Cultural Archipelagos: New Directions in the Study of Sexuality and Space

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Research on sexuality and space makes assumptions about spatial singularity: Across the landscape of different neighborhoods in the city, there is one, and apparently only one, called the gayborhood. This assumption, rooted in an enclave episte- mology and theoretical models that are based on immigrant migration patterns, creates blind spots in our knowledge about urban sexualities. I propose an alterna- tive conceptual framework that emphasizes spatial plurality. Drawing on the loca- tion patterns of lesbians, transgender individuals, same-sex families with children, and people of color, I show that cities cultivate "cultural archipelagos" in response to the geo-sexual complexities that arise from within-group heterogeneity. Rather than inducing spatially singular or scholastic outcomes, as some scholarship pre- dicts, subgroup variations produce diverse yet distinct types of queer spaces. The analytic frame of cultural archipelagos suggests more generally that we cannot cate- gorize urban or social worlds using simple binaries such as "the gayborhood" versus all other undifferentiated straight spaces. Thinking in terms of plurality provides a more generative approach to advance the study of sexuality and space.

From Sydney to Singapore and Sitges: These are all distinct places, yet each demonstrates with particular force a common insight: The city is a catalyst for sexuality—and queerness in particular. It is not the only place where queerness lives, of course, but cities have played a special role in cultivating queer cultures and communities "ever since the time of ancient Athens and the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah" (Aldrich 2004:1719). The street- level expressions of sexuality have varied over time and across places. In early modern London, we encountered molly houses and in late nineteenth and early twentieth century New York, interactions with fairies, trade, and wolves. In Hanoi, men would find other men for sex at Hoan Kiem Lake, while public parks offered points of rendezvous in Delhi (Hubbard 2012).

Motivated by a general understanding of neighborhoods as basic building blocks of cities and a specific interest in the spatial distribution of morality, sociologists in the Chicago School proposed frameworks like moral regions (Park 1915), hobohemian districts (Anderson 1923), and the world of furnished rooms (Zorbaugh 1929) that populated the inner zone in transition of Burgess's (1925) influential model of urban ecology. By imagining the city as a sexual laboratory (Heap 2003) as well as a social one, these studies outlined a "field of sex life" (Burgess 1928:415) that was situated in urban

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environments. A variety of "meeting places" (Forsyth 2001:343) provided opportunities at this time for people who experienced same-sex desire to find each other. These bars, cabarets, theaters, house parties, restrooms, and cruising spots were located in bohemian sections of the city, such as Greenwich Village in New York for white gay men or Harlem for blacks, which had reputations for "flouting bourgeois convention" (Chauncey 1994:227).

With World War II came a new spatial imagination. Many servicemen and –women who were discharged for their real or perceived homosexuality stayed put in port cities, places like Washington DC, Seattle, San Diego, Philadelphia, Miami, and New Orleans. As their numbers swelled, so too did a realization that they comprised "a legitimate minority group, having a certain quasi-'ethnic' status" (Epstein 1987:120). Consider that the population of San Francisco had declined during the 1930s but grew by more than 125,000 between 1940 and 1950. Census data from 1950 to 1960 show that the number of single-person households in the city doubled following the war and accounted for 38 percent of the total residential units (D'Emilio 1989).

A "great gay migration" (Weston 1995) to major American cities ensued in the decades following the war. Bars that catered to them opened more frequently, and over time, the first "gay ghettos" (Levine 1979) formed. The growing numbers of young men and women in urban centers altered their cultural and political consciousness. Efforts to articulate their identities and communities required "control of a given territory," Castells (1983:157) argues. Gay districts nurtured a powerful agentic ethos at this time.

Once thriving as collective expressions of queer life, some researchers argue that gay enclaves, or "gayborhoods" (Ghaziani 2014b), are diminishing in density and are now in a state of "demise" (Usher and Morrison 2010). Journalists lament that these districts are "passé," as the *New York Times* declared on its front page (Brown 2007), while scholars document the demographic deconcentration of same-sex households in gayborhoods (Spring 2013), the loss of "cultural icons" (Doan and Higgins 2011:16), and a "subcultural forfeiture" (Harris 1997:7) that comes with sexual integration. Late-stage gentrification, the global circulation of capital, changes in the flows of migration, liberalizing attitudes toward homosexuality, social acceptance and assimilation, and the normalization of geo-coded mobile apps (which have altered how places facilitate social and sexual connections) are the most commonly cited culprits for the loss of control, or even interest in controlling, queer territories. Some scholars predict that queer populations will merge "into the fashionable mainstream" as "heterosexual customs" overwhelm the gayborhood and contribute to its disappearance (Collins 2004:1802). Others anticipate a stochastic "dispersing" (Ruting 2008:267) of queer people across the city.

Regardless of whether they ask questions about neighborhood formation (Knopp 1997; Lewis 2013), evolution (Kanai and Kenttamaa-Squires 2015; Stryker and Van Buskirk 1996), or change (Rushbrook 2002), scholars who write about urban sexualities from the position of an enclave epistemology (Abrahamson 2005) or an "immigrant enclave model" (Logan et al. 2002:299) see a special relationship between groups of people, their ways of life, and territorial clustering. Applied to the case of urban sexualities, this approach requires us to make an assumption about the spatial singularity of queer space. Think: *The* Castro. *The* Village in Toronto. *The* Chueca in Madrid. La Rampa to *the* Malecón section of Cuba. *Le* Marais in Paris. *Le* Village Gai in Montreal. That's where you go if you want to find *the* gayborhood. A similar assumption underlies how we think about Davie Village in Vancouver, Soho in London, Schöneberg in

Berlin, Zona Rosa in Mexico City, Ni-chome in Tokyo, and De Waterkant in Cape Town (some scholars describe all of Cape Town expansively yet still singularly as "*the* gay capital of Africa" [Visser 2002:87]—the same assumption emerges again). While gayborhoods have "globalized," existing today "all over the world" (Martel 2018:18), each city apparently has one, and only one, gay enclave in its "mosaic of little worlds" (Park 1925:40).

