social sciences

MDPI

Article

Trans Territorialization: Building Empowerment beyond Identity Politics

Stathis G. Yeros [1] and Leonardo Chiesi [2,3,4,*]

[1] Department of Architecture, College of Design, Construction and Planning, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611, USA
[2] Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 50127 Florence, Italy
[3] Scuola di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 50122 Florence, Italy
[4] Fondazione per il Futuro delle Città, 50133 Florence, Italy
* Correspondence: chiesi@unifi.it

Abstract: Transgender/gender non-conforming (TGNC) people and especially people of color face homelessness and housing precarity in the United States at much higher rates than other LGBTQ+ people. In response, during the past decade, TGNC-centered organizations have spearheaded new forms of housing activism, such as cooperatives and Community Land Trusts, building spaces with distinct spatial and aesthetic characteristics. This paper situates those spaces within histories of LGBTQ+ placemaking. It advances the notion of trans territorialization through the analysis of a case study, My Sistah's House, an organization led by TGNC people of color in Memphis, Tennessee. We analyze trans territorialization as an activist form of spatial appropriation distinct from the better-studied gayborhood model. We assess its generalizable characteristics at three distinct but interrelated scales: dwelling units, community, and cultural embodiment.

Keywords: LGBTQ+ spaces; transgender; geographies of race; territorialization; placemaking

check for updates

Citation: Yeros, Stathis G., and Leonardo Chiesi. 2022. Trans Territorialization: Building Empowerment beyond Identity Politics. *Social Sciences* 11: 429. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11100429

Academic Editor: Nigel Parton

Received: 3 August 2022
Accepted: 15 September 2022
Published: 21 September 2022

Publisher's Note: MDPI stays neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Copyright: © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

At a time when commercial LGBTQ+ spaces in liberal democracies enjoy broad social acceptance, a parallel erasure of activist queer cultures is taking place that is the result of discriminatory urban policies and practices. In this paper, we discuss a new form of activism that addresses this erasure by foregrounding activist placemaking by transgender/gender non-conforming (TGNC) people of color in the United States.[1] We call this form of activism trans territorialization and argue that it expands the physical and symbolic scope, along with the political constraints of traditional gayborhoods. As a process, trans territorialization includes establishing new formal entities, such as Community Land Trusts, and creating everyday spaces with distinct spatial and aesthetic characteristics.[2] One of the key motivating factors for this form of activism is the disproportionate effect of homelessness among TGNC people of color, who often face discrimination in existing support programs (Robinson 2020; Doan 2015). Homelessness has historically been a critical concern for a segment of LGBTQ+ activism, as anti-homelessness campaigns in San Francisco and other cities in the mid-1960s demonstrate (Hanhardt 2013). During the following four decades, LGBTQ+ homelessness received less attention as LGBTQ+ activism centered on liberal reforms of the U.S. legal system (Duggan [2003] 2014).

In this paper, we analyze TGNC anti-homelessness activism as a form of trans territorialization through the work of My Sistah's House (MSH), an organization in Memphis, Tennessee, spearheaded by transgender women of color. MSH addresses the violence of systemic exclusion of TGNC bodies and social networks in U.S. cities by appropriating space to suit their needs. We analyze the organization's structure and physical spaces as a case study in the broader contemporary landscape of what we argue is a new form of

space appropriation. It addresses how histories of racism, ableism, and class disenfranchisement shape urban landscapes in the present. The territorial characteristics of this form of appropriation have meaningful differences from those of the better-studied gayborhood model.

MSH was founded in 2016 as an online resource connecting TGNC people in the U.S. South, mainly focusing on the states of Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, and Louisiana. Their goal was to help people navigate the institutional landscape of internal migration in the U.S. A few months after its establishment, MSH introduced emergency housing to respond to the immediate needs of TGNC people in Memphis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, with social distancing transforming the provision of services in the city, the need for housing became even more acute. MSH organizers understood that emergency housing was insufficient to address the systemic roots of homelessness stemming from work, housing discrimination, and other forms of institutional marginalization (Roy and Malson 2016; McElroy and Werth 2019). The organization then shifted its focus from emergency housing to building long-term homeownership opportunities for TGNC people of color as the first step toward economic, social, and political empowerment. It introduced a "tiny home program" that aimed to build twenty 500-square-foot individual buildings in lots purchased through grants and grassroots fundraising. With evidence from the physical environment, discussions with organizers and housing beneficiaries, and the organization's online presence, we argue that MSH has carved out a trans territory in a historically black neighborhood in Memphis. We explore this territory's physical and organizational characteristics, explain its differences from LGBTQ+ urban spaces in existing scholarship on the subject, and conclude with a brief consideration of the generalizable potential of trans territorialization.

Besides our analysis of the territorial characteristics of MSH's work in Memphis, its location in this Southern city allows us to explore its symbolic dimensions as a form of black and trans empowerment. Memphis has a critical Civil Rights legacy and is the home of the National Civil Rights Museum, located at the Lorraine Motel, the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. One of the organization's founders and a key MSH organizer, Kayla Gore, has emphasized the connection between black empowerment and the rights of TGNC people to services that derive from their equal membership in the U.S. political community (CBS News 2021). MSH grew from Gore's advocacy work with existing LGBTQ+ organizations in Memphis. Gore and MSH co-founder Illyahnna Wattshall identified a gap in the provision of services specifically for TGNC people of color, which prompted the establishment of an online platform that, in the span of a few years, led to the physical transformation of multiple houses in historically black neighborhoods in the city.

In this paper, we argue that to understand the work and priorities of organizations such as MSH, we need to know how territorialization works on the ground to empower marginalized and vulnerable LGBTQ+ people. To do so, after a brief review of critical debates about LGBTQ+ space and the discussion of our methods, we turn to the analysis of the neighborhood's physical environment where MSH operates at three distinct but interrelated scales: buildings (tiny homes), community, and cultural embodiment.

1.1. Territorialization and LGBTQ+ Sociality

Territorialization refers to the social dynamics of appropriating space through everyday habitation (Kärrholm 2007; Chiesi 2015). These social dynamics are simultaneously present across levels of analysis, from the micro, for example, the painting of a mural or the activities occurring at a street corner, to the macro, such as the political economies of urban entrepreneurialism. Early work on territorialization in the social sciences has examined why distinct social groups demarcate space, focusing on how agonistic relationships created in defending demarcated space result in social and physical fragmentation (Altman 1975). Nevertheless, this approach tends to flatten how everyday interactions shape physical spaces and mainstream social structures, changing them in the process.

Meanwhile, high-level analyses of socio-political relationships at the level of cities and regions tend to focus on broad economic phenomena to understand how social groups create territorial antagonisms (Brenner 2018; Kaldor and Sassen 2020). Taking a different approach that examines territorialization from the ground up, the empirical analysis of this paper's case study demonstrates the kinds of opportunities that space can afford its inhabitants. Through the analysis of how trans territorialization operates in historically black neighborhoods in Memphis, we investigate how LGBTQ+ politics and the (presumably heterosexual) physical environment are co-constituted in response to multiple, overlapping, and shifting social dynamics, with a particular focus on the contentious politics of race in the U.S.

