Anti-AIDS Activism in the 1980s and 1990s

[M]isfortune is not the same thing as injustice. Death and illness are misfortunes. We are deeply upset over the prospect of a young man dying of incurable cancer, but we do not conceive it as a deep injustice which provokes a sense of outrage against a system productive of such misfortunes.

   – Ralph H. Turner, "The Theme of Contemporary Social Movements," 1972[1]

Oh, yeah?

                – Benita Roth, writing in the margins of the article above, 1990

INTRODUCTION: ANTI-AIDS ACTIVISM AND INJUSTICE REDEFINED

The preceding epigraphs are drawn from the work of one of the most respected and influential sociologists of the twentieth century – that would be the late Ralph Turner – and a snarky UCLA graduate student – that would be me. Juxtaposed, they show how much activism around questions of health and disease has shifted over the past several decades. Writing in 1972, Dr. Turner captured the general view that illnesses like cancer were equal-opportunity diseases. Very few of those suffering from cancer would have attributed the cause of that cancer to negligence by others, and therefore the means of generating the moral outrage that would turn misfortune to injustice was lacking.[2] But moral outrage around health issues was just around the corner. By the end of the 1970s, the feminist women's health movement was in full

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[1] Turner, Ralph. 1972. "The Theme of Contemporary Social Movements," pp. 586–599 in *Sociology, Students, and Society*, edited by Jerome Rabow. Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company.

[2] I'm indebted to Dolores Trevizo for making the point that an injustice frame requires the alleged malfeasance of others. Cancer, especially, was seen as the product of a repressed personality and therefore self-inflicted: see Sontag (1988).

swing, challenging sexist health practices, doctors' paternalistic authority over women, inequalities in healthcare delivery, and prevailing standards in resource allocation for research. Views on what caused disease and who was responsible for health changed, and the feminist health movement spilled over (Meyer and Whittier 1994), spawning other movements that worked to pave the way for a large-scale democratization of the culture of medical treatment and research.[3]

One of the movements that spilled over, buoyed by the questioning spirit of feminist women's health activism, was the direct action anti-AIDS movement of the 1980s and 1990s. This book is about the life and death of an organization that was part of that movement, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, Los Angeles, or ACT UP/LA.[4] ACT UP/LA was founded on December 4, 1987, when activists in Los Angeles called a "town meeting" for people who wanted to take direct action to fight AIDS.[5] The organization lasted for about ten years, ending sometime in 1997, when its three remaining members voted it out of existence.[6] ACT UP/LA's peak period of activism lasted from early 1989 to mid-1992, when it held weekly meetings attended regularly by eighty to one hundred people and sometimes twice that number. The group kept an office open until the mid-1990s, a bank account open beyond its final days, and maintained a network of contacts through an online listserve after it dissolved.

When I wrote my "Oh yeah?" comment in the margins of Turner's article, I myself was participating in ACT UP/LA, so I knew that the deaths of young men prompted outrage. Generating that outrage against the AIDS epidemic took effort and time. The first reactions of the lesbian and gay communities of Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and other American cities to the appearance of what came to be called AIDS was the widespread organizing of community-based social services for the sick.[7] In 1981, Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) formed in New York City; in 1982, the organization that began as the

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[3] On the women's health movement, see Sandra Morgen (2002); on the democratization of health research in the United States, see Steven Epstein (2009); on the spillover effects of the feminist health movement *and* AIDS activism on the anti-breast cancer movement see Klawiter (2008).

[4] I use "ACT UP/LA" throughout this book when writing about the Los Angeles group, as opposed to the generic "ACT UP" which has come to mean ACT UP/NY (see Brier 2009, note 1, p. 242). In using "ACT UP/LA," I follow the group's most common spelling of its name because there are variations in how the acronym is spelled in the group's documents; I preserve those variations when citing from documents.

[5] ACT UP/LA, "A Very Brief History of ACT UP/Los Angeles." Author's collection.

[6] As I discuss in Chapter 5, accounts of the end of ACT UP/LA differ. J. T. Anderson, Stephanie Boggs, and Peter Cashman, Interview with author, 1999; Jeff Scheurholz and Peter Jimenez, Interview with author, 2011.

[7] I use the terms "lesbian and gay" or "gay and lesbian" to denote what would now commonly be referred to as the "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered" (LGBT) community. I use the former terms because they were how the community referred to itself during the 1980s and 1990s. I consider this an imperfect solution to characterizing what was and is a diverse set of communities.

San Francisco Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation and would eventually become the San Francisco AIDS Foundation had formed.[8] In October 1982, the information hotline that would become AIDS Project Los Angeles was set up by four "founders" who, along with a representative from the San Francisco Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation, attended a meeting about what was then called Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disease (GRID) at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center.[9]

These early community-based, service-oriented organizations were highly politicized responses by lesbians and gays to the sense "that public health entities were unlikely to address something considered a gay disease" (Brier 2009: 20). Organizing militant direct action against institutions seen as responsible for the AIDS crisis took a few years to coalesce as the pride of the community taking care of its own became rage at the continued unwillingness of the government to fight AIDS and at the homophobic backlash that ensued as the public became aware of the disease (Gould 2009; see Chapter 2). In March 1987, lesbian and gay activists in New York City formed the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power/New York (ACT UP/NY). Although accounts of ACT UP/NY's founding vary, two things stand out. First, ACT UP/NY was not the first direct-action style protest group around AIDS that formed; second, the 300 or more "lesbians, gay men, and other sexual and gender outlaws" who attended the founding meeting of ACT UP/NY had the numbers and the desire to commit themselves to "the use of civil disobedience and direct action to fight the AIDS crisis" (Gould 2009: 131). ACT UP/NY became the largest, best known, and most widely emulated model for direct action anti-AIDS organizing. In particular, ACT UP/NY's appearance at the October 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights left a strong impression on lesbians and gays from all over the United States who were fighting local battles for the resources to fight the epidemic.

One of the places where ACT UP/NY's model of militancy was catalytic was Los Angeles. ACT UP/LA arose in late 1987 because members of LA's lesbian and gay community were enraged by authorities who alternately ignored them and reviled them. The members of ACT UP/LA were extraordinarily ambitious. They addressed a wide variety of HIV/AIDS issues, matters of healthcare generally, and other political issues involving queer rights and human rights. Members worked on local matters – the establishment of the dedicated AIDS ward at the publicly run County/USC hospital, subsequent monitoring of the ward and of county-funded outpatient clinics – and they coordinated with other ACT UPs to mount national campaigns. A very partial list of issues that ACT UP/LA addressed include:

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[8] See http://www.gmhc.org/about-us); http://www.sfaf.org/about-us/; and Gould (2009).
[9] See http://www.apla.org/about/history.html and Kenney (2001).