The assumption of spatial singularity has left its mark on research about sexuality and space that was published in earlier years (Kennedy and Davis 1993; LeVay and Nonas 1995; Newton 1993) as well as current writings (Hayslett and Kane 2011; Orne 2017; Podmore 2013; Sibalis 2004; Whittemore and Smart 2016). The most recent research that I could find recommends that we shift our geographic focus away from the northeast and the west coasts of the United States (it remains regrettably silent on international comparisons) to the south and southwest parts of the country (Stone 2018). Doing so would move conversations beyond the "great cities" of Chicago, New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles and incorporate more "ordinary cities" (Robinson 2006) like Boise and Burlington or San Antonio, Ithaca, Reno, Wilton Manors, and Fargo. But even here we find that same assumption: Queer life is curiously located in just one part the city.

The assumption of spatial singularity and the enclave epistemology that structures it produce a type of binary thinking that seems to me self-evidently flawed, yet somehow it is still entrenched in urban studies: Gayborhoods will persist or perish. There are many alternatives beyond separate or integrated spaces, however, including queer friendly districts (Nash and Gorman-Murray 2014) where straights are in the majority both residentially and commercially yet "a significant presence of gay and lesbian residents, businesses, and organizations are welcome nonetheless" (p. 760). The defining feature of queer-friendly spaces is the mutual interaction among gays and straights and their attempts to "foster understanding across sexual difference" (Gorman-Murray and Waitt 2009:2855). A 2009 story published in the *Village Voice* in New York entitled "The New Gay Neighborhoods" (Lavers 2009)—notice the plural—describes an outcome that sociologists of sexualities documented more than two decades ago (e.g., Stein and Plummer 1994) but urban researchers have overlooked: Queer spaces defy expressions of singularity and uniformity. There is not just one queer space in the city, and no two areas are alike.

I am not interested in rehearsing "old gay ghetto debates" (Visser 2013:268) in this essay: why they formed, how they are changing, whether or why we still need them, or who they exclude. Nor am I keen on rehashing metronormative critiques (Halberstam 2005; Herring 2010). There is nothing surprising about the fact that queer people live in small cities and towns, the suburbs, and rural areas. What concerns me instead is the assumption of spatial singularity and the epistemological blind spots and binaries that it produces in our knowledge about sexuality and space. Rather than speaking about "islands of decay" (Wyly and Hammel 1999) or "islands of renewal" (Berry 1985)—or any "islands of meaning" (Zerubavel 1996) that carve out a singular mental cluster, I propose that urbanists embrace the imagery of "cultural archipelagos." The analytic frame of an archipelago, rather than an isolated island, shows us one way to resist flattening the city into an artificial binary between *the* gayborhood versus all other undifferentiated and presumably "straight spaces" (Browne and Bakshi 2011:181).

CULTURAL ARCHIPELAGOS

One surprise that I encountered while researching gayborhoods was the unexpected emergence of new clusters for specific subgroups of people. I call their spatial expressions cultural archipelagos (Ghaziani 2014b). Most readers of *There Goes the Gayborhood?* have focused on explanations for gayborhood change that I offered in the first part of the book (people apparently have very strong feelings against the word "post-gay," an idea which is central in part one, and they have routinely reduced it to a straw man). The propositions that drive the second part of the book challenge a pervasive theoretical problem that appears in interdisciplinary writings on sexuality and space. Demographic statistics, media discussions, and scholarship about gay neighborhoods suggest that they are losing their cultural significance (Brown 2014; Delany 1999; Nash 2013; Spring 2013). In this essay, I want to argue the opposite: The spatial expressions of sexuality are becoming more diverse and plural. To illustrate the analytic purchase of cultural archipelagos, I consider the location patterns of lesbians, transgender individuals, same-sex families with children, and people of color.

LESBIAN NEIGHBORHOODS

In early studies on urban sexualities, sociologists ascribed territorial aspirations only to gay men. Castells (1983:140) circumscribed the possibilities in 1983 when he argued, "Lesbians, unlike gay men, tend not to concentrate in a given territory," and so they "do not acquire a geographical basis." Unlike men, "women have rarely had territorial aspirations" since "their world attaches more importance to relationships and their networks are ones of solidarity and affection." Lesbians, therefore, are "placeless." This was so obvious to Castells that he concluded, "[W]e can hardly speak of lesbian territory." Some later studies have echoed Castells' claim. For example, Stein (2004:29) presents a quote from a woman in Philadelphia who told him that lesbians "didn't seem to live in any one particular place." The reflection led Stein's respondent to a similar conclusion as Castells: "Women never seem to congregate the way men do."

Most scholars today reject the "simplistic assumptions" (Binnie and Valentine 1999:176) that lesbians are placeless, they lack a geographical basis, or they are without territorial aspirations. Census data affirm distinct distributions at the county level (Figure 1).[1]

I do not mean to suggest that the location patterns of lesbians and gay men are identical or orthogonal. They sometimes cluster in similar areas—in three cases, as the census shows us: Provincetown, Rehoboth Beach, and the Castro—but "lesbian geographies" (Valentine 2000) exist independently as well (Table 1).[2]

Table 1 reports data from the 2010 Census. The gender differences that it shows arise for several reasons. First, coupled women are more likely to live in rural environments due to cultural cues about gender. One rural, gay Midwesterner confided to Kazyak (2012:840), "If you're a flaming gay queen, they're like, 'Oh, you're a freak, I'm scared of you.' But if you're a really butch woman and you're working at a factory, I think it's a little easier." Lesbians who perform masculinity in rural environments (by working hard labor, for example) are not as stigmatized as effeminate gay men. This makes rural places safer and more inviting for these women. Scholars call this the "gay and lesbian

