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Gay Maps, Queer "Reads": Exposing Violence in the Spatial Representation of Gay D.C. in Search of Queer Spatial Potentials

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Abstract

This article exposes the violences encoded within many contemporary, mainstream gay spaces and connects these violences to a wider politics of the modern LGBT movement. No longer are queer places sites of radically disrupting time, space, and social norms, a practice that in some ways were constitutive of Queerness. Instead, many queer spaces have been organized and reorganized to reflect, reinforce, and support the integrationist and assimilationist goals of contemporary gay (white, cisgender, male) liberals and the State and corporate institutions they seek to become or have become a part of. I develop this argument by undertaking Queer readings of three "gay" maps of Washington, D.C. In deconstructing the violences within spatial representations of gay spaces within the nation's capital, I hope to engage in a broader disruption and subversion of both the cooptation of queer/Queer struggle by State and multinational corporate formations and the assimilationist and (white) nationalist trends within mainstream LGBT politics that allow this to happen. In the "slippage" or "fissure" produced by this disruption, I hope to open a path that allows us to "cruise" ahead towards new thought on what can and should constitute Queer and queer politics and spaces.

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Keywords

Queer, map, LGBT assimilation, gay liberalism, Queer futurity, fissure

Introduction

In the early 90's, in the wake[1] of the AIDS crisis, many queer political organizings took a turn toward assimilationist and integrationist positions. Perhaps due to fatigue caused by the horror of AIDS and the political response to it, perhaps caused by an influx of more conservative queer people who were more comfortable coming out due to increased awareness and representation, or perhaps due to neoliberalism's parasitic ability to coopt and undermine radical political movements, the period from the early 90's through the late 00's witnessed an emergence of a queer politics centered around a triumvirate of goals (marriage equality, open military service, and hate crime protection) that would lend particular members of the queer community recognition, participation, and protection from the American nation-state. With the disruptive energy of the Compton Cafeteria and Stonewall Riots and the subversive organizing of the Gay Liberation Front and the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries becoming a distant memory for many, mainstream LGBT movements embraced respectability and electoral politics and a political agenda that, in extending the bourgeois family, the American imperial apparatus, and the reach of the carceral State, reified dominant power schemas with negative implications for multiply-marginalized queer people (Chavez et al., 2014; Hobson, 2017; Munoz, 2009, 19-32). This transformed a movement for queer liberation from a movement that centered Queer politics to one that centered LGBT liberalism and all of its attendant violences.

Accompanying this change in dominant politics was a change in queer space. Some queer spaces, particularly those inhabited by working class queer and trans people of color, have been able to retain elements of radical subversion[2]. However, many queer spaces, particularly those inhabited by white and wealthy queer people, have been organized and reorganized to reflect, reinforce, and support the integrationist and assimilationist goals of contemporary queer liberals and the State and corporate institutions they seek to become or have become a part

[1] Here I refer to the mainstream perception, rather than the actuality, that we are in a post-AIDS political moment.

[2] Although these spaces are incredibly important and have their own legacies of resistance and "counter mapping", they are beyond the scope of this piece; however, I do plan to address them in later work. In the meantime, I encourage those interested in these contemporary legacies of spatial resistance and space-making to see the work of the Trans Women of Color Collective, HIPS, and Casa Ruby. For a black and queer historical reading of spatial relations in D.C., see Kwame Holme's *Beyond the Flames: Queering the History of the 1968 D.C. Riot*, as well as his dissertation *Chocolate City to Rainbow City: The Dialectics of Black and Gay Community Formation in Postwar Washington, D.C., 1946-1978*.

of. No longer are these queer spaces sites of radical disruption of time, space, and social norms, a practice that in some way is constitutive of Queerness (Halberstam, 2005 & 2011).

Despite this reactionary spatial reorganization, many of these queer spaces still claim a reputation of progressivism, radical acceptance, and subversive openness within both queer and non-queer popular imaginaries. This popular perception acts to obscure and protect the violence produced in and through queer spaces. In this article, I will work to expose these violences and to connect them to the wider politics of the modern, mainstream LGBT movement. To do this, I will undertake Queer readings of three "gay" maps of Washington, D.C[3].

It is important to clarify here that, in this paper, queer is used to indicate the full spectrum of non-normative (as defined by cis-heteropatriarchy) sexual and gender practices and identities marginalized within contemporary society. The term LGBT will be used to refer to liberal, assimilationist, gay and lesbian and, to a lesser extent, bisexual and trans politics that define contemporary, liberal organizing around gender and sexuality. Lastly, Queer will be used to express particular forms of marginal positionality and resistance not inherently tied to sexual or gender practice, but to an oppositional relationship to dominant moral and political constructions. As Gil Hochberg phrases it, "Queer…stands as both an adjective — marking bodies, issues, desires, and so forth as queer — and as a verb, questioning normative articulations of the political and the very processes by which we determine the scope of what counts as political" (Hochberg, 2010, 497). Additionally, drawing on the work of José Esteban Muñoz and Natalie Oswin, I will understand "[Q]ueerness as something that is not yet here," and as a radical utopian practice (Muñoz, 2009, 22). With this in mind, I will argue that, beyond constituting particular forms of marginalized sexual and gender identities, Queerness is a political identity and practice that takes an oppositional stance towards all systems of domination and exploitation, recognizing "the inextricability of sexual politics with geopolitics, nationalism, racism, militarism, neoliberalism, and more", while actively struggling to produce collective liberation from these violent systems (Oswin, 2015, 557). As the Third World Gay Revolution group articulated, "We want a new society… We want liberation of humanity, free food,

[3] All three maps were explicitly produced for a queer and allied audience with a heavy bias towards cisgender, gay men. This reflects wider trends within mainstream LGBT media and political advertising, which constructs a picture of the queer community that is much whiter and wealthier and more male and cisgender than is representational (Oswin, 2005, 81-83). More so, this trend has produced a popular understanding of queer space as monolithically and reductively gay. As Natalie Oswin has claimed, "the postindustrial normalization of gay white masculinity requires rethinking the meaning of queerness" (Oswin, 2005, 83). For an example of this trend and popular resistance to it, see recent controversy surrounding the covers of LGBT publications, such as the Advocate, and the social media campaign #GayMediaSoWhite started by black, gender nonconforming rapper Mykki Blanco (Rodriguez, 2016; Walker 2016).

free shelter, free clothing, free transportation, free health care, free utilities, free education, free art for all," (1971).

Washington, D.C. is an interesting site for undertaking such readings for several reasons. First, D.C. has a large queer population, large African American and Latinx communities, and a unique relationship to national, local, and queer politics. With such a unique demographic breakdown and a central location within American politics, the intersection of and, in many cases, confrontation between American LGBT, racial, gender, and class politics is explicit in the District, allowing for a more legible reading of power dynamics. Additionally, it is important to center this critique in an urban space for, as Jack Halberstam has argued, there is a *metronormative* trend within the queer imaginary, which uncritically produces urban locations as sites of progressivism, safety, and queer freedom (Halberstam, 2005; Muller Myrdahl, 2013). This unduly marks out rural sites, as well the people who inhabit them, as homophobic and dangerous, while simultaneously obscuring the violences that both take place within cities and emanate from them.

I argue this act of deconstructing *metronormativity* and unmasking the city is especially necessary in D.C. because, in addition to being an urban community where people lead their daily lives, D.C. also acts as an imperial capital. Rhetoric and symbolism surrounding D.C.'s alleged acceptance of its large queer community is mobilized both to construct the city itself as a progressive site and to do the same for the American nation and national community. Indeed, as Catherine Nash has explored in Toronto and Natalie Oswin has argued more broadly, there is also a strong material incentive for cities to claim and market queer space and acceptance to attract tourism dollars, as well as new, "progressive" corporate ventures (Nash, 2013, 194; Oswin, 2015). This mobilization works to coopt Queer/queer struggle and community-building and uses it to mask a plethora of violences enacted both by the city administration and the American nation-state in a process often referred to as *pinkwashing*. This was done in June of 2015, when the White House, a building built by slaves and used to plan military invasions and drone strikes, was lit in rainbow lights to celebrate the nationwide recognition of same-sex marriage.

I also chose to center D.C. in my readings because the District is frequently overlooked as a site of analysis within Queer scholarly work, despite its large, diverse queer community (of which I am admittedly a part of) and historical and contemporary importance within queer/Queer movements. Indeed, within the field of queer geography many researchers are based in and choose to focus their research on the United Kingdom and Canada (see the work of Kath Browne and Catherine Nash), while American Queer Studies (excluding the recent work of Kwame Holmes in *Beyond the Flames: Queering the History of the 1968 D.C. Riot*), as well as popular culture, places a heavy emphasis on New York City and San Francisco (with the occasional inclusion of Atlanta by scholars who center black queer experience) as historical and contemporary epicenters of American

queer life. In deconstructing the violences within spatial representations of queer space in the nation's capital, I hope to expand and advocate for the importance of scholarly engagement with the District, as well as to engage in a broader disruption and subversion of both the cooptation of queer/Queer struggle by State and corporate formations and the assimilationist and (white) nationalist trends within LGBT politics that allow this to happen.