- Challenging the Immigration and Naturalization Service's policy regarding the immigration of HIV-positive people to the United States
- Protesting the reluctance of the Catholic Church and then Archbishop of Los Angeles Roger Cardinal Mahony to endorse safe-sex practices and education
- Speaking out against the Federal Drug Administration's slowness in approving life-saving AIDS drugs
- Asking for more visibility and more recognition for women's AIDS issues, including the fact that women were affected by different opportunistic infections than were men and subsequently demanding that the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta change definitions of AIDS to be more inclusive of female "people with AIDS" (PWAs)
- Raising awareness about consent issues for clinical trials
- Protesting prison conditions and the lack of care for prisoners with AIDS
- Arguing for universal healthcare and health insurance
- Promoting needle exchange programs and services for intravenous drug users
- Challenging discriminatory policies and individual acts of discrimination against HIV-positive people

ACT UP/LA members were also involved with other progressive causes, such as Central American solidarity politics, abortion clinic defense, and, by the early 1990s, queer politics through the organization Queer Nation. In the words of the late Stephanie Boggs, one of ACT UP/LA's last members, "there were too many AIDS issues."[10]

ACT UP/LA members used a wide variety of tactics to address these issues: they "employ(ed) multiple mechanism of influence (including disruption, persuasion, and bargaining" as they contended with power (Andrews 2001: 75). Members lobbied elected officials and they wrote letters to those in power, but they also participated in disruptive "phone zaps" and "fax zaps," where members would deluge an official's office with endless calls or faxes. They protested by sitting in officials' offices; they held vigils, marches, and demonstrations at relevant sites. They distributed leaflets, but they also put up stickers and wheat-pasted posters on the walls of public spaces, defying laws about those activities. ACT UP/LA members appeared at gay and lesbian pride parades, staging die-ins at those events and in other spaces. They attended government meetings and participated on internal review boards at hospitals but were willing to disrupt those same meetings. As one might surmise by the variety of tactics used, some members of ACT UP/LA championed disruption and feared any form of cooperation with authority. Others were willing to "play ball" with authority. Still others were ready to be nice or nasty as the situation required.

What these lists of issues and tactics show is how wide a net ACT UP/LA cast in trying to capture energy to direct against the many-faceted AIDS crisis. ACT

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[10] Interview with author, 1999.

UP/LA participants were for the most part lesbians and gay men whose politics were left-of-center or had been pushed left by the crisis. People came to the group out of concern and outrage over inaction regarding the crisis and over societal prejudice against those infected with HIV. This concern and outrage was often very personal because many members were themselves HIV-positive and had friends who had died of AIDS. Some ACT UP/LA members died in the course of their activism. The ambitious list of goals was accompanied by a set of great expectations about what the group could accomplish. While not all of their expectations were met, the ACT UP/LA members accomplished enough to change the landscape of AIDS funding, service provision, and awareness in Los Angeles. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, AIDS was a pandemic barely addressed by government, the medical establishment, and the social service sector, and every victory seemed hard-won and insufficient. At the same time, an "AIDS industry" was beginning to be built in both private and public settings as doctors, drug companies, not-for-profit groups, magazines, and media emerged in support of the AIDS community. As such, ACT UP/LA's effectiveness really depended on negotiating two related stances: (1) criticizing the shortcomings of institutions in fighting the AIDS crisis – the insufficient resources devoted to stopping AIDS, the lack of basic information about the virus, and the dearth of services for PWAs – and (2) insisting that these same institutions build new agencies and incorporate new spaces for dealing with the pandemic.

WHY STUDY ACT UP/LA?

I wish to make several interventions into the field of movement studies through examining ACT UP/LA's life and death. First, I wish to remedy the conflation of the ACT UPs, a broad and decentralized social movement, with ACT UP/NY, a conflation that misrepresents the widespread appeal and coalitional nature of direct action anti-AIDS activism in the 1980s and 1990s. Second, I make the case for greater attention to the politics of place in movement studies. Scholars have acknowledged the importance of studying the local movement field (Ray 1999) in order to understand activists' choices and organizational trajectories. I argue that the LA metropolitan area's structure of "segregated diversity" (Pulido 2006: 52), the County of Los Angeles' role in healthcare provision, and the local history of LGBT politics in Los Angeles affected ACT UP/LA's trajectory as a movement organization. Third, I argue that ACT UP/LA, like other ACT UPs, was an example and, in fact, an exemplar of progressive, multi-issue, anti-corporate, confrontational movements of the late twentieth century. Last, I argue that a feminist intersectional theoretical lens is essential for understanding the dynamics and trajectory of this social movement organization as members grappled with challenges to their intent to engage in democratic and coalitional politics. ACT UP/LA as an organization struggled with maintaining the coalitional solidarity that its members sought due to intractable social inequalities and increasing heterogeneity within the group. A feminist intersectional lens, which

examines the mutually reinforcing hierarchies of oppression that impact interaction, makes it possible to see those social cleavages as they emerged.

CONFLATION AND HIDING THE COALITION NATURE OF DIRECT-ACTION ANTI-AIDS PROTEST

Although ACT UP/NY was the first and the largest ACT UP, it was not the only ACT UP of consequence. The conflation of ACT UP with ACT UP/NY minimizes the scope and appeal of militant anti-AIDS activism in the mid-1980s to early 1990s. Some scholars have written about ACT UP/NY without conflating it with the rest of the movement (Carroll 2015); others have moved beyond the conflation (see Gould 2009; Stockdill 2003) to look at other ACT UPs. But popular media still sees ACT UP/NY as constituting all of ACT UP. Mainstream media in the United States remains centered in New York City: a recent story in *New York* magazine, "Pictures from a Battlefield," depicted ACT UP/NY founders "then and now," without any sense that ACT UPs existed outside New York City.[11] ACT UP/NY is also the most "researchable" ACT UP.[12]

In terms of social movement theory, the conflation of ACT UP with ACT UP/NY leads away from important explorations of the coalitional nature of social movements. What does a more accurate picture of the anti-AIDS direct action movement tell us about the kinds of coalitions needed to do direct action protest? Conflating ACT UP with ACT UP/NY portrays the anti-AIDS direct action movement as the project of a singular, vanguard organization rather than an example of real *social movement*. The ACT UPs were a loosely bound coalition of activists who used direct action along with other forms of disruption – and other forms of more routine political action – to make claims on authorities at the local, national, and, at times, international levels. The network of ACT UPs was internally fractured and at times fragile, but members were nevertheless able to coordinate actions *and* retain a measure of control over their participation. My study of ACT UP/LA contributes to the literature about coalitions in social movements and makes three larger points. First, the very way we speak about movements – the civil rights movement, the labor movement, the feminist movement, the anti-AIDS movement – minimizes differences among coalition members and minimizes the different kinds of challenges that coalition members face. As Van Dyke and McCammon (2010: vii) note

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[11] David France, March 25, 2012, accessed April 2, 2012 http://nymag.com/news/features/act-up-2012–4/.

