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Gendered Residential Space

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Preface

While my family moved too often to really get to know one, residential communities have always fascinated me. I was intrigued by the idea one could live in a neighborhood with people she knows and chooses to live near. Neighbors knew each other well enough to borrow a cup of sugar and allow their children to play together. They not only said "hi" to each other, but also looked after one another. My vision was obviously very utopian and reflective of what I saw on television.

In reality, I witnessed several different types of communities characterized by class, race, and religion. They were more or less homogeneous, with few or no token families that stood out in one way or another. They were also less united than I liked to think. Perhaps there was a neighborhood watch, but more out of necessity than a need and goal of coming together. The communities I saw were urban and while they varied in level and size, they were primarily small and residential. When I moved to Philadelphia generally I saw the same thing, but with a larger variety of social characteristics, such as nationality, that characterized neighborhoods. (This of course, was to be expected of a city larger and more diverse than Saint Louis, where I grew up.) What I did not expect was to find a neighborhood characterized by sexual orientation.

When I was first introduced to the Gayborhood in center city through the club scene, it took a while to make sense of it. Initially it appeared to be a commercial downtown area targeted by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people. I thought, "Great! This city has taken notice of its LGBT population and cares for them." My curiosity led me to discover this neighborhood was not the only one of its kind. There are several across America and internationally. They have become a regular part of most major cities, yet I had

never noticed. Still intrigued, I frequented the Gayborhood, mostly at night or during day street festivals. During these times, I saw many different people, though mostly men. There were different races, gender non-conforming people, young people, older people, and even some straight people. My sophomore year I began taking urban studies courses and learned how to read urban space better. With those newly developed skills, I looked more closely into the Gayborhood. What stores were there? What clubs? What kind of marketing? I had the sense it was a very male-oriented space and I wondered why. Within my last two years in Philadelphia, I realized the Gayborhood is a predominately gay male space where others are tolerated. This led me to question: Is there such a space for women? Are other 'gayborhoods' like this? Why is there a difference based on sex, or is it gender?[1] After years of merely observing but never actually studying the Gayborhood, I decided that these questions where worth exploring in my urban studies senior thesis project.

My research serves to try and understand gender in LGBT neighborhoods because I want to find out what factors lead lesbians to concentrate in certain residential spaces to help the reader understand gender in the larger scheme of urban settlement. I gathered data in the form of interviews and surveys, which I conducted, as well as, from survey information collected by the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation. The research was restricted by time, limited access to a representative group of lesbians, no comparative study of gay men living in the Gayborhood, and a small number of participants.

I. Introduction

[1] The difference was found to be gender based and is further explained in the conclusion. Accordingly, the term gender instead of sex is used throughout the paper.

Neighborhoods like Philadelphia's Gayborhood have become a common part of the urban fabric for most major cities. From New York City and Paris to Cape Town and Sydney LGBT neighborhoods contribute economically to the city's wealth, house a portion of the city's population, provide resources for many who may not live there, and in some situations have fueled the redevelopment of degrading urban space. A 'gayborhood's' presence has grown to represent a progressive, trendy and/or modern city (Florida). With all that 'gayborhoods' contribute and what they represent, it seems counter productive for them to be so male dominated among other things. They serve as a safe space for sexual minorities, so why would men be the primary beneficiaries or rather the main ones making the most use of the spaces? Most lesbians are not frequenting or living in gayborhoods and I aim to understand why. This paper explores lesbian residential concentrations in Philadelphia to understand what makes them more attractive to lesbians than a place like the Center City Gayborhood.

My main question is where do lesbians in Philadelphia choose to reside and why? It is explored through three methods of data collection. The first is a case study of West Mt. Airy, a neighborhood known to have a high lesbian concentration, where I interviewed ten lesbian residents. The second is an online survey given to various lesbian, gay, and bisexual identified people around Philadelphia. It asks their perceptions of their neighborhood, the Gayborhood, and other neighborhoods they would or would not live in, and finally compares their answers. I chose not to use transgender survey participants nor transgender people as a focus in my research because of the lack of background research on trans people and space. Lastly, there is an analysis of data collected by a household survey conducted by the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation combined with census data to get a better

picture of the projected lesbian and gay community in Philadelphia. From these findings, I argue lesbians concentrate in LGBT tolerant areas, where community rather than consumerism, forms the neighborhood foundation and fuel. I go on to explain that as women, lesbians are socialized by gender norms to remain in more private and domestic spaces, rather than the anonymous public space that is the city.

II. Literature Review

The concept of lesbians concentrating in space is something few have written about until recently. Perhaps it is hard to write about lesbianism, a concept that has not always been so clear-cut and obvious in society. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg explains that before we can discuss lesbians or compare their histories to those of gay men, we have to understand the "rigid gender role differentiation with the family and within society as a whole" as one of "several factors in American society between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries [which] may well have permitted women to form a variety of close emotional relationships with other women." [2] (9) She suggests that those relationships bound their "heterosocial" and "homosocial" worlds together, and she supports her claims through the stories of women, married to men, but still engaged in intimate relationships with one another[3]. At the time, society felt that as emotional beings, women needed these bonds, which they could not get from men. Thus all "considered such love both socially acceptable and fully compatible with heterosexual marriage" (8).

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[2] Lesbianism here is not defined by sex but instead intimate emotional attraction and relationship.

[3] Smith-Rosenberg only explicitly considers the relations between married gender normative women whom did not live together. She does not discuss the societal placement of non-married and non gender conforming women.

Contrarily, Smith-Rosenberg's readers are left to assume that for men, these worlds were separate. Emotional intimacy between men was not permitted and seen as something abnormal. This made it easy to separate homosexual men from heterosexual men. Homosexual men stood out as different and outside of the normal social structure, while homosexual women were more integrated and perhaps invisible within. The invisibility factor can be witnessed through certain legislative acts. "In the late [nineteenth] century British queen, Queen Victoria, when confronted by her ministers with a bill to out-law same-sex sexual relationships, famously claimed that lesbians did not exist. As a result they were rendered invisible in subsequent legislation on homosexuality" (Valentine: 2). It follows that on one hand these intimate relationships between women, in many cases, were simply a part of heterosexual society. On the other hand, we must consider that homosexual[4] was term invented in 1862 by a man attempting to describe 'men loving men'. Thus, from the beginning the term privileged homosexual men as a tool for self-definition. The rest of society looked to its sexual connotation to understand it. Western notions of what sex could or could not be made lesbianism seem impossible. There could be no sex without a penis, therefore there could be no sex between two women, and lesbians, women who had sex with women, could not exist. It is clear that the study of lesbians over time is a difficult one, especially for those outside of intimate female relationships, physical or emotional. The question of lesbians concentrating in space is complicated by the unclear notion of what that looks like.

