QUEER LIVES ACROSS THE WALL

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction: "Mamita Invites You In"

Let us remember those glittering ball nights we celebrated after the collapse of the disastrous Third Reich, in a way as continuation of the year 1933. Hundreds of our friends rushed towards the Tefi ballroom when Mamita called them.

– O.Z., "Mamita läßt bitten!"[1]

A call to remember glittering ball nights seems like a fitting way to begin a book on the history of queer Berlin. It was uttered in 1962 by an anonymous writer in the West German homophile magazine *Der Weg* in the piece "Mamita Invites You In," a text that was both an obituary for the entertainer and community organizer Mamita and an elegy for a carefree time that had since passed. It conjures the moment of liberation from the Nazis, when "hundreds of our friends" – the word "friend" was long used as a self-designation among queer men and women – danced in celebration in the city's resurrected queer ballrooms.[2] With its reference to the time before the Nazi ascent to power in 1933 and its lamenting the loss of tolerance that Berlin had witnessed recently, the article sketches the temporal coordinates that also frame this book: the queer publics of the Weimar Republic, their destruction by the Nazis, the moment of freedom between the end of the war and the founding of the new German states in 1949, and the growing social conservatism that characterized the 1950s and early 1960s.

Mamita invites you into this book because her non-normative embodiment of gender illustrates one of this book's key claims: that gender was a crucial aspect of queer lives in Germany in the mid-century. In the article, the writer describes Mamita, a "keen waiter by trade," as a cross-dressing "homophile" man whose "unusual" cross-dressing challenged many within the queer community and who was subject to "much animosity."[3] In the end, this "friend's" charm won over everyone, however.

> Even the custodians of the law put up with Mamita the way she was, and even the cynical critics would at the end laugh along with her. Because Mamita had humour and did not just make fun of others, but also of herself. At her balls, she would stand on the flight of stairs as Grand-Dame and personally welcome all her dears; and then she would present the best show too. The vaudeville program was quite something, and she herself was definitely the top act. She recited as Countess Strachwitz, she sang the Zarah Leander, and she danced the dying swan, and everyone convulsed with laughter.[4]

The writer, shifting between feminine and masculine pronouns, not only admires Mamita's skills as a community organizer and her stamina in the face of hostilities, but also fondly remembers her talent for entertainment: she performed classics like "The Dying Swan" from Tchaikovsky's ballet and German wartime favourites like the songs of Zarah Leander to great acclaim. The wistful memory of Mamita stands out sharply against the changed situation at the time of publication. The piece ends on the sad note that, a decade after Mamita's famous balls, the "newly won freedom and tolerance" had given way again to "prohibition" and a "skewed morality."[5] Nevertheless, the writer insists that "Berlin is still worth a trip, even if a stupid political conception has badly mutilated the city."[6] This "stupid political conception" is the Cold War, of course, and the mutilation it has wrought on the city is the Berlin Wall, constructed one year before the article's publication.

With Mamita, the non-binary star of postwar Berlin's "resurrected social life" who has since been forgotten, I invite you in to explore the subjectivities and spaces of queer Berlin from the end of Nazism to the beginnings of the gay and lesbian liberation movements of the early 1970s. Subjectivity refers to the processes of making the self: how queer Berliners understood themselves, their gender, sexuality, and relationships with others, and how they expressed themselves through styling their bodies, through gestures and movements, through having their photograph taken, or through writing. Space refers to the material and immaterial sites whose meaning for queer Berliners was made through their own practices and the practices of those trying to control and suppress them, be they representatives of the state or fellow Berliners. Ballrooms and the Berlin Wall are two locations in this queer world. Other locations include bars but also more mundane spaces such as private homes and streets and parks. A final chapter is devoted to prisons, which, as we will see, were significant spaces for queer Berliners of different genders. While "glittering ball nights" were and continue to be important aspects of Berlin's queer culture, this book argues that it is worth our while to ask about the daylight and everyday spaces too.

Broadening the scholarly gaze from its current focus on nightlife and politics brings into focus queer lives that historians of queer Berlin have had little to say about in the past, particularly those of lesbian women and trans people. But only by examining lesbian, gay, and trans[7] lives together, and by paying close attention to how gender, sexuality, and class were intertwined, can we understand how the two German postwar states and societies dealt with non-normative genders and sexualities, and what exclusionary processes were at work in constructing East and West German norms of gender and sexuality. Other identity markers such as race, ethnicity, and migration are largely absent from this book, even if Mamita's Spanish name alone hints at the multiple and complicated ways in which the queer Berlin of the postwar decades was entangled with the world. Their intersection with the city's queer history deserves its own study. This absence, and others that I will discuss later, demonstrates that archival absences and imbalances continue to shape queer urban and German histories in different ways. Rather than just replicating these absences, historians interested in intersectional analyses can discuss them and thus make visible historical inequities that often extend into the present.[8]