Studies of LGBTQ+ territorialization in the past thirty years have shed light on how homosexual groups have historically created spaces in the U.S. to suit their sexual and social needs (Hanhardt 2013; Weiss 2011; Rubin 2011; D'Emilio [1983] 1998; Delany 1999; Chauncey 1994; Kennedy and Davis 1993). Work in this area has proliferated in recent years, revealing the diversity of cultural expressions of non-mainstream sexuality and the global polyphony of voices in LGBTQ+ spatial activism (Yang 2022; Ramos and Mowlabocus 2021; Gieseking 2020; Oswin 2019). Although ethnographic accounts offer detailed descriptions of a broad array of sites associated with queerness (as non-normative expressions of sexuality and gender), the physical environment tends to be a backdrop for developing social relationships. In addition to anthropological and historical research, essential contributions to the study of homosexual territorialization in the fields of geography and urban sociology in the past two decades focused primarily on LGBTQ+ urban activism from the perspectives of political representation, the provision of services such as healthcare, and cultural belonging (Ghaziani 2014; Browne et al. 2007; Armstrong 2002). Though these authors explore the links between gender and sexual constructedness and space, the physical environment is again discussed primarily as a container of necessary social and political actions, often appearing as an actively passive entity (Thrift 1983).

In response to the conceptual and methodological challenge of studying LGBTQ+ space, Bain and Podmore (2021) recently called for researchers of LGBTQ+ activisms to draw attention to "vernacular worldings and critical continuities through local case studies of remembering, being and doing" (1307). In this context, "vernacular worldings"—the creation of LGBTQ+ worlds—refer to building distinct non-mainstream cultures through everyday social interactions in the physical environment. These worlds are not invented by singular individuals and do not follow a script that can be repeated (though they share some common characteristics). This attention to local case studies has the potential to "rupture analytical segregations in urban theory" (1307) by exploring how sexuality, along with race, gender, ethnicity, class, and religiosity, cannot and should not be separated in the analysis of everyday habitation. Moreover, understanding worlding as a form of territorialization addresses the symbolism of these spaces and their "utopic" potential (Muñoz 2009) to be understood in relation to other geographically and temporally distant sites (see also Bain et al. 2015; Browne 2008).

1.2. Expanding the Gayborhood

The emergence of gayborhoods in North America and Europe since 1950 offer historical examples of LGBTQ+ territorialization. Their characteristics shed light on how these territories are created, inhabited, and change as a result of demographic shifts and their geographic proliferation in non-Western cities. The first territorial characteristic of gayborhoods is their identifiable location in the urban landscape (Ghaziani 2014, 2018). They are marked by the symbolism of LGBTQ+ flags, posters, bar signs, and, more recently, rainbow crosswalks and historical markers. Gayborhoods also appear on city maps and, in some cases, such as San Francisco and New York, were already mapped out for homosexual travelers since the 1950s (Knopp and Brown 2021). The second characteristic is the concentration of businesses catering to the needs of LGBTQ+ people. These businesses are not limited to bars and clubs but include, for instance, bookstores, home-improvement stores,

gay bathhouses, and sex shops (Nash and Gorman-Murray 2014; Ghaziani 2014). This concentration "enables the pursuit of sex and sociality in the safe, countercultural context of a gayborhood" (Ghaziani 2018, p. 227), thus actively shaping cultural expressions of LGBTQ+ cultures (Orne and Stuckey 2017; Yeros 2022). Meanwhile, gayborhoods respond to urban changes and historical events. They offer opportunities to their residents and visitors for debate and self-reflection. Moreover, the concentration of LGBTQ+ social life in gayborhoods allows for "proactive programming" there (Bain et al. 2015, p. 427). An example is the distribution of safe sex brochures and other resources, which was critical during the AIDS crisis (Ghaziani 2018). Finally, third, the concentration of businesses in gayborhoods has historically led to higher concentrations of LGBTQ+ residents (Gates and Ost 2004; Armstrong 2002; Chauncey 1994; Castells 1983; D'Emilio [1983] 1998). In U.S. cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, these concentrations have played a crucial role in pursuing political rights. LGBTQ+ residents have been able to influence policy regarding LGBTQ+ rights first at the level of cities and then at the national level via elected representatives (Armstrong 2002).

Although gayborhoods have been influential in shaping narratives of equality and inclusion in the final quarter of the last century, they have also created implicit hierarchies with regard to gender, race, class, ethnicity, and bodily ability, among others. This led to stark exclusions in how sexual and gender nonconformity have historically been represented in the broader public sphere. For example, gayborhood policing has been used to coerce residents and visitors to conform to accepted norms of homosexual behavior, what scholars call homonormativity (Hanhardt 2013; Duggan [2003] 2014). Since the late 1970s, certain expressions of homosexuality, especially those associated with white gay male social spaces, aligned with urban entrepreneurialism. These often did not leave space, literally and metaphorically, for racial minorities and poor LGBTQ+ people, especially youth, and those who refuse to conform to contemporary homo-norms (Robinson 2020; Rosenberg 2017; Goh 2015; Lewis 2013). Moreover, top-down applications of the gayborhood model as a form of homosexual liberation in non-Western contexts often do not take into account different cultural traditions and social dynamics. This can exacerbate class and racial inequalities and sometimes lead to "pinkwashing" regimes of violence and citizen surveillance (Oswin 2019; Spade [2011] 2015; Puar 2007). Finally, scholars and policy makers have historically focused on a handful of metropolitan environments as gay rights crucibles. This suggests that there are hierarchical relationships between cities and non-metropolitan LGBTQ+ landscapes (Spruce 2021; Knopp and Brown 2003). This bifurcation is misleading and unproductive for the creation of national and supranational networks of LGBTQ+ rights activism.

Expanding the scope of LGBTQ+ politics and cultural criticism, transgender studies scholars have emphasized the corporeal dimension of trans embodiment (Crawford 2015, 2020; Halberstam 2005, 2018). This work questions the conventional understanding of the human body as a stable ontology, demonstrating how social norms and customs reproduce binary gender identity and how alternative embodiments have existed throughout history in different cultures and various forms (DeVun and Tortorici 2018). Expanding this understanding of embodiment to analyze the body from a trans lens, it becomes the site of the convergence of social, political, and cultural dynamics expressed through comportment, behavior, and self-fashioning (aesthetics). We consider territorialization as a spatial counterpart to embodiment. Moreover, as embodiment can entail acts of transformation, such as changing one's gender or removing binary gender markers, territorialization can call into question seemingly stable spatial constructs. Another form of transformation can be aesthetic, which, according to Crawford (2015), refers to changing the "aesthetics of the surface" (4) independently of what it envelops (clothing and muralism are two such examples), thereby affecting how people and objects interact to create meaning.

An expanded notion of transness not tethered to defining social identities but accepting radical indeterminacy in sexual and gender expressions in space and time opens territorialization to unexpected alliances, multiple temporalities, and embodied, situated

resistances. Gorny and van den Heuvel (2017) define "queering space" as the "capacity [. . .] of performance and acting out to pervert and undermine power constructs to unleash suppressed and marginalized desires" (1). This definition foregrounds active processes of becoming, transforming, and changing over time through habitation. "Transing" a neighborhood is similar to this understanding of "queering space" as it entails ongoing processes of collective re-imagination of social life through everyday habitation that "relies on the power of memory, imagination, narration and social networks to collectively re-vision rather than to re-territorialize a neighborhood" (Bain et al. 2015, p. 425; see also Podmore 2013).

