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Declining Gayborhood or Homonormative Playground in the Making? South Beach Reinvented.

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

DECLINING GAYBORHOOD OR HOMONORMATIVE PLAYGROUND IN THE
MAKING? SOUTH BEACH REINVENTED

By

Kai Kenttamaa Squires

A THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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Declining Gayborhood or Homonormative Playground
in the Making? South Beach Reinvented

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In this study I investigate the “decline” of the South Beach neighborhood of Miami Beach, Florida as a gayborhood (an urban clustering of LGBT residents and businesses) since the 1990s. I also place this case study within a larger context of a global gay village decline (defined as the loss of gay businesses and residents) by evaluating theoretical models and arguments over the roles of gentrification, technology and generational cultural shifts in said decline. Necessarily, this includes a discussion of homonormativity, particularly in regards to tourism promotion and entrepreneurialism versus the needs and desires of the local LGBT community which I investigate through the actions of the city of Miami Beach, Miami-Dade County, and associated organizations, to promote South Beach to a new generation of discriminating LGBT traveler. I argue that, while some of their efforts have been successful in attracting new visitors and extending legal protections to LGBT residents, South Beach remains an excluding, homonormalized location that promotes profit and market-friendly performativities over community involvement and the kind of outrageous queerness that existed there in previous years, particularly in comparison to Wilton Manors, a growing gayborhoods located a half-hour's drive away.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	iv
LIST OF TABLES	v
Chapter	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 ESTABLISHING A THEORETICAL CONTEXT	4
Geographies of Sexualities Versus. Queer Geography	4
Homonormativity: A Recent Entry	13
Gay Village Decline	16
Sexualized Entrepreneurialism and Homonormative Consequences	27
3 ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL CONTEXT	32
Placing South Beach Within Metropolitan Miami and the World.....	32
Finding the Queer in South Beach	44
The Decline of LGBT South Beach.....	52
4 A GAY MOVEMENT? QUANTIFYING THE DECLINE OF LGBT SOUTH BEACH	61
Counting Queers? Prior Attempts to Map LGBTs	61
Using the Census.....	64
Mapping LGBT Supporting Businesses	68
5 SELLING SOUTH BEACH POST-DECLINE: A FABULOUS HOMONORMATIVITY?	77
New Efforts to “Re-Queer” The Beach	79
A Homonormative Leisurescape? Remaking South Beach to Fit Neoliberal Values	89
South Beach – A Future for Gay Villages?	102
6 CONCLUSION	108
WORKS CITED.....	112

List of Figures

Map 1 – Greater Miami Region.....	32
Map 2 – South Beach.....	38
Map 3 – Census Same Sex Couple Household Percentage Change by City 2000-2010..	66
Map 4 – 2010 Census Same Sex Couple Household LISA Concentrations	66
Map 5 – LGBT Friendly Businesses in South Beach in 2013.....	72
Map 6 – South Beach Businesses Advertising in Gay Magazines in 2013.....	72
Map 7 – South Beach LGBT Businesses by Type in 1995.....	73
Map 8 – South Beach LGBT Businesses by Type in 2013.....	73
Map 9 – Mean and Median Centers of LGBT Businesses in Greater Miami 1975-2013	74
Map 10 – Mean and Median Centers of Census Counted Same Sex Couple Households in Greater Miami 2000-2010.....	74

List of Tables

Table 1 – 2010 Census Demographic Characteristics of South Beach Compared with Surrounding Areas.....	43
Table 2 – 2010 Census Demographic Data on South Beach versus. Wilton Manors.....	57
Table 3 – Same-Sex Couple Households as Counted by Census (2000, 20010) Per Area	66
Table 4 – LGBT Business Advertising in Magazines by City and Year	69
Table 5 – LGBT Business in Damron Guides by City and Year	70
Table 6 – Damron listed Miami Beach LGBT Business Types by Year	72
Table 7 – LGBT Themed Events in South Beach by Year of Founding and Theme	82

Chapter 1

Introduction

South Beach, a district of Miami Beach, Florida, located on a barrier island connected to the city of Miami by several causeways, was one of the world's most popular destinations for LGBT (particularly gay male) travelers in the 1990s. It maintained a reputation of raunch, decadence and sexiness that was documented in press reports and Hollywood films (most notably 1996's *The Birdcage*). But in the early years of the new millennium there was a substantial loss in the visibility and diversity of the LGBT resident, visitor and business communities in South Beach.

However, this phenomenon is not unique to South Beach. In the past fifteen years a concern has arisen that urban neighborhood concentrations of LGBTs (lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders), variously dubbed *gay villages*, *gayborhoods* or *gay ghettos*, are on the decline. Press reports have documented the closure of businesses and the displacement of neighborhood residents wrought by gentrification, tourism and other factors. Academics and journalists alike have documented this decline from locations across the Global North and have theorized on this structural change as resulting from cyclical property markets, technological advances and generational shifts in taste.

No academic study of this kind has yet been done on the Miami metropolitan area and its main gayborhoods. There hasn't been any explicitly geographic work done on the LGBT population of the city. This mixed methods project seeks to address this gap in the literature both quantitatively and qualitatively while also advancing South Beach as a

case study on which to theorize more broadly about the state of gay villages beyond South Florida.

The main questions I raise are: Is South Beach as an LGBT space (gayborhood/gay village) on the decline? Who says so, why and how can this be measured or mapped? What effect has this “decline” had on the culture, economics and the performative “queerness” of the space? Is South Beach still an LGBT space? What measures have the city of Miami Beach, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and other public or private organizations taken to maintain a “gay-friendly” image of South Beach and promote it to LGBT consumers? Can the promotional efforts of these actors be read as homonormative and more broadly is this “new” South Beach a homo or heteronormative space? What does the South Beach story tell us about other gayborhoods facing similar declines?

This project is organized into four chapters. In the first this study is contextualized within relevant literature on geographies of sexualities, Queer geography and the phenomenon of gay village decline. In the second a further contextualization is given to the study area including journalistic accounts of decline. In the third claims of South Beach’s LGBT decline are spatially quantified using the mapping of census data on Same Sex Couple Households and the locations of LGBT supporting businesses. In the fourth chapter the actions of the City of Miami Beach, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and various other organizations and agencies are detailed and evaluated as they have attempted to promote South Beach to a new generation of LGBT travelers and consumers. Interviews with elite sources gauge their remaking of the neighborhoods structural changes as something positive or as the end results of a natural process of

maturity and diversification beyond the “gay ghetto” of old. Qualitative analysis includes a discussion of the concept of homonormativity and its applicability to South Beach and how it may be perpetuated by certain actions of the state and various market and cultural forces.

Chapter 2

Establishing a Theoretical Context

In order to properly contextualize this project, a review of literature on the topics at hand is needed. This is done in two chapters; Establishing a Theoretical Context and Establishing a Regional Context. In this, the first of the two chapters, sub-sections cover the history of space and sexuality research, queer theory, their intersections in what is termed queer geography and the concept of homonormativity are addressed. In addition the press articles and formative academic work on the structural change of urban concentrations of LGBTs (from here on out dubbed as gay villages or gayborhoods), i.e. gay village decline and the topic of sexualized entrepreneurialism are also introduced.

Geographies of Sexualities Versus Queer Geography

This study is presented at a time of great change and vigorous debate not only within the research sites on which this work is thematically based but also within academic work on the intersections between geography (especially of the Human, Cultural and Social Geography that can be grouped together under the rubric of “Space and Place”), human sexuality and gender. A theoretical divide has developed between geographies of sexualities or gender and queer geography and this debate lies at the heart of this study. In this section a history of the spatial dimensions involving sexuality and performativity are introduced in order to place the current debates within a temporal context. A reconciliation is attempted by underscoring what both sides have in common and what opportunities lie within greater collaboration.

A History of Same-Sex Attraction and Gender Non-Conformity

The acronym LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) and all of its component terms as well as political recognition of each as describing unique identities are all relatively new phenomena. Whereas transgressors against hegemonic gender roles and expected sexual behaviors have always existed, in the shadows throughout history, because of societal stigma, the earliest predecessors of the modern Gay Rights Movement came from Europe. German jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895) was the first historical figure to propose, name (“Uranian”) and out himself as a member of an identity category based on same-sex attraction. He theorized that he was a member of a “third sex” constituted by a mix of masculine and feminine characteristics and that it was a completely natural and innate orientation (LeVay 1996). In 1869 Hungarian writer Karl Maria Kertbeny introduced the word “homosexual” into use (LeVay 1996). That same year when Germany was considering enacting penal codes that punished homosexual acts Karl Maria Kertbeny wrote an open letter to the minister of justice supporting Heinrich’s assertions that homosexuality is natural and therefore should not be regulated by the laws of man (only by the laws of nature).

He failed and the law became a part of Germany’s penal code became law in 1871 (Jagose 1996). Attempts at repeal by German neurologist Magnus Hirschfeld in 1897 also failed but this started a critical evaluation of sexual orientation, its origins, congeniality and how people of this orientation/identity should be treated (Jagose 1996). A variety of groups were established in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century such as the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, Community of

the Special and factions of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology to promote the ideas of Heinrich and Hirschfeld (Jagose 1996).

The Chicago Society for Human Rights was the first such group in the United States (established in 1924) and provided a template for later groups such as the Mattachine Society (founded in 1951) and the Daughters of Bilitis (founded in 1954), the first lesbian-rights organization (Jagose 1996). This movement, then known as the “homophile movement” (Armstrong & Crago 2006) grew in influence throughout the 1950s and 60s. A turning point in this burgeoning movement was the Stonewall Riots of June 27-29, 1969 in New York’s Greenwich Village. This well-publicized riot followed a police raid on a gay bar called the Stonewall Inn. Rather than passively enduring humiliation and arrest the patrons fought back late into the night and were joined by others from the neighborhood eager to display their dissatisfaction with the NYPD and its constant harassment of LGBTs (Armstrong & Crago, 2006). The media attention surrounding this event inspired similar actions around the United States and today is viewed as the catalyst for the modern Gay Rights movement and is accordingly celebrated by the press and academia, and in commemorative events around the world (Armstrong & Crago, 2006).

Finding the Space for Sexuality

Given the attention focused on Stonewall it is understandable that some might believe that it was the first event in the United States where LGBT individuals organized en masse to protest ill-treatment by local Police and demand equal rights and standing within society. But numerous similar incidents have been documented from such cities as

Los Angeles (Thomas, 2011), San Francisco (Thomas, 2011; Armstrong & Crage, 2006) and Atlantic City (Simon, 2002). What was it about the timing and *place* of the riots that made it so iconic? Numerous academics and journalists (Thomas, 2011; Armstrong & Crage, 2006; Simon, 2002) have noted certain particularities about the location of the Stonewall Inn that distinguished it from earlier acts of resistance.

While in other cities gay bars were more widely spaced and often located in peripheral zones the location of the Stonewall in Manhattan's densely populated urban environment with a nighttime economy (i.e. lots of foot traffic) and its close proximity to other gay bars, was integral in attracting the attention of passers-by and allowing the riot to grow larger. The long-standing media focus on Greenwich Village's countercultural leanings and artistic community allowed for press coverage of the event to swiftly reach far corners of the world.

Stonewall illustrates the importance of space and place in discussions of LGBT history. Nonetheless the incorporation of sexualities as a research focus in human geography was a late phenomenon. So-called geographies of sexualities (sometimes also called gay and Lesbian Geography) arose simultaneously with Feminist and Marxist geographies during the turn towards post-structuralism/post-positivism in the late 1970s and early 80s (Peet, 1998). This is no coincidence as the sexist forces that privileged the male viewpoint, researcher and subject matter in geography were also the same *heterosexist* forces that privileged the heterosexual male viewpoint, researcher and subject matter and discouraged geographic research on or by LGBTs (Brown, 2004; Brown & Knopp, 2003; Peet, 1998).

Early works in geographies of sexualities focused largely on urban clusters of gay men and lesbians, their role in revitalizing downtrodden inner-city neighborhoods and the concentration of political power and visibility in these fortified spaces safe from oppression common elsewhere (Brown & Knopp, 2003; Bell & Valentine, 1995). Of the early examples of this work the best known is Manuel Castell's chapter on The Castro neighborhood of San Francisco from his 1983 book *The City and the Grassroots*. It is noteworthy in its early use of census data (on multiple male and single male households) and addresses of businesses to map likely concentrations of gay men throughout the city. These methods were subsequently employed many times over the subsequent years to spatially quantify "gay and lesbian" space, eventually culminating in *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas* (2004) by Gary J. Gates and Jason Ost.

Queering Geographies of Sexualities

Although acknowledged as groundbreaking, Castell's (1983), and indeed much of the early gay and lesbian geography, is held back by its structuralism (Hubbard, 2011). Despite its arrival at a time of great unravelling of positivist and structuralist assumptions about the finality of knowledge and pre-existing truths, geographies of sexualities were radical only in their subject matter (at the time). This conservatism was not relegated academically to geography but was also common in other social sciences dealing with sexual minorities (Jagose, 1996).

The early 1990s saw the arrival of queer theory and its idea of "performativity" which would radically revolutionize studies of sexualities. Queer theory states that all gender roles and sexual orientation categories are performative social constructions that

rely on a set of normative behavioral codes that are used to determine a person's identity. Masculinity and femininity (and their associative traits) are not innate or naturally formed behavioral roles and identity categories (male/female *gender* as opposed to biological *sex*), but are determined and policed by the societies that we all live in (Jagose, 1996). Beyond disrupting gender binaries queer theory also questions the separation between homo and heterosexualities and thus the use of the term *queer* as a stand-in for "LGBT", "gay" or "lesbian" is a misuse of the term (Browne, 2006).

While Judith Butler's seminal 1990 book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* is commonly considered the work that popularized queer theory (Mahtani, 2011; Jagose, 1996), she was preceded by a number of important works, events and movements that helped to herald the rise of queer theory. For example, Teresa de Lauretis wrote about expanding feminist discourses and research beyond rigid gendered binaries in her 1987 book *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*. In fact, she is credited as actually coining the term *queer theory*, when she used it in the title of a conference she organized in February 1990 (Halperin, 2003), and furthered it into academic discourse in a special issue of the journal *differences* from 1991 that she edited, called *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities* (Jagose, 1996). That she later abandoned the term "queer" for becoming "a conceptually vacuous creature of the publishing industry" (de Lauretis, 1994: 297) that was "devoid of the critical or political acumen she once thought it promised" (Jagose, 1996: 129), speaks to the intense debate and instability of queer theory, its deployment as a term and its standardization as an academic subject and mode of inquiry, some of which I cover in the next section.

Michael Foucault must also be acknowledged as an influential early theorizer. His first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978) took the social constructionist method (not well established until decades later) to trace the emergence of the “modern homosexual” as a constructed identity back to 1870s Europe. Prior to which it was thought that there were no homosexuals per se, only homosexual acts which were thought of as a temptation to which anyone (of poor moral character) was susceptible (Jagose 1996).

Beyond proposing identity as a construct, Foucault’s writings on power, resistance and oppression have also been quite influential on the development of queer theory. His characterization of power as not necessarily repressive but as productive (in terms of producing sexual and gender identities) and of anti-homophobic resistance as being part of the same operations/power structure as heterosexism (as well as his generally anti-liberationist stance) have gotten him into trouble with some LGBT activists and writers who claim he was a defeatist. But his writings on the nature of oppression and identity politics were so far ahead of his time that it took queer theorists years to fully appreciate and acknowledge them (Jagose 1996).

In addition, new wave feminism and critical race theory added gender and race as performative constructs that could be usefully deconstructed, and demonstrated the power of “queering” any number of disciplines within the social sciences (Brown & Knopp, 2003). Even the AIDS crisis of the 1980s can be partially attributed to the development of queer theory, specifically efforts made by health professionals and academics to separate sex acts from identities by introducing new terminology (such as MSM for Men who

have Sex with Men) to treat and/or promote preventive measures to men unwilling to admit to a “gay” or “bi” identity due to stigma (Jagose, 1996).

Queer theory quickly spread to geography, and spatial researchers dissatisfied with the positivist methods employed by geography of sexualities developed the new term *queer geography* to describe their work. The 1995 tome *Mapping Desire* (edited by David Bell and Gill Valentine), despite being subtitled “Geographies of Sexualities”, demarcated the “queer” turn in geography with contributions from scholars Michael Brown, Lawrence Knopp, Jon Binnie, Glen Elder, David Bell and Gill Valentine (amongst others) whose prior and subsequent works furthered the post-modern, de-constructivist and highly critical approaches of the time. While earlier works had not explicitly questioned assumed male/female gender and hetero/homosexual binaries, queer geographers maintained that they are constructs that are spatially produced and embodied. Thus queer geography research focused not just on fixed gay/lesbian identified subjects in space (and their relations to one another and their environment), i.e. *Geographies of Sexualities*, but also on how those identities were formulated, performed and/or resisted within and by the spaces they inhabit.

The Battle for Theoretical Supremacy: To Queer or Not to Queer?

It is important to note here that queer geography did not just replace geographies of sexualities, despite early predictions that it might (Gill & Valentine, 1995). In fact, the two continue to exist and inform each other. *Geographies of sexualities* have been enriched tremendously by queer geography and from outside of geography. Influence of critical race theory, post-colonial theory and feminism, combined with the increased

visibility, societal acceptance and political power of marginalized identities beyond gay men and lesbians, also allowed for an expanded subject matter within geography and with more notice being paid to the intersections of gender, race, nationality, religion, (dis)ability and sexuality (Brown, M., 2012).

While additional “queering” is needed of geographies of sexualities (Browne, 2006) it is important also to note the limitations of (of the initially seemingly limitless) “queer”. Brown & Knopp (2003) warn of “...the political and personal ennui of constantly queering each other’s work” which can result in an endless cycle of academic “stone throwing” and bitter responses such as that which has defined gentrification research (Slater, 2006), for example. In contrast to the emancipatory intent of queer theory, it has been used occasionally to dismiss individuals and identities thought to not be radical enough. To this point Brown & Knopp (2003) write that “...queer perspectives cannot just challenge and critique others; they must also self-critique as well. After all, queer theory insists that no position is completely innocent or unproblematic” (321).

If the meaning of queer and all knowledge produced using queer theory are inherently unstable and fluid, a fact fiercely defended by queer theorists, then is the final result of the current deconstruction project in social sciences a power vacuum in which all meaning and structure are void? For example Kath Browne spends a good portion of “Challenging Queer Geographies” (2006) worrying that to even deploy the term queer risks solidifying and standardizing it and thus making it ineffective. She does maintain that geographies of sexualities and queer geography are beneficial to each other because it allows the latter to maintain a position of useful criticism while the former retains a structure, form and practicality not weighed down by semantic or dense theoretical

squabbles. I agree with this point, but with the caveat that it is not always so easy to tell the difference between such works as an increasing amount of academic work utilizes queer theory or language without being exclusively or explicitly about performativity or questioning the usefulness and solidity of existing identities and structures.

Homonormativity: A Recent Entry

Sexualities/Queer research continued to become ever more critical, inward looking and self-questioning around the start of the new millennium. While in the twentieth century the experiences of sexual and gender minorities were generally contrasted to and defined by an oppressive and normalized heteronormativity, by the early 2000s notice was increasingly being paid to normalizing, patriarchal and racist forces within LGBT communities. Heidi Nast famously challenged “Queer Patriarchies (and) Queer Racisms” in a 2002 issue of *Antipode*, in which she rightly pointed out that white middle class gay men have certain privileges not afforded to other LGBTs. Her self-admitted harsh tone is similar to claims of gay male oppression of lesbians made by radical lesbian feminists such as Sheila Jeffreys and Marilyn Frye years earlier (Jagose, 1996). Glen Elder (2002), in one of multiple responses Nast elicited, pointed out that Nast’s arguments were problematic. He wrote that she portrayed all white gay men as a monolithic block, without regard to differences within that broad grouping, and aligned them with patriarchal and racist power structures, without mentioning that white gay men were marginalized within society as well.

A more careful argument was advanced that same year by Lisa Duggan (2002) in her chapter “The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism” in

Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics, in which she defined “the new homonormativity” as:

A politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption (Duggan 2002, p. 179).

Like Nast, there is a focus on political economy and the marketability of certain gay lifestyles that may privilege certain modes of being over others. She indicates that it is those behaviors and performances which further neoliberal consumerism and mainstream-friendly marketability that are most valued in a new hierarchy of queerness.

Unlike Nast, Duggan’s “homonormativity” concept embodied queer questioning of identity categories and quickly gained mass critical acceptance. Homonormativity has gone beyond its immediate underpinnings in political economy and has been usefully incorporated into questions of the policing of public sex (Andersson, 2012; Ross & Sullivan, 2012, Bain & Nash, 2007; Bell & Binnie, 2004), normalization of certain lesbian performativities (Pattatucci-Aragon, 2006), nationalism and immigration policy (Luibheid, 2008; Puar, 2007, 2006), tourism promotion (Hunt & Zacharias, 2008; Waitt et al. 2008), the suppression of the overtly political/activists (Brown, G., 2007) and sexual citizenship (Duggan, 2008; Oswin, 2007a, 2007b). See also Podmore, 2013 and Richardson, 2005 for a good overview of the literature on homonormativity.