[4] In 1862 Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, created the label in German. It appeared for the first time in English in 1891.

The first few researchers to make claims about women concentrating in space envisioned it as the equivalent to gay men concentrating in space; they assumed it would look the same[5]. Having never witnessed similar lesbian dominated space, Manuel Castells was the first to make the controversial claim that lesbians did not claim territory. His distorted gender theory proclaimed, "Lesbians, unlike gay men, tend not to concentrate in a given territory, but establish social and interpersonal networks… And there is a major difference between men and women and their relationship to space" (140). He went on to say that "women have rarely had [any] territorial aspirations: their world attaches more importance to relationships and their networks are ones of solidarity and affection. In this gay men behave first and foremost as men and lesbians as women" (Castells: 140). He was the first to make this argument, and it was not until two decades later that any research alluded to his mistaken claims.

Adler and Brenner tested Castells assumptions using several census tracts found to have lesbian concentrations in an undisclosed city. Unlike Castells, they were able to find significant concentrations of lesbians, in various neighborhoods. "While [we] reject Castells' characterization of the gender differences between gay men and lesbians, [we] do think there are important dimensions along which gay men and lesbians may relate differently to urban space and urban politics" (Adler: 32). Thus, lesbian and gay male concentrated areas look different. Michael Sibalis seems to differentiate between lesbian space and gay male space as well. He specifically notes lesbians tend not to concentrate in well known and visible urban LGBT space. Comparing the history of many 'Gay Ghettos,' a term I will explore later,

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[5] Castells and Levine are two of the oldest and most notable researchers to make said assumptions.

Sibalis supports Luaria and Knopp's explanation that "by constructing their own urban enclaves, gay men have come to 'figure prominently' in the 'urban renaissance' – which is to say in the redevelopment and gentrification of the inner city" (1740). He goes on to say that "their presence encourages the opening of bars and other businesses that cater to a gay clientele" (Sibalis: 1740.) Hence, beyond the residential, commercial space is a key signifier of a Gay Ghetto. In summary, his readers are left to believe that unless lesbians have a role in gentrification or redevelopment they will not concentrate in urban Gay Ghettos. Before understanding the validity of these claims, it is important to understand the history of gay and lesbian or generally queer[6] concentrations and gay ghettos.

Since industrialization, urban space has become the site of consumerism, the marginalized, and the non-traditional; the space outside the traditional family spear. It is within this space that the modern day queer neighborhood first emerged.

> Only when *individuals* began to make their living through wage labor, instead of parts of an interdependent family unit, was it possible for homosexual desire to coalesce into a personal identity – and identity based on the ability to remain outside the heterosexual family and to construct a personal life based on attraction to one's own sex. By the end of the century, a class of men and women existed who recognized their erotic interest in their own sex, saw it as a trait that set them apart from the majority, and sought others like themselves. (D'Emilio: 470)

This class of men and women moved to cities in droves and due to their lack of funds, found themselves among other marginalized groups. Zukin explains, "city residents gave rise to a sense that marginality was an urban norm" (828). The environment was the space for non-heterosexuals, non-whites, non-wealthy, and non-traditional, in the western sense, families

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[6] I acknowledge that there have been bisexual and transgender concentrations, however, there is little known research on these groups. To address their overlap despite the exclusive research, I will use the modern all inclusive term queer when discussing general LGBT concentrations.

and people. Within this mix of outsiders, there was much 'ghettoization', segregating, and concentrating of populations most noticeably amongst varying ethnic populations.

In the 1940's and 1950's as white middle and upper class groups moved to suburbs and ethnic ghettos ruled urban centers, queer, especially lesbian, presence in urban space could be seen largely through bars. Most of the best documentation of these bars can be found through books like Leslie Feinberg's "Stone Butch Blues" and Audre Lorde's "Zami." Both novels explore the lives of lesbians and the role bars play in them. For Jess, a white, butch lesbian and main character in "Stone Butch Blues," bars were her life. They were where she grew up and more importantly, where she found her housing options. All of the housemates she had were found in some bar. For Audre, a black lesbian not succumbing to the femme or butch stereotypes, though she did not exactly fancy bars, she perceived them as lesbian Mecca's, consequently she frequented them. Their stories illustrate evident lesbian and generally queer dominated urban, though not residential, spaces as early as the 1940's. Fighting to keep these queer spaces, which also included the presence of gay men and trans people, was a symbolic battle leading to Gay Liberation movement, and the physical mobilization of lesbian, gay, and trans populations.

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 marked the beginning of the Gay Rights Movement, which despite other movements, created queer, and specifically gay male, political and residential mobilization. The movement called for collective action as it was thought queer people needed "a spatially defined community for a long period, where culture and power can be reformulated in a process of experimental social interaction and active political mobilization" (Castells: 139). That collective action was complicated by two other prominent movements, the women's movement and the Black civil rights movement, which also called for

mobilization, though not necessarily physical. Many were caught between movements, often forced to prioritize and pick an oppression to fight against. The black movement tended to be homophobic and sexist, the gay movement a bit sexist and racist, and the feminist movement was at times either racist or homophobic. The one group that did not have to deal directly with these issues was gay white males. This group while largely unburdened by other oppressions, also tended to be the most well-off out of any groups fighting oppression. Accordingly, this group was the first able to physically move and mobilize and gentrification was their method of choice. They sought out attractive and centrally located urban areas that were also affordable, "…Not only responding to economic incentive (low rents and real estate prices), but also seeking to create a territory which they [could] inhabit and control and where they [could] feel at home and within a self-contained community… [a place that] provide[d] them with a territorial base for the development of [the] gay movement. (Sibalis: 1740). By the late 70's these envisioned spaces had come to life, and came to be known "gay ghettos".

In the academic setting, queer neighborhoods were first known as "gay ghettos", a term which has heavily guided the process of defining queer neighborhoods for decades. "Gay ghetto" was term coined in 1979 by Martin P. Levine, as a space that "contains gay institutions in number, a conspicuous and locally dominant gay subculture that is socially isolated from the larger community, and a residential population that is substantially gay" (Levine: 364). Manual Castells was one of the first to address the misleading character of the term 'gay ghetto', suggesting the spaces be called 'liberated zones.' He explained, "gay territories unlike ghettos, are deliberately constructed by gay people," who while limited by funds and fear of prejudice acts against them, are not institutionally forced in to the same

areas (Castells: 139). Rather than dispute the validity of the use of ‘ghettos’, many settled on the terms like ‘gay village’. Still providing a name for such spaces has created the perception that all LGBT concentrations first emerged in the 1970s.