Trans territorialization highlights the agency of somatic experience and the situated politics of embodied activism in their entanglements with space. We analyze this as a form of placemaking. Contemporary work on placemaking emphasizes the study of how places generate meaning, for example, through the entanglement of memory with everyday experiences (Seamon 2018). In the context of the study of gayborhoods, Ghaziani (2018) argues that "struggles over what a place means (its cultural character) and who belongs in it (its composition and symbolic boundaries) are indistinguishable from political factors like municipal governance and the growth machine coalition, as well as the economics of land, labor, and capital" (p. 227). Our empirical case study acknowledges the political dynamics at play in the Memphis neighborhoods we study but focuses more on the physical characteristics of placemaking: the structures that TGNC people build, their placement within neighborhoods, and the networks they constitute within the city. We argue that TGNC placemaking is linked to expressions of non-normative embodiment in physical spaces. Without considering the multitude and sometimes contradictory components of TGNC embodiments, we cannot have a complete picture of placemaking strategies and trans territorialization. The urban landscape we examine in this paper demonstrates this polysemy while showing how practical decisions about homebuilding in a historically black neighborhood change what it means to inhabit the space as a black TGNC person. By centering our analysis on built environment observations, we study how MSH's projects in Memphis question analytical binaries, such as public vs. private, security vs. vulnerability, and grassroots vs. institutional change.

2. Materials and Methods

Our study uses mixed methods that prioritize on-site observations recorded in photographs and interviews with informants. We employ a form of design ethnography (Pink et al. 2022; Müller 2021; Cranz 2016) that allows us to examine human habitation through the traces of social activities in space and by exploring how groups and individuals alter the physical environment based on their needs. Observations help to address biases that interactions with informants sometimes introduce, such as overlooking critical physical characteristics of space that informants can underplay or take for granted. Moreover, both authors work in architecture schools. Therefore, one of our goals for this research is to effectively communicate our findings to designers and urban planners, who are more receptive to this form of communication. Design ethnography must not necessarily lead to actionable results, such as redesigning a house or a neighborhood. Instead, on the one hand, it can offer designers and planners ways to understand the social and environmental forces that shape their professional activities and make ethical decisions. On the other hand, it draws attention to design as an object of ethnographic inquiry that would be of interest to social scientists. We contextualized our observations within a historical understanding of LGBTQ+ activism in the U.S. South and housing discrimination in Memphis. We supplemented them with informal conversations with occupants of the homes we visited. An interview with Kayla Gore, MHS's current executive director and one of the organization's founders, provided valuable insight into the organization's institutional structure and priorities.

Our field visits took place in March 2022. During the two years preceding our visit, MSH had raised approximately USD 600,000 from individual donors through online

fundraisers and completed the construction of four tiny homes on three sites, with more homes in the planning or construction stages. The organization had also completed the construction of a community park. In addition, it was in the advanced planning process for converting an abandoned single-family home it had purchased into a duplex. Since the field visits, we maintained contact with the organization and critical informants primarily through social media. Kayla Gore and MSH have regularly posted video updates of the construction progress at their building sites during the past two years, which allowed us to observe how the organization's work has evolved. It is also important to note that this research took place during a period of travel restrictions and limited social interaction due to the COVID-19 pandemic that began with the first wave of lockdowns in March 2020. MSH's "tiny home program" was conceived during the pandemic, partly responding to how layoffs and housing precarity affected the black TGNC people who approached the organization. As digital communication was prioritized and online resources proliferated during this period, we could access a lot of research material online.

3. Building Black Transgender Empowerment

3.1. Memphis and the Queer South

Memphis was founded in 1819 on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Chikashsha Iyaakni' people by the Mississippi River at the southwestern edge of Tennessee along the state border with Mississippi and Arkansas. Throughout its history, race relations shaped its politics and its built environment. Southern cotton plantations, which set the foundations of the city's economic prosperity, relied on slave labor. After the abolition of slavery, agricultural production was fueled primarily by the cheap labor provided by African American workers (Ash 2013; Dowdy 2011). Until the 1950s, the city was a major center for trade in the agriculturally rich Mid-South, and economic prosperity led to the development of a small but influential black economic and political elite. Their efforts to de-segregate white neighborhoods as the black population rose rapidly during the inter-war years came to an abrupt end in the mid-1950s. During that time, violent interventions in the urban landscape led to the demolition of entire black neighborhoods under the fodder of slum clearance (Lauterbach 2016). These interventions stymied black economic empowerment. Dense segregated public housing was constructed where single-family homes once stood, contributing to racial disenfranchisement.

According to Lauterbach (2016), Memphis neighborhoods remained race-segregated even after the emergence of prominent black elected officials in the political arena in the 1970s. White residents had already begun to relocate to eastern suburbs in the 1950s. Meanwhile, the city's economic decline that extends to the present has afforded few opportunities for economic and geographic mobility for black residents. Today, Memphis has a population of 651,000 people, over 65% of whom identify as African American or black (U.S. Census Bureau n.d.). It also has the highest rate of poverty compared to cities of similar size in the U.S. (Delavega 2015).

The city's history in the latter half of the twentieth century is marked by the Civil Rights movement. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in downtown Memphis in 1968 during a visit to support the city's striking sanitation workers. The site of his assassination, the Lorraine Motel, now houses the National Civil Rights Museum. The museum is an active cultural node that makes this pivotal chapter of U.S. history part of the urban landscape. The museum narrates the history of African American individual and collective achievements since European settler colonialism and highlights black cultural contributions. Importantly, it also explores this history's bearing on the present through rotating exhibitions, outreach, and educational programming throughout Memphis. The legacies of Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights in contemporary political organizing are central to the museum's curatorial mission (National Civil Rights Museum n.d.).

In this context, LGBTQ+ political activists in Memphis have employed Civil Rights tactics and rhetoric since 1960 to demand equal rights as U.S. citizens (Buring 1997a). As the gay liberation movement received national attention after 1969, gay and lesbian groups in

Memphis sought to build a distinctly Southern sense of gay and lesbian political community. For example, the motto of the monthly newspaper *Gaiety* published between 1975 and 1977 declared that it was "reflecting gay life in the South."[3] *Gaiety* highlighted local issues, reported on how discriminatory laws affected the lives of gays and lesbians in Tennessee, and offered information about how to take political action. This Southern focus is also reflected in the types of organizing that we examine in the following sections.

However, the history of LGBTQ+ activism in Memphis is also a history of uneven access to resources and divergent priorities along the lines of race and gender. Southern LGBTQ+ historiography during the past two decades (Johnson 2011, 2018; Whitlock 2013; Thompson 2010; Buring 1996, 1997a, 1997b) has made essential contributions to understanding the situated politics of homosexuality in its entanglements with what Howard (1997) calls the four R's: race, religion, rurality, and resilience. These themes overlap to inform local struggles and shape how LGBTQ+ individuals and organizations navigate everyday life in the South (Watkins 2017). However, as Stone (2018) argues, this field would benefit from more fine-grained analyses that allow researchers to compare the characteristics of LGBTQ+ lives that straddle the divide between urban and rural, "ordinary cities" and metropolitan areas. In this paper, we contribute to this field by exploring how MSH operates through its entanglements with "ordinary" everyday life in Memphis while creating openings for future comparative work on trans territorialization in the South.

3.2. Tiny Homes

MSH started as an online platform, MyTransNavigator, that Kayla Gore and Illyahnna Wattshall created in 2016 to crowdsource information and provide peer advice for transgender people in the South who sought to navigate the landscape of what they called a "transition desert" (Gore 2019). Transgender people could join MyTransNavigator, and the initiative focused at first on two main areas: connecting its members with resources for medical and relocation advice, and advocating for transgender people's rights at the municipal and state levels. For example, they opposed a state policy prohibiting transgender people born in Tennessee from correcting the gender marker on their birth certificates (Lambda Legal n.d.). Through this experience, Gore realized that housing was the most immediate concern for the TGNC people who used the navigator.[4] This prompted the establishment of an informal shelter for TGNC homeless people that first operated from Gore's house. When MyTransNavigator transitioned to MSH, the new organization sought non-profit status and was able to secure a grant to purchase a building where it could shelter approximately ten people. The challenges that TGNC people often experience in homeless shelters, where they can be misgendered or do not have access to specialized legal and other resources to overcome discrimination in finding jobs and housing, explains the need for a dedicated shelter (Robinson 2020). Operating a homeless shelter required a great deal of operational support and planning. This prompted the organization to establish a board and hire staff quickly. Besides institutional funding, MSH benefitted from its members' work with other LGBTQ+ organizations in Memphis. Out Memphis, the city's largest LGBTQ+ community center, provided vital support by organizing volunteers for MSH's projects. This shows that MSH operates within a pre-existing network of LGBTQ+ spaces and organizations. This paper's final section briefly explores these connections.