This work, and indeed the use of the term homonormative, has not been without its detractors. Gavin Brown (2012, 2009) problematizes the term, its comparison with heteronormativity (which he argues to be far more powerful and pervasive), its externalization and standardization (which removes agency from the individual and

flattens out contextual spatial difference), the power ceded to corporate and state actors over the individual and the metrocentricism of homonormative research thus far (an argument echoed within larger queer geography; Brown & Knopp, 2003b). Like Elder (2002), he also critiques the accusation of complicity in regards to larger structures, such as neoliberalism, and the stigmatization of “ordinary gay lives”. See also Lewis, 2013; Podmore, 2013; Brown & Bakshi, 2011 and Visser, 2008 for similar arguments about the limits of homonormativity.

A theme emerges in the literature here in debates about queer geography versus geographies of sexualities, Heidi J. Nast versus Glen Elder and proponents of homonormativity versus those critical of it. This can easily be read as a continuation of the debate between the radical, critical and theoretical versus the liberal, positivist and structural that has been going on in social sciences for decades. However Podmore (2013), Oswin (2008; 2005) and Browne (2006) all warn against such easy binarized sides at the expense of the complexity and multiplicity which informs real lived experiences. I agree with the more nuanced and careful approach advocated for here that maintains a critical eye for overlooked injustices and inequities and the (sometimes hard to define or pin down) structural forces that perpetuate them but that avoids vanguardism or assigning conspiratorial motives to large, diverse groups of people that then need to be cast out as “sell-out’s to the queer cause” (Oswin, 2005).

I also agree with the argument that this debate, while vigorous and occasionally frustrating, has been to the benefit of geography (of the queer or sexualities variety); Brown, 2013; Podmore, 2013; Browne et al. 2007; Browne, 2006; Brown & Knopp, 2003. If there is “...notable tension between projects of queering geography and that of

producing geographies of sexualities... many have argued that it is this tension that makes the field so dynamic” (Podmore, 2013). In further chapters here I hope to further this engagement by usefully straddling theoretical genres, not out of a fear of commitment, but because I think the best work has been done in the “queer” grey areas that acknowledge the subjectivity and fluidity at hand when dealing with identities and performativities, especially on topics as contested as gender and sexuality.

Gay Village Decline

Gay Village/Gayborhood Decline is a topic of growing interest has appeared in discussions at the intersection of sexualities and urban geography in the past decade. I introduce this topic and contextualize it within the history of, and research on, urban sexualities. Building upon this, I utilize theory discussed in the previous sections is to gauge arguments about what is meant by “decline”, why it matters, where it is happening, and what may be causing it.

The History of the Gay Village

While stigma within western societies has long sought to make non-heterosexualities invisible they persisted nonetheless, although often in the shadows. Higgs (1999) illustrates the history of the urban queer in global cities ranging from Rio de Janeiro to Moscow since 1600. The chapter on London by Ronald Trumbach introduces were some of the earliest examples of spatially concentrated gay (male) visibility in the “molly houses” of 18th century London. Still, the development of modern “gay village” is generally dated to the mid-20th century United States in cities such as San

Francisco and New York (Hanhardt, 2008; Caymen-Howe, 2001; Higgs, 1999; Castells, 1983).

Several theories have been put forth to exactly why this occurred in the time and place that it did. Many of these Gay Villages were (and continue to be) inhabited and used primarily by gay men. The social upheavals and physical movement instigated by World War II, the rising incomes of expanding middle and upper classes, and the economic and cultural allure of growing big cities, are cited as causal mechanisms for the accrual of enough capital, amongst white middle class gay men in particular, to allow for the movement to and within large cities and investment in purchasing and renovating residential structures and businesses that spurred gay village development.

Simultaneously, the decline of inner cities across the United States, due to “white flight”, left them “empty” (of capital though not necessarily of residents, many who were poor and of color, whom were nonetheless invisible on the landscape) and for the taking of enterprising groups to take advantage of, away from the prying eyes of the conservative, white mainstream which had largely moved to the suburbs. In his assessment of the development of a gay village in Atlantic City, Simon (2002) wrote about “the opportunity of emptiness” afforded by these cheap, culturally and economically (if not geographically) peripheral spaces to a marginalized group, which nonetheless had more access to capital to invest due to privileges of race and gender, and the often-stereotyped lack of expenses associated with raising children, than others.

Beyond economics there is still something about urban, centralized locations that attracted (and continues to attract) gay men. After all, if privacy/peripherality and

affordability were the most desired traits, a number of rural localities could have afforded exactly that. Cities have something that the rural doesn't in this regard, and that is a cultural factor. This pull can be described as, to borrow the term from gentrification research, "the emancipatory city": cities are places of liberal (and therefore more tolerant) politics, diversity and a "freeing" anonymity in the greater imagination (Caulfield, 1994; Knopp, 1990; Castells, 1983). This tolerance is supposed to allow for greater freedom of expression and individuality but also the anonymity that comes with densely populated areas.

The new "gay liberation movement", which took off in the United States following the Stonewall Riots of 1969, resulted in a claiming of space within these gay villages as rainbow flags (the symbol of a pride-ful identity) were put up in the windows of businesses and residences, protests took to the street, gay bars (and other gay owned or friendly businesses) operated openly in the wake of fewer police raids and same-sex couples increasingly openly displayed affection (Hanhardt, 2008). This represented a consolidation and fortification of gay territory in the 1970s. Increased visibility did not always mean increased tolerance and this buttressing of a territory can be seen as a protective measure to resist violence and discrimination. Gay villages grew rapidly as LGBTs (particularly gay men) seeking an accepting environment and/or a concentration of like-minded individuals and prospective sexual or romantic partners, moved in from elsewhere.

Beyond San Francisco's Castro District and New York's Greenwich Village, by the 1990s, gay villages had appeared in Boston's Beacon Hill and South End (Reuter, 2008), Chicago's Boystown (Reuters, 2008; Reed, 2003), Philadelphia's

Gayborhood/Center City (Thompson, 2013; Reuters, 2008), Atlanta's Midtown (Doan & Higgins, 2011; Reuter, 2008), Los Angeles's Silver Lake and West Hollywood, Seattle's Capitol Hill and Pioneer Square and Washington D.C.'s Dupont Circle (all Reuters, 2008) amongst others. Gay villages also appeared in large Canadian cities such as Montreal (Podmore, 2006), Toronto (Nash, 2012) and Vancouver (Catungal & McCann, 2010); British cities such as Birmingham (Bassi, 2006), Manchester (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004) and London (Collins, 2004); Paris, France (Sibalis, 2004) and Sydney, Australia (Reuting, 2008) amongst others.

The 1980s AIDS crisis within the gay community caused structural change amongst gay villages and is cited as spurring the closure of many sex oriented businesses such as bathhouses and increased policing of public sex "cruising" areas (Woods et al. 2003). Green (1997), Hayasaki (2007) and Cooker (2002) attribute it to the decline of gay bars as well in New York's Greenwich Village and San Jose and their subsequent movement to Chelsea, New York and San Francisco respectively. Partly, however, the health crisis galvanized even more attention and fortification of gay villages. Today memorials to victims of AIDS (a disease which was never exclusive to the gay male community but which continues to be associated with them as evidenced by the continued illegality of blood donations by gay men in the United States, for example) are amongst the most visible, and in some cases, the only permanent and non-privatized spatial markers of the LGBT community (at least in the eyes of the wider public; Catungal & McCann, 2010).

As previously mentioned, gay villages have been criticized for being spaces of overt white, middle-class, maleness. While urban concentrations of lesbians do exist; in

Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York (Rothenburg, 1995) and Decatur, Atlanta, Georgia (Doan & Higgins, 2011) for example, overall lesbians maintain a much lower profile in urban areas than gay men. See Knopp & Brown, 2003; Rothenburg, 1995 and the final chapter for analysis on lesbian uses of and visibility within space and why this discrepancy may exist. Likewise transgenders (Doan, 2007) and people of color (Visser, 2008; Nast, 2002) are less visible within gay villages. Arguments about economic privilege, racism and homonormativity exist, but examining the exclusivity of gay villages remains an under theorized phenomenon. Finally, while the gay village/gayborhood is a well discussed phenomenon from the Global North/West, research at the intersection of the urban and sexuality in the rest of the world is woefully lacking, with some exceptions from South Africa (Visser, 2008; Oswin, 2007a, 2007b) and Singapore (Oswin, 2008).

Whither the Gayborhood? Claims of Decline

Roughly since the start of the new millennium, a new phenomenon of gay village “decline” has been reported on feverishly within the LGBT, and occasionally mainstream, press. The tones of these articles ranged from alarmed to celebratory, given the controversy these neighborhoods elicit. I review these articles here and cover academic work on the subject in the next section.

It started with a few journalists noting the closures of individual, though occasionally iconic, gay bars within certain gay villages. Then more closed, due usually to rising rents, and a pattern emerged. By the late 2000s even mainstream city and national newspapers and websites were noting what I term “gay village decline”. The

general consensus by the press has been two-fold: that the gentrification process inexorably tied to inner-city neighborhood claiming and renovating by enterprising white gay men was now out of control and pricing out everyone but the wealthiest residents and high-end businesses and/or that for a variety of cultural, political and technological factors, the need for a territorialized “gay”, “queer” or “LGBT” space no longer exists and the “gay village” is an outdated concept which will inevitably disappear.

To the former, gentrification was indicated as a factor in the decline of Greenwich Village, New York and the subsequent movement of LGBTs to the Chelsea neighborhood (Hayasaki, 2007; Green, 1997). Furthering the gentrification argument for this particular context is the current decline of Chelsea as a gay village and the movement yet further uptown to Hell’s Kitchen (Stiffler, 2014; Russell, 2013). Similar stories were reported from Toronto’s Church & Wellesley (Leong, 2011; Balkisson, 2009), Key West, Florida (Powell, 2005), West Hollywood (Lovett, 2011), San Francisco’s The Castro (Mannix, 2014; Brown (P.L.), 2007; Leff, 2007), Philadelphia’s Gayborhood (Thompson, 2013) and Vancouver’s West End/Davie Village (Barsotti, 2012; Babineau, 2008) amongst others.

While residential displacement is mentioned in many of the articles, the closure of gay bars is prominent. At the center of this formulation is the institutionalization of the gay bar as “a third space”, neither work nor home and free from the oppressive elements that may be found in either a la Ray Oldenburg (1989). Due to the increased acceptance of homosexuality and assimilation of LGBTs into mainstream society, numerous articles have questioned whether the gay bar is any-longer necessary, with one (Geof, 2007),

putting it in a list of ten businesses that will no longer exist in ten years, alongside record stores, crop dusters, newspapers, payphones and used bookstores.

In a 2011 *Slate* piece called “The gay bar: Its riotous past and uncertain future” June Thomas quantifies the loss of gay bars nationwide through analysis of directories, such as the *Damron* and *Gayellowpages*, over a period of years. She also rightfully points to the gay bar as a cultural heritage and that, due to Stonewall, “...gay liberation is the only civil rights movement that began in a bar” and writes about the importance of gay bars as a sociological space of learning “how to be gay” given the lack of such knowledge-passing from, generally heterosexual, biologically reproducing families. While the argument of learning the “rules and ethics of gay life” is, perhaps, homonormative, elsewhere Thomas notes the exclusions of the gay bar such as a lack of lesbians and how the loud music and superficial, youth-oriented sexual politics may reject a diversity of body types and ages.

Similar arguments about why gay bars are no longer necessary were used to hypothesize the decline of gay villages in articles with such revealing titles as “Let us cease these gay campaigns it is thirty years since we first chanted ‘gay is good!’ Time to leave the self-centered ghetto” (Tatchell, 1999); “Do we really need gay florists? Ghettos are not the answer. Integration, not segregation, is the route to a really liberal society” (Reeves, 1999); “‘Out in Austin’ with a city this open who needs a gay ghetto” (Barnes and Massey, 2001) and “Goodbye gay ghetto; we’re everywhere in the city now.” (Gay, 2005). These articles, and many of the others already cited in this section, speak of a generational disconnect between younger LGBTs and those of earlier generations, to whom an explicit territory is important. It is argued (and verified through interviewed

sources) that younger gays and lesbians specifically now feel more comfortable living and socializing throughout the city due to a more accepting climate which encourages integration and assimilation. Technology, particularly internet dating sites and iPhone applications such as Grindr, now allow for gay men to find sex partners without leaving their home and this is having a negative effect on bars and the nightlife scene (Diaz, 2012).

Further gaps in understanding between generations, race and sexuality are illustrated in two case studies from Chicago's Boystown (Washington, 2011) and New York's West Village (Hayasaki, 2007). In both cases an influx of younger LGBTs, primarily of color and from poor/working class backgrounds, arrived in the gay villages, attracted from elsewhere in the metropolitan area by the more tolerant reputation of these places, and engendered tensions with the current, primarily older, white and middle/upper class residents. One of the residents interviewed complained "They're all out with their radios and they're just hip-hopping all over the street" (Hayasaki, 2007). Citing incidents of criminal mischief and violence, West Village residents have demanded curfews and that a train stop close on weekends to make it more difficult to access the neighborhood from elsewhere. Others are more accepting and note that decades earlier straight Italian-American families didn't want white gays around either (Hayasaki, 2007).

Theoretical Contributions

The phenomenon of gay village decline has also been investigated from an academic standpoint and those contributions largely came to similar conclusions as the

journalists. One of the most important was Alan Collin's 2004 "Sexual Dissidence, Enterprise and Assimilation: Bedfellows in Urban Regeneration" which proposed a theoretical model for gay village development, and eventual decline, based off of the SoHo gay village in London. The four stages of the model are (1) a pre-condition of an urban area in decline and featuring "liminal activities" such as sex work and "at least one gay public licensing house"; (2) the emergence of a clustering of gay (male) "social and recreational opportunities" as businesses near the initial gay bar "convert" to a gay clientele or ownership; (3) the expansion and diversification of gay businesses (beyond bars) to include the service and professional sectors and an increase in gay residents; and (4) the assimilation into the fashionable mainstream in which an increasing number of businesses are converted to a heterosexual ownership or clientele and an influx of young urban professionals replace the outflowing "suburbanizing" early gay residential colonizers (Collins, 2004: 1802).

Although Collins limits his model to England ("to control for cross-cultural factors"), it has nonetheless been applied as a predictive and explanatory model for structural changes in gay villages elsewhere and has inspired equal criticism by those pointing to its limitations. While agreeing to the trajectory of the Collins model and applying it in his own case study to the Oxford Street gay village of Sydney, Ruting (2008) takes issue with Collins' conclusions about the fourth stage (assimilation into the mainstream) resulting in a peacefully diverse neighborhood. Ruting writes that the exclusions caused by "a colonization of gay space" by "non-gays" results in "de-gaying". Lewis (2013) however dismisses the entire model as essentializing all gay villages based off of those that form in similar socio-economic and historic circumstances and that

research on gay villages need to take the individual contexts, subjectivities and contestations into account. He cites Greenwich Village and The Castro as two iconic neighborhoods that do not fit the Collins model because they were never peripheral or the center of liminal activities.

Like Collins, Doan & Higgins (2011) place economic factors at the center of the decline of a gay village in Midtown, Atlanta. They theorize that gay men are “first-wave gentrifiers” whose isolated investments in historic architecture created “islands of renewal” that were seized upon by a second wave of “super-gentrifiers” whose considerable access to capital, tenuous ties to the community and collusions with municipal zoning boards caused the most radical structural change and displacement in these neighborhoods. Doan & Higgins don’t let gay gentrifiers completely off the hook, writing about “the bargain that LGBT people with capital have made, namely, to ignore certain aspects of the gay liberation political agenda in exchange for economic integration into the metropolitan housing market” (Doan & Higgins, 2011: 20).

Beyond gentrification, cultural and technological factors were central to the conclusions reached by Rosser et al. (2008) when they asked informants from a variety of world cities “are gay communities dying or just in transition?”, with many citing increasing societal acceptance and new, exciting and easily accessible digital spaces as being causal to the abandonment of gay villages. Rosser et al. also compares gay male communities with immigrant communities and hypothesized that it would take only one or two generations to “assimilate” and to be “considered equal citizens by fellow Americans (Weaver, 2006)” (Rosser et al. 2008: 592). Likewise, Nash (2012) detailed the development (and controversy) of a “post-gay” or “post-mo” era sensibility amongst

younger, metropolitan generations of LGBTs in Toronto as being responsible for the decline of the gay village, political activism and the importance of the Pride event to youth.

Gorman-Murray & Waitt (2009) analyzed social cohesion in two Australian “queer friendly neighborhoods” that are predominately heterosexual and gender conforming but still accepting of difference (with rainbow flags and stickers to prove it). They illustrated the importance of these communities as a future alternative to gay villages with their interview subjects even mentioned preferring these areas citing an increased diversity and the need to be freed from a “ghetto mentality” or a “mainstreamed gayness” similarly to Nash’s “post-mo’s” (2012). That other interview subjects mention continued homophobia in these “queer friendly” places negates this argument somewhat.

However, the decline and disappearance of all gay villages is not a foregone conclusion to some researchers. Hunt & Zacharias (2008), Reuter (2008), Podmore (2006), Simon (2002) and journalists Case (2007) and Green (1997) point to the development and decline of gay villages (or at least commercial clusterings) in Montreal, Boston, Chicago, Atlantic City, Detroit and New York respectively well before the current spate of decline ravaging existing gay villages in the past decade. In most of those cases new gay villages emerged elsewhere in the metropolitan area which suggests that gay villages have a more mercurial and transient presence than thought. Also, Lewis (2013) argued that the continued official designation of gay villages by city governments and the promotion of such officialdom through rainbow signs, crosswalks, historical plaques and monuments negates the assumed decreased visibility that assimilation and decline narratives point to.

Lewis (2013), Doan & Higgins (2011), Ruting (2008) and Doan (2007)) also illustrate the continued importance of gay villages, even in an era of increased acceptance and assimilation of (certain) homosexuals into the mainstream, by expanding their focus beyond white, middle-class, metropolitan gay men. They wrote that transgenders and LGBTs of color, despite occasional tensions with the largely white gay male residents and users of gay villages, continue to find the spaces more tolerant than others in the urban area. They also find that while cities may be becoming more accepting, many rural areas are not, and even white middle class gay men consider gay villages to be important territories for safe socializing and will travel long distances to reach them.

While the literature on gay village decline is extensive, there is still a knowledge gap that I address in this study. While there has been much work done discussing the ongoing phenomena of gay village decline and why it may be happening, there has not been enough work done, to my satisfaction, on the futures of gay villages. What happens to these neighborhoods post-decline? Also are there differing futures for different gay villages, depending on the local context? I address these questions and what my study has to add to the literature in the final section of Chapter 5.

Sexualized Entrepreneurialism and Homonormative Consequences

As summarized in earlier sections, market forces and gentrification have been intimately tied to gay village formation and subsequent arguments about their decline. They have also figured prominently in the literature regarding homonormativity. Thus, a final section is merited in which the role of LGBTs and sexuality in entrepreneurialism and neoliberalism is investigated and the effects this has on urban spaces.

While the term neoliberalism has existed, and has been used, in various contexts throughout the twentieth century, its current definition (particularly in the English speaking West) dates to the 1970s and 1980s roll back of Keynesian economic policies and the widespread adoption of privatization, deregulation and corporatization often associated with the Reagan presidency in the United States and the Thatcher administration in the United Kingdom (Duggan, 2003, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). While this “neoliberal turn” in western governance and economy has often been reported on as a shrinking of government, some (Kanai & Ortega-Alcazar, 2009; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Duggan, 2003, 2002) have shown that it is instead a reconstitution of governing through, by and for the private market sector. Now governments promote entrepreneurialism through tax breaks, deregulation, zoning, subsidies and other measures that encourage private investments instead of regulating the economy to promote redistribution.

While neoliberalism/entrepreneurialism is often associated with conservative politics, which are often at odds with sexual and gender minorities, there is now widespread absorption of gay and lesbians into this mode of neoliberal governance. It was Lisa Duggan (2002) who called “the new homonormativity” the sexual politics of neoliberalism. A realization of the power and profitability of the “pink dollar”/“pink pond”/“pink economy” has spurred efforts by big business to market to LGBTs in advertising, beyond specialized sources such as gay magazines, since at least the 1990s (Wan-Hsiu, 2010; Oakenfull, 2007).

Richard Florida’s seminal *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002) has been instrumental in entwining urban economies with sexual identity politics. In it he proposed

that “creativity” is an economic driving force sustained by Technology, Tolerance and Talent. He devised High-Tech, Bohemian and Gay Indices to explain why certain locations with amenities would appeal most to “the creative class” and that for cities to succeed they needed to attract this class of people. His arguments have been accepted wholesale by governments (at a variety of scales) to such an extent that the “creative” or economic benefits of gay populations are often touted by politicians in favor of legalizing gay marriage (Linskey, 2013).