Same sex female couples per 1,000 households by county (adjusted)
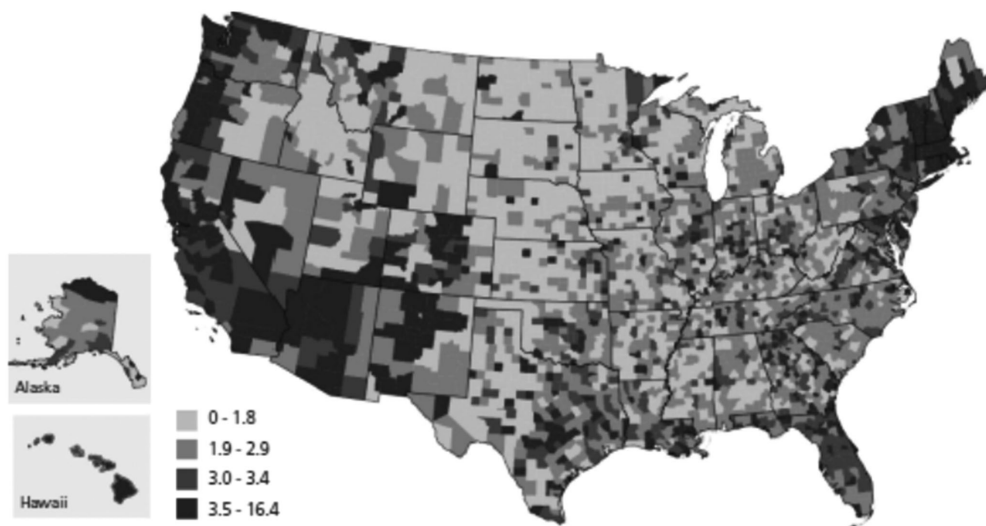
Same sex couples per 1,000 households by county (adjusted)
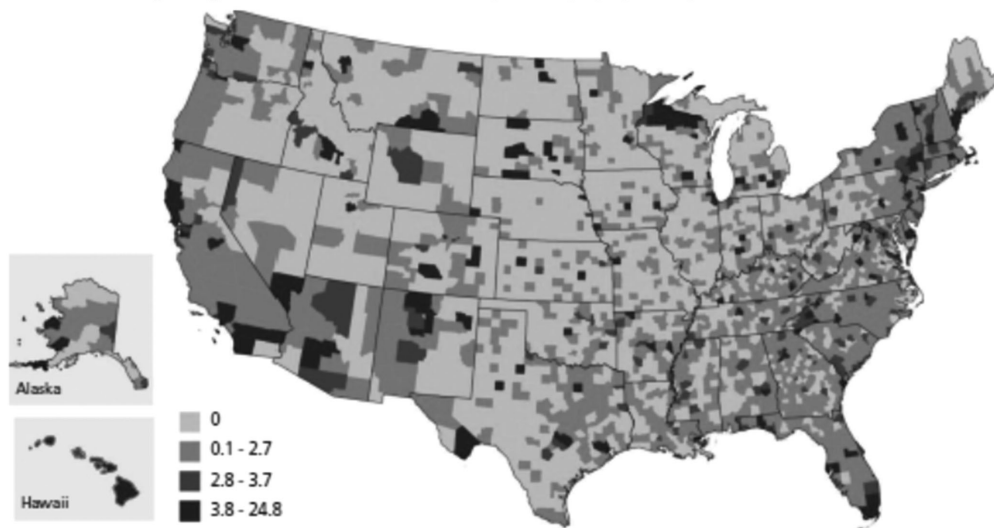
Source: 2010 U.S. Census, analyzed by Gary J. Gates and Abigail M. Cooke, The Williams Institute

FIG. 1. Same-sex female and male couples in the United States.

exceptionalism hypothesis" (Cooke and Rapiano 2007): lesbians elect less urban areas and places that have established lesbian rather than gay male communities.

Subcultural differences also matter. Lesbian neighborhoods consist of a cluster of homes located near progressive businesses like coffee shops, bike shops, and independent theatre companies. Although many cities have distinct areas for gay men and lesbians, neighborhoods for women have a "quasi-underground character" (Adler and Brenner 1992:31). Boystown in Chicago attracts many more men, while Andersonville appeals to

TABLE 1. Lesbian and Gay Male Concentrations by Zip Code

Same-Sex Male Couples				Same-Sex Female Couples			
Zip Code	Location	Percent of All Households	Median Price per Sq. Foot	Zip Code	Location	Percent of All Households	Median Price Per Sq. Foot
94114	Castro, San Francisco, CA	14.2%	671	02657	Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA	5.1%	532
92264	Palm Springs, CA	12.4%	146	01062	Northampton, MA	3.3%	187
02657	Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA	11.5%	532	01060	Northampton, MA	2.6%	189
92262	Palm Springs, CA	11.3%	136	02130	Jamaica Plain, Boston, MA	2.4%	304
33305	Wilton Manors, Fort Lauderdale, FL	10.6%	206	19971	Rehoboth Beach, DE	2.4%	187
90069	West Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA	8.9%	481	95446	Guerneville, north of San Francisco, CA	2.2%	197
94131	Noe Valley /Glen Park/Diamond Heights, San Francisco, CA	7.4%	564	02667	Wellfleet, Cape Cod, MA	2.2%	340
75219	Oak Lawn, Dallas, TX	7.1%	160	94619	Redwood Heights/Skyline, Oakland, CA	2.1%	230
19971	Rehoboth Beach, DE	7.0%	187	30002	Avondale Estates, suburban Atlanta, GA	1.9%	97
48069	Pleasant Ridge, suburban Detroit, MI	6.8%	107	94114	Castro, San Francisco, CA	1.9%	671

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, analyzed by Jed Kolko, *Trulia Trends.*

women. In Boston, we have the South End and Jamaica Plains, respectively, while New York has Hell's Kitchen and Park Slope.