From the beginning, MSH focused its efforts on supporting black TGNC people who face higher rates of institutional discrimination in the U.S., including lack of adequate access to healthcare and housing (Grant et al. 2011). The reputation of the specialized homeless shelter they ran in Memphis quickly reached beyond the city. MSH received numerous inquiries for assistance from TGNC people as far away as Texas, Arkansas, and Florida (Sprayregen 2021). However, the organization could not accommodate everyone who reached out. This increase in demand for services coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in March 2020, many businesses closed or reduced their workforce, increasing economic uncertainty among TGNC hourly workers who were vulnerable to those changes. The pandemic also exposed the informal and precarious living

conditions of many black TGNC people who lived with friends and relatives. Many lost their shelter since informal housing arrangements did not have the legal protections of the nationwide eviction moratorium. MSH organizers realized that houselessness, not only temporary homelessness, was a critical systemic reason for black TGNC economic and social disenfranchisement. They began to devise a longer-term plan to provide permanent homes for people who needed it in the broader MSH community.

According to MSH, the idea of building tiny homes, which are typically between 400 and 500 square feet, was a pragmatic response to this challenge. They sought to square the cost of building construction with creating private and safe domestic environments for black TGNC people. The organization created a short-term plan followed by an online fundraiser in 2021 to raise USD 250,000 to build twenty tiny homes. They estimated that the minimal square footage per unit would allow the organization to stay within budget (Hess 2021). The fundraiser was more successful than MSH had imagined and quickly raised above USD 300,000 from small individual donations. This capital, supplemented with larger institutional grants and non-profit contributions, allowed MSH to acquire and begin renovating existing houses, construct new custom-designed tiny homes, and purchase vacant lots within two neighborhoods. To date, all MSH properties are within a 10-min drive from each other, and most sites that we discuss in this paper are around a single intersection.

MSH purchased its first property from a local black cisgender developer, Dwayne A. Jones.[5] The developer's motto is "I build by faith", and he considers tiny homes in black neighborhoods as a form of economic and social empowerment. This is emphasized on his company's website, which includes information on finding resources to qualify for low-interest mortgages in addition to offering construction services. The company concentrates its activities in Orange Mound, a historically black neighborhood that saw a large wave of disinvestment, absentee landlords, and rent-burdened tenants in the past ten years (Poe 2020). When MSH acquired a 450-square-foot building in Orange Mound that was built by Jones's company, it joined a broader effort to revitalize the black neighborhood. As Gore explained, black transgender people, in her opinion, "are first black and then transgender." This sentiment begins to explain the lack of identifiable TGNC cultural aesthetics and symbolism in MSH's projects. Moreover, Gore's vertical description of the intersection of black and transgender embodiments parallels recent critiques of how black and brown people experience racial discrimination even within LGBTQ+ urban activism in North America (Angeles and Roberton 2020; Rosenberg 2020; Hanhardt 2013).

MSH renovated another single-occupant building (Figure 1) and built two new semi-detached structures with separate entrances and driveways (Figure 2). These developments were less than ten minutes away by car from the first tiny home. A closer analysis of their design characteristics offers a better understanding of MSH's and the building occupants' priorities in shaping their versions of domesticity. The tiny homes have very similar room arrangements. They include one room in the front for sleeping that also functions as a living room, a kitchen area, a laundry area, a closet, and a bathroom. An Indianapolis-based architecture firm, DKGR, which learned about MSH's tiny home fundraising campaign through its social media coverage, designed custom tiny homes for one of the MSH-owned land parcels. DKGR designed a linear floor plan with a front porch and a covered balcony/back porch (Figure 3). The main room in the front and the kitchen with access to the back porch are connected, whereas a door from the front room leads to a closet and laundry area with a washer and dryer, and a large bathroom (Figure 4). A sleeper sofa in the main room converts it to a bedroom at night. This was one of the few things that the home's occupant wanted to change, explaining that the cumbersome room conversion led to her seldomly using it as a living room. During informal conversations, residents of the tiny homes depicted in our photographs from site visits expressed a sense of pride in owning and decorating their units. The kitchens were well-stocked, indicating that they were used frequently. Home cooking, which is associated with domesticity; the neat arrangement of clothes, shoes, handbags, and wigs in the closet; and the installation of wall

art reveal that within less than six months since moving in, residents began to customize their units. This customization contributed to the sentiment of "feeling at home" that a resident expressed, revealing the relatively quick establishment of place-based attachments (Low and Altman 1992).



Figure 1. Exterior view of an MSH tiny home. The front porch lacks any form of defensive architecture, amplified by the "welcome" sign and the two chairs by the front door.



Figure 2. Two new tiny homes were designed pro bono by the Indianapolis-based architecture firm, DKGR, who first heard about MSH's work through its online platforms. Construction was completed in 2022.

The tiny homes are located in deep, narrow lots in a neighborhood populated by single-family homes and duplexes. Each lot includes a driveway (though not typically a covered garage) and a backyard. We observed few fences or gates as we walked in the neighborhood. Barely any property markers exist between lots, and the distance between neighboring houses is seldomly longer than the size of a one-car uncovered parking space. The "welcome" sign and two stools by the side of the tiny home's front door depicted in Figure 1 communicate its occupant's openness to interacting with her neighbors. The house "fits in" the residential street not least because of the lack of defensive design. There are no fences, railing, shutters to protect the windows, or surveillance cameras. When asked about

the lack of window protectors, one resident remarked that she had installed blinds inside the window to protect her from the heat out during the day. However, she preferred to keep them open when she was inside. That way, she could look out into the street, which gave her a sense of security. Even the backyard patio (Figure 5) can be accessed directly from the sidewalk without a gate. As the house can only accommodate one person, the deck plays the role of an outdoor living room when the weather permits. Anyone can access the deck, which was the outcome of a collective construction effort that MSH organized with volunteers who represented a cross-section of Memphis LGBTQ activists. The many gardening tools near the table on the patio, visible in the photograph, indicate that the maintenance of this space also relied on group efforts.

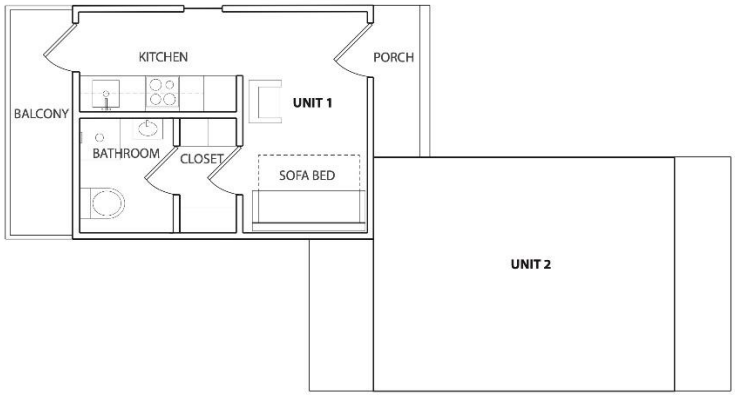


Figure 3. Construction on two new tiny homes was completed in 2022. They were designed pro bono by the Indianapolis-based architecture firm, DKGR, who first heard about MSH's work through its online platforms.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 4. (**a**) Inside the newly constructed tiny homes, the kitchen is attached to the main living space and has access to the back porch. The kitchen was fully stocked and in use during our visits, highlighting the home's association with domesticity. (**b**) A door separates the closet and laundry room from the main living space. This room leads to a large bathroom.