Florida engendered criticism from Binnie (2004) (amongst others) who called Florida’s equating of sexual tolerance with tolerance for entrepreneurialism and the positioning of both at odds with the working class “simplistic and strange” (158). He critiqued Florida’s usage of same-sex couple households as a proxy for “gay and lesbian”, noting that this normalized a coupled and thus “appropriate” form of queer lifestyle and asked “what if the ‘gay index’ was based on levels of arrest for public sex, or number of tea rooms or backrooms?... the gay index is therefore an index of respectability, of nicely gentrified neighbourhoods” (Bell & Binnie, 2004: 1817).

Florida’s hypothesis arrived at a time of increased concern over how the adoption of a consumption based sexual citizenship would affect LGBT individuals, communities and how their visibility in space would be manifested. Richardson (2005) was also critical of Florida and what she calls the “politics of normalization” and warned that assimilationist and integrationist agendas of equality (which she connotes as a “desire for sameness”) with, as opposed to tolerance from, the mainstream has consequences, namely in that it creates homogenous, sanitized spaces that privilege acceptable forms of visible sexual and gender performance over those that are not. This point was concurred

by Rushbrook: “gay urban spectacles attract tourists and investment; sexually deviant, dangerous rather than risqué, landscapes do not” (Rushbrook, 2002: 195).

Bell & Binnie call the group of people excluded from normalized spaces “the queer unwanted” and as illustrated by Casey (2007) and Hubbard (2004, 2001) it can include the elderly, the disabled, lesbians, sex workers and practitioners of public sex (at cruising locations for example). Rushbrook (2002) included people of color within this grouping and, using the case of 1920s Harlem, New York and the popularity of The Cotton Club with a white clientele (which simultaneously excluded blacks in all contexts except as entertainers and servants), usefully reminds us that the politics of normalization are not restricted to discussions of sexuality. The “queer unwanted” can also include working class people as Bell & Binnie (2004) and Richardson (2005) exemplify with the increased corporatization of Pride events (and high ticket costs) and pro-LGBT political advocacy groups, which increasingly rely on private donors and nationalized models of organization and mass media to relay their messages.

Gentrification, often sponsored by local governments through favorable zoning (Doan & Higgins, 2011), and an associated rise in living costs in “themed gay villages”, is also responsible for class based exclusions and “...reducing the ‘gay public sphere’ to consumption spaces and gentrified neighbourhoods only” (Bell & Binnie, 2004:1811). While literature on sexualized entrepreneurialism takes on a highly critical tone and emphasizes the role of certain LGBTs in the neoliberal normalizing project, some have noted that the tourism industry, and the attendant rise in the use of gay village space by heterosexuals, can have negative effects on the supposedly normalized community of

LGBTs by reinstating a heteronormativity and diluting the “queer” character of these neighborhoods (Binnie & Skeggs, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002; Hubbard, 2001).

Andersson (2011) however challenged the notion that all gay villages/spaces will become desexualized, using the case study of the Vauxhall neighborhood in London as an example of a place that has embraced entrepreneurialism but yet maintains a seedy, sexual character through sex and leather clubs. He does note this as an exception and like others (Bell & Binnie, 2004; Hubbard, 2004) he exemplifies Mayor Giuliani’s efforts to “clean up” New York in the late 1990s as a more typical example of city government and globalized neoliberalism establishing appropriate public “sexualized” spaces.

In this study I use “sexualized entrepreneurialism” to investigate how political, business and tourism promoting organizations promote certain kinds of performativities over others. I argue that a normalizing project of excluding certain “dangerous” and “unsafe” sexual practices in public space was instituted by city government in collusion with members of the LGBT community in exchange for less regulation of other transgressing behaviors. While being weary of overtly conspiratorial narratives and the whole structural realities which perpetuate “the politics of normalization”, I nonetheless assert that this is an example of homonormativity. In this chapter I briefly laid out the history of, and explained what space and sexualities, queer geography, gay villages, the phenomena of gay village decline and sexualized entrepreneurialism are. I incorporate the theory discussed in this chapter into discussions of my case study of South Beach in the following chapters.

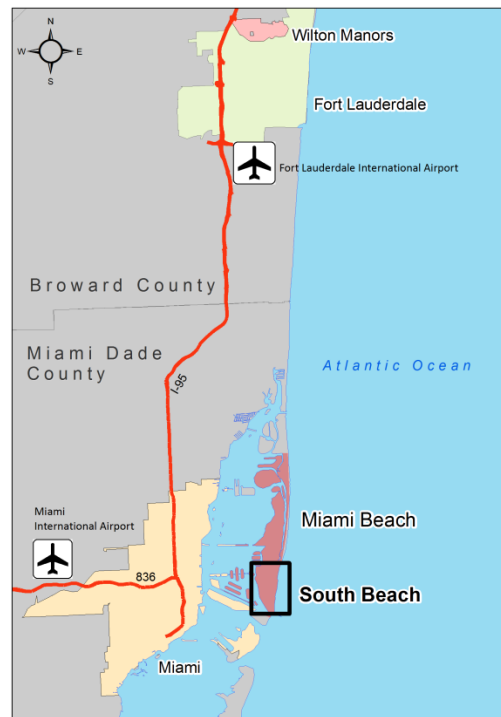
Chapter 3

Establishing a Regional Context

Before starting an in-depth analysis of the “declining” gayborhood/gay village of South Beach, and the response by various agencies to said decline, the research problem needs to be placed in a regional and temporal context, in addition to the theoretical one laid out in the previous chapter. In the first section I discuss the South Beach gay village within the context of the Greater Miami Metropolitan Area and its historical, cultural and economic importance in the world. In the second section I address the limited academic work on LGBT populations within the local area. In the final section I evaluate claims of decline via news articles and how I address the literature gaps in this study.

Placing South Beach within Metropolitan Miami and the World

Map 1 showing Miami region



Greater Miami

In this subsection I detail the history of the greater Miami metropolitan area and its importance in the country and world before moving on to Miami Beach in the next subsection. Miami is at the center of a metropolitan area that extends for 110 miles along the Atlantic Coast of Southeastern Florida and is hemmed in on the west by the increasingly endangered wilderness of The Everglades. The metropolitan area extends southward from the City of Miami along Biscayne Bay to Florida City and northwards through the rest of Miami-Dade County, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. According to the 2010 Census the City of Miami has a population just shy of 400,000 which is only a small portion of the estimated 5.5 million who live in the greater metropolitan area. This makes it the fourth most populous urban area or eighth most populous metropolitan area in the country (Census Bureau).

At 25° north latitude, and further warmed by the Gulf Stream, this portion of Florida is the only part of the mainland United States with a truly tropical climate, and a wet one at that with over sixty inches of annual rainfall and an occasionally destructive hurricane season from June to December. The warm climate is a great draw for tourism to the area, with 2012 reporting 13 million visitors to Miami-Dade County alone and who spent upwards of \$21 billion (Sampson, 2013). Tourism is hardly the only industry as Miami regularly trades on its unique geographical and cultural position as “Capital of the Americas”, “Gateway to the Americas”, “Capital of Latin America”...etc. to engage in transnational finance, trading and a headquarters location for Latin American divisions of multinational corporations. In 2012 Miami was declared an Alpha – World City alongside Seoul, Buenos Aires, Munich, Prague, Barcelona, Melbourne, Zurich, Vienna,

New Delhi and the U.S. cities of Atlanta, Boston, San Francisco and Washington by the Globalization and World Cities Study Group (The World According to..., 2014).

Considering Miami's global importance, it's hard to believe that only a century ago it was a regional backwater. In the next few paragraphs a brief history of Miami is presented largely through referencing Jan Nijman's *Miami: Mistress of the Americas* (2011), with other sources noted. The indigenous Tequesta Native Americans subsisted in the area for thousands of years and it is their word, for "sweet water", which gave the future city of Miami its name. After the Spanish arrived in the 16th Century the Tequestas perished as a result of introduced European diseases and violent subjugation and forced enslavement. The Spanish mostly ignored the area however, and so did the British when it was ceded to them briefly in 1763. In 1821 Florida became a state when Spain renounced its claims in exchange for Texas (another future U.S. state). The "village of Miami" was established by William English after acquiring the land around the old Fort Dallas (a former military post) in 1836.

The area didn't really take off until the winter of 1894-95 when Julia Tuttle, an enterprising land owner, convinced railroad builder Henry Flagler to extend his line down to Miami from Palm Beach by sending him an orange blossom, she did this to show that the freeze that had devastated citrus groves further north had not reached Miami. She agreed to give land to Flagler to recoup the cost of extending the rail line and on this land a town was planned and incorporated in 1896. The early town was supported by a nascent tourism industry, along with agriculture and construction. It grew rapidly in the early years of the twentieth century with many wealthy, northern elites choosing to build palatial winter homes there.

The 1920s were a “boom time”, during this decade the population of the county grew by 100,000 residents. A devastating hurricane in 1926, the global Great Depression and the bursting of the real-estate bubble, along with a criminal element heavily involved in rum-running during Prohibition, could only slow the growth of the city for a brief period before it came roaring back. World War II brought a heavy military presence to the area and, once having felt the climate and seen the beach, many of the soldiers returned after the war to vacation. The advent of universal air-conditioning also boosted the residential population.

The 1959 communist takeover of Cuba (less than 200 miles away) by Fidel Castro also caused a wave of immigration to South Florida. The Cold War political climate at the time was such that Cuban political refugees were welcomed as fighters against communism and granted asylum. The first wave of Cuban émigrés were largely of the elite, upper and middle classes who disagreed with Castro’s redistribution goals and populist support. They also thought that the revolution would be temporary and that they would be able to return once Castro was ousted. The failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 dashed these hopes and the community began investing in permanent residences and business ventures throughout the city, although especially in the Little Havana neighborhood.

The exiled Cuban entrepreneurial class contributed greatly to the city’s economy and, alongside other immigrant populations from elsewhere in the Caribbean and Latin America, helped to establish Miami’s international, Latin character in the popular imagination. By the 1970s Miami’s connections had made it a center of international finance, a corporate hub for business in Latin America and a hub of trade via the

International Airport. With business booming skyscrapers sprung up in downtown and in the Brickell neighborhood (the finance center of the city), giving the city skyline the appearance of a “Manhattan South”.

Nijman notes how a good portion of the money flowing through Miami at the time was from the sale of illegal drugs and money laundering. In 1980 a second wave of immigrants came to Miami from Cuba. Nicknamed *Marielistas*, after the Cuban port they left from, this group of Cubans consisted of the poorer classes who initially supported the revolution and then changed their minds or who couldn't afford to leave before the borders closed years earlier. The *Marielistas* were vilified by the media and the existing Cuban community in Miami and they were blamed for the crime waves of the early 1980s. The criminal element involved in the drug trade greatly contributed to this as well, and soon Miami developed an international reputation for crime.

This reputation was dramatized in the popular television program *Miami Vice*, which aired from 1984 to 1989. Instead of further frightening away tourists, the popular show's depiction of the city as a sexy, dangerous place is credited with revitalizing the city's image (Schmalz, 1989). Of course, it should be noted, that a crackdown on the drug trade and blue-collar crime in the 1980s genuinely reduced crime rates and allowed the city to benefit from its edgy reputation without actually being dangerous to tourists (at least in the areas that they congregated in). Miami's economy and population boomed and grew rapidly from then on until the housing bubble burst in 2007, and the global economy went into recession soon after, although it has recovered since then.

Beyond history, Nijman (2011) paints the portrait of a unique world city whose transience and international population, connections and culture is unparalleled in the country. He develops a Transience Index to prove that Miami is the most transient of all American cities, a fact further bolstered by the latest Census which shows that over half of the population of the city (and the larger Miami-Dade County) was born outside of the country. In fact the Latin character of the city is such that the Spanish language is nearly universal and the population is only 15% non-Hispanic White which is the lowest of any major U.S. city.

Contrary to the luxurious image occasionally portrayed of the city (and realized in swanky neighborhoods like Coconut Grove and Pinecrest) and the narrative sown of an ethnically integrated and peaceful city, Miami remains a city plagued by inequality, crime and racial tension. Corruption and financial problems have also plagued local governments for decades. Local governments have also adopted neoliberalism full scale getting involved in numerous public-private partnerships and spending millions of taxpayer dollars on mega projects to encourage tourism and private business while painfully ignoring the problems facing the poorest in the city. There are occasional protests against such practices such as the massive uproar around the building of the Marlins Stadium on the taxpayers dime (Passan, 2010) and the Umoja Slum, founded as a protest to the lack of affordable housing, but quickly demolished (Bowling, 2007).

Map 2 – South Beach portion of Miami Beach



South Beach

The city of Miami Beach is located on a low, sandy, barrier island (and numerous smaller artificial islands) off the coast of northeastern Miami-Dade County, Florida. It is bordered to its west by Biscayne Bay and to its east by the open Atlantic Ocean. The city is connected to the City of Miami, and other mainland municipalities, by four causeways. As Miami Beach has a north-south orientation (about eight miles long and rarely more than a mile wide) it is informally split into three sections dubbed North Beach, Mid Beach and South Beach though they are all under the same jurisdiction. South Beach consists of the southernmost third of the city and is synonymous with the ZIP code 33139. Its northern boundary with the Mid-Beach neighborhood of Bayshore is formed by Indian Creek (an artificially lengthened natural waterway which now bisects the

island), Dade Boulevard and 23rd St. It is the densest, most populous and oldest part of the city, thanks to its proximity to downtown Miami (closer than the rest of the city).

As the mainland coastline of Biscayne Bay is swampy, tidal and naturally mangrove lined (though they have now mostly been removed), the sandy Atlantic facing side of Miami Beach has always been the center for water and beach activities for Miamians. Not surprisingly it has also been at the center of the local tourism industry. In contrast to its cosmopolitan and manicured image, and the billions of dollars in infrastructure in Miami Beach today, a little over a century ago it was an empty, mosquito and rodent infested mangrove swamp. Once a failed coconut plantation, the first hotel didn't appear on the island (then called Ocean Beach) until the completion of a bridge to the mainland in 1913 by noted entrepreneur Carl Fisher. The longest wooden bridge in the world at the time, Collins Bridge, was a precursor of today's Venetian Causeway (Bramson, 2005). Fisher Island, cut off from the rest of Miami Beach by the Government Cut to facilitate deep-water access to the Port of Miami in 1905, is named after him and is today one of the city's (and country's) wealthiest enclaves (Nijman, 2011).

Once connected to the rest of Miami, a building boom commenced, the mangroves were cleared, the bay was dredged, potable soil was brought in, streets were laid, the town of Miami Beach was incorporated in 1915 and was soon on its way to becoming the "billion dollar sandbar" it has been known as ever since (Bramson, 2005). By 1920 the MacArthur Causeway was built directly from downtown Miami to the fast developing southern end of the island. In the 1920s the population growth was 1,000 % and by 1925 there were 40,000 "snow birds" (part time residents) (Nijman, 2011).

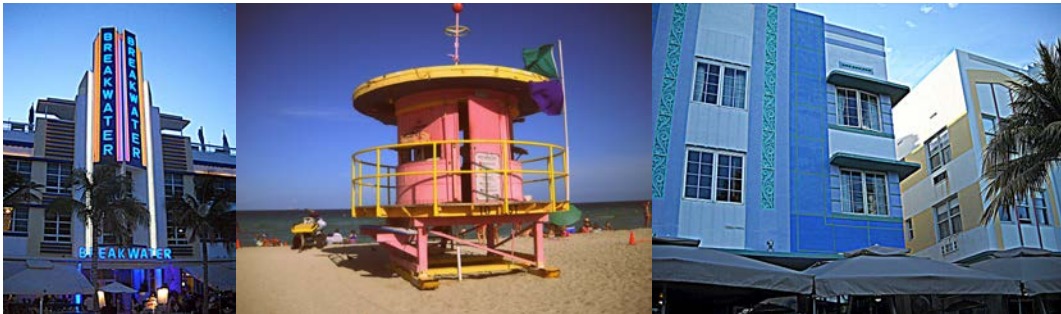
Despite horrific destruction and a death toll of over three hundred, even the hurricane of 1926 could barely slow down the growth and neither could the Great Depression. In the 1930's the population quadrupled (Nijman, 2011). From 1936 to 1941 more building permits were issued in Miami Beach than anywhere else in the country (Bly, 1988). In fact, the hurricane's destruction of the existing structures along Ocean Drive spurred the construction of a number of new hotels in the then popular Art Deco style. Originally from France, once the architectural style reached South Beach it developed a few unique, localized, traits of its own often dubbed Tropical Deco. To accommodate the tropical climate, marine setting and tourism industry, the style became streamlined, colorful and took on nautical themes with some of the resulting buildings resembling cruise ships. In describing this style for *The Chicago Sun Times*, David Ramsey (1989) wrote "...wild, zany, hilarious buildings. Buildings with spirals. Buildings with bold neon signs. Buildings painted peach and ocean blue and, most of all, hot pink. You will not find a grander concentration of nifty, daring architecture anywhere."

Miami Beach was an affluent and exclusionary place. Jim Crow laws prohibited blacks from using the beach and many businesses at the time openly discriminated against Jews (Nijman, 2011; Brimson, 2005). Nonetheless, a small Jewish community arose in the more tolerant zone south of 5th street and the first synagogue was established there in 1927 (Nijman, 2011). This community grew rapidly and spread to the rest of South Beach by the 1940s (by 1949 signs barring service to Jews were made illegal; Nijman, 2011) to eventually become the largest Jewish community in the metropolitan area (and one of the largest in the country).

Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, the city prospered as one of the most popular vacation spots in the country. In 1952 the winter population soared to over 200,000 but dropped back to 45,000 over the summer (Nijman, 2011), showing the continued seasonal cycle and transience of the population. To cater to the high-spending crowd multi-story mega hotels such as The Fontainebleau were built and to this day large structures (hotels or condos) dominate the waterfront north of the Art Deco district of South Beach. In 1960, Lincoln Road in South Beach was turned into a pedestrian-only shopping street, a luxurious “Fifth Avenue of the South” (Nijman, 2011). Despite, or perhaps because of, the success of Miami Beach the city became a magnet for organized crime and was called the “winter gangster capital of the world”, thanks to vacationing Mafiosi from New York and Chicago (Nijman, 2011).

It is probably a combination of this criminal element, and the influx of increasingly middle class tourists and non-whites (due to the end of segregation), which made South Beach passé for the elite and led to the area’s decline by the 1960s. National economic woes in the 1970s hurt the tourism industry further and those that did vacation in greater Miami tended to stay further up the coast at newer destinations like Bal Harbour or Sunny Isles (Nijman, 2011). By then, the South Beach neighborhood had turned “seedy” and was populated largely by the elderly who found it increasingly affordable; hence the painful nickname “God’s Waiting Room”, which was attached to South Beach for many years. In 1970 retirees constituted 90 percent of the residents (Aepfel, 1983) and in 1980 the median age had risen to 66 (Census Bureau). That same year the Mariel Boatlift occurred and many of the refugees were housed in South Beach further tarnishing the neighborhoods image.

The once (and future) treasured Art Deco buildings of South Beach had not been maintained and were in a decrepit shape at the time (Ramsey, 1989; Bly, 1988). Largely through the efforts of Barbara Capitman, the Miami Beach Architectural District was designated as a U.S. Historical District in 1979; the first ever designed to protect twentieth century architecture (Aepfel, 1983). The area is roughly synonymous with the eastern portion of the South Beach neighborhood and today contains nearly 1,000 buildings. The refurbishment of these structures is largely credited as gentrifying the neighborhood throughout the 80s. The elderly (including much of the Jewish community) were displaced to new planned “Century Villages” in Broward and Palm Beach Counties or were not replaced by incoming retirees once many of the old hotels, which had become de-facto retirement homes or sat abandoned, were repurposed for their original use. *Miami Vice* was also shot mainly on South Beach and spread the images of the newly painted and renovated Deco buildings around the world, which increased tourism (Schmalz, 1989; Gapp, 1985). By the 90s South Beach had entered its second renaissance and its popularity continues to this day.



Examples of South Beach’s famed (Tropical) Art Deco (authors photos).

Table 1 – 2010 Census Demographic characteristics of South Beach compared with surrounding areas:

Location	Miami-Dade County	Miami Beach City	South Beach CDP
Population	2,496,435	87,779	38,613
Median Age	38.2	40.3	38.5
% Male	48.4	52.4	56
% Hispanic	65	53	46.9
% Black	18.9	4.4	4.2
% White	15.4	40.5	45.9
% with Child	18	11.7	7
% Foreign Born	51.5	52.5	51.6
% Living Alone	23.5	49	57.5
% Occupied Housing	87.7	69.9	72.9
% Renters	44.2	61.4	66.1
Average Household Size	2.83	1.84	1.61
*Median Income	\$43,464	\$43,321	\$45,725
*Mean Income	\$65,799	\$86,688	\$86,820
*Per Capita Income	\$23,304	\$43,690	\$49,556
*% Unemployed	11.2	6.5	4.4
*% Professional	30.8	39.5	41.6
*% Living Below Poverty	19.1	16.3	18
*Median Home Price	\$221,900	\$354,000	\$322,600
*Median Rent	\$1,071	\$1,059	\$1,104

*From the 2008-2012 American Community Survey

As can be seen from the chart above comparing Census data on the neighborhood of South Beach with the broader city of Miami Beach and Miami-Dade County, South Beach is richer, whiter and more professional than either the city or county in which it is situated. Individuals of the population are also more likely to live alone and rent. The current demographic profile dates back to the 1980s and evidenced by the sharp changes observed between the 1980 and 1990 Censuses. During that decade the median age dropped from 66 to 44, the percentage of black residents quintupled and the Hispanic

population doubled as the older, whiter retirees moved out (Census Bureau). Nijman (2011) illustrates the transience of these new residents by pointing to the fact that two thirds of them moved into their current address in the past five years and that three fourths of all homes are rental. I further discuss the LGBT population (and their role in the gentrification) of South Beach in the next sections, while issues of affordability and the current state of South Beach are addressed in the last chapter.

