

## CHAPTER 1

# The Social Effects of 9/11 on New York City: An Introduction

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THE ATTACK on the World Trade Center (WTC) on September 11, 2001, changed New York City forever. The twin towers, which had become one of the symbols of the city and were a workplace for more than 30,000 people, were destroyed. An entire zip code, 10048, is now, as one journalist puts it, in a kind of twilight zone and has not been used since the attack (Haberman 2003). The death toll was shattering. At latest count, 2,749 died in the attack, close to half of them New York City residents and most of the others from the surrounding suburbs. More than 7,000 of the World Trade Center population were injured or hospitalized in the attack. Family members of those who died, were missing, or had been hospitalized and injured numbered about 17,000. And in the days and months that followed, almost 18,000 rescue and recovery workers labored at the site, which almost immediately came to be called Ground Zero.<sup>1</sup>

It was not, of course, only New Yorkers who lost loved ones or worked in or close to Ground Zero who were affected by the attack. There were the residents of neighborhoods near the site as well as those in communities farther away in the city and metropolitan area where large numbers of the victims had lived. There were the thousands displaced from their homes, workplaces, and schools, and the many who lost their jobs or businesses or suffered economic losses. There were the thousands whose adverse physical and emotional reactions hampered their ability to function in their daily lives. And there were

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those, mostly Muslims, who found themselves subject to a kind of hostility they had not experienced before.

This volume brings together a series of in-depth accounts that explore and analyze how September 11 has affected various social groups and communities in the New York area. It is a product of a working group formed under the auspices of the Russell Sage Foundation to study the impact of the terrorist attack and its aftermath on the social life of the city as part of a larger project, *New York City's Recovery from September 11*. Concurrently, another working group investigated the economic impact of the attack, including job losses, low-skilled workers' wages and earnings, and the city's public finances, office market, and competitive position. A third working group focused on the politics of recovery and looked at, among other things, the rebuilding of the WTC site and the political calculus of development efforts.

In setting out to examine the social effects of September 11, the social effects working group was faced with a wide array of potential groups, communities, and organizations to study. New York, after all, is a city of eight million people, and the wider metropolitan area is more than twice that size. Many well-known studies of the social consequences of disasters, by contrast, have looked at small communities, such as Buffalo Creek, West Virginia, a place with only a few thousand people made famous by Kai Erikson in *Everything in Its Path* (1976). The working group decided to focus on a set of residential, ethnic, and occupational communities that were thought to have been particularly hard hit by the WTC attack and that had not come in for much journalistic or public attention, unlike the firefighters and police involved in the rescue and recovery effort.

A series of ethnographic studies were commissioned and conducted in the spring, summer, and fall of 2002, based on in-depth interviews and participant observation in a broad array of settings. Several studies built on research already under way for other purposes before September 11. Before the attack, David Stark and Daniel Beunza, for example, were in the midst of an ethnographic study of a trading room in the World Financial Center (directly adjacent to the World Trade Center); Gregory Smithsimon had been conducting fieldwork in Battery Park City as part of another project on public space and community life; and Margaret M. Chin had completed research on Chinese garment workers a few years earlier.<sup>2</sup> After September 11 but before the working group was formed in the spring of 2002, Jennifer Bryan had been engaged in dissertation research on intergroup relations in Jersey City; Monisha Das Gupta had been involved in planning a survey for the New York Taxi Workers Alliance; and Francesca Polletta and her colleagues had begun a study of public deliberations in response to the disaster. Whenever they began, most of the ethnographic studies reported in this volume had ended by the last months of 2002, so that with three exceptions—the chapters by Jennifer Bryan; Philip

FIGURE 1.1 SELECTED SITES IN THE NEW YORK CITY AREA



Source: Merih Anil of the CUNY Center for Urban Research.

Kasinitz, Gregory Smithsimon, and Binh Pok; and Francesca Polletta and Lesley Wood, which are based on research that continued into 2003—they discuss responses in the first year or so after the attack.

Although the working group and this volume concentrate on communities and groups that were deeply affected by the attack, for others the impact was less dramatic; sometimes in fact it was quite fleeting and superficial. For many New Yorkers, life in the months after September 11 was mainly business as usual. This point needs to be emphasized at the very outset. Most New Yorkers did not know anyone personally who was killed in the attack, and their everyday lives went on much as before. Even in the immediate aftermath of September 11, New Yorkers responded differently, in large part on the basis of where they worked and lived in the city. Those living closest to Ground Zero or working in or near the site, for example, were likely to have experienced

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more distress—emotional and in some cases, owing to the very air they breathed, physical—than those living farther away (Low 2002; see also studies reported in Garfinkel et al., this volume). Fortunately, in their chapter Irwin Garfinkel and his colleagues are able to present a picture of the reactions and responses of a broad swath of New Yorkers, gained through an analysis of three waves of the New York Social Indicators Survey, the most recent conducted six months after the attack.

There is also the issue of focusing on the social as opposed to the individual effects of the attack. Clearly, the attack had a devastating impact on the lives of many people, leading to grief, sorrow, and trauma that, even several years later, have made it difficult for some to manage. For others, graphic reminders of the attack continue to trigger emotional responses. When the World Trade Center PATH station reopened in November 2003, the *New York Times* reported that many commuters in the first rush hour since September 11 fought back tears as they remembered fleeing from the site more than two years earlier (Luo 2003). Several chapters in this volume tell of people dealing with distress and anxiety, including residents of the Rockaway community of Belle Harbor whose relatives or neighbors died in the attack, traders who worked in the World Financial Center, and psychotherapists who have been treating patients suffering from trauma. Garfinkel and his colleagues report that adverse reactions to the attack were widespread in the city. In the survey they conducted in the spring of 2002, almost one-third of the adults interviewed reported sleeping poorly since September 11, and one-third had trouble concentrating at work. Almost half of the parents said their children had experienced at least one symptom of anxiety since September 11, such as problems sleeping or concentrating, fear of crowded places, or anxiety that the parent would go away and not return.