This book also addresses historiographical imbalances. Most research in queer history focuses on male homosexuality, and this focus is particularly striking in urban queer history and German queer history. Classic histories of queerness and the city, such as George Chauncey's *Gay New York* and Matt Houlbrook's *Queer London*, offered a nuanced analysis of the multiple and shifting gendered subjectivities of queer men, but neither of them analysed lesbian women in the city.[9] The same is true of recent studies of queerness and sexuality in Berlin, for instance Jennifer Evans's *Life among the Ruins* or Robert Beachy's *Gay Berlin*: they ignore lesbian and trans subjectivities and relationships.[10] In German queer history, the scarcity of research on lesbians remains dramatic, and the situation in trans history is even worse.[11] Given that through much of the twentieth century, liberal as well as conservative commentators grouped different forms of non-normative gender and sexuality together as various aspects of "immorality," this research imbalance has severely skewed our understanding of the historical meanings of queerness.[12] When around the turn of the last century, sexual science, sexual subcultures, and activism in Berlin and elsewhere shaped the sexual identities that we continue to use today, it was not just a modern gay male identity but also lesbian and trans identities that came into the world.[13] It thus appears consequential to jointly examine these different queer subjectivities.

A study thus conceptualized must go beyond a history of §175, the German law prohibiting sex between men, and beyond a merely legal history, though of course laws played a significant role in framing the lives not just of cis gay men but also of trans people and lesbian women. As the reader will see, going beyond criminalization results in an account of queer everyday lives that encompasses aspects of the pleasures of living queerly as much as its dangers. Gay male history will also profit from moving away from a history focused overwhelmingly on persecution. At the same time, this book shows how the construction of heterosexuality and the gender binary in postwar Germany was built on more than the criminalization of male homosexuality. State practices, such as the inclusion of gendered markers in identification documents, and the policing of feminine masculinities through police officers but also through neighbours and youth gangs all contributed to the stabilization of normative sexuality and gender. For this reason, rather than offering an account of political activism for legal change, this book tells a more broadly political history of belonging and exclusion.

By exploring some of Berlin's queer spaces from the beginnings of the Cold War through the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the first decade of the city's complete division, this study also contributes to the historiography of Berlin as a divided and entangled city. Its close examination of the meanings of the Wall for queer East and West Berliners suggests that the East German government harnessed homophobic discourses to distract its own citizens and the world public from its murderous border regime, highlighting a neglected dimension of the Berlin Wall and the political uses of homophobia in German history.[14]

In this book, I use "queer" to describe people who found themselves outside the sexual or gender norms of their time because of their same-sex desires or practices, or because they "perceived themselves and were perceived by their societies as gender nonconforming."[15] I hence use it as an umbrella term that can describe subjectivities whose same-sex desires or non-normative gender positioned them against, outside, or deviating from the norm. While it is true that lesbian women, trans people, and gay men have at times faced vastly different legal and social situations, they were put together in the same space of criminalization, medicalization, or stigma because of their same-sex desires and/or gender identities at other times. My choice to use "queer" as an integrative term may come across as outdated in light of trans scholars' long-standing critiques of "queer theory's erasure of transgender subjectivity" and recent theorizations of trans studies that have argued

for "breaks from the established epistemological frameworks of women's studies and queer studies."[16] However, as this book shows, it is impossible to always draw clean analytical borders between non-normative genders and sexualities in recent German history. Rather, this study follows Kadji Amin's suggestion that "critical transgender studies" might include

> foregrounding modes of gender variance inseparable from homosexuality; returning to a feminist understanding of gender not simply as a neutral category of social difference but as a site invested with relations of power; and capitalizing on transgender's associations with public sex, economic marginality, racialized inequality, and policing to promote a politics of structural transformation rather than identity.[17]

While I thus posit that "queer" remains an adequate and helpful umbrella term for this study, a varied terminology will describe the actors in the chapters that follow. I use "gay" as an analytic term for men who sought love and sex with men and "lesbian" for women who sought love and sex with women. I use "trans" for individuals of non-conforming gender who did not identify as gay or lesbian and who may or may not have identified as transgender, or rather as "transvestite" in the terminology of the day. The latter term was coined in 1910 by sexual scientist Magnus Hirschfeld to describe "a range of cross-gendered characteristics and desires."[18] From the 1920s on, it was also used as self-identification by some cross-gendered individuals. Whenever possible, I use specific terms from my historical sources, including *Bubi* (butch woman), *Freundin* and *Freund* (female and male friend), *Homophiler* (male homophile), *Homosexueller* (male homosexual), *Lesbierin* (lesbian), *Mäuschen* (femme), *Schwuler* (gay man), *Strichjunge* (streetwalking boy, that is, male selling sexual services), *Transvestit* (trans person), and *Tunte* (feminine gay man or queen).[19] Part of the work of this book is to disentangle the meaning that these terms held for their speakers. The multitude of terms has to do with the history to which this book seeks to add: that of sexuality and gender, in particular non-normative sexualities and genders, acting as central sites of societies' negotiations of power, or, in Michel Foucault's terms, "as an especially dense transfer point for relations of power."[20] There are so many words because there was so much talk: between bar acquaintances, friends, and lovers; in homophile magazines and in the mainstream press; between sexologists, doctors, psychologists, and patients; among legislators, politicians, administrators, and police; between historians and their subjects.