Finding the Queer in South Beach

In this section a further contextualization is given regarding the LGBT community in South Beach and its history and placement within greater Miami and South Florida. A few of the academic sources available on sexuality and greater Miami are cited here and they generally fall into three categories: history (Capo, 2011); ethnicity, and in particular the formulation of gay and/or masculine identities by Latin American individuals or within Latin communities (Peña, 2013; Avivi, 2006; Kurtz, 2008, 1999); and health, particularly drug use and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (Butram and Kurtz, 2012; Egan et al., 2011; Akin et al., 2008; Kurtz, 2005; Patron & Forrest, 2000). These individual works are discussed in more detail when merited contextually but one thing this section aims to make clear is that there is a literature gap regarding the intersection of the explicitly spatial/geographical and sexualities within South Beach/Greater Miami, something this project aims to rectify.

Julio Capo Jr.'s dissertation (2011) is useful in extending the history of LGBTs in Miami Beach beyond the past three decades. He notes that the post WW II era entertainment zone of South Beach served as the perfect breeding ground for a variety of

gender and sexual transgressions against the conservatism of the time. The presence of the Mafia also contributed to this as they had supported gay bars elsewhere in the country (Thomas, 2011) by protecting them from police raids, in exchange for kickbacks of course.

Cross-dressing drag shows were popular in nightclubs in Miami Beach in the 1950s but a moral panic ensued, as detailed by Fred Fejes (2000) and Capo (2011). In 1953 Miami Beach passed Ordinance 1093 that barred female impersonation, and in 1956, a further law was passed in Miami barring *male* impersonation as well (by female performers) (Capo, 2011). Another ordinance passed by the city of Miami in 1954, to crack down on gay bars, made employing a known homosexual a crime. These laws weren't always enforced, and press reports of their passage furthered the reputation of greater Miami as a sexually "deviant" place. A cooling of moralistic fervor and anti-communist purges, the successes of the Civil Rights Movement, a growing national gay rights and feminism movements, and the changing demographics of Miami resulting, in part, from a massive influx of immigrants and an attendant outflow ("white flight") of conservative white residents, resulted in a more progressive atmosphere by the 70s. A growing gay activist sector included protesters at the 1972 Democratic and Republican Party Conventions (both held) in Miami Beach (Capo, 2011). Thanks to judicial activism many of the discriminatory laws passed during the 1950s had been repealed by the 1970s.

In January 1977 the Dade County Coalition for the Humanistic Rights of Gays convinced the county commission to amend their human rights statute to ban workplace and housing discrimination based on sexual orientation (Peña, 2013; Capo, 2011). The achievement was short lived however, as popular Christian singer, and spokesperson for

the Florida Citrus Commission, Anita Bryant, her husband Bob Green, and another conservative activist Bob Brake, founded Save Our Children, Inc. which successfully campaigned to have the amendment put to a referendum in which it was overturned by popular vote. Bryant claimed that to extend “special protections” to gay men and lesbians would endanger children, whom she claimed homosexuals aim to “recruit” to their lifestyle. Attracting national attention, Bryant took her campaign elsewhere and successfully repealed similar protections for gays and lesbians in Saint Paul, Minnesota, Wichita, Kansas, and Eugene, Oregon (Capo, 2011), although she was defeated in the gay stronghold of San Francisco.

While her political efforts were initially successful, the public eventually turned against Bryant, and she lost her position with the Florida Citrus Commission after protests and boycotts of orange juice in gay bars nationwide (Capo, 2011). Bryant is credited as galvanizing activists, for and against gay rights, and her importance as a historical figure in the gay rights movement is noted by Fejes (2008) and Fetner (2001), amongst others. Such was her influence that Capo (2011) notes that a gay nightclub opened in North Miami Beach called Hurricane Anita, which advertised that it donated a quarter of its proceeds to gay political causes.

Along with increased political visibility (if not yet power and legal protection) gay men, in particular, also gained a noticeable spatial territoriality in parts of greater Miami by the 1970s. Clusters of gay residents and businesses had been established in Coconut Grove (Schmich, 1985) and downtown Miami, but it wasn't until the 80s that the LGBT community began to consolidate in South Beach (Patron & Forrest, 2000). Exactly how and why this happened is discussed below.

Elizabeth Peña, in her 2013 book on Cuban gay masculinity *¡Oye Loca! From the Mariel Boatlift to Gay Cuban Miami*, wrote that the Mariel Boatlift of 1980 contained a large number of open homosexuals, transgenders, drag queens and other “undesirables” that Castro had wanted to rid himself of (such as mental patients and criminals). She notes that many of them settled in South Beach, due to the cheap rents at the time, and that with their distinctively effeminate and flamboyant style, they were labeled *locas* (crazies). Walking (or rollerskating) the pre-gentrified streets in women’s clothing, these *locas* represented the first open gender transgression in South Beach off of a nightclub stage.

The more commonly told story, however, is that gender-conforming middle class gay male gentrifiers were the ones who transformed South Beach into an LGBT-identified space in the 1980s. The association between gentrification of (especially) historical architecture and gay men in particular, is strong and has been noted by many academics. The faded, dilapidated Art Deco district of South Beach in the 1970s and 80s was cheap and provided the “opportunity of emptiness” that Simon (2002) noted as a prerequisite for gay village formation. George Neary, Associate Vice President of Cultural Tourism at the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, and a longtime resident of Miami (Interviewed December 10, 2012), spoke on that era for South Beach:

It was called god’s waiting room. And then, for many, many years, forgotten (and) not looked at... And you cannot explain that to people today. There were no cars. The streets were completely devoid of automobiles. They didn’t even have parking meters. Ocean Drive was completely empty. You could walk *naked* on Ocean Drive and no one would see you, except the seniors. And then these gays and lesbians began to discover, or rediscover, Miami Beach and saw the potential.

The existence of “liminal activities” such as prostitution, adult movie theatres, porn stores (Liff, 1986a) and the occasional gay bar which have existed in Miami Beach as far back as 1960 (Capo, 2011), also provided the pre-requisites for Collins’ (2004) model of gay village development.

South Beach resident, gay activist and former Executive Director of the Miami Design Preservation League, Herb Sosa (interviewed June 27, 2013), said on the topic of gay male gentrification in South Beach that “...this is what we do. We like to go into areas that are affordable. We like to fix things up, we just do. We like good design, historic design, and a lot of these neighborhoods, South Beach being the perfect example, time had forgotten it. It was prime. It was there. It was affordable.” And speaking of his well-timed property purchase in South Beach in 1989:

At the time, this (area) was rough. The buildings across the street and next door had no windows. They were crackhouses. Everyone from my mother on down thought I was insane buying this place. The banks would not give you any money (to invest in a home in South Beach), but I loved it. I love the area, I loved it. I put a lot of money into it, a lot of sweat into it and called it home. I was very lucky. I’m not gonna say I was smart, I was very very lucky, cause it doesn’t always turn out that well, your investments. I was at the right time and the right place and the stars aligned. It was the historic preservation, it was the gay community, it was the fashion industry. All these things came together to make South Beach what it is today and successful.

Beyond enterprising individuals, concerned citizens (many of them gay) banded together behind Barbara Capitman (a heterosexual widow) to form the Miami Design and Preservation League in 1976 (Bly, 1988). Neary said on this era:

And she (Barbara Capitman) began to bring together people of vision who could see beyond the broken windows and boarded up doors. And so she began to create an organization called the Miami Design Preservation League which many gays and lesbians belong to, and that spearheaded the fight to preserve and save this district. So that’s where gays and lesbians played an important part... And it was gays and lesbians in particular who have that unique ability to see beyond walls

and doors and see the beautiful floors and the real wood (beneath)... Michael Horowitz, another gay guy, began painting the buildings in pastel, hence the name 'pastel paradise'... and he got buildings on the cover of architectural magazines, cause' people began to look at them totally differently after he painted them, and they began to appreciate them, which they never did. Americans don't appreciate places they grow up in, it's just junk (to them). So this was 'deco shmeco', no one cared about it. It was people from the outside coming here who saw it and began to look at it through different eyes.

By 1979 The League had succeeded in having the Art Deco district included on the National Register of Historic Places, and with this designation came funding for renovations, regulations on new constructions and what could be done with historic ones as well as increased visibility and tourism; all of which furthered the gentrification process. By the 1980s many of the elderly residents were being displaced by rising prices, construction projects and conversions of homes into hotels. Media reports on this (Castillo, 1992; Liff, 1986b; Gapp, 1985; Aepfel, 1983) referred to the gentrifiers as "yuppies", and made no mention of their sexual orientation. An exception to this was the 1985 *Orlando Sentinel* article by Mark T. Schmich called "And There Goes the Neighborhood, the Rundown Tends to Go Upscale When Gays Move In and Clean House", in which a food market owner interviewed says "gays eat differently than blacks." He then goes on to detail how he is carrying more high-end food items as a result of (white) gay men moving into a formerly black neighborhood (this particular instance is not from South Beach although the article does mention it elsewhere).

The city of Miami Beach vigorously encouraged this gentrification through mandating upgrades that poorer residents couldn't afford or those which discouraged long-term stays (many of the "old age homes" in South Beach were actually hotels that offered long-term stay deals), such as the 1990 decree that kitchenettes were illegal inside hotel rooms (Castillo, 1992). This was a profitable venture for the city which could raise

more money from property taxes off of refurbished structures and the new class of citizens moving into them than on the retired and poor living off of fixed incomes. Even Barbara Capitan noted in dismay that "You have these yuppies coming in and sort of squeezing out the old folks, when there should be plenty of room for both" (Gapp, 1985) and that "When we started, it was because we saw preservation as a tool to save the neighborhood for the older people... The idea was to fight gentrification with the government's help" (Aepfel, 1983). Landlords were in on it too, offering "yuppie discounts" to renters under fifty years of age, although this practice was eventually stopped by the Metro-Dade Fair Housing and Employment Appeals Board (Liff, 1986b).

As gentrification continued the demographics of the neighborhood changed, and by 1992 *New York Magazine* was declaring "Miami Beach's Deco District is the New Hot Scene" and *USA Today* was warning its readers to visit while it was still cheap (Wilson, 1992). By then, the fashion industry had taken note of the architectural and natural beauty of South Beach, as well as the warm climate which made outdoor shooting in skimpy outfits possible all year long. It became a popular location for fashion shoots. In 1992 famed (gay) designer Gianni Versace, who had been involved in the South Beach "scene" since the mid 80s when he designed the t-shirt and jacket look for *Miami Vice* (Matt Ruiz - South Beach LGBT History Walking Tour), bought a mansion on Ocean Drive that he christened Casa Casuarina, and became one of the area's first celebrity residents. He was assassinated on the front steps of his home by serial killer Andrew Cunanan in an internationally infamous incident in July 1997 (Nijman, 2011).

Soon Hollywood came calling too, and when award winning director Mike Nichols needed a suitably gay location to set and film the 1996 English language remake

of the 1978 French film *La Cage Aux Folles*, renamed *The Birdcage*, he chose South Beach. The film starred Robin Williams and Nathan Lane as a gay couple who own and live above a gay nightclub called The Birdcage. The film shots encapsulated the visuals of what had become the growing international perception of South Beach: Art Deco, neon signs, wild nightlife and impossibly beautiful, muscular men (and bikini clad women) roller blading around wearing thongs.

The growing gay residential population had also garnered political power, and flexed its muscle, when in November 1992 Miami Beach became the first municipality in Dade County to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment and retail, with exemptions for religious organizations, senior housing, private clubs and businesses with fewer than four employees (Martin, 1992; Nevins, 1992). Business support of the ordinance is credited, along with activism, for its passage (Martin, 1992). City government became more entwined in the “pink economy” and by 1995 was hosting international journalists on freebie media tours to promote South Beach as “Gay Capital of the United States, if not The World” (Spitz, 1995).

By that time a significant nighttime economy had sprung up, catering not only to gay residents but also to an increasing gay tourism, and centered on nightclubs such as Warsaw, Torpedo, Hombre, Level, Paragon, Kremlin, Salvation, Liquid, Amnesia, Splash, Pump, Loading Zone, The Boardwalk, Twist, Score and Palace (amongst others), that were infamous for their hedonism. Edison Farrow (Interviewed March 7, 2014), a former party planner/promoter and current owner of Cabaret and a South Beach resident since 1995, said of that era:

Everywhere it was just more fun and silly and decadent in the 80s and 90s. People would dress crazy to go to the clubs. (It was) outrageous and shocking but everything was more a reflection of that time. The music was more fun and splashy. What people wore was sparkly, glittery and shiny and plastic. Everything was a big party and (the club scene had) a big presence. Now... the music is more downbeat, people dress down, people wear t-shirts and not plastic pants and satin shirts and pleather. Everything is just toned down. I see that across the board from nightlife to fashion to music. (Back then) it was happy music and happy fun times and happy dress. It was a different element. When I moved here it was just fun and decadent and silly and outrageous. You'd see people in the grocery store in the morning and they (were dressed) like they were going to a nightclub. You didn't know if they were going to or just coming back from that club or if they just dressed like that all the time... One of my friends used to say Halloween on South Beach is redundant.

Amazingly, of all of the nightclubs/bars listed earlier, only the last three survive to the present day. By 1999 the neighborhood had begun to change yet again, and many of the elements were in place for what can be called “the decline of gay/LGBT South Beach” (Flippen, 1999; Patron, 1999).

The Decline of LGBT South Beach

What happened to South Beach? Media accounts, informant testimony and journal articles addressing the shrinking LGBT (although primarily gay male) community, and their visibility, are discussed in this section. Displacement caused by gentrification, and changing generational cultural values which either repaint a gay village as passé or dispense with the need for segregated spaces based on sexual orientation or gender identity all together, are recounted as causal factors here, as they have been with other declining gay villages in the previous chapter. However the South Beach story does have its own particularities that I address as well.

The “scene” of South Beach in the 1990s was well known for its overt sexuality and drug use, even more so than other gay male entertainment districts, and this

hedonism has been attributed to its downfall akin to a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah. Steve Adkins, President of the Greater Miami Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (Interviewed September 19, 2013) said that “We lost a lot of people to drugs in this town because of the heavy party scene that was here and people just got burned out.” Joseph Brown, a *South Beach Magazine* reporter, waxed nostalgic at the closing of the Warsaw nightclub in 2002, writing about its excesses:

The Warsaw's theatrical legacy includes a somewhat, less-than-stellar list of decadence that will go unmatched for many years to come—everything from live, artistic pseudo-S&M performances that degenerated into the real thing being performed on-stage, requiring the owners to kill the lights and separate the performers, to strippers whose act consisted primarily of allowing patrons to extricate 30 foot ribbons from various orifices—all generating an unending list of warnings, citations and fines from the city. As George Tamsitt once put it, a floorshow of "fat ladies, midgets, and pigs." (Brown 2002)

Kurtz (2005) puts 90s South Beach into a generational context writing:

In contrast to the 1980s, when urban gay communities suffered the initial ravages of AIDS, the 1990s witnessed a gradual return to the sexual freedom, pervasive drug use and all-night dance parties that were hallmarks of the 1970s. MDMA, or ecstasy, gained early popularity and was closely associated with the rise of “techno” dance music and “circuit party” culture. Other “designer” or “club” drugs followed, primarily ketamine (Special K), gammahydroxybutyrate (GHB), and crystal methamphetamine (crystal or “tina”) (Kurtz, 2005: 63).

An interview subject of his detailed how South Beach “chews up and spits out” many men who expect to party 24/7 and get high without it negatively affecting their health, only to end up broke, HIV positive and addicted to drugs.

Writing on the preponderance of HIV in South Beach at that time (they estimate that 25 percent of the gay male population in South Beach was positive), Patron & Forrest (2000) attributed the massive migration of HIV positive men from northern cities for establishing South Beach as a gay mecca during the 90s. Kurtz (2008, 1999) concurs

and wrote about how terminally ill men moved to South Beach because of the warm climate and low prices (then) to live out their final days. Steroids used to combat facial wasting (a loss of muscle tone) had the side effect of creating bulky, muscled bodies that masked any preconceived notions of sickness or weakness that stigmatized the HIV positive. Kurtz, Patron and Forrest wrote that this was responsible for the “South Beach boy” look of massive rippling muscles that has appeared in so much promotional advertising ever since (See the examples below). “...The Latin muscle on display rivals the might of any military junta from the Equator” Patron (1999) wrote about the intersection of this body type with the heavily Latin American population of Greater Miami as realized in the nightclub scene.



Examples of the normative musculature of the “South Beach Body” as seen from nightclub advertisements from the 1990s in *Hot Spots* magazine

The combination of such a large HIV positive population, rampant drug use, and a permissive nightclub culture which emphasized sexuality and promiscuity led, understandably, to concerns about health and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. Rather than expanding public health outreach or engaging community leaders on how to raise awareness about drug abuse and safe sex, the Miami Beach Police

Department orchestrated a series of five raids (with officers donning ski-masks and rubber gloves) on different nightclubs between September 1995 and January 1996, resulting in fifteen arrests (Pazdera, 1996). Raids conducted for the “public health” uncovered violations such as “...drug sales as if at a corner pharmacy, open sex as patrons looked on, and in one case dozens of soiled condoms spread across the dance floor...” An officer interviewed stated “It was pretty disgusting... The clubs were making the condoms available to their patrons. I asked one owner why, and he told me they were doing it for their patrons' safety” (Pazdera, 1996).

Soon mainstream media caught wind of it, and a devastating 1996 survey by Florida International University which concluded that 75 percent of South Beach gay men had had unprotected sex in the previous year, and resulting headlines screamed “Survey: Gay men having risky sex” (Mcvicar, 1996), “Florida’s gay mecca South Beach in denial about AIDS risk” (Lester, 1996) and “South Beach: To die for” (Zucco, 1995), amongst others. The latter article in particular emphasized the dangerous sinfulness of South Beach, practically insisting that gay men there were suicidal and reckless with the health of others. Unfortunately both HIV infection and drug abuse continue to be major problems, not just within the gay male community of South Beach but across Greater Miami as well (Buttram & Kurtz, 2012; Egam et al. 2011; Akin et al., 2008; Kurtz, 2008, 2005).

In the late 90s a quieter, more wholesome (and cheaper) enclave of LGBT residents and businesses (though again, mostly gay men) started to develop in Wilton Manors, a modest suburb bordering Fort Lauderdale in Broward County, about 25 miles north of Miami and South Beach. The conversion (some call it “revitalization”) of Wilton

Manors, from a mostly white, working class residential zone to the second gayest (in terms of official Census tallies of same sex couple households) municipality in the country (behind Provincetown, Massachusetts), is often attributed to the opening of Georgie’s Alibi, a gay restaurant/bar in 1997, which galvanized gay interest in the area by attracting other businesses and residents (Ergon-Rowe, 2011; Rothaus, 2011). Unlike South Beach, the scene in Wilton Manors (and spreading into nearby Oakland Park and Fort Lauderdale) is less youth, party and drug oriented, is more welcoming to older gay men and presents itself as a better place to purchase a home and/or raise a family, according to media and interview sources. Some of these claims can be verified by Census data (See Table 2 below) which shows that Wilton Manors has a higher median age, greater percentage of owners versus renters and a lower median home price and rent than South Beach.