Important as these individual reactions are, the analyses in this book nevertheless center on the impact of the September 11 attack on the social level. In his study of the Buffalo Creek flood, Kai Erikson (1976) coins the terms “individual trauma” and “collective trauma” to differentiate between individual reactions to disaster and community-wide responses, but this distinction does not get at what is at issue here. The question here is not so much about collective trauma, although in chapter 4 Melanie Hildebrandt discusses the notion of collective trauma in the context of her analysis of the impact of the WTC attack and the subsequent plane crash in the Rockaways and in chapter 10 Karen Seeley considers it in examining how both therapists and patients were shaken and hurt by the same catastrophic event. Rather, the focus of this book is on how September 11 and its aftermath have affected groups of people who share the same occupation, industry, workplace, religious or ethnic identity, or residential community; how the very nature or structure of these groups and communities shaped their reaction to the attack and its impact on them;

and how the response itself sometimes led to changes in the groups and communities.

It is worth recalling Émile Durkheim's classic study *Suicide* (1951), which deals with that most individual of acts, taking one's own life. Durkheim argues that the concern of the sociologist is not the individual factors—temperament, character, and private history—that lead a particular person to commit suicide, but rather suicide rates. Individual conditions “may perhaps cause this or that separate individual to kill himself, but not give society as a whole a greater or lesser tendency to suicide” (Durkheim 1951, 51). In a similar way, the chapters in this volume, while concerned with an event that affected particular individuals in unique ways, explore the social rather than the psychological impact of the disaster. Indeed, the survey reported by Garfinkel and his colleagues in chapter 2 shows, as they note, that “some groups suffered more than others” in the wake of the attack. Not surprisingly, already vulnerable populations—among them, the least educated, the disabled, Hispanics, and Muslims—were the most likely to report mental health symptoms.

Erikson notes in the epilogue that the early social science literature on disasters emphasized the waves of good feelings and of warmth and fellowship that often follow catastrophes. He offers examples from this volume's chapters of “rituals of gathering” that brought together people in neighborhood communities and efforts to become part of a larger communal whole by joining with other New Yorkers in conversations and projects related to the city's future. Yet as Das Gupta makes clear in her contribution (and Erikson also suggests), the twin towers disaster did not produce a monolithic community of survivors in New York City or a “city of comrades.” Class, ethnic, and racial divisions, among others, constitute what has been called the “terrain of disaster” and have structured not only the dilemmas and difficulties New Yorkers faced after September 11, 2001, but the resources available as they sought to cope with the aftereffects.

## THE NEW YORK CONTEXT

If this book is about the social effects of the WTC attack, it is also about New York City and urban change. Indeed, it is useful to place the attack in the context of other disasters that have occurred in the city in the past and to note pertinent features—economic as well as demographic—that characterized New York at the time of the September 11 tragedy.

In one sense, the collapse of the twin towers can be seen as the latest in a long line of disasters that have struck the city throughout its history. New York, as historians remind us, has withstood natural and manmade disasters before. In the nineteenth century, for example, the cholera epidemic of 1832 killed 3,513 people over a period of six weeks—at a time when the total popu-

lation of the city was not much more than 200,000. Half the entire population fled the city for fear of being infected. Three years later a fire destroyed almost seven hundred buildings—virtually all of downtown Manhattan. The insurance claims were so huge that twenty-three of the city's twenty-six fire insurance companies went into bankruptcy (Mandell 2001).

In the early twentieth century several terrible disasters shocked the city. On June 15, 1904, the *General Slocum*, a wooden excursion steamer taking German and German American members of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church on its annual Sunday school outing, caught fire in the East River. Some fifteen minutes later, when the captain beached the floating inferno off the Bronx shore, the fire had caused the death—mostly by drowning—of 1,021 of the 1,331 passengers on board, most of them women and children. The old and rotten life preservers, fire hoses, and lifeboats proved useless—indeed, rotten life jackets dragged many straight to the bottom—and the crew, untrained in emergency procedures, put up only a token effort to fight the fire (O'Donnell 2003a). Seven years later, in March 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire became, as one historian puts it, “the fire of fires” in New York's memory—or as a recent book on the event states, “for ninety years the deadliest workplace disaster in New York history” (O'Donnell 2003a, 213; Von Drehle 2003, 3). In less than fifteen minutes after the fire began in the garment factory a block from Washington Square Park, 146 women were killed, many having jumped from open windows. And finally, there was what one historian calls “the first Wall Street bomb” on September 16, 1920—until 9/11, the city's worst terrorist disaster. As hundreds of workers poured onto the corner of Wall Street and Broad Street at their lunchtime break, a bomb exploded that killed about 30 people and injured 300; by the end of the year the death toll was up to 40. Radicals were blamed for the bombing, but despite dozens of arrests, the perpetrators were never found (Gage 2002).

The September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center may be only one of many disasters that the city has withstood over time, but clearly it stands out in many ways. It has the distinction of being the worst terrorist disaster in the city's history and, of course, being masterminded by a terrorist organization from abroad and carried out by means of advanced modern technology. Erikson (1994, 141) has coined the term “new species of trouble” to describe a new category of events that specialists have come to call technological disasters, “meaning everything that can go wrong when systems fail, humans err, designs prove faulty, engines misfire, and so on.” Erikson is particularly concerned with technological accidents that involve toxins that “pollute, befoul, and taint rather than cause wreckage” (144). One might say that September 11 is yet another, even newer, species of trouble. Given its scale, size, and location in a quintessentially global city, September 11 was also a truly global event as people all over the world were able to watch much of it on television—includ-

ing the collapse of the towers—as it actually happened. “The iconic image of September 11,” the city planner M. Christine Boyer (2002, 119) has written, “may live in the images recycled again and again in 90 hours of nonstop television coverage: two commercial airlines flying into the quarter-mile high Twin Towers, simultaneously causing both towers and planes to explode in an all-consuming fire. . . . [Then] one tower was no longer there, and then—horror upon horror—the other was gone.”

