LGBTQ+ Affirming Locations of Greenville County

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Introduction

This project explores the LGBTQ+ Affirming Locations of Greenville County. An LGBTQ+ affirming location is best summarized by this response, “It is a comfortable and welcoming place where it doesn’t only feel like LGBT+ people are just being tolerated.” This response was taken from a survey I conducted on LGB&TQ+ Groups in the Greenville area and shows why it is important to identify locations in the Greenville county area. With People coming out and looking for support it is important for them to know where they will not be discriminated against. The goal is to make a visible map that can show places where in Greenville county they can go for restaurants, pharmacies, or hotels that will affirm them. These policies have been shown to have economic benefits for both consumers and business owners.

The importance of identifying LGBTQ+ locations has a great impact for LGBTQ+ NIA Businesses that have affirming policies have a higher retention rate of employees, higher job satisfaction, and less discrimination for both LGBTQ+ folk and non-LGBTQ+ folk. (Baldwin, 2011) This means creating policy to fundamentally ensure everyone is treated the same on the basis of gender-expression and sexual orientation creates a better work environment for everyone.

This idea of knowing where affirming locations are in a particular area is important for people that move into the area for college, work, and other circumstances. (Robison 2012) There is an importance in the LGBTQ+ness of an area for those people to feel like they belong in their community. The amount of affirming Locations in a given area can be used as a tourism tool, accepting and supporting an area is for LGBTQ+ folk. This all boils down to the need for community. That people want to go to places that they know they are safe. (Porter 2002) By cataloging and making available where LGBTQ+ affirming locations are is one step to build that community and make it more visible in even greener areas like Greenville.

Methods

The data for this project came from three sources: local organizations, through survey results and The Human Rights Campaign’s corporate equality index. The criteria for smaller businesses is mainly built off confirmation of the residents of Greenville county and from organizations. The three Local organizations I gathered information from are the Furman Gender Bender Group, Spartanburg Pride, and Upstate Pride.

Gender Bender and PFLAG had local resource guides of assets in the area like churches, law offices, hospitals and many other categories. This was a vital part of getting local businesses, because most of these have been collected over years and have been confirmed as LGBTQ+ affirming locations. Upstate Pride had a slightly different criteria, because the main objective of Upstate Pride is to fundraise and gain sponsors to maintain and organize for a LGBTQ+ pride festival/march located in Spartanburg, SC. The locations gained from this organization is from any sponsors for the pride event. The list that I received was the sponsor list over the past few years. The assumption I ran off was if they are supporting a major LGBTQ+ event that they are an affirming location.

The west part of the results came from a survey I administered to Furman students and the greater Greenville community via social media. The survey asked locations that are LGBTQ+ affirming and garnered fruitful results. The criteria for the reported results were mainly comprised of restaurants and a few other small business. The criteria for these reported locations were based off similar qualities as Gender Bender and PFLAG. The survey went through institutional review board review at Furman University. All data was made anonymously and consent was made clear to take the survey.

To get the major corporations in the area was based on the Human Rights Campaign’s equality index, the index bases the score on non-discrimination policy, healthcare options, and inclusiveness. The businesses included on the map all scored a one-hundred on the index. The policy for these large businesses reflect an overarching policy for the whole company; individual locations in the Greenville area’s management may not adhere to these high standards.

The GIS software that is used in this project is ArcGIS. I used this address the data to point to all the points we put into a excel sheet and then uploaded into ArcGIS. After the upload, the data was Geocoded and plotted onto a map. The layer of the counties and roads were uploaded through the Furman GIS database. The census data that was collected was from the National Geographic GIS database. These layers and the tools from the ArcGIS were the main sources used to create the maps.

Discussion

Plotted on the map the locations on Greenville show trends similar to other major cities, especially the major cities in Southeastern United States. A map of the locations fall onto one of three trends visible on Figure 3. The locations are within city limits of major cities, the locations are near major roads, and/or clustered together in groups. The placement of the business in relation to city limits and proximity to major roads would make sense for all categories of locations, because that would help create a sense of access to the locations. From an economic perspective this would mean better access; this would mean more wind could enter the establishment. If people are able to get to a location easier this means there is a greater chance the location can be supported by its patrons. The small businesses and religious spaces are mainly concentrated in the different city limits of the county. (Figures 2 and 3)

The small business locations also correlates with population density in the county. The majority of small businesses are located in the denser parts of the county. This would make sense, because the more people that live in these areas there would be more people who would shop and eat from businesses in those areas. There is a small discrepancy around the downtown Greenville area. This is due to the high retail spaces compared to the residential locations. This fits into the narrative that is where people shop not where people live. (Figure 4)

The most of the businesses are in between 15-25 minutes away from Furman’s campus. As stated in figures previous this is primarily, because most of these businesses are in the downtown Greenville area and Woodruff road area. This means most of these are accessible to the Furman student body, as well as nearby residence (Figure 5)

The last map I think sums up most of the data from previous maps. The density of the locations to one another points to these are very economically positive areas to have a business. They have high population or surrounded by high population areas. Also at the density map shown they are clustered in these economically advantage areas. Affirming corporations and small businesses to survive they have to make money. This is also a positive thing for consumers, because they are easily accessible for most people within the county. (Figure 6)

Data Sources

PRIDE, Gender Bender, and Upstate Pride: City/block location directories for Greenville SC

Surveying: Small business data, and helping formulate a definition for affirming businesses

Human rights campaign’s quality index: Large businesses data collected from 2010-2013

National Geographic GIS database

All maps developed using Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) ArcGIS, 10.4.1

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References


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