The different terms speak of those who participated in the negotiations about non-normative genders and sexualities; the multiplicity of terms hence reflects the many voices that held a stake in these debates. Scholars have long argued that Berlin was a central arena of these negotiations.

Berlin, Queer Eldorado? Myths and Histories

Berlin holds a mythical space in queer imaginations as a utopia where queer subcultures were allowed to flourish decades before anywhere else. Christopher Isherwood's memoir *Goodbye to Berlin*, as well as *Cabaret*, the musical and films based on the memoir, have been central to this myth. More recently, television shows such as *Transparent* and *Babylon Berlin* have continued it. Since the 1970s, this popular image has been both undergirded and complicated by historical research. Early studies of queer Berlin came from scholars rooted in the gay and lesbian movements.[21] The 1984 student-initiated exhibition *Eldorado: Homosexuelle Frauen und Männer in Berlin 1850–1950* made a powerful case for Berlin's special role as a catalyst of a modern homosexual identity: that in the rapidly growing industrial metropolis and capitol of the German empire, a large queer subculture, the new discipline of sexual science, and a political movement for ending the criminalization of sex between men developed in close connection from the end of the nineteenth century until the Nazi takeover in 1933.[22] Since *Eldorado*, many Berlin-specific studies have explored the Kaiserreich and Weimar periods, focusing on the policing of queer spaces and subjects; the flourishing nightlife; the close collaboration between sexual scientists and activists for decriminalization and emancipation; the emergence of gay, lesbian, and trans identities; the role of scandal in disseminating sexual knowledge; the world's first Institute for Sexual Science, founded in Berlin in 1919; and the diverse queer publics of the Weimar Republic. They have uncovered a city that was no Eldorado but that had indeed produced a diverse, if not uncensored, queer public. Recent scholarship has stressed the limits of this queer public, however, arguing that the "Weimar settlement on sexual politics" entailed keeping "immoral" sexualities out of the public sphere.[23] When the Nazis came to power in early 1933, they very quickly targeted the Institute for Sexual Science and shut down the queer bars and ballrooms, as well as the queer press.[24] In 1935, the Nazis tightened §175, the section prohibiting sex between men, potentially making even short touches criminal. The Nazis also introduced a new §175a, making a man's sex with a male dependent or a male minor, as well as homosexual prostitution, punishable with up

to ten years in prison.[25] §175 did not extend to lesbian women, and the Nazis did not directly target them because they believed that, unlike gay men, whose virility was lost to the state, lesbian women's fertility would still be available to the *Volksgemeinschaft*.[26] Despite persecution and risks, queer Berliners continued socializing. Bars catering to gay men did so more covertly throughout the Nazi period in some parts of the city. Private circles of friends continued meeting throughout the Nazi era too.[27] The lesbian club "Jolly Nine," masked as a bowling club, organized queer balls where predominantly lesbian women, but also gay men and "transvestites," gathered until at least 1940.[28] Research on the queer Berlin of the early postwar decades, up to 1970, has focused on the re-emergence of queer nightlife and its policing, on the ambivalent figure of the "streetwalking boy," on political organizing, and on the denial of justice or rehabilitation of gay victims of the Nazis, who instead faced continued criminalization and persecution.[29] Research on lesbian and trans subjectivities in Berlin during this time remains exceedingly scarce.[30]

Sexuality and Gender in the Postwar Germanies

Sexuality, gender, and the family were central concerns in both German postwar states, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany), and despite the major political, legal, economic, and cultural differences, the two countries saw remarkably similar developments in this area in the 1950s and 1960s. In both East and West Germany, a sexual conservatism took hold in the 1950s, leading to at times intense persecution of those who deviated from the path of normalcy, whether same-sex desiring men, women seeking sex outside marriage, or rebellious youth, called "Halbstarke" or "Rowdies."[31] Both countries shared the "homophobic consensus" coined by historian Susanne zur Nieden for the pre-1945 German states, even if this homophobia manifested quite differently in the two societies.[32]

The immediate postwar period has been described as one of violence, chaos, and crisis: the mass rapes of women at the hands of occupying soldiers, Soviet soldiers in particular; families broken up by death, flight, and imprisonment; and a crisis of masculinity as men returned home from the war with physical and psychological injuries.[33] At the same time, the years following German defeat are also remembered as a period of openness and possibility, when the end of the old and the promise of a new order made for realities beyond any traditional family models and allowed for hopes of a less restrictive future.[34] The absence of fathers and of the heterosexual couple changed everyday

understandings of the family.[35] As historian Elizabeth Heineman has shown, in the "crisis years" between the defeat of the German army at Stalingrad in 1942 and the foundation of the two German states in 1949, the "woman standing alone" whose husband was at war, dead, or in captivity was the norm rather than the exception.[36] In the case of the "women families," families headed by two "women standing alone," this postwar queer reality even became the subject of political debate in West Germany. During the deliberations for the West German rump constitution, the *Grundgesetz* or Basic Law, conveners considered expanding the definition of the family to include such "women families."[37]