I focused my critique on maps because, far from acting as objective and disembodied records of space, maps are created in the interest of power, work to reify these power structures, and express power through their design and construction of socio-geographic ontology. Maps simultaneously obscure this act of construction through the mobilization of scientific epistemologies (Kwan, 2002; Turnbull, 2007). The three maps discussed in this paper are curated from a personal "archive" of maps of the District that I keep in relation to my work as a housing organizer with the radical community organization Organizing Neighborhood Equity DC. In selecting and extracting meaning from these particular maps, rather than engaging in a comprehensive survey of all maps produced in relationship to queer life in D.C., I was influenced by Ann Cvetkovich's and Jack Halberstam's work on the Queer potentials of the archive and the archival object (Cvetkovich, 2003; Halberstam, 2005). Throughout this paper, I understand these maps as important "fragments and memories" that are invested with the potentiality of plural narratives, which point not just to fixed understandings of particular times and places, but also towards fluid guides "to future resolutions," (Halberstam, 2005, 23-24).

By taking a critical eye to these maps, we can see and deconstruct the contours of these power relations as they are enacted through space, the representation of space, and dominant conceptions of space and spatial relations (Krupar, 2005). To do this, I draw from a variety of critical geographers whose work demonstrates the ways in which maps encode and reflect violent spatial relationships, as well as structure our relationships to space in ways that reify dominant systems of exploitation and oppression. I will pay particular attention to feminist and critical race geographers, as well as geographers of imperialism, whose insights will guide the way in which I understand how whiteness, masculinity, and class inform the construction and representation of space. In addition, I will engage with the work of a number of Queer theorists, both to gain critical appraisals of contemporary LGBT politics and culture and to understand how Queer spaces, identities, and bodies interact within material, representational, and social relations.

Each of the maps considered in this paper offers a unique look at the spatial politics of mainstream constructions of queer life in D.C. and each demonstrates some unique aspect of how complex and intersectional power relationships of exploitation, marginalization, and repression are encoded into these contemporary queer spaces. The essence and the record of these relationships are subtly expressed through the aesthetic, technical, and design aspects of the maps and can be brought

out, made explicit, and critiqued. More so, the maps are indicative of a particular moment, addressing the reorganization of LGBT space in what much of liberal discourse understands to be the post-equality and the post-technological age (Chavez et al., 2014; Stone, 1995, 1-32). The first map engages with the contentious reorganization of contemporary Pride parades and issues of corporate equality and homonationalism in the nation's capital. The second engages with the racialized nature of queer tourism and class ascendancy in the recognition of queer space in Washington D.C. Finally, the third map addresses relationships between the digitalization of cruising, spatial organization, and the politics of sexual-spatial respectability.

By performing a Queer reading, I mean that I will engage in a close examination of these maps that centers a critical approach to their construction and their transmission of information with careful attention to the operation of systems of power, discipline, exploitation, and domination in the production and interpretation of their spatial/geographic information. To be clear, by stating that I want to produce "readings" of these maps, I seek to evoke both a history of treating maps as objects similar to texts, in that they are not innocent stores of knowledge and that they can be subject to critical interpretation, and a history of queer "reading" that emerges out of 20th century ballroom culture created by queer and gender nonconforming people of color. This Queer/queer style of reading is a form of ritualized insult, which is confrontational and seeks to expose flaws, shortcomings, and failures (*Paris is Burning*, 1990)[4]. The product of reading taken as a coherent whole is known as a "read". Reading allows members of the community to "punch-up" and critique and expose people from a broad range of backgrounds and relationships to power, while also serving as a community-constituting ritual of practice[5]. With this style of reading in mind, my approach to these maps will be deliberately confrontational. I will not seek to salvage or justify the power relationships incumbent in the maps, but to expose and critique them.

I choose here to mention these examples of reading to demonstrate the multiple legacies of critique that I will draw upon in order to construct my argument. Throughout the argument, I choose not only to understand close or critical reading as a practice rooted in scholarly approaches, but also as a radical and organic practice that has its roots in particular forms of Queer positionalities (i.e. Queer, femme communities of color) and experiences. In recognizing both of these legacies of critique, I hope to point out the relevancy of this argument both to scholarly discourses and to queer/Queer communities on the ground. In doing so, I seek to blur the separation and distinction or, at least, to advocate for the blurring of separation between the two and to encourage scholarly discourses to recognize and honor the radical, foundational intellectual and activist work of Queer/queer communities of color.

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[4] In particular, see 00:33:25-00:35:42 for Dorian Corey's description of both "reading" and "shade".
[5] For example, see 00:34:43-00:35:00, for Drag Mother Pepper Labeija's "read."

Through this process of unmasking and critique, I seek to disturb popular acceptance of maps and to disrupt the normal and, often, unnoticed operation of power through spatial and geographic relationships rooted in a pragmatic and stagnant politics of the "here and now" (Muñoz, 2009, 22). In the "slippage" or "fissure" [6] produced by this disruption, I hope to open a path that allows Queer revolutionaries to cruise ahead towards new thought on what can and should constitute Queer and queer politics and spaces with an understanding that simultaneously recognizes that "Queerness is utopian," and that we must understand "[Q]ueerness as horizon," (Muñoz, 2009, 26 & 32)[7].

"Capital Pride Parade: Presented by Marriott Rewards": Rainbow capitalism, homonationalism, and the socio-spatial restructuring of queer pride

The Pride Parade is a central event within the queer imaginary and is often conceived of and advertised as an essential site of liberatory expression, community-building, and resistance. Emerging from the explosive wake of the Stonewall Riots, Pride Parades historically served as a radical site for many queer people to claim space and disrupt the normative flow of the metropolis, both by shocking cisgender, straight people with open displays of queerness and by shutting down roads and impeding traffic. More recently, however, many Pride Parades have become fertile advertising sites for large corporations hawking everything from light beer to all-inclusive trips to Israel and a space for nationalistic displays with cops and soldiers marching in uniform. With this change, the very nature of Pride has been transformed from a site of radical Queerness to one of accumulative and nationalistic normativity. This, as numerous formations associated with the Black Lives Matter movement have noted, has resulted in heightened policing, disciplining, and surveillance of the Parade and its attendees. For example, in 2016 Black Lives Matter Toronto disrupted Toronto's

[6] Influenced by Louis Althusser's writing on ideology, I take a "slippage" or "fissure" to be a temporary disruption of the ideological superstructure that acts to reproduce contemporary relationships of production, but also domination, repression, and exclusion. (Althusser, 2014). Within these "slippages" or "fissures", modes of thinking and their productive possibilities that were previously occluded by the dominant ideology become temporarily accessible, revealing to us the possibility for and allowing us to conceive of previously unthinkable utopic futures. On disruptions and futurity George Ciccariello-Maher writes that it is in, "the shards of the old world through which shines the glint of the new," (Ciccariello-Maher, 2016, 48).

[7] Drawing on Munoz's assertion that Queerness is futurity bound, I hesitate to provide a more detailed account of what a Queer utopia might be (Munoz, 1, 2009). Rather than understanding Queer utopia as something that is concrete and knowable in this moment, I assert that elements of Queer utopia are constantly revealed through collective resistance, allowing us to continually engage with new utopic potentialities. Despite this inability to fully understand a futurity-bound utopia in the present, we can understand its absence in this moment, as well as the broad contours of what it might be, drawn from the lessons of past movements and struggles. (i.e. Third World Gay Revolution). As Munoz writes, "We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality," (Munoz, 1, 2009).

pride parade and in 2017 the No Justice No Pride Coalition blocked the Capital Pride Parade (Bui & Stein, 2017; CBC News, 2016). Both groups highlighted the inclusion of police outfits in the parades and the danger this poses to communities of color as a central reason for their actions. As No Justice No Pride Stated, "Capital Pride has consistently demonstrated that it is more interested in accommodating the interests of Metropolitan police and of corporate sponsors than it is in supporting the very communities it supposedly represents,"(Bui & Stein, 2017). I argue, this change in the nature of Pride is subtly encoded in spatial representations of the contemporary Pride Parade and in analyzing these representations we can critique wider-trends within Pride itself.

The specific map that will serve as the site of my analysis is titled "Capital Pride Parade: Presented by Marriott Rewards." This map was created to show the course of D.C.'s annual Pride parade for its 2016 iteration (see Figure 1). The map has a blue base that bleeds into the rest of the website, which is overlaid with a white grid of city streets. The route of the parade is marked out in red and there are several black boxes along the route marking sites of interest. At the bottom of the map, there is a Marriott logo which hyperlinks to a Marriott website titled *#LoveTravels*, as well as instructions for the day of the parade. The map also includes markings for sign language translation and the site of a TD Bank. At first glance, this map seems rather innocuous; it appears to be a logistical tool that can be used by parade attendees to find their way at the event. Upon closer inspection, however, the political nature of the map becomes clear.

The first element of the map to notice is that it is "presented" by Marriott and at the bottom of the map a Marriott logo can take you to the corporation's website. The involvement of Marriott and their sponsorship of the map should not be seen as innocent, especially since "the 'carto- graphic project' has always served particular interests (of power)," and the map as a socio-cultural and political object is "inherently implicated in practices of securing and exercising power" (Leszczynski, 2012, 5). Within neoliberal capitalism, mapping is not only a State project that serves State power interests, but is also mobilized by corporations to enact material, productive, and consumptive power.

Indeed, the participation of Marriott in the making of this map and the corporation's logo in the visual reproduction of the space itself serve the corporation's capitalistic interests. By funding a "gay" map and centering itself within this visual context, Marriott associates itself with LGBT progress and creates an assumption, sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, that spending one's money with Marriott helps queer people in some way. This is enhanced by the fact that the hyperlink in the logo takes the map user to a page titled *#LoveTravels*. This semiotic association with "gay" space allows Marriott to enhance its profits by attracting "progressive" dollars and the capital of particular segments of the queer community (typically white, cisgender, gay men) who have increasing access to disposable income. This is despite the fact that the accumulative schemes of companies like Marriott directly hurt queer people, especially queer people of color

and trans people, through the exploitation of their precarious labor and reification of the dominant systems of production, which typically exclude them from formal, stable participation and are neither progressive nor Queer.