Figure 5. The backyard of one of the tiny homes completed in 2022 has direct access from the sidewalk. It was constructed in part by volunteers and is intended to be used as a community space.

The ownership structure of the MSH lots is similarly collectivized. Owning one of the MSH houses does not automatically confer rights to the lot where it is built. According to Gore, MSH operates as a Community Land Trust (this could not be independently verified, although the way the organization handles maintenance of exterior spaces on the lots appears to corroborate this claim). Community Land Trusts purchase land to hold it "in trust" for perpetuity, thereby removing it from the capitalist real estate market (Davis and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy 2010). Community Land Trusts have been implemented elsewhere in the U.S., and in the past decade, they proliferated as a way to achieve long-term affordability in gentrifying neighborhoods (DeFilippis et al. 2019). MSH sells the units to their occupants at an affordable price, which the occupant pays off in low monthly payments. This effectively protects the owners from having to access the mortgage market, while still enabling them to build equity. If the occupant decides to sell the house, they can sell it back to MSH at a "reasonable market price", as Gore explained. She added that she envisioned the tiny homes as "starter homes", providing economic and social stability to their owners, who may eventually want to move to a bigger house. As the steward of both the house and the land where it is built, MSH would then pass it on to another black TGNC person in need of housing.

3.3. Housing Activism and Neighborhood Transformation

By the time of our site visits, MSH had received considerable attention from local and national media. Gore appeared on CBS and National Geographic, while Forbes and ABC News wrote articles about MSH's work. A new online grassroots fundraiser in the first half of 2022 aimed to raise USD 450,000, almost doubling the fundraiser's initial goal. The organization's ambitions grew together with its larger budget. Besides vacant lots to build tiny homes, MSH is purchasing existing empty houses to either renovate them as they are, or convert them to duplexes. During our visit to a newly purchased house (Figure 6), we were joined by a person who worked for Home Depot, a multinational home improvement retail corporation, who came to measure the openings to install new windows. A few neighbors came by to ask about the work. The conversation was mainly about home renovation loans, construction materials' rising prices, and Home Depot's services. Interactions such as this help MSH build relationships with locals who otherwise would not necessarily know about the organization's transgender advocacy. The organization's day-to-day work demonstrates to non-TGNC residents how building homes for formerly houseless TGNC

people can benefit the entire neighborhood. This is a form of "indirect advocacy" in the sense that there are no funds allocated for it (Pekkanen et al. 2014), but it nonetheless serves MSH's mission of black transgender neighborhood empowerment.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 6. (**a**) The back side of a newly purchased house shows the extent of the renovations that MSH is undertaking. (**b**) The new house under renovation is in a neighborhood of single-family homes. MSH cultivates trust with neighbors through informal everyday interactions.

The construction of a community park (Figure 7) at an intersection near the three tiny homes discussed above further highlights the organization's long-term goal to build relationships with existing residents. The park encompasses two residential lots and is covered in neatly trimmed grass. On one side, a shipping container that has been converted into storage is adorned by a large mural, and in the middle, two charcoal grills are permanently installed on a concrete platform. The grilling area is open to anyone from the neighborhood who wants to use it. During our visit, a person wearing a T-shirt with a message printed in large font covering his chest that declared "God so loved" was cutting the grass. We learned that this neighbor volunteered to garden as a form of appreciation for the work that MSH was doing in the neighborhood. Exploring the significance of religion in black culture within the areas where MSH operates is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, the overt declarations of faith by this volunteer and the developer discussed in the previous section indicate that at the level of everyday interactions, religious sentiment and transgender advocacy are, at the very least, not antithetical.

The mural covering the shipping container's side is prominently visible at the intersection. It stands out from its surroundings due to its scale, skillful execution, and subject matter. It depicts three figures against a backdrop of trees, birds, and mountains. The central figure is a young person without overt gender markers holding a house that grows out of a nest. On either side there are two heads in profile, a male and a female, painted much larger so that they barely fit within the picture frame. All three are black, and they have solemn, melancholic facial expressions. The mural is the only example of MSH employing black aesthetics symbolically in public space. There are no overt iconographic markers of TGNC embodiment on the mural (although the central figure holding a house clearly references the organization's work). The natural landscape where the three figures are situated transcends the mural's suburban location, suggesting that the figures inhabit a quasi-mythical space and time. The mural's symbolism re-territorializes the neighborhood as a black landscape of opportunity and empowerment. The absence of overt references to TGNC embodiments, rather than erasing them, affirms their role as stewards of this symbolic landscape. As a form of territorialization, this is different from overt expressions of LGBTQ+ sexual nonconformity in the urban landscape, as a form of political activism (Armstrong 2002; Boyd 2005). The tactic that we identify here with trans territorialization,

nonetheless, has historical precedents in the symbolic interweaving of lesbian feminism within spaces associated with the women's movement in the U.S. (Davis 2019). Lesbian territorialization, though not a homogeneous phenomenon, tends to operate by creating "spatial constellations" (Gieseking 2020) that serve to connect women across urban and rural landscapes and increase their safety (Jones 2020; Atalay and Doan 2019; Browne 2008; Podmore 2006).



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 7. (**a**) MSH created a community park in a corner lot of a residential area near three of its tiny homes. (**b**) A grilling area in the community park is open for everyone who wants to use it. In the background, a mural on the side of a shipping container converted to a storage unit operates as a symbolic cultural marker for the historically black neighborhood.

A comparison between the mural's symbolism and the LGBTQ+ iconography at the Out Memphis community center, which is located no more than a fifteen-minute drive from the MSH community park, illustrates the differences between the two forms of LGBTQ+ territorialization. The building housing Out Memphis is a converted single-family home, like other buildings along its street that now house bars and retail stores (Figure 8). In that sense, it does not stand out. However, the rainbow and trans flags prominently displayed on the front lawn operate symbolically, marking the building and, by extension, the area as LGBTQ+ friendly. A rainbow crosswalk at the end of the block where Out Memphis is located communicates a similar message (Figure 9). Unlike the tiny homes discussed in the previous section, the community center has visible defensive architecture that includes security screens at the doors and windows, heavy locks, and ample lighting. Out Memphis also operates a homeless youth shelter in a residential cul-de-sac, which has 24-h video surveillance in addition to other security mechanisms. This emphasis on safety is a historical attribute of LGBTQ+ territorialization (Hanhardt 2013). It also received renewed attention after the 2016 tragic shooting at the Pulse gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

Out Memphis, as an institutional bearer of LGBTQ+ culture in the city, could become a target of symbolic, large-scale homophobic violence. Besides this type of violence, the violent crime rate in Memphis is well above the national and state averages (U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations 2021). In this context, the decision of MSH organizers to "blend in" with their residential surroundings can be seen as a form of promoting safety. They differentiate their spaces from other, more visible spaces of LGBTQ+ sociality and culture, such as community centers, bars, and clubs. They foster community support by highlighting that all neighbors are "in this together", collectively fighting systemic conditions of economic, social, and political disenfranchisement.



Figure 8. Out Memphis, the most prominent LGBTQ+ organization in the city, occupies a residential building in a middle-class neighborhood. The rainbow flags on its front lawn symbolically mark the building as LGBTQ+ friendly. These overt references to LGBTQ+ space are absent in trans territorialization.