For the analysis in this volume, what is key is that the WTC attack occurred at a specific moment in New York City’s development, thereby shaping the responses and reactions to it. By 2000, New York’s population had passed the eight million mark—the largest number in the city’s history. Given the mass immigration of the past four decades—in the main, from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean—the population is now more diverse than ever. Over one-third of New Yorkers are foreign-born, and the city is extraordinarily heterogeneous, home to large numbers from a wide array of nations and cultures. A new ethnic-racial hierarchy is evolving as New York has become what is sometimes called a “majority minority” city. In 2000, 35 percent of New Yorkers were non-Hispanic white, down from 63 percent thirty years before; Asians had reached 10 percent of the citywide total; Hispanics made up 27 percent, and non-Hispanic blacks 26 percent. Virtually every sector of the city has been affected by the huge immigrant influx, from schools to hospitals and churches, and new immigrant neighborhoods have sprouted in all the boroughs, as have new ethnic occupational niches (see Foner 2000, 2001; Waldinger 1996). The particular difficulties facing South Asian taxi drivers and Chinese immigrant garment workers after September 11 are the theme of two of the book’s chapters; the hardships endured by Arab Muslims are highlighted in another; and attitudes toward Dominicans, the city’s largest immigrant group, come into the analysis of Belle Harbor because Dominicans were the main victims of the plane crash that devastated that community only two months after September 11.

At the time of the attack New York City was a place not only of astounding ethnic and racial diversity but of stark inequalities of wealth, which had grown in recent years to what one historian calls “Brobdingnagian proportions” (Wallace 2002, 213). In 2000, according to census data, more than one-quarter of New York City households had incomes under \$20,000 while 14 percent had incomes over \$100,000 (Gurian and Gurian, n.d.). Manhattan had the distinction of being the U.S. county with the highest disparity of income in the nation: the top fifth of Manhattan households received more than fifty times as much income as the bottom fifth (Beveridge 2003). September 11 came at the beginning of a recession, after a boom time in the mid- to late 1990s. Just how the attack and the recession are related—and how much employment losses after September 11 were due to the attack or due to the recession—are

topics investigated in the volume in preparation by the Russell Sage Foundation economic effects working group. In this volume, several chapters on occupational groups—airline and garment workers, taxi drivers, and artists—suggest that the twin towers disaster exacerbated hardships or declines already being felt as a result of the economic downturn.

Since the recession continued in New York City into 2002 and 2003, we could also say that it accentuated the negative economic effects of September 11 in particular occupations.<sup>3</sup> Yet there were earlier positive trends in the larger city economy that also shaped the reaction to September 11. Garfinkel and his colleagues argue that the long period of economic growth and prosperity and declining crime in the 1990s mitigated the negative effects of the attack. Comparing the three waves of the Social Indicators Survey—1997, 1999 to 2000, and 2002—they find an overall improvement in most indicators of economic and health well-being over time; a higher proportion surveyed rated the city as a good place to live in 2002 than in 1999 to 2000 or in 1997. Despite the economic downturn after 2000 and the WTC attack, many New Yorkers were still feeling the afterglow of the pre-September 11 boom years, a period when they had significantly improved their living conditions. Had New York instead been experiencing a long decline in prosperity and living conditions when the attack took place, chapter 2 suggests, the responses to the survey might well have been very different.

These comments about the economy raise a larger question concerning the way social, economic, and political patterns in neighborhoods, occupations, and organizations shaped reactions to the attack on the World Trade Center—and in turn whether, and how, the attack led to changes in these patterns. In a broad sense, September 11 can be seen as part of an ongoing process of change in New York as societal events—including disasters—continue to transform the city. In the past, to mention three of the disasters previously noted, the *General Slocum* fire accelerated the dissolution of Little Germany in lower Manhattan; the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire resulted in the enactment of fire safety regulations, laws mandating improved working conditions, and a boost to the labor movement; and the Wall Street bomb in 1920 justified a renewed campaign against radicals (Gage 2002; O'Donnell 2003a; Von Drehle 2003). Of course, disasters need not lead to change at all, or they may promote only superficial or insignificant changes; they may even encourage resistance to change (Hoffman 1999, 311). For those cases in which substantial change does occur, the anthropologist Susanna Hoffman (1999, 316) sets out a number of key questions: “Do the changes represent simple shifts in old patterns or utter rifts? Did the calamity initiate wholly new developments or merely accelerate processes already underway? Did the changes permeate the entire populace or subsume a certain few?” In her own study of an earthquake on the Greek island of Thera in the 1950s, she finds that the disaster exacerbated the

island depopulation that already had been taking place and thereby set in motion a series of additional changes—a scenario echoed in a number of chapters in this volume on the effects of September 11. Whether the WTC attack accelerated ongoing change or led to entirely new developments, and whether it aggravated existing problems or created new ones, are central questions in many of the chapters.

### THE IMPACT ON RESIDENTIAL AND ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

A broad range of residential communities in the New York area were hard hit by the collapse of the WTC towers, owing to either their proximity to the site or the large number of victims who had lived in them. In his account of the *General Slocum* fire, Edward O'Donnell (2003a, 214) calls it a concentrated tragedy because the great majority of the victims were from a single parish and lived within a forty-block area in Manhattan. The WTC disaster could be said to be a dispersed tragedy in that clusters of victims were located throughout the five boroughs and surrounding suburbs. Within New York City the area with the most victims was the Upper East Side, home to many high-end employees in the financial industry, followed by several Staten Island neighborhoods where hundreds of firefighters and police officers live (Newman 2002). Outside of the city, several affluent New Jersey communities lost many residents, one of them the focus of the journalist Gail Sheehy's account in *Middletown, America: One Town's Passage from Trauma to Hope* (2003).

Yet it is not just a question of the number of victims. Several neighborhoods in lower Manhattan that bordered or were close to the World Trade Center were badly shaken: residents had been forced to abandon their homes and, on return, had to cope with a variety of strains and disruptions. Clearly, location and geographical contours are important in understanding the effects of the attack on residential communities, as are a host of other contextual factors, including the history of the area, its patterns of development, and its demographic composition.

Two residential neighborhoods were closest to the World Trade Center—Battery Park City and Tribeca. All of the residents of Battery Park City and over one thousand in Tribeca were evacuated on September 11. When they returned days, weeks, or months later, their homes were caked in dust; streets in both neighborhoods were blocked for months. Yet in “Disaster at the Doorstep: Battery Park City and Tribeca Respond to the Events of 9/11,” Philip Kasinitz, Gregory Smithsion, and Binh Pok note that within a year after the attack, the two downtown communities were responding in different ways. One of the great benefits of comparative studies is that they “increase the ‘visibility’ of one structure by contrasting it with another” (Bendix 1964, 17).