The same pattern applies in Canada. Davie Village is the visible gayborhood in Vancouver, the place with nightlife, Pride parades, and rainbow crosswalks. Lesbians are more likely to live and socialize on Commercial Drive. In Toronto, there's the Church and Wellesley gayborhood, but there's also Queen West, which locals call Queer West.

The areas across North America that dominate our popular and scholarly imaginations—Boystown, South End, Hell's Kitchen, Davie Village, and Church-Wellesley—are populated mostly by gay men (and straight tourists), but those are not the only places where urban sexualities cluster. As one gay guide to Toronto notes, "There's one thing you'll notice pretty quickly about Toronto: queer culture is everywhere. The notion of there being a single 'gayborhood' in the city is so last century."[3] As with the *Village Voice* story that I mentioned earlier, here again we see a meaningful reference to plurality.

Third, women in general have less socioeconomic power than men (Badgett 2001). According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, women still earn on average less than men—82 percent of what men earned in 2017.[4] Table 1 confirms that lesbian geographies are located in areas with a lower median price per square foot.

Finally, lesbians are more likely to have children, and this creates different housing needs (Bouthillette 1997). According to the Williams Institute, more than 111,000 same-sex couples are raising 170,000 biological, step, or adopted children. Among those individuals who are younger than 50 and living alone or with a partner, nearly half of LGBT women (48 percent) and a fifth of LGBT men (20 percent) are raising a child under the age of 18. Among couple households specifically, 27 percent of female and 11 percent of male couples are raising children. Finally, among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults who report ever having given birth to or fathered a child, 80 percent are female.[5] Gayborhoods are more likely to offer single-occupancy units at high rents. This steers women, especially coupled women with children, to differ-

ent neighborhoods in the same city—or it motivates them to relocate to nonurban areas.

These four factors affect lesbian territoriality, motivating women to select different places than gay men, but it is invalid to conclude that lesbians are placeless. Note as well that there is never just one lesbian community or spatial cluster. Queer women's migrations are heterogeneous, and alongside the comparatively more visible gayborhoods, they contribute to the analytic chain of cultural archipelagos.

TRANSGENDER PERCEPTIONS OF THE GAYBORHOOD

Few surveys ask questions that track the trans population. One meta-analysis of four of the largest and longest running surveys in the United States found several problems with how federal agencies conceptualize and operationalize gender (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015). Some of the most reliable approximations come from the Williams Institute. According to one of their reports, approximately 0.6 percent of adults in the United States (1.4 million individuals) identify as transgender. Their findings also provide the first ever state-by-state estimates of the trans population (Table 2).[6] While these data are not at the neighborhood level, they support broader arguments about spatial plurality.

Discussions about gayborhoods emphasize the experiences of gays and lesbians (and sometimes bisexuals, though less often) rather than trans individuals. In one of my interviews, a lesbian who lived in Boystown asked me point blank: "And trans folk? Where are they? We never talk about trans neighborhoods. And I don't think that's the gayborhood." Although transness is "more easily legible" (Nash 2011:203) in the gayborhood and its social spaces since they permit "more possibilities for being than places dominated by heterosexual normativities" (p. 199), many individuals still report feeling invisible. Doan (2007:62) found that "the gendered nature of these spaces," or the ways in which gayborhoods enforce traditional gender norms, "results in continued high levels of harassment and violence." She surveyed 149 trans people to learn about their experiences in the gayborhood. Thirty-three percent of her sample reported "hostile stares," 22 percent experienced "hostile comments," and 17 percent described instances of "physical harassment." She also asked respondents "how safe" they felt their city was for GLB versus trans people, respectively. Table 3 shows her results. A third of trans respondents who lived in a city with a gayborhood felt that the area was either unsafe or tolerable, at best, for lesbian, gay male, and bisexual residents. Nearly half felt that the gayborhood was unsafe or tolerable for other trans people.

In response to perceived exclusions and threats to their personal safety, activists have begun organizing new types of spaces, called "queer pop-ups," that celebrate nonbinary gender expressions. These spaces are self-consciously styled in opposition to the "essentialist expectations" (Nash 2011:203) of the gayborhood and gay bars. "I think about queerness as a kind of radical self-expression and an encompassing of difference," one participant said to a colleague and me in an interview. Another added, "Pop-up events have the opportunity to include folks who are not cis-gay men. That would be for me the differentiator" (Ghaziani and Stillwagon 2018:79). In my earlier work, I showed that infighting can be generative (Ghaziani 2008). The point I wish to make here is similar but