Figure 9. The LGBTQ+ symbolism extends to the neighborhood where Out Memphis is located and is exemplified by a rainbow crosswalk.

4. Discussion

We propose that MSH's work in Memphis has the characteristics of what we call trans territorialization. Comparing these characteristics with earlier forms of LGBTQ+ territorialization, such as gayborhoods, we argue that the new ways of creating space for TGNC empowerment that this case study demonstrates are partial examples in a broader repertory of activist placemaking. In this context, placemaking refers to entanglements of physical spaces, TGNC embodiments, neighborhood, municipal, and state politics that operate across spatial scales. Trans territorialization extends the study of LGBTQ+ space beyond its traditional focus on white middle-class urban landscapes. It can also inform how urban studies scholars understand embodied differences in contemporary cities more broadly. This section summarizes the four main characteristics of trans territorialization in Memphis and considers their generalizable attributes.

First, in our case study, home ownership emerged as the main building block of black TGNC empowerment. Centering homeownership responds to the history of disinvestment in black neighborhoods and the lack of support for black homeowners. Meanwhile, it employs the classic image of the American single-family home and its ideals about domesticity. The tiny homes that MSH has built or renovated over the past two years employ core design elements of single-family homes that can be found in Memphis's middle and working-class neighborhoods: pitched roof, front door accessible from the sidewalk via a driveway, front porch as an interstitial space between the public sidewalk and the private home, and, in some cases, a backyard. This building typology is traditionally associated with the nuclear family, and its ubiquitous iconography has shaped the meaning of domesticity in mainstream post-war U.S. culture. Yet, even though they reference this building type, the tiny homes can comfortably accommodate only one individual, thereby subverting the meaning of its original hetero-normative symbolism.

The borrowed iconography of the single-family home is related to the second characteristic of trans territorialization. MSH does not center on the gender and sexual identities of the homes' occupants in its efforts to build TGNC-friendly spaces. In other words, the structures associated with these spaces (tiny homes, duplexes, the community park) do not stand out as outwardly legible examples of LGBTQ+ sociality and culture. This is different from how gayborhoods, especially in larger cities, communicate sexual nonconformity to their residents, visitors, and the heterosexual public. Gayborhoods typically have a commercial core, where rainbow flags and sometimes overtly homosexual imagery in advertisements underlie everyday habitation. We view the lack of comparable LGBTQ+ commercial spaces in the Memphis neighborhoods we examined not as missing elements but as a distinct characteristic of the kinds of spatial appropriations associated with trans territorialization. In traditional gayborhoods, public and commercial spaces overlap. Moreover, activism around commercial spaces, such as bars, has historically marked important moments in the contemporary LGBTQ+ rights movement (Armstrong 2002; D'Emilio [1983] 1998). In contradistinction, within the Memphis neighborhoods we studied, the notions of public and commercial space are distinct. Noncommercial spaces such as the garden patio and the community garden discussed in this paper, rather than cafes, bars, and other businesses, allow residents and their friends to meet each other in person. In the context of trans territorialization, they are the primary sites for black TGNC community empowerment.

The third characteristic concerns how MSH conceptualizes and builds for safety. The spaces we visited in Memphis were integrated within existing neighborhoods without introducing any form of defensive design. There are no fortified gates, cameras, or alarm systems. This openness to the neighborhood can, in fact, be seen as a safety mechanism. As a woman who lives in one of the tiny homes told us, she felt safer when she kept the blinds of her street-facing window open. Regarding the organization's decision to integrate the homes within existing neighborhoods, Kayla Gore, its founder and executive director, explained that "it's just safer for people who might be living alone to have a neighborhood in such close proximity." During our visits, we also witnessed how Gore builds relationships with the owners of the houses surrounding MSH's properties. Besides

introducing herself to them and discussing different aspects of the construction, Gore told us that the organization has to follow a city-mandated formal process of notifying neighbors about the organization's plans and the people who will occupy the new units. As a result, MSH can flag potential problems even before the new occupants move in.

Finally, and relatedly, the kind of trans territorialization that we observed in Memphis can only be understood as a phenomenon that takes place at the neighborhood level, rather than in (or as) individual buildings. Although in this paper we focused on the work of a single organization, similar initiatives have emerged during the past five years in other cities and rural communities in the U.S. and elsewhere. For example, House of Tulip is a Community Land Trust that was recently established in New Orleans, Louisiana, to provide "zero-barrier housing, case management, linkage to care, and community programming to trans and gender non-conforming people in need of a safe place to stay while growing the supply of affordable housing in [the city]" (House of Tulip n.d.). Similarly, Queer the Land in Seattle, Washington, set up a Community Land Trust to purchase a house with a large garden in a residential neighborhood that they started to renovate in 2022 with the goal to house a group of ten to fifteen queer and trans people of color and build a self-sustaining community around urban gardening (Queer the Land n.d.). Similar initiatives are "transing" neighborhoods (Gorny and van den Heuvel 2017) from Oakland, California, to New York and from the San Diego–Tijuana border to Albuquerque, New Mexico (Oakland CLT n.d.; Casa de Luz n.d.; Queering the Farm n.d.).

5. Conclusions

In this paper, we argued that a new form of LGBTQ+ placemaking with generalizable attributes has emerged during the past five years. We described this as trans territorialization and traced its emergence in localized efforts primarily by TGNC people of color to resist displacement, houselessness, and economic disenfranchisement in Memphis, Tennessee. Trans territorialization is characterized by an emphasis on affordable homeownership, operates within existing neighborhoods, and makes them safer for TGNC people. As a process, trans territorialization is driven by the appropriation of everyday spaces through habitation without overt references to LGBTQ+ culture and politics, such as rainbow flags and LGBTQ+-centered businesses that are prevalent in earlier forms of urban gayborhoods. The latter have their roots in the politicization of LGBTQ+ identities in the early 1970s and the emergence of gay commercial urban enclaves. Gayborhoods have historically sought to establish territories within cities with their own distinct symbolism, which led to the consolidation of LGBTQ+ economic and political power.

Trans territorialization responds to a different historical moment, characterized by the precedent of legal protections of LGBTQ+ rights, but also the knowledge that these rights, which are increasingly under threat by the conservative turn in U.S. politics, are especially fragile in Southern states. Moreover, this historical moment is characterized by housing precarity across U.S. cities and rising economic inequality. The case study discussed in this paper offers insights into how TGNC people of color, who are most vulnerable to these conditions, appropriate space and build individual and collective empowerment within existing neighborhoods, transforming them in the process. The MSH programs we analyzed are still being actively developed and their attributes are debated, responding to needs that arise from everyday habitation. We anticipate that future work in this area will further illuminate the kinds of spaces that emerge from these debates along with their manifold entanglements with the histories and lived realities of racism, transphobia, and class disenfranchisement.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.G.Y. and L.C.; methodology, S.G.Y. and L.C.; investigation, S.G.Y. and L.C.; writing—original draft preparation, S.G.Y.; writing—review and editing, S.G.Y. and L.C.; visualization, S.G.Y.; supervision, L.C.; funding acquisition, L.C. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Protocollo n. 0022073.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board (or Ethics Committee) of the University of California, Berkeley, USA (2017-05-9914, approved 8 March 2019).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to thank Kayla Gore, and the participants of this study who invited us into their homes and shared their stories.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 In this paper, we use the term LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and beyond) when referring to sexually and gender non-conforming social identities since the 1970s. We also employ the term to directly refer to transgender and gender non-conforming people whose spaces are the focus of our case study. These terms were first introduced in scholarly literature in the past three decades. They are also sometimes employed by grassroots activist groups outside academia, as is the case with the term TGNC that is used in some of My Sistah's House blog posts. For a detailed discussion of the use of terminology in transgender studies, see DeVun and Tortorici (2018).

