Moving Social Spaces: Public Transportation, Material Differences, and the Power of Mobile Communities in Chicago

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MOVING SOCIAL SPACES:
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, MATERIAL DIFFERENCES, AND THE POWER OF
MOBILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO

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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Asian Female Passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBD</td>
<td>Asian Male Bus Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMP</td>
<td>Asian Male Passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFBD</td>
<td>Female Passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFP</td>
<td>Black Female Passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMP</td>
<td>Black Male Passenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMBD</td>
<td>Black Male Bus Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRFP</td>
<td>Biracial Female Passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>Chicago Transit Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMBD</td>
<td>Latino/a Male Bus Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFP</td>
<td>Latina Female Passenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMP</td>
<td>Latino Female Passenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>POCTA</td>
<td>People of the CTA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTA</td>
<td>Regional Transportation Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTAMS</td>
<td>Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>UFBBD</td>
<td>Undetermined Female Bus Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFP</td>
<td>Undetermined Female Passenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMBD</td>
<td>Undetermined Male Bus Driver</td>
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<tr>
<td>UMP</td>
<td>Undetermined Male Passenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFBD</td>
<td>White Female Bus Driver</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>WMP</td>
<td>White Female Passenger</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMTC</td>
<td>Black Male Train Conductor</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMSG</td>
<td>Black Male Security Officer</td>
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ABSTRACT

Urban research on stratification in the public terrain has focused on how intentional and unintentional physical arrangements and social conventions limit and enable particular kinds of stratification processes and interactions. This prior research primarily focuses on static places such as plazas, restaurants, sidewalks and train stations and does not give adequate attention to the impact of mobility. As one of the few places where people of different social classes and ethno-racial backgrounds encounter each other, public mobile spaces are sites of the replication of civility and incivility among people of different race, gender, and class positions, and sites of its construction too.

Prior public transportation research mostly focuses on transportation policies and the design and planning of systems and services, yet, surprisingly, far less is understood about how mobile spaces, including buses, commuter rail, and city rail systems, shape face-to-face stratification processes. Little attention is given to the intersection of the physical spaces of buses and trains, social interactions within these spaces, and the landscape along the transit routes. In fact, the role of mobility is meagerly considered, if at all.

This study addresses this gap by examining how race and other inequalities are reproduced and resisted on public transportation systems and through face-to-
face interactions and behaviors on these systems. In particular, I show 1) how the materiality of mobile spaces, and their placement in different parts of cities, shapes disparate public transit experiences across different groups; 2) how social interactions and behaviors on these mobile spaces reflect Chicago's racial social histories and structures; and 3) how inequality is resisted through social interactions in mobile spaces. Through this examination, I bring to the fore the intersection of the micro-level consequences of legacies of racism, which includes class implications, and public transportation systems that are imbued with inequalities. Thus although city buses and trains allow people of color and low income people to physically move into and through integrated places, these mobile but confined spaces replicate, and indeed, intensify raced inequalities while also informing certain class and gendered inequalities, effectively keeping people bound physically and socially.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

As one of the few places where people of different social classes and ethno-racial backgrounds encounter each other, public places are sites of the replication of civility and incivility among people of different race, gender, and class positions, and sites of its construction too. Urban research on stratification in the public terrain has focused on how intentional and unintentional physical arrangements and social conventions limit and enable particular kinds of stratification processes and interactions. This prior research primarily focuses on static places such as plazas, restaurants, sidewalks and train stations and does not give adequate attention to the impact of mobility.

Studies of mobile transport experiences have focused on “stops” but not the actual moving systems (Anderson 2004; Iseki and Taylor 2010). These prior studies primarily examine activities that people engage in while waiting for buses or trains, interactions at stops during this wait, wait times and transit satisfaction, and who moves through the space (Kim 2012; Mann, Ramsey, Lott-Holland and Ray 2006; Raudenbush 2012; Russell, Price, Signal, Stanley, Gerring and Cumming 2011). Although some scholars have examined how mobile public spaces, that is, public transportation systems are contested, racialized spaces, much of this work has
focused on static spaces as well (Anderson 2004; Bullard and Johnson 2004; Lenton, Smith, Fox, and Morra 1999). They primarily focus on race and gender interactions in spaces around public transportation, but not on social interactions on mobile public spaces and places. Moreover, public transportation research mostly focuses on transportation policies and the design and planning of systems and services. Surprisingly, far less is understood about how mobile spaces, including buses, commuter rail, and city rail systems, shape face-to-face stratification processes. Little attention is given to the intersection of the physical spaces of buses and trains, social interactions within these spaces, and the landscape along the transit routes. In fact, the role of mobility is meagerly considered, if at all.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining how inequalities are reproduced and resisted on public transportation systems and through face-to-face interactions and behaviors on these systems. To do so, I consider: 1) how the materiality of mobile spaces, and their placement in different parts of cities, shapes disparate public transit experiences; 2) how social interactions and behaviors on these mobile spaces reflect Chicago’s racial social histories and structures; and 3) how inequality is resisted through social interactions in mobile spaces. For this study I used ethnographic observations and interviews on buses and trains at related stops on the Chicago Transit Authority’s (CTA) system and the Metra rail commuter trains, examinations of maps, schedules, and planning documents, and the study of an Internet site where people post about their experiences on CTA. To begin to answer these questions, I use this chapter to examine: the role of mobility;
race inequalities, with attention to class and gender inequalities in public spaces; and patterns of mobile social behaviors. I then briefly examine Chicago’s segregated landscape and its present-day social, economic, and political landscape. I then move to a discussion of data collection and analysis. Afterward I discuss the public transit systems and the routes in the study. I conclude with a section on how the study evolved over time and a brief reflection of my experiences in the space.

Through this examination, I bring to the fore the intersection of the micro-level consequences of legacies of racism (along with class and gender associations) and public transportation systems that are imbued with inequalities. Although city buses and trains allow people of color and low income people to physically move into and through integrated places, these mobile but confined spaces replicate, and indeed, intensify raced inequalities while also informing class and gender inequalities, effectively keeping people bound physically and socially.

**Why Mobility Matters**

Most of the urban and transportation racism research has focused on how the struggle for public space has often been a struggle for equal access to public transportation and public transit services (Allen 2009; Bullard and Johnson 2004, 1997; Farmer 2011; Vannini 2010; Zylstra 2011). This research highlights how legacies of transportation racism have reproduced inequality in the public terrain where racially subjugated laws and practices restrict access not only to public transportation, but also shape Blacks’ experiences (Bullard and Johnson 2004; Marcantonio and Mayer 2010; Stolz 2006). Additionally, studies on inequalities well
document how inequalities persist through housing, school segregation and other forms of institutionalized inequalities (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Bobo and Massagli 2001; Bourgois [1995] 2002; Bullard, Johnson, and Torres 2004; Charles 2006; Hayden 1995; Logan and Molotch 1987; Massey and Denton 1993; Pattillo 2007; Sampson 2012; Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Wilson 2009, 1996; Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, and Combs 2001). From these studies we learn how these institutional forces of discrimination and prejudice work to maintain inequalities and trap minorities and poor people in communities that are characterized by depopulation, blight, disinvestment and crime. Gender studies also inform our understanding of how inadequate protection against street harassment and other forms of stranger harassment shape women’s experiences in public places (Fairchild and Rudman 2008; Fuller 2003; Gardner 1990; Grant-Bowan 1993; Koskela 1993; McDowell 1999; Staeheli and Martin 2000). These previous studies inform our understanding of how those from marginalized groups try to reconcile inequalities in the public spaces and how these inequalities are perpetuated by urban planning, policies, and the built environment. Yet, most of these studies do not give adequate attention to the impact of mobility on the persistence of inequalities in the urban landscape. Mobility improves our understanding of contestation in the urban metropolis. In this dissertation I move urban research through the segregated metropolis and put inequality in motion by examining how social interactions and behaviors are impacted by mobile public spaces and transportation disparities.
Race, class and gender differences are hyper-realized and hyper-produced in face-to-face interactions as trains and buses move through the segregated metropolis. When the included and excluded are confined in moving public spaces, the dynamics of the passengers on buses and trains and their experiences with place shift. Places elicit feelings, such as those of strangeness, and these feelings shape our interactions (Goffman 1971; Hiss 1990; Tuan 1977). Wide-open, static places allow for people to avoid and disengage with others by crossing the street, walking quickly past others, stopping and waiting for others to leave, changing direction of travel among other things. Wide-open spaces also make it easier to avoid physical and visual contact. These options are limited, unavailable or restrained on mobile public spaces.

The notion of public transportation being a “respite from the lingering tension of urban life and an opportunity for diver peoples to come together,” (Anderson 2011:xiv) is possible because of the physicality of static and wide-open spaces. The cosmopolitan canopy is a wide-open and static place that provides pedestrians bodily space control that is limited on mobile public spaces. Additionally, as I show in this dissertation, control of body space is not only restricted by the physicality of buses and trains, but the options are limited in a particular way by the raced and classed, and often gendered, material differences in bus and train designs and assigned routes.

Previous studies have shown that in static public places like plazas, parks, and sidewalks people are often met with stares, “diverted gazes”, hostile sexually
charged comments and gestures instead of a friendly smile, helpful directions, or a hand shake (Anderson 2004; Bowman 1993; Goffman 1971; Jacobs 1961). Responses to these interactions vary in both static and mobile space, but in mobile spaces responses to hostilities are limited. It is challenging to escape a hostile situation on a moving train or bus. Stops are limited, so the means of escape are also limited. People’s movements in confined spaces are limited by the physicality and mobility of these spaces. This shapes social interactions in a particular way, but it is not discussed in the scholarship on social interactions in public spaces.

The emphasis on static places has ignored mobile spaces that move through the urban metropolis carrying tens of thousands of social actors every day. In Chicago, public transportation is an overwhelming part of the landscape, with an average of over 910,000 weekday bus boardings, over 755,000 weekday rail boardings, and an average of over 1,300,000 commuter rail boardings in 2013 (Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Systems [RTAMS]). As these social actors literally move from their communities and neighborhoods and even their counties, they come into confined contact with those often distanced from their own lives, given the diversity of passengers, bus drivers, train personnel, and transit security. In Chapter 2, I show how public transportation systems perpetuate inequalities in these static places. In Chapter 3 I show how mobility complicates and maintains inequalities that are witnessed in the urban landscape through material differences in mobile spaces.
Raced Mobile Systems and Economically Segregated Spaces

In America, racially subjugated laws restricted access not only to public transportation, but they also shaped how Blacks experienced the physical space of mobile spaces and places and the social landscape. The effect of race on public places has in part been shaped by the contestation of public transportation. In particular, legacies of transportation racism have reproduced inequality in the public terrain (Bullard and Johnson 2004; Bullard, Johnson, Torres 2004; Farmer 2011). These previous works show how minorities, particularly poor minorities and their communities, are not just ignored or harmed by unjust policies and practices, but how they are also oppressed through the design of mobile spaces and places (Bullard and Johnson 2004, 1997; Wells and Thills 2011). Urban and race scholars have also shown that in Chicago racial residential segregation is socially and economically isolating and restrictive (Sampson 2012; Wilson 1996; Young 2006). These studies show how legacies of racism are embodied in communities and in the daily lives of the residents who sit at the periphery of economic fairness and opportunities. But the effects of this legacy of segregation and social isolation are not only played out within stable public spaces and neighborhoods discussed in many previous urban studies. My study brings much needed attention to the dramatic effects of this isolation on social interactions by addressing the neighborhood effects of the materiality of difference in public transportation systems and how residents embody unequal lives as a result. I examine how the effects of hyper-ghettoization (Wacquant and Wilson 1989[2005]), the
redistribution of poverty (Sampson 2012) as well as concentrated and persistent poverty are compounded by raced public transportation systems. I also show how these hyper-ghettoized areas of the city are not the inner-city of Chicago, but an *exo-city* – the area of the city landscape where the residents are excluded through physical and mobile boundaries. Racism, classism, and transportation racism create the *exo-city*. The *exo-city* highlights the effects of persistent transportation racism and residential segregation. It is an obdurate space where poor racial minorities residents struggle with the effects of institutionalized inequalities. In Chapters 3 and 4 I show how the materiality of public transportation is exemplified in the *exo-city* and how Black bodies in this space are injured and disenfranchised through these material differences.

But I also show how these residents resist these oppressions while on public transportation (Orum and Neal 2010). In Chapter 5, I show how while moving through this hyper-segregated and hyper-ghettoized area that I call the *poverty corridor* - those neighborhoods and communities bounded by low income and hyper-poverty areas on more than two sides, where most residents are predominately Black – these racially isolated residents create *kinetic kinships*. *Kinetic kinships* are active and spontaneous relationships developed while traveling. Furthermore, I show how these *kinetic kinships* transform mobile spaces into *mobile communities* which are liberatory spaces for Blacks on Chicago’s south side. Because interracial interactions are limited by the demographics of many American communities and neighborhoods, positive public place interactions are also limited.
Racial segregation leads to social and spatial isolation, the effects of which we witness in public spaces and places. The awkwardness or interpreted hostilities between groups in public places are in part consequences of the racial residential segregation that takes place in many communities (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Massey and Denton 1993; Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, and Combs 2001). So, although more Whites may be living in propinquity to other minorities than they were thirty years ago, they may not have many personal encounters or relationships with these groups, and this is reflected in public place interactions and responses to people of color, especially to Blacks (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Feagin 1991; Goffman 1971; Trawalter, Richeson, and Shelton 2009). In this dissertation I primarily focus on social interactions between Black and White passengers because they were the majority groups on the routes in my study. I advance the literature on raced social interactions by demonstrating, in Chapter 4, how Whites’ social interactions with Blacks who are in integrated mobile public spaces are particularly hostile. I show how the hyper-segregation of Blacks through residences and public transportation shapes aggressive racial responses to not only Black passengers, but also to Black transit personnel. I also examine how systemic racism (Feagin 1991; 2006) is hyper-realized in these mobile social interactions through openly hostile interactions, and through what I call processes of *nice-nastiness* - expressions that are insulting but presented as politeness.

Racial tensions are not just played out in static public places or around public transportation systems, but happen during everyday rides on confined mobile
places. Social isolation and segregation are problematized in hyper-real ways on public transportation. Differences are also hyper-produced within these confined spaces. Social discomfort is not easily avoided or unrecognized.

*Gender and the Masculinization of Mobile Spaces*

Masculinities and other gender performances are often discussed in academic discourse on gender and public spaces. These studies highlight gendered relationships of power and control (McDowell 1999; Quinn 2002; Staeheli and Martin 2000) while also discussing the fear that women experience and the guarding in which women often engage while in public spaces (Koskela and Pain 2000). Women are constantly confronted with what I call the *man effect* - the transformation of public space into masculinized space, and with little if any legal recourse. This masculinization of space also transforms public spaces into landscapes of inequality as women actively navigate the space to avoid males in hopes of guarding their bodies from uninvited touching, and as a way to avoid ‘cat calls’ and other crude language directed at them.

These uninvited contacts, both verbal and physical, are considered street harassment, or what some call “stranger harassment” (Fairchild and Rudman 2008:338). In Chapter 3 I discuss, albeit briefly, stranger harassment because it shapes unequal experiences on public transportation. Women often discussed their experiences with public transportation through narratives of harassment, fear of harassment, and the physicality of the train cars. This fear of or experience with harassment was a common theme during interviews with women. Women who
travel on the South Side, into downtown and to the north side sat in this place of fear more often as their routes are often slower, longer, and more cramped than other women who live on and travel mostly on the North Side and downtown areas of the city. Most of these women travelers were women of color.

The physicality of mobile public spaces is particularly harsh for women who are often trapped in spaces by men seeking to harass them through sexual language, threatening words, and/or exposure of their genitals. Although surveillance on public transportation may be more readily available to women than it is in wide-open spaces, the limited choices of escape leave women more vulnerable. This reproduces inequalities, since women do not have the same choices as men about where to sit or how to stand, especially when the space is sexualized after she has sat down or found a place to stand. As a result, women have unequal access to body control, safety, and freedom from harassment than men on public transportation.

Social Isolation, Social Interactions and Confined Mobile Spaces

The urban sociology literature on social interactions primarily focuses on interactions occurring in wide-open and static public spaces and places. This research includes analyses of contestations in the public realm across race, class and gender that are shaped by growth, redevelopment, and politics (Bridge and Watson 2002; Carr 1992; Dear n.d; Duneier 1999; Hayden 1995; Jacobs 1961; Lofland 1998; Tonkiss 2005; Vitale 2008; Zukan 1995, 2002). This research has been important in understanding social interactions and in using histories of contestation to understand inequalities. Beyond its buildings, homes, parks, plazas, and landscapes,
the urban metropolis is also inundated with vehicles, both private and public. Urban studies research includes analysis of the role of the automobile in growth, community, interactions, mobility and patterns of change, (see Anderson 2004; Jain and Lyons 2008; and Lenton, Smith, Fox, and Morra 1999; Urry 2007; Vannini 2010; Yago 1983) but there is sparse research on mobile public spaces. These previous studies primarily focus on race and gender interactions in spaces around public transportation but they do not focus on social interactions on mobile public spaces nor on the interactions as they move through both time and space, especially in segregated areas.

Urban and community scholars provide good framework for discussing public social interactions (Goffman 1959; Hiss 1990; Lofland 1998; Tuan 1977; Zukin 1995). These studies show how interactions in public places are negotiations for space and comfort of place and efforts to maintain rules of social order (Anderson 2004; Goffman 1971; Lofland 1973). Previous research also demonstrates that socioeconomic status, social boundaries and residential segregation shape social isolation and therefore social interactions (Anderson 2004; Feagin 1991; Timberlake and Iceland 2007). Scholars have also provided theoretical and empirical work that evaluates the interplay of the physical environment and social interactions across class, race, and gender giving attention to the intended design and usage of space (Anderson 2004; Gardner 1990; Gieryn 2000; McDowell 1999). But there is a dearth in the literature on how raced, classed, and gendered interactions are shaped on and around mobile public spaces.
Understanding how inequalities are designed into mobile spaces and places and how this shapes social interactions in motion is significant for advancing how we evaluate social interactions. By not addressing the effects of hyper-segregation on social interactions in mobile spaces, these studies miss the opportunity to examine how these hyper-realized experiences with differences on mobile transportation shape other interactions that often play out in static places. This dissertation suggests that we can use mobile public spaces and places to study social interactions through a more complex lens that illuminates the relations between mobile spaces, static spaces, and long-term institutional systems of race, gender and class. In this study I provide empirical evidence to advance the study of social interactions in particular urban settings through an analysis of the interplay of mobile physical spaces and difference across race groups in Chicago, while also giving attention to class and gender group differences.

Static spaces shape interactions in very specific ways. As buses and trains travel through Chicago’s segregated communities and neighborhoods, social interactions aboard and around the public transit system are altered. The mobility of these public spaces and places expose riders to people and environments that on other occasions are restricted. The confinement of the physical space also leaves riders vulnerable and with less control of the types of interactions they may have with other passengers. The location of the exits and entrances on buses, the length, lighting and width of a train platform, and the limited exit options on trains shape interactions. Social interactions on public transportation may prove volatile with the
formation of cultural clashes that are shaped as buses and trains, and their confined spaces, move through various communities that are segregated by both race and often class. This study seeks to ignite discourse on how public transportation reproduces social stratification—race, gender and class inequality—and difference, and how it is also used by some groups to challenge some of the effects of stratification. Inequality and social differences fragment certain types of social interactions and behaviors while others flourish.

In the next section I provide an overview on research design and data collection. It includes information on how the project developed over time, from its infancy as a thought to a dissertation. I then present the research site, methods, the cyber site, and the public transport routes. Next I discuss how my analysis altered the focus of my project from one concentrating on class differentials to race. I end with a discussion of being in the space as a participant-observation and conclude with an overview of the dissertation chapters.

**Research Study, Background, Overview and Data Collection**

This study is dedicated to mobile interactions because I believe it is crucial to the advancement of the urban and community sociology field. I believe that the economics and politics of place, the trajectories of change in the urban metropolis, persistent racial residential segregation, city culture and the culture of cities, urban places and social interactions are better understood when we include a discourse on the role of mobile public spaces. Mobile public spaces embody institutionalized race, class and gender design and these material differences illuminate the
vulnerability of social interactions and help us to better understand the persistence of inequalities in the urban public realm. I also chose to examine mobile public spaces because I believed they absorbed the effects of gentrification, the growth machine, urban planning, racial residential segregation, street harassment and deindustrialization. I am a life-long resident of Chicago, and my observations were informed by many years of experience riding public transportation and watching as passenger demographics changed, as well as noticing that route and service improvements seemed to coincide with changes in the wealthier, Whiter, North side communities and the redevelopment of Chicago’s South Loop. I had also watched as wholesale vendors disappeared off the Red Line and as homeless people were less visible on downtown streets. I began to see that what was happening in stable places, i.e. gentrification and redevelopment, was also shaping behaviors and interactions on public transportation. Public transportation constricts and contains its passengers for short and long periods of time. Those who ride public transportation cannot enter and exit at will, but must abide by the limitations of the physical space, such as the challenge of exiting a commuter train while it is in motion, and rules for designated stops along the routes.

For this project I observed the Red Line train, which travels from the 95th and the Dan Ryan expressway to Howard Street, which is at the northern most border of Chicago. I also rode the Purple Line train, which travels through Evanston, IL to Howard Street and during weekday rush hours, it also travels into downtown. The bus lines in this study travel through several North Side communities and into
downtown or through South Side communities and into downtown. Ridership demographics on the north end of the Red Line changed at certain stops, like the Sheridan Road and Wilson stops (Lakeview and Uptown neighborhoods) and dramatically at North and Clybourn (Humboldt Park neighborhood), and this indicated to me that something was also changing in the communities around these stops, I also watched as the aesthetics of mobile places changed. For example, the North and Clybourn stop along the Red Line, was a dark and dank stop when Humboldt Park was a predominately Puerto Rican community but by the mid-nineties the stop was cleaned and also a 24-hr stop, when before the gentrification of Humboldt Park, this stop had limited accessibility. These patterns left me wondering about material differences and class: Are mobile public spaces classed as neighborhoods are? Are there institutional inequalities and if so, how do they shape mobile spaces? Do material differences shape inequalities?

*Research Site*

Chicago and its metropolis is a segregated space. Segregation has endured population and economic growth, decline, and changes (Sampson 2012; Squires Bennett, McCourt, and Nyden 1987; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005) (Figure 1).
Chicago is a city struggling to reconcile the draw of its famed attractions with its infamous history. It is a city engaged in a constant battle to advance while constantly being pulled aside by its history of segregation, discrimination, racism, violence and various cases of political corruption. Chicago is a place whose social landscape is reflective of much of America. It is a place with pockets of growth, such
as the South Loop and Near West Side, but also a place of decay such as the Grand Boulevard neighborhood. Cultures of the ‘other’ are consumed by omnivores during festivals and at restaurants, but it is also a space where the places where the ‘other’ lives are avoided. It is also a metropolitan space recognized on the international stage, having been listed as a top tourist attraction several times and because of its famed/infamous politics, but also filled with cozy enclaves and tight-knit communities and neighborhoods. Chicago is a stage where social patterns of difference are performed in daily interactions. It is a place that continually absorbs changing global politics and where the growing economic disparities are on display throughout the segregated metropolis (Hall n.d.). It is a place of recurrent social conflict where neighborhood change and development is contested among power players but also by those losing out no matter what (Bezalel 1999, 2007; Brown-Saracino 2009). It is a space where the ‘right to the city’ is restrictive not only for access but for change (Harvey 2003). It is a place that provides empirical evidence that place and neighborhood effects matter (Sampson 2012). It is a place where women shape the urban social and political landscape (Spain 2002). It is a place where sacred monuments are contested terrain and used for political leverage and attacks, such as with the renovations to Soldier Field and the secret overnight dismantling of the Meigs Field Airport by Mayor Richard M. Daley. It is a place where newscasters and reporters criminalize spaces by referring to them by names such as “Terror Town,” subsequently leaving residents further isolated and subjugated (Sfondeles and Main 2012). It is a place where the affordability of quality food
products are unequally distributed thereby endangering the well-being of its most vulnerable citizens (Alkon, Block, Moore, Gillis, DiNuccio and Chavez 2013). It is also a place where social movements and protests command an international audience, such as with recent NATO summit protests, Occupy Wall Street demonstrations, Dream Act rallies, and End the Violence campaigns. This fluidity of place leaves Chicago susceptible to the effects of social stratification resulting in a reproduction process that is also raced and classed (Jackson 2001; Gieryn 2000; Kefalas 2004; Hoelscher 2003). Public transportation in Chicago’s spaces is also often a racial and class experience and as such it warrants consideration in the discourse on reproduced material differences.

Chicago is more than a segregated, raced, and classed place. It is also a place where tourists flock in the millions, a site for the filming of blockbuster movies such as Transformers and television hits such as Chicago Fire, and a city rich in cultures. Public spaces and places in or near Chicago’s business district include plazas, Millennium and Grant parks, Navy Pier, North Pier, the Magnificent Mile, and Water Tower Park. The city has a lower street level, Lower Wacker Drive, which adds an interesting dynamic when traveling between hotels or under Michigan Avenue while trying to avoid the brutal Chicago winters. Tourism is part of the city’s bread and butter and the TIF (tax-increment financing) Redevelopment Plan has transformed the city’s downtown business, entertainment and tourist areas into an aesthetically pleasing landscape.
Public transportation is plenteous in Chicago’s downtown areas (the Loop and Magnificent Mile “Mag Mile”). Additionally, many companies have charter buses that transport their employees to and from the two busiest of the commuter rail train stations. Chicago’s downtown, near west side, and north side streets are also blanketed with taxi cabs. Chicago’s downtown areas also boasts of horse-drawn carriage rides during the evening hours and boat taxis that go from two of the commuter rail stations to the Mag Mile, Navy Pier, and the Museum Campus that hosts the Field Museum of Natural History, the Shedd Aquarium, and the Adler Planetarium. On any given weekday, passersby are also likely to see shuttle buses transporting students, faculty, and staff from some of the area’s larger universities that have downtown and outskirt campuses.

In Chapter 2, I provide a brief history of Chicago’s transportation and race landscape from European settlement to the creation of the CTA. I also discuss the landscape in terms of neighborhoods and the major tourists, businesses, and shopping areas of the city. Chicago’s early history shows a city rich with transportation hubs, and this is still true today. Today there are two major airports, Midway and O’Hare, and a few public transportation systems that are overseen by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Chicago’s major transportation authority is the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). The CTA serves the city and the nearby suburbs of Forest Park, Cicero, Berwyn, Skokie, and Evanston. The major suburban, or commuter rail, is run by Metra. Suburban bus services are provided by PACE. Chicago also has Amtrak and Greyhound stations.
Evidence and Analytic Strategy

This dissertation draws on data collected in the Chicago metropolitan area between 2011 and 2014. To make my case that difference is materially built into public transportation systems and that these differences shape social interactions, behaviors and experiences on public transportation systems, I collected and analyzed five types of data: 1) ethnographic observations on three kinds of transport: buses, city trains, commuter trains; 2) analyses of transportation planning and policy documents and maps; 3) analyses of the kinds of transport options available to people in 18 neighborhoods in Chicago and along some of the busiest train and bus lines; 4) 27 semi-structured interviews with transit passengers; and 5) a shorter analysis of web sites devoted to reporting interactions on the Chicago Transportation Authority trains and buses. In this study I use qualitative and archival data to discuss how material differences are built into public transport systems in Chicago. I also engage in a qualitative analysis of class interactions with respect to variations of place, surveillance and time. Using mobile public spaces and places as a research site removes many of the restrictions of static wide-open spaces. Although the physical space of the buses and trains rarely changes en route, where they are situated throughout their routes merges the static wide-open public spaces and places to the complexities of mobile public spaces and places. External places and spaces vary as the trains and buses move, and this shapes passengers’ experiences and interactions. Additionally, the direction of travel also matters. This has not been discussed in prior urban research.
Social interactions between passengers, bus drivers, and train crew are also analyzed in this study. Interactions were recorded as field notes and also counted in fifteen-minute intervals where I noted the passenger’s gender and perceived race and the same for the bus driver. Quantitative recording of interactions provided me with rich data that enhanced analysis across class, race, and gender. Recording who did what and with whom on these mobile public spaces and places broadens previous space and social interaction research.

*Participant Observations*

I used ethnographic field observations on six CTA bus routes, two train lines, and two Metra train routes. These routes all travel into downtown Chicago. The Metra routes travel from the west or south suburbs into downtown Chicago. The CTA bus and train routes move through various Chicago neighborhoods and communities, gentrified areas, and into downtown Chicago. Ethnographic field observations on buses and trains and in the stations improved the analysis of the transit documents and maps. I recorded size of the buses and the designs of the CTA and Metra trains. I also recorded changes over time and things that didn’t change. I recorded restaurants in the train stations and other amenities or the lack thereof. I recorded when the stations were busiest and the types of weekend and off peak traffic.

I took pictures of the interior mobile spaces and the stations and stops along the way. I also took pictures of the inside of the Metra and CTA train stations. Taking pictures of Metra stations along the route was met with conflict. I was
informed by transit personnel that it was illegal to take pictures of the platforms at each stop. A trainman told me that I could not step out at each stop and take a picture because it was in violation of federal law. Thus most of my pictures and videos were limited to those that I could capture from inside the train. I also recorded some of my trips through video. Videos were strictly used to record the exterior spaces as the buses and trains moved. Pictures and videos, along with ethnographic field observations, were employed to enable me to provide a “thick description” (Geertz 1973) of the spaces and across time.

Occasionally while doing these recordings, passengers would ask me if I was a tourist. During the earlier part of my study, I did not want to draw attention to the fact that I was a researcher, so I simply responded ‘no.’ It was not rare for me to see the same people when riding the Metra, so I did not want to reveal myself as a researcher during any trips. I felt this could disrupt my ability to record interactions in as natural of a setting as possible (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Lofland, Snow & Anderson 2006). Only on one occasion when I returned to one of my sites to take a few additional pictures did I inform the person who asked me about my picture taking that I was a researcher. By this time I had exited the field.

I rode and moved through these systems during various hours of the day and across all seasons. However, the crowdedness of most transit routes during transit morning and evening rush hours – 6:30am-9:00am and 3:30pm-6:30pm – made certain observations, like those between passengers and bus drivers, challenging so these observations were mostly conducted at the end of the morning transit rush
hour and at the beginning and ends of the evening transit rush hours. I use the term ‘transit rush hour’ because they do not necessarily mirror traditional rush hours exactly but are consider the “peak” ridership times and where on the Metra train, express trains and rush hour rules, such as quiet cars, exist.

I traveled on the buses and trains seven days a week, although the routes and times varied. I also traveled year-round and during the largest city festivals (Blues Fest, Jazz Fest, Lollapalooza, St. Patrick’s Day Parade and the Taste of Chicago). Traveling during the largest festivals is where social sabbaticals – periods in Chicago of public rowdiness and drunkenness and where rules of social order are ignored – first emerged. During these periods I recorded interactions on buses and trains, rules of social order, activities in train stations, and changes in how transit personnel boarded passengers at various stops. I later examined CTA and Metra planning documents and announcements that coordinated with these festivals as well as other events where train and bus schedules were altered for the crowds.

I recorded who was in the space by what I perceived was their race and gender. I also noted passenger activities such as use of technology, talking, sleeping, and reading. These activities often served as class markers as well. When riding the Metra I tried to avoid sitting in the Quiet Car because you are not allowed to talk in these cars during rush hour. These cars are supposed to be clearly designated but once when they weren’t I made the mistake of speaking with a friend that I had run into, only to be shushed by a passenger for talking, even though the train hadn’t left the station. Because I tend to be sarcastic, I couldn’t resist pointing this out to her as
I moved on with my conversation. I recorded how other passengers responded to this interchange.

I recorded weather conditions while out in the field. Rainy days tended to be the quietest times on buses. The summer of 2012 was an extremely hot summer in Chicago with daily temperatures often soaring well above 90°. I spent 4-5 days per week in the field during that entire summer. During observations the summer of 2012, issues of environmental justice and health for South Side passengers came to be a more important part of my research. It was during these trips that I recorded many of the observations at the 95th/Dan Ryan station, the very farthest south station on the Red Line, located in a nearly all Black neighborhood, that highlighted how this space is excruciatingly hot: 15 buses pull into tight corridors that were already sweltering from temperatures well above 80 and 90 degrees. Passengers at this station seemed particularly uncomfortable during that summer as they wrestled with heat, high humidity and at some bus stops, the smells coming from six large garbage dumpsters. Passengers were seen wiping sweat from their heads, tugging at their collars, frowning while standing near the garbage dump bus stops, and holding up various objects to shield their faces from the afternoon and early evening sun.

Document Analysis

I began this study hypothesizing that materiality and inequalities were built into public transportation systems. As learned through Massey and Denton (1993), prejudicial practices persist in part because of deliberate actions and policies at the
institutional level. Within the guidelines of my research question and agenda, I started collecting press releases from both Metra and CTA. I also examined present-day transit system maps from both agencies, and examined Census data from the communities and neighborhoods in my study. In choosing my Metra routes, I first researched Census data on all the cities and towns served by the trains exiting out of Union Station and the Ogilvie Transportation Center to ensure that I chose a diverse route. As a former South Sider, I was familiar with the demographic and census information for the South Side communities and the south suburbs, but also updated my charts with the 2010 Census data.

Borrowing from C. Wright. Mills, I approached analysis of the documents that I gathered from a historical, biographical and structural standpoint. I recorded dates, times of the year, availability of information, who was or would be affected by whatever the topic area, and newspaper reports in order to remind myself of the historical context.

These documents served as secondary sources for my overall analytical study, so I did not, nor could I, collect every press release or newspaper account that was released and/or distributed. I primarily drew from documents released during the period of my study, only going back further when warranted by comments or information provided in current documents. The purpose for examining planning documents and maps was to test my hypotheses that materiality was built into the systems and that they were intentional.
Intentionality is hard to document empirically, however, patterns of difference are not. Therefore I used patterns of difference as the qualifier to code for intentionality. My focus was not to provide a chronological account of how material differences have been built into the CTA and Metra systems, but to instead analyze planning documents, maps, news reports, schedules, and transit reports to determine, at least to some extent, how material differences are built into the system. I examined 255 CTA and Metra documents and related webpages. Of this number I examined 40 press releases, 64 news stories, 56 transit documents which included - notices of intent, vision reports, participant plans, and system updates-, six annual reports (2010-2012 for CTA and Metra), 44 bus and rail schedules, 48 maps, 3 transit related boards (Developing Communities Project (DCP), Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)), and 7 social media sites (blogs, Facebook).

These documents, schedules, reports and maps provided a more critical view of macro-level patterns than I could assess through participant observations and interviews. Many of these documents also provided critical information, such as ridership patterns and archival maps (which allowed me to view some changes over time), that were important to making a case that inequalities have been reproduced through institutionalized material differences that are raced, classed, and gendered.

*Interviews*

Although field observations allowed me to observe social interactions in a ‘natural setting’ they could not explain everything so I supplemented observations
with semi-structured interviews (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Lofland, Snow, and Anderson 2006). I utilized a variety of recruitment techniques to complete this part of the data collection. I sent out emails to friends asking them to forward to people they know who might be interested in talking with me about their experiences on public transportation. Because the interviews were anonymous, I asked that they give my information directly to the participant. I did not tell people when their friends or co-workers contacted me. This type of recruiting also allowed for snowball sampling as interviewees forwarded my information to others. This method of recruitment also led to friends wanting to share their experiences. I interviewed a half-dozen people that I knew but as with other interviewees, I did not record names.

The majority of my interviews happened on the streets of Chicago. It is challenging to hear people while riding on buses or trains, so I avoided recruiting people this way. I recruited participants by first asking if they regularly take public transportation in Chicago. This was often responded to with a no and with some adding “sorry, I can’t help you get where you have to go.” This response I assumed was because my question sounded as if I was looking for help. When pedestrians responded yes, I would then tell them who I was, briefly describe the project and if they noted they were interested, I would complete a verbal consent and then hand them the research consent document. Conducting interviews on the streets of downtown allowed for a diverse sampling of passengers traveling into the downtown area from a variety of origination points. I interviewed students,
workers, occasional visitors, street vendors, and panhandlers. This diversity of passengers as a sampling was useful as it provided me with diverse perspectives.

Mobile Diaries: People of the CTA

Social media sites can serve as rich sites for ethnographic data. “Social media may have kept community and social relations from declining and phasing out” (Miller 2011:p.x). When I began this study, I had not considered social media as a source for data collection. A chance encounter with a student and a discussion about my dissertation led me to a Facebook page dedicated to people sharing their experiences on the CTA. In fact, People of the CTA (POCTA, www.facebook.com/PeopleofCTA) suggested that people share their strange and weird encounters with “bums and smelly people (People of the CTA). When I first visited the site my thoughts were, “This is a gold mine” because the posts and pictures suggested raced, class, and gender differentials. I immediately emailed my student and thanked her again for introducing me to a public cyberspace dedicated to experiences on public transportation systems.

I realized early in my examinations of this site that the data source was massive and that I would have to gather data in increments. This dissertation includes a small amount of this data, but as I will discuss in the concluding chapter, this part of the research is on-going because the layers of analysis are complex and rich. I gathered information from this site from November 15, 2012 to April 15, 2013. I also gathered data in September 2013.
Due to the high volume of pictures and comments on the site, I had to devise a method to retrieve and store the data for later analysis. I also suspected that the pictures and comments would not remain permanently on the site. When I first began gathering data the site had approximately 54,000 Likes, meaning that people logged onto Facebook and clicked the 'like' button. In April 2013, the site had over 130,000 'likes.'

I did not participate in the site, nor did I log into Facebook in order to collect data. Because the site is marked as public, anyone can view the comments and pictures. Early visits to the site showed that it was a raced, classed, and gendered space. Although I retrieved data and pictures from the site, I made the decision early on to not include the pictures in the dissertation. Although they were considered “public” and I had a legal right to use them, as a responsible researcher, I could not allow those vilified and marginalized on the site to be further marginalized in my project. I keep the files, of which there are 28 containing over 30,000 comments, in password protected files.