The cover (which parodies the 1981 film *Escape from New York*) of the *Broward and Palm Beach New Times* issue containing *Miami New Times* writer Natalie O’ Neil’s 2010 article “Gays leave unfriendly South Beach for Fort Lauderdale”

Table 2 – 2010 Census demographic data on South Beach versus. Wilton Manors

Location	Wilton Manors	South Beach CDP
Population	11,632	38,613
Median Age	46.8	38.5
% Male	63.1	56
% Hispanic	12.9	46.9
% Black	12.4	4.2
% White	71.2	45.9
% with Child	8.5	7
% Foreign Born	17.2	51.6
% Living Alone	47.8	57.5
% Occupied Housing	87.1	72.9
% Renters	46.6	66.1
Average Household Size	1.82	1.61
*Median Income	\$50,881	\$45,725
*Mean Income	\$74,304	\$86,820
*Per Capita Income	\$38,579	\$49,556
*% Unemployed	9.3	4.4
*% Professional	34.6	41.6
*% Living Below Poverty	11.6	18
*Median Home Price	\$252,700	\$322,600
*Median Rent	\$1,099	\$1,104

*From the 2008-2012 American Community Survey

A number of journalistic media articles played up the competition between the two locales with revealing titles such as “Who needs South Beach? Fort Lauderdale crashes the party” (Lee, 2002), “SoBe or Lauderdale? A matter of taste; Fort Lauderdale is comparable to Walmart, South Beach is like Target claims retail queen” (Nash, 2003), “An alternative to Miami’s South Beach / quieter Fort Lauderdale appeals to mature gay, lesbian travelers” (Lee, 2005a), “Where the boys are Part 2: Watch out South Beach. Fort

Lauderdale is making its move as a top gay spot” (Lee, 2005b), “Broward beckons gays, many leave Miami-Dade for a place to settle down” (Tanasychuk, 2008), “A tale of two cities” (Rubio, 2010) and “Gays leave unfriendly South Beach for Fort Lauderdale” (O’Neil, 2010). I interviewed an anonymous informant, let’s call him Mario, 34 (Interviewed February 2014), who is a former resident of South Beach and currently lives in Wilton Manors. He said on this topic:

What’s interesting is that I know a lot of people who used to live in South Beach and now live here in Wilton Manors. Everyone migrated; you know it was that whole mid-to-late 90s folks that were partying and having fun, you know early 20s and now they’re in their mid-30s; they’re past that stage of their life so you just can’t always live in South Beach because it changed. Now there’s really not that much activity going on in South Beach. It was time to grow up and so everybody moved up to Wilton Manors, Fort Lauderdale area.

What he had to say about his personal decision to leave South Beach is revelatory and continues the theme of “growing up” and changing priorities in life:

I don’t think it (the South Beach scene) burned itself out. It was a lot of factors. I moved out because (I thought) ‘I’m getting older.’ I had to sit down and think ‘I need to start my career. I need to start my life. I can’t just be partying all the time.’ So I think it was a growing up phase. You know the Peter Pan stigma ended. The city started to clean it up. The city really was a factor as well, cracking down on drugs, but that wasn’t specific to the gay clubs, it was everybody.

When asked if there was any particular point in time or any incident that triggered his perception of South Beach’s decline he said:

(It started declining) right around the time that I left. I left around 2003. I remember going to that Winter Party in 2002 or 2003 and it was really just changing... People were going in every single direction to get out of there as fast as possible, only because it was just that you wanted to cash in on your investments, which was all your renovations on the houses and so forth. People were leaving the island as quickly as possible (to get to) different cities, places, so forth. Everybody wanted to wash their hands of South Beach and move on to the next thing. It got too popular. It got too straight. It got too mainstream. It wasn’t that underground scene, it wasn’t that fun scene where you heard the best DJ’s for

a fraction of the cost when they were playing for practically nothing before they became the big time names.

Steve Adkins, President of the Greater Miami Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, pointed to the same time period saying:

The people that didn't leave the beach either died or went to Broward because the clubs stayed open there, the big ones, long after these closed. The rest of the population coupled up and moved off the beach. The people kind of grew up. They found a partner or their profession took them to a different place in the county and it helped push the change that took place here. But... more than anything that changed the look and the feel of South Beach was the success of South Beach. So that 2002/2003 lease reset that I was talking about affected properties all over the place. So Salvation became Office Depot and Warsaw became Johnny's and all these places that were bars at one time, because it was inexpensive at the time for them to go and set up, they're all jewelry stores and upscale boutiques and things like that. They just couldn't survive because the leases became too expensive.

The gentrification that had turned South Beach into a hip and trendy destination for gays in the 90s continued unabated into the new millennium, and prices rose accordingly. All of the articles previously mentioned and all of the informants I interviewed for this project mentioned price as a factor for displacing residents and businesses who could not afford living or operating there anymore. Karen Brown, former Executive Director of the Miami Beach LGBT Visitor Center (Interviewed May 28, 2013) said on this:

In the 90s you could stay on South Beach for \$400 a month. Now those are \$1800 a month for the same little studio or one bedroom... I have to attribute so much of it to the greed of some of the landowners and property owners charging people, the mom-and-pop's, which steve-and-steve's instead of mom-and-pop's businesses who cannot afford to pay hundreds of dollars per square foot and so that creates a lack of diversity. It may be with a gay component to it, of course, but it creates a lack of diversity of people coming to visit here so all we end up getting is the shops that can afford to come here like The Gap, Pottery Barn, William Sonoma, five Starbucks.

Herb Sosa, longtime resident, activist and member of numerous organizations, said on the subject:

I think that Wilton Manors, a lot like South Beach, was an area that had been forgotten, that the gay community came into and made it pretty, made it livable and created a community that had (previously) been forgotten. That's not a unique formula to Wilton Manors or South Beach, that's globally almost a cliché, that that's what the gay community does. We go into areas that may not have the best parks, may not have the best schools, it's a little rough around the edges, and make it livable. Then the cycle goes, that once that occurs, is that 'Straight America' realizes that this place is really cool and it's pretty and it's wonderful and maybe they don't quite know how to put their finger on it, why they like it but they know that it's an attractive place. Then you get Middle America moving in and buying in and a lot of times then the gay community then moves on somewhere else. So I think that has a lot to do with the northern shift, if you will, of a lot of the gay community from South Beach to Wilton Manors, I think that's a part of it.

He also predicted the same thing for Wilton Manors saying:

And I would say if I was a betting man that that's also going to happen in Wilton Manors. It's already happening and straight families are moving in with kids and they just built a brand new school on Wilton Drive and, obviously gay couples can also have families and kids, but the straight families will eventually move back in and I'm sure that the bulk of the gay community will move elsewhere.

Edisson Farrow, longtime resident and bar owner agreed saying "We've come a long way... but unfortunately when all that goes up the prices go up and a lot of people get pushed out and mom-and-pop businesses get pushed out and lower income people get pushed out and it becomes a little less interesting" and then went on to compare the trajectory of South Beach with Manhattan and how unaffordability has pushed residents to Brooklyn.

Chapter 4

A Gay Movement? Quantifying the Decline of LGBT South Beach

The claims of decline in South Beach, as discussed in the media (See Melloy, 2010; O' Neil, 2010; Rubio, 2010; Tanasychuk, 2008; Lee, 2005a; Lee, 2005b; Nash, 2003; Lee, 2002; Flippen, 1999; Patron, 1999), have been substantial and are yet to have been quantitatively investigated. The goal of this study is to address this knowledge gap spatially, using the best data and methods available to me. In this chapter I describe the methods used and conclusions drawn while also acknowledging the shortcomings of this research, the opportunities presented for future work and previous contributions to this field in a brief literature review.

Counting Queers? Prior Attempts to Map LGBTs

One of the earliest works to attempt the difficult task of mapping LGBTs in space is the chapter on San Francisco from Manuel Castell's seminal work *The City and the Grassroots* (1983). Castells showed great creativity and resourcefulness in combining imperfect proxy variables to create some of the first published maps of urban gay male concentrations. Namely, these maps drew from sources such as informants highlighting neighborhoods that they knew had large gay concentrations, voter registration data on multiple-male households, the locations of gay bars and other "gay social gathering places" and voting districts showing the highest support for slain City Supervisor and gay activist Harvey Milk in 1975.

These (or similar) methods remained in common usage until the Census started counting "same sex unmarried partner households", which shall hereafter be abbreviated to SSCH (Same Sex Couple Households), in 2000. For the first time, there was an

exhaustive, nationally comprehensive data source that was available at a variety of scales, and to which there was a reasonably large degree of confidence that it truly included only same sex couples. It is important to clarify that this variable does not represent LGBT individuals (as the Census does not ask questions about sexual orientation) but only a much narrower subset of co-habiting same sex couples (at the time of the decennial census) who identify themselves as “unmarried partners”.

Nonetheless, this information was utilized by Richard Florida (2002), and many others, who failed to accurately convey the limitations of this data and the possible misrepresentation that comes from using it as a spatial proxy for all LGBTs or even all gays and lesbians. For example, *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas* (Gates & Ost, 2004) was a much heralded and unique work for its time, considering the scale (the entire United States) and explicitly quantitative nature, however it, and the usage of the SSCH variable, have come under criticism. Brown & Knopp (2006) note its exclusivity and dependence on both governmentalized scales and residential populations. They also point out that census tract boundaries have little meaning in daily movement or notions of place and that Gates and Ost’s use of city and census tract boundaries exclude people who may work in, visit, or otherwise use the space, but are not themselves residents. They write that misrepresenting, or not counting, individuals who identify as gay or lesbian is akin to a spatial act of closeting.

The authors are hardly anti-quantitative, in fact they write that these types of spatial analyses “can be an integral part of a politics of uncloseting urban (and other) spaces that are otherwise heteronormatively represented and imagined” (Brown and Knopp, 2008:55). They simply caution (and I agree) to be aware of the limitations of

such Census data, the potentially misleading power and usage of scale and of the contentious issues around spatial representation. See also Hayslett & Kane (2011), Walther (2011) and Cooke & Rapino (2007) for important contributions to this field in using census SSCH data.

Another important proxy for mapping (at least) LGBT commercial zones is the distribution of LGBT supporting businesses. For just one example, the locations of bars across time and physical space were mapped for Montreal by Hunt & Zacharias (2008) and Podmore (2006). As Chapter 2 illustrated, gay and lesbian bars have long been considered centers of gay villages and the loci for sociological studies of LGBT populations. Beyond bars, bathhouses, cruising grounds, adult theatres, saunas and other places of public sex or sex work, have been researched extensively, but rarely quantitatively investigated. An exception to this is Woods et al. (2003) which tallied bathhouse locations across several major North American cities from the 1960s to 1999. The three aforementioned studies utilized sources that are also employed in this study, especially the use of advertisements in gay magazines and listings of businesses in LGBT travel guidebooks.

As with the census SSCH variable, this method isn't perfect either, and in fact, it could be argued that the usage of businesses as a spatial proxy for LGBTs in space is homonormative in that it maps locations of consumerism while excluding those spaces utilized by LGBTs without any spending involved (such as cruising grounds) which can be invisible and/or highly fluid in nature, with this caveat I clarify that mapping of businesses catering to a specific population is simply that, a marker for commercial (and not necessarily residential) concentration. In combining these two imperfect variables I

hope to overcome the deficiencies of each, while illustrating their interrelationship within the study area. I also aim to fill two literature gaps: the lack of works which utilize both variables (at least as far as I have been able to infer from my literature review) and the aforementioned lack of quantitative spatial data on the Greater Miami LGBT community.

Using the Census

A consistent claim by news articles on the decline of South Beach (and verified by some of my informants) is the displacement of LGBT residents by rising prices. Many of them also claimed a movement of former residents to the Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale area. Records of where individuals have lived throughout their lifetime are non-existent (the census is anonymous) and neither are records of an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity (beyond male and female) as the census does not ask such questions, so establishing an exact count of all LGBT residents who moved from South Beach to Wilton Manors was not an option. A survey could have been done but remains an opportunity for future work.

The previous section made clear the limitations of SSCH data but it is still useful to this project in that (a) it is spatial data on at least a subset of the LGBT population; (b) it is available across a (limited) time scale which can show at least some temporal change; and (c) it is available at a variety of scales. The SSCH variable was first counted for the 2000 Census and thus only a ten year difference can be measured (the last Census was in 2010). However, for the purpose of this study that is not a hindrance, as much of the claimed movement from South Beach to Broward County is said to have occurred

during this decade. Given this hypothesis, the total number of SSCH should have increased in the Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale region while decreasing in South Beach.

Unfortunately, the numbers do not provide a clear answer in this case as they both support and falsify the argument, as can be seen from Table 3 and Map 3 below. For example, the number of SSCH actually increased in both South Beach and Miami Beach, in terms of absolute numbers and the percentage of total households, which would go against the argument of displacement. However, this growth pales in comparison to the real and percentage growth in Wilton Manors SSCH. A number of caveats must be made at this point. Firstly, many of the claims of displacement regarded individuals, with some claiming that they “coupled off” and moved north, and individuals are not counted here. Second, it is not known whether the SSCH present in 2010 in South Beach are the same ones (or composed of any of the same individuals) as those in 2000. Thus, any number of gay, bisexual or lesbians (as individuals or as members of SSCH) could have moved from South Beach to Wilton Manors, as long as they were replaced in greater numbers by incoming SSCH.

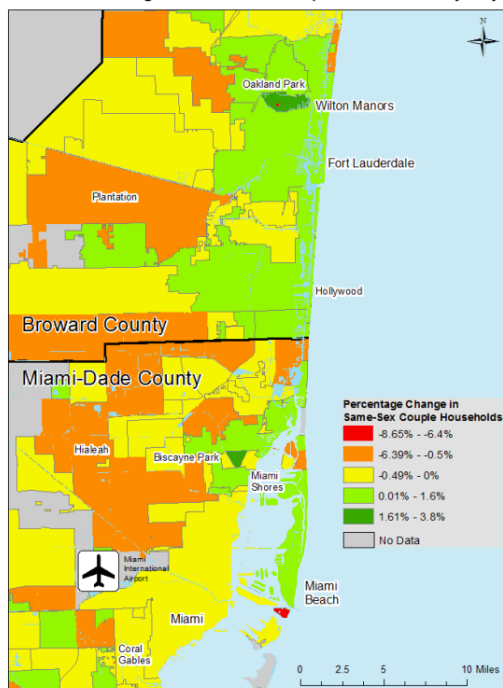
Table 3 – Same-Sex Couple Households as Counted by Census (2000, 2010) Per Area

City/County	2000 Same-Sex Couple Households	2000 % of Total Regional Same-Sex Couple Households	2010 Same-Sex Couple Households	2010 % of Total Regional Same-Sex Couple Households
South Beach	478 (2%)	4.6%	549 (2.3%)	3.3%
Miami Beach	769 (1.4%)	7.3%	916 (1.9%)	5.5%
Wilton Manors	319 (7.4%)	3%	758 (12.2%)	4.6%
Miami	1,167 (0.9%)	11.1%	1,630 (1%)	9.8%
Fort Lauderdale	1,418 (2%)	13.5%	2,383 (3.2%)	14.7%
Miami-Dade Co.	5,889 (0.8%)	56.1%	7,436 (0.9%)	44.9%
Broward Co.	4,613 (0.7%)	43.9%	9,125 (1.3%)	55.1%
Total	10,502	NA	16,561	NA

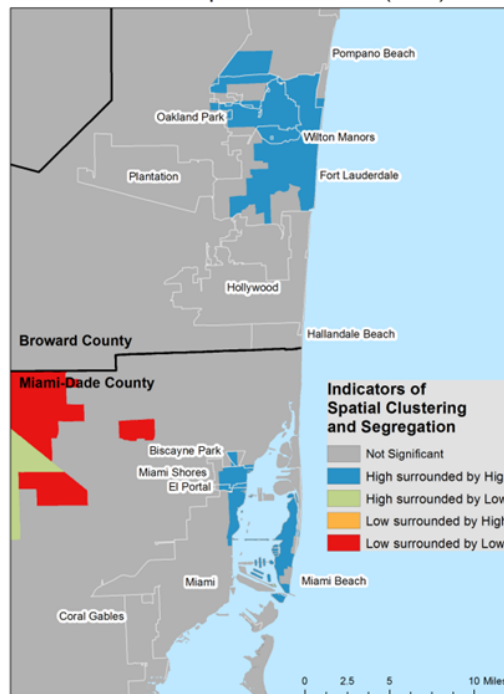
All of the maps in this project utilize shapefiles downloaded from the Miami-Dade and Broward County GIS websites

Maps 3 (below) showing change in SSCH between 2000 and 2010 and 4 (below) showing the results of the LISA analysis on the 2010 variable

2000-2010 Change in Same Sex Couple Households by City



2010 Same Sex Couple Households by Census Tract Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA)



Given all of the information that is not known a greater context is needed to properly analyze the observed changes in SSCH in South Beach versus Wilton Manors. Placing both locations within their counties, and the broader Greater Miami region, is in this case revelatory. As Table 3 shows, a majority of SSCH are not to be found in *either* South Beach or Wilton Manors (or even in larger cities such as Fort Lauderdale and Miami). While SSCH might be highly concentrated in both Wilton Manors and Fort Lauderdale, the numbers there still represent less than one fifth the total number found across Miami-Dade and Broward Counties.

There still exists a problem of scale as official cities are quite large and their boundaries are arbitrary across the urban landscape. Census tracts are much smaller and although they figure even less into people's perceptions of place, they are closer in scale to neighborhoods. In "Still a Gay Paradise?: Homonormativity in the Entrepreneurial Remaking of Miami Beach" (forthcoming), which I co-wrote with Dr. Miguel Kanai, we used the 2010 SSCH variable at the census tract level and ran a Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA), which measures spatial segregation and clustering of a variable by evaluating the assigned weights of a feature not only to the global (entire region) average but also against its immediate neighbors to create an output which include: High-High (highly concentrated features surrounded on all sides by others of high concentration), High-Low (high concentration surrounded by low), Low-High (low surrounded by high), Low-Low (low concentration surrounded by low) and Not Significant which means that features have a more even distribution and are not significantly clustered (Anselin, 1995). This resulted in three distinct clusters of High-High SSCH: one in South Beach, another in the northeastern portion of the city of Miami

and spreading northward to Miami Shores, and a third in Broward County encompassing Wilton Manors and much of the surrounding area (including a large proportion of Fort Lauderdale). We came to similar conclusions as those drawn from Table 3 in that two-thirds of SSCH did not reside in any significant cluster and are significantly disbursed across the metropolitan area.

Mapping LGBT Supporting Businesses

Another important claim to the narrative of decline in South Beach is the significant loss of LGBT supporting businesses (particularly gay bars) and if this is to be believed then the number of businesses should have decreased in South Beach in the 2000s while increasing in the Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale area at the same time. Thus, in order to analyze this claim, LGBT supporting businesses needed to be counted and mapped across space and time. Accessing information proved to be much more difficult and time consuming than the census data was as there is no similar online database of historical business locations. The Stonewall National Museum and Archives in Fort Lauderdale proved tremendously helpful when they suggested that I use advertisements for businesses (which crucially have addresses) from local gay magazines and allowed me access to their archives to procure these publications. The archives contain a near continuous collection of locally produced gay/LGBT magazines dating back to the 1970s, however, as they have not been digitized, recording the necessary information was a large undertaking.

For the sake of consistency, I surveyed two to four issues per year and stuck with a publication until it went out of print, was no longer useful or if I found

another publication that was more useful (usefulness here defined by the number and variety of business advertisements). The publications I used were *This Week with David*, *The Weekly News*, *Hot Spots* and *The Wire*. I recorded three pieces of information for each business: its name, business type and street address, and then entered the information into ArcGIS using geocoding, which placed the business on a digital map with the attribute data included. The result of this is a previously unavailable database of LGBT supporting business in Greater Miami from the mid 1970s until today. Table 4 below lists the businesses by their city of location over five year intervals.

Table 4 – LGBT Business Advertising in Magazines by City and Year

Year	Miami Beach (% of Regional Total)	Miami (% of Regional Total)	Fort Lauderdale (% of Regional Total)	Wilton Manors (%) of Regional Total)	Regional Total
1975	5 (13.2%)	12 (31.6%)	15 (39.5%)	0 (0%)	38
1980	1 (2.4%)	21 (51.2%)	12 (29.3%)	0 (0%)	41
1985	7 (8.1%)	35 (40.7%)	33 (38.4%)	1 (1.2%)	86
1990	7 (9.9%)	23 (32.4%)	29 (40.8%)	1 (1.4%)	71
1995	15 (18.1%)	17 (20.5%)	40 (48.2%)	3 (3.6%)	83
2000	20 (18.5%)	8 (7.4%)	60 (55.6%)	10 (9.3%)	108
2005	10 (10.1%)	4 (4%)	55 (55.6%)	19 (19.2%)	99
2010	6 (6.4%)	5 (5.3%)	54 (57.4%)	22 (23.4%)	94
2014	12 (12.9%)	9 (9.7%)	36 (38.7%)	24 (25.8%)	93

In addition, I supplemented the magazines with listings from the *Damron Guides*, which the archives also had a backlog of, dating back to 1974. The Damron corporation produces an annual national address guide book with listings of businesses sent to them by their readers and then verified by staff. The amount of businesses listed in the *Damron Guides* is significantly larger than that I obtained from magazine advertisements, as can be seen in Table 5 below. I believe this is because listings in *Damron* are free and unsolicited and they include a multitude of businesses categorized as “gay friendly” or

“LGBT-friendly”, possibly as a method to lure tourists reading a national publication, but don’t spend money advertising to locals in magazines with a limited circulation. This claim can be verified by the sheer number of hotels included in the *Damron* listings (especially for South Beach) as compared to the much smaller number of hotels advertising in magazines.