2 Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are non-profit, community-based organizations that purchase land to ensure collective stewardship and affordability for current and future tenants. CLTs can be used for housing, commercial, agricultural, or retail uses.

3 Gaiety Newspaper collection, Rhodes College Archives, http://hdl.handle.net/10267/30704 (accessed on 2 June 2022).

4 K. Gore, interviewed by Stathis G. Yeros, 18 May 2022.

5 The term *cisgender* refers to non-TGNC embodiments.

References

Altman, Irwin. 1975. *The Environment and Social Behavior: Privacy, Personal Space, Territory, Crowding*. Monterey: Brooks/Cole Pub. Co.

Angeles, Leonora C., and Jennifer Roberton. 2020. Empathy and Inclusive Public Safety in the City: Examining LGBTQ2+ Voices and Experiences of Intersectional Discrimination. *Women's Studies International Forum* 78: 102313. [CrossRef]

Armstrong, Elizabeth A. 2002. *Forging Gay Identities: Organizing Sexuality in San Francisco, 1950–1994*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ash, Stephen V. 2013. *A Massacre in Memphis: The Race Riot That Shook the Nation One Year after the Civil War*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Atalay, Ozlem, and Petra L. Doan. 2019. Reading LGBT Movement through Its Spatiality in Istanbul, Turkey. *Geography Research Forum* 39: 106–26.

Bain, Alison L., and Julie A. Podmore. 2021. Placing LGBTQ+ Urban Activisms. *Urban Studies* 58: 1305–26. [CrossRef]

Bain, Alison L., William Payne, and Jaclyn Isen. 2015. Rendering a Neighbourhood Queer. *Social & Cultural Geography* 16: 424–43. [CrossRef]

Boyd, Nan Alamilla. 2005. *Wide-Open Town: A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brenner, Neil. 2018. Debating Planetary Urbanization: For an Engaged Pluralism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 36: 570–90. [CrossRef]

Browne, Kath. 2008. Imagining Cities, Living the Other: Between the Gay Urban Idyll and Rural Lesbian Lives. *The Open Geography Journal* 1: 25–32. [CrossRef]

Browne, Kath, Jason Lim, and Gavin Brown, eds. 2007. *Geographies of Sexualities: Theory, Practices, and Politics*. Burlington: Ashgate.

Buring, Daneel. 1996. Gay Activism Behind the Magnolia Curtain: The Memphis Gay Coalition, 1979–1991. *Journal of Homosexuality* 32: 113–35. [CrossRef]

Buring, Daneel. 1997a. *Lesbian and Gay Memphis: Building Communities behind the Magnolia Curtain*. New York: Garland.

Buring, Daneel. 1997b. Softball and Alcohol: The Limits of Lesbian Community in Memphis from the 1940s through the 1960s. In *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South*. New York: NYU Press, pp. 203–23.

Casa de Luz. n.d. Historia de la Casa. Available online: https://www.casadeluztj.org/historia (accessed on 10 June 2022).

Castells, Manuel. 1983. *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

CBS News. 2021. Nonprofit Builds Tiny Homes for Trans Women Living on the Streets: 'We're Doing It out Loud and Proud'. Available online: https://www.cbsnews.com/news/nonprofit-tiny-homes-trans-women/ (accessed on 16 July 2022).

Chauncey, George. 1994. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940*. New York: Basic Books.

Chiesi, Leonardo. 2015. Territoriality as Appropriation of Space: How 'Engaging with Space' Frames Sociality. In *Cultural Sustainability and Regional Development Theories and Practices of Territorialisation*. London and New York: Routledge.
Cranz, Galen. 2016. *Ethnography for Designers*. London and New York: Routledge.
Crawford, Lucas. 2015. *Transgender Architectonics: The Shape of Change in Modernist Space*. Burlington: Ashgate.
Crawford, Lucas. 2020. The Crumple and the Scrape. *Places Journal*. [CrossRef]
D'Emilio, John. 1998. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940–1970*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. First published 1983.
Davis, Angela Y. 2019. Foreword. In *Maestrapeace: San Francisco's Monumental Feminist Mural*. Edited by Juana Alicia, Miranda Bergman, Edythe Boone, Susan Kelk Cervantes, Meera Desai, Yvonne Littleton and Irene Pérez. Berkeley: Heyday, pp. 11–38.
Davis, John Emmeus, and Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, eds. 2010. *The Community Land Trust Reader*. Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.
DeFilippis, James, Olivia R. Williams, Joseph Pierce, Deborah G. Martin, Rich Kruger, and Azadeh Hadizadeh Esfahani. 2019. On the Transformative Potential of Community Land Trusts in the United States. *Antipode* 51: 795–817. [CrossRef]
Delany, Samuel R. 1999. *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*. Sexual Cultures. New York: New York University Press.
Delavega, Elena. 2015. *2015 Memphis Poverty Fact Sheet*. Memphis: The University of Memphis and The Mid-South Family and Community Empowerment Institute.
DeVun, Leah, and Zeb Tortorici. 2018. Trans, Time, and History. *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5: 518–39. [CrossRef]
Doan, Petra L. 2015. *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces*. New York: Routledge.
Dowdy, G. Wayne. 2011. A Brief History of Memphis. Available online: https://www.overdrive.com/search?q=84AB98E8-3011-45A8-905C-31E4BF8A1EF7 (accessed on 3 June 2022).
Duggan, Lisa. 2014. *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*, 2nd ed. Boston: Beacon Press. First published 2003.
Gates, Gary J., and Jason Ost. 2004. *The Gay & Lesbian Atlas*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press.
Ghaziani, Amin. 2014. *There Goes the Gayborhood?* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Ghaziani, Amin. 2018. Sexual Meanings, Placemaking, and the Urban Imaginary. In *Routledge Handbook of Cultural Sociology*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 226–34.
Gieseking, Jen Jack. 2020. *A Queer New York: Geographies of Lesbians, Dykes, and Queers*. New York: New York University Press.
Goh, Petra L. 2015. Place/Out: Planning for Radical Queer Activism. In *Planning and LGBTQ Communities: The Need for Inclusive Queer Spaces*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 217–34.
Gore, Kayla. 2019. Transition in the South. *My Sistah's House (Blog)*, February 8.
Gorny, Robert Alexander, and Dirk van den Heuvel. 2017. New Figurations in Architecture Theory: From Queer Performance to Becoming Trans. *Footprint* 21: 1–9. [CrossRef]
Grant, Jaime M., Lisa A. Mottet, Justin Tanis, Jack Harrison, Jody L. Herman, and Mara Keisling. 2011. *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.
Halberstam, Jack. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press.
Halberstam, Jack. 2018. Unbuilding Gender: Trans* Anarchitectures in and Beyond the Work of Gordon Matta-Clark. *Places Journal*. [CrossRef]
Hanhardt, Christina B. 2013. *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Hess, Abigail Johnson. 2021. Activist Kayla Gore Is Building Tiny Homes—And Trans Futures—In Memphis, Tennessee. CNBC. Available online: https://www.cnbc.com/2021/06/08/kayla-gore-on-building-tiny-homesand-trans-futuresin-memphis.html (accessed on 29 July 2022).
House of Tulip. n.d. Our Vision. Available online: https://houseoftulip.org/our-vision (accessed on 10 June 2022).
Howard, John, ed. 1997. *Carryin' on in the Lesbian and Gay South*. New York: New York University Press.
Johnson, E. Patrick. 2011. *Sweet Tea Black Gay Men of the South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Johnson, E. Patrick. 2018. *Black. Queer. Southern. Women: An Oral History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
Jones, Chelle. 2020. Balancing Safety and Visibility: Lesbian Community Building Strategies in South Korea. *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 24: 272–85. [CrossRef]
Kaldor, Mary, and Saskia Sassen. 2020. *Cities at War: Global Insecurity and Urban Resistance*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Kärrholm, Mattias. 2007. The Materiality of Territorial Production: A Conceptual Discussion of Territoriality, Materiality, and the Everyday Life of Public Space. *Space and Culture* 10: 437–53. [CrossRef]
Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky, and Madeline D. Davis. 1993. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*. London and New York: Routledge.
Knopp, Larry, and Michael Brown. 2003. Queer Diffusions. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21: 409–24. [CrossRef]
Knopp, Larry, and Michael Brown. 2021. Travel Guides, Urban Spatial Imaginaries and LGBTQ+ Activism: The Case of Damron Guides. *Urban Studies* 58: 1380–96. [CrossRef]
Lambda Legal. n.d. Lambda Legal Sues Tennessee Over Anti-Transgender Birth Certificate Policy. Available online: https://www.lambdalegal.org/blog/20190423_lambda-legal-sues-tennessee-birth-certificate-policy (accessed on 15 July 2022).
Lauterbach, Preston. 2016. Memphis Burning. *Places Journal*. [CrossRef]