In this dissertation, I present data from POCTA to show how social interactions in cyberspace are similar to those observed on buses and trains. I also use the data to highlight the consequences of raced, classed, and gendered public mobile spaces and this site contained hundreds of comments to the like. This dissertation contains analysis from the posts and comments on the site that illuminate the consequences of social isolation, residential segregation, and inequalities. On this site “identities, like truth and reality, are constructed through
discourse” (Barney 2004:6). Analysis of POCTA also shows that the construction of transit reality is raced, classed, and gendered. This reproduces social inequalities in the real world.

I consider Facebook to be a social neighborhood and POCTA as the community. I performed a content analysis where I recorded patterns for the types of pictures posted, i.e. people in costumes, people who were disheveled, women, men, and word analyses. Word analysis showed that words revealed gender, race, and class patterns when predominately used in response to certain pictures. This pattern of social difference was very similar to patterns of social difference noted in social interactions on the buses and trains. The patterns of difference observed through this site supports Embrick, Wright, Lukacs’ (2012) assertion that online spaces replicate racial and gender structures and the social exclusions of the real world. It also shows that patterns of difference were not masked on this site, but that people openly revealed racist, classist, and sexist positions.

*Recording the Data*

It was important for me to capture as much of the activity that I witnessed as possible. I employed several different tools to record my data. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and then coded. Field observations of the spaces were recorded through pictures, videos and notes in a notebook. However, I decided to employ a variety of techniques to record passenger interactions and other behaviors during my trips. I did not want to compromise my ability to sit as a casual passenger in the space. I also did not want to have my notes compromised if other passengers
saw them. I had made the decision early on to record as much as I could while still in the field because capturing the interactions in as pure of a form as possible was important for the analysis. So I decided to use both a notebook and my phone. As I observed, I wrote. I often used my cellphone during busy trips because trying to position my notebook where I could write, hold my bag, or bags, and even a beverage, was challenging during peak hours on buses and trains.

I realized that I was fortunate to be collecting data during the age of the cellphone and texting because my constant typing did not seem to call any unwanted attention to what I was doing. As mentioned earlier, taking pictures and videos didn’t have the same responses. My phone was small, a Palm Pixi™ so the screen was also small. I could barely see it so anyone around me would have to be mighty close to see what I wrote. I mostly used this method when recording passengers’ activities while riding, passenger interactions with the bus driver, and demographics of who was in the space. Recording notes into my phone also allowed me to secure the data immediately because I was able to email the notes to myself and then delete them from the phone.

When recording in my notebook, I recorded in a special code that I created. This allowed me to scribe conversations word for word without fear that someone would be able to read what I wrote. When I disembarked from the bus or train, I usually sat in either a waiting area or stepped into a coffee shop or sat on the bus bench to write other notes. I transcribed these notes into my field notes file when I had the opportunity to get to a computer.
Throughout my study I was conscious of the fact that there was always the possibility that I could lose my phone or notebook or have it stolen. I could not ignore this fact. In response, I scanned and took pictures of my notebook as often as possible and then secured these on a private computer and in a password protected file. My emailed phone notes were also secured in a password protected file.

*Analysis of Bus Routes and Train Tracks*

This study was conducted on various transit routes that travel into Chicago’s downtown business district, the Loop. The public transit system in Chicago is overseen by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), that operates the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Pace, and Metra separately. All three of these systems have routes that travel into and through downtown Chicago.

*Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)*

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is one of the Chicago area public transportation operators for the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). “The CTA is the nation’s second largest public transportation system, providing bus and rail service to the city of Chicago and 35 surrounding suburbs” (Chicago Transit Authority). The CTA operates eight rail routes that are designated by color (Red, Green, Blue, Pink, Orange, Brown, Purple, and Yellow). Two of these routes operate 24 hours (Red and Blue) and one route (Purple) operates an express route into and out of the Loop area during morning and evening rush periods. The CTA was formed in 1945 and its corporate offices are located in the Loop.
The bus and train routes that are the focus of this dissertation were chosen because they travel through various diverse communities in the city and they also travel into the downtown areas of Chicago. These routes were also chosen because of the heterogeneity of the passengers at some point on the route. Although there were several bus routes that met these criteria that served the North Side and downtown areas of the city, there were not many to choose from on the South Side, southwest or West Side of the city, even though these areas’ buses have some of the highest ridership patterns in the system.

The ‘El’ (short for “elevated”) is the CTA’s train line. This study examines social interactions on the Red Line train, which travels between 95th Street and Howard Street. The 95th Street station, which is the southernmost end of the Red line, is one of the CTA’s busiest train stations with almost 4 million entries in 2012 (CTA 2012 Annual Report). On the south side, the Red Line train travels north in the middle of the Dan Ryan expressway before entering its Chinatown stop and before proceeding underground (subway) through downtown stops and then becomes elevated through the North Side to the Howard Street station, which had a little over 1 million passenger entries in 2012 (CTA 2012 Annual Report). The communities along this route vary from those with a per capita income of $87,000 (Near North Side) to $9,000 (Fuller Park).

The Purple Line, which is also called the Evanston Express during weekday rush periods, carries passengers from Linden Street in Evanston, Illinois, an adjacent suburb with a median income of $68,000 (Census 2010). During rush hour
periods it travels into Chicago and into the Loop where it loops around downtown before returning north. During non-rush periods it travels between Linden Street in Evanston to Howard Street on Chicago’s far north side, which is also the border of Evanston and Chicago.

I collected data through field observations on six bus routes - #147, 151, 22, 146, 6, and 3 (see Appendix B for route maps). These routes travel through areas of the city that represent a diversity of class, race, and/or ethnicity (Census 2010). Only the #22 Clark Street bus now provides “Owl” service among these routes. Owl service is service from midnight to 5:00am (CTA).

The #147 Outer Drive Express bus originates at the Howard Street station, which is along the northern most boundary of the city on the east. The Outer Drive Express bus travels mostly along Sheridan Road and through the Rogers Park and Edgewater communities, both mixed income, before traveling express along Lake Shore Drive where it exits onto the Magnificent Mile at Oak Street. Sheridan Road is occupied in various areas with high rise condominiums that are along Lake Michigan’s shoreline. It then travels southbound along Michigan Avenue (Magnificent Mile) to Congress Parkway and Michigan before beginning a return route which travels north from Congress to State Street where it travels north before turning on Washington Street where it eventually returns to Michigan Avenue. This bus runs from early morning (4:30am) until late night (11:20pm).

The #22 Clark Street bus is a regular route that runs twenty-four hours a day and travels north-south from Howard Street on the far northern edge of the city,
into downtown. Passengers are advised to take this bus when the 151 Sheridan and the Outer Drive Express are not in operation. The Clark Street bus also has some of the highest ridership numbers in the system. It also travels through several trendy, upper middle class, mainly white, and popular communities in Chicago including Wrigleyville, Andersonville, Lakeview and Lincoln Park.

The route of the #151 Sheridan northbound varies based on the time of day, as some travel from Union Station only as far as Belmont and Sheridan Road or Halsted Street and Belmont, while some of the routes travel from Union Station (which is the south end of the route) to as far as Devon Avenue and Clark Street. Like the Clark Street bus, the Sheridan bus also travels through some of Chicago’s most popular and well-known communities such as Andersonville, Uptown, Wrigleyville, Lincoln Park and River North and Lakeview.

The #146 Inner Drive/Michigan Express (during the first years of my study it was the Inner Drive/Marine Drive bus) originates in Andersonville at the street level of the Berwyn Red Line stop. Like the Outer Driver Express, this bus runs express into downtown. The Inner Drive Express travels down the swankier Marine Drive through Andersonville and Lakeview East, before beginning its express run on Lake Shore Drive at Belmont. This route travels down Chicago’s famed State Street and to the Museum Campus (Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum of Natural History, Adler Planetarium), and to the Roosevelt Red Line train station before circling around and heading back north along State Street before turning at Lake Street where it travels back to Michigan Avenue.
Like the Sheridan and Clark Street buses, the #3 King Drive bus travels a long route into downtown Chicago. It runs from the early morning hours, from around 4:20am, to 1:20am the next day. It serves South Side communities such as Bronzeville, Chatham, Greater Grand Crossing, Washington Park and Park Manor. It also services McCormick Place and the McCormick Hyatt Convention Center, which play host many of the largest conventions. The northbound racial composition of passengers on this route changes dramatically as it approaches McCormick Place and downtown and in the reverse.

The #6 Jackson Park Express bus originates at 79th and South Shore and travels into downtown. It runs express along Lake Shore Drive from 47th Street to Roosevelt Road. The Jackson Park Express serves Kenwood, Hyde Park and the South Shore communities. It also stops at the Museum of Science and Industry. Like the King Drive bus, this bus’ demographics shift dramatically from predominately black ridership between 79th and 57th Streets to an integrated ridership as it proceeds north into downtown after the 57th Street stop in Hyde Park.

*Metra: The Way to Really Fly™*

The various CTA bus and train routes in this study provide rich class social interaction data but I also wanted to examine social interactions on the mobile public spaces and trains of the more luxurious of the public transportation system routes. The Metra is the commuter train system of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Metra trains travel to and from downtown Chicago into various suburbs in the metropolitan area and Kenosha, Wisconsin. The Metra train is more
expensive than the CTA (A CTA trip from State Street or Randolph & Michigan Avenue to 95th Street is $2.25. A Metra trip from Randolph and Michigan Avenue to 95th Street is $4.25).

A review of the 2010 US Census reveals that Metra stations are mostly located in middle- to upper class communities; however the Metra Electric\(^1\) train serves more low-income to middle-income communities. Although the Metra system comprises of 11 routes that move in and out of downtown Chicago, this study only includes two of those routes. I chose the Metra Electric and the Union Pacific West routes for this study. Although it may prove valuable to study all of the Metra routes, for this study was not feasible. I chose these two particular Metra branches because they leave from different stations and the ridership provided class and racial diversity. Additionally, both of these routes either have several Chicago stops and/or reflect West and South Side of Chicago (metro) physical, socioeconomic and residential dynamics.

**Unexpected Mobile Experiences and Race**

When I began preliminary research for this project in 2009-2010, I rode several north side bus routes to observe social interactions between passengers. As a frequent public transit rider and public transit connoisseur, it was easy for me to get to the routes in my study. I had a good handle on many of the North Side routes, especially those that traveled into downtown. As time passed and I decided to turn

\(^1\) Unlike other Metra trains that run through locomotive power, the Metra Electric train is powered by electricity which comes to the train byway of a bar/conduit from the train and electrical wires above it that mirror the routes.
a small class project into my dissertation, I included a few south side bus routes and two CTA ‘El’ routes and two Metra routes into the study. This decision, although reached casually after speaking with one of my committee members, led me, literally and metaphorically, through two Chicagos: the North Side with predominately white or diverse neighborhoods, and the one south of Roosevelt Road with predominately Black neighborhoods.

I began this project focused on social class dynamics. Although I was fully aware that any study of Chicago would also include race dynamics, I felt that race was well covered by the volumes of scholarship on race and urban life and I wanted to see how class would emerge. I rode through the segregated metropolis recording interactions, physical structures, bus and train conditions, all the while taking pictures and reviewing maps and planning documents. As I began to type up my notes, code them, and analyze what I had, an ugly, yet familiar, pattern arose. Race was everywhere. Race mattered; the race of the passengers mattered, the predominate race in the communities mattered, the race of the bus driver and train conductors mattered, and even my race mattered. Racial patterns jumped from the page and hit me with a glaring blindness only for me to be knocked about by class and occasionally by gender as well. I was sad and annoyed, just like I had been when a CTA bus driver had shut me up in the back door and pulled off with half my body outside of the bus and half of me still on the bus and then followed up the problem by treating me with disregard.
As a researcher and resident of the city, I have ridden public transportation more times than I can count. I have traveled north, south, and west on various bus and train lines, but I’ve ridden the Red Line and the #147 more than any other route. As I traveled the transit routes in my study, one thing was more apparent than anything else: race mattered. I won’t lie, I had hoped that class would jump out and slap me in the face more than any other factor, but as a Black woman, people responded to me as a Black woman on every route. I was brought into the mobile community when riding routes through Black spaces on the South side, and I was avoided and often looked at disapprovingly when riding through downtown or north bound on the North side, particularly on the Purple Line. I found that although I displayed plenty of middle class markers—I used advanced technology like smart phones and tablets, wore well-made clothes, read academic journals and thick texts, often carried shopping bags from higher end stores, and even had conversations about more high-brow cultural experiences—but in the end I was still Black. I experienced racial aggressions on buses on the north side, on the Metra UP-W line, on the Purple Line, and when traveling northbound on the Red Line after leaving the south side (47th Street). I do not use this study as an auto-ethnography, but note these raced experiences as they show that as a participant in the spaces, I was not immune the effects of race, class, or gender. They also serve as additional evidence of patterns of social difference on public transportation. The racing of these spaces also made them contested spaces which I detail in Chapters 3 & 4.
During my study, passengers on both systems experienced fare increases. This was not expected but became useful data in showing built-in equalities. Although the Metra increase came about without a lot of negative public replies, the increases in the CTA’s fares ignited a firestorm of criticisms. Passengers argued that the increases were raced and classed and several media outlets took up the task of proving them right. I discuss this further in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

Although I do not detail this in my substantive chapters, the CTA Red Line also underwent major renovations during my study. The racing of this project is detailed in the dissertation as it relates to passengers waiting and travel experiences on the system. In the conclusion, I discuss how race and class difference is currently constructed in CTA’s reconstruction efforts as I discuss future research agendas.

**My Experiences Riding in Unequal Ways**

Riding the buses and trains during various times of day, across all the seasons, and from the north side through downtown and into the south side provided me with a dynamic view of the divided city. Riding the commuter rail trains into the south and west suburbs provided me with panoramic observations of the segregated metropolis. Train rides allowed me to ride above, through and below the city. Riding on the buses and trains elevated me above the traditional pedestrian view and allowed me to see places in ways not possible by foot or car. I was able to see several streets at a time, examine the ball parks, observe police activity, and to see the back doors and alleys of where and how people lived. The bus provided me
with an elevated view of the city and up-close experiences with the static places that I passed through and the residents of the neighborhoods. Some bus routes even allowed me to see the distinctive class and racial borders and boundaries in the city as I crossed from redeveloped Chicago in the south Loop and Bronzeville or Hyde Park and into the land that capital forgot – what I refer to in Chapter 5 as the poverty corridor. As I moved across the segregated metropolis on these transit systems, race disparities, class privileges and hierarchies, and gender intimidations were highlighted.

I rode dirty buses, clean buses, new buses, older trains, clean trains, short buses, articulated buses, hybrid buses, and many types in-between. I rode with urine smells, vomit remains, alcohol spills, bad breath, wet floors, salt residues, over-sized strollers, the homeless, laughter, tears, screams, verbal altercations, the cold, the wet, and the ticked off. I rode in all Black passenger train cars and buses and on integrated routes. I rode in the back of the bus, in the front but more often than not, in the middle. I rode with tourists, with summer camp groups, with commuters, with physically disabled passengers, and with the brotha who had “I Hate My Mom” tattooed across his forehead. I sat among veterans and rode with the elderly. I listened to immigrants and grade school and high school students. I rode amongst the college crew and with those suffering from mental health issues. I rode in train cars and on buses where high-level personal technology was in abundance and I rode in places where few had more than a flip phone. I rode in train cars with mostly businessmen during the day and I rode at night with service workers,
security guards, and nurses. I was called “sweet heart” and “baby girl” by trainmen and male bus drivers alike and even once referred to as “Renee” by an inebriated Black male passenger. Sometimes there was space aplenty and at other times I was squished, rubbed up against, bumped into, or hit with bags and briefcases. And sometimes I was able to spread out and enjoy the view of Lake Michigan.

I rode listening to conversations that transformed the space into masculinized space such as when a White Male Passenger (WMP) told a White Female Passenger (WFP) that they could share a cab when they got off the train and party together at the beach. I frantically wrote notes as social sabbaticals were granted to White and more affluent passengers on the Metra trains, while Blacks were policed through demands to follow rules or through glares by police, passengers, and train personnel.

Every day was an adventure, but I soon discovered that my adventure was shaped by the route I was on, where I was in the system (which station or bus-stop) who was at the train station or bus stop, and the time of day and the season. These mobile experiences were patterned. For example, I eventually came to expect smaller and dirtier buses on the King Drive route, and frequent, longer, and cleaner buses on the north side’s Outer Drive Express, Inner Drive Express, and the Sheridan buses. I noticed that I never had a white, Latino or Asian bus driver on the South Side or on the Metra; the privilege of space was afforded through race and class codes.
The patterns of difference were often coupled by stark class and race inequalities in the landscape that the buses and trains traveled through. Often it seemed as if I had crossed over an invisible threshold because when I looked out the windows midway through my South Side routes, it wasn’t odd to see a landscape that ‘capital forgot’ and when I looked out the windows on the North Side, downtown, and areas near downtown, it was more likely that I would see sculptured lawns, beautiful parks, but garbage cans were nowhere near where children played basketball (Figure 2), even though all of this happened in the same city.

Figure 2. Views along the #3 King Drive bus 2012.

Riding the Metra revealed qualities of material difference similar to those on the CTA. When looking out the window on the UP-W, I knew when we were
approaching Bellwood, Berkeley and Maywood, predominately minority western suburbs, because the landscape was filled with train yards and corner convenience stores, and there were few green spaces within view. There is a huge train yard between Melrose Park and Bellwood. I remember marking this in my field notes while I also recorded that the landscape between Bellwood and Berkley was blanketed by 500+ cargo dock warehouse district centers. I also knew when I had crossed over the boundary from Chicago’s west side and had entered into the city of Oak Park because, as I wrote in my notes, “the outside environment changed immediately – homes, green, new development” as opposed to the abandoned Brach’s™ warehouse and the lack of capital investment that painted the west side’s terrain.

My rides throughout the metropolis exposed the face-to-face and daily consequences of struggles for equal access not only to public transportation and public transit services, but also of wrestling with the material differences of public transportation systems while similarly navigating these same mobile spaces through a segregated metropolis. Rides were unequal in comfort, length of time, train style, bus size, cleanliness, safety, views outside my window, and interactions with the space itself. These qualities of material differences are not without consequences to the passengers or the social landscape as discussed throughout this dissertation.
Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2 of the dissertation focuses on Chicago’s early and contemporary histories. I use this chapter to highlight how, as Chicago developed as a city and public transportation came to the fore, race and class differences were built in. I then show how legacies of materiality and inequalities are produced and maintained in contemporary Chicago. I focus this chapter on Chicago’s downtown areas, the Loop and the Mag Mile, and provide an analysis of how public transportation shapes how people are able to access downtown and the demographics of Chicago’s two major downtown areas and the major parks, Grant and Millennium Park. In this chapter I also show how, as the urban core and the main location of transportation hubs, the materiality of these spaces is important in understanding persistent inequalities in the larger landscape and the intersection with public transportation.

The findings in Chapter 3 focus on the materiality of difference in public transportation systems. I examine how difference is built into the system’s fleets, planning, schedules, and stations and how this shapes unequal experiences for minorities and poor people. I discuss how these disparities shape an unequal system that not only keeps people bound in economically and racially segregated spaces, but that it shapes incivility in many integrated spaces, including a virtual space dedicated to people sharing their experiences with public transportation. I discuss the social consequences of segregation and built-in transportation inequalities.
Chapter 4 shows how public transportation shapes a hostile environment for Blacks on public transportation. I present data that shows that hostilities and inequalities are not limited to Black passengers, but are also experienced by Black transit personnel. Additionally, I show these patterns of hostility and injurious circumstances are not duplicated by other non-Black transit personnel or white passengers. I primarily discuss Black and White social interactions on these mobile public spaces.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to resistance. In this chapter I present a phenomenon that was present only in Black spaces on the South Side. I show how Black passengers transform public spaces into friendly mobile communities where passengers share stories, offer advice, openly discuss politics, race, and religion. In these communities passengers also openly discussed fears for their safety and for the well-being of their family. Although much of the literature on Chicago's poor and minority communities is inundated with analysis along a crime, violence and social disorganization continuum, these mobile spaces are liberatory and safe places where these types of bonding interactions can occur.

I conclude this dissertation in Chapter 6 with a summary of my findings and a discussion of future research. I also use this chapter to highlight how the unsettledness of mobile spaces shapes social interactions that reflect difference. In this chapter I assert that studying inequality through the intersectionality of mobility and space provides a micro-sociological examination of the consequences of institutionalized inequalities. I then suggest that there is a need to further
examine the effects of mobile spaces on face-to-face social interactions and that in doing so, we can better understand the persistence of obdurate inequalities in the urban landscape. Although this study has limits I include in this chapter how it can be expanded and how it can also be used in the fight for just transportation.
CHAPTER TWO

CHICAGO’S HISTORIES: HOW PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION REPRODUCES UNEQUAL SPACES

It is not possible to understand the present day social, economic or political landscape of Chicago without understanding its trajectory of development and growth — population and geographical — and its intersection with public transportation and inequality. This intersection highlights institutionalized difference and the persistence of race and class inequalities. Furthermore, it demonstrates how residential location influences mobility.

Early Chicago and the Growth of Public Transit

Contrary to popular belief or urban legend, Chicago has not always been a segregated place. In 1832, the small trading town of Chicago was a place where residents lived in close proximity to each other, mostly walked and occasionally rode in horse-drawn wagons to their destinations. Early Chicago was a place where people of various races, ethnicities and social standing lived close to each other. Early Chicago was mostly a trading post and a fort, with no schools or a church. It was a place that people came to trade and have a good time, often in the form of wanton abandonment, but eventually, as the country pushed west and the fur trade dried up, Chicago became more than a trading post and home of a raucous debauchery but instead began to develop into a settlement and marketplace
(“Chicago” 2003) (Figure 3). Its premium location near waterways—specifically, Lake Michigan and the Chicago River—and newly established canals and ever-expanding railroads made trade relatively easy, and Chicago grew quickly (Cutler 1973; Young 1998). With the finances of William B. Ogden and his vision of how to grow the railroads, Chicago eventually became not only a desired place for business, but it would develop as one of the most accessible cities as the country moved westward (Harpster 2009).

Although the railroad would come to be one of the arteries from which Chicago thrived, pedestrian travel in early Chicago was troublesome. Chicago’s streets were patterned on a grid, which is still present today, where there are “typically sixteen blocks to a mile in one direction and eight blocks in the other”
with a few diagonal streets, such as Archer Avenue that are the remnants of early Indian trails (Cutler 1973:26). Although this grid system had a certain sensibility to it, it did not eliminate the problems associated with Chicago’s geological landscape, which often made walking and traveling by horse and buggy difficult. Chicago’s flat, marshy and muddy landscape did not make it easy to get around. The mud and the ever-growing population required residents and business folks alike to make many adjustments to the landscape for better mobility. Plank sideways and horse-pulled streetcars made it easier for people to get around but they too proved insufficient and dangerous, because the horses spread diseases and also left paths of dung on city streets (Young 1998).

In 1837, Chicago was incorporated as a city. By the late 1830s and early 1840s the way business was conducted in Chicago created not only the demand for mass transit, but a middle class (Young 1998:12). This development is important because mass transportation would be demarcated by class for decades to come. Costs and demand quickly shaped access to public transportation. Omnibuses, which were 20-30 passenger (horse-drawn) vehicles, were the main public transit vehicles at the time. These vehicles were mostly used to transport passengers from railroad depots and hotels (Borzo 2007). The system was mostly used by the middle-class because the poor couldn’t afford it (rides were $.05) and the rich had their own personal transportation in the form of one-horse carriages (Borzo 2007; Young 1998). Poor people usually walked to where they went (Young 1998). This would continue when the middle and upper classes were able to move away from the crowded urban hub because they could afford the different mass transit systems.
that were growing in Chicago. The poor, in essence, were trapped in place because of the costs of transportation.

Between 1840 and 1850 Chicago grew from 417 people per square mile to 3070 people per square mile and this population density “was probably the most important single factor in developing a market for public urban transit” (Young 1998:13). Middle class residents moved away from State, Lake, Dearborn and Randolph streets, which were downtown, and out to the far boundaries of the city. As the city grew in population and area, it moved relatively quickly from the horse drawn omnibuses that carried people on bumpy rides through the city, to more use of railroads to transport people.

Railroads grew exponentially in Chicago. William Ogden, who had come to Chicago to invest in the Chicago Canal, decided instead to put his wealth into building railroads into Chicago. The short story is that he created private railroads, financing them through private wealth and by convincing farmers and private land owners to invest in the building of the railroad through their property, in return for get stock in his company (“Chicago” 2003; Harpster 2009). This private deal-making practice in the railroads growth and development would become the mass transit culture in Chicago and its Achilles heel, which I discuss later.

The smell and diseases of horses in the growing city proved problematic, and horses could only work a few hours a day (Borzo 2007). With the energy, drive, and wealth of William Ogden, along with Chicago’s position along the new canal, railroads grew for transporting goods and people (Harpster 2009). Railroads not only allowed people to move differently in the city, such as out further, but they
were quicker than horses. In fact, railroads, which carried horse cars in the mid-1800s, and cable cars in the late 1800s, were such a massive part of the landscape, that the city forced companies to elevate their tracks (Borzo 2007; Young 1998). These elevated ‘L’ trains and other railways shaped much of the growing Chicago’s landscape and institutions.

In the late 19th century and well into the 1940’s, public transportation in Chicago was controlled by private industry. Political influence and quests for financial gain shaped much of the system. However, political corruption and the influence of land speculators would eventually financially cripple the mass transit system and this would finally lead to a decision to put mass transit into the hands of the public in 1945 (Young 1998; Borzo 2007). During this time of private ownership, many transit companies built many stops in neighborhoods to mirror what the privately owned street cars had done, which was...and eventually some areas along the ‘L’ lines had stations that were as close as one-eighth a mile apart. These stations were the result of political strong arming and were in areas that were “ravaged by decay” or were in underdeveloped areas (Borzo 2007:104). At one point the central business district was so crowded by horse carriages, omnibuses, street cars, and railroads, that gridlock was a regular site in the city (Figures 4 & 5).
Public Transit, Class, Race, and Ethnicity

As Chicago grew, the capital winners and the losers developed with it. Capital access, and the subsequent gain, was shaped by residential opportunities and patterns which soon formed along class and ethno-racial lines. Chicago’s
population during the latter parts of the 19th century and the early parts of the 20th century was mostly White - many had come to do business from the East Coast. Blacks in Chicago lived in close proximity to American born Whites at the turn of the century, while the huge foreign born European immigrant population, which in 1890 were 79% of the population, were segregated (Nugent 2005). Residential options, accessibility to businesses, and residential patterns developed around class and ethno-racial boundaries, as “ethnicity organized the backstage neighborhoods of Chicago into minighettos” (Abu-Lughod 1999:121). Immigrant groups were concentrated in ‘their’ part of the neighborhood for a variety of reasons, including fear of each other and as part of efforts to assuage acclimation to a new country and city (Pacyga 2009).

As Chicago developed and grew and through the early part of the 20th century, racial minorities often lived close to each other and to Whites. Although Blacks were living close to Whites at the turn of the century and after the First World War, integrating their children in schools set off a flurry of racial conflict, violence, and hyper-segregation. Whites were tolerant of living near Blacks, but they would not have their children educated with them. Attempts at integrating of schools led to movements of ‘white flight’ and increased segregation in the city (Pacyga 2009; Wilson 2006). The invention and growth of the automobile, and the highways to carry them, made moving away from the city and into the growing suburbs possible for those who could afford cars and who enjoyed the right to live anywhere they could afford. Racially restrictive covenants, which would begin in earnest in the 1920s and continue for decades, ensured that Blacks would become
relegated and hyper-segregated into a few certain neighborhoods in the city (Pacyga 2009).

Mobility gave Whites more residential choices than Blacks and some newer ethnic groups like the Italians (Pacyga 2009). Transportation, to some extent, helped to reduce the amount of conflict as Chicagoans “poured across the prairie creating various neighborhoods based on social class, race, and ethnicity” and away from the central business district (Pacyga 2009:74). As Whites left neighborhoods that were near or integrated with Blacks, Blacks moved into the only areas where they were permitted to live. From 1920 to a decade later, many South Side neighborhoods, such as Jackson Park and Grand Boulevard, went from being less than 20% Black to being over 90% Black. Patterns of ethnic and racial hyper-segregation continued well into the Great Depression and beyond, but after World War II, more of the South Side neighborhoods became open to an ever growing Black population, but segregation continued (Abu-Lughod 1999; Pacyga 2009).

Patterns of residential segregation and White flight were helped in large part by public transportation. “The impact of public transportation on these outlying neighborhoods cannot be overestimated. Pre-Civil War Chicago was largely a pedestrian city that saw social classes, ethnic groups, and races living in close proximity to each other and mixing on city streets. The arrival of suburban commuter trains allowed the wealthy to begin creating suburbs just outside the city limits” (Pacyga 2009:74). Public transportation, which grew exponentially in Chicago because of its massive railroads, elevated train lines, and ground transportation, also formed around these same patterns; the advent and increase in
automobile usage sealed the deal. It is important to note that what would become Chicago's commuter rail line, the Metra, operates along tracks owned by railroad companies and are a part of Chicago's early railroad system. A review of the railroad network helps us to understand why our commuter rail system looks like a web, or a spoke, instead of a system that connects suburbs (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Historical map of Chicago's railroad network. (Picture captured from Cutler 1973: Credited to Chicago Tribune)

Automobiles, like commuter rails, afforded upper and middle class residents with mobility luxuries while working-class residents and Blacks continued to rely on public transportation in the city. Income levels shape the type of transportation people use and the ability to own a car; and in Chicago, these income levels, along with race and ethnicity, also shaped mobility (Sanchez, Stolz, and Ma 2003). In the early part of the 20th century, the increasing role of the automobile “helped to reinforce the division between city and suburbs and made mass transit (and its
fares) a contentious arena for both class and city-suburban conflict” (Abu-Lughod 1999:128). Highways were built through lower-income and minority neighborhoods, separating classes, and provided a means for wealthier suburban commuters to bring their cars into the city.

The increase in automobile usage further crippled mass transit in the city. Practices of pay-to-play politics and corruption that had ruled the railroads and public transportation systems engulfed this new mode of transportation as policies designed to allocate federal funding to highways for suburban travelers and away from city public transportation took form by the 1930s (Abu-Lughod 1999). Public transportation took major economic hits from the automobile, the Great Depression, and continued corruption that benefited the private owners and the wealthy.

After WW II, government projects such as expressways and housing were used to literally move people about the city (Pacyga 2009:300). The shifting of public transportation systems into the hands of a publicly owned/regulated CTA, aided these landscape shaping efforts. But in order to save Chicago’s public transit system, which had been hit hard by the Depression, outflight to the suburbs, and the automobile, the Illinois legislature put it under public ownership in 1945, and the CTA was created. The CTA moved to stabilize public transportation by closing one-quarter of the rapid-transit miles between 1947 and 1960, including lines that ran through Humboldt Park and Kenwood (Young 1998). Early on the CTA also purchased all modes of transit in the city in efforts to “integrate disparate services and eliminate wasteful competition” (Borzo 2007:107) (Figure 7).
Chicago’s early growth and development history and the history and development of public transportation help us to better understand Chicago’s long and distinctive history of closely related racial and class residential segregation. Practices of race and class inequalities have resulted in socioeconomic polarization throughout Chicago (Dear and Flusty 1998). The development and growth of Chicago reflects an uneven distribution of power and resources which produce and reflect differences across “race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and other social groupings” (Connolly and Steil 2009:5). The areas experiencing economic struggles
in Chicago have long been overwhelmingly and predominately African American and Latino communities. The practice of constructing public housing projects in African American areas contributed to segregation and material difference (Pattillo 2007; Perez 2004; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005; Wilson 1996). Informal segregation is as much a part of Chicago's history as the river and State Street (Reiff 2008). Poor Blacks and Latinos in the Chicago metropolitan area often live in communities with poor public services and low levels of public and educational resources. The malignancy of these legacies of inequality are produced and reproduced through institutions and at the macro-level of politics, economics, education and cultural institutions, and experienced in very micro-level ways in daily face-to-face interactions. Urban sociologists and race, class, and gender scholars have demonstrated these causes and consequences through countless studies that examine the reproduction of inequality in urban settings at various points in history. These studies highlight the role of politics, policies, and institutions in the production and reproduction of inequalities and how inequalities persist over time and space (Anderson 2004; Bonilla-Silva 2006; Charles 2006; Davis 1990; Duncan and Duncan 2004; Feagin 2006; Foucault [1982] 1994; Massey and Denton 1993; Pattillo 2007; Scott and Soja 1998; Squires, Bennett, McCourt and Nyden 1987; Squires and O'Connor 2001; Timberlake and Iceland 2007; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005; Wilson 2009, 1996). This scholarship shows how the reproduction of stratification emerges through the process of city growth and development. As cities "develop" and grow, this body of research shows, neighborhoods are bulldozed, and practices are initiated and carried out with
promises of keeping the stratified system in place. One of the most important contributions of these studies for the study of public transportation systems and inequality is that they have shown how intentional and unintentional physical arrangements and social conventions limit and enable particular kinds of stratification processes and interactions. However, they have had relatively little to say about how stratification processes are reproduced and maintained through mobile spaces and places and the fixed structures that enable them to operate.

The sections that follow examine how Chicago’s history of race and class inequality has been produced and reproduced through non-static spaces. I begin with a brief overview of the material organization of contemporary Chicago and race and class inequalities. I then focus on Chicago’s downtown areas and downtown parks. I highlight the race, class and material differences in these spaces and how the spaces are experienced and accessed through public transportation. I examine the contemporary downtown as a social landscape to show how materiality is embodied in the city’s urban core. I then show how the intersection of transit, housing and education inequalities perpetuates inequalities and access to valuable areas and elements of the city, such as the Metra transportation centers, which provide public transportation to the area’s job rich suburbs such as Naperville and Schaumburg. In short, I show that the material organization of transit systems intersects with housing segregation and socioeconomic inequality to reproduce the materiality of difference and inequality.
A Brief Overview of the Material Organization of Chicago and Class and Race

Inequalities

The materiality of racial difference and inequality in Chicago is not novel but one with a long history. Chicago is, and has long been, a raced space. Historians, politicians, architects and sociologists have long documented and studied the racialization of Chicago. As Squires et al. (1987) write, housing has played an especially important role in the segregation of the city: “The spatial structure of the Chicago metropolitan region is not a spontaneous expression of natural forces...residence is not just coincidentally related to race, ethnicity, and class distribution...spatial structure is the result of decisions made by key institutional actors about where various kinds of housing will be constructed” (Squires, et al., 1987).

It is challenging to understand Chicago without a brief understanding of how it is spatially organized. As I show in Chapter 5, understanding the spatial organization provides a snapshot for seeing patterns of persistent segregation and inequalities in the city. And as important, much of the scholarship on Chicago, including this study, refers to areas of Chicago by the community area or neighborhood or by its basic geography, such as “North Side,” “South Side,” “Southwest Side” and “West Side.”

Chicago is organized into 77 Community Areas - which house hundreds of neighborhoods- that have historical, political, socioeconomic, racial, and developmental import (Figure 8). Most of these neighborhoods were actual townships (and suburbs) until annexed by a growing Chicago after an 1872 law
made annexation fiscally feasible (Young 1998). Most neighborhoods within the south, west, and southwest sides of the city are predominately minority—specifically, African American and Latino—while community areas on the north, and northwest sides of the city, are more likely to be majority White or majority minority (US Census 2010).

These community areas are as distinguishable by race and class as they are by services and social experiences (Sampson 2012; Shah, Witman, and Silva 2006); indeed, they are closely related. Quality schools and hospitals, jobs, public transportation, and investments are more likely to be found in predominately White and integrated areas of the city (Abu-Lughod 2007; Wilson 2006). For example, of the top 20 performing high schools in the Illinois, seven are in Chicago and of those seven, all but Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory and Whitney Young Magnet are located in North Side and predominately White communities such as the Gold Coast, the Loop, Lincoln Park, and Lakeview. The top performing elementary school, Skinner North, is located in the North Side’s Old Town neighborhood (US News and World Report 2014).
Trajectories of growth and change also follow along segregated ethno-racial and class lines. As Chicago’s metropolis grew, the poor suffered underneath the growth machines’ treacherous spikes, but people of color, especially those who were poor, suffered even more: even as suburbs were open to them, they were regulated to certain areas that were not booming or were structured along low-wage industries (Massey and Denton 1993; Squires and O’Connor 2001; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005). The effects of these housing decisions have been complimented by the criminalization of many West Side and South Side communities—such as Austin and North Lawndale on the West Side, and Englewood...
and Greater Grand Crossing on the South Side -along racial and class lines, economic redevelopment, and public transportation (Pattillo 2007; Sampson 2012; Venkatesh 2000; Wilson 1996). Chicago, as a space, has also been racialized through highways, residence, transit, and physical boundaries (Farmer 2011; Kornblum 1974; Sampson 2012; Squires et. al 1987; Suttles 1968) with Blacks and Latinos hyper-concentrated in south, southwest, and West Sides of the city and in pockets on the North Side like Belmont-Cragin and Hermosa.