TABLE 2. State-by-State Estimates of the Transgender Population

STATE	POPULATION	PERCENT	RANK
United States of America	1,397,150	0.58%	-
Alabama	22,500	0.61%	15
Alaska	2,700	0.49%	33
Arizona	30,550	0.62%	12
Arkansas	13,400	0.60%	18
California	218,400	0.76%	2
Colorado	20,850	0.53%	27
Connecticut	12,400	0.44%	37
Delaware	4,550	0.64%	9
District of Columbia	14,550	2.77%	-
Florida	100,300	0.66%	6
Georgia	55,650	0.75%	4
Hawaii	8,450	0.78%	1
Idaho	4,750	0.41%	43
Illinois	49,750	0.51%	30
Indiana	27,600	0.56%	23
Iowa	7,400	0.31%	49
Kansas	9,300	0.43%	41
Kentucky	17,700	0.53%	26
Louisiana	20,900	0.60%	17
Maine	5,350	0.50%	31
Maryland	22,300	0.49%	32
Massachusetts	29,900	0.57%	22
Michigan	32,900	0.43%	40
Minnesota	24,250	0.59%	20
Mississippi	13,650	0.61%	14
Missouri	25,050	0.54%	25
Montana	2,700	0.34%	47
Nebraska	5,400	0.39%	44
Nevada	12,700	0.61%	13
New Hampshire	4,500	0.43%	39
New Jersey	30,100	0.44%	36
New Mexico	11,750	0.75%	3
New York	78,600	0.51%	29
North Carolina	44,750	0.60%	16
North Dakota	1,650	0.30%	50
Ohio	39,950	0.45%	34
Oklahoma	18,350	0.64%	8
Oregon	19,750	0.65%	7
Pennsylvania	43,800	0.44%	35
Rhode Island	4,250	0.51%	28
South Carolina	21,000	0.58%	21
South Dakota	2,150	0.34%	46
Tennessee	31,200	0.63%	10
Texas	125,350	0.66%	5
Utah	7,200	0.36%	45
Vermont	3,000	0.59%	19
Virginia	34,500	0.55%	24
Washington	32,850	0.62%	11
West Virginia	6,100	0.42%	42
Wisconsin	19,150	0.43%	38
Wyoming	1,400	0.32%	48

TABLE 3. Perceptions of Safety among Transgender Residents

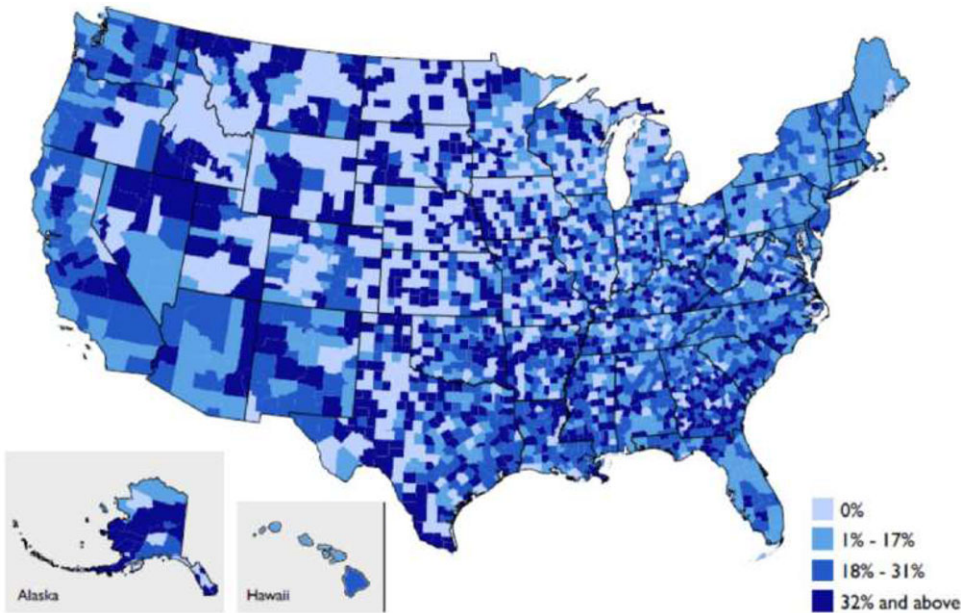|		City has a queer area		
		No	Yes	Total
How safe is your city for Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals?	Unsafe	14 (16%)	1 (2%)	15
	Tolerable	47 (55%)	19 (31%)	66
	Safe	25 (29%)	41 (67%)	66
How safe is your city for Transgendered people?	Unsafe	18 (21%)	3 (5%)	21
	Tolerable	44 (52%)	26 (42%)	70
	Safe	23 (27%)	32 (53%)	55

FIG. 2. Same-sex families with biological, adopted, or foster children under the age of 18 in the home. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

at the spatial rather than intergroup level: Some queer spaces exist in a productive tension with gay spaces like the gayborhood and its bars, and they contribute to the overall diversity of cultural archipelagos. One pop-up participant offered a useful analogy: "For me, as a Black person, I would never be like, 'There's too many black-centered things in the city.' Because there literally are not." The same logic applied to queer spaces. "Even if there are specifically gay bars in the city, I'm never—in my mind, it doesn't make sense to be like 'We've reached our limit.' There should always be so many more. Always."

SAME-SEX FAMILIES

Implied in my earlier discussion about housing needs is a third example of cultural

Same-Sex Couples with an African-American Householder per 1,000 households by county (adjusted)

Legend:
- 0.1
- 0.2
- 0.3 - 0.6
- 0.7 - 4.6
- No Couples w/ African-American Householder
- No SS Couples w/ African-American Householder