The history of LGBT concentrations and more recent research on lesbian concentrations imply that ‘Gay Ghettos’ and queer concentrations are not exactly the same. In the 1970’s, many lesbians could be found in more purely residential settings. These communities were spatial neighborhoods with a mixture of groups that were not just anti-homophobic; they were anti-sexist, and often anti-racist and class-ist. Filled with those facing overlapping oppressions, lesbians in these communities recognized the need to fight them all at the same time. While many had utopian ideals and “envisioned communities where every lesbian would be welcome,” they were not immune to the pressure of the overlapping movements, the same ones that perhaps separated them from gay males in the first place (Dykewoman).

> “ ‘You’re either with us or against us’ must be one of the most persistent political ideologies of all time. If you had multiple identifications, your found yourself pulled. The Black political community was no less demanding than lesbian ideology – your brothers need you. Claiming membership among lesbians (as opposed to being closeted) was often cast as being a race, ethnic, religious an/or class traitor. Demanding space for your race, ethnicity, religion or class identity among lesbians was often defined as the betrayal of choosing men and male values over women. (Dykewomon: 34)

Were lesbians too radical for their own good? Did the overlapping of identity struggles surrounding lesbian communities make the lesbian community that much weaker politically? If it did, it did not destroy their chances of survival, for in 1992 Adler and Brenner confirmed they still existed and still looked quite different from ‘Gay Ghettos’ and “these differences reflect the fact the lesbians are women” (32). The two authors claim,

"counter-cultural[7] neighborhoods appear to be most open to [lesbians]" (Adler: 32). These were neighborhoods which were child friendly, as lesbians were more likely to have kids than gay men; safe, because women were more vulnerable to male violence; and affordable because lesbians as women made less then gay males as men[8]. These characteristics could however describe the target neighborhood for anyone with kids, any one concerned with safety, someone of any race, etc. Therefore, would it be a surprise to find other concentrations of groups in these neighborhoods? Would these characteristics over shadow the presence of the lesbian spatial community making gay ghettos more publicly identifiable and noticed than lesbian neighborhoods?

Today, gay ghettos, or gayborhoods as I shall further refer to them, are the most publicly visible and identifiable LGBT oriented areas. They are largely male dominated and marked by their mostly commercial institutions, like bookstores, bars, and coffee shops. They have highly educated and economically advantaged crowds. This is exacerbated because of the process by which the many gay neighborhoods were gentrified specifically in the United States. It began with a low-income area filled with historic homes and often many ethnic minorities and ended with heavy investment from homosexual populations that then drive real-estate values up and original inhabitants out. When Marc Stein interviewed one gay male Philadelphia resident about why gay males were gentrifiers, he said that it is "because gays like things nicer, just have better taste…it happens everywhere. Gay boys move in and there goes the neighborhood, there goes the real-estates values" (Stein: 26). Further interviewees

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[7] The definition of counter-cultural is not completely clear but their descriptions said neighborhoods suggest that they are generally opposite of the main-stream, homogeneous in race, middle-class, traditional, two parent, etc.

[8] This does of course exclude the pattern of woman on woman violence, and its factor in these environments.

explained that often it was not individual wealth that brought about this change. They often lived together in community styled housing, as couples, or simply as roommates. Still, the fact that men have statistically higher levels of income whether alone or in groups gives a reason why women may have been left out of this development, even if they chose to live together. At any rate, it must be stated that further research has found that "in a different and more complicated way lesbians, have had a significant role in revitalizing urban neighborhoods in North America" (Forsyth: 340). Their role is simply less recognized and publicized, illustrating potential difference in the way they choose to inhabit neighborhoods.

Is there a difference in gay and lesbian residential concentrating based solely on gender? Regardless of whether lesbian residential concentrations exist in conjunction with gay male concentrations, separately, as a part of one of the aforementioned associated groups or otherwise, we know they exist and often differently than gay male residential concentrations. My question is how differently and why?

> Perceptions of lesbians as less territorial than gay men may reflect geographic differences between the sexes in general or between lesbians and gay men in particular. But they may also reflect differences in the ways that territoriality is defined and differences in the ways that lesbians and gay men make themselves visible. (Stein: 47)

If definitions of territoriality matter, is there a deeper implicated difference in the value system behind it? Does the absence of publicly identifiable lesbian neighborhoods reflect gender differences in interest, need, and values, or resources available to gay men and lesbians? Does misogyny have a role in the conversation? Author Marc Stein in his research on Philadelphia has addressed much of this discussion.

Deemed "The City of Brotherly and Sisterly Love," Philadelphia is known for its rich lesbian and gay history. It is home of "the Gayborhood", the third American neighborhood to be officially recognized by its city government as a LGBT neighborhood. This neighborhood, while mostly commercial, is home to many gays, some lesbians, and transgender people, college aged and older professionals, singles and hipsters. Still, the institutions allude to the male-oriented nature of the space. This just one of the many neighborhoods identified as having a significant queer population. Stein has listed West Philadelphia and Mount Airy as two other such neighborhoods.

Today, it is evident that Philadelphia continues to have several gay male and lesbian concentrations, with some more visible than others. Are they still largely separated by gender? Recognizing the visibility of a space like the Gayborhood in center city, which is still associated with gay males, I question whether visibility is a concern for lesbians when deciding a residential location. Is claiming territory important or even a thought? My main question is: What do lesbian communities in Philadelphia look like today? Where are they located? I ask these questions of many lesbians and gay males residing in Philadelphia to understand what factors into lesbian residential choice. Known nationally for its lesbian concentration, I shall explore a case study on Mt. Airy. There I focus specifically on lesbians and attempt to understand their path to Mt. Airy, perceptions of the neighborhood, and perceptions of other queer space. Too often, answers to these questions are assumed based on social characteristics of neighborhoods where lesbians are found. Ultimately, I want to know first hand, what do lesbians consider when deciding where to reside in Philadelphia?