This process is part of a wider trend under neoliberal capitalism that aesthetically coopts and appropriates the work of radical political movements in order to profit off of them, while also diffusing the disruptive energy of these movements by presenting "conscious" consumption and the circulation of capital between the most privileged sections of the movement and their class compatriots as a valid form of resistance. In queer contexts, this phenomenon is often called *pinkwashing* (Shulman, 2012). Through Marriott's sponsorship and the inclusion of its logo on the map, the producers of this map make an argument that the Pride Parade should be a site of consumption and advertisement and that consumption itself is a way of demonstrating pride and enacting struggle. Even Andrew Sullivan, the conservative gay political commentator, is willing to admit that, "it's the bourgeoisification of the gay world," (Colman, 2005).

In addition to the inclusion of the Marriott logo, the producer of the map also chose to include several other elements in the representation of the parade route. Again, as maps serve particular interests, the inclusion or exclusion of particular factors should be addressed less as the product of inevitable decisions about representational importance and more as gaze, perception, and even world-structuring elements that serve political and material ends. As Shiloh Krupar writes, map power held within "maps represent the world according to strategic interests and are used to dominate how the world is seen," (Krupar, 2005, 2). This is further contextualized by John Pickles, who claims "'to map' is also to ask about the epistemological and ontological structure of the world in which we live and map. These epistemologies and ontologies are, of course, not simple things…to map, therefore, is to ask: in what world are you mapping, with what belief systems, by which rules, and for what purposes?" (Pickles, 2006, 76-77). Anything included or deliberately excluded in the map is complicit in these world-making, knowledge-producing, and space-defining claims.

The producer of the Capital Pride Map chose to include a series of black boxes that mark out elements of the official infrastructure of the parade such as the "Parade Announcement Stand". The inclusion of these boxes is further contextualized with the use of textual elements at the bottom of the map which read, "The parade is expected to last **three hours** with the last contingent passing 14th and R at 7:30pm," and "**Please stay out of the street** and clear of parade contingents as they proceed along the route. Jumping on and off floats and throwing items is expressly prohibited," (emphasis original).

While these elements of the map may appear less relevant to the casual attender of the parade, the producer of the map (the Parade planners and their sponsors) lends these elements of the space importance by marking them in the official spatial representation of the event, as well as by lending them material

force by deploying policing and space and movement-structuring barricades at the event itself. The implicit message of this inclusion is clear; rather than a space that is free-flowing and open to community input, the Pride parade is an official and heavily choreographed event. Instead of allowing for the liberatory, Queer potentials of disruption, community production, and anarchic renderings of space and time, the organizers of the event, who are heavily invested in the capital structures and integrationist political goals that surround it, have chosen to spatially and temporally regulate the event through regimes of discipline, order, and structure discursively reflected and ideologically reinforced through this map.

Before the event even begins, the organizers of the parade communicate their control of the event to their audience by making map-claims that the parade *must* run on their schedule and that *only* groups that they have invited may participate. While these claims might make the parade run in an efficient and respectable manner, they prevent, what Halberstam argues, are the Queer political practice of sleaze, danger, and discomfort, a politics of making oneself repulsive to systems of normative regulation and violence and therefore refusing participation or complicity (Halberstam, 2015). These disciplinary regimes, which sterilize the messy, uncomfortable, subversive potentials of Queerness, play into a liberal LGBT politics that relies on respectability and obedience, as well as integration into existing rights-based political structures. This curtails the revolutionary spatial and temporal potentials of the parade, which go back to the pride march and radical organizing which followed the Stonewall Riots in 1969, as a site of physical and symbolic resistance and collectivity that could offer liberatory spaces and times to all Queer people. In turn, the parade is rendered a sanitized space for the practice of consumption, performative normality, and order (white respectability, male privilege, etc.) in hopes of integration by the most privileged sectors of queer society. Indeed, this rendering and resistance to it are part of a long process within queer history. An example of this process of particular note is the exclusion and booing of Sylvia Rivera, as well as her subsequent disruption of the proceedings, at the 1973 Christopher Street Liberation Day for existing as a revolutionary, latinx, trans femme person and for calling for a more radical and expansive notion of "Gay Power" and the goals of the "gay liberation" movement (Feinberg, 1996; Flash & Goodfriend, 2018).

In a slightly different vein, one should also note that this map, in addition to being a technical spatial representation, acts as art. The line between map and art is blurred as art can communicate and represent conceptions of space and maps can make claims through their aesthetic qualities and artistic practices (Crampton, 2009, 841-842). This means that we can read the aesthetic qualities of the map to understand the political structures and interests at work within it. For instance, the map's color scheme is red, white, and blue, colors with a strong association with American nationalism. This color pallet is paired with the name "Capital Pride" and a picture of the U.S. Capitol building, a building with a strong semiotic association with the American nation-state, in rainbow in the top left corner. These

elements help to define the structure of the map as a work of artistic, as well as, technical production with deeply political implications.

The use of nationalistic aesthetic features in the representation of queer space match a wider acceptance of homonationalism in LGBT politics. Homonationalism is a political phenomenon that has been nascent in LGBT politics in Europe and the United States for decades but has recently emerged in force. Jasbir Puar describes homonationalism as the process by which, "the imbrication of American exceptionalism [and imperialism] is increasingly marked through or aided by certain homosexual bodies," and "a more pernicious inhabitation of homosexual sexual exceptionalism [that] occurs through stagings of US nationalism via a praxis of sexual othering, one that exceptionalizes the identity of US homosexualities," (Puar, 2007, 4). Central to homonationalist political organizing is a patriotic identification and comfort with an ethno-nationalist conception of the nation-state as well as the implicit acceptance of State violence (the American military, the expansion of the carceral state by hate crimes legislation, etc.) against communities constructed as pre-disposed to homophobia (Puar, 2007).

In the United States, homonationalist politics have traditionally taken the form of demands for open service and integration into the American military. Access to military service is taken as a symbol of progressive "inclusion" with little attention paid to the institution's complicity in the deaths of poor people and people of color around the world (Farrow, 2014; Jones, 2014). More recently, the American homonationalist drift has resulted in the emergence of gay neo-fascist figures, like Milo Yiannopolous, who argue that it is in the best interest of white gay men (in their construction of queerness this is the only expression of queer identity that is possible) to support white supremacist and nativist politicians and limit Muslim integration into the United States. This is due to the supposedly "backwards" views that Muslims (apparently a monolithic group that is mutually exclusive with queerness) allegedly hold about queer people.[8] Indeed, and furthermore, within gay neo-fascist and homonationalist ideology, queerness or "homosexuality" is not only an exclusively white phenomenon (unless the queer sexualities of people of color are being mobilized against other people of color), but is almost exclusively male as well. For example, at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Milo Yiannopoulis asserted that he did not truly believe that "dykes" actually existed (Yiannopoulis, 2016).

By choosing a color scheme and symbol that celebrates the American nation-state and its attendant nationalist ideologies, the producers of the map have crafted an aesthetic construction that implicitly associates queer pride with national pride. This encodes the politics of homonationalism into the spatial representation

[8] For an example of this, see *After the Pulse Club Massacre, It's Time for Gays to Come Home to Republican Party*, published in Breitbart by Jim Hoft (Hoft, 2016).

of the pride celebration, which is in line with the recent trend of having in-uniform police and military members march in the parade (Sienkiewicz, 2017). This act of national allegiance flies in the face of a history of Queer and queer resistance to State violence, which is often directed at queer people, and a Queer politics that seeks to subvert, rather than integrate, into dominant schemas of power. It may also serve to isolate queer people who are members of communities marginalized by the State from pride events, constructing a queer space that is gay, cisgender, male, white, and rich.

This nationalist aesthetic association and the queer space it produces play into the integrationist goals of white, bourgeois, cisgender gay men, who are often more interested in reclaiming elements of their lost privilege from the State, rather than dismantling systems of violence. It also works to erase the violence that multiply-marginalized queer people face at the hands of the State and may invite enhanced policing and imperial intervention in their communities to promote queer "progress" (Chavez et. al, 2014, 1-11; Jones, 2014; Spade, 2014). Rather than promoting a space of Queer resistance and community building, the aesthetic qualities of the Pride map reify homonationalism and restructure queer space in a way that promotes complicity with State violence. This reification is antithetical to Queer political goals.

A final aesthetic element of the map that warrants attention is the depiction of DuPont Circle. Although the rest of the map is relatively "light" in blue and white, the depiction of DuPont Circle is a "heavy" black dot that draws the eye of the viewer. The circle is towards the center of the map and is clearly labelled. Radiating out from the map is the DuPont Circle neighborhood, including streets that are not necessarily relevant to the flow of the parade. The DuPont Circle neighborhood is the only neighborhood depicted in this map, even though Pride festivities take place throughout the city and the official Capital Pride group hosts events in other neighborhoods in D.C. Why is the circle depicted in a manner that visually centers it and gives it aesthetic weight in the spatial representation of the D.C. Pride Parade?

Though the DuPont Circle neighborhood has historically served as one center of D.C. queer life and, at least in conversations that I have been part of, still retains limited traction in the D.C. queer imaginary as a "gayborhood", queer life is contemporarily dispersed throughout the city, as the next map will show (Depillis, 2010). Additionally, in past decades DuPont Circle has undergone intensive gentrification that has made the neighborhood incredibly expensive, as well as much more noticeably white and bourgeois. These identities have come to define the neighborhood, rather than its supposed Queerness or queerness. This gentrification and all its various accoutrements (enhanced policing, the disciplining of public space, etc.) makes DuPont Circle an unwelcoming and financially inaccessible space, if not explicitly dangerous, for many queer people of color, trans people, sex workers, etc.