The comparison of Battery Park City and Tribeca dramatically highlights the role of geography as well as the very nature of the communities and their organization in shaping the responses to the disaster.

There were, of course, a number of similarities. In both places there was unity in adversity as residents joined together in the immediate aftermath in face-to-face action and in groups and began to talk to neighbors, in their homes and in public, in ways they had not done before. In both places the response led to a general upsurge in local civic activity as established organizations took on new roles or were revitalized and new groups were created; some of the issues raised were similar too, in particular environmental and cleanup concerns. But there were also marked differences. Tribeca's recovery, Kasinitz and his colleagues argue, was remarkable, especially compared to Battery Park City. Unlike Battery Park City, there was no exodus of residents in Tribeca after September 11. Nor were deep discounts in rents required to lure new residents. After a few months rents and housing prices began to rise; by 2002 they were again among the highest in the city. Moreover, these authors report, a year after the attack September 11 no longer permeated community consciousness in Tribeca the way it did in Battery Park City. The twin towers disaster led to new divisions in Battery Park City between long-term residents and the many newcomers, who did not share the bonding experience of having gone through the disaster; in Tribeca, Kasinitz and his colleagues argue, September 11 gave new focus and energy to what had been a fairly unorganized community of business owners and residents. Post-September 11 developments accelerated the gentrification trends already under way in Tribeca as upscale restaurants expanded and the conversion of lofts to residential spaces continued apace.<sup>4</sup>

One reason for the different recovery process in these two communities had to do with geography: Tribeca residents were not, like those in Battery Park City, cut off from the rest of the city by the destruction of the towers and the excavation efforts. Also, the communities have dissimilar histories. Battery Park City is a brand-new planned neighborhood that prior to September 2001, the authors argue, was functionally a gated community. Because it has few street-level businesses, many residents used to do their shopping in the World Trade Center Mall. In contrast, Tribeca, a community of lofts and expensive apartments in a former manufacturing and wholesaling area, houses many businesses, including restaurants and art galleries. Before September 11, Battery Park City, in the words of the authors, turned its back on the city, while Tribeca generally looked north to Soho and Greenwich Village and turned its back on the World Trade Center. These contrasting features help explain the different reactions in these two communities to post-September 11 policy initiatives. With its many high-end stores and restaurants, Tribeca benefited from the "recovery through shopping" promotions and cultural events sponsored by

local government in the weeks and months after September 11, which were seen in the community as healing. In contrast, when urban planners and redevelopment officials attempted to decrease Battery Park City's isolation with increased ferry service and plans to "roof over" West Street with a park, residents objected, as they did to programs intended to draw people to the neighborhood's public spaces and parks. These efforts increased the sense of violation among residents, who sought to maintain the community's isolation and separation from the city—the very reason so many had moved there in the first place.

In "Double Trauma in Belle Harbor: The Aftermath of September 11 and November 12 in the Rockaways," Melanie Hildebrandt offers a different kind of comparison that adds further insights into the response of residential communities to the attack. She examines how the history, geography, and demographic features of Belle Harbor and Breezy Point influenced reactions to September 11, and by comparing the responses to September 11 and to the devastating plane crash that occurred in Belle Harbor eight weeks later, she is able to show that the nature of the disaster itself led to particular results.

As she explains, September 11 hit the western Rockaway neighborhoods hard: over seventy residents (out of some twenty-three thousand) died in the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, including many firefighters and financial service employees. Hildebrandt argues that despite the tragic losses—and the dozens of funerals and memorial services in the weeks following September 11—the Rockaway communities she studied became more "cohesive, supportive, and unified," largely owing to their cultural and social organization. Breezy Point and Belle Harbor are part of New York City, but these geographically isolated, middle-class, virtually all-white beach communities have a small-town—or as some would say, insular—character. Often dubbed "firefighter country" because so many residents and their relatives have worked for the New York City Fire Department, Hildebrandt notes the informal code of reciprocity and extensive support network that were already in place among firefighter families, as well as the extended kin ties among Irish Americans (the largest ethnic group), who have lived in the area for generations. Furthermore, the Rockaway communities include a web of community organizations, churches, and (in Breezy Point) synagogues.

If, as Hildebrandt contends, the structure and culture of the community helped residents move on after September 11—and strengthened community bonds through shared grieving and memory—the airplane crash that occurred two months later created tensions and divisions. Mainly, the tensions had to do with the nature of the disaster and its aftermath. Unlike the September 11 attack, the crash—which killed all 260 (mostly Dominican) passengers and five on the ground, destroyed a dozen homes, and damaged many others—disrupted the physical space of Belle Harbor. Indeed, the Catholic church, which

had played such an important role in healing after September 11, was cordoned off and unavailable for the first days. The community had gained positive recognition after September 11—the firefighters from the community who died were honored as heroes, and the civilians as innocent victims of terrorism—but after the plane crash residents felt treated with disdain by U.S. government officials as they tried to make sense of what had happened. Moreover, resentments developed within the community over lawsuits and insurance settlements for property damage and loss.

Plans for the memorial for the plane crash victims created additional tensions. Memorializing the victims of flight 587 came to be seen as affecting only a few individuals rather than the whole community. Moreover, the plans for the memorial involved not just Rockaway residents but Dominican families who had lost relatives in the plane disaster and were pushing for a memorial on the very site of the crash. Never a racially tolerant place, many Belle Harbor residents resented the incursion of nonwhites into the community. Hildebrandt notes the “declining sympathy” for the Dominican families visiting the site to place wreaths or flowers on a makeshift memorial, as well as angry letters to the local newspaper about building a memorial on the site of the crash. Hildebrandt concludes, however, on a positive note: despite the internal fissures that developed and the emotional strains of dealing with the double trauma, Belle Harbor and Breezy Point, she argues, have not been torn apart or destroyed, but remain, for the most part, cohesive and united. Indeed, “there is nothing to suggest that the glue that has bound these communities together for generations has changed in any fundamental way.”