III. Methodology

To answer my research questions, I created and followed a three-part data collection methodology. This method triangulation combines three sources, both qualitative and quantities, for a stronger conclusion. The first part was an online survey, five sections with a total of twenty-three questions. The first section, labeled 'Household', asked four questions: Who lives in your home? How many children live in your home? Do you rent or own? And is any one in your home active in one of your community organizations. The second section, labeled 'Neighborhood', asked seven questions: What is the name of your neighborhood? How long have you lived there? Would you move if you had the option? If you did move, what neighborhood would you move to? What keeps you in your current neighborhood? How would you rank you neighborhood and the categories were safe, active, welcoming, unified, traditional, gentrified, new, and historic? Would you move to a neighborhood that was characteristically blank and the categories were lesbian, gay, racially ethnic, white, wealthy, middle class, working class, poor, not identity based, or other? The third section, labeled 'Gayborhood', asked four questions: Do you spend time in the center city neighborhood of Washington Square West, also known as the Gayborhood? Why do you go to the Gayborhood? Do you consider the Gayborhood to be: welcoming to all, safe, and the center of lgbt life in Philadelphia? And, would you say any groups frequent the Gayborhood more than others? If so, which? The fourth section, labeled 'Neighborhood pt. 2', asked three questions: Can you identify another or other predominately lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer neighborhoods in Philly and if so, which? Would you consider living in a publicly identifiable lesbian or gay neighborhood like the Gayborhood? And, along with LGBT identified neighborhoods, there are also ethnically identifiable neighborhoods such as a Chinatown or the predominately black neighborhood of Harlem, NY. Would you

considering living in an ethnically identifiable neighborhood? Lastly, section five, labeled 'demographics' ask five questions: Please select your age group. What is your gender identity? What is your sexual orientation? What is your ethnicity? And, please select your income range. The survey was advertised via the LGBT Center at Penn's listserv, on craiglist.com, and flyers at Clark Park, the William Way Center, Weavers Way Co-op, Firehouse Coffee Shop, and Colors Inc; all LGBT friendly or frequented organizations. There are several areas outside of West Philly, Mount Airy, and Center City that were missed and my results are skewed towards residents in this area and affiliates of Penn.

For the second part of my data collection, I did a case study of West Mount Airy through interview with ten lesbians. Before beginning my research, I learned West Mt. Airy had a high concentration of lesbians. Given my time restrictions, it made sense to study the neighborhood, which I was sure would be named as one of the neighborhoods of high lesbian concentration in my survey. I use five categories: 1 'Your Neighborhood', 2 'Attractive/Repulsive Characteristics', 3 'Social Characteristics', 4 'Philadelphia's Gayborhood', and 5 'Gayborhoods/Gay Villages/Gay Ghettos – Gay only'. Please refer to the appendix for each category's guiding questions.

At the end of the interview, I inquired about their perceptions of gender differences in regards to residential concentrations. The interviews were 45 minutes to an hour long and were conducted in all but two of the interviewees' homes. (One was over the phone and the other on Penn's campus.) Along with questions, I included a prompt asking the women to draw "their neighborhood" on half sheets of white paper with pencils. I found the residents through a professor and friend at Penn. Perhaps coincidentally; all of the women were well-educated, at least middle class, and predominately white. I lacked several perspectives

including that of women of color, women less family oriented, lower-income earning women, single mothers, and women in the early twenties.

Third and finally, I analyzed data collected by the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation in 2006. The PHMC South Eastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey Philadelphia file is a gathering of individual level data gathered from nearly 4,000 Philadelphia adults in a random telephone survey. It has been weighted and projected to be representative of Philadelphia as a whole and includes data about the sex of partners for sexually active adults. PHMC also combined this data with 2000 census geographically based data, not from individuals. It includes data on households where a person of the same-sex as the householder was recorded as an "unmarried partner." With all this information they also created a maps and graphs to document the information.

IV. Data Discussion/Analysis

Men and Women are Not Concentrating in the Same Locations

There is a general difference in housing locations based on gender, regardless of sexual orientation or any other identity trait in Philadelphia County. Refer to maps A and B in Appendix IIa and IIb. While most areas have slightly more women, representative of the 100,000[9] more women that lived in Philadelphia, 2000 the census data in maps A and B show the areas of exception. Map A illustrates percentages of females living in Philadelphia. According to the map key, generally, most areas are darker orange to burnt orange ranging from 50-75% women. There are a few noticeable exceptions namely along the Delaware River and in center city below Broad Street. Those areas correlate perfectly with the darker areas in Map B, which illustrates the percentages of males living in Philadelphia. The

[9] "2000 Decennial Census." U.S. Census Bureau. <www.census.gov.>

majority of these areas range from burnt orange to brown and range from 60 to 100% male. It is likely many of these areas have same sex roommates or even families with many of the same gender in one house. Thus, this information is not enough to assume that the high percentages of men and women exist because concentrations of gays and lesbians live there. On the other hand, look at Maps C and D in Appendix IIc and IId. In 2000, the census bureau decided to attempt to measure the lesbian and gay population in the United States by counting the number of unmarried same sex partners. Of course, there are a few criticisms with this method of measurement, the first being that not all gay men and lesbians live with or even have a partner. Secondly, some roommates might claim to live with a same-sex house partners, misunderstanding or simply disregarding what the term was meant to address. Despite these major criticisms, the same-sex unmarried partners statistics are the best way that the census has been able to measures the amount of gay men and lesbians living in the U.S. The housing information gathered from these couples and focusing on Philadelphia has been mapped out on Maps C and D. The darker the orange, the higher the concentration of same-sex couples. Both maps show clear areas of concentration, which do not overlap. In Map C the darkest shades of orange are primarily around the Mount Airy and Germantown neighborhoods; there are higher levels of female/female unmarried partners here. In Map D, the darkest shades are around center city; there are higher numbers of male/male unmarried partners here. While only representative of coupled gays and lesbians, these maps show a clear locational difference in concentrations of lesbians and gay men.

Recently non-partnered gays and lesbians in Philadelphia have been better accounted for through a new methodology, allowing the same patterns to be discovered. Unsatisfied with the US census data alone, the Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC)

combined it with their South East Pennsylvania Household Health Survey Philadelphia file to prepare a Philadelphia LGBT Community Assessment. They then produced three lists of top ten gay and lesbian neighborhoods shown Appendix III, chart 1.

The first column lists neighborhoods with high concentrations of lesbians and gay men. The second column list neighborhoods with high lesbian concentrations and the third column does the same for gay men. Overall, these neighborhoods correlate to the census finding. Most top ten lesbian neighborhoods are around Germantown and Mount Airy, while most top ten gay male neighborhoods are around Center City.

Following this trend, my survey results also show a higher concentration of lesbians participants living in Mount Airy and near by. When asked the question, "What is the name of your neighborhood?" 59 percent of the 27 lesbians who completed the survey answered Mount Airy or Germantown. Male respondents did not have any trends. However, the survey was mainly distributed through list-servs, which reached people in areas around West Philadelphia and all of my interview respondents from Mount airy had to complete it too. This definitely, influenced the distribution of lesbians. Also, while flyers for the survey were distributed in some areas of Center City as well as on Craigslist.com, not many males, especially males living in Center City responded. I feel that receiving the link online through an email made people more likely to complete the survey than finding my email address on a flyer and then going to a computer to email me and request the link. In any case, there is an irrefutable pattern of gays, and specifically lesbians concentrating in certain areas around Philadelphia.