[12] ACT UP/NY's files have been made accessible at the New York Public Library (see http://www.nypl.org/archives/894); the excellent ACT UP Oral History Project focuses chiefly on activists who were in ACT UP/NY (see http://www.actuporalhistory.org/). Two recent documentaries – David France's Academy Award-nominated "How to Survive a Plague" (http://surviveaplague.com/) and Jim Hubbard's "United in Anger" (http://www.unitedinanger.com/) also focus on ACT UP/NY, although both filmmakers show ACT UP/NY members acting in concert with participants from other ACT UPs to pull off demonstrations outside the city.

many, if not most, movements are amalgamations of movement organizations. Many researchers assume that movements are simply homogenous social entities … conceptualizing social movements as … coalitional networks allows us to grasp more fully the varied constituencies, ideological perspectives, identities and tactical preferences different groups bring to movement activism.

The ACT UPs as a movement were such a coalitional network. As I discuss at a number of points in this book, ACT UP/LA had a tenuous relationship with the variously named national networks of ACT UPs that coordinated national actions, and it fought with the national network over questions of democratic decision-making and the distribution of resources. Conflating the whole of the ACT UPs with one social movement organization hides exactly what Van Dyke and McCammon advise us to uncover – the complex coalitional dynamics of ACT UP as a social movement made up of a variety of constituencies.

In fact, a number of social movement scholars agree that speaking of the existence of a social movement in the singular is no more than a "grammatical convenience … in reality, movements are much sloppier affairs" (Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005: 329). Some scholars have put forward understandings of movements as networks; for them, social movements are unique political formations because they rest on the creation of a new network out of

formally independent actors who are embedded in specific local contexts (where "local" is meant in either a territorial or a social sense), bear specific identities, values, and orientations, and pursue specific goals and objectives, but who are at the same time linked through various forms of concrete cooperation and/or mutual recognition in a bond which extends beyond any specific protest action, campaign, etc. (Diani 2003: 301)

There is further recognition by scholars that the edges and borders of movements are often unclear. New networks of activists and new organizations are formed as individuals with multiple alliances shift their relationships with others, with issues, and with particular groups (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Roth 2008; Saunders 2007).

Second, much of the work that social movement scholars have written on coalitions has to do with how "grammatically convenient" movements affiliate (or don't) with other movements. In other words, scholars tend to focus on when and how individuals in organizations in different movements – defined as "different" on the basis of issues – come together in coalition across difference (see, among others, Agustin and Roth 2011; Beamish and Luebbers 2009; Dixon and Martin 2012; Ferree and Roth 1998; Krinsky and Reese 2006; Mayer et al. 2010; Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005; Mix and Cable 2006; Rose 1999; Roth 2010; Saunders 2013; Simmons and Harding 2009; Van Dyke 2003).[13] According to Meyer and Corrigall-Brown (2005: 327)

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[13] For a look at intramovement coalition formation – again with the movement defined by an issue as such – see Staggenborg (1986).

(t)he decision of social movement organizations to join a coalition is akin to the process whereby individuals join social movements, involving an assessment of costs, benefits, and identity. As the political context changes, the costs and benefits are assessed differently and, for this reason, actively engaged coalitions are difficult to sustain over a long period as circumstances change.

Thus, scholars generally agree then that heterogeneity among social movements – of issues, of constituency, of ideology – is a challenge for joint political action.

Third, I wish to broach the question of how heterogeneity or diversity within a social movement organization is also a challenge for actors. Unlike social movements, social movement organizations generally have perceivable outlines and boundaries – in fact boundary-making by members of an organization between themselves and the outside is a key way of mobilizing and establishing collective identity (Taylor and Whittier 1992). Within a social movement organization, members often struggle with negotiating common interests while battling structural inequalities among members that lead to division. To give just one example, Ostrander (1999: 640) has written about how, even in progressive organizations, members engage in active practices to try to prevent structural inequalities from impeding action, such that "gendered and racialized patterns may both be very much in evidence and, at the same time, be regularly and actively challenged" (Ostrander 1999: 640). Silke Roth, in her work on the Congress of Labor Union Women (CLUW), a "bridging organization" (Roth 2003) that sought alliances with other related movements, argued that CLUW needed to use conscious strategies to maintain a collective identity that was "sufficiently broad as well as meaningful to a diverse constituency" (Roth 2008: 215). In particular, Roth emphasized that CLUW's organizational structure provided a means of integrating diverse elements because the group followed the formal, federated, and representation structure of the American labor movement in mobilizing members.

Using a very different template but also relying on structure to manage heterogenous interests, ACT UP/LA and other ACT UPs declared themselves to be coalitions of individuals. The name "ACT UP" itself – "AIDS *Coalition* to Unleash Power – showed that participants intended the group to be diverse in its make-up. ACT UP/NY established a participatory democratic structure of having a general assembly – or "General Body" – make decisions while having committees devoted to members' diverse interests and, less easily, their diverse identities. ACT UP/LA emulated ACT UP/NY's structure of "General Body plus committees" and made participation the sole criterion of membership. ACT UP/LA's founding was, as I discuss in Chapter 2, based on a coming together of a variety of groups working against AIDS and for lesbian and gay rights, and its founders wanted to maintain the new group as a coalition of individuals united by the desire to actively fight AIDS. In practice, the ACT UP/LA's coalition of individuals was maintained by channeling members into committees but also by allowing for participation "only" in the General Body or

"only" at actions The structure that ACT UP/LA used came at a moment of heterogeneity within the larger lesbian and gay community, which had come to tolerate a great deal of diversity in organizing. By the late 1980s, the lesbian and gay movement, organized as it was around constituencies seeking changes in policy, seeking to celebrate identity, and looking for pleasure, had what Armstrong calls a "high tolerance for ambiguity," which helped foster cooperation among its constituencies (Armstrong 2002: 198). In this book, I show how ACT UP/LA's members negotiated the pressures of maintaining unity in the face of real structural differences among members.

THE POLITICS OF PLACE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL FIELDS FOR ACTION

A second contribution I wish to make with this examination of ACT UP/LA, one that dovetails with the coalitional perspective on social movements advocated earlier, is to suggest that scholars pay attention to the politics of place in exploring the actions of social movement participants and the trajectory of organizations. Local histories and relationships among political actors condition social movement activism and mean that actors working in coalition but situated in different physical spaces face different challenges. In social movement studies, scholars have usefully referred to local contexts as social movement *fields*, following Raka Ray's (1999) term. In her work comparing the two different settings for Indian feminist organizing of Bombay and Calcutta, Ray defined "field" as "a structural, unequal, and socially constructed environment *within* which organizations are embedded and *to* which organizations and activists constantly respond" (1999: 6, emphasis in the original). In Ray's view, a field encompasses the other political players – movement organizations, political parties, and state structures – that social movement actors confront. Significantly, a field also has a prevailing political culture, that is, a way that actors make and respond to claims. Political culture can be understood as being both the routine ways that politics is done in a given context and the embodied understandings of politics based on the experience of the founders and joiners of organizations (Roth 2003; Whittier 1997). Ray's conception of activists confronting the local as well as the national helped to bring questions of regional variation to the front of analyses of movements, and the term "field" has been used in social movement studies in a variety of ways to signify the environment that social movement participants act in beyond the organization. Although Ray meant the field to include social movement actors and the political institutions to which they made claims, others, for example, Armstrong (2002), have used "field" to mean the social movement sector itself, specifically that of LGBT organizing in the city of San Francisco. In another comparative work on feminist organizing within a national framework,

Guenther (2010) examines how feminist organizations in different parts of "reunified" Germany constructed different agendas linked to local contexts and political cultures. She makes a particularly strong case for how local histories and local political opportunities shape the character of local feminist organizations.