Similarities and Differences in the Legal Frameworks in East and West

Hopes for a new beginning quickly faltered after the 1949 foundation of the two German states. Instead of protecting different existing families, the West German Basic Law favoured a traditional family model and guaranteed the state's "special protection" of "marriage and the family." Over the course of the 1950s, gender roles and ideas of the family became increasingly rigid. With a shortage of men, unmarried women were viewed with suspicion, and female couples, who had formerly been seen as inconspicuous as long as they did not display public affection, were increasingly understood as non-normative.[38] Married women were treated as second-class citizens and were dependent on their husbands for permission to work and to open a bank account.

Both East and West Germany reintroduced the German criminal code established during the late nineteenth century. Both countries also adopted some Nazi changes to the criminal law, though with important differences regarding sex between men. Allied efforts to denazify German criminal law and reintroduce the pre-1935 version of §175 quickly fell victim to Germany's Cold War division.[39] In 1951, the GDR reintroduced §175 in its old, less encompassing version.[40] The new socialist criminal code, passed in 1968, abolished §175, though the new §151 introduced a different age of consent for sex between men or between women, thus continuing to criminalize certain same-sex relationships.[41] The numbers of men persecuted under §175 in East Germany had already dwindled since the late 1950s. The FRG, by contrast, kept the Nazi version of §175, prompting a contemporary to observe that, for gay men in West Germany, "the Third Reich only ended in 1969."[42] West German judges, many of them former Nazis, repeatedly denied that the law presented a Nazi injustice, and until the Great Criminal Law

Reform of 1969, they sentenced 50,000 men under §175.[43] Both East and West Germany held on to the Nazis' addition of §175a, which criminalized male prostitution as well as male sex with a male dependent or underage partner, and prosecutions under this section were comparably high in the GDR and the FRG.[44] Apart from §175 and §175a, the laws against public nuisance, which remained largely unchanged since the nineteenth century, also affected non-normative genders and sexualities. §183, "Public Causation of a Sexual Nuisance," punished those "who give a public nuisance by acting indecently" in both states with up to two years in prison or a fine, and additionally allowed for the withdrawal of civil rights.[45] §360 made "engaging in disorderly conduct" punishable by a fine of 150 Marks or imprisonment.[46] These laws remained in place in both German postwar states until the law reforms of the late 1960s: the new socialist criminal law codified in the GDR in 1968 and the West German Great Criminal Law Reform of 1969. The GDR also created new laws that served to penalize deviance and to police public space. The 1961 "Ordinance about the Limitation of Stay" and §249 of the new criminal code, "Endangering Public Order through Asocial Behaviour," passed in 1968, allowed the state to prohibit citizens from entering certain areas as well as force them to work if they were found to be "work-shy" (*arbeitsscheu*). These laws were used against different groups who deviated from the socialist norm, in particular people who did not hold a steady job, rebellious youth, and women who sold sexual services. Legal scholar Sven Korzilius has shown that the law targeted deviant sexualities more broadly: "From the perspective of the state authorities and the jurists, homosexuals and people suffering from sexually transmitted diseases bordered on 'asocials.'"[47] Being convicted under the 1961 ordinance or the 1968 law could mean being sent to "labour education commandos," as well as prohibited from visiting certain areas – usually cities frequented by Western tourists. §249 allowed for prison sentences too, and courts made frequent use of it throughout the existence of the GDR.[48]

Discourses about Sexuality

Despite the continued legal repression of non-marital sexuality, both East and West Germany also experienced "sexual revolutions," which involved massive changes in their citizens' sexual mores.[49] Historian Dagmar Herzog has famously interpreted West Germans' desire for moral cleanliness as a way to distance themselves from sexual permissiveness in Nazi Germany and thus as a response to avoid dealing with German crimes.[50] Historian Sybille Steinbacher has further argued that