By centering DuPont Circle and the DuPont Circle neighborhood in the spatial representation and material manifestation of Pride space, the producers of the map offer an argument about which types of spaces are queer-friendly and who these spaces are for in a way that centers the experiences of white, cisgender gay men. This reflects the assumption that queerness is synonymous with particular performances of whiteness, wealth, gender, and respectability and reinforces that, contemporarily, queer spaces and spaces that are welcoming of queer people are the same as white and wealthy spaces (Massad, 2002; Puar, 2007). This erases the diverse production of queer and Queer space throughout D.C. and bars queer people who are less easily taken up by integrationist, respectability politics or feel unsafe in white and wealthy neighborhoods from the Pride Parade. This spatial representation assumes that most queer people are white, male, cisgender, and bourgeois, while discursively reifying this conception of queerness by producing queer space in a way that actively excludes anyone who does not meet these identity parameters. This reproduces dominant identity-based power structures and eliminates the Queer potentials for radical inclusivity and diverse collectivity from the Pride Parade, re-appropriating this space for reactionary constructions of space, consumption, and liberal political goals.

Far from demonstrating an innocent representation of queer space, "Capital Pride Parade: Presented by Marriott Rewards" is encoded with violences and power regimes that, while tied to mainstream, liberal LGBT organizing, are not Queer in their political orientation.

Gaycities "Gay Washington DC": The tourist gaze and the gay frontier

As queer people (in this case mostly white, gay men) have been integrated into capitalist regimes of accumulation (such as marriage) their mobility and ability to engage in leisure travel has expanded. With the growth of "gay" tourism, there has come an entire industry dedicated to facilitating and profiting off this new mobility. In line with the security-obsessed imaginary of the post-9/11 world, a central element of this industry is the production of knowledge about spaces that are "safe" for gay tourism and the production of a taxonomic regime that characterizes spaces as either "gay-friendly" and therefore "safe" or "homophobic" and "unsafe" (Feldman, 2004; Gilmore, 2011; Nash, 2013; Puar, 2002). These spaces are often spatially mapped out and contextualized with guides, ostensibly so that queer people can avoid those spaces deemed to be homophobic and stay "safe". Despite the allegedly noble goals of this mapping project, I will argue below that these characterizations and the maps that represent them are produced through a problematic touristic gaze (Kanouse, 2015). This gaze as it is enacted through maps is deeply implicated in the production and reproduction of capitalist, settler-colonial, and white supremacist systems of violence, while simultaneously working to obfuscate the operations of these systems through the association with queer people.

In order to perform this analysis, I turn to a map titled "Gay Washington DC," (see Figure 2). This particular map was produced by GayCities, a travel, lifestyle, and party blog that caters to gay men with enough disposable income and documentation to travel for leisure. GayCities is owned by Q.Digital, a LGBTQ focused marketing company that describes itself as "the Trusted Voice in the LGBTQ Community." The goal of Q.Digital is to connect corporations and businesses with potential LGBTQ consumers, as Q. Digital states on their website "the LGBTQ community is an untapped market worth $830 billion… And that's a market worth tapping into," (Q.Digital, web). The map I engage is a Geographic Information System (GIS) overlay, on which points of touristic interest in D.C. are marked using color-coded dots that note bars, restaurants, hotels, etc. The map allows the viewer to zoom in and click on these dots, which are linked to reviews of the locations. The intended audience of this map are gay men travelling to D.C. and looking for "gay" and "gay-friendly" spaces, as well as gay locals who are looking for new social options in the District.

To understand the power structures at play in this map, it is worthwhile to chart that it was produced with tourism in mind and therefore reifies the tourist's gaze. Recognizing the tourist's gaze, particularly in a city like D.C. that has a large black population and is a center of American tourism, is important because for tourists there are a number of "insulated and privileged factors that all too often prevent tourist experiences from resulting in a more nuanced awareness of geographical or political conditions," (Kanouse, 2015, 45). A touristic gaze is coupled in this map with GIS mapping systems that depict the land as grey and empty. In its depiction of land as empty space, the GIS map continues the historical work of the map to de-people the land and, through this depeopling, remove all responsibility to the people who actually occupy the land[9]. J.B. Harley writes, "Indeed, the graphic nature of the map gave its imperial users an arbitrary power that was easily divorced from the social responsibilities and consequences of its exercise," (Harley, 2009, 282). In this dual functioning of tourism and GIS, this map erases local queer people, many of whom are queer people of color, and their social, community, and political spaces from the landscape of D.C. This recreates D.C. as a gay tourist playground, operating in what Joseph Massad calls the gaze of the Gay International (Massad, 2002, 361-363).

It is worth noting that, while I am addressing mostly domestic tourists travelling internally to their country of origin, the race and class differences between the two subjects (the white, wealthy tourist and the working-poor or working-class, latinx or black local) produce two reasonably different cultural contexts, practices, and identity constructions and, in this case, mirror the relationship described by Massad. It is also important to note that D.C. is an

[9] This has a long history in settler colonial mapping practices in the Western Hemisphere, which were used to erase Indigenous communities and portray them as existing outside of "civilization"; justifying the expropriation of their land and their displacement and killing (Johnson et al., 2006).

"international city" and Gay Internationals from other parts of the world, also with enough disposable income, documentation, and employment opportunities to travel and live abroad, take part in this process and are mobilized by it in order to prove that D.C. is "diverse"; however, I argue that their experiences are shaped by class and foreign origin in a way that racializes them differently than black and latinx D.C. locals and less-privileged immigrant communities.

The gaze of the Gay International might thus be seen as working to obscure space in which localized queer cultural production, sexual and gender practice, and political resistance occurs and to representationally replace this space with a vision of D.C. and local queerness informed by the gaze of a gay man and, to a lesser extent, queer woman with enough money and documentation to travel for leisure. Through this mapping, D.C. becomes a blank, sterile space that becomes peopled, cultured, developed, and therefore more "gay-friendly" through the expansion of businesses and spaces catering to bourgeois, white gay men and their consumption needs. In doing this, the map associates queer life in D.C. with white consumptive practices and celebrates the expansion of white consumption through gentrification, which, as we have explored earlier, depoliticizes queer life, exposes multiply-marginalized queer people to enhanced violence and displacement, and operates in opposition to Queer goals.

In the context of this map, this process of de-peopling the land followed by its reimagining by an outside, dominant group resembles processes of imperial mapping. These processes have deep roots in the development and the history of maps, as well as their role in orientalist knowledge production. Harley describes this history writing, "As much as guns and warships, maps have been the weapons of imperialism. Insofar as maps were used in colonial promotion… maps anticipated empire…," (Harley, 2009, 282). Additionally, Pickles writes, "mapping contributed to the physical eradication and historical erasure of indigenous populations," (Pickles, 2006, 109). Indeed, the GayCities map produces an argument for the expropriation of diverse queer spaces by white gay men and reframes this expropriation as the innocent, if not progressive, filling of "empty" space in a way that is "gay-friendly". This not only includes the erasure, depeopling, and "de-queering" of land currently inhabited by black and latinx residents, but also the erasure, depeopling, and "de-queering" of land historically held by Piscataway and Conoy Indigenous people, local to the D.C. area, and the erasure of their pre-colonial and contemporary sexual and gender practices. As Brooke Neely and Michelle Samura argue "the social links between race and space are not new phenomena. Most notably, there are long-standing historical roots of the race-space connection in the process of imperialism racializing bodies and groups has always been linked to the theft of land and the control of space," (Neely & Samura, 2011, 1934).Through this construction, gay tourists claim more right to the city than the people who live in D.C. and, in the name of the expansion of gay progress, progressively displace long-term communities.

Additionally, in de-peopling the land, the GIS aspect of this map removes any commitment or obligation to the people who have been erased. In the context of this map, this means that white, wealthy gay men have no obligation to political solidarity with the multiply-marginalized queer people living in or displaced from D.C. Indeed, the map also works to deny the notion that queer people can be multiply-marginalized and to argue that people who are marginalized in ways other than their sexual identity are dangerous to queer people. The map does this by producing a "gay frontier" along the Anacostia River.

On the Western side of the Anacostia river, which has been thoroughly gentrified, there are a number of dots marking gay-friendly establishments, signaling a profusion of gay spaces. East of the river, which is still largely black and low-income, there is only one gay bar marked on the map. This frontier divide between the West and the East of the river suggest several things. First, by refusing to note any queer spaces in the predominantly black and poor Anacostia neighborhood, the map plays into homonationalist constructions of queerness as a singularly white, middle class phenomenon. Because there are no black (or Indigenous or otherwise racialized) or poor queer people, there are no black or poor (or Indigenous or otherwise racialized) queer spaces to represent. Discursively, because there are no black or poor spaces represented on the map, there must not be any black or poor queer people[10].

The fact that this is a GIS map supports this claim. GIS maps, through their association with techno-scientific positivism, obscure the situated nature of the gaze of the producer, in this case the gaze of GayCities and Q.Digital, and can claim an objective "god's eye view" (Kwan, 2002, 647). Through this view, the GIS map makes an argument that the situated gaze of the map's producer is an objective representation of the spatial ontology of the area depicted. In this case, the GIS system is used by the map's creator to make an argument that because no black or poor queer space is depicted, this space does not exist. This draws on and discursively reifies larger legacies of spatialized white supremacy, which Katherine McKittrick argues is and was "predicated on various practices of spatialized violence that targeted black bodies and profited from erasing a black sense of place," (McKittrick, 2011, 948). Due to this construction of queerness and queer space, the frontier divides and separates two wholly distinct societies.