The durability of these inequalities can be witnessed in today’s communities, and on public transportation systems. As I show throughout this study, the areas with an extreme concentration of ethno-racial minorities, such as Grand Boulevard, Washington Park and Auburn-Gresham on the South Side, also have an over concentration of dilapidated buses, shorter and small buses, unhealthy waiting areas near the CTA rail system, and they have unequal access to better transportation services such as express buses. Passengers who travel from and into these areas often have longer and more uncomfortable rides (due to old and smaller buses) to jobs and city offices that are in the urban core. Additionally, access to public transportation routes to O’Hare and Midway airports and suburban financial hubs is also often characterized by long rides and several route transfers for this same demographic. Examining how inequalities are reproduced through downtown spaces helps us to better understand the durability of classed and raced inequalities in the neighborhoods and how these inequalities are reproduced and maintained through public transportation.
Aggregate Inequalities: Material Differences in Downtown Chicago

While most of the research on segregation has focused on static places, specifically residential neighborhoods, we can see similar patterns of inequality in the downtown business hubs. In Chicago, segregated spaces are not restricted to traditional residential neighborhoods. Chicago’s major downtown areas – the central business district (Loop) and the Magnificent Mile (Mag Mile) – are also raced and classed. Although there are pockets of residences within this part of the landscape, it is primarily a business and leisure core. The Chicago River physically separates these two areas and the sustained patterns of social distance and difference. North of the river, the Gold Coast and Streeterville neighborhoods (Near North C.A.) and Michigan Avenue (Mag Mile) are home of some of the highest-end shops, like Barneys, Bloomingdale’s, Neiman Marcus, and Burberry. South of the river, in the Loop, shopping and eating are more economical; stores such as Target, TJ Maxx and Burlington Coat Factory, and restaurants and eateries like Pittsfield Café and Under 55 Café, are not hard to find.

The city of Chicago, as well as its history of inequality, originated in the area of downtown that we now refer to as the “Loop.” The Loop is host to City Hall, but it is also host to the main offices of the CTA and Metra. As I showed earlier, in the early history of Chicago, railroads, the elevated ‘L’ train, and the development and growth of CTA were all centered downtown. Today the Loop continues to serve as a transportation center for trains (Metra, CTA, and Amtrak). Many of the respondents in this study also noted the Loop’s significance to them as a place where they go to school, such as at Westwood College’s Loop location, and where they come to access
city offices and county services, as one Black Female Passenger (BFP) informed me as we boarded the bus.

Prior to the TIF (tax-increment financing) plans that began in earnest in the late 1990's; the Loop was a dark place, literally. In 1998, then mayor, Richard M. Daley proposed a plan to light up the Loop by illuminating the buildings and streets. This was part of greater plans to redevelop the Loop with new hotels, lofts and other residential places, and new businesses and theatres (Washburn 1998). As a longtime Chicago resident, I want to reflect on how the Loop looked in the early to mid-1990s: standing at State and Lake and looking southward on State street, I see an OTB next to the Chicago Theatre, the soul food restaurant Soul by the Pound next to WLS 7 studios, a Walgreens at the corner of State and Randolph across from Marshall Field’s Department Store, and Block 37, which was vacant land used as an ice rink during the winter. The people on the main drag, State Street, ranged from office and other workers to homeless people who utilized the shelter, the Pacific Gardens Mission and a few of the SROs. The ethno-racial landscape was diverse, but with a noticeable presence of African Americans and Latinos.

Car traffic on State Street was prohibited, so only buses, taxis, and bikes filled the thoroughfare. The Reliance Building was being restored. Most of the stores in the area were affordable, with Carson Pirie Scott and Marshall Field’s being the pricier shopping venues. Foot traffic on State Street was abundant during business hours, but most stores closed at or before 7pm. I recall asking one merchant why everything in the Loop closed so early compared to the area surrounding the Magnificent Mile (Michigan Avenue, Gold Coast, and Streeterville areas); he
responded that it was because the streets were too dark in the Loop and it was hard to police. I found this peculiar, but ten years later the Loop was lit up with lights, there were new sidewalks, cars were allowed to drive down State Street, and there were new hotels and developments and a large University Center that would house students from at least three area colleges and universities. In the surrounding Loop areas and on State Street, there was a cornucopia of people from all walks of life well represented. It was a space where buses and trains from various neighborhoods stopped, often letting off weary passengers who had travelled an hour-plus to reach the area, such as those from the far south Roseland community. Passengers could be seen hurrying from the Randolph Metra station (now Millennium Station) where they had traveled in from the far south suburbs and some of the areas on the South Side of Chicago. It was the place where I could get breakfast for less than $5 from Ronny's, which was right off the corner of State and Randolph, or where I could walk into a clothing store and buy a top for $6.00 and once purchased three coats for less than $100.

Now, on any given day, the State Street & Loop areas are still filled with a diverse pool of tourists, shoppers, workers, passersby and a convergence of minorities and poor people. The homeless aren't as visible, but they can often be found outside of transit stations, Target, and the Chicago Cultural Center. As you walk back and forth on Randolph, Wabash, State, Adams, Madison, Clark, LaSalle, Dearborn, Lake, Monroe, and Jackson Streets and the southern end of Michigan Avenue you are likely to encounter more Streetwise™ vendors (Chicago's street paper), more homeless and transient populations, and more Blacks and Latinos
shopping, working, walking, and going to school (college) and catching public transportation than in the areas north of the river (Figures 9 & 10). More buses travelling to and from predominately minority areas of the city originate/end in this area south of the Chicago River than north of the river.

Figure 9. The Loop on or near State Street 2014
The historical racing and classing of Chicago is prominent downtown in the areas north of the Chicago River. This area is officially called the Near North, but it is known for the Mag Mile (Magnificent Mile) and is also home to the Gold Coast and Streeterville neighborhoods. Unlike the Loop, exclusive and luxurious hotels and residences such as the Peninsula, the famous Drake Hotel, Trump Towers and Lake Point Towers, are in abundance in this area. Michael Jordan’s Steakhouse, the Signature Room, and the exclusive shops of 900 North Michigan and North Bridge are also found north of the river. Couture boutiques, fine dining, and high-end retail shops line the Mag Mile and the Gold Coast. On the far north end of the Mag Mile, there is also the Water Tower, which is one of the only structures to survive the Great Chicago Fire. Across from it is Walgreens Drug Store (Figure 11).
This area is also different from the Loop because it does not have any major transportation centers or major city or Federal offices. Additionally, this area is home to Navy Pier, one of the state’s busiest attractions. Walks and rides along the
Magnificent Mile also revealed a more visible presence of police officers. In the Loop, police are not standing on every corner during rush periods or doing off peak hours. However, on the Magnificent Mile and on some of the side streets like Chicago Avenue, there is a noticeable police presence.

Unlike the Loop area where ethno-racial diversity was observed at street corners as pedestrians waited for changing lights, and at bus stops, the area north of the Loop is visibly less diverse. Pedestrians were predominately White or Asian. The quality of clothing, the presence of large numbers of shopping bags from high-end retailers, and the abundance of cabs stopping in the area, also showed economic differences between those in this space and those in the Loop, where the African American and Latino populations were much denser.

Walking along the Mag Mile, down Delaware, Ohio, Ontario, Grand Avenue and various other streets in the Near North area revealed a homogenous pedestrian demographic compared to walks throughout the Loop. Shopping bags from stores like Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Tiffany’s, stops for photos and cameras with large zoom lenses, and the legions of people spilling in and out of the hotels also show that this space is a more of a leisure space than the Loop, even though several leisure activities are in the Loop as well. An observable difference was that on the Near North, leisure seemed to come with a much higher price tag compared to many of the shops and eateries in the Loop, including being hard-pressed to be able to buy a Chicago-Style hot dog, which was easily found in the Loop.

On the eastern edge of the Loop, along Michigan Avenue, are two of the city’s most famous and visited parks, Grant Park and Millennium Park. Millennium Park is
a beautiful park, but it does not welcome all public people, as the park is partially privately owned and operated. Additionally, certain ‘publics’ are surveilled and responded to by authority figures more often in this park than the one to its south, Grant Park. Millennium is crisp, clean, and filled with class markers, while Grant Park is often dirtied by the numerous and expansive festivals and running events that it hosts all year long. The design and function of Grant Park shapes an experience of place for the City of Big Shoulders.

These parks bear many of the same material differences as the Loop and the Mag Mile areas as classed spaces. Difference is embodied in the design, surveillance, events, costs, and structures of the parks. Millennium Park draws millions of passersby, tourists, festival attendees, wedding parties, private party-goers, Loop employees and business owners and every day folk. It has the famous Cloud Gate (more often referred to as the Bean) and reflection fountain (Crown Fountain), while in the winter you can don ice skates and take a whirl around the rink adjacent to the Park Café. The park also has the Harris Theatre, pavilions, promenades, and other markers of distinction such as a bridgeway, the Boeing Gallery and the Lurie Garden (Figures 13 & 14).
Figure 13. Cloud Gate and the stage top at Pritzker Pavilion

Figure 14. Aerial view of Millennium Park (Photo: Chicago Public Library)
Grant Park (Figure 15) is home of the historical Buckingham Fountain and where President Barak Obama delivered his 2008 Presidential Election acceptance speech. Grant Park is also home to the city’s museum campus and the Art Institute, the Field Museum of Natural History, and the Shedd Aquarium and the Adler Planetarium (Chicago Park District). Chicago’s largest and free festivals such as The Taste of Chicago, Chicago Blues Festival, and Chicago Jazz Festival are held in Grant Park. Until recently, it was also the site of the Gospel Festival, which was moved, along with its predominately Black audience, to Bronzeville. These festivals and other celebratory events, such as the Independence Day fireworks, bring all sorts of people into the Loop area, sprinkling the landscape with a diversity of cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and classes.

![Figure 15. Grant Park (Photo: Chicago Park District)](image)

The physical space of Grant Park is wide open. The landscape has monuments, but is not interrupted by the stone ‘private donor’ edifices that one encounters in various places in Millennium Park. Most of Chicago’s running and
walking events originate and end in Grant Park. And although many of these events have predominately White participants, on-lookers and community organizations (with booths at the event) often diversify the space. Walks through Grant Park also reveal more diverse gatherings, similar to that witnessed in the Loop. In Grant Park, you may often find more public characters—panhandlers, homeless persons, neighborhood kids and families, street musicians—than you will find in or around Millennium Park (Figure 16).

![Grant Park: Buckingham fountain and park sculpture](image)

**Figure 16.** Grant Park: Buckingham fountain and park sculpture

Grant Park does not engage visitors in the same respect as Millennium Park. Entrance into this Chicago gem is not interrupted by stairs, a café, permanent artwork commissioned by international sculptors or other class demarcations.
Although one can find various artistic displays in Grant Park, such as the Agora, they do not sit above street level looking down on the people, as is evidenced from various points of view in and outside of Millennium Park. You can actually accidentally end up in Grant Park while walking in the Loop, because its entrance areas are obstructed. Its wide open and unobstructed places also make it welcoming. This makes Grant Park as a place and a space for all. One can enter Grant park without the ‘imaged’ entrances that shape Millennium Park, where after walking up the path shrouded with trees and stopping and viewing the Wrigley monument that sits in the space to the left of the imagine entrance, visitors are directed upward by the stairs or ramp nearby if they want to continue walking through the park. Upon climbing the stairs near the Randolph and Michigan Avenue entrance, a park visitor is directed by the placement of stairs to turn to the right to view Cloud Gate. The experience of place in Grant Park often, but not always, serves as a refuge from the experiences of the segregated metropolis. It allows for more directionless attention and freedom to create singular experiences. Like the Loop, pedestrian traffic in Grant Park reflects more of ethno-racial and class diversity in Chicago, where Millennium Park’s traffic is less diverse and is the site of more upscale edifices, similar to the Mag Mile/Near North area.

Grant and Millennium Parks, the Loop, and the Mag Mile/Near North, highlight distinctions of the city landscape. These spaces show that the urban core is not immune to the effects of legacies of racism or class inequalities that are representative of Chicago’s history. In the next section, I highlight how public transportation shapes some of downtown’s observable pedestrian distinctions. I
examine how public transportation shapes access to the urban core and how inequalities in the system shape unequal access to this same space. These access distinctions are both raced and classed.

*Unequal Access to the City’s Urban Core via Public Transport*

The Loop is home to City Hall, the city’s central business district (where the Board of Trade, the Mercantile Exchange, and the Financial District are also located), Federal buildings, the State of Illinois Building, county (Cook) offices and services, Metra (the commuter rail) train stations, transfer stations between the CTA ‘L’ trains, and interstate public transportation hubs (Amtrak and Greyhound). The Loop is a place where people travel to work, shop, play, go to the park, eat, and attend a play or comedy show. Although Chicago is a sprawling city with isolated residential neighborhoods, the Loop has cultural value for the city, as evidenced by its jobs, shopping, cultural attractions, and leisure, and it is a place where people can take advantage of urban amenities such as mass amounts of outdoor cafes, the theater district, a diversity of people, and public transportation.

The Loop is accessible by various modes of private and public transportation. Seven of the CTA’s eight ‘L’ train routes have stops in the Loop. All of the Metra trains and the Northwest Indiana Corridor (NICTD) trains have stations and stops in the Loop. Express and regular buses, chartered buses, Amtrak, Greyhound, trolleys, and one suburban PACE bus, come into the Chicago Loop area.

Although the Loop is a hub for government and transportation offices, and is accessible by various modes of transportation, residents from many of the south, southwest, and West Sides of the city struggle to access these places in a timely
fashion because of public transportation limits in their communities. There are several buses and train routes that transport passengers from the south, southwest, and West Sides of the city into the Loop. These routes include the #60 Blue Island bus (Southwest Side), #20 Madison and #12 Roosevelt (West Side buses), and the #3 King Drive, the Jeffery Jump J14 (South Side buses), the Jackson Park bus, the #1 Bronzeville/Union Station, #2 Hyde Park Express, #4 Cottage Grove, and #26 South Shore Express (South Side buses), the Red Line, the Green Line (South and West Sides), the Pink Line (West Side), the Orange Line (Southwest Side), and the Blue Line (West Side). Most of the South and Southwest Side bus routes are not express bus routes. The express buses, (#2 Hyde Park Express and #26 South Shore Express) only operate during peak hours and on weekdays. Lack of or limited express transit services means that those who use buses on the South, Southwest, and West sides of the city, often experience long bus travel times to and from the Loop. For example, to travel from 115th Street & Indiana (which is in the Roseland community, a predominately Black neighborhood) to City Hall, it would normally take a passenger at least 64 minutes, assuming no delays. This passenger has to use a CTA or Pace bus to get to the Red Line train and travel into downtown before walking several blocks to the location (RTA trip planner). An alternative would be to take the more expensive Metra train and then to take a bus once downtown or walk several blocks to the destination.

Chicago has extremely cold winters and extreme heat and humidity in the summer; this also shapes this passenger’s trip into the Loop, for it not only means that they are more likely to be exposed to elements, but that the elements can
sometimes slow down transport, particularly during the winter. There are no express bus alternatives for this passenger and taxicab service in the Roseland community is meager at best. However, if this same passenger wanted to travel from Howard and Western, which is at the far north and western edge of the city, it would take 56 minutes, and part of this trip would be on the Purple Line Express train (RTA trip planner). This is significant because 115th Street is four miles from the southern edge of the city border. One Black male passenger (BMP), who used to travel from Roseland to the Loop for his job, noted that he spent $121 dollars for a monthly Metra pass because taking CTA to his job was too long of a trip, although it was a more convenient and at the time nearly $40 cheaper route to access from where he lived. As the sole source of income for his family, this $40 extra expense was troublesome (December 2012). A passenger who lives near Howard Street in Rogers Park can access City Hall via two train routes (Red or Purple Line) or three different bus routes (Outer Drive Express (#147) or the Clark Street (#22) bus).

There are financial and time consequences when passengers have unequal access to the urban core via public transportation and this is experienced more by minorities who live in the predominately ethno-racial and lower income areas on the city’s South, Southwest, and West Sides with fewer transportation options.

These temporal and physical inequalities were also described to me by a Black female passenger (BFP) who told me that she has to group her downtown errands together because travelling into the Loop from the South Side takes a long time. She also noted that her trips are further inconvenienced by delays and construction projects. The CTA is her primary source of transportation seven days a
week. The long commutes also make it difficult for her to partake in evening events in the downtown area (January 2014). This respondent’s experiences typifies the long trips that many South, Southwest and West Side passengers have to take in order to access many city and government offices, as well as Metra trains and other CTA trains that will take them into the suburbs. It is not only the long rides, which can affect riders from the South Side, but the number of transfers and costs that keep these residents place-bound and restrict their access to the city’s cultural and financial core. This is compounded on the weekend, when residents seek to access recreational sites and shopping, because buses and trains do not run as often on Saturdays and Sundays. As a result, Chicago residents from the South and Southwest Sides of the city are at a distinct disadvantage in their ability to easily access the city’s densest collection of shopping, arts, the lakefront, work, and transport and the “feel” of being in a diverse city.

Transportation in the Loop highlights how the city is accessed by those who travel from the most segregated parts of the city. As we reflect on how minorities and poor people in early Chicago were bound near the central business district due to the cost and access of public transportation, in contemporary Chicago, we see some of these same patterns where buses and trains that travel from predominately minority and poor communities do not travel beyond the Loop, restricting access to the certain downtown areas for those from these economically and racially isolated communities. This shapes a particular social landscape during evening hours and weekends in particular.
Transportation options to the Mag Mile/Near North also highlight unequal access to downtown. Examination of buses that travel into downtown show that the material differences between the Loop and the Magnificent Mile/Near North are not only evident in shopping, residences, hotels, and tourist attractions but the areas are visibly distinguishable by transportation. On most days, and throughout the year, the street traffic is filled with cabs, airport shuttles, private vehicles, trolleys, rickshaws, and double-decker tour buses. Most of the of the CTA buses traveling into the Mag Mile/Near North area originate on the North Side of the city, but unlike many of the buses that travel to the Loop from the predominately minority and poorer areas of the South, West, and Southwest Sides of the city, the buses traveling from the North Side go to the Mag Mile/Near North and into the Loop. As noted in Chapter 1, the buses in this study were chosen because they travel from the North or South Sides and into the downtown area. However, all of the North Side buses in this study travel to the Loop and Mag Mile/Near North area. The King Drive bus travels from the South Side into the Near North, but it is a trip that usually takes over an hour. The Jackson Park Express ends just before the Chicago River.

Although many travelers transfer routes when they reach these downtown areas, the poor and minority passengers from the South, West, and Southwest Sides often do so after a few previous route transfers, or after long and crowded bus rides, compared to those traveling from many of the predominately White and wealthier North Side communities. These South, Southwest and West Side predominately African American and Latino communities are moderately supplied with buses for
transportation within their communities, but not with quick or direct routes to the Mag mile, and only a few express or quick routes to the Loop.

This shapes how the downtown areas are accessed, who has access, and where and when access occurs. Although the Loop is accessible by various means of public transportation, access to direct, express, quick, and shorter distanced or limited stops routes is raced and classed, with White and wealthier riders enjoying more convenient, shorter, and more comfortable rides into the downtown areas, including the Loop, than Chicago’s poorer, African American, and Latino passengers. This holds true for those working in the area or just visiting for dining, shopping, or cultural activities. Accessing the Loop by taxi cab is also raced and classed. Most company’s routes are in the north or in the immediate near south Loop or West Loop areas, at the area airports, and Chinatown, leaving most South and West Side residents, who are overwhelmingly people of color, waiting for crowded public buses and trains, or seeking out smaller ‘livery services’ such as the one described on the poster below (Figure 17).
Conversations between passengers at bus stops reveal that public transit passengers whose journeys originate in some of Chicago’s poorest and predominately African American neighborhoods - such as Englewood, Roseland, and Austin, North Lawndale, and Armour Square, which are located on the South and West Sides of the city - are aware of some of the disparity in public transit options and difficulty in accessing the metropolis’ best resources due to distance and long trips that are shaped by the lack of express buses and trains in their communities.

Access is further complicated after both the morning and evening rush periods as midday travel and limited ‘Owl’ service, coupled with often erratic bus
schedules, and availability of taxi cabs, keeps many of the regions poorer and minority communities further bound in their respective segregated space. For those with access to private cars, parking prices in downtown Chicago serve as yet another discouraging barrier to accessing the city when coupled with low income. Midday travelers on the South Side often complained about waiting thirty minutes for a bus, and when it arrived, it was crowded and cramped, because along the King Drive route, the bus was always a smaller bus, compared to the larger and articulated buses that were common on the North Side routes.

Millennium Park and Grant Park are both in the Loop and are accessible by multiple public transportation routes. However, experiences of these parks while riding on public transportation highlights their distinctions. When riding public transportation past these parks, one also gets a sense of the openness as the beauty of Grant Park because it is quite visible, but most of the Millennium Park's spaces are hidden from view. This is reminiscent of Chicago's segregated landscape where some of it is accessible and other parts, such as South Deering and East Side, are least accessible.

The ‘right to the city’ is communicated through public transit planning, design, and routes. As Robert Bullard (2004) argues “transportation remains a major stumbling block for many to achieve self-sufficiency” and to enjoy the many attractions and lucrative opportunities readily made available to those not living in the isolating pockets of the segregated metropolis (Bullard 19). Public transportation exposes segregation and restricted social spaces, as with the parks, but it also perpetuates segregation in the downtown area through bus routes and
scheduling. This is a compelling pattern of social difference that suggests that Chicago’s racial social histories go beyond neighborhood effects. The next sections further detail the vital role that public transportation plays in reproducing segregation and class inequalities.

We know that the downtown areas of the city are ethno-racial and class segregated and materially differentiated. As I show next, these same patterns appear in heavily residential areas of the city, too. They illuminate the obduracy of racial residential segregation and economic and social isolation in Chicago. In the sections that follow, I examine the institutional forces that produce and reproduce residential and economic segregation in Chicago’s neighborhoods and how public transportation is structured in ways that maintain racial segregation, social and economic isolation, and inequalities of the neighborhoods. I emphasize that public transportation does not sit as an inactive agent in the persistence material difference, yet it is only sparsely considered, if at all, in studies on persistent neighborhood segregation, isolation, and inequalities (Charles 2006; Marcuse 1997; Massey and Denton 1993: Wilson 2006; Sampson 2012). As I show, public transportation systems serve as vital and powerful forces to isolate and segregate. Additionally, mobility matters because public transportation shapes expectations of place and social distancing, allowing and encouraging disengagement and isolation.

Indelible Housing and Educational Inequalities and Segregation

In Chicago, over the past four to five decades, large public housing complexes, discriminatory housing practices, and physical barriers served to produce and reproduce a racially and economically segregated landscape and a
coinciding landscape of material differences and inequality. The politics of public housing in Chicago has historically failed to consider the humanity that should be afforded the residents, while purposefully harming children, thereby ensuring a cycle of poverty for an entire class of people who make up 32% percent of the city’s population (Kotlowitz 1992; Venkatesh 2000; US Census 2010). The placement of tens of thousands of people within a two-mile by two-mile radius that was also situated on the edge of the worse slums in Chicago, as was the case with the Robert Taylor homes, created large barriers that confined residents but these buildings also served as buffers between poor Blacks and the wealth of downtown and the middle class communities near the University of Chicago. The Robert Taylor homes (as well as other projects like Henry Horner Homes, Stateway Gardens, and Cabrini-Green) were built like old-style zoos, with the buildings serving as their caged habitat. The big concrete structures packed in thousands of people, with each building surrounded by emptiness and more buildings, and with trees, plants, and small parks only intermittently spread throughout the two-mile confinement. These massive structures served as metaphorical offensive walls for Chicago residents and travelers who didn’t want to be reminded that Chicago was grossly unequal, hyper-segregated, and that people actually lived in the concrete walls of public housing projects.

Although Chicago’s massive high-rise public housing complexes are now gone, and demolition included displacing and dislocating tens of thousands of poor Blacks into communities and suburbs that were already hyper-racialized, hyper-ghettoized, and hyper-segregated (Goetz 2011), many residents from these projects
now live in Chicago communities where public transportation is inadequate. These former poor and Black housing project residents were dispersed to other low-income and poor areas in the city (Sampson 2012) where there is unequal access to quality city services, high unemployment and high percentages of poverty.

One of the consequences of residential segregation is school segregation, and because of this, Chicago’s residential segregation is closely linked to raced and classed educational opportunities. The trajectory of changes in the public schools (Chicago Public Schools is the district name) are similar to those occurring within the city. Poverty is concentrated in schools that are in predominately low-income and majority-minority communities, with the exception of a few magnet and/or college preparatory schools located near the West Side and on the South Side of the city (e.g. Whitney Young Magnet and King College Preparatory high schools). The schools are as hyper-segregated as the communities where they are located. For example, in spring 2013, the Chicago Board of Education voted to close 54 of what they term “underutilized” schools (the list was eventually reduced to 50). These schools were said to have lower or dwindling enrollments and that resources could be better distributed by closing some schools and combining them with others (Chicago Public Schools). This measure was approved by the mayor, Rahm Emanuel. Since the majority of Chicago’s public schools are predominately Black and Latino this means that these closings disproportionately affected minority children and their families. Additionally, the closed schools were in predominately minority neighborhoods, particularly African American communities. As when the city demolished the large public housing complexes and the problem of poverty was
not solved but dispersed (Sampson 2012), the same happened with these school closings.

Most scholarly work on persistent residential segregation and inequalities in Chicago has focused on these types of inequalities that are embedded in housing patterns and education, while only meagerly considering how raced and classed differences are built into the metropolitan region’s public transportation systems help to maintain the materiality of raced and classed difference and segregation. We can better understand Chicago’s history and trajectories of persistent segregation and inequalities through public transportation, including those embedded in patterns of housing and educational inequalities and segregation.

**Housing and Schools: How Material Difference is Reproduced Through Public Transportation at the Level of Neighborhoods**

Public transportation is an option for those in the poorest areas of the city, but if they want to move beyond the ghetto it means long rides out of the south or West Sides - the areas of the city where Blacks have been historically segregated. On the CTA system, passengers are afforded only two transfers within a two hour window unless they can pay another full fare. At one point between 1974 and the early 1990s (Chicago-l.org), on Sundays, the CTA had a Sunday SuperTransfer, because trains and buses ran infrequently and on a Sunday/Holiday schedule, but this did not increase mobility for socially and economically isolated populations because, as one BFP passenger noted, travel was not only long, but often physically exhausting, dangerous, and uncomfortable (December 2013).
Public transportation also disproportionally disadvantages those wrestling with the consequences of educational inequalities. It helps to keep minorities hyper-segregated in schools that often end up on the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) ‘failing’ lists or are targeted by politicians for closure (Layton 2013; The History of School Closings 2013). When children attend schools out of their neighborhood, by choice or by force, transportation becomes an issue but not just for the student, but also for the parents. Although CPS (Chicago Public Schools) provides transportation for students who are attending schools outside of their neighborhood because of administrative choices, it does not provide transportation for parents who now have to travel further for parent-teacher conferences, to pick up sick children, and to attend school events. Parental involvement is important to school success, but if the parent struggles to get to the school, how involved can they be as involved as need be? When a student who is now attending school outside of their neighborhood has a crisis, parents’ access to their student may be impeded when public transportation is insufficient. It may not only be harder for the parent to reach the school from home, but they may also struggle to reach the school from work and to take a sick child from school to a clinic or the hospital when private transportation is not an option, and public transportation is now a longer ride with more transfers or further walks from the nearest station. Regardless, when schools close and parents have to decide where to send their child next since “transportation costs and safety are key issues. Parents are looking to send their kids even to a low-performance school if it’s accessible for them” (Tussing 2009:np).
In Chicago, segregation and inequality in public transportation systems compound the effects of inequality in education, as the poorest performing and resourced schools are also in majority minority and low income areas. Transportation from the economically isolated areas of the city to the best and/or more diverse magnet and college preparatory schools can also be dangerous and/or make for a very long day. As one former Chicago resident made clear,

I lived near the Kenwood area on the South Side, but attended Whitney Young Magnet High School. I remember taking two buses and a train to get to school every day. It was just part of my day. I never thought about how much time I had to spend to get to school compared to people on the North Side until now. (LFP)

During our conversation, she reflected on how early she had to get up to get to school because she was an athlete, and how much of her day was spent on public transportation because she did not have a car for a long part of her high school career. She also noted that her commute was a lot longer than that of other students, but thought that long commutes from the South Side to the near West Side of the city was normal. At the time of her attendance, Whitney Young was the premier magnet school in the city, so many of its students commuted long distances but not necessarily with as many transfers as she experienced.

A parent reflecting on some recent troubles that her son had experienced shared that she had considered taking her son out of his high school because “I was concerned about his safety” (2013). Her son was repeatedly harassed by gangs on his way to school. He had to travel using several modes of public transportation, ending with the Green Line. The availability of an express bus from downtown to his
school would have provided the student with safer and quicker transport to and from school. The family did not have a car to take him to the South Side college preparatory charter school that he was attending. Reliance on public transportation also encumbered their ability to participate in many of his activities, because it that would mean also taking their other children on the long rides.

CPS students have a long history of using public transportation to get to school (Figure 18). “The CTA estimates they provide 150,000 rides to students using reduced fare cards, two-thirds of whom go to public school” (Dries 2011). Although these rides are reduced fare--students pay $1--but many students struggle with paying this and as a result, miss a lot of school (Dries 2011). Chronic absences can affect academic success which can of course effect future education and income potentials.

Figure 18. Bronzeville Military Academy student waiting for King Drive bus
My research often put me in the direct path of massive numbers of public transit-riding CPS students. This was most notable on the King Drive Bus, the Jackson Park bus, the south end of the Red Line train, and at some of the Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Uptown neighborhood stops along the north end of the Red Line. What was notable, besides the saturation at certain stops, was that the majority of the traveling grade, middle and high school students on these routes were predominately Black and Latino. Many traveling on the South Side attended charter schools or the Bronzeville Military academy, as indicated by uniforms or identification badges. On the North Side, the students were usually only traveling a few stops to Swift School, Senn Metropolitan Academy or to Sullivan High School.

Public transportation costs and accessibility matter because if the students cannot get to school because they lose their CTA pass, for instance, their achievements can also be impeded. Additionally, when private transportation or activity school buses are not an option, participation in programs that can not only shape school success but applications to colleges and universities, is also limited. This can reproduce inequalities. Many students do not participate in after school activities, such as tutoring or athletics, because safe passage home is an issue or because the cost of getting to and fro to school often means sporadic attendance (Dries 2012). The mother whose son was commuting to the college prep charter high school did not permit her child to get involved in after school activities because there was not a safe passage home at the conclusion of these often academically supportive activities. He would have to board the Green Line and travel through territories that were made more unsafe after dark.
Residential segregation shapes school options and demographics and future earning potentials. Minority and poor students are bounded in hyper-segregation areas of the city that also have high poverty rates. Limited access to public transportation routes that can carry them quickly and safely to the highest performing schools compounds the effects of racial residential segregation and class inequalities. Understanding the intersection of public transportation and raced and classed housing and education patterns helps us to better understand Chicago’s indelible segregation and inequalities.

Mobile Public Spaces Expose Segregation and Material Differences

Segregation, social isolation, and equalities are not only visible through housing and education patterns, but they are also observable through the city’s landscape. Mobile public spaces expose segregation as the vehicles move in and out of neighborhoods, sometimes traveling into downtown, and as passengers come to realize how mobility exposes them to difference. Today, riding through the segregated city allows us to see distinct material barriers up close. As I rode through Chicago, the materiality of difference and how place and mobile transportation reproduce these differences was as much a part of the landscape as the street or the tracks on which the buses and trains rode. For example, while riding the King Drive bus along Martin Luther King Drive, the materiality of difference is easily identified between 37th Street and 39th Street (Figure 19).
Within two blocks, the space outside the bus shifted from green space with signs of investment like new condominiums, to brown corners and stores where customers can purchase groceries and cell phones in the same store. Purchasing groceries or snacks from stores that also sold technology was not uncommon in this space where investment was rare. Fast food restaurants, large vacant lots, and abandoned and boarded up residences were also often present when we crossed 39th Street. The long, slow, and often cramped ride along Martin Luther King Drive allowed for long observations of the ‘land that capital forgot.’

Passenger demographics on many of the trains and buses that travel through various neighborhoods bring the segregated metropolis up close and personal. Rides on trains and buses also highlight the distinctive residential patterns of difference. For example, while riding the Red Line train from the south end, 95th & the Dan Ryan, to the north end at Howard Street, the racial composition of the train
passengers is distinctive. Southbound and south of downtown the racial
composition of the passengers shifts from a heterogeneous group to predominately
Black passengers as the train moved south of 35th Street. Similarly, as the train
heads north of downtown, the racial composition is majority White; however it
remains integrated to the end of the line. Passengers are often aware of public
transportation segregation, as a WMP recalled:

He discussed one of his first rides on the Red Line when he moved to
Chicago. He was traveling to the Museum of Science and Industry and
had boarded the train on the North Side with the intention of exiting
at the 55th/Garfield stop. He recalled becoming so immersed in a
book that he wasn’t paying attention to the stops. His reading was
disrupted when “a Black woman came over to me and said ‘Baby, did
you miss your stop?’” He then looked up and saw that she was right.
He had missed his stop. He noted that he remembered finding it
interesting that a stranger would know that he had missed his stop
but then he looked around and saw that he was the only White person
in the car. He later reflected that he realized that she knew he had
missed his stop because White people rarely ride the train south of
55th and Garfield (March 2013).

Another passenger (BFP) commented on how she noticed that improvements
to public transportation are raced. During an interview she discussed the
reconstruction along the south end of the Red Line and the CTA’s plan to close down
the line from 22nd/Cermak to 95th/Dan Ryan. “That’s going to be longer time and
actually the route I take is a shorter time now. And I feel like, you know, it’s a good
thing [replacing the tracks] but on the other hand, when they were renovating the
stops further north, that they had one side open and the other side closed. For
them to completely shut it down for south, that’s (pause) that’s, very horrible I
believe... At the end of the day, if it weren’t for the people getting on transportation
then y’all wouldn’t be making no money.” Her final comment, “CTA sucks, call your dissertation that.”

The CTA’s history of raced planning also includes a pattern of more often changing or adding routes to accommodate the more affluent and whiter areas in the city and eliminating or cutting back routes that serve predominately minority and poorer communities. For example, on the South Side, in November 2012, the #1 Indiana/Hyde Park bus route and name was changed to the #1 Bronzeville/Union Station bus. This bus route has undergone contentious service cuts over the years. According to CTA records, when the name changed and the route’s South Side service was further cut (after over a decade of various other stop and service cuts) the average weekday ridership was 2,818. A month later, in December 2012, the ridership had decreased to an average weekday ridership of 2,245. Ten years earlier when it traveled further south to 51st (the route now ends at 35th Street in Bronzeville) the average weekday ridership was 7,063 (City of Chicago Data Portal). Passengers living south of 35th Street no longer have direct access/route to Ogilvie or Union Stations, where the Metra trains which travel to the lucrative business corridors in the west and northwest suburbs (e.g. Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates, Naperville) originate. Indeed they can still get to the Metra trains, but they must now take at least two different routes, or one route, such as the Green or Red Line, and walk further to or from their originating stop or downtown destination, if they choose not to or can’t take a bus to these stations. This adds to the commute times, and for some, it makes commuting tenuous as seasons change.
Passengers who live on Chicago’s South Side often complained of long waits and having to make a lot of route transfers. These conditions are often complicated during Chicago’s harsh winters and when traveling with children. During one ride on the north bound Red Line, two BFPs, who were both traveling with children, boarded the train on the South Side. As they sat down they complained to each other about the bus “taking all day” to get them to their locations but that they had to “deal with the ‘L’ first.” During a southbound trip on the King Drive bus in June of 2012 a BFP boarded the bus after 39th Street. As she sat down, she complained to another BFP who had boarded at the same time about the long wait, “I always have to wait long for the bus and now two buses come back to back. This shows the schedule is off.” Other riders route also complained of the same pattern of waiting long periods of time, sometimes as long as 30 minutes and then having to either crowd onto an already crowded bus, or having to wait for the other bus that they could see coming up the street which would also eventually get crowded. In Chapter 3, I discuss how this shapes transit experiences for Blacks on the city’s South Side.

Many conversations on the south end of the Red Line and on the King Drive bus revolved around these long wait times and travel times. These long waits and rides could also hinder the ability to accept temporary employment or earn a decent day’s salary as a Black Female Passenger (BFP) noted to a person she was speaking with on the phone: I got a call at 4:30am to work at Connie’s at McCormick but I could only do four hours because I have a meeting at my kids school. Her route, the Red Line, did not take her directly to McCormick Place. It was February in Chicago and
that meant the cold was brutal. She discussed walking from 22\textsuperscript{nd} and Cermak (where the Red Line stopped) over to McCormick Place, in the cold, instead of adding another wait time (she had to walk to the bus stop after getting off the train).

The effects of long waits, several transit transfers, and long commutes are compounded when also dealing with Chicago's cold winters or often hot and humid summers. Taking more than one mode of transportation to get to a destination is a common occurrence on the South and Southwest Sides of the city. Observations show that most passengers along the Dan Ryan end of the Red Line enter the stations after disembarking from one of the buses that travel to the various stations. For many, the bus is just one of several routes they take in a day to get to and from work, the doctor's office, and school. On the north end of this same line, repeated observations showed passengers walking to and from the stations into the surrounding residential neighborhoods. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the distance between and the number of stops along the Dan Ryan end of the Red Line is not equal to those on the north end of the line either, which makes commuting routes less flexible for south siders.

"Central cities contain 20 percent of all workers and account for 69 percent of all transit use. On the other hand, suburbs account for half of all workers but generate only 29 percent of all transit trips" (Bullard 2006:10). Access to these distanced positions is compounded by the lesser amounts or infrequent public transportations within these same boomburbs and metropolitan centers (Bullard 2002). The Chicago region has a suburban bus system, PACE, but this system does not operate most routes 24/7 and bus schedules reveal infrequent and limited
stops, routes, services and hours. This further complicates options for those who
not only need affordable housing but who also rely on public transportation as their
primary source of transit. Furthermore, individuals who are able to find affordable
housing move and leave their social and personal networks to move to what for
many are distant suburbs. Limited accessibility to jobs and housing near those jobs,
as well as continued, albeit illegal, practices of housing restrictions, helps to keep
Chicago and its metropolis racially and economically segregated.