the 1950s debates over sexuality represented the resurfacing of discourses of sexual morality, or *Sittlichkeit*, that emerged at the turn of the century.[51] She has accordingly interpreted the postwar debates as a continuation of the struggle over the meaning and shape of modernity. West Germany's economic boom, the *Wirtschaftswunder*, allowed its citizens to participate in these debates as consumers too: purchasing erotica from Beate Uhse's mail-order catalogues and, later, sex shops, they became educated about different varieties of sex by the marketplace and "learn[ed] liberalism through sexuality."[52] On the one hand, aspects of sexual repression remained in place in West Germany during and beyond the 1950s, well into the 1960s, in fact: convictions of men for transgression of §175 continued to be high, and marriage rates soared to previously unknown levels, making other forms of cohabitation less acceptable and entrenching the "normal family" – the married couple with children – as the dominant social model.[53] On the other hand, ideas and attitudes about sex were changing rapidly, with 50 per cent of West German households ordering erotica, whether self-help literature, contraceptives, toys, or sexual imagery, from mail-order catalogues by the early 1960s.[54] Accordingly, what is often referred to as the "sexual revolution" of the late 1960s and early 1970s began much earlier in postwar West Germany and was, rather than "a sudden, fundamental overthrow of … sexual interests and behaviours … a long-term, complicated process."[55] In East Germany, changes in ideas about and practices of sexuality were comparably vast and followed a similar trajectory despite immense differences between the two political systems, prompting historian Josie McLellan to speak of an "East German sexual revolution."[56] In the socialist state too, the 1950s and the first half of the 1960s were marked by sexual conservatism and a concern with deviant behaviour, and the mid-to-late 1960s and 1970s characterized by a trend towards liberalization.[57] The place for sex in the GDR was within loving, long-term heterosexual relationships. Practices other than reproductive, monogamous sexuality were discouraged, with sexological handbooks condemning masturbation, anal sex, and sadomasochistic practices.[58]

Same-sex desiring East Germans faced a contradictory situation that scholars have recently described as "persistent ambivalence" or "schizophrenic."[59] While the GDR never persecuted sex between men with a zealousness comparable to West Germany, and the government abolished §175 in its 1968 criminal code, it continued to criminalize queer lives through the new §151 and §249. Additionally, the lack of a free public sphere meant that queer publications and organizations could not exist, severely hampering East Germans' possibility to organize

queer communities and live queer lives. "Persistent homophobia" thus appears as a more apt description of the East German state and society's dealings with queer citizens.

Theories and Methods

This book contributes both to a re(dis)covery of queer lives *and* an analysis of how sexual "normality" and "difference" were produced. It thus sits squarely in the middle of the decades-long argument among queer historians on whether their work is about searching for lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans (LGBT) ancestors who have been "hidden from history" and must be rediscovered, or if it is rather the study of how sexual and gender norms were produced through the making of sexual and gendered difference.[60] Historian Laura Doan has described the two strands as "the history of us," an ancestral history or genealogy, on the one hand, and a "critical queer history," on the other, with the first looking for "queerness-as-being" and the latter interested in "queerness-as-method."[61] While this division is, to some extent, a false dichotomy – most recent work partakes in both approaches – many authors of recent studies in the histories of urbanity and sexuality appear compelled to situate their work in this way.[62] Following David Halperin, I pursue a genealogical approach that takes the modern concepts of homosexuality, lesbianism, and being trans as vantage point and traces back their developments.[63] As I will show, this approach is possible without ahistorically mapping contemporary identities onto subjects in the past who were both similar and different from us.

Though their work is not framed as a contribution to the "queerness-as-being"/"queerness-as-method" debate, Laurie Marhoefer has argued in a similar vein for a "queer methodological approach, generating a history of 'immorality' rather than a history of just one faction of 'immorality.'"[64] They note that Weimar Republic contemporaries understood sexual phenomena that we would differentiate today, for instance homosexuality, prostitution, or birth control, as really just "a single, capacious phenomenon." Their descriptions of "immorality" or "moral degeneration," Marhoefer argues, reflected the interconnectedness of these different issues.[65] While I agree with them on this point, this book demonstrates that asking about queer subjectivities continues to be a productive route for historians of gender and sexuality. We simply do not know enough about queer lives between 1945 and the 1970s to *not* ask how lesbian women, gay men, and trans people lived during that time.

Like Marhoefer's book, *Queer Lives across the Wall* considers women and men, as well as people embodying shifting genders.[66] This approach sets it apart from the overwhelming majority of queer histories, particularly queer urban histories. In *Queer London*, Matt Houlbrook offered a rationale for excluding lesbian subjectivities from his analysis, arguing that "women's access to public space was more problematic" and that "lesbianism remained invisible in the law."[67] Despite women's more limited access to funds and public spaces, however, lesbian publics existed in cities like London, New York, and Paris. For Berlin, we can even speak of a trans public during the Weimar Republic, however small it was. Furthermore, private urban spaces warrant scholarly analysis too, though researching them requires different methods and archives than examining public spaces. By disregarding the lives of urban women, these studies reproduce the state's (apparent) ignorance and are complicit in upholding an image of the city as a male-only space. As a result, their analysis of the gendered experience of city life will remain insufficient. In this book, I have attempted to privilege female and trans voices, and to be particularly attentive to lesbian and trans subjectivities and their space-making practices, even when their traces, particularly in public spaces, were fleeting.