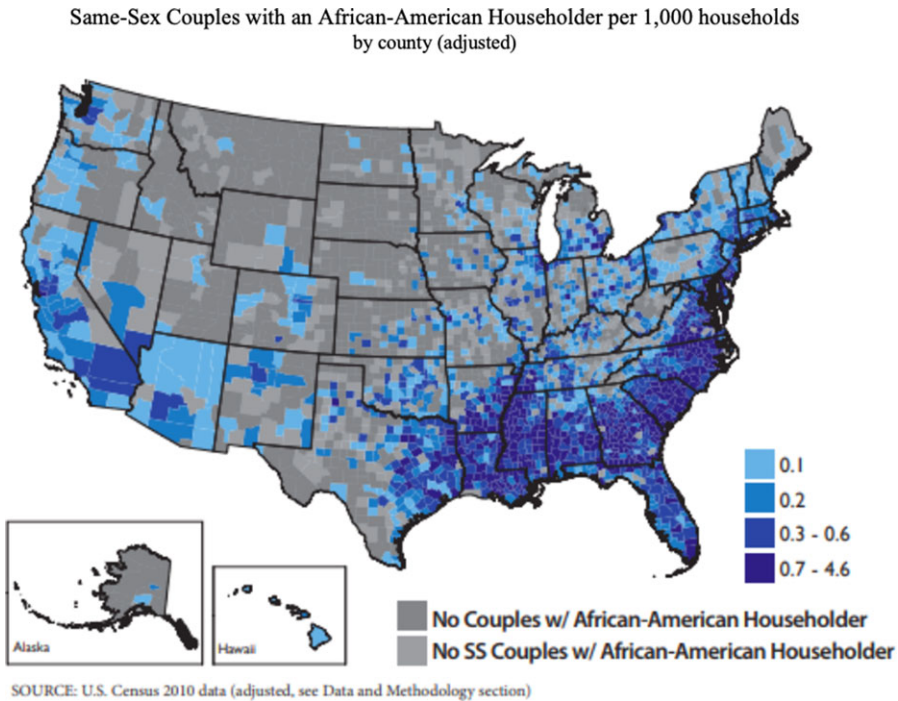SOURCE: U.S. Census 2010 data (adjusted, see Data and Methodology section)

FIG. 3. Same-sex couples with an African American Householder. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

archipelagos: same-sex families with children. Currently, more than 110,000 same-sex couples are raising an estimated 170,000 biological, step, or adopted children. Those couples who consider themselves "spouses" are more than twice as likely to be raising children compared to couples who define themselves as "unmarried partners."[7] Census data from 2010 show that while same-sex couples are raising children across the country, their distribution is not stochastic (Figure 2).

Childrearing among same-sex couples is most common in the Southern, Mountain West, and Midwestern parts of the country. States that have the highest proportion of same-sex couples with children include Mississippi (26 percent), Wyoming (25 percent), Alaska (23 percent), Idaho (22 percent), Montana (22 percent), Kansas (22 percent), North Dakota (22 percent), Arkansas (21 percent), South Dakota (21 percent), and Oklahoma (21 percent).[8] When we examine metro areas, we see that same-sex families cluster in economically integrated areas adjacent to regions that have a large population center (Table 4).[9]

One interpretation of these data is that the location patterns of same-sex families with children contribute to the deconcentration of gayborhoods; same-sex families live elsewhere, after all. This view is possible only when we conflate the study of sexuality and space with the analysis of gayborhoods. By allowing for spatial plurality, we can identify discernible pockets of concentration for same-sex families with children and interpret them as components of cultural archipelagos rather than misrecognizing them as evidence of outmigration from the gayborhood or residential dispersion.

TABLE 4. Metro Areas with Highest Percentages of Same-Sex Couples Raising Children

Population below 1 Million		Population above 1 Million	
Metro Area Name	% Same-Sex Couples Raising Children	Metro Area Name	% Same-Sex Couples Raising Children
Grand Forks, ND-MN	65%	Salt Lake City, UT	26%
Bismarck, ND	61%	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	24%
Hinesville-Fort Stewart, GA	46%	Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	22%
Laredo, TX	45%	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	22%
Visalia-Porterville, CA	44%	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	22%
Cheyenne, WY	43%	Baltimore-Towson, MD	20%
Rapid City, SD	43%	Columbus, OH	19%
Sioux City, IA-NE-SD	43%	Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	19%
Brownsville-Harlingen, TX	42%	Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	19%
Longview, WA	42%	Oklahoma City, OK	19%

TABLE 5. Top 10 States for LGBT African Americans

State	Estimated LGBT African American Adults	% LGBT among African American Adults	% LGBT African Americans among All Adults
District of Columbia	22,800	9.7%	4.48%
Louisiana	37,300	3.7%	1.11%
Georgia	73,800	3.6%	1.09%
North Carolina	66,200	4.5%	0.91%
Mississippi	18,900	2.5%	0.89%
New Jersey	56,000	6.7%	0.84%
Maryland	36,500	2.9%	0.79%
Alabama	29,800	3.3%	0.78%
Michigan	56,200	5.6%	0.71%
New York	106,000	5.1%	0.70%

RACIALIZED GEOGRAPHIES

Census data show that African American individuals in a same-sex partnership live in areas where there are higher overall populations of other African Americans, rather than areas that have large clusters of GLB people. More than one out of every four of African American same-sex couples lives in Georgia, New York, Maryland, and North Carolina (Figure 3). Of these households, 34 percent are raising children.

The 10 states with the largest percentages of GLB African Americans include DC, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina, Mississippi, New Jersey, Maryland, Alabama, Michigan, and New York (Table 5). This clustering is evident at the county level as well (Table 6).[10]

Zip codes associated with traditional gayborhoods are largely white. This made Nero (2005) wonder in the title of his essay, "Why are the Gay Ghettos White?" Rather than adopt a deficit approach like some scholars (e.g., Hunter 2015), I propose that we see

TABLE 6. Top 10 Counties for LGBT African Americans

State Rank	U.S. County Rank	County	Same-Sex Couples with African American Householders (adjusted)	Same-Sex Couples with African American Householder per 1,000 Households (adjusted)	% Raising "own" Children among Same-Sex Couples with African American Householder (adjusted)
2	1	Baltimore city, Maryland	1037	4.15	38%
7	2	Lee County, South Carolina	25	3.69	6%
7	3	Bamberg County, South Carolina	21	3.51	16%
3	4	Clayton County, Georgia	317	3.50	40%
9	5	Macon County, Alabama	28	3.27	26%
2	6	Prince George's County, Maryland	9538	3.14	29%
3	7	DeKalb County, Georgia	829	3.05	31%
1	8	District of Columbia, DC	793	2.97	22%
5	9	Holmes County, Mississippi	20	2.96	58%
3	10	Fulton County, Georgia	9672	2.57	23%

Nero's critique through a generative lens. Gayborhoods are not without exclusions, but they are only one expression of urban sexualities. The assumption of spatial singularity is epistemologically harmful because it ignores the "spatial capital" (Centner 2008; Mace 2017) and creative placemaking efforts of queer people of color. This includes youth of color, many of whom respond to the racial exclusions of the gayborhood by building separate communities, or as Greene (2018:168) argues, "refashion[ing] gayborhood street corners" into "queer street families."