**Conclusion: Why Mobility Matters**

Most of the research on stratification in public places has focused on static
sites such as plazas and streetscapes, investigating how intentional and
unintentional physical arrangements and social conventions limit and enable
particular kinds of stratification processes. Urban inequality studies also primarily
focus on how inequality is reproduced through discriminatory housing patterns and
inequality in education, while only meagerly considering how raced and classed
differences are physically built within the metropolitan regions’ public
transportation systems and the social consequences of these inequalities. I bring to
the fore the daily social implications of public transportation systems that are
imbued with inequalities in their design and that bully particular groups by keeping
them bound in physical and social spaces.

In this chapter I presented the historical classed and racial patterning of
public transportation. I also showed how the ethno-racial segregation of the
metropolis is not confined to Chicago’s historically segregated neighborhoods, but
that as social actors move, so do the representations of segregation. These
differences mean that different groups not only have differential access to transport, but that they have very different social experiences as a result. Thus although city buses and trains allow people of color and low income people to physically move into and through integrated places, these mobile but confined spaces reproduces, and indeed, intensifies classed and raced inequalities effectively keeping people bound physically and socially. The materiality of differences within public transportation systems intersect with ethno-racial and economic segregation in neighborhoods and in the downtown area, producing and reproducing material inequalities.

In the following chapters, I demonstrate how inequalities are reproduced through the unequal designs, locations, services, cleanliness and safety and routes of Chicago’s public transportation systems. I also highlight how the train and bus fleets are differentially supplied in racially and economically dissimilar places in the city and the surrounding metropolis. Furthermore, I show how Blacks and poor people absorb these inequalities and embodied unequal lives compared to White and wealthier passengers.
CHAPTER THREE

EXPERIENCING THE MATERIAL DIFFERENCES OF MOBILE SPACES: HOW PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS REPRODUCE INEQUALITIES

“I just want them to make it right for everybody else, the people, the public. If that’s what they gotta do to keep it going…I heard they were stretching it from 95th to 130th. Yea, but if that’s what they got to do to make it right for people, then yea” – BMP discussing the renovations on the south end of the Red Line

Two Chicagos: Differentiated Mobile Spaces

Research on inequality and public transportation often discusses inequality as a fixed entity. It tends to center on the enactment and implications in fixed spaces of the system such as system layouts, planning, and access as they relate to race and class inequalities (Bullard 2006; Bullard & Johnson 1997; Farmer 2011; Tomer 2011). These studies highlight the race and class implications of public transportation funding and planning and the consequences to those who rely on public transportation as their main means of transportation (Bullard 2006; Farmer 2011; Tomer 2011). I examine these areas as well, but emphasize mobile structures and mobility because public transportation not only moves people across and through the social and economic isolation of the segregated metropolis, but it does so while often bringing the included and the excluded together in restrictive places where race and class differences are hyper-realized, hyper-produced, and resisted in face-to-face interactions and behaviors. This chapter focuses on how inequalities
are reproduced through the unequal designs, services, locations, safety, cleanliness and routes of Chicago public transportation systems. Specifically, I discuss the physical and social consequences of institutionalized materiality in the systems’ fleets and routes and how they produce and reproduce raced and classed experiences and inequalities. I also highlight how buses and trains are differentially placed and furnished in racially and economically dissimilar parts of the metropolis. In doing so I show how these differences shape passengers’ experiences as transit riders but also their interactions with each other. Because transit passengers do not have equal levels of privilege or disadvantages on these transit systems, they have different experiences.

*How Differences are Designed into the CTA and Metra Systems*

Like Chicago, the CTA system is organized along distinct race and class patterns. The North Side of the city and adjacent western and northern suburbs have more CTA rail options and better bus services than most of the South Side, and predominately minority and lower income, communities (Figure 20). Additionally, adjacent South suburbs do not enjoy any direct CTA services, unlike the Western suburbs of Oak Park, Forest Park, and Cicero and Skokie and Evanston to the North. The South and West Sides of the city are serviced by ‘L’ trains, none of which make connections with other trains until the trains reach downtown.
Figure 20. CTA System map with 'L' routes highlighted (Map: CTA)
The Yellow and Purple line trains are suburban CTA routes serving Evanston and Skokie, IL, two middle and upper class and predominately White suburbs (US Census 2010). The CTA also provides direct train service to west suburban Cicero, Forest Park and Oak Park. There are no CTA trains that travel south of 95th Street, even though the city’s southern boundary is at 130th Street. People’s everyday experiences are differentiated by race and class as we consider that passengers living or traveling south of 95th Street or 55th Street on the Southwest Side, who are predominately Black and Latino, do not have the same access to CTA services as passengers from several Chicago suburbs.

Passengers are aware of these built-in racial discrepancies. One Latino Female Passenger (LFP) who works on the North Side but lives on the Southwest Side and relies on public transportation to travel to and from work said that “I tell you this, the North Side passengers really got it together. Things are so smooth for them. I wonder if it’s because they’re White” (March 2014). She also noted that the lack of a longer distanced and 24-hour trains was a problem for her and other blue-collar workers on the Southwest Side who worked the overnight because it meant that most of their early morning commutes (between 3-4am) were extremely long and exhausting. She also noted the discomfort she often felt during the winter when they sometimes had to wait 30 minutes for a bus. Black and Latino far South/Southwest wide CTA passengers’ experiences were in stark contrast to the experiences of convenient commutes enjoyed by many White suburban transit riders as exemplified in comments by a WMP from a Western suburb who noted
that he takes a CTA bus from right outside of his door and has several CTA train lines and a Metra line choice to access the city and to get to the North Side (September 2013).

The Metra, which is the metropolitan’s commuter rail, provides services to Chicago and suburbs (Figure 21). Like the CTA and metropolitan Chicago, Metra is also organized along race and class boundaries. The system uses different train models/designs (lavatories and reversible seats or no lavatories and stationary seats) based on routes. Metra’s system has classed and raced differentials in physical spaces, policing, surveillance, and services. Metra differentially provides services for the Metra Electric, which also services more low-income, and minority passengers and communities than the other routes on the system.
This chapter moves forward the scholarship on public transportation as sites of contestations by highlighting how material differences in transit spaces shape transit riding experiences, social interactions, behaviors and expectations of place. It also demonstrates how minorities and lower income and poor people experience unequally embodied lives on public transport systems. Although public transportation should provide mobility to all, examination of these material
differences and inequalities show that they shape unequal access to the city’s central business district and its resources and social mobility.

In the next sections I discuss characteristics of material differences on the public transportation systems in Chicago, their consequences, and the passengers’ responses to the consequences. We know that people have physiological and psychological responses to space and place (Hiss 1990; Tuan 1977). We also know that difference and stratification persists “both by routinizing daily rounds in ways that exclude and segregate categories of people” (Gieryn 2000:474). Public transportation systems in Chicago are in reality, projects of exclusion that through differentiated services and planning, do not provide equal access (Foucault 1977) that reproduce inequalities and where legacies of racism and, classism, and gender inequalities get perpetuated. These processes of stratification moreover, are hyper-produced on these mobile spaces and this difference is hyper-realized. This shapes patterns of experiences on these systems that are especially raced and classed.

In the first section, I examine physical transport space qualities and the physical, social, and time consequences for Chicago poor and minority communities and residents. Next, I show the materiality of waiting times and conditions and the consequences for low income and racial minority residents on Chicago’s South Side. I follow this with a discussion of the physical spaces of buses and trains and their effects on the health, senses, and movements of Blacks who board on the South Side of the city. Material differences also expose passengers to various levels of cleanliness and filth, so I discuss how this is also patterned in racially and
economically dissimilar parts of the city. I then move to a discussion of services and locations through an examination of unequal access to express routes and consequences on time, social isolation, and safety. I follow this with a discussion of racial residential segregation and show the material differences of the system in these spaces. I conclude with a section on how material differences shaped racially classed experiences and particular gendered experiences.

Discovering Spatial Differences

On a Friday evening in late January 2014, early in the evening, while riding north on the Marine Drive bus, I looked out of the front windows of the bus as it turned onto Michigan Avenue. I noticed that there were two buses waiting at the bus stop at South Water and Michigan Avenue. Sweetwater restaurant and a large office edifice inspired by Mies van der Rohe, sat in the background. The front windows of my bus were relatively clear. This was surprising because the rest of the bus and its windows were covered in the salt and dirt that had kicked up during the bus’ many trips that winter. That winter, Chicago and much of the northern half of the nation battled record snowfalls and brutally cold temperatures due to a phenomenon that meteorologists called a ‘polar vortex.’ After being distracted by the clean windows, I fixated on what was at the bus stop. I could see a ‘3’ displayed on the LED sign on the back of the awaiting buses when we first turned off of Lake Street onto Michigan Avenue. The buses were waiting for the traffic light to change to green. But I hadn’t paid much attention to anything other than the numbers. The light eventually changed and as the buses moved out of the space and our bus pulled
in, I noticed something that I had not observed at any point in time prior to 2014. What I saw as the first bus pulled around to move into the middle lane of Michigan Avenue shocked me. It was an articulated King Drive bus!

These observations at one stop in Chicago exemplify the material differences in public mobile space in Chicago. The King Drive bus travels from 95th Street and Martin Luther King Drive on the South Side, to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Streeterville, which is part of Chicago’s downtown (Appendix B). The bus travels through the predominately Black South Side communities of Roseland, Chatham, Greater Grand Crossing, Washington Park, Grand Boulevard, and Bronzeville. This bus’ average weekday ridership from January 2011 to August 2013 was 22,114 (Table 1), boasting the highest weekday ridership average among the routes in my study and one of the top-ten busiest bus routes on the CTA system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Weekday</th>
<th>Jan 2011-Aug 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#3 King Drive</td>
<td>22,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Jackson Park</td>
<td>11,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#22 Clark</td>
<td>21,724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#146 Inner Drive</td>
<td>11,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#147 Outer Drive</td>
<td>15,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#151 Sheridan</td>
<td>20,544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Average weekday ridership. Data source: https://data.cityofchicago.org

Regardless of its high ridership, the King Drive bus was the only bus route in my study that did not have an articulated bus in the fleet (Regional Transportation Authority Mapping and Statistics [RTAMS]). The King Drive bus has a
predominately Black ridership for nearly ten of its 14 mile route. The Clark Street bus was predominately Latino for the first three miles (Howard to Bryn Mawr) but then is predominately White until it reaches the end of its route downtown. The Jackson Park Express bus is integrated from downtown to 57th Street and Hyde Park (6 miles) but has a predominately Black ridership for the remaining part its route to 79th and South Shore. The other routes in my study have a predominately White ridership.

The absence of articulated buses on a route with high ridership meant that rides on that route had unequal bodily, emotional and social options, and more movement limitations compared to other routes. The experiences of South Side Black passengers boarding the King Drive bus included crowded buses, cramped seating, narrow aisle, irregular on-board temperatures, worn seating, and a lot of standing which can present balance and personal safety issues. Understanding how Black passengers experience bus rides when boarding on the South Side of Chicago and how their experiences are different from the experiences of passengers who board buses on the North Side help us to better understand how inequalities are embodied in the routes and shape unequal embodied lives for Black passengers. It highlights racial patterns and class differentials in the design and planning of these public transport systems and exposes spatial inequalities that literally move through the city.

When traveling northbound, the King Drive bus has a Black ridership from 95th Street until about 35th Street, where Asian passengers begin to board. White
passengers start boarding near 23rd and McCormick Place (which is one of Chicago's largest convention sites) and in the redeveloped South Loop. The passengers who boarded on the far South Side and who traveled into downtown, at least to Washington & Michigan Avenue, usually traveled for 40 or more minutes before they reached this destination. That meant that when the bus became crowded, Black passengers often sat or stood in cramped spaces for fifteen or more minutes, including during non-peak/non-rush hour (9am-3pm & 7pm and owl service) trips. This differentiated their experiences from the predominately White ridership on the North Side of the city who rode the Sheridan, Clark, Inner Drive Express, or Outer Drive Express buses. Although North Side passengers may have experienced some standing and crowding, on average their rides were on buses with wider aisles, more seating, and longer buses and crowdedness was typically experienced during peak hours and not during non-peak times. As exampled during a conversation overheard between two WFPs during a Thursday evening rush hour in July 2012, where the temperature was 101°F, crowding on the North Side was unusual outside of rush hour, and even during rush hour passengers had more spatial control: Two WFPs boarded at Foster and stood next to each other on a southbound Outer Drive Bus at 5:10pm. One of the WFPs commented that she had never been on a bus “this crowded.” Her friend told her that she hadn’t either and said the crowding may be due in part to the construction on the north end Red Line because some stations were closed and people had to take the bus instead.
In sharp contrast, on the South Side and on southbound trips from downtown, passengers on the King Drive bus often experienced crowding and cramped conditions during peak and off-peak hours. For example, from Roosevelt Road to 71st Street and between Grand and Adams or 25th Street, passengers faced crowding because of the size of the buses and the high ridership numbers. Boardings were often prolonged as boarding passengers were often squeezing past standing passengers and walking sideways down crowded and narrow aisle as they boarded and tried to find a place to stand and possibly find a rail to hold.

CPS (Chicago Public School) students also usually boarded at 30th & King Drive – Dunbar High School, and 35th Street – Bronzeville Military Academy and Youth Connection Charter Schools, further crowding the buses. This southbound crowding was usually accompanied by high levels of noise from the high school students:

A June 15, 2012 trip aboard a southbound King Drive bus was on a smaller bus that had seating for around 39 people. This was the standard bus for this route. I sat in the back second row facing west. It was the last day of classes for CPS. At 30th Street, four Dunbar High School students boarded the bus. They boarded speaking loudly to each other and laughing. The volume level went from 4 to 8 (10 being extremely loud) after they boarded. One of the students from Dunbar was on the phone giving his friend advice about what to do for Father’s Day and told him to “just drink and have fun and don’t let some woman ruin your day.” The other students were loudly discussing their plans in between joking and jesting with each other.

Crowding and the size of the bus meant that everyone, young, old and in-between, experienced sound disruptions. On the North Side bus routes, school dismissal times were not as noticeably disruptive to the bus’ atmosphere because
the buses were larger and longer. When North Side students boarded these buses, they tended to sit or stand in the back half of the bus, leaving older passengers and others with a quieter front bus. Also, many of the North Side students boarded trains so their presence on the buses was minimal.

On another South Side bus, the Jackson Park Express bus, Kenwood-Academy & Hyde Park Academy students often boarded the bus after their afternoon dismissal. Although both the Jackson Park Express bus and the King Drive bus were often inundated with CPS students, those boarding the Jackson Park bus were often boarding integrated spaces (it has a Whiter and more affluent ridership from Midway Plaisance and Northbound) and longer and wider buses. The majority White and the half dozen or so Black passengers on this bus did not experience sound disruptions on their trip like the passengers on the King Drive bus did. Southbound trips on the Jackson Park Express bus had mostly White passengers from Wacker Drive to Midway Plaisance. The northbound trips were mostly people of color until around 57th Street.

Unlike passengers on the mostly integrated Jackson Park bus (the south and north bound routes mostly travels through the more affluent areas on the South Side) and on North Side bus routes, the experiences of Black passengers on the King Drive bus were often unsettling. These passengers had different experiences with noise disruptions due to limited spaces on the shorter buses that dominated the King Drive bus route in particular. These passengers did not have a physical way to prepare for the disruptive and jarring points of their trip, such as moving to the
front of the bus, so they sat in their cramped spaces choosing to engage each other and almost unconsciously adjusting the volume of their conversations, or staring blankly, as the disruptions occurred.

On the King Drive bus, noise levels can go from moderate to extreme at any given stop along the route, which is every other block. Passengers could not avoid the variations in human activities, sounds, behaviors or smells because they did not have a place on these smaller and narrow buses to escape the extremes.

Waiting Expectations and Safety

April 15, 2012 was a windy and rainy day. It was a Sunday and I had just exited the Millennium Metra train station around 6:56pm and had headed to the bus stop at Randolph and Michigan to catch the Outer Drive Express bus home. The rain had mostly ended but it was still extremely windy. There was a bus shelter at this stop, so I headed toward it to keep from getting wet from the water blowing off the nearby buildings and the sprinkles that lingered from the storm. I laugh to myself whenever it rains because there is no doubt that I will pull out my umbrella or run for shelter, even when it’s just drizzling like it was that night, because like my family and friends often say, “Black girls don’t get their hair wet.”

When the light changed, I quickly darted across the street and headed for the bus shelter. There were people waiting outside of the shelter, which didn’t make much sense to me since there was obviously a lot of room for everyone to fit under the shelter. I said “Excuse me” to a few of the waiting people, all of whom were White, and stepped into the shelter. A BFP, about 5 feet tall, was sitting on the
shelter’s bench. She was wearing jean Daisy Duke shorts and a striped blue & White shirt. There was also a BMP with her, wearing a hoodie. He was about 6’ tall and appeared to be in his early 30s. Earlier, I had seen them run from the 7-Eleven that was across the street when I was waiting for the light to change when I first left Millennium Station and before reaching the bus shelter. When I walked into the shelter the BMP looked at me, snickered and said, "If you were White, you woulda looked in here, saw us and stayed out. Just like a n**ga to not care. You see us and are like 'Hum, I'm coming in there.' A n***a don't care." I just smiled and said 'Hello.' He paused for a minute and then added, “I know a White person wouldn’t come in here.” And he was right. None of the White people waiting in the heavy winds had walked into the shelter, nor did any who came later.

I recall this story here because I remember thinking at the time about how this waiting scenario reflected Chicago and the public transportation system – Blacks experiencing the space one way and Whites experiencing it another. In the integrated spaces of the buses and trains, social patterns of difference were observed in seating as Blacks sat alone longer than any other group. On that Sunday night, passengers waited in a particular way. The Black passengers waited in one space, in close proximity to each other and White passengers waited where they had more options of escape and could distance themselves from the waiting Black passengers. On the buses in this study, spacing was similar, such that Black passengers riding on the King Drive bus rode in close proximity, unable to avoid each other due to the size and limited body control on the bus. On the routes where
the space was predominately integrated, White and often Asian passengers often could and did avoid standing and sitting in close proximity to Black and sometimes Latino passengers. Those avoiding Black and Latino passengers chose to stand, often in crowded areas, instead of sitting next to a Black or Latino passenger. Groups of Black teenagers were also avoided by boarding White passengers just as the Black passengers waiting in the shelter that damp night were avoided, even at the risk of comfort. I discuss these patterns of avoidance and social difference in greater details in Chapter 4.

Social difference was not the only difference in the waiting experiences of passengers. Transit passengers also experience material difference in their waiting experiences. Depending on where you live in the city and where you are boarding your bus or train, your waiting experience can be relatively pleasant because you are standing in a protective space – under a bus shelter or a heat lamp during cold months – or it may be unpleasant such as in front of garbage cans, heaps of trash, in a dilapidated shelter, or just next to a sign when businesses and narrow sidewalks leave little room for much else.

Waiting conditions can shape passengers experiences on public transportation. Among other things, their waiting conditions can be shaped by weather, spaces around the transit stop or station, transit population density, smells, and other vehicles. Passengers’ waiting experiences can also be shaped by institutionalized material differences that are raced and classed. For example, the CTA has bus stops outside many of its train station. On the Red Line, where
95th/Dan Ryan is the southernmost stop and Howard Street is the northernmost station, passengers’ waiting expectations and safety conditions are very different. The racial and class demographics at each end of the line are also noticeable. At Howard, passengers board from trains and buses come from Evanston and Skokie trains and buses (both are middle-to upper income suburbs) and by walking, and some bus passengers come from parts of Rogers Park, a Chicago community area where 22% of the population lives below the poverty line (US Census 2010). At 95th Street, passengers board from buses from predominately minority and low income suburbs like Robbins and Harvey, and from some of Chicago’s lowest income community areas such as Auburn Gresham, Burnside, Pullman, and Chatham, which are also predominately Black communities.

On the South Side at the 95th/Dan Ryan station, as the mostly Black ridership exited the trains, they walked up stairs or rode the escalator to the bus stops that surround the station. When passengers exited the station and headed toward the buses, they often looked agitated as they twitched their legs waiting for several buses to pass so that they could cross to reach their bus stop. As they waited, they often sat on soiled grounds or entertained each other during longer waits (Figure 22). They also hurried across unencumbered spaces to get to the stops or to enter a waiting car or to head to the McDonald’s on the west side of the terminal.
These predominately Black passengers also wait at bus stops that are on bridges above the Dan Ryan Expressway. Passengers moving around this station are constantly navigating passageways and waiting areas with attention to several approaching buses and car traffic, which is not something that the predominately White passengers on the North Side of the branch have to do in order to wait, board, or transfer routes (Figure 23).
Chicago’s weather conditions can be extreme. Unsheltered waits for buses on bus bridges over the expressway exposed passengers to snow, and wind gusts. Passengers tried to huddle inside the station but the exits kept them exposed them to winds and the extreme cold. As I discuss later, in the summer the 95<sup>th</sup>/Dan Ryan waiting conditions were particularly brutal as passengers tried to cope with the effects of a heat island created by air temperatures and the heat and emission from the 15 buses that had scheduled stops in the station. Although many stops throughout the city are without bus shelters, the design of the bus waiting areas on the South Side Red Line leaves little space for refuge for the mostly Black ridership within the stations when waiting for buses, unlike stations on the North Side, which has a mostly White ridership.

CTA passengers also do not have the same waiting experiences, expectations or safety along the rail system itself. Passengers who boarded the Red Line trains
and buses at the 95th/Dan Ryan station did not have similar waiting, boarding or exiting experiences as passengers at the other end of the line at the Howard Station on the far north end of the city. Both spaces are starting and ending points for the Red Line train. At Howard Street, passengers, who are majority White passengers, waited on an elevated platform. This platform sits between a street and buildings to the east and a bus terminal and a shopping center to the west (Figure 24).

![Various Waiting areas at the Howard Station](image)

**Figure 24. Howard Station (Credit: Kyle Woolley –lower right side photo)**

While waiting on the platform for the Red Line train, the Purple Line train, or the Yellow line train passengers looked out at the tracks, streets, stores, and people. This station also has a bus depot at the street level. Shops and a storage facility surround the bus terminal where 6 CTA buses and two Pace buses turn around/start/end their routes. Bus passengers did not wait in crowded areas because the bus stops and the station are spacious. There were various places
where passengers could wait away from the extreme Chicago winds and other uncomfortable weather conditions. Often passengers stepped out the station to wait for buses, just to step back in the corridors when they realized the conditions, many exclaiming “Whoa” upon exiting. Passengers at this station could also access an express bus to downtown if there was a delayed Red or Purple line Loop-bound train.

At the 95th/Dan Ryan station, train passengers wait on a platform situated in the middle of the Dan Ryan expressway. When passengers waited away from inclement weather they waited upstairs in a station. Although the station isn’t enclosed, they could shield themselves from some of the winds by standing along east and west glass walls. The north end turnstile for exiting to the bus bridge exposed those who waited upstairs to winds, outside temperatures and exhaust from the passing vehicles as exemplified here: In February 2013, at this station there were several people waiting for buses. Many stood in areas near each other where there was a wall. If they exited the station to the bus stop, they were greeted by cold winds. Some of the waiting passengers conversed while others stood shivering while trying to push as close to the wall as possible. A few BFPs turned toward the glass wall and pressed against it, but then turned back around, possibly because the wall was extremely cold. Bus and train passengers waited in some of the same areas because the train platform at this station does not have any heat lamps. There are 15 buses that come into this station, but there were no warm places to wait. Around this station there aren’t any bus shelters, but there is a canopy on the east and west sides, poles, signs, and garbage dumpsters. Waiting passengers shifted their bodies as winds blew through the station that day. Others decided to wait on the downstairs platform for the train. That day, there were dozens of people, Black people, waiting out in the cold.

The Howard Station, by contrast, has heating lamps, as do most of the CTA’s train platforms. One of the things that I noticed when walking down the platform at the 95th/Dan Ryan station was the absence of heating lamps and spaces along the platform. Passengers at this station often ran from their buses down to waiting
trains, however, the train doors were opened for several minutes while passengers and CTA personnel boarded and prepared for departure. This often meant that the trains were very cold when boarding in the winter and hot in the summer. On several occasions, passengers changed seats on waiting trains if seated near the door because the space had an uncomfortable exposure to the outside weather conditions. Once the train departed the station it would often be several minutes before the bitterness of the cold left and the train began to warm and passengers relaxed their bodies. The discomfort was readily noticed on the frowns on the passenger faces, their shivering, or when they discussed it being too cold to be standing out, such as when a BMP commented that it was super cold and that he didn’t think it was ever going to warm up. Another passenger, a BFP, tried to find humor in her long cold wait by commenting: “After losing 3.5 of my toes to frostbite, nearly falling to my untimely death and standing uncomfortably close to a stranger (and paying $2.50 for this lovely experience, might I add) I have one simple prayer - Jesus, be a brand new car,” which was a pun from the gospel song “Jesus, Be a Fence All Around Me.” Many passengers who boarded at the first several stops often sat in the seats in the middle of the train first, which helped them to avoid exposure to the outside elements when the train stopped again. Waiting in the extreme cold or humid summer heat and then boarding a train with variable temperatures, exposed these Black passengers to more and longer periods of exposure to weather related issues than passengers on the North Side at the Howard Station due to the unheated platform and waiting area and the heat island created at street level from waiting
buses and hot air temperatures. Passengers waiting at the 95th/Dan Ryan station are vulnerable to these environmental risks that were not experienced by Howard Street station passengers.

Traffic on the expressway also made the 95th/Dan Ryan station extremely noisy, unlike at Howard Street. There is also a lot of street traffic around the 95th/Dan Ryan station and a lot of buses. The space around the station serves as a bus terminal for 20 buses (13 CTA buses and five Pace buses) along with the Greyhound and Indian Trail buses (Figure 25). CTA personnel and passengers often had to yell to be heard over the sound of motorized vehicles, horns, and air brake releases. This also made it hard to hear any announcements being made at the station.

Figure 25. Bus location sign and west bus terminal and 95th/Dan Ryan train station
Spaces serving as bus stops often seemed unpleasant to waiting passengers. Passengers could be seen using paper or their hands to block the sun while standing on the north end of the terminal because there isn’t any shade or covering. These passengers were also waiting on a bus bridge that is over the Dan Ryan Expressway. In the east terminal, some bus stops are situated on the same sidewalk as several garbage dumpsters. Passengers waiting for buses in this space had looks of unpleasantness on their face, particularly in the spring and summer times. The emission and exhaust from the buses, cars and semi-trucks passing below on the expressway, and the fumes from the garbage dumpsters, trapped waiting bus passengers at the 95th/Dan Ryan station (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Bus stops at 95th& Dan Ryan CTA Red Line station
Views of the east terminal showed predominately Black passengers waiting in front of these unsightly, huge, over-flowing, smelly sites of refuse—although the space had been designated as a bus stop by the signs that were positioned on the sidewalks in front of the dumpsters. A review of archival pictures as well as ones I took in 2012 through 2014 show that this waiting experience has been bodily experienced by those who use this space for several years. In fact, the Dumpsters™ at this station are not temporary fixtures but have been there, in one capacity or another for years. One BMP informed me that the Dumpsters™ had been there his whole life and he’s 28. He also said that “In the summer it’s really horrible” because of the smells, flies, and bees” (June 2012). Seeing and smelling garbage shaped these waiting spaces into refuse spaces (Wright 1997) for Black passengers at this train station, as they stood in these filthy and unclean places and dumping sites that created an unhealthy and depressing landscape. They could not sit or lean against the rails while they waited because the Dumpsters™ where behind them and the liquids and spilled trash had made the sidewalk where they were standing grossly unsanitary, filthy, smelly, unsafe, and unhealthy.

The environmental problems increased at this station in May 2013 when the CTA decided to shut down the entire Dan Ryan/Red Line South end of the Red Line for renovations. Part of the plan to transport an average weekday ridership of 13,000 people was to use shuttle buses to take passengers from the 95th/Dan Ryan station to the Green Line stations at Garfield or to the next Red Line station (Chicago Transit Authority). When a BFP passenger asked a White male CTA employee, who
was in the station on May 16, 2013 (3 days before the shutdown) handing out information, where these shuttle buses were supposed to go and where they would load passengers, he responded that “the shuttle buses at 95th Street will be cramped into the spaces where other buses already are. Some will run express, depending on traffic, to the next stop. I don’t know what happens then.” The plan called for CTA to fit dozens of articulated buses into spaces already overcrowded by other buses. This plan also meant that passengers had to be cautious of the regular station bus routes and the shuttle buses as they crossed back and forth when entering and exiting the station or transferring routes as the CTA put into place a plan to use buses that the CTA worker said would “simulate a train” (Figure 27).
Signs in the reconstruction area were nebulous, simply telling passengers to go online to get more information. Four days before the shut down and passengers were still asking questions about what was going to happen (Figure 28). Blacks and low income passengers were the majority ridership affected by the reconstruction
(Health-Human Services, City of Chicago). These passengers had to wait on information in ways that North Side riders did not have to during the 2012 North Red Line renewal project. News reports had also shown that many South Side residents in the affected areas were unaware of the changes, when CTA ambassadors went door to door the week before the shutdown to pass out brochures about the change (ABC7Chicago 2013; Rossi and Ihejirika 2013).

Their waiting conditions also drastically changed during this period. Passengers at this station, and others on the South Side, had to navigate a new waiting terrain, and many seemed unaware and unprepared, as they asked CTA
personnel “Where will I catch my bus?” and read pamphlets just four days before the changes. In the days leading up to the renovations and shut-down, there were several passengers in the 95th/Dan Ryan Red Line station waiting to talk to personnel about the changes and they listened in on explanations given to other passengers. Many asked about how to get to nearby stations and some wanted to know how they would get downtown.

The reality for far South Side passengers who use this station is that where they live not only determined their public transit options, but the conditions under which they waited. They experienced health and aesthetic deprivation that was not part of the experiences for those boarding at Howard Street. During the summer of 2012, when temperatures were often well above 90 degrees and the humidity was intense, this space also felt like a heat island. In inclement weather with wind gusts, blowing snow and torrential rains pounding the area, waiting was even more uncomfortable and challenging. Passengers were visibly uncomfortable as they wiped sweat off their faces and gave big sighs while awaiting the arrival of their bus. Most stood staring off into the landscape, rarely engaging use of technology and with only a few engaged in conversations. They occasionally paced back and forth, but didn't step too far away from their bus stop, even the ones located in front of the garbage dumpsters. They were observed seeming to fight for air through fumes, garbage Dumpsters™ and passing buses as witnessed by loud gasps and looks of aggravation on their faces. Waiting experiences for the mostly Black ridership at the 95th/Dan Ryan station was unequal in comfort, pedestrian safety, environmental
quality, and crowdedness than the mostly non-Black ridership at the Howard station.

Waiting expectations, experiences and safety on the Metra lines was also delineated along race and class lines. Passengers on Chicago’s South Side who use the Metra Electric line to University Park wait on dark, wood-planked platforms. Their stops are ‘flag’ stops, meaning that the train conductor has to see them in order for the train to stop. As a result, these Black passengers have to wait out in the open or step often from the minimal platform shelters to watch for approaching trains. These same passengers wait long periods during rush and peak times because most trains run express and only local trains will stop for them. At night, the wait is accompanied by dim yellow platform lights. At night especially, passengers quickly exited the trains and walked toward the platform exits while looking back or calling someone as they left the train. On the UP-W train, most trains do not stop at the Kedzie stop in Chicago. West Side residents traveling to the Western suburbs, have to take the Green Line CTA train to Oak Park and then wait for a Metra train to take them further west. But passengers do not have to wait on dimly lit platforms and stations along this line, unlike the Metra Electric.

These differences also affect the Metra Electric personnel, as was the case one day when one of the trainmen was left on the platform at 63rd Street. A Metra supervisor received a call noting that the train had pulled off without the trainman. The rule was that both train conductors (some are trainmen/women and some have conductor on their hat) -- that night it was a male and a female - were to disembark
from the train at the ‘flag’ stops. The female boarded and closed the doors
without ensuring that the other trainman was on board. Metra police had to be
dispatched to pick this person up from 63rd Street for safety reasons. The next train
wasn’t due to that station for an hour, and the waiting conditions were not optimal
given the conditions of the station and the time of night.

Figure 29. 63rd Street Metra station platform

The ‘flag’ stops do not have traditional stations or safety measures for
passengers or train personnel. The 63rd Street stop, as with the other stops from
63rd through 115th/Kensington, does not afford passengers comfort in standing, for
lighting and safety at night, or on platforms as most of these platforms have loose
wooden planks, worn benches, and lack proper places to stand and wait while
seeking to ‘flag’ down the approaching trains (Figure 30).
Material Differences in Bus Design and Details

Patterns of difference in the CTA’s bus types are distinctive along class and race lines. On CTA, spatial choice and access is not equally distributed. Just as the BMP presumed that a White person would not enter a bus shelter where only Blacks were waiting, people who ride the King Drive bus and many of the buses that travel through predominately minority and low income communities can expect older and smaller buses. The exceptions are the J14 -Jeffrey Jump and the Jackson Park Express bus. Both travel through more affluent White and Black areas on the South
Side (e.g. Hyde Park and Bronzeville) before reaching areas experiencing economic hardships (e.g. South Shore and Woodlawn).

Minority and low income transit riders experienced more crowding and less control of body space on buses as they experienced less access to newer, cleaner, and larger buses. The aisles are narrow on these buses, so those sitting in aisle seats were often bumped as passengers walked by them. When passengers boarded a King Drive bus that had two wheelchairs they had to walk sideways through the aisle, often bumping the people in the wheelchair and those sitting in aisle seats (Figure 31).

![Wheelchair aboard a King Drive bus](image)

Figure 31. Wheelchair aboard a King Drive bus

Taller passengers struggled with space when trying to sit in forward facing seats where they often had to extend their leg or legs out into the narrow aisles or had to sit slightly to the side when in a window seat. These passengers, who were often men, remained standing or when seated, shifted their body position several times during their ride. The King Drive bus was always a smaller bus, so taller
passengers often had to stand or they took up two seats and spread their legs because they could not sit forward without this action. On the longer articulated buses there were several side facing seats as well as seats that were on a platform which were ideal for taller passengers, as one WMP who has been riding CTA for 25 years pointed out (August 2012). How passengers navigated the space varied based on bus size and design and these options showed patterned race and class differentials in the CTA’s bus fleet and distribution.

People who are heavier in weight, tall, or use a mobility device do not have equal access to controlling their body space on these small buses either. Although all of the CTA’s buses are accessible, when there are two wheel chairs or a wheel chair and a scooter or a wheel chair and a stroller on the bus, boarding the bus and moving past the front area was challenging and often made for prolonged stops along the King Drive route. People with children found it challenging to navigate holding their child’s hand while also moving through the front accessible/priority seating side of the bus, while trying to find a space for themselves and the child. Larger passengers on these smaller buses also appeared uncomfortable as they shifted, moved side to side, and adjusted packages that they were holding. When sitting in an aisle seat, these passengers often had to lean in toward their seatmate in order to make room for others trying to navigate the narrow aisles. Seating options were limited when priority seating areas was used for strollers and mobility devices. This reduced the already low number of seating options forcing more people to stand in the narrow aisles. Consequentially, this made for longer boarding
times at the bus stops, more crowding, and less options for passengers to control their body space. This also often meant longer travel times and several occurrences where buses were several minutes off schedule and these delays often compiled and resulted in some passengers having to wait over 20 minutes beyond the expected waiting time for a bus, as was repeatedly overheard during boarding periods. This occurred more often on the King Drive bus than any of the other routes in my study.

Riders who take the Inner Drive/Michigan Express, the Outer Drive Express, the Jackson Park Express, and the Sheridan or Clark Street buses are usually aboard an articulated bus, which has the following amenities: 55+ seating options, wide aisles, a middle space for standing without standing directly in front of people, several seats on the back half of the bus, which is the space after the accordion, options for being physically distanced from others, more choices to avoid sitting next to certain people, and plenty of leg room (Figure 32).
Passengers on the shorter smaller buses were often interrupted at each stop. For instance, the crowding on the King Drive bus often meant that passengers who were near the back exit doors had to get off at each stop, hold the door open for exiting passengers, and then get back on. Often there wasn’t room for them to just move out of the way, unlike on longer articulated buses. On the King Drive bus this meant exposure to exterior spaces which were often unpleasant landscapes or extreme temperatures.
Smaller buses also meant that other passengers were likely to overhear other people's conversations because they were in tight quarters. In fact, it was nearly unavoidable because there was not a lot of distance between passengers across the aisle or between rows. Although people often formed kinetic kinships on this route, there were times when they also tried to have private conversations. Narrow aisles and limited seating placed passengers close to each other as this cramped closed space was often a site where attempts at privacy were thwarted. As an example: one day while riding northbound on the King Drive bus, a few pre-teens and teens boarded after 47th Street. They were carrying ‘Class of 2012’ balloons so I assumed they were going to a graduation. They sat across from me in the back of the bus. I was mostly looking out the window and there were several conversations going on, but I was also able to clearly hear their conversation:

A BMP who was in junior high, per his conversation, said “I had to lie to mommy about the price of the flowers so she wouldn’t ask for money. I told her $13 but so far I’ve spent $27... I had to buy her some flowers because mommy wasn't going to do s***. I was saving for my phone bill but I had to at least get her flowers.” During the conversation it was revealed that most of the group was in foster care; however, they were talking about their biological mother when making the mommy comments. A BFP in the group informed him that their mom “could of done something for her baby.” Their conversation then shifted to careers and choosing them for money or to walk around wearing tools (like in dentistry as one remarked) that represented the career.

Overhearing very personal conversations was par for the course on the smaller buses, whereas on larger buses passengers often would turn their bodies away from others when on calls or stand and sit in ways to reduce the likelihood of
being overheard too well. When riding the larger articulated buses, I rarely heard conversations so clearly. Passengers have unequal access to control of information on these smaller buses, giving them less access to the already minimal amounts of privacy available on public transportation. In Chapter 5, I discuss how the South Side passengers used the crowdedness of the smaller buses to transform the space into mobile communities.