Virtually every ethnic and racial group in New York City was affected by September 11, but Muslims were especially vulnerable. Of course, Muslims were not immune to stereotyping and discrimination before the attack, but as Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Anny Bakalian (2003) point out, the events of September 11, involving Muslim suicide bombers, brought the Middle Eastern conflict to American soil; Arabs and Muslims were seen as a threat to national security and targeted by a series of federal administrative measures. Starting immediately after the attack, Arab and Muslim immigrants became subject to detention. If suspected of terrorism, they could be kept without charge for an extended period of time, denied bond, and their attorney-client communications disregarded. Most of those detained were housed in a Brooklyn detention center and the Passaic County Jail in Paterson, New Jersey, with Pakistanis comprising the largest number of detainees, followed by Egyptians, Turks, and Yemenis. Other federal initiatives included an entry-exit registration system obligating aliens from twenty-six countries, all predominantly Muslim, to be registered, fingerprinted, and photographed on their arrival and periodically afterward; special registration requiring male citizens of a number of predominantly Muslim countries who were older than sixteen to register with the

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) if they had entered the United States before September 10, 2002, and planned to remain at least until December 16, 2002; and “voluntary” FBI interviews with several thousand men who had entered the United States between January 2000 and November 2001 from countries suspected of al Qaeda presence or activity (Bozorgmehr and Bakalian 2003).<sup>5</sup>

How these federal initiatives and directives—and new fears of Muslims and hostility toward them—affected Muslims themselves is the subject of chapter 5, “Constructing the ‘True Islam’ in Hostile Times: The Impact of 9/11 on Arab Muslims in Jersey City.” Jersey City, just two miles west of Manhattan across the Hudson River and a ten-minute train ride away, is home to a sizable Arab Muslim community. (Jersey City is, of course, in the state of New Jersey, but its location, commercial and residential development, and close ties to New York City have recently led some to refer to it as a “sixth borough.”<sup>6</sup>) The Arab Muslims whom Jennifer Bryan talked with during two years of field research in Jersey City experienced intensified levels of hostility after September 11. She describes the impact of detentions, investigations, and raids, as well as hate crimes and assaults, including physical violence against women and children and attempts in one neighborhood to close down a mosque.

In response to the hostility and hate crimes, Bryan argues that there was a swing toward traditionalism among Jersey City’s Arab Muslims. Many emphasized making the Muslim community stronger—and changing the way Islam has been represented and understood in American society—by adhering more strictly to religious practices that reflect their sense of the “true Islam.” There was renewed interest among many Arab Muslims in close readings of the Qur’an, traditional weddings, and the religious rules regulating social interactions. The emphasis on practicing “the true Islam,” on the one hand, strengthened community ties; on the other hand, it created tensions and exacerbated the rift between more traditional and progressive Muslims. Whether the response of Jersey City Arab Muslims to the aftermath of the WTC attack is typical of Arab Muslims in other parts of the New York area and the five boroughs and whether hostility toward them was as virulent and extensive elsewhere are questions that Bryan’s ethnographic study of one community cannot answer. Clearly, further research is required to address these questions as well as to explore whether the turn to traditionalism will persist in Jersey City itself.

## THE IMPACT ON OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

In the weeks and months after September 11, reports about the firefighters and police officers who died in the attack or were involved in the recovery efforts

were prominent in the media. Other occupational groups in the city that were hard hit by the event received much less attention, including many businesses located near the WTC site, such as retail stores, restaurants, and a host of corporate firms. The chapters in part III focus on a subsample of the occupational groups that were affected. They give voice to the difficulties experienced by workers in a variety of fields—ranging from immigrant workers in low-skilled, poorly paid, and insecure jobs to high-level professionals—as they coped with the aftershocks of the disaster. To what extent did the WTC attack and its aftermath accelerate changes that were already under way in specific occupational sectors or exacerbate preexisting problems or conflicts? How did the structure of the particular occupation influence the response to September 11 and subsequent recovery? Did September 11 lead to new difficulties or problems among particular groups of workers or professionals who, for example, lost their jobs or income, had to cope with their own and others' trauma, or faced new or intensified hostility, owing to their ethnicity, religion, or national origin?

Airline workers are among the hardest-hit occupational groups discussed in this book. If Belle Harbor residents experienced a double whammy, the airline workers described by William Kornblum and Steven Lang in chapter 6, "The Impact of 9/11 on the New York City Airline Industry," were subject to a triple punch: the restructuring of the airline industry, economic recession, and the attack on September 11. As Kornblum and Lang argue, corporate reorganization and downsizing meant that even before the WTC attack the major carriers were laying off workers; the recession that began prior to September 11 was causing job insecurity and unemployment as well. When the collapse of the twin towers led to additional losses in the industry and even greater unemployment, the economic impact, in Kornblum and Lang's words, was swift and severe. On September 11 itself, the airports were immediately closed; when they reopened, passenger traffic plummeted. By just three months after the attack, approximately 140,000 airline workers in the nation had lost their jobs, some 10,000 of them in the New York area. A year after the event, more than half of the airline workers in the New York metropolitan area who had been displaced were still unemployed.

If the attack on the World Trade Center aggravated existing problems in the airline industry, it also created new ones for the workers, especially for those who were let go after the attack. Kornblum and Lang tell a grim story—the human experiences behind the summary statistics. For those laid off as well as for those who continued on the job, there was grief over lost friends: many of the flight attendants interviewed in the study knew one or more of the flight attendants who had been killed in the attacks. There was the fear of new attacks on the ground or in the air. Displaced workers suffered a loss of income and, for many, loss of medical benefits and health insurance; many

suffered from physical conditions associated with increased stress and financial insecurity. Those who found other work generally had to settle for jobs at lower wages. Moreover, displaced workers confronted limits on their eligibility for relief assistance, isolation from their former occupational communities after being laid off, and government unwillingness to assist labor unions' efforts to secure employment for displaced members after the attacks.

Kornblum and Lang's analysis reveals that airline workers' sense of neglect—of being “tainted, isolated, shunted aside, superannuated, not eligible for emergency relief, not considered worthy of special consideration”—has been aggravated by the public adulation of the firefighters, police officers, emergency workers, and other emergency crews at Ground Zero as heroes. The government response to the plight of the airline companies has compounded that sense of neglect. Congressional leaders and members of the Bush administration used the terrorist attacks of September 11 as the primary justification for a massive and highly public bailout of the airline corporations. Airline workers felt left out in the cold. Many of those displaced faced the prospect of being shut out of the airline industry forever or, if rehired, having to work for the new lower-cost airlines—at lower wages and without the benefits they had been accustomed to as unionized workers.