Following Ray's original definition of a social movement field as an environment for social activism that includes institutions, social movement organizations, and a history of political culture, in this book, I examine how ACT UP/LA operated in a social movement field characterized by features specific to Los Angeles as a metropolitan area: (1) the city as a sprawling urban metroscape of "segregated diversity" (Pulido 2006: 52) and the way that public health institutions were distributed within that urban space and (2) the specific history of lesbian and gay activism, some of it militant, in the Los Angeles metro area. First, as any visitor would know, LA is a huge, sprawling metropolitan area. That sprawl is a relatively recent phenomenon, and the hollowing out of the urban core due to the growth of suburbs is a post-World War II phenomena. Suburbanization in Los Angeles further divided the metro area by race and class. Political geographer Laura Pulido (2006: 34) has noted that while LA's postwar development was triggered by "a tremendous population explosion" and by "massive economic development, particularly in the military and aerospace industries," it proceeded along lines of race and class. As defense companies turned Los Angeles into a "martial metropolis" (Loyd 2014: 7), the new jobs provided opportunities both for people of color – with interned Japanese Americans returning from camps with nothing and no choice but to find new places to live – and for internal white working-class migrants, but segregation deposited them in different neighborhoods,

The "incorporation movement" in LA County further ensured racial and class segregation:

> Between 1940 and 1960, almost sixty cities incorporated in the metropolitan area. . . . . [Incorporation] established a geographic base for unequal opportunity, as incorporated cities were able to exert far more control over who lives, entered, and shopped in their communities . . . the reproduction of white privilege was predicated on distancing oneself from the poor and people of color. (Pulido 2006: 34)

These "minimal cities" (Davis 1990: 166) were able to keep the Other – however the Other was defined – out, and they foisted responsibility for municipal functions onto Los Angeles County. At roughly the same historical moment, the federal government passed the 1946 Hill-Burton Act, which allowed for the construction of new public hospitals, with specific provisions that allowed the hospitals to be placed in "underserved" areas. The Act allowed counties and municipalities to justify racial discrimination on the basis of creating geographical "service areas" with racially separate medical facilities. According to Loyd (2014: 38),

[i]n Los Angeles, rapidly suburbanized, new hospitals constructed with Hill-Burton funding would effectively be segregated by virtue of where they were built. Between 1950 and 1959 ninety general hospitals were built in metropolitan Los Angeles, a stunning increase of almost 8,500 beds, 64 percent of which were in new hospitals.[14]

As public hospitals were being built, LA County saw the development of free clinics tied to the "community control" movement of the 1960s and 1970s (Loyd 2014: ch. 7). But these clinics were not able to wrest control from the new corporate health empires being established because hospitals, along with pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies, usurped power from the medical professionals and community activists who had sought free clinics in the first place (Loyd 2014: 204).

Thus, in the 1980s, direct action anti-AIDS activists in Los Angeles organized within a diverse but segregated metroscape and faced one major opponent in their quest for better resources for people with AIDS: the County of Los Angeles, the entity responsible for the provision of public health. The quest for resources was also shaped by the state of California's shifting of the burden for rising public healthcare costs onto smaller municipalities and counties as a means of politically insulating the state from criticism for the failures to control costs and provide care (Loyd 2014: 220). By the late 1970s, the thirty or so public hospitals operating in California provided almost 50 percent of "uncompensated care" (Loyd 2014: 223): that is, they were serving the poor and the uninsured. Confronting the County of LA's public health department and the County Board of Supervisors was a constant, central activity for ACT UP/LA's members, given that institution's central role in the (non-)provision of healthcare for people with AIDS.

The presence of prior LGBT activism in Los Angeles was also important in shaping the way that ACT UP/LA organized. Although standard narratives of LGBT activism in the United States present what Moira Kenney (2001: 1) calls "a tale of two cities, centering on New York and San Francisco," the way that lesbians and gays lived in LA – less visibly in more spread-out neighborhoods – was more like the way that most lesbians and gays lived in other cities:

The size and sprawl of the city necessitates a mobility of daily life that scatters ethnic, racial, religious, and other culturally defined communities, reducing the possibilities of the kind of geographic concentrations of community landmarks that characterize enclaves like Greenwich Village or the Castro. (Kenney 2001: 5)

For much of the twentieth century, the LA metro area did not have visible LGBT enclaves; that changed with the incorporation of West Hollywood, a story that I will turn to in a moment. But Los Angeles was nonetheless the site of important LGBT activism. As historians Lillian Faderman and Stuart

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[14] The racializing provisions of Hill-Burton were deemed unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court in 1964 (Loyd 2014: 48–49).

Timmons (2006: 3) note "more lesbian and gay institutions started in Los Angeles than anywhere else on the planet." There were certain neighborhoods that attracted gays and lesbians, like the Silverlake district, where gay leftist men founded the first "homophile" organization, the Mattachine Society, in 1950 (Kenney 2001: 7). The ONE Institute and *ONE* magazine were also founded in Los Angeles in the 1950s; both were forums for gay scholarship, with the ONE Institute eventually comprising the largest archive of LGBT materials in the world (Kenney 2001: 7). The likely first US lesbian publication was circulated out of Los Angeles by "Lisa Ben" who "stole time from her secretarial job in Hollywood to write and publish *Vice-Versa*, the first lesbian publication circulated in the United States" in the late 1940s (Kenney 2001: 7). And the Metropolitan Community Church was founded in Los Angeles by the Reverend Troy Perry in 1968 (Faderman and Timmons 2009: 162–165), giving lesbians and gays a place to express their (Christian) faith.