**Unequal Design Distributions and Consequences of Inequalities**

Unequal distribution of longer and newer buses is institutionalized classism and racism. The central business district, the many majority White neighborhoods on the North Side, and the more affluent communities on the South Side, use better, newer, and quicker buses and routes. On the South Side, most routes use older, slower, and smellier buses (Figure 33).

![Figure 33. Examples of bus types – exterior and interior](image)
An examination of CTA records, bus models, and servicing garages show that older and smaller buses are used more in Black, Latino, and poorer areas of the city, even though the ridership in these neighborhoods and on these routes are some of the highest on the system. For example, from January 1, 2013 through September 2013 the #9 Ashland bus had 7 of the top 10 average weekday ridership numbers with over 33,000 in May 2013 (RTAMS). This route travels through the far South Side (104th and Vincennes) and north to Clark & Belle Plaine. Most of the route passes through majority minority neighborhoods. Examination of CTA records from 2005 through 2013 show that this bus route and the majority of the other bus routes that are typically among the top 10 highest weekday average ridership (#3, #4, #8, #20, #22, #49, #53, #66, #77, #79) also travel predominately through majority minority neighborhoods (#22 Clark is an exception – even though part of the route Howard – Hollywood has a majority Latino and ethnic minority ridership) and distances ranging from 10 miles on the #77 Belmont to 20 miles for the #9 Ashland bus (RTAMS). Yet, none of these routes are express routes so for passengers traveling longer distances on these routes, their commute can be as long as 2 hours and it is more likely that these routes will use smaller and older buses (Appendix C).

Health can be affected by route time because CTA buses do not have lavatories. For instance, there wasn’t a public restroom or bus depot at either end of the King Drive bus. Because this route is long and slow, it can be challenging to passengers who are aboard from 95th Street to downtown. There were very few
businesses along this route that could accommodate passengers who had to get off the bus when nature called. The exceptions were the White Castle at 35th Street, the McDonald’s and Walgreens near 63rd Street, and the Popeye’s and BP gas station at 95th Street. People traveling with small children had to tell them to ‘hold it’ until they got home and when they couldn’t; it meant urine filled seats that were not dried out until much later in the day, if at all. The options on the North Side were different because there were lots of businesses and coffee shops along many of the routes, and with several buses and/or more frequent services and more express routes to these areas as well, passengers had more options when and if they had to quickly exit the bus.

 Longer and slower routes also meant that passengers did not have equal access to relief from whatever the bus temperature was. The longer boarding times on the King Drive bus and the nearly every corner stop, because of the busyness of the route, meant that the bus temperature was irregular. Passengers seemed more occupied with navigating the crowdedness or moving to give someone room to pass them by, then to the irregular bus temperatures. I often wondered if the prospect of waiting for another crowded bus was a less pleasing alternative for these passengers and that’s why they stayed on the bus even when it was hot or cold. On the rare occasion when a passenger boarded an uncomfortable temperature on a North Side bus or the Jackson Park Express, they often exited and expressed they would wait for the next one.
Offenses to the Senses: Unequal Sensory Pleasures and Unpleasantness

Material differences in design mean that exposure to sensory pleasures and unpleasantness is not equally distributed on public transportation systems. This is not addressed in the literature on inequality in public transportation system. These previous works do not consider the effects of material differences on the senses and how these shape experiences on public transport systems. How passengers were able to manage trash, filth, or offenses to the senses was shaped by where they were on the system.

On smaller buses, passengers were closer to dirt and filth. These buses also tended to have seats where the fabric was extremely worn, especially compared to other buses in my study. Although the King Drive bus travels through the Loop and down the Magnificent mile during the last/first part of the north end of its route, non-Black passengers who board tended to only be on the bus for a few stops or for less than 15 minutes, if that long, so their exposure to inequality of cleanliness and design was limited (Figure 34).
Observations of passengers boarding smaller buses showed that passengers often experienced sensory distractions. These passengers often responded to keen smells. Some even asked the bus driver “what is that” when they boarded. On larger buses, passengers were often seated before they seemed to realize that something was afoul. This sometimes led them to change seats. Avoiding sensory offending spaces was harder on the smaller buses.

Unlike on larger and articulated buses, it was much harder for passengers on smaller and older buses to avoid incidences of ‘offenses to the senses.’ On a larger or an articulated bus, passengers had more standing and sitting options after boarding the bus, allowing them to avoid the smells, spaces or people that offended the senses. This was evident during one trip on a southbound Outer Drive Express bus. When the bus exited off Lake Shore Drive and onto Michigan Avenue people began to stand up and head toward the exit doors. Some headed to the exit doors in
the middle of the bus and some headed toward the front. I was sitting in the back of the bus at the time. I noticed after the Pearson stop on Michigan Avenue that boarding customers got up and moved shortly after having sat in the raised seats that are midway through the bus. As they left this area, they often walked with a look of disgust on their face (as displayed by the turning up and sneering of their noses) as they headed to the back of the bus. I observed several people doing this. The only person who did not move was the larger and unkempt BFP who was sitting in one of the raised seats. Eventually I moved forward to this seating area to be closer to the exit door. I sat across the aisle from the BFP but a few seats south of her. After sitting, I noticed a strong smell of what seemed like rotting flesh. I looked over at the BFP and noticed that she had extremely large, bleeding leg sores all over her legs. She was wearing shorts. The smell was very strong and was mixed with body odor. A WFP and a WMP who were also seated nearby turned their heads and covered their noses. Some who walked past her made a gasping sound, while others quickly scurried by. Later I realized that I had seen this same woman before panhandling on south Michigan Avenue.

People were able to avoid this woman by moving to the back of the bus, or near the middle exit doors, or toward the front of the bus. This avoiding of smells or people was often problematic on the King Drive bus because the bus was usually crowded and always a small bus. Passengers had to sit wherever they could or stand and risk being bumped, rubbed, touched, or stepped on (even though passengers were very polite and said “excuse me” when they did accidentally bump
or step on someone else). However, offenses to the senses were less tolerable
on the King Drive bus than on other routes. This was in part because of an
interesting interactive dynamic on the King Drive bus that was only mirrored on the
south end of the Red Line, which I discuss in greater detail in Chapter 5. On other
routes when people’s senses were offended by someone who smelled of urine or
other body odors, the size of the bus often allowed passengers to avoid the
individual all together by moving a good distance away or by standing near the back
door or squeezing into an already crowded standing group. This was harder on the
smaller buses because if someone really reeked, you smelled them no matter where
you sat or stood. These circumstances created a certain riding atmosphere,
especially on the King Drive bus, such as during this ride:

In September 2012, I was riding southbound on the King Drive bus. The bus was crowded as usual with heavy loading and unloading between Roosevelt and 71st Streets. Sometime after 47th Street people started complaining about someone smelling. One BMP asked if someone was “tweaking.” A BFP, who was sitting near me told him that he was smelling a BFP sitting up front. Another BMP responded shocked and said, “Naw, that ain’t no woman smelling like that.” The BFP continued responding “Yes it is. I’ve seen her funky a** on here before.” The BMP shook his head and responded “Man, how can a woman smell like that?” The BFP, who was well agitated by this point added, “Makes no sense. Got a d*** rag in her hand. Use it.”

This last comment was directed toward the older BFP who was the subject of
their conversation. As we pulled into another stop, several more people boarded.

There was a small child up front near the entrance wailing as his mother paid her
fare. The younger BFP who was sitting near me looked over at the other BMP who
was near the first guy she was talking with and said “He probably crying because he
smellin’ her old funky a**,” referring to the same BFP they were discussing earlier. The two BMPs who were standing behind me didn’t respond, even though they had said earlier that they thought someone was tweaking and didn’t realize it was someone’s body odor. Unlike on the larger articulated bus where passengers were able to avoid the BFP with the leg sores, the size and design of the King Drive bus limited where passengers could move to avoid the unpleasant smells that had been attributed to the BFP who was sitting in one of the front side-facing seats.

Being close and personal with offenses to the senses shaped the social interactions and the experiences as exampled here as the earlier scenario continued to play out:

The woman who boarded the bus with the crying child moved away from the front of the bus and came closer to where we were sitting. The child stopped crying when he was put in the seat. The two BMPs started laughing with one falling all over the seat – Martin style (Like Martin Lawrence tended to overdo it on his show Martin).

One of the BMPs said laughingly, “Man, shorty stopped crying when she moved him.” (pause) ”It’s like greenhouse gases up there.” The BFP who had pointed out the smelly woman then said “I know she got family members who need to tell her to get in the tub.” One of the BMPs noted “That’s one reason why I hate buses.”

These reactions were consequences of riding on crowded, small buses. Although the ridership on the King Drive bus is near that of the Sheridan and Clark Street buses on an average weekday, the King Drive bus passengers were trying to navigate much smaller spaces. These negotiations for space (Anderson 2004) are bodily. Small, cramped buses limit these negotiations for minority passengers, who are also often from low income and high poverty areas, when riding buses through
majority minority communities in Chicago. Negotiations are not only limited for space but limited for time in ways not experienced by the majority of passengers on the North Side routes.

Metra riders also have differentiated sensory experiences that reflect race and class differentials. Although Metra is considered the ‘luxury’ line, it is not a luxurious experience for all of its passengers. The Millennium Train Station, which underwent major renovations for over ten years from the late 1990s to 2007 (Metrarail.com), has many unsightly structural problems that passengers view and navigate as they enter and exit the station. One day when returning from the South suburbs, I heard the sounds of water after we exited the trains and as we were walking through the station to exit to street level. I found this odd given that we were underground, even though I knew it was raining outside. As we exited the first set of exit doors from the station, we were greeted by water pouring out of the walls in the west corridor, which serves as the main entrance and exit to the station. There were no buckets or caution signs, but the amount of water suggested that this had been going on for a while. I called in the problem while we all carefully walked toward the exit stairs.

Months later, passengers where still walking through unsightly spaces when entering and exiting the station, including unsightliness at the areas where the water had poured in. Passengers walked underneath and around gaping holes, wall crud from where the walls had leaked when the melting snow seeped in like the rain during storms, and they walked through spaced that smelled of urine, rust, and
many other unidentifiable smells (Figure 35). Many were able to walk swiftly through the space but others walked slowly with children or luggage in tow. They tended to try and walk down the middle of the corridor, avoiding accidentally rubbing against the walls, but this was challenging during rush periods and on weekends when hundreds of passengers exited both the Metra and the NICTD (Northern Indiana Commuter Train District) trains. This exit and entrance corridor smells and the unknown drippiness create discomfort and an unpleasant experience.

![Millennium Train Station Entrance & Exit corridor - February 2014](image)

Figure 35. Millennium Train Station, Randolph Street main entrance/exit corridor

As previously noted, passengers using this station, including those who ride the NICTD trains, travel to and from predominately low to lower-middle income communities. On the Illinois side, the majority of the communities and Chicago
neighborhoods are predominately minority. Passengers at this station smell urine, feces, rusting pipes and stale water upon entering and exiting the station at the main Randolph Street entrance.

Passengers who used this station weren’t just exposed to the putrid smells, holes in the ceiling or the unsightly walls and floors. Those needing the elevator also had to navigate their bodies through unpleasant conditions. The elevator area at the Millennium station usually smelled of urine year round. It was also usually filthy. The interior of the elevator was full of grime on the walls and the floor. The interior of the elevator and the waiting area at the street level also smelled of urine. The interior doors had remnants of vomit and the space was dimly lit (Figure 36).

![Figure 36. Millennium Station elevator and entrance](image)

People traveling with strollers or luggage, those with disabilities and elderly passengers who needed to use the elevator at this station were exposed to these smells and unsightly appearances at the station level and outside at the street level.
Passengers were repeatedly observed struggling to carry their strollers and luggage up the stairs and down the stairs because they were so disgusted by the smells on the elevator or it was broken, which was also a frequent occurrence (Figure 37). Women often tried to use the elevators because they had children with them, so did the elderly, or passengers with lots of bags or luggage. Women displayed trepidation when entering the elevator during the evening hours but would often quickly exit before the doors closed and could be seen turning up their noses or waving their hands by their noses, indicating an unpleasant smell. They would also make comments like, “Let’s take the stairs. I’ll help you with the luggage.”

Figure 37. Broken elevator and passengers carrying bags down a flight of stairs
The conditions are worse at the South Water end of the station where bathrooms are closed during the late evening and on weekends, and the space wasn’t monitored. The elevator in this space was often found with remnants of vomit. Passengers who exited the late night trains on this side of the Millennium Station usually waited for other passengers before walking through the exit doors from the train platform.

These conditions are in stark contrast to the entry and exit points at the Ogilvie Transportation Center, where the UP-W train exits (Figure 38). The UP-W, and several north and northwest trains leave from this station, which is attached to the Citigroup building. The Center is located in the near West Loop. There are two food courts, several retail stores and a restaurant in the section of the building that serves as a main entrance to the escalators to the trains.

Figure 38. Ogilvie Transportation Center (Photo: Robert Maihofer II retrieved online)
Passengers at the Ogilvie station, even those entering through the Washington Street entrance, were not exposed to filth, leaking pipes, or putrid smells. There was also a visible police presence in the station during the day, evenings, and weekends. These officers were usually surveilling the homeless and transient people, who came into the station to warm up, cool off, use the restroom, or relax. The police mostly stood near this group and by the escalators and kept them contained on the ground level of the station. This suggested that the police were policing one class of pedestrian while protecting another class group. For example, when a BHM walked through the larger food court and slowed up as he approached a group of White passengers who were standing and discussing what they were going to eat, a Metra police officer moved closer to the group, suggesting in his movement that the BHM should not come closer, which he did not but instead picked up his pace and continued through the area.

Even during social sabbaticals - periods in Chicago of public rowdiness and drunkenness and where rules of social order are ignored- Ogilvie passengers entered a cleaner station as personnel worked to keep the space clean and unobstructed as drunken parade and festival-goers passed through. During St. Patrick’s Day, mostly White, drunk passengers littered the floor as they slept, often on each other, or placed their discarded beer cans on the floor. Thousands passed through the station loudly and disorderly during social sabbaticals such as St. Patrick’s Day, but they found the floors clean for resting and staggering through
Figure 39. Passengers waiting for Metra trains at the Ogilvie Transportation Center, March 2013

Sensory inputs and outputs on public transportation are influenced by the space. Public transportation in Chicago does not provide for equity in sensory exposures and experiences as passengers travelling to and from lower income and minority areas were more often exposed to unpleasant sights and smells. The ability to limit exposure to other people’s bodies is a sign of class privilege. Controlling things about our own bodies is considered civilized, yet passengers on the South Side and those traveling to the South suburbs have less control of body space and avoiding of sensory offenses than their more affluent and mostly White counterparts on the North Side of the city and those who travel to the Western suburbs on the UP-W train.

Express Routes and Time Inequality

Difference is also built into the CTA bus system through services and location, particularly through the availability and location of express bus routes. At
the start of my study the CTA bus system had 28 express bus routes. The majority of these routes traveled through the downtown central business district. Additionally, most of these routes originated/ended on the North Side of the city and in the more affluent areas of the South Side. As evidenced on the Table 2, what is absent from the current express bus pool are express buses serving the West Side of the city and the majority of the South and southwest sides. Although the mostly minority and low-income residents in these areas depend heavily on public transportation, as evidence by the ridership numbers, they do not enjoy the express options that the predominately White and wealthier North Side residents enjoy.

With the exception of the Outer Drive Express and the Inner Drive/Michigan Express, the express routes serving the Loop and North Sides of the city do not have a large average weekday ridership. CTA records show that ridership on South Side buses are some of the highest in the entire system, yet South Side residents only have four full express routes from which to choose, and these are only available east of King Drive (Table 2). Express buses that travel in and out of the more traditional residential neighborhoods are also almost always articulated buses, and as the CTA obtains newer model buses, these were usually first seen on these routes and on the Sheridan bus route. Even though the Jackson Park Express travels through some predominately Black communities, the majority of its route is downtown and in integrated and more affluent communities such as Kenwood and Hyde Park.
At the end of 2012 the CTA discontinued five express routes: the 144, 145, 122, 123 and X28, but the 144 & 145 already shared much of their routes with other existing express routes like the Inner Drive/Michigan Express, so passengers were

Table 2. CTA Express bus routes. The #144 & #145 were eliminated in January 2013. Ridership data is only available through September 2013. (D) Discontinued as of Jan 2013. Source: RTAMS (Original data source: Chicago Transit Authority Data Services)
still able access express services into downtown. One WFP passenger noted that “They had to get rid of some of the North Side routes because people would have cried bloody murder if they didn’t eliminate some North Side routes.” This comment was in reference to the last express route cuts that the CTA had implemented. In 2010, the CTA eliminated 9 express routes. These were done not based on ridership numbers but on the basis of race and class. The majority of the express routes discontinued at the end of 2010 served neighborhoods where residents are highly dependent on public transportation, in majority minority and poorer neighborhoods, and on routes that in some cases had triple the average weekday ridership as some of the routes that were not discontinued (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>AREA SERVED</th>
<th>AVERAGE WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X3 King Drive Express (D)</td>
<td>SOUTH/LOOP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X4 Cottage Grove Express (D)</td>
<td>SOUTH/LOOP</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X9 Ashland Express (D)</td>
<td>SOUTH</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X20 Washington/Madison Express (D)</td>
<td>WEST SIDE</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X49 Western Express (D)</td>
<td>SOUTH WEST</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X54 Cicero Express (D)</td>
<td>SOUTH WEST</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X55 Garfield Express (D)</td>
<td>SOUTH</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X80 Irving Park Express (D)</td>
<td>NORTHWEST</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128 Soldier Field Express</td>
<td>Game specialty</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168 UIC/Pilsen Express (D)</td>
<td>Game specialty</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Discontinued Express Routes. Source: RTAMS (Original data source: Chicago Transit Authority Data Services)

As shown on both charts, the number of express buses serving the South, Southwest and West Sides of the city were and are outnumbered by those serving the majority White and wealthier areas of the city. Unlike passengers who live on
the far North Side of the city, those living on the far South Side are unable to take an express bus into downtown, making for longer commutes to and from the central business district and the commuter rails that go into the suburbs. Their long rides into downtown are also on smaller and older buses. This institutional pattern of unequal distribution of express services further highlights the inequality in travel times into the downtown central business district. For those passengers who may be only able to find work in the West, North, or Northwest suburbs, it means longer rides to work. As one BFP passenger explained, “I used to work in Northbrook and it took me 2.5 hours just to get to work. I did that for seven years. Then the opportunity came along to transfer into downtown to work, I can now just take the Red Line to my job.” Although research, as well as CTA and RTA’s records show that low-income residents rely heavily on public transportation (Bullard 2006; Hanson 1995), institutional racism and classism continues to restrict equal access to the resources of the central business district. This is an inequality in service that is shaped along class and racial borders. Latino and Black city residents have less access to time-saving trips (these same populations also do not have equal access to express trains either). This shapes waiting times for buses and travel times throughout the city. To add insult to injury, while most South and Southwest Side residents do not have an express bus route available to them, the CTA provides express buses for many of Chicago’s sports fans traveling to and from Chicago Cubs, Blackhawks, and Bulls games (but not for White Sox fans to the park, US Cellular Field, on the South Side of the city). Express bus services and locations shows that
there is higher value placed on the time of White and wealthier passengers than on the time and conditions for poorer minority passengers.

Express routes also widen the social isolation gap. Because these buses, as well as trains, run express for part of the route, it allows for the avoiding of certain communities and people. Express routes cater to those who are “business class,” i.e. those with business in the downtown areas or who can afford to pay to attend professional sporting events and those who travel from the business commuter's rail, the Metra (as is the case with the #121-125 routes). Express buses also tend to be the longer articulated buses or the newer series of buses and cleaner, thereby supplying passengers not only with advantages in travel times, but spatial advantages where they can often spread out a little more. When crowded, it’s usually for less than 15 minutes (such as with the Outer Drive Express right before it gets on the outer drive- Lake Shore Drive).

Express services also provide unequal access to safety. When vehicles are express, stops are limited and this means that interruptions are limited and the possibility of unexpected events is also limited. I observed passengers sleeping more on express routes and using more technology than on any other routes, even when the bus or train was crowded. This was not the case on routes when the buses stopped every other block. Continuous, uninterrupted rides meant less jerking of your body, which was often experienced when the bus driver applied the brakes. It also meant more control of movement because people did not change seats once the bus started the express part of the route. If there was an empty seat next to them,
Passengers would often put their bags on the seat to spread out because they knew that no one else would be boarding. I also observed sleeping and silence patterns. During trips into downtown, buses were usually silent while on Lake Shore Drive. Even those who had been previously talking quieted down.

On regular routes, passengers were interrupted by the physicality of the bus stopping. Because the ridership is high on the South Side all day long, this meant that there was rarely any period of time when you could be on the bus and not have to endure stops every other block. Constant stops also meant that bus temperatures changed every two blocks as the front and back doors opened to board and disembark passengers. This shaped experiences on transportation and social behaviors and interactions.

**Residential Segregation and Transportation**

One crucial area of inequality that shapes the urban metropolis, and counties, is racial residential segregation, which is also classed. “Segregation was built on a foundation of ecological and overtly racist processes, leading to dramatic variation in static levels of segregation” (Timberlake and Iceland 2007:358). This practice, which is perpetuated and reproduced through racialized policies, restricts the social and residential mobility of racial minorities. Racial residential and economic segregation work through policies and practices; it is operated by the power elite; and it works against marginalized groups whose history in America is fraught with victimization, degradation, and loss. Racial residential and economic segregation have kept Blacks and Latinos isolated, i.e. “hyper-segregated,” from the mainstream
and therefore isolated from the freedom to enjoy economy prosperity and choice (Davis 1990; Drake and Cayton [1945] 1993; Massey and Denton, 1993; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005). Practices of racial, social and economic segregation have resulted in socioeconomic polarization throughout our urban metropolises (Dear and Flusty 1998).

Earlier scholarship that examined inequality and public spaces focused on how intentional and unintentional physical arrangements and social conventions limit and enable particular kinds of stratified interactions (Anderson 2011; Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2006). Prior studies show that the effects of racial residential segregation are not contained in the communities and neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993; Pattillo 2007; Sampson 2012; Welch, Sigelman, Bledsoe, and Combs 2001). Some scholars have also examined how public transport spaces are racialized spaces, but much of this work has focused on static spaces such as train stations and bus stops (Bullard and Johnson 2004; Lenton, Smith, Fox, and Morra 1999). These previous studies help us to better understand legacies of inequality that are produced and maintained through spatial segregation. We learn more about the growth of cities and the metropolis, and the role of contested spaces, through these studies but little is known about how segregation and legacies of inequalities are maintained and reproduced through non-static spaces and places, i.e. mobile structures.

Unlike in the metaphor of the cosmopolitan canopy, where ethnic and racial borders are deemphasized (Anderson 2011), racial and ethnic borders are hyper-
realized and hyper-produced on and around mobile spaces. In mobile spaces, racial, spatial, class and gender boundaries shape interactions and reproduce difference in hyper-realized ways. As discussed earlier, these boundaries are manifested in the physical spaces, services, locations, and designs of public transport systems. Examining mobile structures and spaces provides an important opportunity to unravel and explore how mobility shapes face-to-face social processes and renegotiated interactions within and across the urban terrain. It allows us to better understand the effects of racial residential segregation, which is also classed, and how it is maintained through the design of public spaces.

This section explores the impact of the intersection of racial residential segregation and material differences on public transportation systems. Specifically, I use Chicago’s ‘L’ trains as examples of how the temporality of mobility does not negate the consequences of racial residential segregation but instead these trains served as spaces where difference was hyper-produced and reproduced. In doing this, I advance urban scholarship on inequality and social interactions by showing how public transport systems and public transit culture reproduce inequality in the public terrain.

The ‘L’ is a good laboratory for examining how institutionalized material differences are transported and hyper-produced through mobile spaces that are materially different. Mobility exposes riders to people and environments that on other occasions are restricted. Using the ‘L’ as a laboratory I am was able to
examine the consequences of legacies of racism and class inequalities in shaping social interactions and behaviors in public spaces.

Earlier I discussed the material differences of the two major Red Line stations at 95th/Dan Ryan and Howard Street stations but in this section I focus on the material differences of the ‘L’ routes that use these stations, the Red and Purple lines, with primary focus on the Red Line. By exploring the materiality of the routes, I build a case that highlights institutionalized racism and how legacies of inequalities are perpetuated through transit systems. I then show how racism and racist ideas and patterns frame the Red Line as a segregated social space where social meaning is ascribed through a racialized lens that is also classed and gendered thereby reproducing inequalities.

*Social Locations and Locating Class on the ‘L’*

Like the Howard and 95th/Dan Ryan stations, trips along these routes are classed, but are especially raced. The Red Line train runs north and south through the city. The Purple Line train travels from Evanston, stops at Howard, and then travels into the central business district during morning and evening rush periods. The Red and Purple line trains, which are part of the same system, not only operate differently but these differences shape differentiated experiences among passengers.

The Purple Line, because it is predominately an Evanston train, has a ridership that is mostly upper and middle class Whites.¹ Passengers on the Purple

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¹ The median household income in Evanston from 2008-2012 was $68,051 (US Census 2010).
Line, especially when boarding downtown, tended to be White or Asian. There were also several class markers for this group, such as the use of high-end technology such as iPods, tablets & e-readers, iPhones, laptops, conversations about partaking for high-brow cultural events and places, and designer and high quality clothing and bags/briefcases. One respondent actually referred to the Purple Line as the “happy train.” This WMP reflected on his experiences on this line like this:

I usually take it [Purple Line] to Davis or Church stop (central Evanston). It’s interesting because the Purple line is like the Happy Train. It’s where all of my experiences where people seem to just be in a better mood. They also seem to be younger. I don’t know if they’re just going to do something fun or if they’re just happier people or what the deal is. But let’s say compared to the Red or the Blue or the Orange – they are more of the people who are ‘getting the work done’ and so they are more focused on what the next thing is that they gotta do. It’s sort of a feel about them. On the Purple line it’s a different deal. They’re just kinda hanging out, having a good time. I don’t think demographically, the Purple doesn’t usually have as high a volume as the other lines, it tends to pack up around the Howard stop – it feels like you’re joining a party [packed with the folks who came in express from downtown is what he meant] Feels like a funnier trip. (August 2013)

During this interview, I remember wondering how much social position shaped people’s mood – less cares about affording food, paying rent, clothing, crime, jobs, etc. I wondered if people on the Purple Line seemed happier because the train was usually cleaner than other lines, it ran express for a good portion of the trip which meant less interruptions and anxiety about who boarded, and it catered to a ridership that seemed demographically similar. After overhearing numerous conversations on both the Red and Purple Line trains, I concluded that much of the mood on the Purple Line is shaped by the social position of its majority passengers.
Passengers either became engrossed in their laptops, tablets, or smart phones, talked about going ‘out’ or they read. I never heard passengers on this line discussing concerns about their personal safety at home or when walking through their neighborhood or about paying bills, reliance on public transportation and concerns about disruptions to service.

This was not the case on the south end of the Red Line, where passengers were often coming from socially and economically isolated and deprived areas of the city where one of the major concerns in their lives was their safety and that of friends and family members as demonstrated in numerous conversations like this one between two BMPs who boarded at 95th and at 87th Street: After 87th Street, they discussed some folks being locked up and how they avoided ever going to prison. They then moved to a conversation about gun violence:- “But the shorties now, they’ll do anything.” (pause) “Time’s changed. Mother f***ers will shoot anybody. It’s why I’m trying to get out of town.” The other BMP then said “They tried to kill Boomie, man. Shot him six times. They (Boomie) down in Florida and haven’t been back since.” There was nothing ‘fun’ or ‘happy’ about this ride or the several others where passengers discussed “handlin’ their business,” or planning to “roll up on a b**** and letting her know I don’t play,” or informing their friends that they need to keep their business tight to the chest because "I don’t play games. You like to let folks in your mother f***ing business. I don’t play. I see sh** from afar."

These types of conversations happened during various times of day, among different age groups, and with men and women. Unlike the Purple Line passengers, these
southern Red Line passengers did not discuss driving downtown or going to Ravinia but discussed getting to school, to friend’s houses, or trying to find something to do, just as Al Young (2004) demonstrated in *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men*. Patterns of conversations were shaped by the conditions of poverty as the Red Line traveled through areas with hardship indexes as high as 98/100 and unemployment rates as high as 40% (Health and Human Services, City of Chicago) just as conversations on the north end of the Red Line and on the Purple line were shaped by living in and around areas with better resources and more economic stability.

Comments made about having to wait long for buses/trains were a regular part of the scene on the southern end. People boarded complaining of “the bus taking all day” but having to deal with the ‘L’ too. Others complained about having to wait at 3am for a late bus that should have arrived at 3:15am but that didn’t come until 3:45am. At Howard, the biggest wait was for one train to clear out so the other could pull up to the platform because there are three trains that utilized the station. At Howard, the majority of waiting passengers were usually engaging with technology, often tracking the train, texting, playing games, listening to music, or checking email. Even those in groups often had their technical device, or evidence of it (such as a cord coming out of a bag or pocket), on display. At 95th Street there were more people without technology and those who had it were usually listening to music. These patterns continued when the passengers boarded the train.
College students boarded both the Purple Line and the Red Line trains. Those boarding on the North Side were oftentimes students from elite private universities such as Northwestern, Loyola, and DePaul universities, as signified by their clothing, lanyards, and conversations, while those who boarded on the South Side discussed attending proprietary schools that had downtown locations such as Westwood College, Computer Systems Institute, and the Illinois Institute of Art. This latter group was not usually dressed in clothing that demarcated their school. Interviews with some of the college students that I encountered on both the North Side and the South Side showed that there were class and race transit use patterns on each Side of the city as well. There is plenty of research that shows that people from lower economic groups rely heavily on public transportation (Bullard 2006; Hanson 1995; Sanchez, Stolz, and Ma 2003; Tomer 2011); what I found more compelling was that on the train, this same group also attended proprietary schools even though they could access the city’s traditional colleges and universities by train as well.

The South Side student respondents were Black and the North Side students were White, Asian and Biracial. Those on the South Side noted that they use public transportation as their major source of transit, even on weekends, whereas the North Side students used it mostly during the weekday, to get back and forth to school, to go shopping, or if meeting friends ‘out.’ North Side students also discussed using other modes into downtown like buses and bikes, but the South Side students were concerned about the Red Line renovations because it meant more
transfers and longer trips into downtown because that end of the Red Line was completely shut down for five months. North Side students did not have to navigate the North Side renovations through drastic measures like the Black South Side students did, because the North end’s renovations meant only a few station closures and no adjacent stations were closed at the same time. As I discuss in the next section, on the North Side, the stops are usually a few blocks apart and there are buses and a large pool of cabs to choose from as well. But more importantly, the Howard Station did not close during any of the renovations, unlike the 95th/Dan Ryan station. One South Side student argued on the phone with her family because she had to move due to the renovations, telling them “I’m not going through all those transfers to get to school.” Other South end Red Line passengers discussed similar concerns, but timing and transferring several buses was not part of the conversations on the North end of the Red Line or on the Purple Line where passengers enjoyed close station stops and several alternative routes – i.e. express buses, cabs, other trains – to reach their destinations in a timely fashion.

**Gender Codes on the Train and Responses to Material Differences**

The ‘L’ also has material gender inequalities that deserve examination as they shape unequal experiences and reproduce inequalities. Observations of women’s bodies in this space showed that women’s bodies were navigated throughout the space through design, because of “stranger harassment” (Fairchild and Rudman 2008) and the masculinization of space that shaped trains, and buses as well, into hostile places and spaces for women. “Women have different
experiences in public places than do men” (Gardner 1990:311). Women not only experience public places differently than men but they also do not have equal access to space as men (Koskela and Tani 2005; McDowell 1999). Women must reconcile these experiences as well as the possibility of them when in confined public spaces. This reconciliation involves “deliberate and strategic” boundary work (Fuller 2003). This boundary work is complicated on mobile spaces, especially trains, where escape strategies and options were limited by train design and movement.

Although train cars are wider than buses, train cars and platforms are hard for women traveling with packages and children to navigate. Women were often the ones traveling with a child or a group of children. When traveling with a stroller it was difficult for them to walk from the elevator to the train boarding areas because the space was narrow (it was also very challenging to those in wheel chairs and using other mobility devices). One mother was vilified and called the “troll who lives under the bridge” and the McDonald’s character Grimace, because she chose a creative way to hold onto her children while walking the narrow ‘L’ platform. People found it ‘reprehensible’ that she had one toddler over her shoulder while she held the hand of the other one while they walked from the train to the exit.

On the ‘L,’ women were at particular risk for more strangers connecting to their ‘golden zones’ (the areas between the upper chest and lower hip) or being exposed to theirs. When the CTA unleashed their Bombardier 5000-series trains, golden zones were exposed and visited more than any other time during my study. Because the majority of the seats on these cars face each other, instead of forward,
passengers were more likely to be facing a crotch when sitting down. If tall, other body parts were often directly in the passenger’s face (Figure 40).

![Image of passengers standing near the exit doors on the Bombardier 5000 cars](image)

Figure 40. Passengers standing near the exit doors on the Bombardier 5000 cars

I write this sarcastically because when I first boarded one of these train cars I remember thinking, “Really? Who thought this design was a great idea?” The technology was great but not the seating arrangements. I was aware that these train cars were similar to those used in many places, such as New York, but that didn’t make it a smart idea. Women complained of feeling more vulnerable when standing in these cars, especially when the train was crowded. Passengers, men and women, also noted that they were uncomfortable sitting in the sidewalk facing seats because of often being exposed to men’s crotches and because of the bucket seats which could make for tighter seating.
The strap handles on these trains move and that also meant that passengers risked being bumped into by other passengers and more often when the train was stopping or starting. This design also made it harder for women to navigate the space because women are less likely to sit in a seat between two men, which meant that they were often standing up. On the older cars, the maximum seat mate was one person. Standing up and holding onto strap handles instead of the back of seats, like on the other models, exposed women’s golden zones. In the summer, there were many exposed midriffs and upper thighs when women reached to grab the straps when a pole wasn’t available.

Train cars were also gendered when men sexualized the space by exposing themselves or referencing--through pointing or words--their genitals and offering women the opportunity for a sexual experience. This shaped a hostile environment as well. During an interview, a FP noted that she told a man that she would “punch him in the throat” if he continued to talk to her. She made this statement after he continually tried to talk to her and he wouldn't back down. He then told her “I bet if Gucci Mane asked for that p***y, you’d give it to him,” to which she then responded, “If you say one more thing to me, I will punch you in the throat.” This happened on a rush hour train, but she also noted that she was surrounded by women. The offending male exited the train at the next stop. An empty or only half-filled train can be tragic and uncomfortable for women in ways that are not experienced by men.
Taking the train could many have traumatic consequences for women. This particular story was shared with me by a WMP before I was able to read about it online. In November of 2013, a White female boarded the Red Line train at Granville and was completely naked. Some news reports said she was slapping passengers. When police arrived, they handcuffed the woman, behind her back, and escorted her off the train and down the platform and through the station. One passenger noted that he was disgusted and in shock that they did not cover the woman up, but had instead cuffed her behind her back and walked her, completely naked, through the train and down the platform (Figure 41). This woman was later referred to in *The Huffington Post* as the “nude goddess of the train,” after it had been reported that she referred to herself as the goddess of the train (Huffington Post November 2013). This would have not happened with a male offender. This naked woman’s picture was taken and posted all over the Internet by many who were on the train, leaving her naked body exposed beyond the Red Line.
Women have not only been victimized through these types of experience, but they also experienced unequal rights to safety and freedom of travel. When women have been attacked on the train, part of the official police response has often included reminding women to avoid empty cars when traveling alone. These gendered responses shape the ‘L’ into dangerous spaces for women, regardless of the time of day. Women often shared stories of being in masculinized spaces that were also dangerous for them, such as this situation, which a BFP shared during an interview:

Um geez... there were incidents before when I would be on the train and there would be guys masturbating on the train. I mean that's the um... I've seen [GP: What do experience or do when you see this or
how do you feel?] It’s violating. It’s violating. It makes you scared to get on the train. It’s been instances where I was the only one on the car and a guy masturbated, but it’s like, I didn’t want to say anything. I didn’t know what he was gonna do to me and the button was so far away from me [she was referring to the call for help button that is near the exit doors on the train cars]. It’s like, do I go for the button and see what is going to happen? So I had to just sit there and wait and he ended up jumping off on Addison. But still it was something that occurred and you won’t catch me in a car by myself. If I’m the only one there, I move to another car with other people around.

Other female respondents had similar trepidation, and noted that they usually sat in the first car at night because at least they would be closer to the driver if anything happened. But even train conductors, when female, aren’t immune to stranger harassment and hostilities, as observed during this incident on the Red Line at Howard Street. Two BFTC were talking on the train waiting for the departure time when a BMP decided to engage in conversation. He told one of the women his age, called her “baby,” and then eloquently quoted several verses of poems. When the other BFTC conductor had exited the conductor’s space and sat next to the first BFTC, he said "Hi, blondie." He then went on to ask the first one which church she went too. The second BFTC said 'stop asking her questions,' to which he replied "I'll be waiting for you at home brown sugar. I want some sugar and honey and you know what I mean by honey." The two women looked at him, and the one who would be operating the train, got up, went back into the control room, closed the door and the train doors and departed the station. There were several White and Asian males in the space during this incident and on the platform
when the same man threatened a BFP, but each time they turned their bodies or their heads away from him and the ladies he was harassing.

The physical space of the platform and trains - exit door locations, seating arrangements - made it hard for women to move around. The masculinization of space, created through stranger harassment, shaped the train into uncomfortable and dangerous spaces for women in ways not experienced by men. When women shared their stories with me or online of being harassed, felt-up, rubbed against, propositioned in “disgusting” and inappropriate ways, or threatened, none had stories to share where anyone, other than other women, stood up, spoke up, or stepped in for them. One BFP complained that even after she had yelled at a guy for “choking the chicken” in front of her and had chased him off the train, no one said or did anything.