Chinatown's garment workers were also devastated by the twin towers disaster, as Margaret M. Chin shows in chapter 7, “Moving On: Chinese Garment Workers After 9/11.” Like the airline industry, Chinatown's garment industry was already in trouble, and September 11 accelerated the downward trends. The industry had long been struggling with overseas competition, and in the 1990s the rapid spread of dot-com firms also pushed out many factories in the area. After September 11, Chinatown's garment industry had to cope with many problems, including delivery delays caused by increased bridge and tunnel security, street closures, and the rerouting of traffic. As a result, a massive number of orders were canceled, continuing through 2002. Six weeks after the attack every Chinatown factory that had contact with the garment workers' union had laid off workers or reduced hours. By September 2002, 75 shops had closed and 3,500 Chinese garment workers were out of work. Gaining access to September 11 relief funds was difficult since those who worked and lived north of Canal Street were ineligible for government aid in the first few months (80 percent of Chinatown's garment shops were north of this disaster zone), and the complicated application procedures were daunting. Chinese garment workers, nearly all women, turned to unemployment insurance, help from children or other relatives, and part-time work in the factories as their incomes fell dramatically. On average, the annual household income of the workers in Chin's study declined by almost half, to \$16,000, after September 11. Over half of the husbands were employed in restaurants and a few other businesses that were also hard hit by the disaster.

Chin shows that the garment workers' loss of income had ripple effects throughout the local Chinatown economy. The thousands of Chinese garment workers—about half of whom lived outside of Chinatown—not only worked in the community but also shopped and used services there. In Chin's words, the workers "made the ethnic economy hum." When garment workers lost their jobs or had less income, Chinatown's stores, banks, hair salons, and other services suffered (as they did in other Chinese communities in the city). Moreover, street closings in Chinatown, the elimination of parking spaces to accommodate extra police and security vehicles (still in effect in the spring of 2004), and of course the disappearance of the WTC towers reduced the number of tourists, shoppers, and restaurant patrons so critical to the ethnic economy.

Whether Chinatown's garment industry will rebound or sink further into decline is an open question. Meanwhile, Chin suggests, the disaster has affected how Chinese garment workers look for work and made it clear to them that they cannot depend only on co-ethnic ties. Indeed, her findings about the limits of co-ethnic ties in the period after September 11 lead Chin to reevaluate the ethnic enclave model, which has been prominent in discussions of Chinatown in the scholarly literature. In good times, she argues, the ethnic enclave provided jobs with flexible hours and health benefits for Chinese immigrant women without English skills; when disaster hit, the ethnic enclave proved to be a liability. It fostered dependence on co-ethnic networks that no longer carried useful information, and it did not provide leads to work outside of Chinese neighborhoods or opportunities to learn English.

For the taxi drivers at the center of Monisha Das Gupta's chapter, "Of Hardship and Hostility: The Impact of 9/11 on New York City Taxi Drivers," it was not a question of losing jobs or being forced into part-time work, but of suffering a drop in income, increased financial worries, and a rise in hostility from passengers. Das Gupta analyzes the impact of the WTC attack in the context of structural features of the industry, in particular the leasing system, which requires most drivers to make advance payments to garages or brokers no matter what fares they earn. In the immediate aftermath of September 11, taxi drivers were hurt by bridge and tunnel closings, road closings for security reasons and emergency work, increased traffic, and a downturn in air travel (and trips to the airports) and tourism. A year later the drivers Das Gupta studied still had not recovered from their initial income losses. Partly responsible for their plight was the recession, which reduced demand for their services, but also critical was the leasing system's demand that they pay costs up front without assurance of making back what they paid. In the first weeks after September 11, many drivers depleted their savings and spiraled into debt; with accumulated debt added to depressed earnings, many still had not recovered from the initial blow even many months after the attack.

To make matters worse, taxi drivers, like Chinatown garment workers, confronted numerous obstacles in obtaining disaster assistance, including, initially, being ineligible for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) aid because their income was not solely dependent on the delineated disaster area in lower Manhattan. Even after the geographical definition of the affected area was changed, other requirements, such as citizenship or legal residency, were problematic for some drivers, and the paperwork was overwhelming. Taxi drivers were disillusioned and discouraged not only when they were turned away for assistance but when they received little public recognition for providing free rides to family members of victims, rescue workers, and other volunteers at Ground Zero.

Far from being praised for their role in the recovery process, taxi drivers, the vast majority of them Muslim, found that, like the Jersey City Muslims in Jennifer Bryan's study, they were victims of an anti-Muslim backlash in the wake of the twin towers disaster. South Asian and Muslim drivers, as Das Gupta puts it, "did not feel drawn into the community of sufferers, even though they responded with a sense of unity, purpose, and service. . . . The 9/11 attacks, seen from the drivers' perspective, solidified rather than dissolved the lines drawn along ethnic, religious, national, and racial difference" (this volume, 234). Many South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslim and Sikh drivers stayed away from work in the first week after the disaster, and some stayed away even longer, out of fear of reprisals for the attack. When they returned to work, the majority of the drivers surveyed between July and November 2002 reported some form of overt hostility, including verbal harassment, physical threats, and damage to their cabs. Drivers were used to being ordered around by passengers, and Das Gupta argues that city policies instituted in the 1990s had promoted negative images of cab drivers. Still, drivers experienced "the overt hostility directed at them by some passengers [after September 11] as new."

Visual artists seem like a world apart from taxi drivers and garment workers, yet as Julia Rothenberg and William Kornblum show in chapter 9, "New York's Visual Art World After 9/11," they too experienced economic losses. In what is by now a familiar theme, when the planes hit the WTC towers, many visual artists were already suffering from the economic recession, which had begun to weaken the art market and the industries, such as graphics and web design, that were sources of employment. The suicide bombings worsened the situation. Admittedly, established artists, commercial art dealers, and auction houses rebounded fairly quickly after the attack. However, gallery owners located near the WTC towers experienced severe losses, and younger, less-established artists were hard hit with a double blow: not only were there further declines in the demand for their art, but, perhaps more important, they faced a loss of job opportunities in the sectors of the economy on which they

relied for their daily bread, such as restaurants and bars. Rothenberg and Kornblum contend that the combination of the events of September 11 and the recession has increased polarization and stratification in the visual arts community: on one end are the most well established artists, galleries, museums, and nonprofit organizations, and on the other end are the more innovative galleries, museums, nonprofits, and artists who depend on them, which fared much worse after September 11.