Up until this point, I have been proving information that you and I may have already known; lesbians concentrate in space. However, unlike what I expected, the data also proves

the areas lesbians and gay men concentrate in largely adhere to stereotypes about lesbian and gay male space. One of my interviewees proclaimed that for every Gayborhood there is a Mount Airy. The stereotype as I have come to understand it is that gay men love the fast paced and urban, club heavy atmosphere and lesbians love the quiet green family atmosphere. Others, despite prefacing their comments with "now I know it is not allows true" or using finger quotes, claimed that lesbians are more likely to settle down in an affordable neighborhood with a co-op and besides that they do not need the same public spaces gay men tend to utilize. While these lesbians were aware of exceptions, often attributing them to factors such as age, race, education level, and economic status, they along with many in the larger queer and non-queer communities, believe lesbians, and gay men for that matter, simply follow the stereotypes attached to them. Conversely, the rest of my findings shed light upon what appears to underline those trends.

Sexism Drives Consumerism, Keeping Lesbians Out and Gay Men in the Gayborhood

On the surface economic factors and perceptions about 'female space' constrain lesbians to live in less urban spaces, but beneath the perceived reality there is an inherently male bias in capitalism. In many respects gay men are the target group for the heavily consumerist center city, and particularly the Gayborhood. Generally they are seen as a more powerful consumer group to businesses, organizations, and the public. They are also seen as the greater, and perhaps more needy users of queer public space. Thus, gay male residential spaces largely center on center city, while lesbians concentrate in the more private, suburban areas of North West Philadelphia.

Gay men as men are a more powerful consumer group than lesbians as women, and like other such groups they are privileged in public consumer based space. In Philadelphia,

the medium income for full-time working male was $34,199[10] in 2000, while it was $28,477[11] for females. In a same-sex partnered household, that average was $68,398[12] for gay men and $56,954[13] for lesbians. Men make more money alone and partnered with another man. It is important to note that, according to the PHMC SEPA Household Health Survey 2004 Data, 51 percent of individual homosexuals make either below $15,250 or above $60,000 and 49 percent earns within that range. 41 percent of heterosexual people on the other hand earn above either below $15,250 or above $60,000 and 59 percent earns within that range. Thus homosexuals are more likely to earn comparatively very low or very high incomes, rather than average which would be $31,388[14] for all individuals. While PHMC data on homosexual incomes did not specifically address female and male homosexuals separately, the small sample in my survey illustrated the same high and low trend for each group. 70 percent of lesbians, and 73 percent of gay males earned either below $30,000 or above $70,000. Despite the same high-low trend, gay males are still more likely to earn more than lesbians, simply because they are men. Therefore they have higher potential consumer power, which makes them the likely most targeted queer consumer group. Like other targeted consumer groups, they are privileged in having their consumer needs catered too at a higher rate than other queers.

Gayborhood institutions, bars being the best examples, target gay men, creating a 'gay men are preferred' atmosphere throughout the neighborhood. From my observations,

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[10] "2000 Decennial Census." U.S. Census Bureau. <www.census.gov.>
[11] "2000 Decennial Census." U.S. Census Bureau. <www.census.gov.>
[12] "2000 Decennial Census." U.S. Census Bureau. <www.census.gov.>
[13] "2000 Decennial Census." U.S. Census Bureau. <www.census.gov.>
[14] Here, I averaged the average male and female incomes for full-time working Philadelphian.

there are approximately four gay male bars for every one lesbian bar in Washington Square West, the neighborhood that includes the Gayborhood. With few other choices, lesbians frequent some of the male gay bars, but do not necessarily feel welcomed. Gay clubs, like "Woody's are male spaces, and they tolerant us," proclaimed one partner in a Mount Airy couple who was clearly annoyed by the few lesbian oriented options in Gayborhood. Sisters is technically the only lesbian bar in Gayborhood, though Club Libations, another lesbian bar, sits on the edge on Broad Street. Yet, as an interviewee who used to work at the bar explained, two gay men own Sisters, and though they allow a lesbian to run it, the club would probably be more attractive to lesbians, if lesbians themselves played a larger role behind the scenes. To her, and many other lesbians, Sisters is an unsuccessful attempt at creating a lesbian oriented space. She went on to explain that lesbians know what lesbians want, and as a result are successful at attracting them. "Just look at the highly successful 'Girl Parties'," she said. Girl Parties are monthly events that occur at various bars, both queer and heterosexual, around Philadelphia. They are almost always hosted by lesbian organizers and attract large numbers of lesbians and other woman-identified queers. Party organizers rent bar space, which obviously is not the same as owning a bar space and having a permanent lesbian space. Thus, with non-permanent lesbian parties, a lesbian bar owned by gay men, and gay clubs that are only tolerant of lesbians, Gayborhood appears to prefer gay men.

Public perception influences the use and inhabitation of neighborhoods. In all but two of the interviews conducted in Mt. Airy, each interviewee either exclaimed the Gayborhood was a gay male space or that it specifically targeted gay men. My survey concluded similar responses. For the "Would you say any groups frequent the Gayborhood more than others? If so, which?" question, 36 out of the 45 who answered, or 80%, said yes, Gay males. While the

question does not explicitly ask whom Gayborhood is for or who it targets, it does address who is using it. More often than not, the ones using the space the most are the ones who feel comfortable and welcomed. As discussed above, in this case, it is clearly gay men.

The Gayborhood is largely consumer-based neighborhood, which privileges the most powerful consumer groups, and within the queer community, gay men are that group. They are privileged to be marketable for their buying potential; thus, institutions choose to cater to their wants and desires. They are also privileged to have the capital to buy into and own many of those institutions, unlike their female counterparts. These privilege related factors are largely a consequence of male, and specifically white, straight, male dominated United States economic system, that gay males, and white gay males especially, benefit from. Ultimately, this privilege allows them to utilize this urban, public space at higher rates than lesbians who look to other neighborhood options.

Lesbians Concentrate in Queer Friendly Residential Areas

Lesbians, like other social groups, are diverse in their needs, value, beliefs, and preferences. They concentrate in physical space, but in lower levels than gay men, and they are generally more spread throughout cities. With that said, it is safe to proclaim that when lesbians choose to, they concentrate in lgbt tolerant areas where they feel comfortable and where community rather than consumerism is more likely to fuel neighborhood growth because generally, they are contrarily influenced by the commercial incentives of Gayborhood.