Table 5 – LGBT Business in *Damron* Guides by City and Year

Year	Miami Beach (% of Regional Total)	Miami (% of Regional Total)	Fort Lauderdale (% of Regional Total)	Wilton Manors (% of Regional Total)	Regional Total
1975	11 (16.7%)	27 (40.9%)	18 (27.3%)	0 (0%)	66
1980	4 (4.4%)	35 (38.5%)	38 (41.8%)	1 (1.1%)	91
1985	10 (8.6%)	45 (38.8%)	46 (39.7%)	2 (1.7%)	116
1990	13 (11.3%)	31 (27%)	53 (46.1%)	5 (4.3%)	115
1995	56 (32.9%)	24 (14.1%)	61 (35.9%)	5 (2.9%)	170
2000	88 (38.9%)	19 (8.4%)	77 (34.1%)	17 (7.5%)	226
2005	80 (33.1%)	18 (7.4%)	81 (33.5%)	30 (12.4%)	242
2010	66 (28.7%)	13 (5.7%)	81 (35.2%)	38 (16.5%)	230
2013	83 (30.9%)	31 (11.5%)	69 (25.7%)	48 (17.8%)	269

Tables 4 and 5 reveal differing information about South Beach and Wilton Manors and, like with the Census SSCH variable, work to both support and falsify the narrative of decline. Notice that the tables include businesses by city, and thus Miami Beach is listed rather than South Beach (which is a neighborhood/section of the city) but, as the maps in this chapter reveal, South Beach has always had most of the LGBT supporting businesses in the city. Both the magazine and *Damron* listings show a slow increase in the number of businesses in Miami Beach, increasing slowly during the 1980s before exploding during the 90s. Between 1990 and 1995, the number of businesses advertising in magazines doubled, while the businesses in *Damron* quadrupled. However

between 2000 and 2005, the number of businesses advertising in local gay magazines decreased by half, while decreasing by only one tenth in the *Damron* listings during the same time period.

Why is this? As mentioned previously, the *Damron* listings include many businesses which are “LGBT friendly” but don’t cater exclusively or primarily to LGBT consumers. As my informants and the press articles stated, when the nightclubs and other smaller businesses that had previously paid for advertising in local gay magazines went out of business, they were replaced by corporate chains or businesses that catered to a wider audience, some of which were “LGBT friendly” enough to be included in the national *Damron* books. This claim can be verified by Table 6 of *Damron* listed businesses from Miami Beach below, which includes the business type. Notice the drastic decrease in nightclub/bars since 2000, while the number of hotels increased. Notice also the Lesbian type; this includes businesses catering specifically to women rather than men. While many of the other businesses are certainly frequented by women as well, the majority of their revenue comes from men, as can be verified from the dominance of men in their advertisements and from personal observations. See the Chapter 5 for analysis on why this may be. The Sex type merits explaining; it includes bathhouses, saunas, strip clubs, adult movie theatres and porn stores.

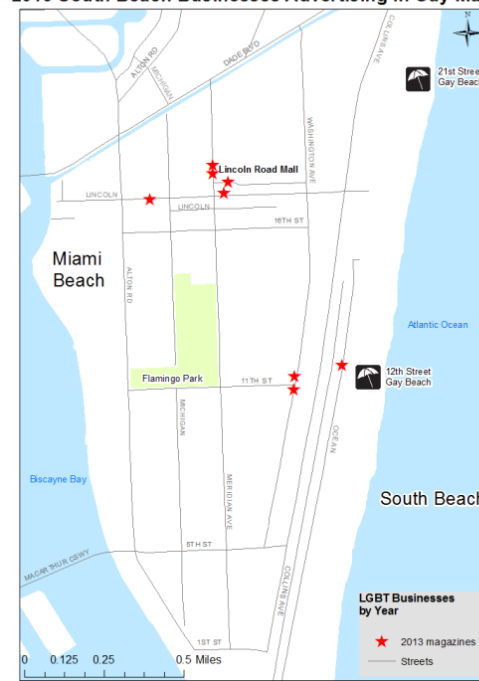
Table 6 – Damron listed Miami Beach LGBT Business Types by Year

Type	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2013
Club/Bar	6	4	4	7	13	17	10	6	5
Hotel	0	0	4	1	19	46	46	37	46
Retail	0	0	0	1	5	2	2	2	3
Service	1	0	0	0	3	4	4	2	5
Religious	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Restaurant	1	0	0	3	15	15	16	15	20
Sex	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	4	3
Medical	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
Lesbian	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Total	11	4	9	13	59	88	80	66	83

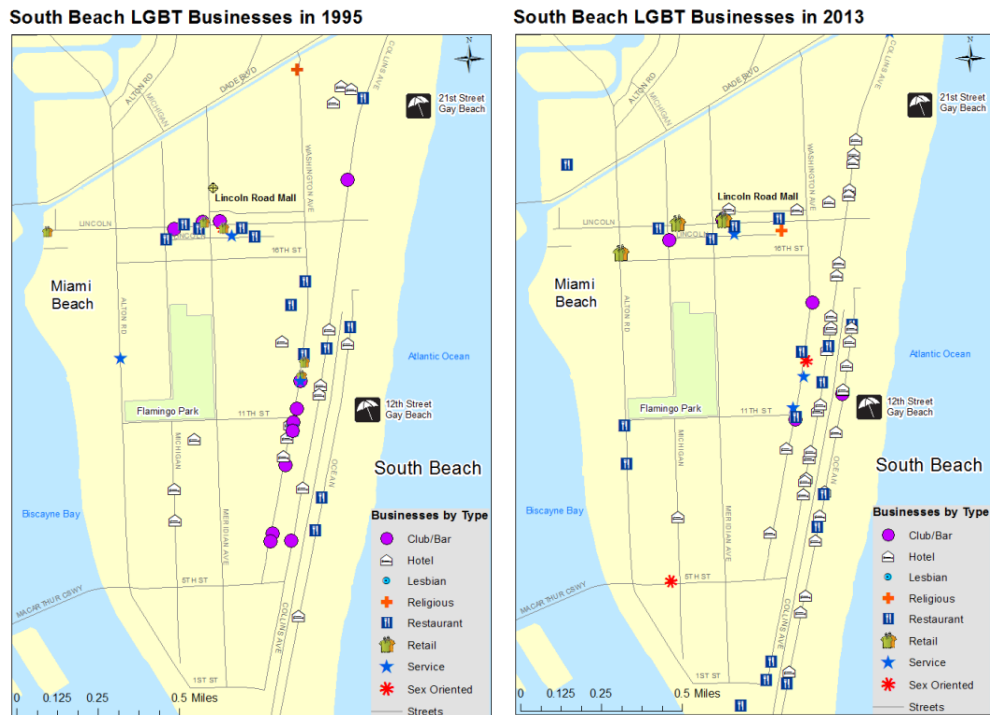
South Beach LGBT Businesses in 2013



2013 South Beach Businesses Advertising in Gay Magazines



Maps 5 and 6 (above) showing the differing results of including businesses from Damron guides (left) and local gay magazines (right) in South Beach



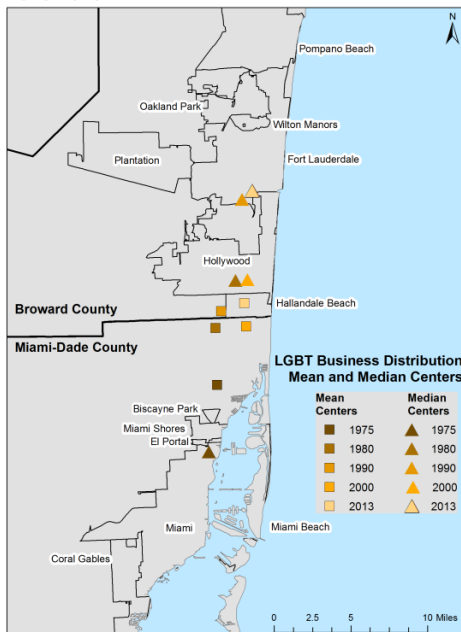
Maps 7 and 8 (above) showing the loss in gay bars and other changes in LGBT business type from 1995 (left) to 2013 (right)

Both the magazine and *Damron* listings agree that Wilton Manors has seen a boom in businesses opening since 2000 and Fort Lauderdale has almost always had the largest share of the LGBT supporting businesses in the region. The overall move of businesses north can be further quantified through the GIS tool of Mean and Median Centers. These are statistical operations in GIS that locate the center of a distribution measured as either a mean or median. The median center is the location with the shortest straight line distance to all data points. The mean center however measures the average XY coordinates of all data points and chooses a center location using this average, and thus is more susceptible to outliers in the data.

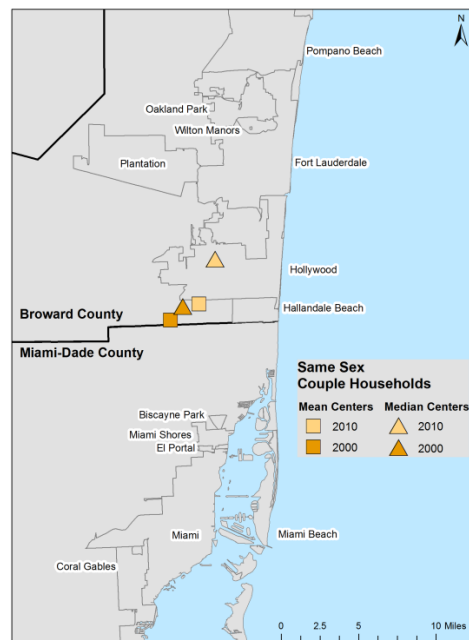
I mapped the mean and median centers for businesses and SSCH below as Maps 9 and 10. Notice the general trend northwards for both variables over time (1975-2013); the

mean center moved 8.7 miles northeast (6 miles straight line distance) from Golden Glades, Miami-Dade County to Hallandale Beach, across the Broward County line. The median center showed even greater movement northwards, from Miami in 1975, it moved 27 miles (17 miles straight line distance) to Fort Lauderdale in 2013. I also used the mean and median center operation on the SSCH variable. The movement for the SSCH mean and median centers was far shorter, having advanced northwards only 2 miles for the mean center (Miramar to Hollywood, both in Broward County) and 3.7 miles for the median Center (Miramar to Pembroke Park, Broward County). However, this variable only accounts for the change within one decade as opposed to the businesses, which have a three plus decade history.

LGBT Business Mean and Median Centers of Distribution 1975-2013



Same Sex Couple Households Mean and Median Centers 2000 - 2010



Maps 9 and 10 showing the movement of Mean and Median Centers of LGBT businesses (left) and SSCH (right) over time

Concluding Remarks

The results of the quantitative analysis on the decline of LGBT South Beach are inconclusive to the extent of proving this narrative in one way or another, but some conclusions can be drawn. The displacement (or voluntary relocation) of individuals from South Beach to any other location is yet to be proven and tallied due to the anonymity of census data. A survey could draw better conclusion but is beyond the scope of this project. What is known is that the number of SSCH increased in South Beach, as an absolute number, percentage of total households and as a share of the regional total SSCH, countering the displacement argument somewhat (though again, see earlier sections for discussion on the limitations of this variable). However the increase was much smaller than that in Wilton Manors which shows that South Beach's location as the *main* gayborhood in Greater Miami has certainly been lost.

As regarding the loss of businesses, it was proven that certain types of businesses did experience a significant loss in South Beach, but that the number of businesses deemed "LGBT friendly" (rather than those catering exclusively or primarily to LGBTs) or, significantly, those businesses catering to tourists and listed in a national travel guide (*Damron*), has not experienced such loss. This discrepancy speaks to the greater economic importance of (and focus by entrepreneurial governance on) tourism in South Beach, as compared to Wilton Manors, which is more of a nightlife destination for residents. In Wilton Manors and Fort Lauderdale, businesses catering primarily or exclusively to LGBTs *and* "LGBT friendly" businesses have both increased, lending some credence to the claim of businesses moving there, though as stated earlier, businesses relying on tourists (such as hotels) are of a much smaller number there than

they are in Miami Beach. As with SSCH, however, there is much that remains unknown. For example, short of interviewing all of the former business owners in South Beach, it would be impossible to know their exact reason for closing and if, or where, they decided to open a new business (in Wilton Manors or elsewhere).

Chapter 5

Selling South Beach Post Decline: A Fabulous Homonormativity?

As I was using quantitative spatial methods to investigate the decline of LGBT South Beach, I came to realize that simply supporting or falsifying the claims of decline were not enough, as bigger questions remained. I was interested in what happens after Collins (2004) fourth stage of “assimilation into the fashionable mainstream” and, further, how do community members feel about this transition? Also, how do city, county and organizational leaders and business owners who depend (or formerly depended) on an LGBT consumer base, respond to this transition? And finally, what does the South Beach story say about other declining gay villages and the phenomena of gay village decline more broadly? Those questions are addressed in this chapter, which takes a qualitative approach to the “problem” of the decline of LGBT South Beach, as compared to the quantitative methods applied in the previous chapter. It is organized into sections that deal with (a) the heavy sponsorship of a resurging LGBT-friendly South Beach, (b) the kind of neighborhood this investment is creating, evaluated through the lens of homonormative entrepreneurialism, and (c) expanding the knowledge and gaps presented through this project to other gay villages, and (d) the opportunities presented for future research.

Qualitative methods employed in this chapter include: ethnographic observation of annual LGBT related events, observation of several monthly meetings by the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee, seven in-depth semi-structured interviews with leaders of these various entities and one interview with an anonymous gay male former resident of South Beach currently residing in Wilton Manors. These

informants expressed their opinions on the past and future of South Beach and spoke with me about their work in the remaking of the neighborhood that has been such a top priority for the past several years. In order to avoid repeating each of their proper titles, positions and the interview date each time they are mentioned or quoted, I have included that information in an easily referenceable table below.

Informants listed in chronological order with attribute information and date of interview

1. George Neary – Director of Cultural Tourism at the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau; Board Member of the Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; Board Member of Miami Beach Pride; former (founding) member of the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee; former Director of Preservation at Miami Design and Preservation and League: Interviewed December 10, 2012
2. Karen Brown – former (until December 2013) Executive Director of the Miami Beach LGBT Visitor Center; General Manager of Hotel Gaythering; member of the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee; former General Manager of the Anglers Resort (hotel in South Beach): Interviewed May 28, 2013
3. Robin Schwartz – Executive Director of Aqua Foundation for Women; Board of Directors member of Miami Beach Gay Pride; former member of Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee: Interviewed June 21, 2013
4. Herb Sosa – President of Unity Coalition; Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of *Ambiente* Magazine; Chairman of the Miami Beach Historic Preservation Board and former Executive Director of Miami Design Preservation League; Activist honored by City of Miami Beach, Congresswoman and *Out* magazine amongst others: Interviewed June 27, 2013
5. Steve Adkins – President of the Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; Board of Directors member of Miami Beach Gay Pride, also board members of Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau and Miami-Dade Mayor’s GLBT Community Advisory Committee and Business Development Committee; formerly owned and operated Jefferson House (South Beach Hotel): Interviewed September 19, 2013
6. Roger Roa – Director of Development at The Pride Center: Interviewed February 25, 2014
7. “Mario” anonymous former South Beach resident 2001-2003 and employee at nightclub Level as well as “scene” reveler during the 1990s: Interviewed February, 2014
8. Edison Farrow – Owner of The Cabaret of South Beach; Board of Directors member of Miami Beach Gay Pride; member of Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee; formerly ran SoBe Social Club: Interviewed March 7, 2014

New Efforts to Re-Queer The Beach

In the summer of 2007, eight years after reassuring its readers that despite “heterosexualization”, South Beach still “sizzled” as a “old gay spot” (Flippen, 1999), the national LGBT publication *The Advocate* asked the question “Is Fort Lauderdale stealing South Beach’s thunder?” Individual responses included: “What thunder?”, “Yeah. The gay community doesn't exist here like it did in the 90s. It's now so touristy. It lost its flavor.” and “Yes. South Beach has been taken over by the hip-hop world...” This was but one in a long line of news articles which editorialized a widespread concern for the loss of a dominant LGBT community in South Beach and/or the loss of its status as a preeminent destination for LGBT tourism in South Florida (See Chapter 2 for examples). Later that same year, in the fall of 2007, Matti Herrera Bower became the first Hispanic woman (of Cuban descent) to be elected the mayor of Miami Beach. She quickly set to work on reinvigorating gay tourism and fighting the perception of decline or a loss of gay/LGBT friendliness.

Many of my informants credit Bower, and her administration, with helping to galvanize greater support for, and investment in, the LGBT community and in promoting LGBT tourism and business in South Beach. Steve Adkins said of her “I think any mayor wants to leave a legacy and I think that Matti really felt that when she got elected that the LGBT community played a great part in that and there were a lot of people who supported her campaign both financially and by voting for her...” Karen Brown agreed, saying “The gay community has been very supportive of her and she has been right back in return, so I definitely attribute it to her.” Brown also noted South Beach’s history and that wanting to recreate it triggered this investment, saying

I think it's because it's almost like a heritage that the gays helped to create this city... And then when it became 'oh that must be hot', then everybody started raising the price of hotel rooms. And the mayor helps to keep some of these permeating issues at bay because it's so expensive, and cost prohibitive, that we were losing production companies. It was recognized by the city, and larger entities, that we needed to preserve some of the history that is here and preserve the community that's been so supportive of the creation of what we have here because if not, it's going to turn into one big mall. It's gonna be a homogenic society that all looks the same, like any other town in 'Anytown, USA'. There has to be some sort of charm, like 'creatives' painting on the side of the road, (with a) gay is a component of it, (but) it's not all of it, (there's also) the hippies, the surfers, the funky people on Lincoln Road, the crazy Taxi drivers, it makes up a fun community, otherwise (without it) you're in Anytown, USA.

Amongst Bower's early accomplishments were the establishment of the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee and the Miami Beach Gay Pride festival. The Enhancement Committee came first, in 2008, and differed from the already existing (since 2000) Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in scale (city versus. entire county) and makeup, as Committee members were appointed by the mayor or city commissioners and were not restricted to due-paying business owners (as in the Chamber). It was established, as Robin Schwartz, the original Vice Chair put it "...to enhance all business in Miami Beach but also to, and I don't know how else to say this, bring the gay business back. So what happened was in the 80s, you know, Miami Beach, Lincoln Road was the hot spot then it started to grow and all the gay people were coming from everywhere and then it got a little to where it wasn't such a popular gay spot anymore and she wanted to make sure that it got that back." Karen Brown, a current member of the Committee also admitted "...we're focusing on how to bring LGBT businesses back to Miami Beach." Steve Adkins told me that the first order of business for the Committee was the removal of an antiquated ordinance that forbade the flying of flags by businesses so that they could put up rainbow flags without being cited for code violations. The issue was raised by tourists curious about the lack of territorializing

LGBT symbols and the Palace Bar, the city’s oldest surviving gay bar/restaurant, which had been cited several times for its rainbow flag (Head, 2008).



Logos (from left to right) of the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee (designed by Edison Farrow), the Pink Flamingo Diversity and Training Program (designed by Karen Brown) and Miami Beach Gay Pride downloaded from their respective websites

The second order of business for the committee was the establishment of a Pride event for the city of Miami Beach, the first of which was held in 2009. Given the popularity of South Beach in the 1990s for gay tourism, nightlife and also its large residential LGBT population, its surprising that the city did not have an annual Pride celebration, of the likes that have existed for decades in other gay villages. George Neary credits this with the preponderance of other spectacular events catering to LGBT audiences, albeit without the “pride” moniker attached. He had a point, as can be seen by Table 7 below which lists all of the annual LGBT oriented events held in the cities of Miami Beach or Miami and the year of their founding.

Table 7 – LGBT themed events in South Beach by year of founding and theme

Annual Event	Founding Year	Theme/Niche
White Party	1984	AIDS research benefit
Winter Party	1994	Gay and Lesbian Task Force benefit
Gay and Lesbian Film Festival	1998	Film festival
Aqua Girl/Sweet Charity	1999	LBT women pride and Aqua Foundation benefit
Sizzle Miami	2003	Black LGBT pride in conjunction with Memorial Day Urban Beach Weekend
Miami Beach Bruthaz	2006	Black LGBT Pride and issues awareness
Miami Beach Pride	2009	LGBT Pride
Orgullo Hispanic LGBT Pride	2011	Hispanic LGBT Pride

Elaborating further on the reasoning for Pride, and its tremendous early success, Neary said:

Well my feeling was (that) we did seven events in Miami Beach, so my point is, what do we need one more for? I didn't understand, till we did the event, how much it meant to people because they looked at the other events as tourist related. They never felt (that) they had anything for *them*. And the response was so overwhelming. We thought we'd get 7,000 people and we got 35,000 the first year, no one does that! And then it built up (from there). Last year we had 60,000. So it's been embraced enormously. But I thought since we had Aqua Girl and this (event) and that (event) that people would (think that) what do we need this other event for? We're gonna take all of the volunteers from all of these groups and it's gonna take the money from them (those events). What do we need it for? But I will tell you the day of the event people kissed and hugged me and strangers (were) telling me how much it meant to them. It's the most emotional thing I've ever seen. And you know (people came) from Kendall, Doral, you know people that can't be gay or don't feel comfortable or don't feel celebrated (where they live), now they have a parade (and they) had the Mayor and dignitaries (there). It really meant a lot, it *means* a lot to people... And like Ocean Drive loves it, because of the tax dollars and the beer and the liquor (sales) and the restaurants (get business) and (there were) no problems. You know, (there were) 60,000 people and no arrests. We don't carry guns. We don't shoot people. So it's welcomed, embraced, cause again the population is terrific.