When I was conducting interviews in Chicago, Alessandra, a Latina lesbian, explained to me why she disliked the gayborhood: "Boystown is overwhelmingly white." This did not leave her "placeless," as Castells would say, or without access to communities of color in queer spaces. "There are pockets on the South Side that have developed into mini gay areas," she told me. These "mini gay areas" provide a counterargument to the claim that Chicago has only one gay area. Alessandra rebutted, "There's a distinct African American, queer, female-identified community. There's a distinct Latina queer community. There's

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a little bit of an Asian community. These spaces are separate from the white spaces, which is Andersonville and Boystown. On the West Side, there's this whole underground scene of African American male parties, and they have their own scene that's not connected to Boystown at all, because they don't feel comfortable going to Boystown. . . . It's the exact same thing within the female world." These efforts may not culminate into a formal gayborhood, but to evaluate them by such a singular standard positions the gayborhood as analytically hegemonic. Edith, another Latina lesbian in the city, showed me a different map as well: "There's a lot of queer people in different neighborhoods of color that build their own spaces."

The patterns that I found in Chicago exist in other cities as well. For example, the story I referenced earlier about the "new gayborhoods" of New York noted that people of color are forming unique settlements of their own in places beyond Manhattan. Jackson Heights in Queens has become "an enclave for Latino gays." Michael Lavers, the journalist, calls it "Hell's Cocina—the city's main Latino gayborhood"(Lavers 2009). It's not the only one in the city either, but rather "one of a handful of such outposts that have sprung up in the so-called outer boroughs. Immigrants from Latin America and South Asia have transformed Jackson Heights into a neighborhood teeming with ethnic restaurants, street vendors, and legions of flamboyant drag queens and macho Latinos." In a similar way, Fort Greene in Brooklyn has become "a bastion of gay Black professionals," so much that "it is called the Chocolate Chelsea."

Charles Nero was right to wonder about racial exclusions in the gayborhood, but his critique does not mean that queer people of color are placeless. What I saw in Chicago and what is happening in cities like New York illustrates the powerful agency they have in creating unique residential and social clusters. This is not to suggest that there are no people of color in existing gayborhoods like Boystown, Hell's Kitchen, or Chelsea, any more than it implies that queer people of color who live in other parts of the city never go to the gay bars that are based in those areas. The world of urban sexualities is spatially plural and culturally complex.

LOOKING BACK, REFLECTING FORWARD

The study of sexuality and space has a long and interdisciplinary history, yet urban researchers have adopted a "remarkably reluctant" (Hubbard 2012:1) stance toward it. This is especially the case for sociologists, who demonstrate a "disregard for queer residents" (Brown-Saracino 2008:7) and are "biased toward the experiences of people who claim heterosexuality" (Moore 2015:245). The little we know about the spatial life of queer people inflates their role in gentrification, focuses exclusively on their residence in gayborhoods, or narrows the analysis of social spaces to gay bars. The result is an incomplete and distorted understanding about how queer people interact with the city. We cannot be content with case studies that ignore the role of gayborhoods in the metropolis, but neither should we conceptualize the city as a "dichotomy of gay/straight spaces" (Browne and Bakshi 2011:1818).

I focused in this essay on the experiences of lesbians, trans individuals, same-sex families with children, and queer people of color, but this is not an exhaustive list. Additional clusters exist for seniors (many gay seniors "abound in areas not known for their sizable gay populations," including North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, and

West Virginia[11] [Misgav 2016]); suburban (Brekhus 2003) and rural queer people (Gray 2009); and immigrants (Carrillo 2017; Martinez 2015). The logic of intersectionality also instructs us that people identify with more than one group at a time.

In addition to the location patterns of different subgroups of queer people, cultural archipelagos also develop as gayborhoods form, evolve, and change over time. Consider New York as an example. While Greenwich Village was the site of the famous Stonewall riots in 1969, the queer nucleus has since shifted. The 2009 *Village Voice* essay that I cited earlier, entitled "The New Gay Neighborhoods," tracks a trend that is happening in other cities as well: "Gay men, pushed out of Greenwich Village, went north of 14th Street to populate Chelsea, then past 34th Street to Hell's Kitchen. Now, many of them are pioneering some unlikely neighborhoods that are emerging as future gay neighborhoods"(Lavers 2009). HIV/AIDS incited some of this migration. In his 1995 *Washington Post* piece, Gary Lee observes, "Hit by the AIDS crisis and changing times, the heart of gay New York began to gradually shift a decade ago to Chelsea, which borders Greenwich Village to the north." Later in 2002, a writer for the *New York Times* offered a similar assessment:

> If Christopher Street was once America's gay Main Street, today it conjures a gay Potemkin Village. AIDS wiped out an entire cohort of gay men who had flocked there, even as Chelsea attracted a younger generation of gay, mostly white residents by offering cheaper rents. Eventually, Eighth Avenue outpaced Christopher Street as the city's gay standard. Until the mid-1990s, when Chelsea took over, the West Village zip code, 10014, had indicated the most populous gay neighborhood in the city (D. Lee 2002; G. Lee 1995).