Additionally, by creating a frontier along the Anacostia River the map scales onto already common discourses about Southeast D.C.[11] and presents the land to the East of the river as dangerous or unsafe for queer people. As Nicholas Blomley writes, the frontier delineates a "shocking contrast between the domain

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[10] As Neely and Samura contend, "the making and remaking of space is also about the making and remaking of race," (Neely & Samura, 2011, 1934).

[11] For example, one American official, in response to a question on "violent extremism" in Kenya, quipped, "There are neighborhoods in Washington, Anacostia, for example, that are way more dangerous," (Gettleman, 2015).

where property and security and its antithesis—the violent space in which property is absent," (Blomley, 2003, 125). More so, in the mythology of the frontier, "the racialized figure of the savage plays a central role," (Blomley, 2003, 124). Here, the frontier not only erases the existence of black and poor queer people, it portrays the space in which they exist as dangerous and "characterized by internal violence" (Blomley, 2003, 125). In the specific context of this map, notions of the frontier link up with the homonationalist and homo-white supremacist mythology that people of color are more homophobic than white people. People of color allegedly possess "backwards" ideas about sexuality and gender and therefore pose a threat to the inherently-white queer subject (Puar, 2007).

Although the origin of the frontier logic rests in the United States' settler-colonial history, it has been transmuted into the epidemic of gentrification in D.C., as evidenced in the map. This construction of the frontier in this map serves two purposes. First, by portraying predominantly black, predominantly poor Anacostia as the scary "other" side of the frontier, the map discourages travel to this area, maintaining the white, popular mythology that it is devoid of queer people and spaces and preventing the formation of relationships by white, middle class queers with queer, low-income people of color (or low-income people of color in general). This maintains the lack of political responsibility to the people who live there and the elimination of the possibility for solidarity that are produced through the de-peopling of the map. Finally, by linking up with common stereotypes of Southeast D.C. and constructing the "other" side of the frontier as dangerous and homophobic, this map implicitly promotes its "colonization" (i.e. gentrification and displacement) by gay-friendly businesses, much like those Q.Digital seeks to represent. The introduction of gay business is associated with gay progress in the context of this map, so that by expanding across the river, gay-friendly businesses can "civilize" and "tame" the homophobic wilds, which in turn justifies the violences of gentrification and displacement. This reflects Catherine Nash's claim that, "the possibilities, potentials and limitations for queer women/genderqueer individuals [the focus of her research in this particular article] to take up alternative locations are constituted through complex social relations and include notions of what 'queered' and 'queering' space entails and participants'…own classed, racialized and gendered positioning," (Nash, 193, 2013).

Far from envisioning utopic and egalitarian Queer potentials, the GayCities map actually functions to argue in favor of what David Harvey has called "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2003). In this case, "accumulation by dispossession" occurs when real-estate and property developers use excess capital to buy and redevelop inexpensive property, particularly housing complexes with Section 8 contracts, located within low-income communities of color. It is these communities, which are almost entirely majority black or latinx, in particular that are targeted because, "racism functions as a limiting force that pushes disproportionate costs of participating in an increasingly monetized and profit-driven world onto those who, due to the frictions of political distance, cannot reach

the variable levers of power that might relieve them of those costs," (Gilmore, 2002, 16). Once the property is obtained, developers push out long-time residents and bring in expensive shops, restaurants, and bars, as well as luxury housing with exorbitant rents. In dispossessing communities of color, developers can multiply the accumulative potentials of their capital[12].

The map works to hide this process in two ways. First, it acts to de-people the neighborhoods which are to be "developed", preemptively dispossessing communities in representations of the space, which works to obscure their eventual physical dispossession from the actual land. Additionally, the map acts to *pinkwash* this process and present it as "progressive" by framing it as the expansion of "gay-friendly" space in the District, rather than a violent process of expulsion and accumulation that primarily benefits the interests of the capitalist class and not queer/Queer people.

Rather than promoting a Queer reading of D.C. space or even providing a representation of queer progressive spaces in D.C., the GayCities "Gay Washington DC" map subtly communicates white supremacist and capitalist ideologies that promote the "settler-colonization" and displacement of historically black and Indigenous spaces through white, gay gentrification and the prioritization of white, gay tourists. The map demonstrates that, in the D.C. gay imaginary, poor queer people of color are forced to exist at the dangerous periphery of their own city –if they are not erased to the point of nonexistence. This construction of space demonstrates that gay maps do not necessarily make Queer arguments or even avoid conservative constructions of space and social-spatial relations. It also makes clear that liberal gay politics do not inherently lead to Queer outcomes and, indeed, often produce enhanced violence against multiply-marginalized communities. Beneath the progressive veneer of this map is a host of injustices that white, gay liberalism has been at best willing to ignore and at worst willing to become complicit in.

Grindr and Town DanceBoutique: Queer bodies, spatial organization, and dance floor and digital fascisms

The final map read/"read" is less conventional than the prior two. This map is made up of screenshots from the home screen of my Grindr profile taken while I was at Town DanceBoutique, a D.C. "gay" club, on Friday, February 3rd, 2017 (see Figure 3). The screenshots are paired with a series of pictures that depict Town, as it is commonly known, on the same night. These pictures show the top floor of Town from the vantage point of its upstairs stage on a relatively slow night. Grindr is a hookup and dating app released in 2009; it is primarily geared towards gay

[12] For examples of this process, as well as resistance to it, see tenant organizing efforts in Congress Heights and Barry Farms.

men, though people of other gender and sexual identities also use the app[13]. Grindr uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to geo-locate its users in relation to each other in a way that shows fellow users in terms of distance from one's location. The app also tracks changes in location and updates the home screen every few minutes to demonstrate movement. In rural areas or areas with low population density, the distance between users may be several miles; however, in a popular gay club in D.C. on a Friday night, my Grindr home screen showed me users who were close enough to be inside the club.

Because of this heavy concentration of users within a relatively small distance (some users were listed as being 0 feet away) and the fact that they were organized on the screen based on spatial information I want to understand the screenshots that I took as a map of Town on February 3rd. The images depict spatial and geographic relationships between subjects interpolated as gay in a particular space (Town) and time (February 3rd, from roughly 11 pm until roughly 2 am). The Grindr screen produces and transmits spatial information to queer subjects who then interpret this information and use it to navigate the world based on particular socio-spatial parameters (i.e. the ability to meet other queer people and potential sexual partners); it therefore can be understood as a gay or queer map. This map is contextualized by the pictures I took of the club on the same night. It should be noted, however, that both the Grindr-map and the images are mediated representations of this space. Both representations are situated, both are encoded with power relations, and neither present an objective or "real" look at the club in the established space-time experience.

More so, the Grindr map is not a map in the same vein as the two maps discussed above, which remain relatively stable over time, are more apparently cartographically technical, and are much more traditional in their mapping practice. The inclusion of these images as constituting a map draws upon Cindi Katz's work on "minor theory" and Jack Halberstam's work in the "Silly Archives" (Halberstam, 2011; Katz, 1996). The "Grindr Map" was intentionally included because of the way it "self-reflexively interpolates" (Katz, 1996) the author into the theoretical production of this article and for the way it bucks particular forms of disciplinary seriousness found in more conventional maps. These aspects of the map allow us to more fully engage in a Queer analysis that is able to address and interpret this cartographic material in ways that a reading rooted in a more rigid understanding of maps and cartography cannot. More importantly, its inclusion and analysis as a map uniquely allows for the production of what I call liberatory disruptions or "fissures," what Natalie Oswin refers to as "radical geographies of complicit queer futures," (Oswin, 2005), and what Cindi Katz refers to as "renegade cartographies of change," (Katz, 1, 1996). The fact that this map is less traditional than the prior two, however, does not mean that it is not its own

[13] It should be noted that these communities are often interpolated into gay manhood by fellow users.

particular kind of map. Indeed, throughout the history of cartography unique and creative applications have been deployed, both historically and contemporarily, to communicate and store geographic information and produce multiple spatial ontologies (Crampton, 2009: Turnbull, 2007). This remains true in the age of digitally produced and maintained maps (Paglen, 2009).

Having established that these screenshots are indeed images of a map, might we understand the Grindr map's structuring of queer community and erotic space? The first element of this map that we should note is the fact that it organizes Grindr users into an orderly grid that one can easily scroll through. Unlike the disorderly, spatially irregular structuring of the club itself, the app takes the geographic information from other users and maps and orders them into a straightforward grid that is organized from closest fellow user to furthest fellow user. The grid, which is the home screen of the app, includes the user and in the very top left corner users can see and click on their own profile in the same way that they can click on the profile of any other user. Far from being a simple design choice, Blomley argues the grid "[plays] an important practical and ideological role in property's legitimation, foundation, and operation," and "such spatial grids continue to be a powerful form of disciplinary power," (Blomley, 2003, 121 & 129). With this in mind, as well as an understanding that Grindr is primarily used to find casual sex and dates (it is the digital descendant of "cruising"), we can understand the images that I took of my Grindr home screen not only as a spatial-representation of queer dance space, but also as a spatial representation of a gay libidinal economy[14].