Public transportation is not a space of equality. Women do not have legal recourse for the harassment that they experience in these mobile public spaces (Grant-Bowman 1993). Mobility limits women’s ability to escape and avoid these masculine and hostile spaces. Trains have limited stops and choices for escape. On buses you can pull the cord and exit relatively quickly or sit or stand near the bus driver. Confinement and space and exit and escape limitations shape these social interactions. The masculinization of this space reproduces inequalities as women’s experiences are shaped in ways dissimilar to those of men.
Conclusion: Resulting Inequalities

In this chapter I showed how train cars, bus types, transit stops, and the layout of public transit systems reflect and build inequality through raced and classed experiences, but also through gendered experiences. Previous work on transit equity does not focus on why mobility and the physical layout of transit vehicles, stations or routes stations matter. In this chapter, I showed how material differences in the system shaped unequal access to time and space, safety, control of body space, physical closeness or distance, exposure to elements, and sensory experiences. These differences shaped passengers experiences with space and with each other. A reproduction of race and class inequalities on public transportation systems fragments certain types of social interactions and behaviors while others flourish.

Elijah Anderson (2011) argues that the cosmopolitan canopy offers “a respite from the lingering tension of urban life and an opportunity for diver peoples to come together and that they are [spaces] where people engage one another in a spirit of civility or even community and good will” (Anderson 2011:preface). But the cosmopolitan canopy can happen because these spaces are wide-open. Options for escape are abundant (even in Grand Central Station), even inside, because the space is static. Public transit isn’t the same type of respite. It isn’t a respite for those wrestling material inequalities found in this same system. Hyper-exposure to public transportation system inequalities leaves those wrestling with other material inequalities hyper-exposed to material inequalities in the confined spaces of the
system, while also being unable to equally access the metropolis’ resources, which further isolate Blacks and other minorities socially and economically. Riding through the metropolis these same residents often saw and experienced the “other” Chicago while riding on dirtier and older buses that travelled through developed and redeveloped spaces as they rode into the downtown central business district. When the excluded and included were together in the confined spaces of public transportation, patterns of social difference were hyper-realized.

Material inequalities and segregations shape social interactions on these routes. For passengers riding long periods of time on crowded buses, interactions may be more distancing when the excluded and included are together in confined and uncomfortable spaces. But interactions among passengers who chronically ride on older, smaller, and more time consuming routes can also show how inequalities can be resisted on public transportation. In Chapter 5, I discuss how, on the South Side of the Chicago, passengers resist these inequalities and actively transform the public transit spaces into mobile communities.

Material inequalities shape places of privilege, as passengers acted accordingly, and places of disadvantage. North Side riders not only expressed different expectations of mobile spaces than South Side Black, and lower income riders, but they also became hostile and cruel with other passengers when these expectations were not met. In the next chapter I discuss how material differences in the design of ‘L’ trains and routes, the social construction of imagined ‘L’ spaces,
racial residential segregation and economic isolation, shaped patterns of social differences in seating patterns, standing, and social behaviors on the train.

What we know is that institutionalized disparities shape social patterns of difference and reproduces inequalities. The material conditions of buses, trains, and stations, combined with unequal access to service and locations, means that Blacks and poor people have physical experiences that are different from others in more affluent, White, or integrated areas of the city. Material differences also put Black passengers at higher safety and health risks as they stood at the 95th/Dan Ryan station waiting for buses or crossed the terminal to board the train. Safety was also a problem for Black passengers on the South Side along the Metric Electric line in ways not experienced by other groups riding the Metra. Furthermore, bus types and conditions were also shown to be raced, and classed, as Blacks and low income passengers on the South Side had to jam and cram their bodies into crowded, narrow, and dirty buses throughout the day.

In the next chapter, Chapter 4, I discuss the consequences of these disenfranchised Black bodies in particular. I show how social and institutional antipathies shape public transportation systems as contested spaces that perpetuate legacies of racism. In Chapter 5, I show how Blacks resist this fragmentation by actively creating kinetic kinships and mobile communities.
CHAPTER FOUR

COLOR CODES: RACE IN MOTION

Everyone on here looking and saying 'I can’t wait ‘til they get off. They like, ‘They Black and they’re loud and cursing.’ Folks gonna walk in the cold to get away – BMP on Outer Drive bus (January 2013)

The young BMP who made this comment had boarded a northbound Outer Drive bus with several of his classmates. They boarded in the Loop at the Madison and State Street bus stop. When they boarded the bus, it was relatively empty. By South Water and Michigan Avenue, the bus was about 85 percent full. He and his mostly Black male group sat down in the middle raised seat section of the bus and continued their conversation. Those conversing repeatedly used the n-word and profanity. It was rush hour so the bus not only quickly filled but people were willing to stand in order to get home. Although this bus was crowded, White and Asian passengers avoided standing near the area where this group was both seated and standing. Blacks did not have the same response but instead both stood and sat near this group. The group was conscious of this avoiding as the one looked around and said, “Everyone on here looking and saying I can’t wait ‘til they get off. They like, ‘They Black and they’re loud and cursing.’ Folks gonna walk in the cold to get away.”

In previous chapters, I focused on how institutionalized inequalities are reproduced through built in material differences on public transportation systems.
In this chapter, I focus on the responses to raced social interactions. Racism and racist ideas are interwoven in our histories, social structures, and institutions and the effects play out in everyday life (Bell 1992; Bonilla-Silva 2006; Bullard and Johnson 1997; Fanon 1963; Feagin 2006; Omi and Winant 1994; Wiley and Shiffman 2012). Although there has been racial progress, such as a decrease in racial residential segregation, a significant portion of the White population still holds negative perceptions of Blacks and other minorities (Bobo and Charles 2009).

Whites on public transportation are not immune to these perceptions, and in public places they often expose minorities to raced interactions and violence (Feagin 1991). Public transport serves as a space where inequalities are reproduced through mobile social interactions. In this chapter, I show that racist performances are not ‘backstage’ (Eliasoph 1999; Goffman 1959; Picca and Feagin 2007), nor captured in the idea of hidden and subtle micro-aggressions. When the transit doors shut, they are performed and expressed in face-to-face interactions and online, where racist ideas “offend not only social but also sociable sensibilities” (Menely 2008:95). In these spaces, people show, through various tactics, the social disregard for and undesirability of Blacks. These confined mobile and integrated spaces do not produce sociability, where one’s pleasure or joy derives from other people’s happiness (Simmel [1905] 1971), but instead produces hostilities. As one of the few places where people of different ethno-racial backgrounds encounter each other in public mobile spaces, public transportation are sites of the replication of civility and incivility among people of different race, gender, and class positions,
and sites of its construction too. As I show in this chapter, ‘social ordering’ (Goffman 1971) is challenged and disrupted through raced social interactions on mobile spaces. Public transportation brings the included and the excluded together in restrictive places where differences are hyper-realized and hyper-produced in face-to-face interactions and behaviors.

I use this chapter to examine two forces of mortal injury – hostilities and nice-nastiness – that are wounding Black bodies on public transportation systems. The hostilities are exemplified in aggressive and intentionally harmful responses to Blacks on these systems, whereas the nice-nastiness is played out through avoidance and exclusion techniques. This chapter demonstrates that raced social interactions on public transportation have intentional, malicious, and deliberate characteristics. Structural inequalities shape raced and unequal spaces and hateful responses.

Differentiated patterns of interaction highlight the malicious force behind raced social interactions. I also highlight the deliberation of raced social interactions on public transportation routes and the kill orders posted on People of the CTA. And finally, I show that intentional raced negligence jeopardizes Black bodies, including Black transit personnel, on public transportation systems.

Transportation racism shapes structural violence where harm is absorbed by the marginalized and inflicted by the privileged. I foreground the risk, threats and injury that Blacks experience through these raced social interactions to illustrate how the face-to-face and daily consequences of racism are numerous, injurious, and violent (Feagin 2006) and how Blacks are particularly vulnerable to these risks and
violence. Racism in motion results in a hyper-exposure to risk and damage for minority passengers. Through daily face-to-face interactions where “racial ideologies and structures are lived out” (Lewis 2003:284) public transportation reproduces inequalities. Yet, it is not only in material space that these relations are created. Increasingly, social life is also virtually mediated. Therefore, I also show how socially violent raced interactions are perpetuated through virtual space, thereby exposing Black passengers to more threats and danger.

**The Politics of Harm and Racial Aggression**

Throughout America’s long history with racism, racial conflict and racial subjugations, those at the top of the race advantage ladder often exhibit uneasiness when those near the bottom, or the Black line (Anderson 2011; Bonilla-Silva 2001; DuBois 1903), bring up the topic of race inequality, especially in a public setting. As an example, I began this chapter with an epigraph from a January 2013 trip on a northbound Outer Drive bus where, in the midst of his friends and a crowded rush hour bus, a young BMP loudly proclaimed that “everyone on here looking and saying ‘I can’t wait til they get off. They like, ‘they Black and they’re loud and cursing.’ Folks gonna walk in the cold to get away.” When he said this, the non-Black passengers who were within a few feet noticeably tensed up, looked down, or looked away. As the bus moved along, non-Black passengers avoided sitting next to this young man and his seven friends, who, based on their conversation, were college students. This avoidance pattern and looking away from Blacks and other minorities was repeated on many rides on buses and the trains. Many race scholars discuss these avoiding
patterns as racial micro-aggressions, racial apathy, or unconscious because of the routinization, subtleness, or brevity of the actions (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Feagin 1991; Forman 2004). I agree that some racist acts may seem small, subtle or brief but I want to push that card back. To quote Lawrence Bobo and Camille Charles (2009), I do so “without apology or excuse,” and assert that these racial micro-aggressions are as subtle as first-degree murder. They are not brief as these acts are continual abuses that Black passengers don’t get to just experience once, but over and over again when boarding public transportation.

Racism is uncomfortable, brutal and burdensome, and to call raced actions or interactions small, minute, or delicate (Bonilla-Silva 2006, Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, and Esquilin 2007; Vega 2014) diminishes the impact and consequences in both singular instances and with aggregate experiences. The young man on the bus made his comment after he watched Whites and Asians hurrying past him and his friends. When he looked around, the only ones engaging his gaze were Blacks, while others quickly turned away. By asserting a definition of the situation, the young BMP exerted power by limiting what Whites were likely to do. When gazes are diverted, the intent is to avoid looking; just as when minorities and spaces they are in are avoided, the intent is distancing; when services are unequally distributed, the intent is to provide privilege. Examinations of daily face-to-face social interactions reveal patterns of social difference that are intentionally raced and damaging. In this chapter, I engage the criteria for first degree murder - intent,
malice aforethought and deliberation (law.cornell.edu) - to highlight and illustrate the impact, harm and damage that Blacks suffer on public transportation systems.

Public transportation systems intentionally disenfranchise minorities and the poor. I have shown how this is achieved through services, locations, bus and train designs, planning documents, and maps. I have also shown how minorities, women and poor passengers experience these built in inequalities. In this chapter, I further investigate public transit systems to demonstrate historical practices of racial antipathy throughout the system. This chapter focuses on how Blacks in particular absorb the intentional, malicious, and deliberate harm of institutional inequalities and the negative impact of these inequalities, including segregation, on social interactions in mobile spaces.

Structural Damage: How Blacks Experience Harm Through Structural Inequalities

The reality of Chicago is that it is a segregated space where minorities and poor people experience hyper-segregation and hyper-ghettoization (Massey and Denton 1993; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005). This segregation shapes the demographics on the Red Line, as well as other lines. To better understand raced social interactions on the Red Line, it is important to also understand how the route is spatially and socially raced.

The Red Line is the CTA’s busiest train route. As one WMP described it, “I almost feel like the Red Line is the umbilical cord like for Chicago. It’s the thing that keeps the city alive in terms of its own public transportation” (WMP September
The WMP who expressed these feelings during an interview in 2013 reflected fondly on his experiences with the Red Line. He perceived of the Red Line as an umbilical cord of the city due to its 24-hour service and north-south route. Yet the Red Line is also a raced space where racism and racist ideas and patterns in the space are expressed against Blacks.

A review of CTA transit map systems shows, for example, that stops along the Dan Ryan end of the Red Line, which serves predominately Black neighborhoods, are 1-1.5 miles apart. North end stops are much closer: many are only 2-3 blocks away from the next stop or are near alternate bus routes that run often or express into the central business district (Figure 42).

![Figure 42. Red Line stops and distances](image)

The Red Line is a space where you not only see the demographics of the city in clear view if you ride it from end to end, but it is also a space where the reality of the city “expresses itself.” The reality is that the city’s residents are economically,
socially, and racially isolated. The Red Line is just one of the eight ‘L’ routes, it is not the only 24 hour train, it does not travel to any of the area airports, and yet, as the CTA’s busiest train route, many feel connected to this line, even when the connection was only an imagined experience – as a respondent who imagine having taking it to its furthest southern stop even though he didn’t travel as far south as 79th Street. The Red Line carries passengers into and through the busy downtown shopping and tourist corridors and to the homes of the White Sox and Chicago Cubs, but the space north and south of these corridors is raced and classed, both on the Red Line and in the segregated city. Data from ethnographic field work and online show that the Red Line was undesirable by many White and Asian passengers when mostly Black, on the South Side, and when Blacks who appeared homeless were riding it. But during business hours, after festivals and parades and Cubs games, and when out drinking excessively, it was shaped as a desirable place for Whites. But this desirable space was restricted to the tourist and sports corridor and the north end of the line.

Although over 15 miles of the Red Line route travels through predominately White and diverse communities and upper- and middle class neighborhoods, race and class, Blackness and poor people in particular, were often attached to discussions about this line in ways different than other lines. Even though it travels through downtown and on the North Side, it also travels throughout the day and night and through parts of the South Side. People often discussed the Red Line as two difference places because of this. White respondents often looked at it as a
badge of honor when they told me they had taken the Red Line to the South Side
or when they stayed on their train car even after it was mostly minorities as this
WMP did:

I experienced the reroute to 79th but usually, actually, I have never been down there this year. I've always wanted to but just didn’t. It was interesting because while riding one day I decided to keep track of who is on the train. It’s Saturday so the train is super packed with like tourists. Well, from where I get on at Loyola to Fullerton. I noticed that when I got to Roosevelt, everyone who wasn’t Black funneled off. That’s what I noticed. It was kind of interesting because (pause) I’m just sitting there. I don’t really feel out of place or anything. I feel fine. But I can tell that like, um (pause) there was a White family with their three little kids, and there’s a Black (pause) woman and her boyfriend it looked like. They were sitting like across. And he put like his boot, like he put his boot on one of the seats (Respondent motions to show that it was the side of the seat). It was a two-seater. And he put his put his boot on the seat (Again he motions to show it was on the side of the seat) and the whole family just like (pause) moved, away. {GP: Oh they got up?} Yea, they got up and moved because he put his boot on the seat. It was so weird and I was like, what. It was so weird. They didn’t seem like they, like, live in the city. I don’t know it was just so weird.

[GP: how far did you go?] - I went all the way to the end. [GP: Oh you went to 95th?] No, I went to the end of the renovation. Prior to that trip the furthest south I’ve been is Roosevelt [The Red Line ran on the elevated tracks to Ashland/63rd not 79th Street as he had thought].

His response to my question “Have you had any experiences with the Red Line construction” was interesting for a variety of reasons. He had shaped taking about the Red Line south as if it was some adventure or some place so different that he needed to see it since he’s “always wanted to” go south of Roosevelt Road. He also found it necessary to note that he was fine with being on a train car that had mostly Black passengers and that he didn’t “feel out of place” and said he felt fine.
Although social actors ascribe their own meaning to spaces and places, these meanings are not devoid of the effects of institutionalized inequalities (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Embrick et al. 2012; Feagin 1991; Hayden 1995; Logan and Molotch 1987; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005). The Red Line was often perceived and described as a place of fear and danger people online and in overheard conversations so the WMP who “felt fine” with staying on the train after it became mostly Black, had braved it past the corridor of comfort – that was his adventure. Danger and fear was mostly ascribed to the Red Line when it travelled through certain parts of the city, specifically in predominately Black spaces as exemplified during a trip on the UP-W Metra train:

St. Patrick’s Day weekend in 2013 was extremely busy on the UP-W train. Eastbound trains were filled with people dressed in green and heading to the parade. During one of the more empty trips, after the parade had started, a WFP who had boarded at Oak Park began a conversation with a White couple shortly after we left the station. She complained about the lateness of the train. [Late trains are typical on west, north, and northwest lines during activities associated with Chicago’s social sabbaticals as people boarded by the hundreds and often tried to jam into one entrance instead of using all of them.] She discussed her preference for the Metra over CTA. She eventually said “I would have taken the Green line but its cree…” She didn’t finish the word, but instead looked sideways at me. She continued “I’ll take the Blue line.” The WMP from the couple then cautioned her about the Red Line and not taking it because it was dangerous. She concurred and added that she won’t take it south “like toward Sox Park.”

This latter comment suggested that the woman wouldn’t take the train toward the South Side because it was outside of her comfort zone, but not because it was in Chicago, because she had traveled to Chicago often. But this comment, along with her unfinished Green Line comment, was raced. The WFP’s comments and her
glance in my direction were raced interactions. As the only person of color in the space on St. Patrick’s Day, were the UP-W is filled car to car with an over 90 percent White ridership, many of whom were well over-the-top drunk, raised my risk level. Her raced comments and behavior reflected the consequences of racial residential segregation which shape social and spatial distancing that is hyper-realized on public transportation.

Comments about the Red Line on the People of the CTA website often focused primarily on the south end of the train where the space was racialized through comments and responses, and where Black people were often discussed through a hostile and injurious framework. Smells, danger, stereotypes and Blackness were made synonymous with this line in ways not replicated in conversations about other train lines. For example, a picture of a BFP was posted on People of the CTA. The woman was wearing a white coat and she was sitting with her skirt slightly above her knee and her legs weren’t crossed. The person who took the picture captured a part of the woman’s panties that were showing. Responses to this picture included: “This red line train must be heading south”; “I bet that whole side of the bus STANKKK” [even though the caption said it was the Red Line]; and “There really should be a distinction on Red Line posts... North Side or South Side? I never get to see this sh** on my route.”

This matters because the perception of this space, the Red Line, as a space of ‘others’ when it traveled through particular parts of the city, shaped how White people interacted with Blacks when the train traveled to the downtown area from
the South Side. People ‘imagined’ the south end of the Red Line as a space delineated from the rest of the line. They imagined it as a Black and undesirable space, as demonstrated by the over 386 comments about it on People of the CTA, which was more than twice as much as any other line or area of the city. More than any other space, the Red Line and the South Side were framed through a raced and class lens.

Public transportation also reproduces inequalities through raced policies and planning that are injurious for a majority Black ridership. CTA documents show that security is differentially placed, or more specifically, risk reduction is raced. We can see this along its Red Line route. The Red Line has completed or will complete several major station renovations between 2012-2015 to the Wilson (Uptown), Loyola (Rogers Park), Clark/Division (Gold Coast), 95th & Dan Ryan and Red Line north stations renovations projects. The 95th/Dan Ryan area of the renovations is on the South Side, and the other stations are located north of downtown. Press releases on each of these projects included information regarding budgets, purpose of project, projected completion dates, bike racks, and new and improved features, structures, and lighting. What is also mentioned for the Wilson, Clark & Division, and the Red Line north stations project (which included work on 7 stations) is the concern for keeping passengers safe, but by improving security in particular. The 95th/Dan Ryan station project only mentions improving passageways for pedestrians to cross to get to the train; for now they have to cross in front of lots of buses and cars to access the train station.
The documents highlight a pattern of providing protection of and security for certain bodies – mostly White and those in North Side community areas and neighborhoods, such as Uptown and the Gold Coast - while not providing this same level of security for Blacks on the South Side of the line. This is evidenced in these excerpts from CTA press releases:

Wilson (Uptown): “New, brighter lighting and the installation of more than 100 security cameras throughout the stations and its three entrances will help improve customer safety.”

95th & Dan Ryan – “The station does not currently have direct access to and from 95th Street, a problem that requires pedestrians to use terminal areas for street access, posing safety risks.”

Clark/Division renovations: “State-of-the-art communication and security equipment.”

Red Line North Stations Renovations: “Security camera system will be maintained and/or modified.” (Chicago Transit Authority)

In fact, the seven page press release for the renovations of the 95th/Dan Ryan station does not mention the word ‘security’ at all. The focus is solely on pedestrians’ walking safety: “Improvements are also needed to better serve existing high volume of riders, provide safer passenger access to buses and the train station, and expand passenger facilities that will lead to a modern, safe and pedestrian-friendly transit center with fewer delays and shorter travel times” (Chicago Transit Authority).

The omission of any additional ‘security’ measures on any of the south end Red Line renovation projects is even more problematic because of crime patterns on the CTA. A January 31, 2014 NBC5 Investigates report revealed that after analyzing
police data to determine “which CTA platforms have the highest number of reports of violent crime and thefts. We found that the Red Line station at 95th and the Dan Ryan Expressway tops the list with the most violent crimes” (NBC5 Investigates, Jan 31, 2014). The risk and injury that Blacks on the South Side experience was highlighted in an interview with a 25-year-old BMP in a wheelchair. He was panhandling on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Randolph when I stopped to interview him. During the interview, he noted that during the Red Line South renovations, there were visible and new security measures taken to protect White bodies, especially between Roosevelt and 55th Street (where most non-Black passengers left the train), but that more security is needed all the time, regardless of who was on the train:

Since the reconstruction, because of the reconstruction, there are more police around [near the Green Line]. But we need to have them around more often during other times. During the reconstruction of the Red Line they put a lot of police at the stop where the shuttle buses come. But they need to put more police around during other times. People need protection all the time. People be on there smoking and they just get off before the police get on. There be like ten police out at 55th (during reconstruction). So when people snatch an iPhone – on 47th - or something, they’re going to get off before 55th. And fire trucks and ten police out, everything be out there at 55th. (September 2013)

He also noted that security personnel are needed on the South Side of the city because of the crime but noted that these new security measures were along the Green Line and at the stop where passengers were redirected during the Red Line South reconstruction project. “They need more security on the ‘L.’ Like undercover cops. Someone who just sits there and doesn’t say anything but you know they’re
the law. They need more security because the ‘L’ is dangerous, very dangerous, especially when you get on the South Side. Cameras aren’t enough. They don’t care about no cameras. I done seen somebody roll weed right in front of the camera. (pause) I be on the ‘L’ counting my money and I’m like, ‘You gone do what you gone do so.” He shared these comments on security when I asked, at the conclusion of the interview, if there was anything he wanted to add about his experiences on public transportation that I had not asked about. The salience of safety concerns for this Black male passenger was particularly interesting because many of the reports regarding the CTA and safety tend to present Black males as perpetrators of crimes on public transportation and only mention them as victims if they are killed. His security concerns weren’t imagined but experienced.

Another BMP discussed his stepson’s near robbery while riding the bus near Bronzeville. He noted that his stepson was sitting on the back of the bus listening to music and was going to be getting off near the house. He noticed when a few other BMPs boarded and came and sat by the back exit doors. He was in the back of the bus. They attempted to rob him and then jumped off the bus through the exit doors. They had shown him a weapon but did not remove it from their clothing. When they saw that he was about to make a scene they quickly jumped off the bus. As far as he knows, these would-be robbers were never caught and the story was not reported on the news, even though cameras on the bus more than likely recorded the incident (July 2013).
In another incident, in February 2013, police released pictures of a masturbator who had exposed himself to a woman on the Red Line near Granville. This same man had been seen masturbating on the south end of the Red Line a few days before the news release. During that incident he had pulled his coat over his head, pleasured himself, and then left the train. Black passengers often expressed awareness of the lack of response and attention to South Side disturbances and security issues compared to responses given when things happened downtown or on the North Side. One older BMP noted that offenders can “do whatever they want to do” because there was no one policing what happened. Another BMP noted that a lot of illegal activities happens when the trains are on the South Side “because very little police presence [is on the train] once it hits outside the Loop.” Disparity in security maintenance shapes these mobile spaces into risky places where injury is heightened because security is lacking or low. These interviews also show that Black passengers are aware that more can be done to protect them and to reduce their risk levels. They also understood that they were not experiencing the same safety and security as those riding outside these *sequestered spaces* on the South Side of Chicago.

The intentional negligence that Black passengers experience on the system violates their right to safety and security, a right that is afforded White and more affluent passengers and those not trapped in socially and economically isolated areas of the city. It also perpetuates the idea of Blacks as perpetrators. Raced
security reproduces inequalities on public transport systems and exposes Blacks to higher chances for injury.

**Nice-Nastiness: Injuring Black Passengers Through Interactions**

The very limited physical spaces on public transportation limit people’s ability to use many of the strategies that they might use in open spaces, such as moving away from others, not having to hear particular kinds of comments, and avoiding being stared at or ignored. Thus although city buses and trains allow Blacks and poor people to physically move into and through integrated places, these mobile but confined spaces reproduces, and indeed, intensifies classed and raced inequalities. It hyper-exposes these groups to hostilities and *nice-nastiness* in social interactions. In this section I examine how this is carried out against Blacks on varies transit routes.

When Latino passengers boarded the Red Line, for instance, at 55th and 47th streets, they sat wherever there was availability. At 35th Street (Sox Park), boarding patterns changed depending on whether or not there was a White Sox game. When there were lots of White passengers boarding, White passengers readily found places to stand or sit as they boarded, but when the space was predominately Black (i.e. the majority of the passengers who were already on the train and getting on the train were Black), this was not the case as White passengers tended to look around and contemplate longer where they were going to stand or sit. When the train pulled into 22nd Cermak/Chinatown, boarding Black passengers sat wherever there was a seat but Asian passengers mostly stood or sat near each other. When other
White and Asians passengers boarded the Red Line beginning at Harrison, sitting/standing patterns reflected these same patterns of *nice-nastiness* - expressions that are insulting but presented as politeness - avoiding sitting next to Blacks and choosing to stand until empty seats became available next to non-Blacks. These acts of *nice-nastiness* were a way of saying “I’m not racist,” while politely showing Black passengers that they were. For example, an AMP and WMP boarded the train at Harrison. Most of the passengers in the train car were Black. There were plenty of aisle seats available where they could sit across from each other and talk. Instead, they stood in the aisle, holding the back of the empty seats. When we left the subway and went above ground at Fullerton the train emptied out more. By Belmont more seats were available. Each of these men then sat in seats next to White passengers, even though seats were still available next to Black passengers, including the ones who were in the window seats next to the aisle seats that they had been standing next to. On another trip an older WFP boarded the Red Line train and passed up several seats next to people of color but then sat next to a WFP who was loudly chatting on the phone. These examples typify a pattern of *nice-nastiness* in avoiding Black passengers who are on the train when it is heading from the South Side. It was repeated during peak and off-peak hours. *Nice-nastiness* is a mask (Goffman 1959) put on by many of the White and Asian passengers in these spaces that said ‘I’m politely avoiding you because you are Black and I’m a racist.’ *Nice-nastiness* made raced negotiations for space less confrontational.
When White passengers boarded the train on the North Side, they did not avoid Black passengers in the same way, as if the Red Line train was two different ‘L’s. When Whites boarded on the North Side, they seemed oblivious to who was on the train at most stops (Wilson (Uptown) and Sheridan (Wrigleyville) were exceptions). Passengers’ seating patterns, interview comments, and online comments confirm this differentiating between the North Side of the Red Line and the South Side of the Red Line, as two separate lines. It’s a reliable line because it runs 24-hours a day and is ‘always there’ and is okay to ride when downtown or north of the city. As one WFP noted, “There are definitely times when I take the Red Line, like if I’m going toward Howard. If I’m going downtown I usually take the Red Line just because it’s quicker.” Only three of my non-Black respondents had taken the Red Line south of 22nd/Chinatown and only one had been to 95th.

Several respondents expressed an awareness of the divisible Red Line. Two of the WMPs noted that they noticed how far apart the stops were on the South Side line and that during the construction, Black passengers would be most inconvenienced. As one AMP noted when discussing the reconstruction on the south end of the Red Line and the CTAs decision to shut the line down from 22nd/Cermak to 95th/Dan Ryan “they would never do that... when they did the North Side it was every other stop. They would never shut down the entire route of anything or a long stretch at all”. Later he noted that the city “takes advantage of issues of race and class.” This divisible line and taking advantage of issues of race, were most harmful to Black passengers as they not only experienced
differentiations in services along the south end of the Red Line but also as they came into contact with people who used this divisible line within the confined spaces of the Red Line, through avoidance, and at other times through comments online about the South Side, the south end of the line, and about Blacks on the CTA.

There was one pattern that was outside of these typical nice-nasty interactions: that of older White men doing whatever they wanted in the space. WMPs that appeared to be older than 55 sat next to Black passengers more often than other Whites, who usually avoided them. This occurred on the bus and the CTA train, but not on the Metra. When other Whites would pass up empty seats next to BMPs, these men would sit down regardless of who else was in the space. During one evening trip on a packed Red Line northbound trip, stop after stop White passengers passed up seats next to Black males until the train because predominately White, but older, men often sat wherever there was space. This I thought was more a privileged action than a ‘Black people don’t bother me action.’ Nice-nastiness isn’t necessary when you’re in the most privileged position--as a person with a long lifetime of advantages.

As a Black person in the space, I experienced the avoiding and the diverted gazes, as well as the glares when other Blacks were violating the unspoken rules that Blacks should be quiet when in integrated space. During one trip a BMP with a cane yelled for someone to hold the door at the Sheridan stop on a southbound train. Although the southbound trains were usually a less hostile environment for Blacks, his loud pleas disrupted the social order which required that Blacks keep
their head down and just ride and to try to be invisible in integrated and White spaces. When he boarded the train, some Whites glared at him as he exhaustedly sat in the seat. Those in front of him continued to look back at him. During another trip, a WMP became annoyed with the two BFPs who were sitting behind him talking about work. Their volume levels didn’t appear differently than others on the train, yet he mumbled to himself, “These Black people talking, these Black people talking.” I further discuss how Blacks negotiated this unspoken rule of being silent and/or unnoticeable when in integrated spaces in Chapter 5.

Racism in motion is not limited to the CTA. Raced interactions were also observed on Metra trains. In this space, White passengers didn’t divert their gazes from Black passengers, but instead often stared at them for an unusual period of time. On the Metra Electric line, when the train stopped at stations in Black communities, such as Harvey and Riverdale, seated White passengers often stared out the window and watched as passengers walked the platform to board the train and then stared at them to see where they were going to sit. On one northbound trip, a WFP fixed her gaze on two young BMPs who boarded in Hazel Crest. She watched them as far as she could while they walked the platform, and then she turned her head to watch them as they entered the vestibule and then chose where to sit. This staring down BMPs in particular was a common occurrence and not repeated when White passengers boarded the train. The nice-nastiness was enacted as just ‘being observant’ and not as cautious racism.
The UP-W line passengers expressed raced patterns similar to those of
the CTA where Black passengers sat alone longer than any other group. Usually less
than 10 percent of the ridership was Black so this was very noticeable. Even during
evening rush hours, Blacks sat alone longer, as non-Black passengers often chose to
keep walking through the car if seats were not available next to non-Black
passengers. On this line, White passengers were often drunk, loud, and used
profanity, especially during summer months, but they were not avoided in this space.

Black children also absorb the damage from raced interactions. Metra is the
“family line” as one male employee told me, but all families are not interacted with
in the same way. Black families on the Metra Electric were more prevalent than on
the UP-W because of the demographics of the communities served by each line.
During the summer and on weekends, there are lots of families on both of these
trains. Most travel late mornings and during other off-peak times. During one trip,
on the 12:57 pm Metra Electric train at University Park a group of 14 children,
twelve Black children and two White children, along with three adults – one Black
and two White, boarded the train. While waiting at the station the Black adult
repeatedly reminded the children to watch their volume levels because “we’re not
the only ones on the train and we need to be respectful of others.” This would also
help them maintain the raced social order. At the time the train car was majority
people of color. As we moved northbound and a few stops away to Matteson,
Olympia Fields and Flossmoor, which are mostly middle to upper middle income
south suburbs, more Whites boarded the train. As if a memo had gone out, White passengers looked into the car as they boarded, saw all the Black people seating on the lower level, looked up and saw the Black children sitting upstairs and turned to head to a different car. In this instance, *nice-nastiness* was enacted as Whites avoided even sharing a relatively wide space with Blacks but where they presented it as if they were just avoiding the space because of the children, who were relatively quiet. Black boarding passengers engaged in the same scanning of the car and then opened the doors, entered, and found a seat. The BFP noticed this happening as she continued to ensure that the children weren’t disrupting the space with loud volume. This pattern of avoiding children did not happen with other groups. Loud and active White children not only often jumped up and down on the seats, but would run from one side of the upper seating, down the stairs, and up to the other side. Blacks came into those spaces with this happening and so did White passengers.

Raced social interactions were also observed on buses. On buses, Black passengers sat alone longer than any other group. Blacks who were ‘loud’ in the space were avoided but loud Whites weren’t avoided, as in these next examples. Four BFPs from an area high school were sitting on the back of the Outer Drive Express bus. They were laughing as the bus traveled southbound. They sat in the middle seats on the very last row of the bus. White passengers walked toward their area when boarding but when the girls laughed, they stopped and sat away from them. During a different trip on the same route, five White college students were
traveling together. They sat in the middle partition area of the bus. They laughed and talked loudly, yet people did not avoid their space but instead stood and sat close to them.

When Blacks sat next to Whites on the bus, they also often experienced *niceness* as White passengers turned their bodies or their heads to stare out the window and would then turn back after the Black passenger moved or exited the bus. In one instance a WFP became annoyed with a BFP who sat next to her. She scooted over when the BFP sat down. After a few minutes she yelled at the BFP, “Excuse me ma’am can you move over? I just moved over and then you moved over.” The BFP was not touching her. The WFP called someone shortly after the bus moved from the stop. While on the phone she put her shirt up to cover the side of her mouth that was next to the BFP. She also turned a little bit toward the window a little. “Don’t take this the wrong way but if he’s South American, maybe he can bring some drugs here... Well if he’s driving that type of car, he’s obviously not part of the drug cartel,” the WFP said to the person on the phone. She eventually scooted forward in the seat and turned toward the BFP and said “I’m gonna scoot up.” Through each of these interactions, she never looked at the BFP.

At night time, the Red Line train is often filled with young Black males. As these trains moved into the integrated spaces of downtown, White passengers repeatedly passed up empty seats next to these men. This was a pattern for both White men and women. During one late Friday night (10:45pm) trip on a northbound crowded Red Line train, several White passengers began boarding at
the Roosevelt and at the Jackson stops. These passengers did not sit next to any of the young BMPs who were already on the train. The BMPs were sitting quietly and looking out the window, yet no one sat next to them. Once the train became predominately White, these same passengers sat down, even though they had earlier avoided empty seats next to BMPs. Sitting patterns by these White passengers didn’t change as the train became less crowded, but only after the train car was no longer predominately Black. These instances of deliberate *nice-nastiness* are injurious, singularly and aggregately, as experiences of shunning and avoidance.

Even when Black passengers sought to assist White passengers, there civility was often met with incivility. During one trip on the Outer Drive Express bus a White couple boarded the bus. After scanning their transit card the WFP told the WMP that she must have grabbed the wrong card because it didn’t have enough money for both of their fares. They were short a nickel. A BFP who was sitting nearby overheard the conversation and offered them a nickel. The WMP refused her so the BFP offered it directly to the WFP who said thanks. The WFP gave the WMP a disapproving look. He never thanked the BFP.

Racism was also in motion online as Blacks were injured through words on the People of the CTA web site. On line, the Red Line, Blacks, and the South Side of Chicago were disparaging as spaces of distain, just as in the non-virtual Chicago. These hostilities, although witnessed in cyber space, were shaped by real world social isolation (Anderson 2011; Feagin 1991) and show that cyber relationships are not “disembedded” as other scholars suggest (Bauman 2001) but instead are
now embedded in place and in these new imagined communities of social networks. People of the CTA provided an important view on how the “enduring structures of our society” shaped responses to Blacks on public transportation as the “the online sphere is no longer a realm separate from the offline ‘real world’, but fully integrated into offline life” (Miller 2011:1). For example, comments along the lines of “Once you go Black you go single mom” were posted underneath a picture of a Black woman walking with her two children on the train platform. Even in instances where viewers could not see faces, people intended to injure Blacks, such as with a picture of two individuals on the train under a blanket with the smaller of the two who was in women’s jeans and shoes (based on design) was face down in the lap of the other individual who had large feet, rugged boots and jeans, people repeatedly wrote things like ‘They have to be Black’ or “Wanna guess what race they are.”

The majority of the pictures posted were of Blacks, but there were also several pictures of Whites. However, the majority of the comments were in response to a picture of a Black passenger. Table 4 shows that 62 percent of the posted comments were directed towards Blacks and that people shared or liked the comments at a higher percentage for Black passengers as well.
This social media page was very injurious and harmful for Blacks on public transportation. The most hostile words and exchanges were used with these pictures and in general comments about the CTA. As exampled in Table 5, words were raced when used only or mostly in response to pictures posted of Blacks. For example, the word ‘ghetto’ was only used in response of pictures where the subject appeared to be Black. Furthermore, the word was used 58 percent of the time with pictures of Black women. Pictures and comments on this site exemplified the harm and damage that Blacks experience on public transportation systems. Later I also show how the site is used to direct kill orders - suggestions to cause mortal injury - against Blacks.
People of the CTA posts highlighted the consequences of the persistent inequalities of the segregated metropolis and how they are reproduced on public transportation system. It showed that Black passengers were not immune to racist ideas and patterns. People of the CTA provided an additional space for people to do damage. People of the CTA served as a place where virtual reproductions of racial structures in other parts of society are expressed and where race was constructed and performed (Embrick, Wright, Lukacs 2012) through posts, comments, likes, and shares. The social isolation and raced spaces of the real world continued online (Embrick et al. 2012). This online world was injurious for Blacks and the massive amount of pictures posted of Blacks exposed Blacks to daily harm, showing that on this site as well, risk reduction was raced. “Spatial separateness allows social

Table 5. Raced words from People of the CTA
relationships to be structured along racial lines, which in turn has the effect of perpetuating and reinforcing social and economic inequality (Capers 2009:43). Segregation makes it so we do not see each other, making it easier to write crazy things about each other online, and making it easier to treat areas of the city, and its residents, with difference and contempt.