All of the activism just described predated the June 1969 Stonewall Rebellion in Greenwich Village, the event most often used to mark the founding of militant lesbian and gay politics in the United States. LA also saw public and disruptive LGBT protest in the 1960s prior to Stonewall. The intolerable degree of harassment by Los Angeles police of gay bars led to demonstrations in the wake of egregious police brutality on New Year's Eve in 1967 at a bar called the Black Cat (Armstrong and Crage 2006: 733–735). Although the Black Cat Raid did not trigger the "commemorative" response that the raid on the Stonewall Inn did two years later, it was nonetheless a key moment for the LGBT activists in LA as homophiles went from routine forms of political interaction toward the consideration of more open display (Faderman and Timmons 2006: 153). One group that helped to organize the demonstrations against the Black Cat raid, Personal Rights in Defense and Education (PRIDE), eventually ended up starting *The Advocate*, still the premiere national LGBT magazine/media conglomerate.[15]

WEST HOLLYWOOD'S ROLE IN LESBIAN AND GAY POLITICS

By the 1970s, West Hollywood, a slice of unincorporated county in the relative middle of the LA metro area, had become an LGBT enclave, in part because it was "overlooked and relatively ungoverned" (Kenney 2001; 36–37) by the County. Since the 1920s, West Hollywood had been known for its night life, much of which was tied to the film industry studios next door in Hollywood. The county sheriffs who policed the area were less brutal than the LA Police Department (LAPD; Kenney 2001: 23). Attracted by West Hollywood's location, wedged between the studios of Hollywood and the riches of Beverly Hills, after World War II, hipsters, hippies, Jewish refugees from Europe, and,

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[15] See Faderman and Timmons (2006: 159) and http://www.advocate.com/; http://web.archive.org /web/20080129125434/http://www.planetout.com/pno/news/history/archive/advocate.html).

later, Russians and Ukrainians moved in, rented cheap apartments, and shopped Santa Monica Boulevard, the soon to be city's main artery. West Hollywood incorporated in 1984, making it a relative latecomer to the incorporation movement, but it was a very different kind of political entity than had been seen in the metro area. Along with the so-called "People's Republic of Santa Monica," West Hollywood's founders styled themselves as progressive, and many were unabashedly lesbian or gay. The city's first city council election featured forty candidates, nineteen of whom were openly gay or lesbian (Kenney 2001: 49).

The incorporation and ongoing success of West Hollywood as a city nonetheless contributed to LA County's landscape of segregated diversity. While West Hollywood was internally diverse in terms of its inhabitants, with people of different ages, religions, and sexualities sharing its densely packed streets, it was still largely white and distant from the neighborhoods where people of color lived. Some gays and lesbians of color saw going to "WeHo" as "an excursion into whiteness" (Faderman and Timmons 2009 281). In contrast, another neighborhood within Los Angeles City's boundaries, Silverlake, was a place where lesbians and gays worked in coalition with that area's working-class Latino families (Faderman and Timmons 2009: 298–299). Because Silverlake was part of the larger city of Los Angeles, gays and lesbians could not take the kind of control they did in West Hollywood; for this and other reasons, Silverlake was West Hollywood's not quite as glamorous, not quite an enclave, counterpart. West Hollywood remained the center of LGBT life in LA County, a city where lesbian and gay citizens had real power to shape social agendas, and, when the AIDS epidemic struck, it was in West Hollywood where social services were most easily set up for PWAs (Kenney 2001: 9).

ACT UP/LA came to embody the bipolar LGBT world in how and where it chose to organize. Its Monday night "General Body" meetings took place in West Hollywood's Plummer Park, and its office space was located in a downmarket (then, anyway) stretch of Sunset Boulevard in Silverlake. The politics of place – the social movement field – that ACT UP/LA occupied was thus characterized by LA County's geography of segregated diversity and the County's centrality in providing healthcare to poorer PWAs from different racial/ethnic neighborhoods and by a political culture of activism by lesbians and gays that culminated in the establishment of the LGBT power enclave of West Hollywood, a progressive city that was still far, symbolically and actually, from many of those affected by AIDS.

The failure to consider the politics of place also renders invisible the way that all the ACT UPs, including ACT UP/NY, *oscillated between local and national actions* during the 1980s and 1990s. ACT UP/NY also made use of local targets to make its voice heard about the AIDS crisis. Actions at spaces like the New York Stock Exchange, Shea Stadium, Grand Central Station, and St. Patrick's Cathedral received national attention, but they were *local*

targets.[16] This oscillation between the local and the national in terms of actions was mirrored by other ACT UPs; it was certainly what ACT UP/LA did.

In order to understand how a decentralized, networked coalition of social movement organizations actually proceeds, we have to understand this oscillation between the local and the national because the ACT UPs were *never* solely about taking nationally coordinated action against national targets. The many ACT UPs that existed engaged in local and nationally coordinated actions and similarly made use of local landmarks in their actions; activists made claims on political authorities for resources, and some of these authorities were cities, counties, and states. Both local and national struggles could be invigorating or enervating; certainly, on the whole, locally based anti-AIDS activists benefited from the national networks that they chose to be a part of, but national coordination among the ACT UPs was always fraught. I think it is significant that not a single activist I interviewed saw his or her participation in the national actions as the only reason to be in ACT UP/LA; instead, almost all recounted stories of oscillation between local and national actions, as I will show in the chapters to come.

ACT UPS AS EXEMPLARS OF LATE TWENTIETH-CENTURY ACTIVISM

A third way that my study of ACT UP/LA contributes to movement studies is by showing how the ACT UPs collectively embodied the decentralized structure of many late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century social movements, as well as the set of interlocking concerns about inequality, democracy, and justice that went beyond healthcare. The ACT UPs were decidedly left-wing organizations, and recentering direct action anti-AIDS organizing within the narrative of progressive protest in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries helps to address the traditional left's neglect of issues of "sex, sexuality, desire, and gender" (Highleyman 2002: 116) as well as redress a history of protest politics that does the same (Pulido 2006; Valocchi 2001).

The direct action anti-AIDS movement was decentralized and networked in an era largely before the communications revolution that the Internet ushered in (Juris 2008a). ACT UP/LA and the other ACT UPs made copious and sophisticated use of what was, in the 1980s and 1990s, a barely emerging new set of communication technologies. Activists coordinated actions by teleconferencing, used cell phones, and, toward the end, sent messages via email, listserves, and bulletin boards. At its height, the ACT UP network included over one hundred ACT UPs in the United

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[16] Tamar Carroll (2015: 5) has helpfully pointed out in her work on anti-AIDS mobilization in New York City that the city's local landmarks have iconic status for the rest of the United States (think the Statue of Liberty). That, as well as the importance of the city for finance, culture, immigration, and media, have led to New York City being "perceived as simultaneously distinctive and representative of America."

States (Halcli 1999), and the name "ACT UP" was used by anti-AIDS groups in Sydney, Paris, London, and even Moscow.[17]

In the United States, the individual ACT UPs retained their autonomy while they coordinated national actions involving hundreds and sometimes thousands of participants. The ACT UPs were dedicated to participatory democracy and organizational informality. They operated without membership lists for the most part (although fundraisers compiled mailing lists for direct mail campaigns), and yet they were able to mount repeated local and national challenges to institutional authority. Informality was part of identity; ACT UP/LA members, like those in other ACT UPs, engaged in activism that was simultaneously instrumental in its goals and explicitly expressive of members' identities. Many, if not most, who participated in ACT UPs were dismissive of assimilative, integrationist "rights" politics that were becoming more prominent in the lesbian and gay community (Armstrong 2002; Seidman 2005). But, at least in ACT UP/LA, those same activists were equally dismissive of mere expressivity in political action, and most were uninterested in single-issue politics. AIDS was at the center of a politics that linked the crisis to homophobia; racial, class, and gender inequality; and the lack of real democracy in people's everyday lives.