In the context of this libidinal economy, in which bodies are exchanged and consumed as products, a Grindr user is interpolated into multiple subject-object positionalities. The user is simultaneously: the producer in this economy, as the user constructs a profile that produces a digital construction of self within the app-space to attract other users; the product, as the user's body and corporeal-sexual presentation and performance is what will be consumed by other users on the app; and the consumer, as the user seeks to obtain and use the bodies of others. The user's own square in the grid is a digital representation of the user's sexual-corporeal property that is produced and maintained and this grid-block is exchanged for the perceived contents of another user's grid-block and their material manifestation, their sexual-corporeal property.

From this multi-positionality, a unique sexual gaze emerges. Art theorist John Berger describes the heterosexual male gaze as viewing potential female, sexual partners, depicted in nude paintings, as sexual objects to be claimed, owned, and utilized (Berger, 1973). Conversely, when heterosexual women view nude paintings of women, they do not see a sexual object to be obtained, but a visual-

[14] In this case, a libidinal economy housed within a platform primarily targeted towards gay men, but populated to a lesser extent with people of other sexual and gender identities and expressions.

corporeal standard on which to judge and regulate their own physical appearance, as "from earliest childhood she [i.e. women] has been taught and persuaded to survey herself continually," (Berger, 1973). As Berger writes, "one might simplify this by saying: *men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves," (Berger, 1973, 47). As gay men are neither fully sexual object nor sexual subject, neither of these descriptions adequately describe the gaze being enacted in gay male-oriented libidinal economies. Indeed, a queer gaze emerges in this economy that simultaneously is regulated by the desire of idealized bodies and the desire to be the idealized body. This queer gaze is not quite sure whether it wants to be the idealized man or to fuck him.

From this confusion, a dialectical relationship emerges within libidinal economies and reflects the processes of material capitalism, wealth accumulation, and the shrinking of the bourgeois class sketched out by Marx in his work, *Wage, Labor, and Capital* (Marx, 1978). To obtain sex and sexual worth, gay men must enact the idealized body. By "improving" their bodies and enacting dominant conceptions of the idealized male form, gay men obtain sexual value (they are desired and admired by other gay men) and, therefore, power within the libidinal economy. This causes them to become complicit in the economy and promote it as a means of maintaining their own sexual power and heightened access to sex. As no one person can truly enact a fully idealized, desirable queer form (i.e. singularly monopolize the sexual economy), an endless cycle of desire and corporeal regulation emerges, which expects higher and higher standards of corporeal perfection that an ever-smaller class of men is capable of performing. Those people who do not meet these standards, particularly people of color, trans and gender nonconforming people, and women and femmes, are made invisible and disposable in this sexual economy, if not fully alien to it. This is evident in the popularization of the phrases "masc4masc", "no fats, no femmes", and "whites only" on Grindr profiles (Anderson, 2016).

The map that is Grindr is viewed through this sexual gaze and is used by gay men and other men who have sex with men, as well as people of other sexual and gender positionalities, to navigate their way to more desirable/valuable bodies. In addition, the map marks out clear property lines that delineate sexual norms[15]. Less desirable/valuable gay men know not to approach the profiles of more desirable/valuable men, lest they be subject to derision, mocking, or violence from the more desirable man. More so, women, except for trans women who face fetishization on the app, are totally excluded from this corporeal economy and their bodies and sexual potentials are devalued and erased. This matches wider patriarchal trends within capitalist economic systems in which the erasure and

[15] This occurs much in the same way that mapping and surveying were used during the Enclosure movement to delineate property norms.

oppression of women is predicated on their total exclusion from or devaluation and hyper-exploitation by systems of material and corporeal exchange, as noted by numerous feminist authors (Davis, 1981; Rubin, 1975). Indeed, exclusion of queer women from these libidinal economies contributes to the erasure and exclusion of queer women from other queer spaces and from conceptions and depictions of queerness, queer sexuality, and queer sexual practice. This has forced many queer women and nonbinary people to struggle against patriarchal relationships, trivialization, and erasure within male-dominated queer spaces and to produce separate spaces that represent and meet the needs of their gender positionalities (Mann, 2012).

Additionally, by structuring gay space in terms of a property grid, Grindr reframes participation less as participation in a collective, interpersonal community, which would imply social and political solidarity between members, and more as a loose network of individuals brought together by competitive consumptive practices structured by individualistic, capitalist norms (i.e. a market). This undermines the Queer political potentials and the potentials for the development of a Queer community in queer space, subverting them in favor of the creation of a sexual economy that only serves the sexual needs of particular, normative gay men.

The intensity of the gaze as it enacted through the grid is enhanced by the panoptic effects of Grindr. The same grid that interpolates Grindr as a libidinal economy also bears a close resemblance to the individual cells of the Foucauldian panopticon. When one logs onto the Grindr home screen, the presentation of spatial information allowed by GIS reorganizes spatial information in a way that excises the disorder and confusion of the chaotic dance space and gives the map user the sense of having a "god's eye view", rather than a situated, limited gaze. This means that the user has the feeling of seeing and catching all that happens within the space. In addition to the "god's eye view", the Grindr interface actually improves upon Foucault's panoptic model because as one enacts a gaze through the map provided by Grindr, one is also keenly aware that one is potentially being surveilled by other users of the app and that this surveillance is invisible and unknowable. The feeling of surveillance is enhanced by the fact that one's own profile appears in the interface provided by Grindr, placing it in equal position with other profiles that are being surveilled.

Unlike Foucault's prison guard in the tower, who has some separateness from the discipline of the inmates, a Grindr user is disciplining through their gaze, while simultaneously being disciplined by the gaze of others. This, in turn, creates an ideal disciplinary web (Foucault, 1979). All users are subjected to and participate in the subjection of other users through this disciplinary web, which allows the disciplinary regime to run itself. This enhanced gaze, enacted through the map, is incredibly effective in discursively regulating participation in space because "the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary…this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and

sustaining a power relationship independent of the person who exercises it," (Foucault, 1979). On Grindr, users feel as if they are constantly being watched and, as they do not want to be disregarded by the libidinal economy, they must constantly perform respectable behavior and racial and gender performance in a way that reifies the values of the libidinal economy.

This spatial reorganization and omniscient surveillance is markedly different than the gaze produced by interacting in the dance context without Grindr. Turning towards the contextualizing images, one can see that experiencing Town without Grindr is a messy, disorganized, and somewhat anarchic experience (See Figure 4). Town is a mass of shifting bodies and flashing lights. The effect is disorienting and destabilizing. In this space, the type of totality in gaze, which both disciplines and interpolates into libidinal economies, is impossible. There is too much confusion and a single subject cannot take in everything at once in the same way a subject can pretend to through the mediation of the Grindr map. Conversely, the disorder of the club creates pockets of space, fissures, and slippages in which one can enter and feel free from the surveillance of the queer gaze. In these hidden spaces, disruptions of the disciplinary gaze and potentials for subversive, disruptive behavior (drug use, interracial intimacy, public sex, etc.) emerge, filled with sleazy, noncompliant Queer potentiality.

Through GIS, Grindr closes these gaps through its "god's-eye view" and extends itself into these hidden, intimate spaces to subject them to the capitalistic, white-supremacist, masculinist disciplinary tendencies of the gaze (Kwan, 2002, 647). The collective Queer potentials of these spaces are pushed out and erased, only to be replaced by the self-enforcement of norms of respectability, deference to power, and normative, for some, and deferential, for others, performances of race, gender, and class. The god's-eye gaze enacted through the GIS elements of the Grindr map interface is fascistic, both in its reliance on hyper-disciplinary surveillance regimes and in the racial, gender, and behavioral results these regimes of vision work to produce. The panoptic effect of Grindr acts to chase subversive Queerness out of queer space, replacing it with a regime of regulation, prejudice, and violence.

In instituting a libidinal economy through the property-defining, discipline-enhancing grid, the GIS of Grindr has a material effect on the bodies of subjects within the Grindr economy. The corporeal impacts of GIS mapping exemplify claims made by Mei-Po Kwan, who argues GIS mapping systems, when addressed as technical and objective scientific tools, fail to recognize and respect the specific embodied realities of marginalized subjects, but nevertheless act upon and influence these realities. Kwan argues that, "the extent to which GIS can represent gendered space and bodies is a major concern…current GIS data models still have serious limitations representing entities as complex and fluid as gendered spaces and bodies," (Kwan, 2002, 653). In this case, the map, its grid, and the gaze that it creates work to institute political, material, and sexual incentives that produce whiter, more masculine, and therefore more "ideal" gay male forms.

Simultaneously, the techno-scientific objectivity lent to the map through its use of GIS acts to obscure these incentives and the politically and corporeally implicated nature of the app itself. Far from producing a radically Queer, post-corporeal digital utopia, Grindr instead engages in the normalized production of queer bodies that are considered ideal through their performance of whiteness and masculinity. This act of production and the politics that surround it are in turn fascistic in their implications[16].

The production of white, gay male space and corporeality is deeply implicated in contemporary homonationalist politics and within the mainstream LGBT movement. The normalized enactment of this spatial-aesthetic-corporeal politics has deep roots in both historical gay libidinal culture and fascist political movements. It is far from alien in queer social and cultural spaces. As Halberstam writes, "any reading of Tom of Finland's über-masculine leather daddies [a popular depiction of the idealized male form in numerous gay contexts] that [makes] a detour around fascism [is] skirting a central component of the work… we cannot be sure that all of our interest in erotic material is politically innocent," (Halberstam, 2009, 152-153). He also argues that the Nazis, "deployed homophobia and sexual morality only when and where it was politically expedient to do so… they turned a blind eye so long as the participants in the sexual activity under scrutiny were 'racially pure'," (Halberstam, 2009, 154). This points to a deeply troubling history, which the digitalization of queer space has been unable to shake, and unsettles any *defacto* progressive reading of queer space or desire.