Hostile raced interactions were also part of the Metra trips as well. One BMP complained that “whenever I tried to ask a White person a question to make sure I was in the right place, they kept moving like they didn’t hear me. I bet if I said I’m gonna stick you up, they would have heard me then.” A Black male Metra employee noted that “most White people disassociate themselves with anyone.” He also stated that “after 9/11 you will literally see people, White people as a matter of fact, seeking out minorities to sit next to because they believe they’re safer. You’ll see a White female passenger or a White male passenger purposely sit next to a Black passenger because they feel like they will be safer as opposed to sitting next to anybody else. Why, I don’t know but it is what it is.” He also noted that although seating patterns had changed back, “late at night, if you see a professionally dressed BMP and you don’t see a lot of people on the train, you will see WFP or WMP get on the train, and although there might be 50 seats open, sit next to that person as opposed to sitting by themselves or sitting with someone else. they would seek them out.” He thought this was because they felt that if something happened on the train, the Black man wouldn’t just sit idly by. This pattern was not one of racial acceptance but also nice-nastiness because they targeted Black bodies to protect
themselves from injury. In instances where Blacks were sought out for protection from “incidents” it suggested that Blacks would absorb the dangerous circumstances or be a first responder, leaving the White passenger protected. The BMP and the Black employee highlighted the harm that Blacks experience through raced interactions on public transportation. Later I discuss how Black transit employees experience these types of hostile raced interactions during the course of doing their jobs.

**The Price of Segregation: Social Distancing on Public Transportation**

There has been little choice of residential location offered to Blacks and Latinos in a system of racial residential segregation. Placing residential limits has oiled the wheels of inequality and has left Blacks and Latinos concentrated in economically deprived and resource low areas of the city (Drake and Cayton [1945] 1993; Davis 1990; Duncan and Duncan 2004; Massey and Denton, 1993; Scott and Soja 1998; Squires and O’Connor 2001; Wacquant and Wilson [1989] 2005; Wilson 1996). The experiences of the success and prosperity that result from a system of capitalism have been intentionally limited for Blacks and Latinos. This plays out on public transport through a hyper-concentration of minorities experiencing injury on the system than any other group. Much of this injury is shaped through patterns of social distancing and difference.

As previously noted, public transportation brings the excluded and the included together in confined spaces where options of escape and distance are limited. This integrated space is brokered by mobility and the physicality of the
space: the seating is defined, exit/entrance doors are stable, stops are mostly limited to assigned options on both the train and bus and when the vehicle is moving, drivers and passengers can’t just jump off unless they choose peril. This creates a space of anxiety (Figure 43). This anxiety of being in a space of strangers is different from strangeness in static places (Lofland 1973) because of the physicality and mobility of the space and racial integration in an otherwise racially separated landscape.

Figure 43. Brokered Matrix

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1 Residential segregation constructs spatial boundaries. These spatial boundaries are imbued with various distinctions including race, class, gender, and cultural distinctions. Social actors are mobile and when they move out of their segregated spaces and board public transportation, they enter integrated mobile public spaces. These spaces also often have the same distinctions and are spaces where the included and excluded come together in confined mobile space. The physicality and mobility of the space shapes raced anxiety and hostilities.
The effects of segregation makes these confined mobile public spaces all the more strange and anxiety ridden. Passengers often responded to this anxiety through activities of disengagement (Baumgartner 1991) such as reading, listening to music, engaging with their smart phones, fake texting, or sleeping. However, patterns of disassociation by many Whites and Asians also emerged as they not only disengaged but avoided Black passengers as they boarded and even after a Black passenger sat down next to them. Racial hostility was also evident as exampled in this hostile exchange between an AFP and a BMP:

We were on a moderately crowded Outer Drive Express bus. Most of the seats in the front of the bus were taken when a BMP boarded. He sat next to an AFP who had boarded earlier with a child. The child was seated in a small stroller. She had to move the stroller in front of her to give him space to sit. The BMP was using a cane. When seats opened up on the other side of the BMP, the AFP told him to "Move over a seat." "Don't do that man" the BMP replied when she tried to nudge him over. "Don't do that. I have 2 kids 20 and 40, I'm 60 years old, don't do that." He then told her that he had already planned to move and that he has his "act together" so there was no need to be hostile and afraid. (December 2011)

The AFP could have also moved after the bus emptied out, yet she thought it was the BMPs responsibility to move and to give her and her child her desired space.

Segregation and stereotypes shape raced anxieties that are often acted out in mobile spaces, shaping the space into hostile terrain that damages Black passengers’ experiences on public transportation and injuring social interactions. When spaces were more restrictive due to the bus size, such as on the smaller buses, raced hostilities threatened physical injury as well
such as during this incident that occurred after two BFPs boarded the bus as
told by a BRFP:

Two BFPs boarded the bus and one had a baby in the stroller. There
was already a WMP in a wheelchair in one of the adjustable seats. I
was sitting in the back of the bus so I could not hear the initial words
spoken between the BFP with the baby and the WMP in the
wheelchair. Shortly after the first exchange, the BFP stands up and
tells the WMP “I don’t give a f*** (pause) ‘you ain’t gone do s***.”
Later I learned that her comments were in response to the WMP
saying something about her crying baby and then calling her a whore
to which she responded “I’m not a whore. I have a full-
time job. I pay
my bills... you don’t even know me.” He then threatened to hurt her
and stood up out of his wheelchair. The BFP then dared him to hit her
or to throw something at her. The WMP –was then like “No, I’m about
to get off the bus” and then he proceeded to call her various
unflattering names including the n-word. (August 2012)

The respondent then added that later an older BFP calmly told the BFP that
she should have known better and shouldn’t have gotten into the argument with the
WMP because he was old. The younger BFP simply nodded. The bus driver, a Black
male, did not try to disrupt the hostile physically but looked in his mirror and said
“Y’all stop, y’all calm down.” This was not the first incident of where a Black driver
has not interceded when a White passenger began a hostile interchange with a Black
passenger. I wondered if it was because the bus driver was thinking ‘Oh they can
handle themselves’ or if it was an opportunity to empower the Black passenger to
take back the space. White passengers often cringed during these types of hostile
flare-ups and tried to engage in a distraction activity while Black passengers looked
directly at the involved individuals, as if waiting to see what was going to happen.
The BRFP told me she “wanted to see the fight play out” because she was tired of men telling women what to do.

*Killing the Black Body: Cyber Threats and Transit Reality*

Inequalities on public transportation systems are also reproduced through social media pages dedicated to people sharing their experiences on public transit. This space is particularly hostile to Blacks, as shown earlier. This site is also a space where raced kill orders—suggestions to cause mortal injury—are recommended. These kill orders show that online communities are not free from the characteristics and prejudices of its operators (Miller 2011). The narratives of these operators not only racialized this space, but they shaped it as a place that was dangerous for those who warrant killing, i.e. Blacks. Skeptics may argue that people are not serious when issuing kill orders online and that examining it through a racial frame is being hyper-sensitive. However, as demonstrated in Table 6, these kill orders are primarily aimed at Blacks (36 orders). These orders (37 orders) mostly followed pictures of disheveled and unkempt Blacks, Blacks laying on platforms, and Blacks sitting on trains and buses, showing that they were raced and classed. Suggesting that a Black person be pushed off of platforms and onto train tracks or killed while sitting on a bench in the subway is not random or gentle speech. Other violent terms like rape were also used more often after pictures of Blacks than any other group.
Words such as drunk, lazy, fat, crazy and crack user were also associated more often with pictures of Blacks (Table 7). These are not sociable words (Simmel [1905] 1971) but critiques of character and on this site, the critiques were mostly reserved for Blacks on public transportation. This site was started in April 2010 as a place for people to post pictures of “bums and smelly people” (People of the CTA) but soon it popularized into a site to post pictures of Blacks where others can log into the mobile diary to interact with and produce maliciousness. Although there are several pictures of White passengers on the site, they did not garner the same rate or number of responses as pictures of Blacks, and many of their pictures were followed with phrases such as OMG (Oh my God), LOL (Laugh out Loud), and SMH (Shaking my Head) as opposed to kill it, push it off the train, and push it onto the tracks.
This cyber public space helps us to better understand how legacies of racism are reproduced at a day-to-day level. Online communities are extensions of the world we live in (Embrick et al. 2012) as hostilities witnessed in the real world were replicated here. Segregation makes it easier to reduce people to pictures and places and to not see them in sociable ways. The raced biases and aggressions that Blacks experienced on public transportation was replicated in this world but here they were more violent and direct in ways that are highly injurious to the Black body. The comments matter as people cannot unread them. People of the CTA shows the effects of social and economic isolation. Those marginalized and traditionally bullied in the 'physical' world, have their pictures treated accordingly in this virtual world.
Public transportation is seen as an undesirable place throughout this site, and
Blacks are part of the undesirability.

**Exposing Black Bodies to Harm: Security Lapses and Racial Hostilities**

**Experienced by Black Transit Personnel**

What is sparse in the research on inequality and public transportation are
issues of security and safety for bus drivers and transit personnel. I give attention
to this gap because it highlights the consequences of unequal protection in a
distinctive way that requires action but is also an aggregate consequence of
systemic inequalities reproduced by segregation. In this section I examine how the
Black bus drivers on Chicago’s South Side do not have the same access to safety as
drivers on the North Side and on downtown routes. The disparity in “urgency”
coverage (Zizek 2008) for security lapses and institutional antipathy for the Black
body has left South Side bus drivers exposed to dangerous places and conditions not
experienced by their North Side counterparts. These bus drivers have been left in
the haze as concerns for passenger safety and “security” is aimed at White
passengers, while most bus drivers for the CTA are non-White.

The South Side bus routes that go through predominately Black and poor
areas are operated by Black bus drivers (Interview with a former CTA employee).
On the King Drive bus, all the drivers were Black men and women. While collecting
data for this dissertation, I did not encounter any non-Black bus drivers on the
routes that traveled south of 35th Street. These observations occurred while riding
the bus, waiting at bus stops and in observing buses at stop lights and stop signs.
During a casual conversation with a Black female bus driver (BFBD) who mostly drove the Sheridan and Outer Drive Express buses, I learned that the CTA gave drivers choices about where to work, and White drivers never chose the South Side or west side routes and were perceived to have more privileges in choosing where they worked. Some of the choices were based on closeness to home or to the bus garage, and in a segregated city, these choices followed racial residential patterns except Black drivers often drove all over the city, regardless of where they lived.

Black drivers on the South Side must navigate communities that have been labeled some of the most violent communities in the city. Crime in a few communities get a lot of attention, particularly those in Greater Grand Crossing and South Shore areas which were labeled as “Terror Town” in a report in the Chicago Sun-Times (August 2012). According to the Chicago Tribune, Greater Grand Crossing ranks as one of the top 5 most violent neighborhoods in Chicago (crime.chicagotribune.com/Chicago/community). The King Drive bus serves Greater Grand Crossing. Given the mediated violence (Wacquant 2008) and actual dangers of the area, one might expect a fair amount of police activity especially during the hot crime months of the summer. During weekday trips, there were very few marked or noticeable police cars along this route or on side streets, from June through September 2012. When I made my observations, there were three police cars spotted in July – one on 51st, one on 52nd Street, and one on 67th Street. In September there were three suburban wagon police cars engaged in activity on 51st Street.
The lack of police presence, including Transit Police, was alarming given the attention to violent crimes that many South Side communities experienced. Along King Drive, bus drivers drove past drug deals and watch spots. When the buses pulled up to the stop at the 63rd and King Drive Green Line station, there were always hoards of people in the area. Some were waiting for transit and others were not, but there were no signs of transit police or Chicago Police Department. Often the same people who were in the space on southbound trips were still in the same space 30-40 minutes later. In the midst of these groups, drugs and money were often exchanged. Bus drivers not only had to stop in this space, but they had to open their doors, which directly exposed them to illegal activity.

The bus drivers’ interactions on the bus also highlighted inequality on public transportation. For example, during a northbound trip in September 2012 two BMPs boarded the King Drive bus. They stood in the doorway of the bus, finished their gang-related hand gestures and then one of them exited the bus. The BMBD didn’t say anything and actually waited for them to finish. I looked around outside and noted that there was no one he could call if he wanted to. During another trip, a BMP attempted to board the bus at 51st and King Drive. When we pulled up on the south end of the corner, I noticed police activity about 100 yards east of the corner. The young Black male approached the bus and knocked on the door. He looked back at the police cars. The BMBD didn’t open the door but instead said “Come on man,” and pointed to the bus stop that was north of the intersection. The young man looked back at the police again and then crossed westbound on 51st. The lack of
protection for these Black bodies, both the drivers and the passengers, reminded me that I was in the ‘other’ Chicago where even protective resources were unevenly distributed by race. In this sequestered space Black bus drivers did not have equal access to safe working conditions as drivers in other spaces.

The response to the dangers on the South Side was in gross contrast to responses to crimes that happened in Streeterville, spaces near the Chicago Red Line ‘L’ stop, and along Michigan Avenue. The bus drivers that passed through these predominately White and wealthy areas drove past corners where 5-7 police officers stood along Michigan Avenue and near the Chicago Red Line stop. Police were often deployed in large numbers to this area, and this number increased after criminal activities such as a late night/early morning shooting, a robbery, flash mob activity, and a stabbing in Streeterville and the Gold Coast, yet I observed that the Black bodies that were endangered along King Drive that summer received nothing of this magnitude from the CTA or Chicago police. The same drivers who had to tolerate gang activities, witness drug deals, and keep potential danger off their buses were the same ones who also saw an abundance of security measures along the Mag Mile that summer, because the King Drive bus travels down the Mag Mile as well. The driver didn’t usually change until the south or north end of the route. Mobility exposed these drivers to two Chicagos in ways that do not happen in static places.

Bus drivers are also confined in raced, anxious and hostile spaces. As drivers and authority, they are confined to their spaces, only getting up to fix a problem on
the bus or to help a passenger off. Drivers are also in a space that every passenger must move past when boarding the bus. Some passengers had to pause longer in the space next to the driver because their pass didn’t work or they had a question or the person in front of them was having an issue of some type. However, even those bus drivers are in this physically unavoidable space, minority bus drivers, also experience patterns of social difference, distancing and hostilities similar to those of Black passengers.

In November 2010, while preparing to board the Outer Drive Express bus, I noticed that the LED sign that displayed the route was not working but there was a hand-written sign taped to the front window indicating the route. The BFBD also announced the route when she opened the doors at each stop. When we reached the Thorndale stop, she opened the doors and said “This is the 147 Express to Congress.” A boarding WFP looked at her, scanned her transit pass and said “I don’t need you to tell me what bus this is.” The WFP was dressed in a long rain coat and appeared affluent as evidenced by the quality of her coat, her designer handbag and her shoes. The bus driver looked at her, but gave no reply.

This incident raised my antennae. Although I had been recording passenger interactions with each other, I had not considered passenger interactions with the bus drivers, so I began recording them on integrated routes. I wondered if the interactions were classed, raced, gendered or an intersection of all three. I recorded these interactions two to three days a week on southbound and northbound trips on
my bus routes. I recorded what I perceived as the race and gender of the driver
and did the same with the passenger. I recorded these interactions primarily during
later morning periods 9:30-11:00am, late afternoon 1:30-3:30, and late evening
6:30-8pm. I chose these times because I could get a better view of the driver and the
passenger during the beginning ends of the rush/peak hours. I considered any
gesture - smile, nod, or speaking ('hello' or 'thank you')-- aimed at the bus driver as
an interaction. I considered these interactions an attempt to make a connection
with the driver (Miller 2001). Because the bus drivers are in confined and avoidable
spaces, I had expected high levels of interactions with the driver. Other than that, I
had no expectations while recording. Although the populations in several North
Side communities are diverse, as noted early, the majority of the bus drivers were
people of color. Routes such as the Sheridan bus and the Inner Drive/Michigan
Avenue Express had a majority White ridership, but on the weekends between
Irving Park and Devon, the Sheridan bus was more diverse than during the
weekday. This was also true on most routes during the late evening hours where
hotel workers, kitchen workers, and other uniformed minority workers boarded the
buses.

I didn't know what to expect until I began analyzing the data. What emerged
were raced interaction patterns that were similar to passenger interactions. As
shown in Table 8, when WFPs boarded, they interacted with their bus driver 41
percent of the time. For WMPs passengers, they interacted 35 percent of the time.
BFPs interacted with the drivers 61 percent of the time and BMPs interacted 52 percent of the time.

![Graph showing interactions](image)

**Table 8.** Overall passenger interactions with bus drivers

After examining these interactions, I wondered if there were interaction patterns that varied by race and gender of the passenger and race and gender of the driver. What I found was that bus drivers, although they are in an unavoidable physical spaces, were still avoided by passengers and that there were distinctive racial and gendered patterns as shown in Table 9.

White passengers interacted with Black bus drivers less than 40 percent of the time when they boarded the bus. However, White passengers had high rates of interactions, 60 percent and higher, with White bus drivers. Black passengers’ interaction patterns were similar (40 percent and higher) regardless of the race of the driver, but Black males interacted more with White drivers (Table 9).
White bus drivers experienced higher incidences of interactions with passengers than Black male bus drivers across most groups. Avoidance created a hostile climate for bus drivers. Even when Black bus drivers stopped midway down a street because they saw a passenger running for the bus, White passengers, especially White female passengers, rarely said thank you compared to other groups. There were repeated times when these same Black drivers would greet their
passengers, only to be ignored. Additionally, WFPs not only greeted White bus drivers more than they did Black bus drivers, but they also would often say good-bye or thank you to their White bus drivers when exiting through the front entrance/exit doors. This pattern of pleasant good-byes was not observed when the driver was Black or on the few occasions when the driver was Latino or Asian.

Hostile Intentions: White Passengers and Black Transit Personnel

Ridership on the Metra UP-W is mostly White and middle to upper class. During off-peak hours, passenger conversations had one distinguishing topic — drinking. Conversations were often about getting drunk, being drunk, and/or drinking. Metra’s rules provide a safe space for being drunk, especially during social sabbaticals - periods in Chicago of public rowdiness and drunkenness and where rules of social order are ignored. Drinking is not allowed on the trains during Chicago’s major parades and festivals; however, people passengers were observed pouring booze into water bottles and beverage cups and drinking when the train conductor wasn’t around.

Black train conductors on the UP-W line exhibited different behaviors when aboard trains filled with White passengers (most of the time my car was 90+ percent White) during social sabbaticals. They did not stress the rules of social order on the train and usually quietly collected and punched tickets. During other rides, they were more vocal with passengers, saying hello, or expressing the rules of order. This suggested that the space was hostile to Black Metra personnel. White conductors were more vocal during social sabbaticals. Black personnel on this line
were also traveling to and through mostly White areas as well, with the exception of Maywood, Berkeley, and Bellwood.

During social sabbaticals, Black Metra personnel were also often involved in hostile interactions with White passengers in the Ogilvie Transportation Center. For example, after the 2012 and the 2013 St. Patrick's Day parade, passengers flowed into the Ogilvie center by the hundreds. Although there were many families amongst the group, there was also an over-abundance of drunken parade-goers. People were over-drunk throughout the station. They were over the point of maintaining self-control; over a place of comfort (laying on tables, sitting on hard floors); over and beyond the areas where good sense resided; and overtly hostile to Black security and Metra personnel who tried to maintain order in the station and on boarding trains. Those wearing shirts and jackets marked “security” were all Black, but Metra police were more diverse.

During one particular incident, a Black male security officer (BMSG) approached two WFPs who had staggered off the escalators and were staggering near the doors that led to waiting trains. He stopped them and told them to calm down. They had staggered through yelling and walking in and out of the businesses that were still open. One responded “sir, I got a credit card, money don’t mean…” But then her friend grabbed her and pulled her away. The first WFP pulled away from her and turned around to go back to say something to the BMSG. She walked up to him and stood in his way. Her friend screamed at her, “You wanna get arrested?” in an attempt to get her to stop. “Just wait,” she told her friend as she
stood closer to the BMSG. She then turned and pulled out her phone and walked away. During another incident, a WMP ran through the station with no shoes on. He didn’t have a bag and wasn’t carrying his shoes either. He was stopped by a BMSG. When the guard stopped him, the WMP moved close to him and screamed at him for about a minute arguing that he could do what he wanted to do. Eventually his friend was able to convince the WMP to walk away.

Hostility toward Black transit personnel was not confined to the drunken hazes of the social sabbaticals. On the UP-W, the space seemed to be particularly hostile for Black Male train conductors (BMTC) during routine trips. When BMTCs tried to enforce the Metra rules of order or fares with White passengers who did not want to comply, other White passengers often came to the passenger's defense, as if they were being attacked. They defended the White passenger who was wrong and would vilify the BMTC, sometimes to his face and at other times after he left the car, as exemplified during this westbound trip on the 10:40am train to Elburn:

A BMTC (after Oak Park) asked a WMP if he had gotten his ticket already. He said “Yeah.” The BMTC then asked him “Did you get on at Oak Park?” The WMP replied that he had boarded downtown. Afterwards, a WFP who was seated elsewhere interjected and confirmed that the WMP had indeed boarded downtown. The BMTC then proceeded down the aisle and toward the center doors that lead to the next train car. When he reached the WFP who had interjected he told her “When I ask someone a question, you don’t answer for them. Ok?” She responded “Ok.” After the BMTC left the train car, the WMP and a few WFPs criticized the BMTC for taking their ticket (as if he wasn’t supposed to). The WMP then complained that the BMTC had judged by his looks because he didn’t have any teeth (July 2012).

It was interesting that he had made this comment because the group had responded to the BMTC the same way, by his appearance as a Black male. They had
not only criticized him for doing his job in this instance, but had also went on to criticize him for asking a group of WFPs for their high school i.. because they were requesting a reduced fare. Metra rules state that you must present your high school identification card for reduced fares. Although the BMTC had calmly and clearly explained this to them, the WFP who had jumped to the WMP defense said he had “lectured those poor girls” and they were “probably traveling alone and had no one to stick up for them.” These same ‘poor girls’ were able to convince a WMTC to give them the reduced rate later on that day, even though they did not present their i.d. cards. Here the narratives surrounding the BMTC were that of a bully and a rude bully, as one of the WFPs called him. This undermined his authority and created a hostile space for him as the train travelled through affluent and predominately White DuPage County (US Census 2010). The women’s reactions to the BMTC were incidences of nice-nastiness as they challenged his authority with a smile, even though he was doing his job. They made several other critiques but always smiled when he came back into train car to collect tickets as we travelled further west.

What we learn from these interaction patterns, those between passengers and those between passengers and their bus drivers, is that sociability on public transportation is raced. “Paying lip service to the need for diversity but changing little about one’s own practice” is not useful or helpful (Hill-Collins 2001:6). “Our daily lives are filled with interactions and gestures that basically convey no information, but serve to enhance a general sense of sociability and community by acknowledging the presence of other people and establishing a connection with
them” (Miller 2011:203). These types of interactions highlight that although more Whites may be living in propinquity to other minorities than thirty years ago, they may not have many personal encounters or relationships with these groups, and this is reflected in public place interactions and responses to people of color, especially Blacks (Feagin 1991, Bonilla-Silva 2006). Additionally, in 2010 the typical Black person resided in a census tract that was 45 percent majority Black, regardless of income, showing that social isolation is still an issue (Fry and Taylor 2012).

As I continued with my research, I began to also get more answers as to why these patterns were emerging. One reason was the social distancing that happens because of segregation, but I also noticed something else. Blacks serving in positions of authority on public transportation, such as police/security, train conductors, and bus drivers, were often challenged or ignored by White passengers in particular. These instances of challenging Black authority shaped the space into contested space and threatened Black transit personnel in ways not experienced by non-Black personnel.

**Conclusion: Disenfranchised Bodies**

The heterogeneity of the city does not lend to quiet experiences with race. Racial social histories shape the biographies of those entering and mingling on public transportation systems. The consequences of racial residential segregation affect the entire metropolis. The effects of racial residential segregation have indeed spilled over into the public domain (Anderson 2004; Feagin 1991). This practice
has affected the attitudes of Whites, just as it has been affected by the attitudes of Whites (Logan and Molotch 1987). No one is left unscathed by practices of racial residential segregation. It produces social isolation and social segregation, the effects of which are also experienced on public transportation.

Spatial divisions, such as those witnessed on the Red Line, help maintain these systems of inequality (Dwyer 2010). This chapter demonstrates how social segregation harms its victims as they continue to encounter and absorb the effects of segregation and racial inequalities on public transportation systems. Social isolation and segregation are problematized in hyper-real ways on public transportation. Differences are also hyper-produced within these confined spaces as people come face-to-face with differences.

Race realism (Bell 1992) forces us to include public transportation into the reproduction of inequalities discourse because the effect of this racial residential segregation and legacies of racism are not contained in communities and neighborhoods of the metropolis, but enacted in everyday interactions on mobile spaces. The effects of segregation also spilled over into the virtual world as users wrote and responded to mobile diaries that damaged Blacks who used public transportation. As a result, racial aggression paints the landscape while acts of kindness are unusual.

These practices disenfranchised Black bodies on public transportation resulting in the reproduction of inequalities. We know that Blacks are excluded from safety, courtesy, sociability, and respect on public transportation systems.
They were subjected to injurious forces of raced hostilities and *nice-nastiness.* As passengers and personnel, Blacks on public transportation systems were required to navigate an often hostile terrain within confined integrated spaces that shaped raced anxiety and hostilities. This burden on the Black body disenfranchises them in public spaces. The risks, threats and injury that are embedded in the social interactions that Blacks often have with non-Black passengers, shape a mobile terrain that was not only hostile, but harmful as well.

Legacies of racism also shape a terrain where Blacks absorb much of the systemic inequalities embedded in the city and urban metropolis’ public transportation systems and routes. They absorb violence, threats, and damage. These racial aggressions, although they may appear brief, are continual abuses that Black passengers don’t get to just experience once, but over and over again when boarding public transportation.

Examinations of mobile social interactions reveal raced social selection that profiles Blacks to embody unequal lives on public transportation. Blacks are profiled and selected for unequal access to risk reduction and exposed to continual and abundant amounts of hostile, harmful, and injurious interactions on the system. This examination suggests that discourses on the direct impact of racism needs to be brought back to the forefront of race studies.

In the next chapter, Chapter 5, I discuss how Blacks on the South Side of Chicago resist these threatening conditions while traveling through *the poverty corridor* - those neighborhoods and communities bounded by low income and
hyper-poverty areas on more than two sides, where most residents are predominantly Black – which are a part of *sequestered spaces* - segregated spaces where residents experience social, economic, physical, and mobile isolation and boundedness - thereby transforming mobile spaces into liberatory places.
CHAPTER FIVE

KINETIC KINSHIPS AND MOBILE COMMUNITIES: HOW DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION ARE RESISTED IN MOBILE SPACES ON CHICAGO’S SOUTH SIDE

Previous research on black subjugation and resistance against transportation racism has primarily focused on organized protests and acts of civil disobedience (Allen 2009; Bullard, Johnson, and Torres 2004; Mann et al. 2006; Marcantonio and Mayer 2010). These studies have also shown how Blacks and other minority groups resist public transportation inequalities at the local level. Urban scholars also show that limited mobility has disproportionally affected poor and racial-ethnic minority communities and their ability to access jobs (McKenzie 2013; Tomer 2011; Vannini 2010). In doing so, these scholars and others, demonstrate that much of the contestation in the public sphere has often been a fight for just transportation (Allen 2009; Bullard and Johnson 1997; Sanchez, Stolz, and Ma 2003). Although these previous studies amply show how minorities and poor people organize and fight transportation inequalities, they do not show how these subjugated groups resist inequalities on a daily basis and through face-to-face interactions. This chapter addresses this gap by showing how Blacks who move through *sequestered spaces* — those segregated spaces where residents experience social, economic, physical, and mobile boundedness -- resist inequalities. In particular, I show how this resistance
happens through their social interactions on mobile spaces that move through a particular space within Chicago’s South Side sequestered space, the poverty corridor – here delineated as those neighborhoods and communities bounded by low income and hyper-poverty areas on more than two sides, where most residents are predominately Black.

The idea of mobile connections (Jain and Lyons 2008) is rarely discussed in urban or transportation literature and is absent from most studies on urban inequalities. In this chapter, I show how Blacks use the metaphorical and physical boundaries of racial (which are also social and economic) borders to transform the South Side’s sequestered space into a liberatory space. Particularly, I show how public transportation vehicles that travel through the space’s poverty corridor are transformed into mobile communities by the enactment of the kinetic kinships - active and spontaneous relationships developed while traveling. I demonstrate how Blacks, who are wrestling with the consequences of racial segregation and poverty, can also flourish in mobile spaces, despite their hyper-exposure to inequalities and built-in material differences. This space is not an ideal space, but it highlights the power of place in shaping social life (Hayden 1995).

**Sequestered Spaces and the Poverty Corridor: The Landscape and the People**

Sequestered spaces have physical (highways, railroads) and institutional (policies, planning) boundaries and the residents of these spaces are usually predominately ethno-racial minorities and poor people. All sequestered spaces struggle with unequal access to public transportation and mobility (cars, taxis,
These spaces may also be characterized by limited access to safe parks, jobs, industry, psychological and counseling services, high quality city services, and healthy, affordable, and accessible food options and resources that are prevalent in other areas of the same city. The same city qualification is important because it exposes another layer of the two Chicagos. In Chicago, there is one CTA, one City Hall, one Chicago Housing Authority, and one Chicago Public School board (CPS), yet the public services available in sequestered spaces are starkly different from those in other spaces in the city where amenities are visible and accessible. Wilson (1996) and Squires and O'Connor (2001) emphasize that in our review of places we have to look at what is actually happening, not just the conditions of poverty or even crime alone, but how people experience the results of policies that led to poverty, especially when that experience is also a result of racial discrimination and racialized policies. Institutionalized materiality shapes the sequestered space and the embodied inequality of those who are active in the space.

The movement of trains and buses present a paradox of place (Rushing 2009) for this sequestered space. Mobility should diminish the boundedness of the space, but it doesn’t, as shown in Chapters 3 and 4. Within the sequestered space of Chicago's South Side, there are communities that have living conditions and characteristics that are similar to that are similar to other wealthier, but unbounded, areas of Chicago. These outliers, such as Hyde Park, Bridgeport and Kenwood, also have quality public transportation services, such as express buses and/or regular
Metra train stops that are not available within most other communities in the sequestered space (Figure 44).

![Figure 44. Community areas' economics (Data source: City of Chicago data https://data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Census-Data-Selected-socioeconomic-indicators-in-C/kn9c-c2s2)](image)

Sequestered spaces, because of economic and social segregation, also tend to have a poverty corridor, or at least part of one. Poverty corridors have many similar qualities as sequestered spaces but they may also cross municipal borders. In this study, the poverty corridor begins after 35th Street along the study's bus and train routes. This corridor has also been shaped by growth and political machines, racial residential segregation, concentrated poverty, and public transportation (Logan and
Molotch, 1987; Sampson, 2012; Wilson, 1996). These neighborhoods have a high hardship index¹ and per capita incomes below $22,000 (Table 10) (Figure 45).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Area Number</th>
<th>COMMUNITY AREA NAME</th>
<th>Nearby Bus/Train</th>
<th>PERCENT HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY</th>
<th>HARDSHIP INDEX</th>
<th>PER CAPITA INCOME</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Loop</td>
<td>Purple, Red, 22, 151</td>
<td>12.2</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
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<td>Near South Side</td>
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<td>#6, Metra Electric</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Edgewater</td>
<td>Red, 15,146,147</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$33,893.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>97</td>
<td>$9,372.00 PC, SS</td>
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Table 10. Economics of Chicago Community Areas in the study. Source: City of Chicago
https://data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Census-Data-Selected-socioeconomic-indicators-in-C/kn9c-c2s2

¹ Based on Census Data from 2007 – 2011. From the data source: Data uses “six socioeconomic indicators of public health significance and a "hardship index," by Chicago community area, for the years 2007 – 2011. The indicators are the percent of occupied housing units with more than one person per room (i.e., crowded housing); the percent of households living below the federal poverty level; the percent of persons in the labor force over the age of 16 years that are unemployed; the percent of persons over the age of 25 years without a high school diploma; the percent of the population under 18 or over 64 years of age (i.e., dependency); and per capita income.” Source: City of Chicago data https://data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Census-Data-Selected-socioeconomic-indicators-in-C/kn9c-c2s2
Figure 45. Poverty Corridor and highest hardship areas (Source: Community map retrieved from City of Chicago)
Where we live affects quality of life (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2004). The effects of the conditions of the poverty corridor (such as high poverty, and high unemployment) were often observed while riding on the public transportation routes that serve this area. Bus shelters were dilapidated compared to the shelters downtown and on the North Side and there were several large empty and vacant lots (Figure 46). Children playing basketball in a small park near 77th and King Drive played next to three garbage dumpsters that sat on the edge of the park, while Washington Park’s basketball courts where without rims (18 of the basketball posts only had a backboard). Passengers often had to navigate around the trash that was tossed on the grounds (there were few trash cans seen along the bus routes) near CTA bus and ‘L’ stops before they could get on the bus.

Figure 46. CTA properties and a vacant lot along the King Drive bus route (Pictures: Nina S. Burton)
Conversations and activities in the poverty corridor were reflective of many conditions of poverty, such as high unemployment, and low job opportunities and community investment. Passengers boarding the bus and train in the poverty corridor didn’t usually talk about work or school but about activities they were engaged in to pass time during the day. Some residents sat or stood near the 63rd and King Drive Green Line station, while a group of regulars could be seen sitting for hours in a shaded grassy area outside the White Castle at 34th and King Drive talking and watching people walk by. On the bus some passengers discussed “hating the bus” and lamented it being their major source of transportation. Others engaged in conversations about not being able to catch a break while non-Americans had opportunities, such as during this conversation between two middle-aged BMPs in the summer of 2012: “Those Arabs kill me. They come over here trippin’.” To this the BMP sitting next to him responded, “Yep, they can barely speak English but they get everything.” These activities and politically and ethno-racially charged conversations were as much a part of the landscape and signs of disinvestment.

The poverty corridor is also similar to many other urban poor areas in that there is insufficient police protection. As discussed in Chapter 4, the consequences of insufficient protection often spilled onto the bus. This too-often repeated condition of urban poverty played out in conversations about fear for one’s own safety as exemplified during this exchange between a young BMP and a BFP: A young BMP boarded the northbound King Drive bus near 71st Street, and sat next to a female friend, BFP, who was already aboard. She asked him where he was going
and he said to his cousin’s and mentioned the neighborhood. The BFP asked him why he got on the bus and then told him to get off. He said that he couldn’t. She then told him to “Get off with me. Ain’t nothing gonna happen to you because you’re with me.” She told him whose house she was going to and urged him again to exit the bus, but he refused (September 2012). The bus was a respite for this young man as indicated in the conversation and by the dramatically relaxed position he took once he had sat down.

Conversations regarding safety fears were not uncommon in the poverty corridor. During another trip on a southbound King Drive bus, a BMP between the ages of 40-50 discussed with another middle-aged BMP that he needed to move because he was concerned about his safety. He added, “Man, on 79th, things are rough, and I’m tired. Trying to figure out where I can move.” They continued to discuss where they could move in the city that was both economical and safe. They never consider areas north of downtown, but noted that more had to be done to safeguard residents on the city’s South Side (February 2013). Inadequate police patrols and presence, which I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, is a quality often found in the poverty corridor, and this shaped passengers’ experiences in particular ways.

Although the weariness of stagnation, safety concerns, and other ‘quality of life’ (Dreier et al. 2004) issues were often verbalized in the poverty corridor, passengers resisted being overwhelmed while in these mobile spaces as displayed by their eventually shifting their conversations to asking about others’ family
members and plans and other general conversations, which I discuss later in the chapter.

Although the conditions of the poverty corridor may prove exhausting, an overall sense of hopelessness was not found on these rides. As I show later in this chapter, rides through the poverty corridor were often marked by animated laughter and jokes, and jest, even when passengers were bothered or annoyed. This was not common in the mobile spaces outside of the corridor. As I show in the next sections, passengers resisted the conditions of segregation, poverty and isolation of the outside through observed relaxation and by actively creating a space where *kinetic kinships* - active and spontaneous relationships developed while traveling - although temporal, could occur. I demarcate the poverty corridor as a special space because of the social interactions and behaviors that were presented in freely expressed form. Like the poverty corridor's geographical spaces in Chicago, the buses and trains that travel into the space, are predominately Black spaces. As I also show in this chapter, the interactions and behaviors suggested that the poverty corridor was a space where liberation, which was a form of resistance, existed in mobile spaces and where passengers were free to fully express themselves in ways not seen in economically and/or racially diverse mobile spaces.

**How Resistance is Formed in the Poverty Corridor**

Prior research on social interactions among Blacks who travel through Chicago's South Side (Raudenbush 2012) does not examine how Blacks, who are isolated in hyper-segregated areas of the city, actively resist isolation through
interactions on mobile spaces. This earlier research does not show how Blacks are able to resist the conditions of isolation through their “collective and interactional” (Lovell 2003:14) behaviors. Additionally, examining Black’s social cohesion through a symbolic interactionist “linked fate” lens (Raudenbush 2012) does not give attention to how Blacks actively pursue these mobile connections. Kinetic kinships are not passive, nor do they ‘just happen’ because Blacks are together in black spaces.