The official estimates from the Miami Beach Pride website (and verified by other informants) is closer to 15,000 attendees for the inaugural 2009 event, but this is still a significant number and the growth of it has been tremendous. The website (miamigaypride.com) estimates that there were 80,000 attendees for the 2013 event and with a similar number expected for 2014. The two day event includes an official beach party, numerous smaller events in host businesses and a parade. In 2013 the parade included 1,200 participants and 66 entries according to the website. Celebrities have signed on as performers and/or grand marshals in recent years, with *American Idol* winner Adam Lambert appearing in 2013 and Miami native Gloria Estefan in 2014.

Notably, the number of attendees at Miami Beach Pride is far larger than that of any LGBT related event in Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale. Wilton Manors resident Roger Roa does note however, in defense of Broward County events, that:

I think it's like 2% of the people who go to that Pride actually live on South Beach and everyone else is from the neighboring cities: Coral Gables, Kendall, all of the big cities funnel in (participants), including Fort Lauderdale, so that's why it's grown. It was a perfect venue, a great backdrop and it was perfect for them. I'm very happy for them. You know the Pride here in Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale area, cause we have Pridefest which is in March and we have Stonewall which is in June, is a little bit more local. It's definitely (composed) of the residents that are there, not to mention we don't have the big pool (of residents) that Miami-Dade County has, you know South Beach had everything that was west of them to pool from, we (in Broward) have a lot less cities to pool from and the Miami boys won't really come up here too much.

The Miami Beach Gay Pride website disputes this assertion, to an extent, maintaining that 60% of the attendees are local, with less than 20% being either tourists or "regional". They don't clarify the scale used to differentiate regional from local, however, so it may be possible that a majority are visiting from other cities in Miami-Dade County, which, to

Roa's point, does have a much larger population than Broward County and metropolitan Fort Lauderdale.

The huge success of the Miami Beach Gay Pride launch in 2009 convinced city and county leaders that there was still a great deal of interest in South Beach by the LGBT community and that this could be utilized for business promotion. The economic downturn of the Great Recession had made prices in South Beach the cheapest they had been in years. Steve Adkins said in our interview that he used the bottomed out prices to negotiate a lease with the city for the Old City Hall building on Washington Avenue and 12th Street (the new City Hall is on Lincoln Road) as a space to house both the offices of the Greater Miami Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and a planned LGBT Visitor Center. The Old City Hall building itself is a historical structure dating to 1927 and was undergoing extensive renovation at the time.

On October 14, 2010 the Miami Beach LGBT Visitor Center opened its doors and it currently shares the building with an art-house cinematheque. The Visitor Center is the only one of its kind in South Florida and, even more broadly, was the first Visitor Center in the country to be funded entirely by a Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (as of today Seattle has one as well, according to Adkins), although they did receive additional sponsorship for three years from MetLife, according to Adkins. Speaking on why the LGBT Visitor Center was funded this way, and why it was needed, Steve Adkins said

You know, probably because a lot of (Gay and Lesbian) Chambers (of Commerce) mission statements don't include hospitality in it, and ours does, so as a result of that, if we're going to serve the mission of the chamber, and that hospitality is the biggest business here, then this is one way to do that and that is visibility through accommodation, so one of the things that we set out to do several years ago was to find a home that would also accommodate our ability to

greet LGBT visitors, who we know come here in massive numbers... (the purpose of the Visitor Center is) to create an awareness in the marketplace that this was an open, welcoming LGBT destination and one of the best in the world. So what we wanted to do was create a segmentation in the marketplace. We wanted to create a vision of what it's like to come here as an LGBT traveler, different from anywhere else, because it is the Miami experience, it is a relatively upscale place to go, (and) with some European attributes. You don't have to have a car, you can walk everywhere. There's culture here that a lot of people don't know (about) or it's newly discovered, that I think a lot of people don't realize that's very attractive to the LGBT community. So they've been working on this whole vision of what we are and what we wanna be for the last fourteen years and we've been able to benefit from that.



The Miami Beach LGBT Visitor Center in the Old City Hall Building on Washington Avenue (authors photos).

Also in 2010, an LGBT-friendliness hospitality certification program was launched in conjunction with the YES Institute, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Greater Miami and Beaches Hotel Association. Called the Pink Flamingo Hospitality Certification Program, Steve Adkins explained that its mission was “to demystify working with our (LGBT) marketplace” by training hotel staff on issues of gender identity and sensitivity to LGBT concerns. Karen Brown elaborated on this:

...you know the program we offer here, ...we... go and train the hotel front desk staff, reservations, banquets, valet guys all these people interacting with their guests and teach them how to break down preconceptions that they had in their brain about gay people and their travel needs. And it's just like the simplest thing, not arguing over if I booked a king (sized bed) room, not trying to convince me to have two beds because you see (the guests are) Steve and Greg. You know it's simple things like that.

Despite only having certified fourteen businesses thus far (all hotels), Adkins would like to expand the program to restaurants and large retailers. In addition, in the fall of 2013, the Visitor Center presented the inaugural Pink Flamingo Awards banquet (emceed by Karen Brown) which handed out awards to businesses competing in an online poll, in categories such as "Favorite Nightlife Promoter" (Edisson Farrow won), "Favorite DJ", "Favorite Restaurant", "Favorite Tourist Attraction"...etc.

In 2011, yet another annual event was launched called Orgullo Hispanic LGBT Pride (see next section for more in-depth discussion on this). In 2013, the cities of Miami and Miami Beach partnered to, successfully, bid for the 2017 World OutGames (beating out the other finalist Reykjavik, Iceland), which upped the ante even higher on spending for the LGBT market. The World Outgames were born out of a schism amongst the organizers of the would-be Gay Games in Montreal in 2006 (Ros, 2006), and today exist as a competing sporting event with the Gay Games. The economic benefit for the games is estimated to be at \$125 million (Gilmer, 2013). Speaking on how Miami Beach won the bid, Karen Brown described to me how the city and county put together an attractive enticement package, which Mayor Bower personally delivered to the deciding committee in Antwerp, Belgium where planning was underway for the 2013 games. Interestingly, given the economic might of Miami and Miami Beach (the population of Miami-Dade County is roughly eight times larger than that of the entire country of Iceland), Brown

described the campaign as having a “grassroots gay component” in comparison to Iceland, which she noted has a gay prime minister. Clenching the deal was the Latin American association Miami has, which games organizers felt would bolster participation of Latin American athletes who would find Miami easily accessible.

Of course, the planning and spending for an event that size is significant. Such heavy investments do have their price, and while Bower handedly won re-election bids in 2009 and 2011, her administration engendered significant controversy in the following years regarding the planned billion dollar (including \$600 million of public investment) overhaul of the Miami Beach Convention Center and a number of arrests of city employees on corruption charges (Veiga, 2013). Bower, restricted by term limits from running for mayor again, ran for City Commission in 2013, which she lost. Michael Gongora, the first openly gay city commissioner (elected in 2006), and a close colleague of Bower’s, lost the mayoral bid to millionaire businessman Philip Levine. Overall all of the incumbents lost their races, and the 2013 elections resulted in a completely new face for Miami Beach politics. The *Miami Herald* (Veiga, 2013) reported that the contested Convention Center plans were to blame, as all of the winning challengers supporting smaller public expenditures than the incumbents. The article also quoted Bower, who complained that it was her administration that had brought the corruption issues to light and were subsequently being blamed for them. When asked about this Edison Farrow remarked that:

You know I think people just, it’s a worldwide terrible economy and people just blame who’s sitting there in the office and they may have nothing to do with what’s going on, and they have no control over it and it’s really a worldwide thing. They look at that face and wanna change it and (they think) this person’s not gonna effect what’s going on worldwide and so people just vote for change.

(Voting someone new in) doesn't necessarily mean it's going to make everything in their (the voter's) life better (though).

When questioned about what changes the election would bring for the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee he remained tight lipped. However, since the election I have personally witnessed, in their monthly meetings, concerns expressed about appointments to the committee, which need to be done through the mayor or one of the brand new commissioners, although many of the members remained on the committee. One potential development discussed in the recent meetings is designation of the area around 12th Street and Washington as an Official Gay or LGBT District and the putting in of a rainbow crosswalk, like the kind seen in other gay villages such as Toronto's Church and Wellesley. Designating this area makes sense, as it contains the Visitor Center, the "gay beach" and the longest-running remaining gay bars from the twentieth century, Twist and Palace, as well as Edison Farrow's new establishment Cabaret.

The future for LGBT South Beach is not entirely clear. The heavy investment by the Bower administration, the Greater Miami Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, in attempting to revitalize South Beach, has not been met with an equal response from the private sector, in terms of new primarily LGBT supporting businesses opening. In 2010, the luxurious Lords South Beach hotel opened with great fanfare, and exaggerated claims of being "the first gay boutique hotel brand in the country", but it didn't last long (Martin, 2011). Perhaps learning from it, a much smaller gay-themed but "straight friendly" Hotel Gaythering opened in December 2013, and managed to snag Karen Brown from the Visitor Center as its General Manager (according to their Facebook page), although she reportedly no

longer works there either according to one of their employees I talked with. Another Business Enhancement Committee member, Edison Farrow, opened the first new gay(ish) (he said “I say it’s for music lovers. ...it is obviously gay owned and many of the employees are gay...”) bar in years in South Beach, called The Cabaret of South Beach. On the chances of its success he said

It’s a live music venue, open seven nights a week. All the performers (and) all the bartenders are professional singers and take turns performing, and there’s almost no live music around anymore so it’s very refreshing for the people to have a new live music place, and no one’s ever done this concept before so we’re getting great reactions... (but) It’s difficult. I think you really have to have a plan. You have to have a specific identity of what you are so there’s a reason (for someone) to go to your bar, and it’s hard to break into the bar business here, it’s very competitive. There’s some huge corporations (that have) monopolies (and) control the nightlife here. It’s difficult for the small business owner to open a bar these days... You know it’s a very small city with a lot of competition. For a one square mile town there’s a lot of hotels, a lot of bars, a lot of restaurants, so it’s competitive.

Even without LGBT specific businesses, the many LGBT themed events in South Beach have proven to be extremely popular and are big money makers for the city. A more in-depth discussion of exactly what this, and other changes in South Beach, may point to in the future of other gay villages can be found in the third section of this chapter.

Homonormative Leisurescape? Remaking the Beach to Fit Neoliberal Values

Is South Beach homonormative? In this section I argue that it is and I provide supporting evidence here. However, I will also provide examples of how individual persons, events and actions contest an overriding homonormativity, even if in subtle ways. Again, I want to emphasize that I am not attributing conspiratorial motivations to any one person or organization, in claiming that their goal is the suppression or oppression of the working class, people of color, women or anyone else. I believe that

capitalism, particularly in its current neoliberal form makes all of us complicit in some way or another for exploitation of labor and perpetuation of inequalities. It is simply my contention, as per Duggan (2002), that certain performativities are promoted, catered to and normalized over others, using profitability and mainstream acceptance as a motivation.

That South Beach has adopted the neoliberal entrepreneurialism model of governance is a foregone conclusion and this has thoroughly filtered through to the LGBT community (at least their visible representations). As the previous section demonstrates, there are multiple organizations devoted to promoting LGBT tourism and entrepreneurialism, such as the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee, Pink Flamingo Diversity and Training Program, Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and an there is an LGBT Visitor Center. What are lacking are the kinds of non-profit community centers that are found in Wilton Manors and Fort Lauderdale. The Pride Center (in Wilton Manors) is case in point, with over 63 free groups that meet that range from alcoholics and substance abuse support groups to senior exercise to adult education and game nights. Also in that area, SunServe has several locations that offer youth counseling and services for LGBT seniors (Roger Roa interview).

There used to be a LGBT Community Center in South Beach during the 90s but it closed. When I asked Steve Adkins what happened to it he said:

The city took the space back. Mind you it was a much different LGBT community back then, and we had a number of activists, and this group of activists went to the city to create a community center here on the beach, and the city owned this property on Alton Road, and it wasn't very nice but at least it was a space, and they donated it to the community for like a dollar lease. There were things that were put together community wise; bingo, get-togethers, things like that, but it

wasn't a consistent group because we didn't have a large older population here on the beach. It was younger kids (who lived here), for the most part, who wanted to party and have a good time. So these activists that really thought that more people would galvanize around this idea (didn't realize), it just isn't here, it's in Miami, and people weren't willing to come across the bridge and deal with the parking. Ultimately it went back to the city for not being used.

When I asked why something like the Pride Center wouldn't work on South Beach today he continued:

...because in all these other cities where the Pride Centers are really big and active you have tons of social services and people in need, whether they just need a place for socialization or familiarity or services. You need to have a large older community, or lots of women who have kids (or) men who have kids, single parents who need day-care... etc. They need to have services they can charge for and a community that's going to take advantage of them. This is a very professional, mobile community here on the beach. A traditional center is not going to work on the beach. The rest of the Miami-Dade County LGBT community is very much dispersed, much like Los Angeles. The LA community centers are run differently than the San Francisco or New York ones. The one in Wilton Manors has become a senior center for the most part because the demographic up there is much older than other parts of the country, especially (than) here. They know the constituency that they're serving and they did a brilliant job in creating a platform of services that address the market. Their model is great. Robert Moon, and the board up there, have done an amazing job. You know, but the demographic up there is retired, primarily, and at least twenty years older, on average, then it is here, so it's people who are at a different place in their life. It's also demographically very different. The people that live in Broward, for the most part, came from different parts of the United States and different parts of the world then (the people) that exist here. So I don't know that that model would work here.

Roger Roa, Director of Marketing for the Pride Center, did admit to me that the services were utilized more by the older demographics, and that they are making an effort to appeal to younger generations that do not always understand the usefulness of an LGBT community center in more accepting times, and he agreed that it might be difficult to sustain such a center in South Beach.

Countering both of their points, however, are the homeless LGBT youth which come to South Beach (perhaps due to its decades-old LGBT friendly reputation) seeking

shelter, only to find a Visitor Center not equipped to meet their needs. All Karen Brown, and the Visitor Center staff, could do was to refer them to Pridelines Youth Services 11 miles (by car) away, in Miami Shores, on the mainland. The Business Enhancement Committee has been in discussions with Pridelines to, perhaps, extend their services to South Beach in some way (observed in their monthly meetings). In this instance homonormativity is countered, even by those whose job it is to cater to mainstream consumptive tastes. Surely no one on the Business Enhancement Committee would think that such actions would truly enhance business, but they got involved anyway. The lack of a true community center, and the preponderance of business minded civic groups, does not in this case mean a *complete* lack of altruistic intent.

However, the very fact that this kind of work is being done through a Business Enhancement Committee, rather than through grassroots community activism or non-profit organizations in South Beach, speaks to a certain level of homonormativity. Similarly, the Committee was excited to announce that, through the implementation of its suggestions, Miami Beach was the only city in Florida to receive a perfect score of 100 from the Human Rights Campaigns Equality Index (Wilton Manors only got an 82) (Human Rights Campaign Website), which supports the point made in the homonormativity literature (Richardson, 2005; Rushbrook, 2002) about how the “equality” turn in LGBT activism could be seen as a desire for sameness and legitimizing inclusion within, rather than a tolerance from, the mainstream. Again, that this resulted from the recommendations of a Business Enhancement Committee could be taken by some as a cynical attempt to cache in on “the creative class”, or tourists who would prefer to spend their money in a highly ranked “LGBT friendly location”. However, having

personally observed and spoken to so many members of the committee (who openly identify as LGBT themselves), it is not my contention that they are disingenuous in truly wanting to make their city a more inclusive place.

In this vein, I also recognize Herb Sosa's role in providing low-income housing in South Beach as a member of the Board of Directors of the Miami Beach Community Development Corporation, especially given that he fits the classic profile of a "gay male gentrifier", in that not only did he purchase his own home in South Beach when it was cheap (in 1989), and restore it, but he has also been heavily involved with historic preservation, which has often been labeled as a cause/precursor to gentrification and displacement. He told me why he got involved with providing low-income housing:

I think the formula for success for any community has to be diversity. It has to be. You cannot have a community that is all rich or all poor or all white or all black or all gay or all straight. You can have it, of course you can, but I don't believe that's a formula for success. I think the MBCDC has been a vital part of keeping that balance in Miami Beach, especially as prices increase. It's an island, it's an island. At its widest part, I think it's eight blocks or something, eleven blocks (maybe). We're landlocked (sic), starting there, as real estate prices continue to go up, you've got fancy hotels, you've got great clubs, you've got good restaurants, well people need to work there and they need to be able to live close to where they work and they need to be able to afford living where they work, afford to live where they wanna live, so MBCDC has been instrumental in keeping a little bit of that balance, and also for the elderly, in creating affordable housing within Miami Beach.

He also spoke about Shelbourne & Fernwood HIV/AIDS Housing (he was also a member of their Board of Directors), which is the only such housing project in the county

(Broward County also has one, according to Roger Roa):

Although the reality of HIV/AIDS has changed dramatically, and it's become a more manageable, livable, if you will, disease, but that wasn't the case ten, fifteen, twenty years ago, when those two buildings were developed. So that was extremely vital for the community, it was a huge need. If it wasn't for an MBCDC

project like that, those people would have been displaced, there's no way they would have been able to stay living in Miami Beach and afford it...

The theme of homonormativity, and contestations, continues into discussions of the scheduled LGBT themed events. Miami Beach Pride is homonormative in that there is little in the way of activism, outrageousness or radicalism, and easily half the parade floats are corporately sponsored or function as advertisements for individual businesses. However, there is no entry charge, as there is for some Prides, although there are plenty of \$8 rainbow fans for sale, and expensive drinks and food. A controversy has yet to erupt like the one that resulted after the Dallas Pride committee issued a dress code (Nichols, 2013), or when San Francisco Pride tried to keep Chelsea Manning supporters from marching (Wilkey, 2013).

Celebrate Orgullo Hispanic LGBT Pride is different, however. I was initially ready to write it off as a corporatized, cynical effort to cash in on ethnic pride, especially when Herb Sosa told me that the idea of it came from City Hall requesting a way to increase Hispanic LGBT tourism in the off-season (it is held every October). Then, attending the event changed my mind when I noticed that political activism played a more central role than at Pride, with information booths set up to educate people on changes to immigration policy following the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act and other political issues relevant to Hispanic LGBTs. Also, all of the proceeds for the events go to Sosa's non-profit Hispanic LGBT rights organization, Unity Coalition, as compared to Miami Beach Pride, whose profits go into a fund to insure that "...there can be another Pride" (Robin Schwartz Interview), and is therefore not a fundraiser for charitable organizations as Orgullo is. Even so, the prices for rainbow and Latin American flag themed paraphernalia were still cheaper than at Pride. It should also be mentioned that

many of the other events (Aqua Girl, Winter Party, White Party, Miami Beach Bruthaz) also benefit non-profits.



Authors photos from the Celebrate Orgullo Hispanic LGBT Pride Festival on October 14, 2013

One of the common assertions in the literature on homonormativity, is the claim of desexualization (Richardson, 2005; Bell & Binnie, 2004; Rushbrook, 2002). For South Beach, that is certainly not the case. In fact, I would borrow the descriptor “embedded hedonism”, initially deployed by Andersson (2011) for the Vauxhall neighborhood of London, to describe South Beach and its history of gangsters, prohibition era rum-runners, drag performers and a rowdy, alcohol and drug-fueled nightlife scene, which continues to this day (See Chapter 3 for a more in-depth history on all of this). That South Beach (and metro Miami), has such high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Buttram & Kurtz, 2012; Egam et al. 2011; Akin et al., 2008; Kurtz, 2008, 2005) is evidence that, unfortunately, MSM’s (Men who have Sex with Men – their terminology) are still having plenty of unsafe sex. However, what is true is that the sex scene in South Beach has moved from the public realm (nightclub stages and “dark rooms” and outdoor “cruising areas”) to exclusively private ones. While cultural and

technological (iPhone apps such as Grindr and online dating sites) changes are certainly causal factors for this as well, the city has explicitly targeted public sex for elimination.

As detailed in a *Miami Herald* article (Patron, 1997), following a series of raids on gay bars by police looking for illegal drugs and attempting to curb public sex acts, community leaders met with city officials in January 1996. As part of a deal to stop the raids a task force was created to address the issue of “cruising” in Flamingo Park, as requested by the police department, who had received complaints about men having sex in the park at night. By November, the task force was distributing fliers to men around the park demanding “What you do is your business but where you do it is ours” and warning that, starting in December, police were going to start arresting men caught “loitering” in the park and adjacent alleyways after dark. This is indicative of homonormativity in that a hierarchy was established which positioned illegal acts occurring inside an enclosed, consumptive space (a nightclub which may charge a cover and certainly charges for alcohol) above those that occur outdoors and without exchange of money (men are cited as having driven all the way from Miami to the park for *free sex*) and thus, the former were in need of protection from police harassment and prosecution while the latter were not because they did not contribute to the local economy. Of course, the raunchy indoor club activities halted anyway when all of the large nightclubs closed down over the next several years. Police surveillance of Flamingo Park, however, continued unabated until 2009 when a particular incident drew national attention.