Additionally, this fascistic visual-corporeal canon, which links gay men to a history of hyper-nationalist politics, evokes Walter Benjamin's work on the "aestheticizing of political life" (Benjamin, 1936, 120). On the subject Benjamin states, "[Fascism] sees its salvation in granting expression to the masses– but on no account granting them rights. The masses have a right to change property relations; fascism seeks to give them expression in keeping these relations unchanged" (Benjamin, 1936, 120-121). By enacting fascistic and nationalistic corporeal pressures through the construction of gay libidinal-economic spaces, Grindr mapping has worked to make white, gay men increasingly legible and, through homonationalism, useful to the American nation-state. This has aided white, gay men in achieving integrationist political goals (i.e. marriage equality), which have lent certain queer subjects a peculiar form of political recognition without challenging or changing the fundamental systems of power that grant recognition[17].

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[16] Due to contemporary political events within the United States and, in particular, the assault of DeAndre Harris and the murder of Heather Heyer at 2017 "Unite the Right Rally" in Charlottesville, Virginia, I intentionally use the word *fascistic* to connect the processes occurring through the Grindr map to wider socio-political and material currents in contemporary American culture. I feel that it would be irresponsible to not make this connection and to avoid naming it in an explicit way, particularly since queer people have been openly participating within these currents.

[17] This recognition is ultimately hollow in its Queer potentials and is contingent upon the ability of the recognition to reproduce and strengthen hegemonic social and material systems, not any

By propping up institutions of the capitalist, white supremacist, and masculinist State, LGBT organizing has discursively encoded white, gay men as whiter, more bourgeois, and therefore more legible to the nation-state. In turn, queer people who are less valuable in Grindr's sexual economy and less legible to the American nation-state, have been erased and subject to continued, if not enhanced, inter- and intra-community violence[1819]. The ultimate effect of this aesthetic-corporeal political regime is the strategic granting of particular forms of political expression coupled with the maintenance of hegemonic social and material relationships[20].

This is a common issue in the mapping of marginalized communities, as legibility is often coupled with erasure and intra-community violence that match the assumptions and goals of the nation-state. In addition, through interpolation into State ideologies, "legible mappings" often erase Indigenous, in this case Queer, ways of thinking (Johnson et al., 2006, 90-94). Through Grindr's mapping and the sexual economy it produces, white, gay, bourgeois men become legible to the nation-state and wider white, male, heteronormative society. Through this legibility, white, bourgeois gay men are offered opportunities for complicity in systems of State violence, which become more acceptable through the erasure and demonization of the queer subjects who suffer under them. This barely produces gay progress, let alone radical Queer solidarity, and it creates a political situation in which Queer potentials are erased. Complicity with State power is prioritized over an ethic of intentional solidarity and subversive thought.

Rather than acting as a site of subversive Queer potentials, radical intimacy, and postmodern community construction, Grindr works to reorganize space in a way that enacts a violent libidinal economy. This economy, which is defended, discursively constructed, and enhanced through disciplinary surveillance, uses sexual worth to assign human value and access to space in queer contexts. Additionally, it works to produce increasingly perfected versions of gay bodies, which are always white and always male. While this lends legibility to segments of the queer community, it erases other, multiply-marginalized community members and through its production of a loose network of individual consumers, erases Queer community-production possibilities. This leads to a compliant form of political expression and normative acceptance for white gay men, as long as they remain complicit in systems of nationalist, capitalist, and white supremacist

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progressive political concerns on the part of the State or cis-hetero dominant society; however, it is popularly conceived of as fully and terminally liberatory.

[18] Through this discursive act of representation and erasure, the hegemonic social and material relationships are maintained and strengthened.

[19] For more on this, see Kath Weston's *Families in Queer States: The Rule of Law and the Politics of Representation*.

[20] Thinkers, such as Jasbir Puar, Jack Halberstam, and the Against Equality Collective, have provided a more in-depth exploration of this phenomenon and its centrality within the assimilationist, integrationist political goals of the liberal LGBT movement.

violence, while diffusing the energy and ability to enact more egalitarian and liberatory Queer relationships to power.

Conclusion

This paper has undertaken a Queer reading of three "gay" maps of Washington, D.C. In critically examining a map of the D.C. Pride Parade, a gay tourism map of D.C., and my own Grindr profile, I have used a critical understanding of the construction of space and spatial relations through mapping to understand how power is reflected and enacted in and through representations of queer spaces. This close reading has exposed a construction of queer space that emerges from mainstream LGBT, liberal politics, which advocates and reinforces homonationalism, consumer capitalism, imperial relationships to nonwhite bodies and spaces, and a fascistic corporeal impulse. In exposing these relationships in space, I hope to disrupt and disturb their casual acceptance and progressive veneer in queer and non-queer culture, as well as their ability to garner complicity in their production from particular segments of the queer community. In doing this, I seek to end the enactment of these violent relationships through queer spaces and their representations so that we may mobilize these spaces to enact Queer spatial potentials.

Although I believe the geographic literature needs more of these disruptive interventions and appraisals of queer space, particularly in regard to geographies of race and queer space[21], Queer activists and organizers at the grassroots are already doing this work and challenging the operation of violence through queer spaces. In 2017, activists from the No Justice No Pride coalition, most of whom identified as black queer and Indigenous two-spirit people, broke the barricades at the Capital Pride Parade and blocked the parade in front of the Wells Fargo, Lockheed Martin, and Metropolitan Police Department contingents to protest their inclusion in the event (No Justice No Pride, 2017).By utilizing their black and Indigenous bodies to force the parade to a halt, these activists not only challenged the naturalized flow of the heavily-choreographed parade, they also exploded what a Queer space can and should be and who Queer spaces can and should be for. Through this act of material disruption, No Justice No Pride challenged the hegemonic, liberal, progress narrative that organizes both the Pride parade and the contemporarily mainstream, LGBT politic. In doing so, they pointed to an expansive vision of Queer liberation that echoed the call of historical Queer movements and allowed us to imagine a Queer future in which queer spaces are free from the violences and injustices of the present.

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[21] As Dr. Laura Pulido has argued, "In particular, critical work on race remains relatively contained within urban and social geography, thus precluding a disciplinary conversation on the subject of race, with significant consequences for geography as a whole," (Pulido, 2002). Additionally, Natalie Oswin has stated that queer geography is "an area of enquiry that has arguably failed to make racism, colonialism and patriarchy central enough to its project," (Oswin, 2005, 81).

While, in many ways, the grip of the dominant ideo-spatial regime remains tight and liberatory Queerness remains unknowable, each of these disruptive engagements offers new opportunities for producing Queer spatial imaginaries, if only in their partial form. In making space for these imaginaries, I hope that queer space can be reconceived in a way that is Queer and to provide the disruptive analyses required to do the type of work necessary to escape from a moment in which Queerness exists only as horizon. In disrupting and exposing the ideo-spatial regimes of the present, I hope that we can open at least part of the pathway needed to "cruise" forward to a Queer spatial future, whatever this may look like.