Some scholars have noted the way that the ACT UPs simultaneously embodied militancy against AIDS *and* other kinds of injustice, and they have noted how the ACT UPs exemplified the decentralized, late-twentieth-century social movement. Shepard and Hayduk, in their 2002 collection, *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization*, assert a link between anti-AIDS activism, particularly the ACT UPs, and anti-corporate globalization struggles. In their contribution to that volume, Lesley J. Wood and Kelly Moore (2002: 28) argue that

ACT UP pioneered a new political stream by drawing upon the affinity group model used by American anti-nuclear activists, using the anarchist, pacifist, and civil rights tradition of localized decision-making; the direct action techniques of pacifists who physically confronted systems of power through "misuse" of spaces; and the feminist emphasis on process.

The affinity group model of "small, face-to-face groups that form the basic units for a protest" had existed in protest movements for decades and, more immediately, was used in US left and anti-Vietnam War protest in the 1960s and 1970s (Kauffman 2002: 36). Affinity groups were an important safety valve for ACT UP/LA, a way for participants to engage in disruptive protest and, at the same time, protect the "General Body" of ACT UP/LA as an organization.

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[17] Stride and Lee (2007) have argued that institutionalized nonprofits and charities using branding in order to promote the values of the organization to the public; in the 1980s and 1990s, the ACT UP brand, much like the Occupy brand of 2011–2012, denoted a modular style of direct-action protest that could be adapted to local circumstances. On the international appeal of the ACT UP brand, see Nguyen (2010), who has noted that an anti-AIDS group in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, renamed itself "ACT UP Abidjan" to link itself to the ACT UP style of activism.

They were also an explicit and structural acknowledgment that individuals had the right to protest as they saw fit, without necessarily asking for the majority's approval.

ACT UP/LA members targeted a number of institutions and power centers, including the state; they used a variety of tactics that ranged from disruptive to routine; and they built an agenda based on the interests of members of their community. The multiple targets of LGBT activists – the way that activists focus on centers of power beyond the state – have led some in movement studies to see gay and lesbian organizing as "a subcultural movement that embraces tactics that are expressive and internally oriented, rather than instrumental and externally oriented" (Taylor et al. 2013: 220). Because ACT UP/LA was built on a foundation of members' interests, questions arose concerning who the ACT UP/LA community was and how united the participants could be under the ACT UP/LA banner. ACT UP/LA members had to grapple with difference – different interests, different positions within the lesbian and gay community, different positions within the larger matrices of power relations – in the making of solidarity, ACT UP/LA, like many movement organizations before it, had to struggle with creating links among heterogenous individuals situated in structurally unequal space. Because ACT UP/LA's members were diverse, I argue that a feminist intersectional theoretical approach works well for understanding the group's trajectory, and I next turn to an explanation of what feminist intersectional theory can bring to the understanding of ACT UP/LA and social movement organizations generally.

THE FEMINIST INTERSECTIONAL LENS ON ACT UP/LA

A last theoretical intervention I wish to make is to argue for using a feminist intersectional perspective to unpack the ways in which activists in ACT UP/LA and other social movement organizations like it dealt with complex inequalities (Stein 2013) in interaction. I argue that a feminist intersectional perspective on movement studies is useful because the very concept of intersectionality is rooted in the idea of (oppositional) communities being composed of coalitions of actors whose social locations exist at the intersection of mutually co-constructed inequalities.

The concept of "intersectionality" is usually attributed to critical race law scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) who is given credit for coining the term because her work both encapsulated and extended the ideas present in the emerging interdisciplinary field of women's studies.[18] Crenshaw argued that in

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[18] Crenshaw's work remains a touchstone for scholars across a number of disciplines working in intersectionality studies in the US and internationally. See Brah and Phoenix (2004); Carastathis (2013); Carbado (2013); Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013); Choo and Ferree (2010); Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013); Davis (2008); Jordan-Zachery (2007); Lewis (2013); MacKinnon (2013); Ferree (2009); McCall (2005); Mohanty (2013); Patil (2013); Valentine 2007; Verloo

looking at the situation of marginalized groups – women, Blacks, people living in class-segregated communities – scholars needed to account for the "multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (1995: 358). Following her conceptualization of individual identities shaped by mutually co-constructed inequalities, Crenshaw theorized that oppositional communities were actually coalitions rather than homogenous groups in which all members had identical interests. Some members were relatively privileged in terms of how they were treated by dominant institutions; others decidedly less so.

Definitions of intersectionality have proliferated over time, and the term's "ambiguity and open-endedness" helped ensure its widespread adoption (Davis 2008: 67). Thus, any scholar using the concept of intersectionality needs to specify what she means by it (Choo and Ferree 2010). Recently, in a special issue of the journal *Signs* devoted to intersectionality studies, Crenshaw and co-authors Sumi Cho and Leslie McCall (2013: 795) characterized intersectionality as

… best framed as an analytic sensibility … What makes an analysis intersectional – whatever terms it deploys, whatever its iteration, whatever its field or discipline – is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power. This framing – conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always permeated by other categories, fluid and changing, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power – emphasizes what intersectionality does rather what intersectionality is.

The view that Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall take of intersectionality as sensibility has several advantages for thinking about power, sameness, and difference, and I found their view of intersectionality as sensibility important in researching ACT UP/LA. Thinking about intersectionality as sensibility severs the substantive link between the researcher's methodology and the progressive ideology of the group being studied. Even a group like ACT UP/LA that emerged from a marginalized community and sought to organize itself in an intersectional manner – conscious of difference and the pervasiveness of relations of power – should be studied as if it can be affected by the very same power relations it rejects.

As a sociologist, I do take some issue with Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall on the question of fluidity; here, I follow Mignon Moore's (2011: 7) approach of seeking not to "dismantle categories … [but] to understand how people whose lives have historically been structured by categories make sense of them and use them in different ways." As my research will show, activists chose subject positions and, indeed, inhabiting a relatively stable subject position was a necessity for action. ACT UP/LA's members, like any other social movement

(2013); and Yuval-Davis (2006). For earlier, "pre-coinage" expressions of intersectional perspectives, see the Combahee River Collective (1979, 1981); Thornton Dill (1983); King (1988); Sacks (1989); and Spelman (1982).

participants, needed to construct a collective identity in order to act together. In social movement studies, scholars have focused on the processes by which participants establish collective identities strong enough to enable mobilization across difference (Jasper and Polletta 2001; Kosbie 2013). Scholars have rightly conceptualized the accomplishment of collective identity as an achievement, not a given, and thus have led us away from assuming that marginalized group members automatically share common interests. But marginalized groups do find common cause even as they contend with internal heterogeneity. The ongoing achievement of collective identity oriented toward action should be seen as a resource in itself, although an ultimately unstable one, and intersectional analysis can uncover "politicized identity categories to be held together variously by tacit, unspoken, deliberate, and explicit acts of alignment, solidarity, and exclusion" (Carastathis 2013: 942). It is also useful, I think, to consider heterogeneity as socially constructed and to consider what it means to establish a collective identity based on the idea of embracing difference. As Ghaziani (2008: 2) has argued in his work on the organizing of large-scale marches for LGBT rights in the 1970s through the 1990s, even conflict can have positive effects for coalitional work because "conflict is one of the major ways activists make decisions about goals and strategies" (Ghaziani 2008: 2). However, conflict across organizations is likely experienced quite differently than conflict within organizations; an intersectional approach should also pay attention to the ramifications of social difference experienced in specific interactional settings.