Indeed, the transient nature of lesbian and trans spaces in particular challenges scholars to come up with alternative ways to theorize the production of space.[68] Feminist theorist Sara Ahmed has noted that lesbian spaces often "come and go with the coming and going of the bodies that inhabit them."[69] She points out the spatial origin of the term "queer":

> We can turn to the etymology of the word "queer," which comes from the Indo-European word "twist." Queer is, after all, a spatial term, which then gets translated into a sexual term, a term for a twisted sexuality that does not follow a "straight line," a sexuality that is bent and crooked. The spatiality of this term is not incidental. Sexuality itself can be considered a spatial formation not only in the sense that bodies inhabit sexual spaces, but also in the sense that bodies are sexualized through how they inhabit space.[70]

Ahmed's return to queer's semantic origin directs readers to think about the metaphorical meanings of the terms used to describe spaces and the movement of bodies in them. It is a richly productive direction of thought for a queer urban history. Consider, for example, how she describes queer sexuality as "not follow[ing] a 'straight line.'" All kinds of lines come to mind: lines drawn on city maps to represent streets,

buildings, rail tracks; subway lines; the itineraries of city dwellers from sleep to school, work, leisure, and back. In German, one translation of the word for line, "*Strich*," denotes the location of public commercial sex. "*Auf den Strich gehen*," walking on the line, hence means selling sexual services in public space, and the "*Strichjunge*," a figure that will be present in multiple chapters and that I have translated as "street-walking boy," is the name of a youth or young man offering them.

Lines also play a role in geographer Jen Jack Gieseking's theorization of lesbian and queer space-making practices. They compare the sporadic and unfixed quality of lesbian and queer places to "stars and other celestial objects" that are "scattered and visible only when you know where and when to look."[71] The networks and lines drawn by lesbian and queer city dwellers in their everyday movements, for instance from a bar to the LGBT centre to their home, make up constellations: "By tracing the contingent production of virtual, physical, and imagined places and the lines and networks between them, I show the formation of constellations as an alternative, queer feminist practice … of the production of urban space."[72] Gieseking introduces constellations as an alternative to more fixed queer space-making practices associated with cis gay men, namely the "gayborhood," a neighbourhood characterized by the long-term concentration of cis gay men's commercial venues, community spaces, and residences.[73] The spaces around which this book is organized belong to both categories: the bar chapter highlights neighbourhoods in which queer nightlife concentrated, often over a period spanning multiple decades, whereas the chapters on homes and prisons analyse spaces whose queerness remained potential until it became realized through the presence of queer bodies doing queer things.

I assembled the archive for this book from materials that I found at the archives of the feminist and LGBTIQ* movements as well as from sources collected at state institutions, where they are often not catalogued as such. Here, queer historians, like other scholars of marginalized communities, have found success by reading against the grain, or "reading queerly": reading against the intent of those who authored and collected the documents. In the case of Berlin, the city's Cold War division has created further challenges for the researcher. Two administrations produced two archives, and even though the city has now been reunited for over thirty years, some records from East Berlin remain less accessible than those from West Berlin. The resulting archival imbalances structure this book; I have attempted to make them visible throughout the chapters.

This book is committed to privileging queer voices over those of the state. Hence, I started building my archive at the feminist and LGBTIQ*

movement archives, where I found oral history interviews, movement publications, and personal papers that included correspondence, calendars, diaries, memoirs, fiction, and personal photographs. My account also draws heavily on sources produced by the state, however, such as West Berlin police records, court documents, and files of the East Berlin Stasi. Whereas the first group of sources was produced from the perspectives of people who made queer social spaces, the second was produced by the state actors who surveilled them, attempted to delimit them, and criminalized them. Because both German postwar states were concerned about the dangers that queer desires and subjectivities presented to "the fragility of heterosexuality," they surveilled queer public spaces intensely and produced ample documentation of the process.[74] In using these sources, I focus on the self- and space-making practices of queer Berliners, even if they are often rendered through homophobic language and perspectives.

By contrast, queer voices from the postwar decades are relatively scarce, for many reasons. The study of gay and lesbian history did not begin until the 1970s and 1980s in West Germany, and the 1980s in East Germany, with trans history only emerging in the 2000s. Intergenerational tensions between postwar queer Berliners and those socialized during the gay and lesbian liberation and rights movements did not always foster an atmosphere of trust necessary to sharing personal stories and documents. Often, survivors of postwar criminalization, stigmatization, and homophobia destroyed "evidence" of their queer lives during this period so that it could not be used against them. Finally, many aspects of everyday life, of producing queer spaces, making the self, and emotional and sexual practices may have been perceived as trivial or unworthy of recording.