Linger for a moment on the imagery of a "gay Potemkin Village." Potemkin was a Russian soldier, statesman, and one of Catherine the Great's lovers. He helped her seize power in 1762 by creating hollow facades of sham villages along the Dnieper River, hoping to impress the European powers-that-be with Catherine's supposed new conquests. From this mythology was born the phrase "Potemkin village" to designate a veneer that seems impressive but which lacks substance beneath it. To call Greenwich Village a gay Potemkin Village seems unfair to me. I prefer to think about these neighborhoods as having a symbolic relationship to one another; Even as businesses and residences shifted north to Chelsea, the Village retained a queer reputation due to the location of Stonewall, which is still a major symbol of queerness and an "anchor institution" (Ghaziani 2014a) for the area.

After the Village came Chelsea, and now there's Hell's Kitchen. In her story for the *New York Times*, Motoko Rich remarked, "For the last decade, Chelsea, on the West Side just north of Greenwich Village, has been the epicenter of gay male life in New York. Gay bars, novelty shops and coffee shops (notably, Big Cup, on Eighth Avenue), have drawn pilgrims from all over the country. . . . [But] as mostly straight families move into Chelsea, gay residents are now gravitating toward Hell's Kitchen and beyond." David Shaftel, writing also for the *New York Times*, calls this a "new gay presence" (Rich 2004; Shaftel 2007). In big cities like New York, gayborhoods have moved over time. Prior versions do not just vanish, of course, but the assumption of spatial singularity veils our ability to see, let alone theorize, the relationship between multiple areas.

Whereas the Village is an example of a symbolic (or Potemkin) gay village, Chelsea and Hell's Kitchen are more apparent, at least for now. How long this lasts before the cultural archipelagos of New York expand further remains to be seen. "Despite Hell's Kitchen's growing appeal to many of the city's young gay men, an attraction fueled by

its strengthening gay identity," Shaftel suggests that "many residents predict that the area may never have the gay identity that Chelsea has and that the West Village was once famous for, that it will endure simply as a gay-friendly district, less a scene than simply a neighborhood." His distinction between a scene and a neighborhood is intriguing. How can we measure the difference between a gay neighborhood, a gay-friendly district, and other kinds of queer scenes? How do "qualities of place" (Silver and Clark 2016) shape their position in cultural archipelagos? These are new questions that emerge only after we shift our analytic attention to cultural archipelagos.

I want to be careful in my concluding remarks to not overemphasize the position of the gayborhood. Based on a nationally representative sample of 1,197 self-identified LGBT American adults aged 18 years of age or older, a recent survey by the Pew Research Center found that most respondents have never lived in a gayborhood—72 percent, to be exact. Only 14 percent say that they have lived in such a place at some point in their life, while 12 percent said that they currently live in a gayborhood.[12] If 72 percent of LGBT individuals have never lived in a gayborhood, then what does that imply about frameworks in urban studies that restrict our analysis of sexuality and space to just those specific areas?

The conventional approach to studying urban sexualities adopts an enclave epistemology, one that isolates single gay districts for analysis. To reflect on the theoretical paucities of this approach, consider a conversation that I had with Jared, a 51-year-old, white, partnered gay man who has lived in Chicago for more than two decades. He told me about a "biggie bang" that happened in the city and produced "little planets of gays" across the map:

> There is a pattern of movement of where people live. Let us say it is this "biggie bang." Everybody lived in Lakeview. There was no question at the time that the place to move was Lakeview. All through the 1980s, it was really, really heavily gay. And then it exploded. Lakeview's not as concentrated anymore, and it will never be as concentrated. Now people are settling in different areas. The explosion has made little minienclaves throughout the city. . . . Now you've got all these little planets of gays.

Jared identifies two features of queer spaces that I think are worth acknowledging: They are protean (they change over time and reflect local place characteristics), and they are plural (they are multiple and diverse). This realization generates more questions. Rather than ask why a gayborhood forms, Jared inspires me to inquire about the causes of a "biggie bang." What triggers a spatial explosion that produces a "pluralization of sexuality" (Brown 2014:1) across the urban landscape? What types of cities are more likely to support cultural archipelagos? What factors constrain their formation? Similarly, rather than relegate our analysis to just one gayborhood, we must inquire about the interrelationship among the "little planets of gays." How can we characterize the ecological distribution of the "variety of gay and lesbian enclaves" (Compton and Baumle 2012:1351) that dot many cities today? If place characteristics affect "orientations to sexual identity" (Brown-Saracino 2015:1), how do the features of queer cultural archipelagos affect the worldmaking practices (Ghaziani and Brim 2019) that take place within and across the chain? What elements do they share? Which are unique?

We need new conceptual tools. I propose that we redirect the study of sexuality and space away from our preexisting assumptions of spatial singularity—evinced by a steady stream of publications about individual gay districts—toward a cultural archipelagos model of spatial plurality. New residential and leisure queer spaces are forming across

the city, and beyond its borders as well. They are not based exclusively in gayborhoods. The analytic frame of cultural archipelagos can produce more sophisticated inquiries into the relationship between sexuality and space, and it can advance an insight that is by now vast in its reach on the ground yet inadequately represented in scholarship: Urban sexualities are protean and spatially plural.

NOTES

[1] https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census2010Snapshot-US-v2.pdf.

[2] https://www.trulia.com/research/welcome-to-the-gayborhood/.

[3] https://www.seetorontonow.com/toronto-diversity/queer-west/.

[4] https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/womens-earnings/2017/home.htm.

[5] http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Parenting.pdf.

[6] https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/How-Many-Adults-Identify-as-Transgender-in-the-United-States.pdf.

[7] http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Parenting.pdf

[8] Ibid.

[9] https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/infographic-msas-may-2013/.

[10] Source for census data on LGBT African-Americans and African-American Same-sex Couples: https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Census-AFAMER-Oct-2013.pdf.

[11] https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/infographic-msas-may-2013/.

[12] http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/06/13/5-key-findings-about-lgbt-americans/.

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