Another advantage of having an intersectional sensibility is that it mandates thinking *structurally* about people's interactions; that is, thinking about the way the "macro" influences choices made on a more "micro" scale. As Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013: 922) have argued, "(t)he idea of intersectionality helped shift the focus of academic feminist and anti-racist contestations away from preoccupations with intentional prejudice and toward perspectives grounded in analyses of systemic dynamics and institutional power." In sociological terms, the view of intersectionality as structural and interactional dovetails well with Choo and Ferree's (2010: 134) characterization of "process-centered" intersectional analysis, in which the researcher uses an intersectional view to reveal "structural processes organizing power." Process-oriented intersectionality is necessarily constructionist and, as such, "examine(s) how individuals are 'recruited to' categories and yet have choices in the 'subject positions' they adopt in these complex locations." Process-oriented intersectional analysis does more than generate lists of groups who are "given voice" in analysis – what Choo and Ferree refer to as the "inclusion" model of intersectionality; instead, process-oriented intersectionality proposes that intersecting inequalities are "characteristic of the social world in general" (2010: 133), and this always important for analysis.

Process-oriented intersectional analysis is what drives my analysis of ACT UP/LA in this book. I argue that specific inequalities – being gay or lesbian, being female or male or transsexual, being a specific race, even having a specific

set of AIDS issues – are incarnated in specific settings. For example, gay men in ACT UP/LA were marked by their non-mainstream sexuality, but, at the same time, they were men, members of a socially privileged group in society at large. Their gayness may have hampered easy access to that privilege, but questions of male dominance were part of ACT UP/LA's internal discussions almost from its beginning. A process-oriented intersectional perspective posits that *everyone* has an inherently intersectional social location, an inherently interactional set of resources to employ. This insight about everyone's intersectional location/resources/burdens holds whether or not members with disparaged statuses actually make claims *on behalf* of redressing the injuries caused by disparaged statuses because it matters that claims are being made *by* those with disparaged statuses. At the same time, process-oriented intersectionality allows the researcher to consider the question of which social cleavages caused by inequalities are salient in given social situations, allowing that "in specific historical situations and in relation to specific people there are some social divisions that are more important than others in constructing specific positioning" (Yuval-Davis 2006: 203).

I noted earlier that Crenshaw's work inspired scholars to think of oppositional communities as coalitions, and this is a particularly important aspect of the feminist intersectional perspective for movement studies. Social movement theorists of late have drawn more pronounced and sustained attention to the question of coalitions in movement politics (see the essays in Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). Intersectionality scholars have long maintained that, not only are collective action groups coalitions, but also that, because of intersecting inequalities, these "strategic group positions … are always partial, perspectival, and performative" (Chun et al. 2013: 923). If chosen "strategic group positions," including collective identities, are always partial, an intersectional perspective can help to uncover the way that "politicized identity categories [are] held together variously by tacit, unspoken, deliberate, and explicit acts of alignment, solidarity, and exclusion" (Carastathis 2013: 942).

In this work then, I am interested in the way that ACT UP/LA's members worked as a coalition intentionally, and I am interested in how and when social inequalities shaped the results of their intentions. There is still a lot to be said about what kinds of inequality mattered for direct action anti-AIDS activists, and there is more to be said for how a feminist intersectional perspective can help us understand inequalities in action in any social movement organization. Others, for example, Stockdill (2003), have argued for taking an intersectional approach to understanding the shaping of oppositional consciousness in movements, but, in this book, I am less concerned with the making of individual oppositional consciousness than I am with the shaping of organizational and movement dynamics.

In taking an intersectional look at ACT UP/LA, I hope to complicate the overly simple "gender story" that has been told about the demise of the ACT UPs by the mid-1990s. Gendered divisions are cited as playing a large role in

splitting ACT UP activists into two camps: one, purportedly composed of white men, argued for actions that would lead to more "drugs into bodies"; a second, purportedly composed of white women *and* men and women of color, argued for the need to go beyond the "drugs into bodies" approach and fight for universal healthcare as a social right (Altman 1994; Corea 1992; Epstein 1996; Gould 2009; Halcli 1999; Leonard 1990). However, in this reading of gender splits as central to the demise of the ACT UPs, the paradigmatic rupture is the one that affected ACT UP/NY. In June 1992, ACT UP/NY's Treatment and Data Committee – devoted to putting drugs into bodies – became a separate organization, the Treatment Action Group (TAG; Halcli 1999, http://www .treatmentactiongroup.org/history). TAG's actions supposedly broke ACT UP/NY beyond repair – and they may have done so, but the reality of gender politics in the other ACT UPs was more complicated than the drugs into bodies/ universal healthcare dichotomous picture provides.[19] It is true that, nationally, a growing network of activist ACT UP women chose to focus on issues involving women and AIDS. While they worked on questions of universal healthcare, their activism was also focused on the health and welfare of a particular constituency of PWAs: women. This makes the implicitly stark division between the genders – one of self-interest on the part of white men and selflessness on the part of all others – open to question.

Once again, it is useful to think of particular and local coalitions rather than network-wide cleavages. What is one to make, for example, of the fact that in ACT UP/LA, many men, including HIV-positive ACT UP/LA co-founder and leader Mark Kostopoulos, were strong and consistent advocates for universal healthcare? What is one to think of the fact that, although ACT UP/LA had an active Women's Caucus (WC) supported by almost all ACT UP/LA men, not all women in ACT UP/LA worked on women's issues or wanted to? Last, why didn't ACT UP/LA's Treatment and Data Committee spin off from the larger group, and why did another committee focused on needle exchange cause much more disruption to the group's solidarity? As I argue through my examination of the case of ACT UP/LA, the gender dynamics that led to the deaths of individual ACT UPs by the mid- to late 1990s were local stories about gender, but were also about other lines of social cleavage, like race and sexuality. Gender is certainly a part of the story of the fall (and, for that matter, the rise) of ACT UP/LA, but gender's role in the organization's trajectory needs to be considered in a situated and intersectional manner.

[19] As Carroll (2015: ch. five) notes, an earlier schism in ACT UP/NY – its housing committee becoming the social service organization "Housing Works" – did not doom ACT UP/NY. Carroll also gives an alternative reading of the relationship between anti-AIDS direct action and women's health activism in New York City as being one of synergy and not schism. She in fact sees ACT UP/NY and the other ACT UPs as continuations of feminist health activism from the previous decades, a reading that supports the idea of anti-AIDS protest as a spillover movement relative to the women's health movement.