The women I interviewed live in West Mount Airy because it is generally tolerant, the homes were affordable when they moved in, and even if they were not originally aware of the high lesbian population, they enjoy having it. The first couple I interviewed moved

into their house in 2001. With two children they wanted to live in a neighborhood where non-traditional families would be accepted. They took pleasure in telling me how when playing outside and witnessing six people of all ages and colors walking dogs, their son automatically assumed they were a family but was more curious about the "funny looking dogs." This was their proof to me, that by living in the neighborhood, their child was learning not to see human and family difference as strange or outside of the norm. Beyond a level of acceptance, they were proud of the comfort level at which they and their children could go about their lives. This sentiment was found throughout all my interviews. For some, comfort is found in having the ability to walk around hand in hand with her partner. For others it is having friends in the neighborhood. No matter how they quantified it, comfort was a must.

Affordability was another important factor in choosing to reside in Mount Airy. "I bought my house for $87,000 but now it is worth $200,000. I cannot afford to buy it today," explained one woman. There is a sense this neighborhood is generally affordable but some areas are more expensive than others. One woman, who has lived in different homes in the neighborhood for nearly a decade, exclaimed that, when she first moved here, it was solely because of the cheap rent. "$200 a month, can you believe it?" She knew nothing about the diversity, lesbians, or even green space, as she had never actually been to the house when she replied to a housing rental ad. She only considered affordability and proximity to her job. With that said, she has stayed in the area because of her comfort level as well as the friends she has made, many of whom are also lesbians. Another older interviewee tried to explain the bond she also established with neighboring lesbians. "Lesbians like living near other lesbians. In fact, many of [my] lesbian friends moved out here after my partner and I did."

Most of these women either moved to Mount Airy or stay in the area because of the lesbian population.

Mount Airy is green, affordable, and characteristically everything else that would attract lesbians; but beyond that, it represents the private sphere which women have historically been placed. After I asked my interviewee why they liked Mount Airy, I asked why they preferred it to an area like Gayborhood?

> "It has everything a city does not. Grass and trees, you know? Plus, I suppose lesbians don't need extra space that men need to gather or organize. We have get-togethers in our homes. When we have neighborhood problems that is where we tend to meet. And, we care about the community and closeness of our neighborhood, rather than the anonymity of city spaces. But, I suppose I would move to Center City if I could find a community like we have here."

These comments came from the California native I interviewed. She was married to a man before she moved to Philadelphia and fell in love with her female roommate. Contemplating this question more or less for the first time, she seemed to describe a very traditional notion: women need a private space to be and a community to support them. They do not need public institutions; those are for men. While I do not think she explicitly meant all that I presumed from what she said, I question what fuels so many women, as she was not the only one, to claim women need public space less than males. Is this a natural phenomena or a notion so deeply instilled in their ways of thinking that it has become the norm? Unfortunately I was not able to answer this question through my research.

Conclusion

Gayborhoods have always been studied as an urban phenomenon, distanced from family space and combined with consumer institutions. Thus, by definition they have

excluded home based and private spaces historically bestowed upon women. In other words, traditionally these spaces have been gendered and not sexed, following heterosexual gender roles. Hence the spaces of exploration in this paper have gender-based difference. Despite the modern acknowledgement that lesbians exist, notions of queer space in the larger society have yet to broaden enough to include concentrating queers as women. For as Smith-Rosenberg described, there is a gender role difference that has effected where lesbian and gay space was formed from the mid eighteenth century onward. Today, we know lesbian residential concentrations do exist and they tend to exist separately from that of gay males, particularly in Philadelphia. While the institution based, urban societies or 'Gay Ghettos,' Castells and Levine described are still largely male, lesbians have been found to concentrate in more suburban and family oriented neighborhoods.

My research finding attributes several factors to this difference. First, there is the claim of a lifestyle difference between gay men and lesbians; the urban club frequenter versus the quick to settled homebody. This notion is based upon stereotypes, which do not incorporate a large portion of the lesbian and gay society. Hence, the claim cannot hold as the primary cause. Secondly, there is the claim that lesbians are more likely to have kids and thus need a family space. While this may be true for many coupled and older lesbians, most of the lesbians I interviewed did not have children. At the same time, each complained about the poor education system, which affected their suburban-like area, as Mount Airy is a part of Philadelphia County, and claimed they would move to a better school system in the suburbs if they were to have children. On the other had, one couple with a two year old said they wanted to raise their family in center city, until the violence got too bad, which brings me to the last claim. Lesbians as women prefer the perceived safety of suburbia. Mount Airy is not

a suburb, nor is it a completely safe haven. The women I spoke to, which included one who had been robbed in front of her home generally feel safe in the neighborhood, but safety was never listed as a reason to move there. Conclusively, these claims do not appear to point to the core reasoning for the gender difference in queer male and female concentrated space. I argue this difference is more connected with the historic "rigid gender role differentiation with the family and within society as a whole" rather than a natural female need for the family suburbia and male need for anonymous urban space (Smith-Rosenberg: 9).

Despite historic gender difference, having no role in the development may keep lesbians from concentrating in the Gayborhood. Lesbians, like other people, prefer areas that have features that appeal to them. For the Mount Airy residents I interviewed, that included affordability, green space, diversity, and lgbt friendly atmosphere and for those who were aware of it beforehand, the lesbian population. Generally, they like most aspects of the neighborhood and when they do not, the majority of the participants feel like they can do something about it. For example, a Penn affiliated interviewee explained that one Valentines Day there was a display with pictures of couples in the window display case at the bookstore on the corner of Carpenter and McCallum. The couples all included a man and a woman. She had no problem going into the store and requesting the display be more representative of non-heterosexual couples. The store clerk, change the display with no problems. She had power in this situation and was able to make the display more appealing to her. Perhaps, this is one of the differences between a place like Mount Airy, and one like the Gayborhood. In primarily residential neighborhoods, the residents can have a real say, vote, and role in what goes on in their neighborhood. Whether it be in small, easy to change situations like that at the bookstore, or a harder to change issues like racism in the community, or a more political

issue, the lesbians I spoke to felt that they were in a position to make change. Contrarily, they perceive most downtown neighborhoods, to be run by business owners and powerful consumer groups and obviously politicians, which have a role in both neighborhoods. Thus, with few attractive features for lesbians in the Gayborhood and the perception that they will have a hard time changing much about it, the lesbians of Mount Airy and other locations probably will not be moving to the Gayborhood anytime soon. I must agree with the former Sisters employee, who said without some role in the development, lesbians may never concentrate in 'Gayborhoods' because they prefer to move to places that appeal to them and gay men are not able to create these features as well as women can. There evidence is in the already low levels of women in the current primarily male owned Gayborhood. Also, of the 16 out of 27 female and lesbian respondents who said they would move if they had the option, not one mentioned moving to Washington Square West but instead to West Philly, South Philly, or another neighborhood outside of Philadelphia.

So what is next for these queer neighborhoods? Will gay male and lesbian concentrations ever overlap? In a recent New York Times article, one author used San Francisco's "Castro," a popular gay neighborhood to describe one answer to this debated question.