September 11 also influenced artists' creative work, which was fed by what Rothenberg and Kornblum call an almost insatiable demand for visual representation of the terrorist attacks. The response has been an outpouring of artwork dealing directly or indirectly with the events of September 11, from painting and sculpture to artworks that incorporate video images. Of course, the creative output following the disaster—and produced in direct reaction to it—went way beyond the visual arts. Given that New York City is the cultural capital of the nation, this is not surprising. In November 2003, theaters in the city (virtually all of them off- or off-off-Broadway) were mounting, were about to mount, or had mounted in the past year some twenty-five productions about the September 11 attacks. Dance productions were created and performed in New York in response to the attack, and more than two dozen film and video documentaries chronicled the attack itself or the reaction to it of New Yorkers and New York institutions. Just a year after the towers collapsed, September 11 had, by one account, spawned more books than any other single news event in American history. By the fall of 2002, Amazon.com had nearly seven hundred 9/11-related titles in stock, including anthologies produced by news organizations, memoirs, and children's books.<sup>7</sup>

Given the nature of their work, the mental health professionals who are the focus of chapter 10, "The Psychological Treatment of Trauma and the Trauma of Psychological Treatment: Talking to Psychotherapists About 9/11," faced a different set of dilemmas than the other workers profiled in this volume. Karen Seeley tells a moving story of individual and collective trauma, and also of innovation and change. On a broad institutional level, Project Liberty, a federally funded disaster mental health program designed by the New York State Office of Mental Health, was, as Seeley notes, "strikingly different from its previous initiatives." Among other things, Project Liberty trained thousands of mental health professionals in disaster mental health and community outreach and extended free counseling to anyone affected by the attack. Psychoanalytic institutes and mental health organizations acted as clearinghouses to meet the demand for psychological treatment. But many of the individual psychotherapists Seeley interviewed had little sense of what to do as they tried to treat survivors and victims' families suffering from trauma (some of whom still suffered from severe distress more than a year after the attacks). A number of psychotherapists, especially those who volunteered in the first days after the

attack, spoke of making it up as they went along. In general, many therapists whom Seeley interviewed “found themselves delivering mental health services they had never been formally trained to provide, to populations they had never been trained to treat, in a catastrophic situation for which they had never been prepared.”

Not only was the work itself emotionally wrenching for these therapists as they listened to tales of anguish, grief, and trauma, but they were in a new kind of situation: the therapeutic boundaries between patient and therapist were blurred by the fact that both had been emotionally affected by the same attack. Indeed, several therapists had family members who had been injured in the attack or witnessed it from their offices. A number of therapists told Seeley that it was difficult for them to keep their composure in front of patients; some talked of being dazed, exhausted, numb, and sometimes left in tears after listening to patients tell their stories. In this context, Seeley notes, many modified their usual mode of practice, and some changed their understanding of the psychotherapist’s role. Whether these modifications will lead to longer-term clinical shifts among individual therapists is uncertain. Yet in the end, Seeley suggests, the experience of treating trauma after September 11 may well have long-term effects on the mental health profession, which may rethink the scope and implications of therapy and the role of psychotherapists in times of disaster. Certainly, the experience is likely to stimulate broader and more urgent clinical interest in the treatment of trauma and traumatic loss, the consequences of terrorism for individuals and communities, and finding ways to ensure adequate therapeutic response in the event of future catastrophes.

## THE IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONS

Inevitably, the chapters on residential and ethnic communities and occupational groups discuss the role of organizations in the recovery from the September 11 attacks—from churches and community groups in Belle Harbor and Battery Park City to the labor unions and workers’ associations representing airline employees, garment workers, and taxi drivers. The organizations themselves do not occupy center stage in these studies, yet clearly they deserve their own close analysis. Understanding how organizations responded to the disaster in New York is important to a full appreciation of the social effects of the attack. Some organizations changed, if only in subtle ways, as a result of the disaster. Moreover, a number of new organizations and new organizational forms developed, such as Project Liberty, the program created to offer free counseling after the attack.

A dramatic example of organizational response to the disaster—and of organizational resilience—is provided by Daniel Beunza and David Stark in chapter 11, “Resolving Identities: Successive Crises in a Trading Room After

9/11.” Their chapter focuses on the trading room of a major international investment bank that they refer to pseudonymously as International Securities; it was located in the World Financial Center, right next to the World Trade Center. Beunza and Stark had the unique opportunity to study the organization’s response to attack because they had been doing research in the trading room for two years before September 11. On that day, shortly after the first terrorist-piloted plane hit Tower One, the 160 traders in the organization evacuated their offices; by the evening of September 11, it was unclear how and when the trading room could resume operations. In just six days, however, when the New York Stock Exchange reopened on September 17, the traders at International Securities were trading again—in a basement in a New Jersey suburban corporate park that, on the day of the disaster, had contained no workstations or desks and had no “connectivity.”

Responsiveness, Beunza and Stark argue, was a combination of anticipation and improvisation aided by the structure of the organization, with a flat hierarchy and competing subgroups. Before September 11, this structure, they contend, was a resource in exploiting the uncertainties of the market; afterward, it was a resource in coping with the more difficult uncertainties created by the attack (see also Beunza and Stark 2003). In the New Jersey location, the traders combined old and new technologies and were flexible about changing roles to solve problems: some became clerks, others worked as manual operators, and still others shared cable to the New York Stock Exchange. At the same time, the traders sought to reconstruct the familiar order in their New Jersey outpost: for example, they arranged their desks to reproduce the layout of their office in the World Financial Center.

Over time, Beunza and Stark note, the exhilaration of meeting the challenges of rebuilding gave way to the realities of long commutes and continued anxieties. The circumstances in New Jersey began to threaten traders’ identities as sophisticated professionals, and in December 2001, with the bank’s approval, a group of them left to establish themselves as a temporary trading room in midtown Manhattan. What could have caused a serious crisis was averted, however, by a leadership style that managed ambiguities, as Beunza and Stark put it. Management presented the midtown trading room as a short-term policy and emphasized the commitment to return to the World Financial Center; at the same time, the leaders hedged their bets by setting up a facility in Hoboken, only a five-minute ferryboat ride from the World Trade Center, in case it proved impossible to return to Manhattan.

