urban Traffic Project, directed by Siim Soot, City of Chicago
2005	International Mission to China on Anthropology and Archaeology, Chengdu, Xi'an, and Beijing

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2006 Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Illinois at Chicago, Cultural Geography (Spring)
- 2006 Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Illinois at Chicago, Intro to Social Anthropology (Fall)

FIELD EXPERIENCE

- 2008-2010 Dissertation fieldwork of the Boystown neighborhood in Chicago
- 2008 Boystown preliminary observation on gentrification, under guidance of Dr. Gayatri Reddy (summer)
- 2007 Boystown and gay space preliminary fieldwork, interviews, and participant observation under guidance of Dr. Kenneth McGill for Qualitative Methods (ANTH 418 – Fall)
- 2006 Gay space in Chicago preliminary data collection (Spring)

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Blair, Zachary
2018 "Racial Violence in Chicago's Boystown: Discourse, Power, and Gay Neighborhood (Re)Production." *Central States Anthropological Society (CSAS) Annual Meeting and Conference*. Session: "Intersections of Power: Race, Gender, and Sexuality." Indiana University at Bloomington, April 19-21.

- Blair, Zachary
2018 "Boystown: Formation Narratives and Racial Violence in Chicago's Gay Neighborhood," *Queer Studies Conference: Prisons, Borders, and Pipelines: Toward a Queer Abolitionist Movement*, Session: *Queer Inside and Outside*. University of North Carolina at Asheville, April 5-7.

- Blair, Zachary
2016 "Pulse: The Neoliberal Trap of Gay Space," *Spaces and Flows Conference: Planetary Urbanization in the Modern World*, University of Pennsylvania, November 10-11.

- Blair, Zachary
2012 "Boystown: Intersections of Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality in Chicago's Gay Neighborhood," *American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA, November 18.

- Blair, Zachary
2011 "Bodies in Built Queer Space: The History, Politics, and Economy of Chicago's Northalsted Street," *Gender, Sexuality, and Urban Space Conference*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, March 11-13.

Blair, Zachary and Galloway, Samuel
 2010 "The Queer Politics of Cyber-Sociality? The Political Possibilities and Limitations of Queer(ing) Social Networking Sites," *Queertopia Conference: The Radical Potential of Queer(ing) Politics*, Northwestern University, May 21-22.

Blair, Zachary
 2010 "Junk in the Trunk: Gender, Race, and the Political Economy of Truck Nutz," *Thinking Gender Conference*, University of California at Los Angeles, February 5.

Blair, Zachary
 2010 "Junk in the Trunk: A Queer Exploration of Truck Nutz as Contemporary Material Culture," *Gender, Bodies, and Technology Conference*, Virginia Tech, April 22-24.

Blair, Zachary
 2009 "Junk in the Trunk: A Queer Exploration of Truck Nutz as Contemporary Material Culture," *Brown Bag Speaker Series*, University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, December 1.

Blair, Zachary
 2009 "Junk in the Trunk: A Queer Perspective of the Testicle Trend in the Southern United States," *Queertopia Conference: (Re)Imagining Communities*, Northwestern University, May 1-2.

PUBLICATIONS AND THESES

Blair, Zachary
 2016 "The Pulse Nightclub Shooting: Connecting Militarism, Neoliberalism, and Multiculturalism to Understand Violence." *North American Dialogues* 19(2): 102-110.

Blair, Zachary
 2016 "Boystown: Gay Neighborhoods, Social Media, and the (Re)production of Racism." In *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies*, ed. E. Patrick Johnson. Duke University Press.

Blair, Zachary
 2006 "Faggot: A Sociolinguistic Perspective of Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Inequality" Master's thesis, University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Blair, Zachary

- 2005 "Same-Sex Marriage: A Cross-Cultural Perspective," Burnett Honors College Undergraduate thesis, University of Central Florida.

ORGANIZED CONFERENCES AND SESSIONS

- 2013 Student Presenters Organizational Committee. *Second City Anthropology Conference*, University of Illinois at Chicago, "Challenging Communities: Power, Boundaries, and Resistance," March 30.
- 2010 Panel Organizer, "Material Bodies and States of Feminism," *Thinking Gender Conference* at the University of California at Los Angeles, February 5.
- 2010 Panel Organizer, "Gendered Bodies in a Material World," *Gender, Bodies, and Technology Conference* at Virginia Tech, April 22-24.
- 2009 Panel Organizer, "Hegemonic Masculinity," *Queertopia Conference: (Re)Imagining Communities*, Northwestern University, May 1-2.

JOURNAL REVIEWS

- 2013 Article reviewer for *Student Anthropologist*: Special Issue, National Association of Student Anthropologists

PROJECT MEDIA COVERAGE

- 2010 "Boystown the Topic of Anthropological Study" in *Gay Chicago Magazine*, Vol. 34 (9), March 4, 2010: 10.
- 2010 Kennedy, Kerrie. "Boystown the subject of anthropological study" in *Chicago Free Press*, Vol 2 (26), March 4, 2010: 5.
- 2010 Bill Pritchard, "Boystown the topic of Anthropological Study" in *Chicago Now*, March 1, 2010. <http://www.chicagonow.com/mayor-of-boystown/2010/03/boystown-the-topic-of-anthropological-study/>

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS

- 2017 University of Illinois at Chicago, Image of Research Honorable Mention, *Affect and Solidarity Constructed*
- 2012 President's Research in Diversity Travel Award
- 2011 Graduate Student Council Travel Award
- 2010 Charles Reed Memorial Fund Award
- 2010 Alice J. Dan Dissertation Award
- 2010 Graduate College Student Presenter Award
- 2010 Graduate Student Council Travel Award
- 2009 The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality Student Research Grant
- 2008 University of Illinois Chancellor's LGBT Seed Grant
- 2008 Kellogg Company Rainbow Merit Scholarship

- 2006 Out and Equal in the Workplace annual conference summer scholarship
- 2005 University of Missouri at Kansas City Chancellor's Award
- 2004 University of Central Florida Founder's Scholar Award
- 2003 University of Central Florida Founder's Scholar Award
- 2001 Derby Lane Scholarship
- 2001 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2018 Central States Anthropological Society
- 2018 Association for Queer Anthropology
- 2017 Qualitative Research Consultants Association
- 2017 Society for Cultural Anthropology
- 2017 Society for Urban, National, and Transnational/Global Anthropology
- 2012 Society for the Anthropology of North America (SANA)
- 2008 The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
- 2006 American Anthropological Association
- 2003 National Society Collegiate Scholars
- 2003 Golden Key Honors Society

COURSES PREPARED TO TEACH

Critical Race Theory
 Geographies of Sexualities
 Global Queer Studies
 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
 Introduction to Cultural Geography
 Introduction to Critical Surveillance Studies
 LGBT Spaces in the United States
 Qualitative/Ethnographic Methods
 Queer Ecologies
 Queer Ethnographies
 Queer Theory
 Queer (De)colonialities
 Social Movements in the United States
 Urban Space

LANGUAGES

Spanish: Speaking (adequate), Reading (good), Writing (good)