> These are wrenching times for San Francisco's historic gay village, with population shifts, booming development, and a waning sense of belonging that is also being felt in gay enclaves across the nation, from Key West, Fla., to West Hollywood, as they struggle to maintain cultural relevance in the face of gentrification… "Claiming physical territory was a powerful act," Mr. Reuter said. "But the gay neighborhood is becoming a past-tense idea." In the Castro, the influx of baby strollers — some being pushed by straight parents, some by gay parents — is perhaps the most blatant sign of change. "The Castro has gone from a gay-ghetto mentality to a family mentality," said Wes Freas, a broker with Zephyr Real Estate. (Brown)

Is Gayborhood becoming equivalent to Mount Airy? While the author, Patricia Leigh Brown, describes this as the possible end to the Castro and other "centers of the Gay Liberation movement," I question whether this is merely a regular part of urban development, the process that keeps cities forever in a state of change. Perhaps, this is a sign of the societal integration of gays and lesbians. But as urban queers move into more affordable communities, might they push the original inhabitants out creating the same process of gentrification in which Gayborhoods first emerged? Only time will tell.

Post Survey for You

Now that you have downloaded and reviewed my work, please take the time to complete this short survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=_2fuD0tUhhAUrhLzTdwezTaw_3d_3d

Thank you.

Appendix I

Your Neighborhood

1. How long have you lived here?
2. What attracted you to the location?
3. Where did you live before living here?
4. Would you change anything?
5. Would you move if there were no obstacles?

Attractive/Repulsive Characteristics

6. How are the resources? Near by groceries? School system? Libraries and bookstores? Public transportation?
7. What about the nearby public space: do you look for aesthetics or functionality?
8. Do you know many if any of your neighbors?

Social Characteristics

9. Is there a sense of community?
10. Are there any residential organizations and if so are you a member?
11. Describe the history of the neighborhood.
12. Describe the people and the social environment.
13. Do you view the neighborhood as largely lesbian? Gay? LGBT? What effect if any did that have on your decision to move here?
14. How else would you describe the area?
15. Are you familiar any other such L G B or T concentrations in Philly?

Philadelphia's Gayborhood

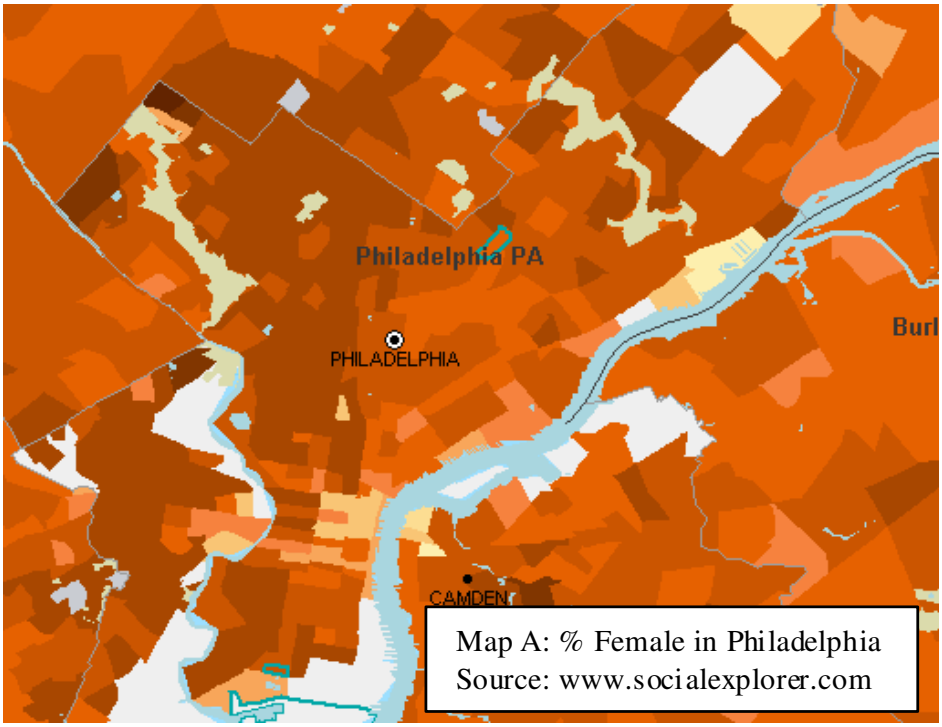
16. Are you familiar with the Gayborhood?
17. Do you spend time there? Doing what?
18. Would you live there? Why or why not?
19. Who does it cater to or whom does it attract?

Gayborhoods/Gay Villages/Gay Ghettos – Only Gay?

20. Do you think it caters to a certain gender more? In what ways?
21. Why do you think such neighborhoods exist?
22. Why are some more publicly visible (to the population at large) than others?
23. From my understanding Lesbian concentrations are a more recent concept, why do you think this is so or is it? Why suburban like spaces?
24. Do you think lesbians as women, and gay males as men have different social values, interest, or needs that lend to them staying in one area as opposed to another?
25. Is the difference based on resources that are available?

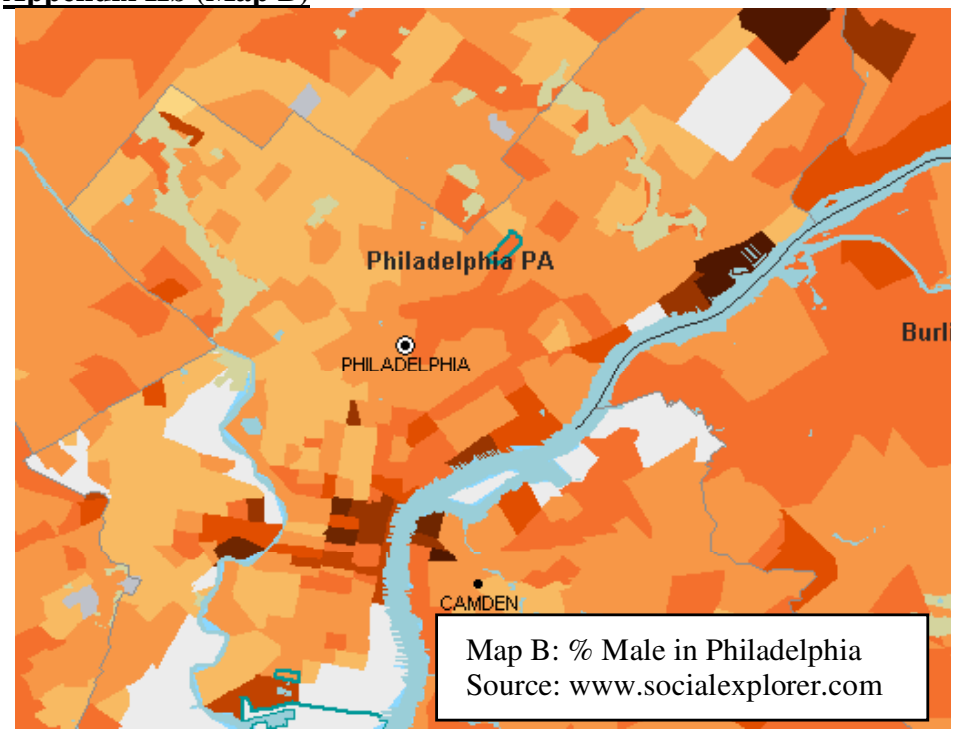
Draw a mental map of your neighborhood.