Lewis, Nathaniel M. 2013. Ottawa's Le/The Village: Creating a Gaybourhood amidst the 'Death of the Village'. *Geoforum* 49: 233–42. [CrossRef]
Low, Setha M., and Irwin Altman. 1992. Place Attachment. In *Place Attachment*. Edited by Irwin Altman and Setha M. Low. Boston: Springer, pp. 1–12. [CrossRef]
McElroy, Erin, and Alex Werth. 2019. Deracinated Dispossessions: On the Foreclosures of 'Gentrification' in Oakland, CA. *Antipode* 51: 878–98. [CrossRef]
Müller, Francis. 2021. *Design Ethnography: Epistemology and Methodology*. Cham: Springer.
Muñoz, José Esteban. 2009. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: New York University Press.
Nash, Catherine J., and Andrew Gorman-Murray. 2014. LGBT Neighbourhoods and 'New Mobilities': Towards Understanding Transformations in Sexual and Gendered Urban Landscapes. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38: 756–72. [CrossRef]
National Civil Rights Museum. n.d. Exhibitions. Available online: https://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/exhibitions/?source=adwords&campaign=&medium=cpc&keyword=national%20civil%20rights%20museum&target=kwd-312983525&loc=9075555&device=c&gclid=Cj0KCQjw54iXBhCXARIsADWpsG8vPg9tSIuEoccX76BFnaeD1_SRvk8jII029cbfz3Nkqkt5ZjBTdDIaAmtTEALw_wcB (accessed on 28 July 2022).
Oakland CLT. n.d. Liberated 23rd Avenue. Available online: https://oakclt.org/portfolio-items/liberated23rdave/ (accessed on 10 June 2022).
Orne, Jason, and Dylan Stuckey. 2017. *Boystown: Sex & Community in Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Oswin, Natalie. 2019. *Global City Futures: Desire and Development in Singapore*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
Pekkanen, Robert, Steven Rathgeb Smith, and Yutaka Tsujinaka, eds. 2014. *Nonprofits and Advocacy: Engaging Community and Government in an Era of Retrenchment*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Pink, Sarah, Vaike Fors, Debora Lanzeni, Melisa Duque, Yolande Strengers, and Shanti Sumartojo. 2022. *Design Ethnography: Research, Responsibility, and Futures*. London and New York: Routledge.
Podmore, Julie A. 2006. Gone 'Underground'? Lesbian Visibility and the Consolidation of Queer Space in Montréal. *Social & Cultural Geography* 7: 595–625. [CrossRef]
Podmore, Julie A. 2013. Critical Commentary: Sexualities Landscapes beyond Homonormativity. *Geoforum* 49: 263–67. [CrossRef]
Poe, Ryan. 2020. The 901: Why Memphis Has a Big Appetite for Tiny Homes. The Commercial Appeal. Available online: https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/news/local/the-901/2020/02/27/tiny-homes-one-creative-answer-memphis-rising-rents-901/4889908002/ (accessed on 16 July 2022).
Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Queer the Land. n.d. Who We Are. Available online: https://queertheland.org/who-we-are/ (accessed on 10 June 2022).
Queering the Farm. n.d. Instagram Feed. Available online: https://www.instagram.com/queeringthefarm/ (accessed on 10 June 2022).
Ramos, Regner, and Sharif Mowlabocus, eds. 2021. *Queer Sites in Global Contexts: Technologies, Spaces, and Otherness*. London and New York: Routledge.
Robinson, Brandon Andrew. 2020. *Coming out to the Streets: LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness*. Oakland: University of California Press.
Rosenberg, Rae. 2017. The Whiteness of Gay Urban Belonging: Criminalizing LGBTQ Youth of Color in Queer Spaces of Care. *Urban Geography* 38: 137–48. [CrossRef]
Rosenberg, Rae. 2020. Negotiating Racialised (Un)Belonging: Black LGBTQ Resistance in Toronto's Gay Village. *Urban Studies* 58: 1397–1413. [CrossRef]
Roy, Ananya, and Hilary Malson, eds. 2016. *Housing Justice in Unequal Cities*. Los Angeles: UCLA Institute on Inequality and Democracy.
Rubin, Gayle. 2011. *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Seamon, David. 2018. *Life Takes Place: Phenomenology, Lifeworlds and Place Making*. London and New York: Routledge.
Spade, Dean. 2015. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. Durham: Duke University Press. First published 2011.
Sprayregen, Molly. 2021. Activist Kayla Gore Is Building Tiny Homes for Trans Women of Color. Forbes. Available online: https://www.forbes.com/sites/mollysprayregen/2021/02/19/activist-kayla-gore-is-building-tiny-homes-for-trans-women-of-color/ (accessed on 15 July 2022).
Spruce, Emma. 2021. The Place of Transversal LGBTQ+ Urban Activisms. *Urban Studies* 58: 1520–28. [CrossRef]
Stone, Amy L. 2018. The Geography of Research on LGBTQ Life: Why Sociologists Should Study the South, Rural Queers, and Ordinary Cities. *Sociology Compass* 12: e12638. [CrossRef]
Thompson, Brock. 2010. *The Un-Natural State: Arkansas and the Queer South*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press.
Thrift, N. J. 1983. On the Determination of Social Action in Space and Time. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 1: 23–57. [CrossRef]
U.S. Census Bureau. n.d. DP05: Census Bureau Table. Available online: https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Memphis%20city,%20Tennessee&tid=ACSDP5Y2020.DP05 (accessed on 15 July 2022).

U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations. 2021. Crime Data Explorer. Available online: https://crime-data-explorer.app.cloud.gov/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend (accessed on 28 July 2022).
Watkins, Jerry. 2017. Keep on Carryin' on: Recent Research on the LGBTQ History of the American South. *History Compass* 15: e12428. [CrossRef]
Weiss, Margot Danielle. 2011. *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Whitlock, Reta Ugena. 2013. *Queer South Rising: Voices of a Contested Place*. Charlotte: Information Age Publishing.
Yang, Yo-Hsin. 2022. Sexuality on the Move: Gay Transnational Mobility Embedded on Racialised Desire for 'White Asians'. *Gender, Place & Culture* 1–21. [CrossRef]
Yeros, Stathis G. 2022. AIDS and the City: Bathhouses, Emplaced Empathy and the de-Sexualization of San Francisco. *Urban History* 1–18. [CrossRef]