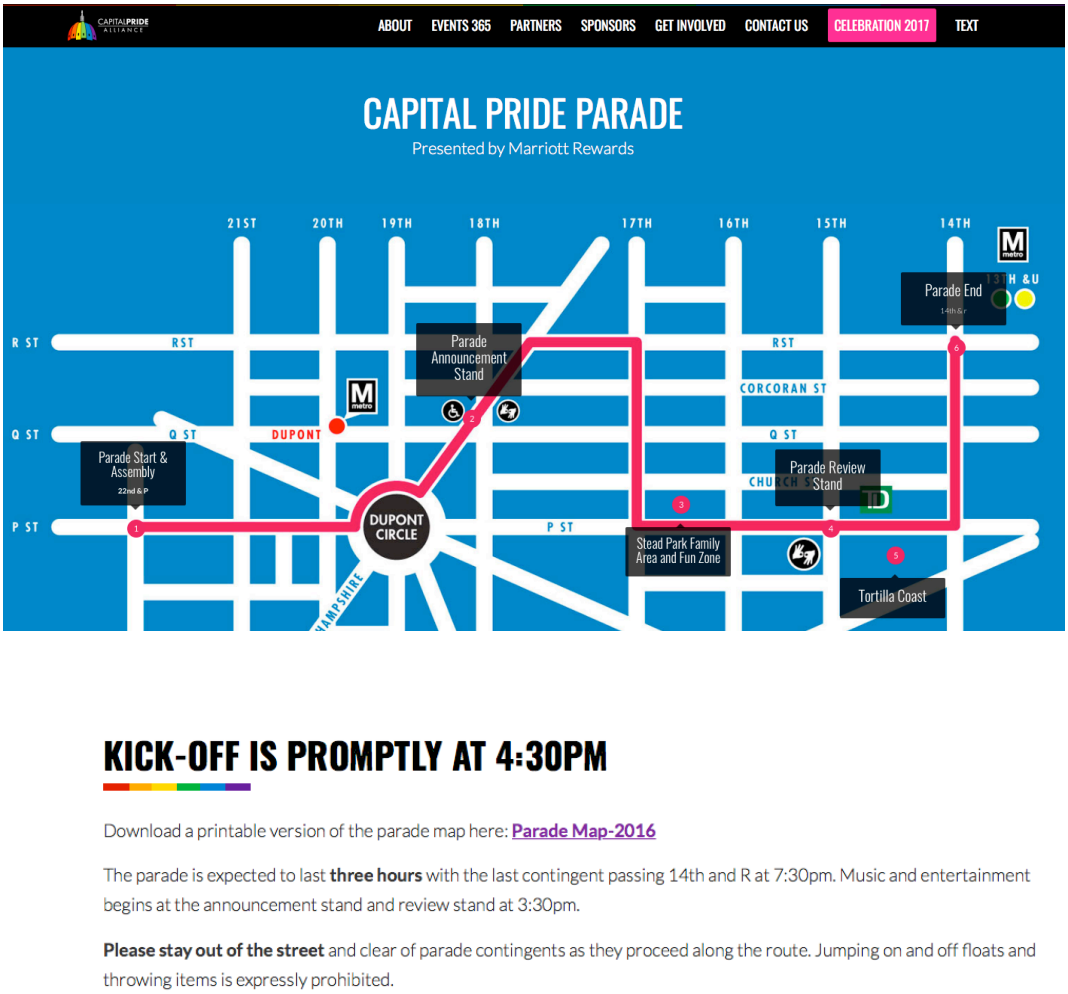
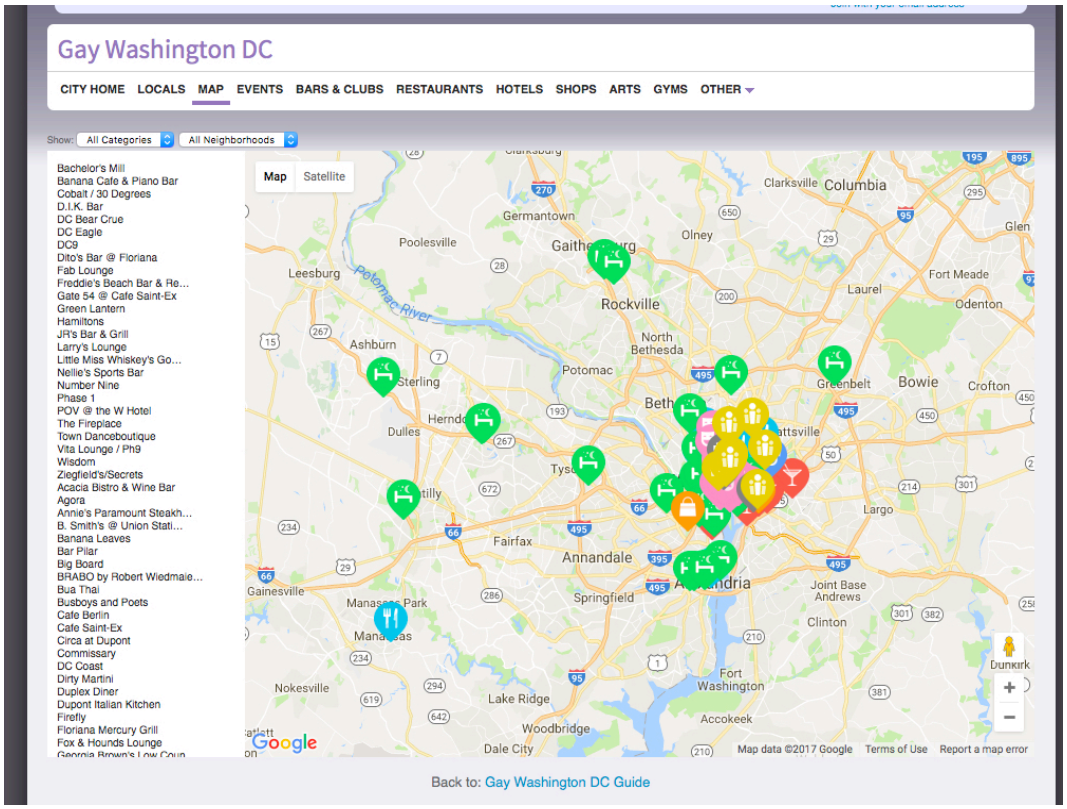


Figure 1: http://www.capitalpride.org/celebration-2016/parade-map/



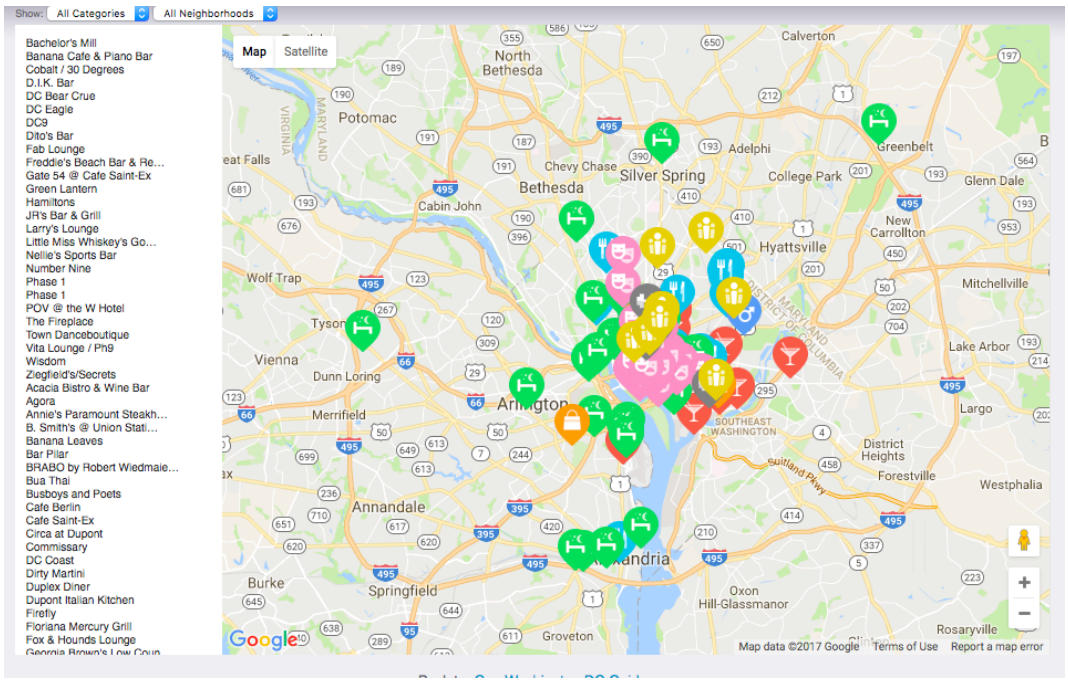
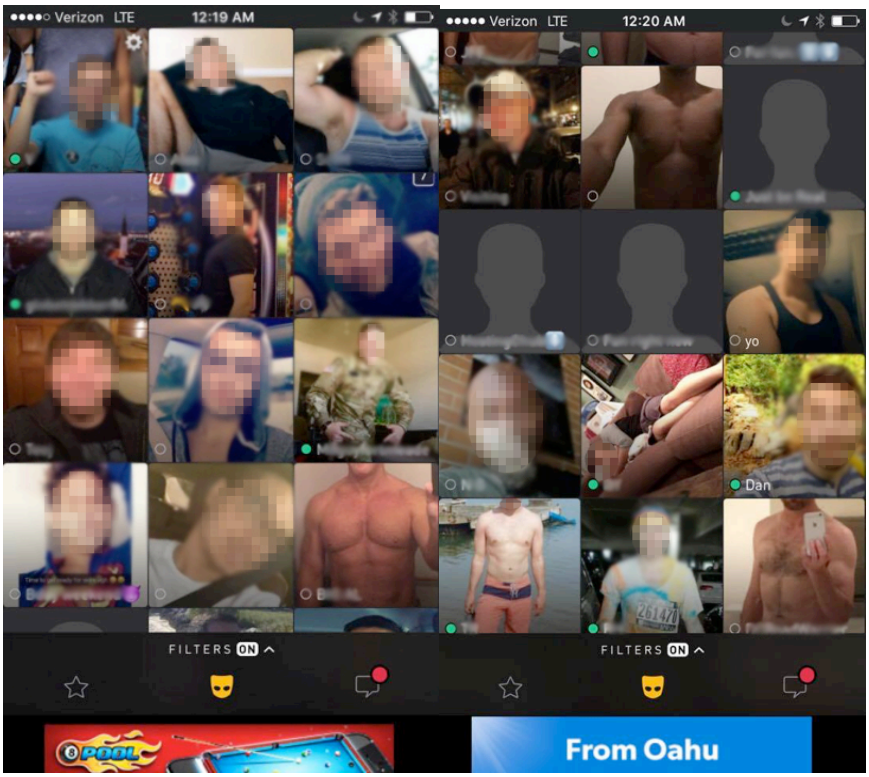


Figure 2: http://washingtondc.gaycities.com/map/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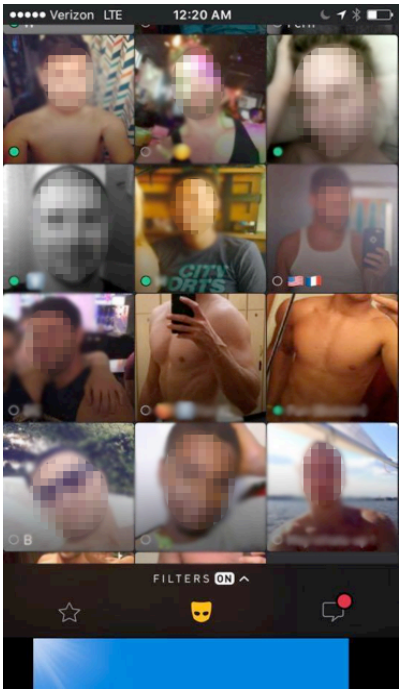
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Figure 3

Figure 4

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