As it turned out, the traders were able to move back to their old trading room at the World Financial Center in March 2002. They did not, however, return to the status quo. For one thing, the firm now had a backup facility in Hoboken, which could be fully operative within thirty minutes of an evacuation from the World Financial Center. Beunza and Stark also hint at some

structural changes in the organization—for example, a decrease in communication across desks. And of course, it was impossible to avoid daily reminders of the attack or the emptiness of the site. The traders now did their jobs in a room that overlooked Ground Zero, and they had to walk alongside or around the WTC site on the way to work.

If the tale of the International Securities trading room is one of organizational resilience and survival in response to the attack, “Public Deliberations After 9/11” analyzes a different kind of organizational innovation. In chapter 12, Francesca Polletta and Lesley Wood focus on “Imagine New York” and “Listening to the City,” two public deliberative efforts designed to solicit input into the redevelopment of lower Manhattan. Imagine New York was spearheaded by the Municipal Arts Society, and Listening to the City by the Civic Alliance, a coalition of environmental, planning, and civic groups formed after September 11 and led by the Regional Plan Association. Certainly, organized public forums of this type, set up to influence the rebuilding process, are a new response to disaster in New York. Their emergence was partly a result of the vast scale of the disaster and the various economic and political stakes involved in the rebuilding, but also playing a role were the increase in civic, neighborhood, environmental, and planning organizations in recent decades and a growing interest in deliberative democracy. Whatever the reason for their development, the forums organized by these two groups attracted thousands of participants—over four thousand, for example, attended a daylong Listening to the City event at the Jacob Javits Center on July 20, 2002. Most of the participants did not think they would have much impact on decision-makers; rather, they were seeking an opportunity to talk about issues that were important to them with people different from themselves.

Whether these groups did in fact have any influence on the design process remains in dispute. As Polletta and Wood point out, the lower cost and low-tech format of Imagine New York seem to have made it easier for its organizers to maintain an ongoing campaign for public involvement.<sup>8</sup> Even if, in the end, the groups have little impact on how lower Manhattan is developed, the very fact of their existence and the public deliberation around the WTC site may have long-term effects on what Polletta and Wood call the “landscape of citizen participation in urban planning” in New York City. In one scenario they present, there may be efforts to substitute public deliberative forums for more traditional modes of resident input, such as community board meetings or city council hearings. The danger is that such forums, even if institutionalized, may simply provide the illusion of participation if no mechanisms are provided to keep decisionmakers accountable for the recommendations that come out of them. Another possibility is that civic and advocacy groups will increasingly turn to public deliberative forums to represent the priorities being given short shrift in development plans.

## THE LEGACY OF SEPTEMBER 11

Speculation about the future, of course, is a notably risky business. After all, ten years ago no one would have predicted the attack on September 11, 2001, and equally unforeseen social, political, and economic developments—to say nothing of other disasters—may be in store in the years ahead. What the chapters in this volume make clear is that the events of September 11 set in motion a chain of responses and reactions that have altered the New York urban landscape in numerous ways. Unlike some earlier disasters, such as the *General Slocum* fire, September 11 is unlikely to fade rapidly and almost completely from public memory.<sup>9</sup> As time goes on, the practice of dividing the world into pre- and post-September 11 periods will probably disappear, yet the scale of the event, the televised and film and video memories, and the planned memorial are bound to keep the twin towers disaster alive in the public consciousness. It is also likely that some of the social consequences of the attack, including many discussed in this book, will continue, at least in the near future, to shape institutions, organizations, occupations, and residential communities in New York City. The chapters in this volume offer rich insights into the way a broad spectrum of New Yorkers and New York communities were influenced by the September 11 attack in the first year or so after it occurred. It remains for future studies to determine whether—and how—the effects examined in these pages leave a longer-term legacy.

## NOTES

1. These figures on injuries and hospitalizations, as well as the number of rescue and recovery workers, are from Gail Sheehy (2003, 330). Some newspaper stories put the estimate of rescue and recovery workers much higher.
2. See also Caroline Tarnovsky (2002), who did research on the impact of September 11 on the day laborers she had been studying at a Brooklyn site.
3. The thirty-two-month New York City recession lasted from January 2001 through August 2003. For an analysis of the economic impact of this recession and 9/11 on low-wage workers in New York City, see James Parrott and Oliver Cooke (2004), a revised version of which will appear in the volume edited by Howard Chernick (2005) on the economic effects of September 11 on New York City.
4. See Setha Low and others (2002), whose report on Battery Park City for the social effects working group detailed, among other things, divisions between new and old residents in the community and the changed organizational landscape.
5. Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Anny Bakalian (2003) and Gary Gerstle (2003) place the current policies against Arab and Muslim immigrants in the historical context of the actions taken against “enemy aliens” in times of war in earlier eras.
6. The title of the 2003 roundtable sponsored by the Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute at Baruch College, City University of New York, was “Jersey City: New York’s Sixth Borough?”

7. For a list of the books, film documentaries, museum exhibitions, theatrical productions, and visual and performance art in New York in response to 9/11, see *Gotham Gazette* (n.d.).
8. On the influence of civic associations in the rebuilding of the WTC site, see Arielle Goldberg (2003), an expanded and revised form of which will appear in the volume being prepared by the working group studying the politics of recovery from September 11.
9. The historian Edward O'Donnell (2003a; 2003b) suggests several reasons why the *General Slocum* disaster was soon all but forgotten, in contrast to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which came to be remembered as "the fire of fires" in New York's history, even if it claimed far fewer lives. One was that the Triangle fire was linked with the intense labor struggles of the day. The onset of World War I also contributed to the forgetting process: rabid anti-German sentiment erased public sympathy for anything German, including the victims of the *General Slocum* disaster. Newspaper articles about the annual June 15 memorial for the victims of the *General Slocum* fire stopped abruptly in 1914 and did not reappear until 1920, at which time the Triangle fire was achieving "iconic status as the city's most memorable blaze" (O'Donnell 2003b). In fact, O'Donnell notes, it was the attack on the World Trade Center that renewed interest in the *Slocum* story.

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