Appendix IIa (Map A)



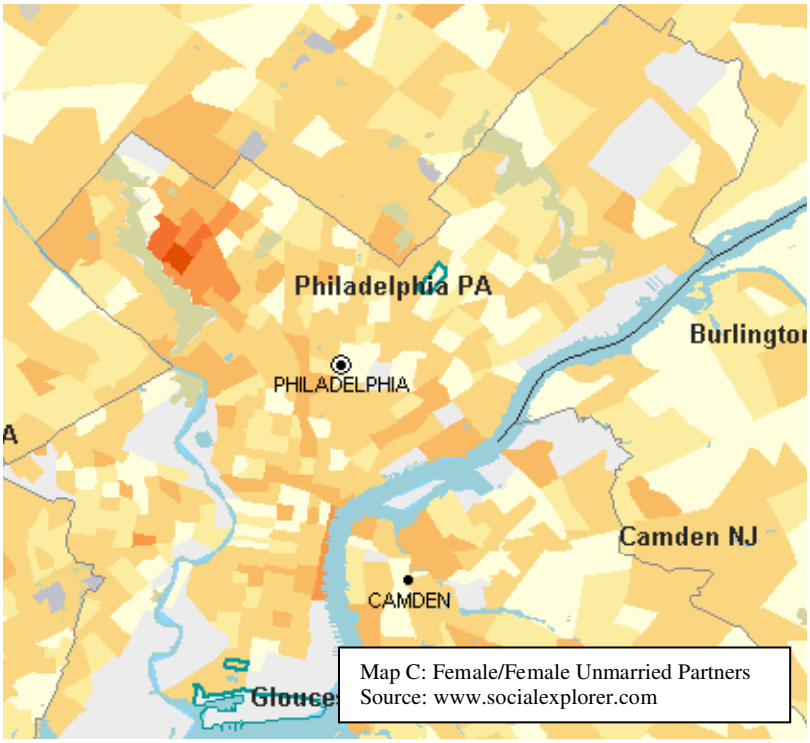
Map A: % Female in Philadelphia
Source: www.socialexplorer.com

Appendix IIb (Map B)



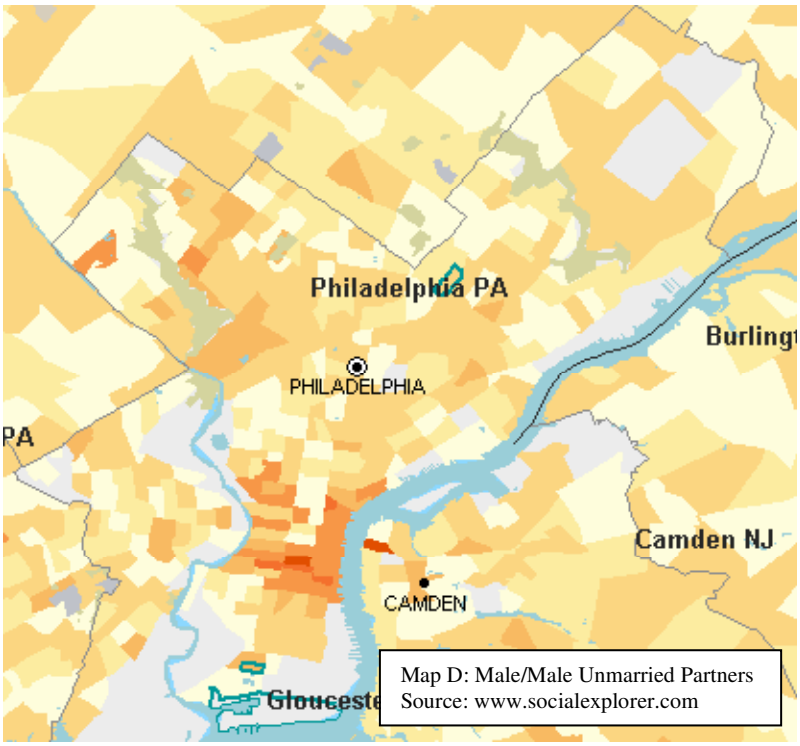
Map B: % Male in Philadelphia
Source: www.socialexplorer.com

Appendix IIc (Map C)



Map C: Female/Female Unmarried Partners
Source: www.socialexplorer.com

Appendix IId (Map D)



Map D: Male/Male Unmarried Partners
Source: www.socialexplorer.com

Appendix III

Gay/Lesbian Top Ten Neighborhoods	Lesbian Top Ten Neighborhoods	Gay Male Top Ten Neighborhoods
1. Pine East (The section of Pine in Center City)	West Mount Airy	Pine East (The section of Pine in Center City)
2. West Mt. Airy	West Mount Airy	Queen Village Middle
3. Queen Village Middle	Cedar Hill	Graduate South
4. Bella Vista Middle	Germantown	Bella Vista North
5. Graduate South	Fern Rock	Northern Liberties
6. Northern Liberties	East Germantown	Pine West
7. Queen Village North	Poplar	Bella Vista Middle
8. Bella Vista North	East Falls	South Philadelphia (Christian to Ellsworth, Broad to 6th)
9. Pine West	Chestnut Hill	Queen Village North
10. South Philadelphia (Christian to Wharton, 6th to Front)	South Philadelphia (Mifflin to Oregon, 10th to 5th)	South Philadelphia (Christian to Wharton, 6th to Front)

Chart 1
Source: This chart was taken from a draft of the Philadelphia LGBT Community Assessment and appears to have some typos. I was unable to verify the exact boundaries of these locations and whether the first or second neighborhood in the second column, Mount Airy and Mount Airy, is meant to be East Mount Airy.

Suggestions for Future Research

1. Explore other populations of lesbians (Low Income, People of Color, Young, Religious, etc)
2. Explore what keeps gay men living near Gayborhood
3. Explore the business owners in Gayborhood (Their incentives and views on the area)
4. Explore the areas where gays and lesbians affected by urban gentrification are moving to
5. Explore the role of race and class

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