To summarize, a feminist intersectional perspective emphasizes the coalitional quality of oppositional communities due to existing inequalities; an intersectional perspective focuses on the meaning and (re)iteration of inequalities in the lived experiences of activists; and looking at the internal dynamics of a social movement organization from an intersectional perspective puts front and center the question of how inequalities are (or may be) implicated in internal conflicts. An intersectional feminist perspective alerts us to look for consequential social interactions predicated on co-constructed inequalities. If gender and other significant markers of social inequality are always elements of interaction – that is, are always being localized – then those same markers of social inequality always matter for inquiry as to what activists do. I take activists' words about their intentions in their activism very seriously in this work, as the reader will see, activists disagree: if there are disagreements, it is reasonable to ask if these are patterned by social inequalities and if the disagreements themselves reference tensions about divisions caused by social inequality. It is therefore important to ask how, when, and why inequalities mattered.

This last point – about how an intersectional feminist perspective orients the research toward finding out about the effects of inequalities – segues into the area of methodology. I find affinities among feminist intersectional theory, grounded theory, and extended case views of how to look at social protest, which I discuss in more depth in the appendix. The appendix also covers the kind of data used for this study – participant observation, archival, and interview data – with further discussion of how I acquired each kind of data and how they illuminate the case when used in tandem. A reader interested in these questions of method and data may wish to read the appendix first: for others, I turn next to the plan of the book.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The book provides an overall view of ACT UP/LA's rise and fall and an analysis of the internal struggles and external relationships that led to its demobilization. I end the book with a substantive chapter about the relationship between the inside and the outside in ACT UP/LA and its role in the lives of several former activists, followed by a conclusion and a methodological appendix for those inclined to think about qualitative methods and approaches.

In Chapter 2, "Beginning, Building, and Being ACT UP/LA," I look at the founding of ACT UP/LA, its structure, and the actions members took during the group's mobilization and peak years of activity. I focus especially on (1) how activists oscillated between local and nationally coordinated ACT UP actions; (2) how local activists sometimes captured a national stage through audacious, theatrical actions; (3) how the greater prominence of women's AIDS issues in ACT UPs nationally manifested in Los Angeles with actions that involved both women and men; (4) how ACT UP/LA was challenged by coalitional anti-Gulf War work and the emergence of Queer Nation; and (5) how ACT UP/LA

members during the group's heyday addressed difficult and unpopular causes, working on behalf of the rights of prisoners with AIDS and taking on the local Catholic Church over safe sex issues.

In Chapter 3, "Battling for Women's Issues and Women's Visibility in ACT UP/LA," I explore how feminists within ACT UP/LA formed a women's caucus as they worked toward making women's AIDS issues a more visible place within the larger group. I also examine the broader impact of feminist politics on ACT UP/LA – the way that feminism had "spillover" (Meyer and Whittier 1994) effects onto ACT UP/LA – by looking at the phenomenon of feminist men in the group who came to the aid of the WC explore how ACT UP/LA feminists kept a focus on women's AIDS issues through interactional strategies such as counting men in attendance at meetings and actions and by reminding others of the presence of women in the group. ACT UP/LA Women's Caucus members became the group's "official women," inhabiting paradoxical roles in which they received male deference on women's AIDS issues but were also made solely responsible for a women's AIDS agenda. I conclude that WC members' actions made a feminist AIDS agenda an integral part of ACT UP/LA's trajectory in part by underscoring the inherently coalitional basis of the oppositional organization and, by extension, the larger anti-AIDS community.

In Chapter 4, "Intersectional Crises in ACT UP/LA," I consider how gender, racial, and sexuality politics were embedded, but underexamined, in moments of conflict within ACT UP/LA. I briefly consider the meaning of conflict in the lesbian and gay community and then go on to examine three moments of intersectional crises for the group: (1) the influx of new members after California governor Pete Wilson's veto of a gay and lesbian rights bill in 1991, (2) ongoing controversy within ACT UP/LA over a needle exchange program and the implications of expanding ACT UP/LA's purpose and community through the provision of a social service, and (3) arguments about "competing actions" at the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Rights and Liberation. I argue that intersectional crises fractured the hard-won solidarity of group members and that ACT UP/LA's trajectory as a movement organization is inexplicable without understanding the way that gendered, raced, and, at times, sexual divisions affected the group.

In Chapter 5, "Demobilization: ACT UP/LA in the Years 1992–1997," I explore ACT UP/LA's extended period of demobilization. While the timing of ACT UP/LA's demobilization roughly corresponds with that of other ACT UPs (see Halcli 1999), in keeping with my focus on the politics of place, I argue that a combination of more localized factors led to the demobilization of ACT UP/LA. ACT UP/LA was enervated by its struggle with the County of Los Angeles over making sure that adequate provisions were made for PWAs reliant on public healthcare, a lack of success and the deaths of key leaders demoralized activists, and the numbers of participants fell. National coalitional work with other ACT UPs were more fraught and failed to infuse ACT UP/LA with energy in the same way that earlier oscillations between national and local

actions had. I chronicle internal efforts to heal rifts within the group and show how, over a period of five years, low numbers of participants led to ACT UP/LA's death as a viable direct action anti-AIDS organization.

In Chapter 6, "From Streets to Suits: The Inside(r)s and Outside(r)s of ACT UP/LA," I look at how the case of ACT UP/LA undercuts received wisdom about the supposedly clear dichotomy between insider and outsider activism. Scholarship by feminists and others have challenged the idea that institutions are eager to co-opt activists, and insights about the possibility of institutional activism have also led to a reassessment of the varied relationships between insider and outsider politics. I chronicle extensive debates in ACT UP/LA about how to relate to political insiders, as well as the group's actual accommodation of different tactics, which derived from the premium members put on participation. I look at a subset of activists who used insider and outsider spaces at various times to fight against AIDS. I conclude that ACT UP/LA's former activists carry "ACT UP" attitudes while doing their insider work and that, while institutions directly shape the possibilities for these activists, the time they spent with ACT UP/LA was crucial to their understandings of the institutional activism they do now.

In Chapter 7, "Looking Back on the Life and Death of ACT UP/LA," I discuss the importance of recapturing the direct action anti-AIDS movement's history for our understanding of how social change was made. I summarize the main arguments in the chapters outlined earlier and then consider the implications that the case has for the study of social movement organizations; namely, that a feminist intersectional lens can reveal how inescapable complex inequalities are in social movement praxis; that the politics of place and the shape of the local social movement field matter for activists; and that, contrary to our common sense understandings, outsider and insider spaces are interwined in activists' lives and practice. Last, I consider the ACT UPs' legacy for the ongoing AIDS crisis; that is, how this kind of loosely bound, networked, and self-consciously coalitional organizing is still needed in the struggle to end AIDS.

In the appendix, I discuss my use of archival, participant observation, and interview-based sources, as well as the limitations of each way of gathering data and the usefulness of using multiple data sources in conducting historical sociological work. In the second part of the appendix, I argue for why the methodological perspectives of grounded theory and extended case method are appealing for the feminist intersectional researcher, and I describe how they informed the way that I did research for this book.