Additional imbalances in my archive stem from the fact that sources on West Berlin outnumber sources on East Berlin, and materials about sex between men, non-normative masculinities, and male-to-female trans people outnumber materials about sex between women, non-normative femininities, and female-to-male trans subjects. Concerning queer-produced sources, the East-West imbalance has to do with the differences in gay and lesbian activism and scholarship in West and East. Whereas activists in West Berlin started researching "their" history in the 1970s, and through the 1980s institutionalized it by founding archives, a museum, and workshops, East Berlin activists did not have access to publishing and other resources, though they began much of the same work in the 1980s. Of the movement archives that I visited – the Feminist FFBIZ Archives (Frauenforschungs-, Bildungs- und Informationszentrum), the Gay Museum, the Magnus Hirschfeld Society, the

Spinnboden Lesbian Archives, the Kitty Kuse papers at Christiane von Lengerke's home, the Lili Elbe Archive for Inter Trans Queer History, and the Archive of Other Memories of the Federal Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation – only the last two were *not* founded in pre-1989 West Berlin.[75] The West Berlin archives also collected materials from East Berlin, and some, like the Gay Museum, have significantly enlarged their GDR-related collections since German reunification. Nevertheless, they remain predominantly West German archives. As for East Berlin movement archives, the Robert Havemann Society, dedicated to the history of the opposition in the GDR, has records related to queer lives from the 1980s, but not before.[76] The Lila Archive in Meiningen, founded by East Berlin lesbian activist Ursula Sillge and dedicated to "preserving cultural artefacts relevant to women," does not have personal papers of lesbian women.[77]

State-produced sources for East Germany remain difficult to access, even thirty years after German reunification. For instance, at the Police Historical Collection Berlin (Polizeihistorische Sammlung Berlin), where archivist Jens Dobler pointed me to some crucial sources for West Berlin, the files from the East Berlin People's Police are not indexed at all. Since this archive relies on private funding, it has neither the staff nor the resources to make indexing happen in the near future. At the Stasi Archives, researchers cannot search the catalogue and must instead rely on the archive's staff and trust that they know how to search for the issue at hand. In my case, the staff member assigned to me provided me with materials about gay men but claimed there were no files about lesbian women for my period of interest, a result of the lack of the criminalization of sex between women, he explained. Late in my research, I met a documentary filmmaker from Leipzig, Barbara Wallbraun, who had come across Stasi files about lesbian women in Berlin in the 1960s.[78] She was so generous as to share the relevant call numbers, which the archivist then pulled for me. This episode demonstrates just how damaging a criminalization-focused approach to queer history can be.

As for same-sex relationships between women, scarcity of sources is a problem that generations of lesbian historians have grappled with and productively engaged. Already in 1987, Hanna Hacker noted that "the wish to represent their 'reality' [that of women-loving women] requires a different method and a different language than the analysis of male-male dialogues."[79] More recently, Martha Vicinus, summarizing different paradigms in lesbian history, has suggested "the usefulness of examining the 'not said' and the 'not seen' in order to discover women's sexual lives in the past," or, "in other words, silence is not empty,

nor is absence invisible."[80] In my analysis, I have marked silences and described invisibilities; however, for postwar Berlin, lesbian lives did leave traces in both movement and state archives. In movement sources from the period, such as homophile magazines, there is a small yet significant lesbian presence. West Berlin lesbian activists of the 1970s and 1980s bridged generational differences, forming organizations that focused on older women, interviewing them for books and documentary films, and founding archives that collected their personal papers, thus creating a rich archive for the historian. But even in state archives, lesbian lives are present, despite the lack of an explicit criminalization of sex between women.[81]

To overcome the sole focus on cis gay men, I conducted a broad archival search, often following the suggestions of archivists and lesbian historians.[82] At the movement archives, I looked at all available personal papers and oral histories from people who had lived in Berlin during my period of interest, in addition to homophile publications. At the Landesarchiv, the archivist helped me create a list of terms that described deviant sexual behaviour and subjectivities, which might have been used to police queer subjectivities, as well as a list of the sections of the German criminal code relevant to policing gender and sexuality. The list of terms that she helped me come up with included the terms "lesb," for variations of lesbian; "homo," for homosexual; "aso," for asocial; "kuppelei," the German legal term for procuration; "GeKra," for sexually transmitted disease; "lid," "erregung," and "grober unfug," for causing a public nuisance; "unzucht," the German term for fornication; "sittl," for morality; "betrug," for fraud; and the sections of the German criminal code relevant to policing gender and sexuality, §175, §180, §181, §181a, §183, §360, §327, and §361; as well as "trans" and "strich" for streetwalking boys. I then searched the police, prison, and court files for these terms, looked through samples, and probed deeper if I found material relevant to queer subjectivities.