At 1 A.M. on March 13, 2009, Harold Strickland, a former South Beach resident, was walking back to his hotel from a gay bar, when he passed Flamingo Park and witnessed two plain clothes police officers attack one of two men they caught kissing in

the park. Not knowing that the two men he saw committing the assault were police officers, Strickland called 911. While on the line with a dispatcher, the two officers approached Strickland, demanding to see ID and asking where he lived before they assaulted him as well, while yelling homophobic epithets, and arrested him on a charge of attempting to break into vehicles (Smiley, 2012). The American Civil Liberties Union sued the city and officers on behalf of Strickland and eventually, due to pressure from the LGBT community, both officers were fired, although one of them was reinstated when his union lawyer successfully appealed the termination (Smiley, 2012).

This incident, along with other hate crimes against gay men and transgendered women, were compiled by Natalie O' Neil for her January 2010 *Miami New Times* article "Gays leave unfriendly Miami Beach for Fort Lauderdale." The grim portrait the article painted, of rampant violence in a declining gay village and an apathetic response from city officials, received national attention and engendered significant local controversy. My informants claimed that the article was sensationalist and played loose with the facts. To the later point, local LGBT news aggregator Steve Rothaus (2010) reported on his site South Florida Gay News, that O' Neil's claim that three quarters of all hate crimes reported in the county in 2008 were from Miami Beach was technically true but that she neglected to mention that the total number of reported attacks was only four, and that this hardly amounts to a new, significant crime wave, while Broward County, which O' Neil wrote about as a bastion of safety, reported a higher total number. Speaking on the backlash against the article Steve Adkins said:

People got very angry, and it was right after the Business Enhancement Committee was really going strong and we felt like 'you know this couldn't happen at a worse time' because we're trying to do all of this and build this

momentum, putting Pride together and all of these successes, and then all of a sudden for something like that to come out... And I remember (when) it came out, because there was this crime that took place that they were able to cite in there. We didn't even know what happened and it was just like... it was inopportune, but they felt they had a story to tell and so they told it. It's funny though because it's a community paper. It's a fringe paper. But because our community is so small, internationally, we read all the same stuff, we get our communication the same ways, we talk to the same people, that thing just flew through the LGBT blogosphere. It took some work to do to defend (against) it.

Attempts to restore the image of Miami Beach (and in particular the Police Department) as gay friendly included the unveiling of a prototype for a rainbow striped cruiser to be used for Pride and special events (Rothaus, 2014) and the inclusion of an openly gay police officer in the Miami Beach LGBT Business Enhancement Committee, who liaises between the committee and department on community outreach and how to further educate officers on sensitivity (personal observation of committee meetings).

Homonormativity as a term has often been used to theorize the normalization of a gay white male identity and the prioritization of catering to their spending patterns at the expense of other LGBTs. In certain ways, South Beach both supports and falsifies this assumption. As far as race is concerned, the demographic data available on residential populations in Tables 1 and 2 in Chapter 2 show that South Beach is significantly whiter than Miami-Dade County as a whole but is still more racially diverse (although with a smaller percent of African Americans) than the archetypical current South Florida gay village of Wilton Manors. The appearance on the calendar of three annual events catering to LGBTs of color (Miami Beach Bruthaz, Sizzle and Orgullo) also seems to negate that, as do the survey results of attendees of the non-racially themed (and more popular) Miami Beach Pride, of which only one quarter self-identified as white (Miami Beach Pride Website). Still, the existence of separate ethnically themed events could

understandably be seen as indicative of racial tensions or efforts to commodify racial difference and ethno-nationalism. While my informants agreed that they personally disliked segregated events, and wished for more integration, they dismissed accusations that the existence of these events has to do with racism and, instead, point to a need to celebrate cultural differences and individual identities who felt that they needed an event dedicated to them.

Still, charges of racism, regardless of sexual orientation and particularly against Blacks, continue to be levied at South Beach. A bone of contention is the Urban Beach Weekend, which is a Hip Hop themed event that takes place over Memorial Day weekend, which, unlike the LGBT events, has no central organization and simply consists of thousands of like-minded visitors arriving in South Beach at the same time. Residents have long complained of an increase in crime, vandalism and the same kind of congestion and general chaos that comes whenever hundreds of thousands of visitors pour into the one square mile area for other events. Defenders of the event say that reports of criminality are overstated and that the Miami Beach Police Department is abusive. In support of that argument, during the 2011 event, officers shockingly shot over 100 bullets into the car of an unarmed young black male who refused to pull over, killing him and injuring three bystanders (McNeir, 2013). Since then, on every Memorial Day weekend, South Beach has become ever more militarized, with an increased police presence and road barricades and checkpoints, and as a result many residents skip town for the whole weekend.

Luke Campbell (former member of the rap group 2 Live Crew and longtime local celebrity and entrepreneur), wrote in a *Miami New Times* piece (Campbell, 2012), that he

offered (then) Mayor Bower to take over the event and give it some central organization (he cited using the Essence Festival in New Orleans, a African American music themed event which is peaceful, popular and well-organized, as an inspiration), but she refused due to pressure from residents that she and city government do everything they could to dissuade participation in the event (which they are powerless to cancel as it is not an official or sponsored event). Herb Sosa became involved in the mêlée when an open letter he wrote to Mayor Bower, calling for an end to the event, became public. Campbell, in response, wrote “I never thought I'd see the day when a gay man would call for the disenfranchisement of a group of people. I was appalled by his open letter to Mayor Matti Bower and the city commissioners” (Campbell, 2011). To me (and in media since then) Sosa insisted that there was no racial animus and that he was concerned about property damage when he wrote the letter.

As demonstrated by mapping businesses in Chapter 4, LGBT Greater Miami is very gay/bi male centered. When I asked Karen Brown why that is she said:

Lesbians have a terrible reputation for not supporting their own businesses. Like, if there's a lesbian bar it wasn't full seven nights a week, but there's enough (gay men) to sustain four gay (male) bars on Miami Beach and not even one women's bar. So, women may be more fickle. You know the straight (up) fact that men get paid more than women still remains true... seventy cents to every dollar that a guy makes is roughly still the same issue. If you look at club prices for men it's much much higher (than for women), (and) than going into weekends at Aqua Girl, prices for the same type of events than at a guy's event, they're almost a third of what the guys' (events) cost and the guys are willing to pay it. I think that women tend to nest, is also what we're also guilty of doing, and so the going out part is not as prevalent because women tend to find whoever and then settle down and then you're with them for ten to fifteen years.

Robin Schwartz answered similarly saying:

Men go to bars because they want to hook up and they do what they do. Women don't do it in the same way. So they're less likely to go to a bar for that purpose

and I think that has something to do with it. When there have been female oriented bars they don't last because we just don't go out as much, it's 100% true... I think that women just socialize differently. Women tend to go over to each other's homes. They have more intimate socialization, whereas men are more about going out to a party or a bar and being seen, you know just more out. You'll see the men more. It doesn't mean there are more of them but you will see them in the greater community more and that's true of non-profits and everything. There's more of a presence of the guys. One of the reasons we started Aqua Foundation was to change that. We want more women to be a part of the greater community and so we're trying to create that inspiration.

The Aqua Foundation, which Schwartz is Executive Director of, is a non-profit LBT women's foundation based in Miami which provides grants, scholarship and mentoring. Once a year they also disrupt the maleness of the South Beach scene, and the lack of lesbian visibility, with their annual fundraising Aqua Girl event, which in 2013 sold 9,000 tickets. Schwartz attributed much of its success to its location saying

I think there are a lot of things that go into that. First there is no other party like this. There's one on the West Coast called Dinah Shore, and we're the only non-profit. So on the East Coast we're the only one. And we're the largest non-profit party of its kind. So (it) just being unique, attracts more and more people every year. I also think that... South Beach is a huge reason for our success, quite frankly. It's a beautiful, beautiful city, on the water, we always have beautiful hotels. People can walk from their hotels to various locations and have a good time, so I think the location does help us as well. I also think that the variety of events we have, they're well produced, they're different types of events, the pool party is tremendously popular (with) women, and I think in a large part that's why we get a lot of women from out of town cause they live in New York or someplace where they don't have a lot of pools or it's not so beautiful, they're gonna wanna come here.

The lack of visibility of transgendered/gender non-conformer individuals is another issue cited in gay villages (Nash, 2010; Doan, 2007). While the transgendered are now protected from discrimination in the city of Miami Beach, this was not accomplished until 2004 (Vega, 2004), twelve years after the first bans on discrimination for gays and lesbians were passed (Nevin, 1992). On the possibility of discrimination, Karen Brown pointed to tourism saying "...because we're still a tourist destination, people from the

Midwest, who've never seen a transgendered person in real life, might stare or say something." They are also conspicuously absent from the calendar of themed LGBT events in South Beach, which includes lesbians (Aqua Girl), Black men (Miami Beach Bruthaz) and Hispanic/Latinos (Orgullo). When I asked Robin Schwartz about this she assured me that South Beach couldn't be more trans-friendly (from a governing standpoint) and that she didn't care for a segregated event and preferred to welcome the transgendered into existing events saying:

I don't like the idea of having a specific event for them. I can speak for Pride, since I'm on the Board there, and for Aqua, that 100% we welcome (them). We want everybody who wants to be part of Aqua to be part of Aqua and to have an amazing time. We're very cognoscente of that community and we made sure that the bathrooms are appropriately labeled. We take time to make sure that we do the best we can to make sure that everybody feels welcome.

South Beach: A Future for Gay Villages?

So what does the South Beach story have to tell us about other gay villages? In this section I lay out where South beach fits into the literature on gay village decline and what possible futures my research on South Beach may foretell for other gay villages. This necessarily includes a bit of review from Chapter 2 and a discussion on how South Beach differs from, and is similar to, other gay villages.

In some ways South Beach is the archetypical gay village, considering its rise as a gentrified historical architectural district (which follows the trajectory laid out in Doan & Higgins, 2011). It also fits the evolutionary model laid out by Collins (2004) quite well. In applying that model to South Beach we have Stage one: a pre-condition of an urban area in decline and featuring "liminal activities" such as sex work and "at least one gay public licensing house" (the 1970s); Stage Two: the emergence of a clustering of gay

(male) “social and recreational opportunities” as businesses near the initial gay bar convert to a gay clientele or ownership (the 1980s – early 90s); Stage Three: the expansion and diversification of gay businesses beyond bars to include the service and professional sectors and an increase in gay residents (the mid to late-1990s); and Stage Four: the assimilation into the fashionable mainstream in which an increasing number of businesses are converted to heterosexual ownership/clientele and an influx of young urban professionals replace the outflowing “suburbanizing” early gay residential colonizers (the 2000s).

What comes after Stage Four for South Beach is contentious and undecided, as a majority of the media articles agreed with Ruting’s (2008) claims of “de-gayng” and a loss in queer visibility and acceptance, by contrast nearly all of my informants tended to agree more with Collins’ assertions of a peaceful co-existence and a more diverse, less “ghetto-ized” community, in making statements to me such as “...we’ve been fighting to be a part of the greater community for all these years and now (that) we’re getting it I don’t wanna go run back someplace where I have to only be with gay people” (Robin Schwartz) and “I think that we just don’t walk around with a rainbow flag on our back and that’s a great thing” (Herb Sosa). If anything, my research has proven that South Beach is now closer in character to the “queer friendly neighborhood”, as described by Gorman-Murray & Waitt (2009), rather than an overtly LGBT space or a completely heteronormalized queer-excluding one. While there has been a substantial loss in primarily LGBT supporting businesses, and a claimed (though thus unproven) loss in LGBT residents, the dogged survival of a few gay bars, an overall increase in businesses calling themselves “LGBT friendly”, and the ever increasing popularity, number and

diversity of LGBT themed events, all point to South Beach being remade as more of an LGBT consumption and event space, rather than a traditional residential gay village.

My only informant who disagreed with the “LGBT/queer friendly diverse neighborhood” narrative woven by the others was the anonymous one, who responded, when I told him what the others had been saying about South Beach, with “You could counter that with saying that ‘everyone who goes there is a tourist’, with the over 80 something hotels that are on South Beach you’re not going to see a lot of gay males walking down the street.” This statement reveals what differentiates South Beach from most of the other gay villages in the world and that is its incredible popularity with international and domestic tourists. For example, of the estimated 13.9 million visitors to Miami-Dade County in 2012, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Board surveys suggest that 42% of them (almost 6 million) stayed in Miami Beach and that 49% of those were international visitors (“Greater Miami and the Beaches 2012 Visitor Industry Overview”). The popularity of South Beach as a tourist destination when placed within the already highly globalized and highly transient population and economy of Greater Miami (Nijman, 2011) makes the extreme (and quick) transformation of the neighborhood, once gentrification had brought it back into the “mainstream” flows of capital and tourism in the 1990s, more understandable.

A transformation of that magnitude will likely never take place in Wilton Manors because it lacks the attributes that lure so many visitors to South Beach: the historic Art Deco architecture, the beach (Wilton Manors is inland) and the easy access to downtown Miami, the International Airport and myriad other attractions in the surrounding area which are decidedly lacking in Broward County, a half hour drive north without traffic.

Gentrification may very well displace residents and businesses from Wilton Manors as well (as some of my informants warned) but probably not to the same level as that seen in South Beach.

These two examples point to differing futures for gay villages, depending on their locations. For example, Greenwich Village in New York and The Castro in San Francisco are both in global, tourism driven cities and these neighborhoods have become attractions in themselves. Like South Beach they may (some might argue already have) lose many residents and businesses to rising prices *but*, like South Beach they might continue to, at the very least, be the center of LGBT oriented events in their cities, even if current declining trends continue, due to their symbolic embeddedness in local and international LGBT history. Gay villages in less well known cities or neighborhoods may not fare as well, due to destabilizing factors such as gentrification and cultural, technological and generational shifts in taste. Particularly illustrative are Nash's (2012) findings about the abandonment of completely or primarily LGBT spaces (and even identities) by some in the younger generations, who find acceptance everywhere (or at least in major metropolitan areas). Noticeably, the individuals Nash does not include are those that may keep these gay villages alive for longer than some have predicted.

Many of my informants sardonically referred to the older age of, gay men in particular, who reside and vacation in the Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale area. Examples included "Ft. Lauderdale is a much older destination, older guys, lots of guys from Minnesota. I call it 'Ohio in Florida', and that's where they settled. They left their businesses when they were 50, 60 and 70 and moved there" (George Neary); "Wilton

Manors is perceived to be a lot more family friendly, a lot more laid back, (an) older (age wise) gay community (than South Beach)” (Herb Sosa);

...the demographic up there is much older than other parts of the country, especially here... You know but the demographic up there is retired, primarily, and at least twenty years older, on average, then it is here, so it’s people who are at a different place in their life... So if I’m retired and I want a lot of friends my age all living in the same neighborhood, what we used to call the gay ghetto, then I’m going to feel real comfortable in Broward cause it’s set up completely that way... What benefited from that were the bars and restaurants because now you have this captive audience, largely retired, mostly men, with large disposable incomes, who could take advantage of going to Georgie’s Alibi at three o’ clock in the afternoon, going to dinner with their friends, going somewhere else and then going to bed. That’s not the lifestyle here (on South Beach). (Steve Adkins).

...you won’t see many forty and fifty year old lesbians at a bar, but in Fort Lauderdale, for instance, there’s a lot of older gay men, but those are the guys that survived AIDS, they were thirty years old and thirty five years old, forty years old when the AIDS epidemic (started) and they survived that. They might tell you that fifty friends of mine are dead and here I am, sitting with a beer in Wilton Manors at the age of seventy. (Karen Brown)

What’s revelatory of the last two quotes is that they both mention these older gay men as patrons of the existing gay bars in Wilton Manors. Chapter 4 showed that, contrary to a universal gay village decline as has been discussed, Wilton Manors is growing, in both the LGBT (again primarily, but not totally, gay male) population and the number of businesses catering to them and tourists. Often written about as places of youth, gay villages may continue to exist, and thrive, as centers of residence and consumption by *older* LGBTs. Older LGBTs may be less likely to adopt newer technologies (such as iPhone apps or online dating websites) that are thought to hurt gay bar attendance (Diaz, 2012) but, contrary to ageist assumptions that state otherwise, haven’t given up on socializing outside of the home. To this point I can confirm, from personal observation, that the bars along Wilton Drive are patronized by a generally older consumer than that in

South Beach, but it is not as extreme as many of my informants have described; for example, The Manor is a popular, youth oriented nightclub there.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The South Beach neighborhood has seen a significant decline during the 2000s in terms of the number of businesses catering exclusively or primarily to LGBTs that existed in the 1990s. These businesses were largely bars, nightclubs and small independent gay-themed restaurants and retail stores that were mostly replaced by corporate chains that catered to a (sexually) mixed, well-healed crowd, as South Beach transitioned from a gentrifying gay neighborhood to a globalized tourist destination. There has also likely been a loss in the resident population of LGBTs (although this is difficult to quantify and hasn't been resolved in this study), as has been claimed in various press articles and by interview subjects. This decline has resulted, largely, from the displacement derived from rampant gentrification, but also from heavy competition with Wilton Manors/Fort Lauderdale and a variety of cultural factors which devalue traditional gay villages as safe or segregated spaces for younger generations of LGBTs. However, South Beach continues to be a popular destination for LGBT tourists and locals for its (albeit significantly reduced) nightlife, and more importantly, for the variety of city/county sponsored events spread throughout the calendar year. In that respect, the organizations currently promoting/marketing South Beach to LGBTs have successfully remade it as a tourist-powered, consumer-driven event and (mixed) nightlife space of global appeal, in contrast to the cheap, residential LGBT space that it was (and probably never will be again).

So is this new South Beach welcoming to all? While the city, and varying organizations, has worked hard to extend official protections against discrimination for LGBTs (including gender identity) and same-sex couple benefits for city employees, the influx of (often drunk) heterosexual men, due to the popularity of South Beach as a nightlife destination, has resulted in documented hate crimes. In addition, the Miami Beach Police Department has a long history of reported discrimination against gay men (particularly in regards to “cruising” in Flamingo Park) and African Americans. Also, long-standing claims of a sexual hierarchy privileging certain body types and members of certain age and racial groups over others in South Beach continue to exist. In addition, LGBTs of more modest incomes have been spatially excluded from South Beach by the high cost of living and services and from the lack of efficient public transportation connecting South Beach with the rest of Greater Miami.

Do these exclusions and the actions of the city and varying organizations to promote the “new” South Beach lead to *homonormativity* i.e. the incorporation of certain sexual others into the neoliberal project? I argue that yes the new South Beach is homonormative by comparing the overriding focus of officials and planners there on tourism promotion and business enhancement with the litany of free services provided by the community centers in the less-tourist oriented Wilton Manors. Avoiding easy binaries of homonormative/not-homonormative however, I show how complicity and resistance can be embodied by individual persons, organizations and events who attempt the delicate balance of promoting tourism and big business while still raising money and awareness for non-profits and community outreach, which show that the situation in South Beach is complex and ever-evolving.

What does South Beach have to say about other gay villages facing similar declines, and what does this study add to the literature addressing this phenomenon? I present South Beach as a classic example of the gay male-led gentrification described from similar gay villages, and the resulting displacement that occurs when second-wave gentrifiers continue the process through to its logical conclusion, as theorized by Collins (2004) and Doan & Higgins (2011). The globalized nature of Greater Miami, and the unique attributes of South Beach, means that the displacement seen there may not be replicated to such extremes in other gentrifying (or gentrified) gayborhoods such as Wilton Manors. In addition, the current political clout of, and legal protections afforded to, the South Beach LGBT community, as well as the popularity of the LGBT events and the resolute survival of certain businesses, means that total “de-gaying” (Ruting, 2008) is not a foregone conclusion and points to a different future for gayborhoods. That is, that they may maintain a certain number of LGBT businesses and residents but in a more mixed (and some might argue homonormalized) setting, and/or that they may rely on tourists or in-traveling revelers from the greater metropolitan area rather than a local residential LGBT population for their “LGBT/gay character”.

Furthermore Wilton Manors, while not explicitly studied in this project was investigated enough, particularly in (a competitive) relation to South Beach, that it provides an illuminating example of a thriving gay village not in immediate decline. It also provides examples of what factors may allow (some) gay villages to survive the destabilizing forces of gentrification and technological and cultural changes. Those factors include a large middle-aged or elderly LGBT population which frequent gay bars, retail stores and service providers; the lack of any outstanding features in the landscape or

culture which give Wilton Manors a national or global profile and thus attracting tourists or super-gentrifiers which would displace working class LGBT residents and businesses that endanger mainstream assimilation or threaten family-friendly values (such as raunchy or sex-oriented businesses) or those which narrowly cater to a specifically LGBT consumer base and can no longer afford their rent or change to cater to a more mixed clientele.

Of course, Wilton Manors needs to be studied to greater depth so that these preliminary conclusions can be better verified and expanded upon. This is an opportunity for future work in this field, perhaps as part of a PhD dissertation. Another way I would like to expand the work started in this study include interviewing more non-elite sources such as current and former residents of South Beach who don't work for government or other organizations promoting South Beach to LGBT tourists who would likely be able to speak more directly (or at least unimpededly) about some of the more negative consequences of South Beach's transformation.

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