Oral histories present an important body of sources for this book, and they have been an indispensable source for queer histories of the recent past from the beginning of the discipline.[83] In light of the challenges of the queer archive spelled out earlier, oral histories have the potential to mitigate some of the imbalances of traditional archives and to go beyond what is traditionally deemed worthy of archiving. However, oral histories also come with significant challenges for queer history. Nan Alamilla Boyd has described how "it is nearly impossible for oral history or ethnographic narrators to use language outside the parameters of modern sexual identities."[84] Narrators' knowledge of the purpose of their interviews for preservation in a gay and lesbian history

archive not only prompted them to identify in the categories of that archive but also made them self-censor parts of their life stories that they felt would run counter to the community's respectability, specifically sexual practices.[85] This bias is a problem for a queer history whose inquiry is directed not towards finding stable gay and lesbian identities in the past but towards analysing how the construction of normative and non-normative sexual subjectivities has changed over time. The oral history archive that I have primarily worked with, the Archive of Other Memories in Berlin, was founded as part of the German federal government's efforts to rehabilitate men persecuted under §175.[86] Its nature as a recuperative, government-sponsored project also creates imbalances; specifically, the narratives told for it may tend to emphasize stories of victimhood over stories of success.[87] Keeping these methodological challenges in mind, oral histories are crucial to this study. I quote extensively from five interviews from the Archive of Other Memories, as well as one interview that I conducted myself, and from oral history passages reprinted in published histories. In approaching these sources, I was most interested in how narrators talked about spaces in Berlin, what the spaces meant to them and how they used them, and how narrators described their sexual and gendered subjectivities. Thus, while I listened to the complete interviews, I did not analyse the whole narrative, only the episodes that addressed Berlin specifically.

Chapter Overview

The book begins in the moment of Berlin's liberation from Nazism in early May 1945, as we follow lesbian communist Hilde Radusch and her girlfriend Eddy Klopsch marching back from their rural hideout into the city centre. The first chapter, "Homes," examines both how the realities of postwar housing played out for queer Berliners and the domestic, political, social, and sexual practices they engaged in to make queer homes. Bringing together oral history narratives, photographs, fiction, and personal papers, I explore what challenges and opportunities the material realities of the postwar moment, particularly the lack of housing and the absence of men, held for queer Berliners. My analysis follows feminist theorizations of home as a space of resistance and of homemaking as fundamental to the making of the self. In my discussion of queer practices of homemaking, I consider queer Berliners' living quarters but also their bodies as important sites of creating a sense of self and belonging.

From the precarious privacy of the home, the second chapter, "Surveilled Sociability: Queer Bars," moves into a semi-public space often

called a "second home": the bar. Opening with party photos that were collected and captioned by the West Berlin police, this chapter examines bars as spaces of surveilled sociability. It discusses personal narratives of going out in (West) Berlin against the backdrop of police records that document constant surveillance, frequent raids, and the targeted persecution of those categorized by the police as "transvestites" or "streetwalking boys." The chapter tracks changing reactions against this harassment, showing how bar-goers and owners both creatively subverted surveillance and fought it head-on during the 1960s. It also demonstrates the competing agendas of different authorities in regulating West Berlin's nightlife, as morality began losing out to the mandate of marketing the isolated city to tourists. Finally, it discusses the impact that the division of the city's public by the Wall had for queer East Berliners, who were mostly cut off from these spaces of sociability after August 1961.

Chapter 3, "Passing Through, Trespassing, Passing in Public Spaces," ventures out into the streets and parks of the city to examine what public spaces meant to queer Berliners and how their presence in public was perceived and policed. In personal narratives and police records, streets and parks appear as spaces of seeing and being seen, of flirting, cruising, and sex, but also of slurs, name-calling, and assault, of surveillance and arrest. One major focus of the chapter is the policing of non-normative gender by authorities and bystanders. I examine an oral history account of a feminine man who describes the difficult process of learning normative masculinity, as well as a police file that documents a changing policy of regulating "transvestites" in West Berlin. Another focus of this chapter is "streetwalking boys," who again emerge as central figures who attracted the police's attention, both for their public offers of sexual services and for crimes against their clients. In the chapter's third part, I analyse how the East German regime used the stigmatized figure of the streetwalking boy to detract attention from the violent death of Günter Litfin, the first person to be shot at the Berlin Wall. I argue that, through Litfin's death and the ensuing obliteration of his reputation, the Wall came to signify queer death for the city's queer community. From a distance, however, the Wall could also serve as a template for erotic fantasies, as a short story from Swiss homophile magazine *Der Kreis* demonstrates.

The final chapter, "Bubis behind Bars: Prisons as Queer Spaces," examines queer inmates' experiences of incarceration in both East and West Berlin, with a focus on women's prisons. In oral history accounts and prisoner files, penal institutions emerge as sites that simultaneously regulated and accommodated queer subjectivities. Lesbian

relationships and non-normatively gendered subjectivities have left traces in records from both the East and West Berlin's women's prisons. In the late 1960s, prison officials in East Berlin repeatedly linked newly criminalized "asocial" women with "lesbian love" and female masculinity.[88] In West Berlin, the file of prisoner Bettina Grundmann offers an opportunity to assess the possibilities and limits of prisoner agency. It also testifies to queer working-class subjectivities that are rarely found in movement archives. In these sources, prisons appear as spaces whose relatively isolated same-sex environment facilitated erotic relationships between women, turning a site designed to instill social norms into delinquents into a space of queer possibility.