Active formation of kinships shapes a space where resistance can occur. I examine kinetic kinships through a resistance lens because kinetic kinships disassociate passengers from the negative conditions of the corridor and they lead to the forming of mobile communities, where interactions are purposeful and meaningful. This resistance is liberatory. As trains and buses moved into the poverty corridor, passenger’s shifted their behaviors and interactions and these the spaces became host to liberated interactions and behaviors in the newly entered homogeneous spaces (Figure 47). The bounded space was transformed into a liberatory space.
Passengers travelling into the poverty corridor interacted with friendliness, such as when a BMP called me Renee and acted as if he knew me. Boarding and seated passengers greeted each other with a friendly nod, a bro’man from the 5th floor head bob (this references a character on the television series Martin and involves tipping one’s head slightly backwards and then giving a quick nod), or said “hey” or “what’s up” as they made eye contact. This pattern of friendliness was distinctive in this space. It was a resistance to the hostility, incivility, and unfriendliness that was often observed in mobile spaces outside the corridor,
especially those raced and hostile interactions that Blacks experienced, and a resistance to the often hostile static spaces of the poverty corridor.

In these next sections I detail how Blacks riding in the poverty corridor resisted the social disorganization narratives that are often attached to descriptions about how Blacks behave in these same hyper-poverty and hyper-segregated spaces (Sampson 2012; Wacquant 2008; Wilson 1996; 2006). I detail how Black passengers cultivate kinetic kinships and shape mobile spaces into places where mobile communities are formed and flourish. These actively formed kinetic kinships and mobile communities disrupt the sequestered landscape and the narratives on the Black urban poor that center on culture of poverty and social disorganization theories. Kinetic kinships show that the poverty corridor is not just a space of isolation, low employment, intense poverty and high crime rates. It is also a space of liberation, civility, advocacy, and a space where there are rules of social order, social cohesion, and sociability (Simmel [1905] 1971).

Engaging Interactions: How Kinetic Kinships are Created

“Hey Renee. How you doing? I haven’t seen you in forever.” I’ve been called many things in life, but never Renee. This story of the BMP who, after he boarded a southbound King Drive bus, looked at me and referred to me as “Renee” is one of my favorite experiences in the field. This experience was exemplary of the types of interactions observed on rides through the poverty corridor. Passengers who boarded buses and trains in this space often responded to others in the space with familiarity, even when interacting with people who were total strangers, which was
signified by an “It was nice meeting you” statement at the end of their ride or conversation. These friendly, and sometimes brief, conversations were heightened during southbound trips, which I discuss in further detail later.

Passengers’ interactions outside of the poverty corridor were often unfriendly and revealed patterns of active disengagement, avoiding techniques, and oneness—where passengers tried to avoid sitting too close to others or used technology, such as mp3 players, phones, and earbuds to create a personal space within the public space. Passengers in the poverty corridor resisted being disengaged. Headphone use, phones and other activities of disengagement that were often employed and witnessed on North Side and downtown routes were not usually present in the poverty corridor. Even those who were on the phone or listening to music responded when someone said something to them. Trip after trip showed a community of talkers, even in personal matters such as medical problems or dealing with their children “who refused to take care of their responsibility,” as one BFP complained during a trip on the King Drive bus.

Unlike on the North Side routes, Black passengers didn’t board the King Drive bus or the Red Line south and immediately disengage. People used this isolated time to engage each other, as exampled during one trip with three giddy BFPs who were traveling on the King Drive bus. They were sitting in the back of the bus laughing and talking loudly. When another BFP boarded and walked to the back of the bus and sat down near the teens, one of them looked over at her and after the bus had left the stop she said, “Excuse me Miss. I like your hair.” The older BFP responded
with “thank you” and a few other comments. One of the teens asked her what
products she used in her hair, and she told them mostly water and Motions™
mousse. They then said something about Garrett’s® gourmet popcorn (because the
older BFP was holding a bag of this popular and delightful Chicago treat).
Eventually the teens returned to their conversation.

This type of conversation about hair was commonly observed among Black females in the space. Women would even engage in these conversations as buses and trains were pulling into the station and one of them was preparing to exit, such as in this quick exchange between a BFP who was standing near the exit doors of a southbound Red Line and another BFP who asked her a question as the train pulled into the station: “Where you get your twists done?” the seated BFP asked. The other BFP proceeded to tell her she got them done on 79th Street and then named the shop. The seated BFP then asked “Was it expensive?” The other BFP responded, “Naw, it’s not too bad” (May 2013). They then engaged in a quick exchange about the quality of the extensions. Even though the BFP who was being questioned was trying to exit the train when asked about her hair, she stopped and responded before getting off the train. In the poverty corridor, passengers were often observed resisting hurried disengagement and instead took the time to answer questions instead of exiting and ignoring the questioner.

In the poverty corridor, kinetic kinships formed through these types of intentional acts of friendliness and civility. Black passengers did not act like strangers. Passengers didn’t divert their gazes when they boarded the bus or train.
They freely expressed kindness and annoyances, and did not ignore others, even when the person was annoying or slowing them down from exiting the bus or train or trying to find a seat.

*How Mobile Communities are Formed Through Kinetic Kinships*

Passengers used the isolation of the poverty corridor to discuss topics that are often taboo in public spaces, especially in confined mobile public spaces. Typical socially acceptable public conversations were not the dominant order in the poverty corridor. For instance, it was not uncommon for several people to openly engage in discussions about politics, especially in regards to Chicago politicians, in confined spaces where others could easily overhear the conversation as exemplified here: during a southbound trip on the King Drive bus a couple of BFPs discussed being disgruntled with Mayor Rahm Emanuel. One proclaimed that “he left Washington to come to Chicago and got a raise but he wants people to work for free” (September 2012). This proclamation ignited those nearby to engage in a discourse on how they felt the Mayor was a bully and suffered from a Napoleon complex. They discussed how he was bullying the teachers and the paraprofessionals at CPS. One BFP mentioned that she was on her way to the west side for a union meeting regarding the teachers’ strike because she was a crossing guard. She noted that she was traveling a long way to get to the meeting but didn’t worry about the distance because she was going to get a ride home later. Another person asked her details about the strike and the meeting. Other passengers freely offered their thoughts about the situation and continue to be uninhibited in their critique of the mayor.
This kind of open discourse did not routinely happen on routes outside the poverty corridor. Outside the poverty corridor, when someone spoke loudly and mentioned any public taboo topic, such as politics, they were shut down, such as during an observation on the Outer Drive Express when a BMP discussed how America was falling behind China. He repeatedly tried to engage others only to have them look out the window or play with their phone (April 2013).

Through kinetic kinships people exchanged information, supported each other, and advised each other on how to advocate for services and rights, this created a mobile community as in this example:

During a southbound ride on the King Drive bus in July 2012, a BFP boarded the bus at the Roosevelt Road stop. She sat in one of the inward facing seats. As people boarded and sat down, she handed them a tract (as she referred to it. Others may call it a palm card). She was promoting an event that was happening somewhere on the South Side. She quietly passed out the tracts to Black passengers, but passed them out in earnest after we entered the poverty corridor, i.e. when we were south of 39th Street. After a few stops into the poverty corridor, at which point the bus was a black space (all the passengers and the driver were Black), another BFP asked her for more information about the tracts. After she informed her about the event, the other BFP offered to help her pass out the tracts. She said she could pass them out to co-workers at her Walgreens job and to family. (July 2012)

These two women did not know each other as evidenced in their introducing themselves to each other at the conclusion of the conversation. This conversation is just one example among many of the kinetic kinships that shaped mobile communities in the poverty corridor. This observation is important because conversations on ‘every stop’ buses, like the King Drive bus, can easily be disrupted.
As a result, kinetic kinships are more vulnerable to disruption on this bus not only because it stops at every other block but this particular bus is always a short bus (one of the smallest bus models in the CTA fleet) and is usually crowded until 79th Street. When disrupted by the crowdedness, those engaged in conversations usually kept talking once the bus started moving again or when the space cleared. For example, in July 2012 two older BMPs on the King Drive bus were talking about everything from politics to the state of the union. They had boarded somewhere between Roosevelt and 23rd/McCormick place. They weren’t sitting next to each other but were two seats apart with one sitting in a side facing seat and the other was two seats away in a forward facing seat. The older of the two was also wearing a shirt that indicated that he was a veteran. Their conversation was disrupted as people boarded and the noise levels increased. They also paused to speak to people who sat down next to them or in-between them during their ride. When the ridership thinned out, they continued their conversation in earnest with one noting that it was ‘nice talking’ and then telling the other guy to ‘take care.’

On other routes, crowdedness makes it harder to maintain conversations with those that you know and even more challenging to talk with people that you do not know. But then again, the North Side routes in the study did not reveal patterns of kinetic kinships or other forms of active engagement among passengers, except when tourists asked a question. In the mobile communities of the poverty corridor, people resisted the inconvenience and discomfort of crowdedness on the small
buses that were always used on the King Drive bus and the loudness of the ‘L’
train on the Red Line bus and engaged each other despite these physical limitations.

These kinships were not only memorable, but there was not a pattern of this
on any of the hundreds of rides on four different North Side bus routes in the study,
two of which are express buses, or on other transportation routes in the study. The
kinetic kinships transformed these spaces into these observable mobile
communities. That these transformations also occurred within socially and
economically isolated spaces, while also being disruptable, was also remarkable.
The abruptness of the stops, did not lead to abrupt responses for those engaged in
these kinships. Passengers gave clear indications of finished conversations with a
“good-bye,” instead of hurrying out of the space when stops were reached, as
evidenced by the “nice to meet you” and “God bless” comments that were exchanged
before those engaged in conversations exited the space. Kinships were framed
beyond a shared experience continuum, but instead showed intentional
interactions.

These kinships among strangers also revealed patterns of care, advice, and
empathy, as passengers discussed how to access services for seniors or how to sign
a new lease which required the exclusion of a child if they had a felony conviction.
Passengers engaged in these kinships did not give attention to the strangeness of
those around them, but instead used the homogeneity of the interior space, and the
characteristics of the exterior space—such as isolation—to create a safe space
environment where the qualities of community could be freely expressed. This was illustrated in an interaction between two older Black female strangers:

July 2012 was an extremely hot month. People boarding the bus were usually sweating as they boarded the small King Drive bus. During one southbound trip, two BFPs began a conversation about their children and how they were irresponsible, including with their own kids. One of the women informed the other that she wanted to move, but wasn’t sure what she should do because if she moved, her grown son may not have a place to live. She also noted that she was paying $87 a month (due to a disability). She noted that she didn’t just want to move to ‘any ol’ place’ but wanted to move somewhere that her visitors didn’t have to sign in and out of her building. She saw requiring visitors to sign in as controlling and just wanted to have her family and friends freely visit. Their conversation then moved to a discussion of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). They discussed how complex the system was and how CHA was planning to move folks out of apartments. The BFP who was looking to move noted that she didn’t want others on her lease because the rent would then go up to $400/month. The other BFP shared that a friend of hers had to put her kids out because they all had criminal records and she was living in Section 8.

This type of intentional sharing of personal information among strangers was not uncommon within the poverty corridor. These two women did not know each other as exampled by their parting, where they both said “nice to meet you.” Thus, sharing is an important element of kinetic kinships in that passengers not only actively engaged each other in conversation, but these exchanges were also meaningful and resourceful. Transforming public transportation into mobile communities helped connect people and informed them about potentially available resources. These connections were a resistance to the disconnectedness that is often a part of the discourse about communities in the poverty corridor. These connections between these Black passengers, who were often poor as evidenced in
their conversations, resisted the situating of ‘blackness’ in a frame of violence and disorder, which is the prevalent discourse in many studies on poor urban Blacks.

Examining the kinetic kinships that developed as the buses and trains moved through the poverty corridor and into liberatory spaces moves us away from a simple natural social cohesion frame and instead suggests that social actors actively engage in strategies for community building in particular areas of the city. These kinships were framed beyond a shared experience continuum, but instead revealed intentional interactions. The social disorganization language that is rampant in so much of the urban scholarship is repeatedly disrupted and resisted in this space, where strangers and acquaintances are actively cordial, helpful, and appear delighted to converse with each other.

Kinetic kinships transform public mobile spaces into liberating mobile communities. When the buses and trains become ‘all Black,’ i.e. Black spaces, passenger liberation was not only observed through physiological changes, such as slouching in the seat or putting their legs across the seat, but in their psychological responses to place, as smiles, laughter, and even verbal anger, filled the bus or train cars.

Laughter was also something very common in the poverty corridor, even during conversations about private matters, security concerns, or in gendered discourse. Passengers often found ways to make those around them laugh. Sometimes it was like being in a comedy club. For instance, while traveling south on
the King Drive bus, a group of 20-something BMPs boarded. An older BMP who
was sitting in the seats near the back of the bus looked at one of the young men and
said, “Excuse me brotha, you know something? You are one good lookin’ brotha.”
The young man responded with a puzzled look. “Hey, I ain’t no f** or nothing, but
you look good.” The young man then responded “Man, you know you can’t just say
stuff like that everywhere.” After a few minutes, the older BMP nudged the BFP who
was sitting next to him and said, “Ain’t he good lookin’, tell him he’s good lookin.”
Another BMP who was standing near the exit door looked at the good looking BMP
and hunched his shoulders and they both laughed (2012).

Laughter was a form of resistance in the poverty corridor. Passengers
laughed when jokes about Rahm Emanuel were told. They laughed when a loud
talking BFP on the Red Line left the train after being insulted that someone
screamed at her for talking too loudly on the phone. They laughed when three BFPs
on the Red Line dramatically explained labor pains and how one of them “carried
on” in describing how she behaved when she had her baby. And they laughed when
they overheard the jovial conversations of those sitting nearby. Laughter was often
used as segues into kinetic kinships and often helped to keep the mobile community
revolving as people boarded and exited the train or bus.

**Resisting Disorder: Mobile Community Rules of Order and How They Are
Applied**

Community areas in the poverty corridor are often depicted as disorganized
(Wilson and Wacquant [1989] 2005), yet those traveling in the space were engaged
and there were clear rules of social order. Kinetic kinships revealed these rules of social order. One obvious rule was that you speak when spoke to. I became aware of this rule by watching others. In areas outside of the poverty corridor, even within the sequestered space, people mostly kept to themselves or only conversed with travel mates. In most spaces, the public transit rule was to disengage, avoid, divert, or ignore others, as explained by an AMP, a frequent rider of the Red Line on the North Side: “I feel like there is this general unspoken rule about creating social distance between you and other people on the train; that you’re not supposed to talk to people. You’re not supposed to look at them. Um and you kinda just do your own thing, so putting headphones in, reading a book, being on your phone is a way to do that” (Spring 2013). Passengers in the poverty corridor resisted the social distancing observed in integrated spaces by creating an environment where conversations and friendly gestures were welcomed. Creating an engaging rule of social order shaped these mobile spaces into places where kinetic kinships could flourish and where mobile communities were formed.

The poverty corridor was a liberatory space for those on public transportation, but it wasn’t without rules of orderliness. The mobile spaces were not to be treated as a free-for-all. Passengers were not allowed to just board and bother others simply because they were in a Black space, but were expected to behave ‘as if they got some sense.’ Black passengers in these spaces also ‘handled their own’ and did not need others to ‘speak for them’ unlike what was observed of other passengers in White and integrated spaces where passengers ‘spoke for’ those
whom they felt were being bothered, bullied, or when seating rules were not observed (certain seats are to be yielded for the elderly, passengers with disabilities, and expectant mothers).

In the poverty corridor, when passengers violated the rules of the mobile community, such as not ‘taking a hint’ and leaving a person alone when they didn’t want to be bothered, the offended passenger did not hesitate to respond accordingly. The following field note provides an example:

A BMP boarded the bus at Roosevelt. He appeared inebriated as he staggered walking up the aisle of the small bus. He spoke to people as he passed them, calling them by random names such as Irene. He eventually made his way to the back half of the bus. After we passed McCormick Place (23rd Street) the bus was crowded but there were only black passengers aboard. Sometime after we passed up 35th street, he yelled “Excuse me, does anybody on this bus know the square-root of 49?” He paused to wait for a response. After about 20 seconds, he gives the answer – “7 X 7 is 49. I went to Hyde Park Academy but I wanted to go to Kenwood.” As we moved further south, I could hear him talking to the BFP (Black Female Passenger) who was sitting next to him, but could not make out a lot of the conversation. Later I clearly heard him tell her, “I’m not giving you my number.” She replied “I don’t want your number. I want you to shut up.” Later he asked she was cooking what he wanted at home.

He then said something that appeared threatening if she didn’t have the food ready for him to which she responded, “I wish you would. Today is not my day. Don’t try me.” (she paused and then continued) “I’m trying to respect you because you’re old, but you need to leave me alone.” (September 2012)

This disruptive behavior continued until the older BMP exited the bus before 63rd Street. The BFP was on the phone the entire time the BMP was interrupting her. She told him that it was rude for him to keep talking to her because she was on the phone and that she just wanted to be left alone. Even though he repeatedly
bothered her, she informed him that she was tolerating him because he was old. She didn’t get up and move but instead repeated herself a few times and continued with her phone conversation.

Responses to violations of the social order could be mild or particularly harsh, as exampled in Chapter 3, when the BFP’s bad body odor on the small King Drive bus exposed her to embarrassment. In the poverty corridor, the disruptive behaviors and smells, that revealed rules of community where those who violated them through various ‘offenses of the senses,’ such as talking to people who didn’t want to hear you, looking a mess, or emitting unpleasant smells, which were openly shamed. Those who didn’t respond when spoken to also could be subjected to disapproving looks by others, but this violation was only observed once or twice.

Raudenbush (2012) argues that “moreover, the manifestations of social cohesion that occur on public transportation in black areas are of important consequence in that they lead to the (re)production and negotiation of common notions of a particular black reality and collective black identity. Additionally, these manifestations are part of a normative process in which ideas about how blacks should act and ought to be are expressed, discussed, and consumed (p. 457).” But Blacks did not just interact and behave in certain ways simply because they were black or in a homogenous space. Black passengers’ behaviors and interactions shifted along the routes that travelled through the poverty corridor. In particular, my observations show that directionality also shaped behaviors and interactions in the poverty corridor and the rules of order. Kinetic kinships were freely formed in
the mobile spaces of the poverty corridor, but the rules of directional order of
the mobile community were expected to be maintained in the process. This rule
included what could be said, done, or performed as the trains and buses headed
northward, closer, and eventually into integrated or White spaces. As the buses and
trains moved southward, passengers allowed themselves and each other to slouch
(with feet in the walkway area), take up several seats—when space allowed, speak
and laugh loudly, talk loudly on the phone, and expand their personal space in
various ways.

As Blacks moved into the poverty corridor, liberatory interactions and
behaviors were expressed. However, when moving away from this space,
physiological responses and interactions changed. Blacks policed themselves in
black spaces, and this is not engaged in previous studies on black spaces (Duneier
1992; May 2001). As shown in this example of self-policing, directionality
influenced social interactions and liberatory behavior: During an April 2013 trip
aboard a northbound Red Line train, a BFP passenger said “The Koreans are
terrorists. I’m about to go to Chinatown and blow all those mother f***ers up.” She
made this statement after she read a story in the Red Eye. A BMP then responded,
“yea, Koreans are trying to blow us up and stupid Dennis Rodman took his a** over
there.” These passengers didn’t seem to care that what they said might be
considered racist while we were still in the poverty corridor. However, these same
passengers, who had gone on and on about Koreans seeking to harm Americans
ended their conversation as the train pulled into the 35th Street/White Sox station
and where Whites were waiting on the platform. This was a regular pattern.

Isolation had been a freeing or liberation when moving into the corridor, but on trips out of the poverty corridor and the sequestered space, conversations shifted, silence ensued, and Black passengers shifted their body from positions of relaxation and instead sat up and still for the remainder of their trip.

This type of behavior, where the rules of directionality were every present, also happened with groups traveling together as exampled when five BFPs, who seemed high school aged, boarded a northbound Red Line train on a late Friday night in October 2012. A few young BMPs, who had glared at them while waiting on the 87th Street platform, boarded after them. One of the BMPs tried to engage them in conversation. The teenaged girls just looked at him and smiled. When they exited at 69th Street, he ran over to the door and screamed “butch” several times. His friend asked him why he would call them that and why he screamed out the door, to which the screaming BMP responded “because they deserved it.” He then mumbled something about them playing games before they moved their conversation to talking about other things including music. Although they were together, they sat in three separate seats and put their bags on the seat next to them. They also slouched in the seat and one of them chatted with his leg across the seat. The train still had an all-black ridership after the Chinatown/22nd Street stop. As we pulled out of the Chinatown/22nd Street stop, the young BMPs stopped talking, put in their earbuds and looked out the window. The next stop would be Roosevelt which was an
integrated downtown stop. They rode to Morse and only intermittently spoke to each other for the remainder of the trip.

As the train and buses moved northbound, passengers not only policed themselves, as noted in previous observations, but they also policed others, almost creating a general reminder that they were exiting the poverty corridor and the mobile community and would soon be entering integrated and White spaces. On most weekdays during the day, especially around the early evening rush period; the northbound Red Line trains often began to become integrated at 55th/Garfield and 47th Street. During this incident a BFP forgot to observe the rules of directional order and was quickly reminded by another passenger:

During a northbound Red Line train trip, a BFP boarded at 79th Street while talking extremely loud on the phone. She looked around long enough to find a seat. She didn’t break the flow of her conversation even as she sat down. “That b**** trying to set me up... of course I’m gonna check her. (pause) What y’all expect.” Several people looked over at her as she continued her conversation. Eventually a BMP yelled, “Aaaahhhhhhh.” She couldn’t see who screamed but she stopped talking, looked around, and then said to the person on the phone, “I know ain’t nobody yelling at me telling me I’m talking to mother f***ing loud. Not on no ‘L’. (pause) Girl, some fool just yelled like I was talking too loud.” She exited at 63rd and stood on the platform as the train pulled off. (June 2012)

This indicated that she would be waiting on the next train because she did not head toward the exit/street level. When she walked off the train, several passengers laughed. The man who yelled didn’t say anything or turn toward the loud talking BFP, yet she assumed that his yell was aimed at her. She couldn’t see who had yelled because he was seated several seats behind her, but her response indicated that she knew it was a ‘please shut-up’ yell. She could have continued to talk and
ride, but this would have been a violation of the rules of directional order, so she opted to leave the train and wait for the next one. She did not stand up to find out who had yelled, nor did she ask around. She realized the problem, as indicated in her response, and got up and left.

During another northbound Red Line trip in September 2012, three BFPs boarded and one was talking loudly to her friends. One of the BFPs looked at her friend and said, “Girl, you loud as f***!” This cautioned her friend to lower her voice, which she did. Another one continued the conversation discussing how she told some girl to shut up talking to her until she got back in school after being expelled for smoking crack. “I was at least passing my classes,” she told her friends, explaining her situation when she was kicked out for reasons not mentioned. During the conversation, one of the girls offered a bag of chips to another BFP who was sitting a few seats over and was traveling with a young child who was getting antsy. The BFP took the bag and said thank you. They had a quick exchange about children and snacks before the other BFP resumed her conversation with her friends. This interaction exhibited both the rules of directional social order, a kinetic kinship, and showed how the mobile community is maintained on northbound routes.

**Conclusion: Civility in the Poverty Corridor**

Urban scholars refer to areas of the city that have high levels of concentrated poverty and other social problems as the inner city. But in fact, the poverty corridor is the *exo-city* - the area of the city landscape where the residents are excluded
through physical and mobile boundaries. Although it is an obdurate space where poor racial minorities struggle with the effects of institutionalized inequalities it is also a place where liberation, community, and social order can be found on certain mobile spaces that travel into the area. It is a liberation zone.

Robert Sampson (2012) defines social disorganization “as the inability of a community to realize the common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls” (37). Kinetic kinships, social rules of order and the directional rules of order in the poverty corridor’s mobile communities show that Black passengers in the poverty corridor are not without values or control. Social mobile spaces were repeatedly shown to be valuable to passengers in the poverty corridor. They maintained social control through disapproving looks when people where violating the rules. They corrected and shamed those who violated the rules of order and the rules of the mobile community, which included a directional rule of liberatory expression. And they policed themselves. Mobile spaces in the poverty corridor resisted being defined as a space of social disorganization.

In his book *Great American City*, Sampson (2012) also states that collective efficacy, which is “social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control” is linked to stability and less violence (27). But kinetic kinships and mobile communities show that collective efficacy is not just bound to static stable places like neighborhoods, but that collective efficacy also found on public transportation that travels through neighborhoods, even in places where he found there was no collective efficacy. Kinetic kinships and mobile communities show how the negative
effects of hyper-segregated and hyper-poverty neighborhoods, such as social isolation, can be resisted through interactions as people move through these neighborhoods. Mobile spaces brought people together from various community areas of the sequestered space and poverty corridor; but unlike the integrated spaces of the downtown and North Side areas of the city, where Blacks often experienced raced, hostile, and uncivil interactions and responses, interactions on the mobile spaces of the poverty corridor were often friendly and civil.

Although the mobile spaces in the poverty corridor have built-in institutionalized material differences and passengers wrangled with these inequalities on daily trips and during face-to-face interactions, kinetic kinships show how they often used these same confined and small spaces to form bonds. In a Durkheimian sense, order was established and maintained in these mobile spaces, although they traveled through spaces of disorder. This highlights the significance of mobility. Although much of the urban research suggests these poverty corridor community areas are disorderly, the mobile communities in this study were not. I am not suggesting that the mobile community was a perfectly ordered place, as no public space is, but it was observably an orderly and civil space. Order was maintained through unspoken and spoken rules and directional rules of social order. This mobile space’s rules of social order, kinetic kinships, and mobile communities resisted what has beforehand been viewed as a forgone conclusion, that hyper-segregated and hyper-poverty communities are characterized by social disorder and disorganization. But instead, examining the mobile spaces of the
poverty corridor, and the kinetic kinships and mobile communities, show that this space can indeed be examined through a continuum of civility and social order.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

I began this study by examining how race and class inequalities are reproduced and resisted on public transportation systems. I have argued that inequalities are reproduced through built-in material differences and in social interactions in mobile spaces that are raced and classed with attention to gender implications. I also showed how inequalities are resisted by Black passengers in one of the poverty corridors on the South Side of Chicago. Examining social interactions on mobile spaces exposed social patterns of difference that were not only mediated by persistent residential segregation and social isolation, but they were also mediated by the unsettledness of mobility (Kumar and Makarova 2008). The mobility of these confined spaces can be unsettling as possibilities of unexpected interactions increases and options for escape are reduced. This unsettledness among social actors in these spaces shaped various activities of disengagement and avoidance. These activities were often raced and classed and hostile.

In this study, I also examined an understudied dynamic in the poverty corridor, resistance enacted through social relationships or what I called kinetic kinships. The resistance to determinants of social disorganization that was employed by passengers in the poverty corridor showed that spaces are powerful. So much of the urban research focuses on social disorganization, crime and violence in poor
minority communities. Additionally, studies on transportation inequalities have primarily focused on built-in inequalities. This study examined these built-in inequalities, but I also showed how those who grapple with the consequences of persistent inequality are not dormant, but instead engage in kinships that create and maintain order on the mobile spaces of the poverty corridor. Poor people and minorities are indeed bullied by systems of inequalities but they also fight in ways that move beyond social movements and acts of civil disobedience. Daily trips often showed how these groups used the confinement of mobile spaces, and the isolation of the places they were riding through, to do powerful things such as create kinships with strangers. This should be further studied.

Previous studies show that poor minorities and their communities are not just ignored or harmed by unjust policies and practices; they are also oppressed through the design of mobile spaces and places (Bullard and Johnson 2004, 1997; Wells and Tills 2011). However, poor minorities are not just punching bags for unjust and unequal systems that privilege some with access to quality public transportation, all the while denying the same to members of communities that are sequestered away from the downtown areas. The creation of liberatory spaces in the sequestered areas of Chicago’s South Side was inspiring to see and showed that urban poor spaces aren’t the unfriendly hotbeds of chaos and disarray that is too often claimed in the urban research.
Implications

By putting urban research in motion, and by showing how face-to-face interactions are affected by hyper-racism and hyper-segregation, I highlighted how mobile spaces can provide a micro-sociological view of social interactions. In examining how inequality is reproduced through public transportation systems, I revealed the micro-level consequences of institutionalized inequalities, but in a particular way. The daily and face-to-face consequences of institutionalized inequalities are compounded in confined mobile spaces, and I believe this affects other types of social interactions. Public transport stands as a site of the construction and reproduction of inequalities, and these are experienced in hyper-real ways because the boundaries of mobile spaces are far more restrictive than the static race and class physical boundaries of Chicago’s segregated landscape. The effect of the mobile built environment on face-to-face daily social interactions should be attended to as legacies of race, class, and gender inequalities are hyper-realized on mobile spaces (constrained, limited escape and movement, once in motion you must find a way to deal, etc.). Escape can only happen at stops, and this is important to symbolic interaction research, race, class and gender research, urban research, and transportation research.

Mobile spaces serve as places where scholars can examine how social actors interact and behave when the space and the individual are mobile. Mobile spaces highlight racial attitudes that can often be masked (Goffman 1959) in wide-open
static spaces like the cosmopolitan canopy. The hope is that this study will begin a new dialogue about social interactions and civility in public places.

Built in inequalities on public transport systems have many implications. This study and others highlight health, time and environmental implications. But as I showed in this study, built-in material differences are also injurious. Although I only briefly highlighted this, it is particularly harmful to women. Many studies on the street and stranger harassment that women experience in public places (Kearl 2006; Fairchild and Rudman 2008) does not give intensive attention to mobile harassments that are maneuvered in particular ways. But these harassments are often possible because of train and bus designs that do not consider women’s bodies, how women navigate their bodies, or how men masculinize spaces through the built structure. This study is only a beginning to an examination of the gendered consequences of built-in material differences. Further studies can be used to inform decisions about how mobile spaces are built – the vehicles, the platforms, and the stations – and how they can be designed and built to provide a more comfortable and safe experience for more women.

I hope that this study can also be used in the fight for just transportation. This study showed how planning and policies are raced and have unequal effects on minorities and poor people. Protection for ethno-racial minorities' bodies is seriously lacking in public transit systems. Security is planned for wealthier and whiter areas of the system, while minorities' need for improved and better security is all but ignored. Conversations between passengers on the South Side highlight
that this is a serious concern. Similarly, justice-oriented transportation scholars and advocates would do well to include a fight for just transportation security on their agenda. The research is sparse in this area, but the implications were evident throughout the sequestered spaces of the South Side of Chicago. Understanding how unequal access to sufficient security affects where and when poor and minority residents can travel for jobs and leisure will advance this growing body of research on just transportation and the effects on the health and well-being of poor people and minorities.

**Constraining Factors**

Every study has limits. This study was limited by my gender. As a woman, and given the hostile environment of many mobile spaces for women, I was limited in how I could move within the spaces. This primarily affected when I could travel. As a woman researcher I had to employ common sense and restrict my travels between 6am and midnight. Preliminary observations suggested that there was usually a good amount of pedestrian traffic during many of these times. That mattered because I had to exit the bus and train at the end of each run. Exiting the bus and waiting in a deserted space at midnight wouldn’t have been prudent, especially given the time variable for many crimes. Unfortunately I don’t live in a world free of street harassment and other types of assaults, so I chose to use due caution instead of exercising researcher excitement to get the data at all costs. This means that this study does not include observations across a 24-hour period but instead are limited to the hours between 6am and midnight. Comments on the
People of the CTA website suggest that social interactions and behaviors late
night may provide great data, but unfortunately, I couldn't get to it. Additionally,
only one of the bus routes I studied has Owl service. This limited the study as well.
Further research would involve looking at social interactions at night and compare
them with the other time intervals.

Chicago is a huge city. Our public transportation system, even with all its
limits, is also massive. I had to conduct many preliminary site investigations before
choosing where to study and which routes. I couldn’t go everywhere and I also did
not have time to choose areas where I would have to travel an hour just to get to a
place where I could board a bus or train and then travel another hour on a one-way
run. This was a limitation.

As I continue this research I look to include predominately Latino
communities and routes in the study. This will allow me to look across an ethno-
racial group that wasn’t well represented in this study. Studying interactions on
buses and trains in other parts of the city would have made this a very expansive,
and possibly unruly, study. However, more geographical diversity will improve this
study.

Other limits included Chicago’s extreme weather conditions. I thoroughly
enjoy the cold, and although I traveled heavily in the winter, I had to consider what
times of day to travel and how many days in a row to go outside. Additionally,
traveling in the rain made it challenging to gather data because many of the bus
stops do not have shelters so observing at these stops was difficult during inclement
weather. Moreover, I had to consider the same weather and waiting conditions of the passengers and this meant that sometimes I had to turn around and go back home because it took me too long to get to a site because of snow or a bus breaking down or other weather related delays. During extremely cold months, ridership increased on the Metra and this sometimes meant that my trip was not as fruitful because I often couldn’t sit in a space where I could make observations and could only record conversations (in my notebook).

Ethnographic observations often involve navigating typography and weather and this can limit what is seen. Time spent navigating rough terrain, physical and geographical, can detract from the quantity and quality of data that one can collect. Further work will require more attention to 7-day forecasts and alternatives for days when the weather hampers what can be seen, such as traveling during low ridership times or more time in transit stations during extreme weather conditions.

This study can also be improved with more interviews because these can enrich the data where observations are limited (by weather and other variables). I found that people love talking about public transportation and sharing their stories. Conducting more interviews could have provided me with richer data. Interviewees often provided information in areas/routes outside of my study and conducting more interviews would have given me a broader view of public transportation inequalities in Chicago. As I move forward I look to conducting more convenience interviews and snowball sampling. Surveys may also prove useful to reach a wider and more geographically diverse group of transit riders.
Future Research

“Racial equality is not realistic” (Bell 1992: 363) and persistent racism is harmful and often violent. Inequalities and incivilities are harmful and violent to the human spirit. My future research is guided by a quest to reduce harm to the human community, even if only in a small way. Civility and incivility in public life have important consequences on the human spirit. As one of the few places where people of different social classes and ethno-racial backgrounds encounter each other, public places are sites of the replication of civility and incivility among people of different race, gender, and class positions, and sites of its construction too.

My future research plans are to continue to contribute to the larger project of understanding how legacies of racism, class inequalities and sexism are reproduced at a day-to-day level and how these reproduced inequalities can be reduced by changes to the design of spaces. I cannot and will not attempt to conquer the world, but I can hope to provide information that others can use to further justice projects. My long-term goal is to alter the narratives and practices that shape how public spaces and places are designed so that more inclusivity and justice are promoted, thereby reducing some of the incivility in the public terrain. I look to do this in a variety of ways which include expanding this project. This expansion will include examining the enactment of white privilege on public transportation systems and a contextual and theoretical examination of cyber mobile diaries, such as People of the CTA, and how these virtual diaries are new spaces of racism, sexism, and classism.
Race scholars have also examined white privilege or freedom in public spaces (Case 2012; Duneier 1999; Kendall 2013; McKinney 2005) a freedom not even common among middle and upper class blacks. They have also discussed how these same privileges, such as public drunkenness, is denied Blacks in public spaces and create volatile, and often violent (Collins 2008), public spaces. Histories of inequalities result in violence in everyday life. Although I examine this phenomenon in this study, I hope to conduct more research in this area.

The public drunkenness that is afforded to Whites in spaces on and around public transportation in Chicago highlights how Chicago’s raced celebratory culture is replicated through public transportation. The CTA and the Metra often provide extra and expanded services for events like Lollapalooza and the St. Patrick’s Day parade, and Cubs night games where the landscape is crowded with mostly White revelers who are often drunk, obnoxious, disrespectful and disgusting. I observed this during this study as I purposely travelled during many of these social sabbaticals. The level of privilege to be rowdy and disorderly that was granted to these groups was undeniable. In the future, I seek to examine this further and to travel more routes observing how it changes or remains constant across the city and the metropolis. This will show how raced and classed ‘fun’ privileges are permitted on certain public transportation routes and to privileged groups, and how this reproduces inequalities.

The framing of this dissertation, and space and time limitations, did not permit a focus on the information acquired from the People of the CTA Facebook
This social media page serves as a site for the reproduction of inequalities through ‘othering’ the other, and social identities. It is a site of bullying, but occasionally it is also a site of civility. I look to contribute to the growing body of literature on cyber communities (Embrick et al. 2012; Miller 2011; O’Hara and Stevens 2006) that examines how real world inequalities are not only reproduced in cyberspace but also reenacted in the real world.

And finally, I look to continue urban research that challenges previous scholars to examine the city through a kaleidoscopic lens. The city and the urban terrain may be imbued with contestation and obdurate inequalities, but it is also a space where the telling of its social history has only just begun. This history is not just a violent, racist, classist, or sexist history where those who are oppressed and crushed at the base of a stratified social ladder reside. The city and the urban landscape are also places where residents thrive and live in ways that ensure the city (central, global, and world) will persist in despite its persistent inequalities. Cities embody much of the richness of civilization. The heterogeneity of cities allows for diverse understandings, complicated relationships, rich culture, and a cornucopia of social interactions that present the most interesting of pictures and views through an ever-turning kaleidoscope.
APPENDIX A

CHICAGO TRANSIT TIMELINE
### Important transit dates in Chicago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Horse car service began</td>
<td>Apr. 25, 1859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable car service began</td>
<td>Jan. 28, 1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First electric streetcars</td>
<td>Oct. 2, 1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First rail line</td>
<td>June 6, 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loop Elevated opened</td>
<td>Oct. 12, 1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First motor bus service</td>
<td>Mar. 25, 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolley bus service began</td>
<td>Apr. 17, 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Street Subway opened</td>
<td>Oct. 17, 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA became operating entity</td>
<td>Oct. 1, 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearborn Subway opened</td>
<td>Feb. 25, 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last streetcar ran</td>
<td>June 21, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skokie Swift service began</td>
<td>Apr. 20, 1964</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expressway median operation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expressway</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress (Eisenhower)</td>
<td>June 22, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Ryan</td>
<td>Sept. 28, 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>Feb. 1, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail service to O'Hare</td>
<td>Sept. 3, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail service to Midway</td>
<td>Oct. 31, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail line names switched to colors</td>
<td>Feb. 21, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fare Cards introduced</td>
<td>August 18, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink Line service began</td>
<td>June 25, 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Chicago Transit)
APPENDIX B

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY BUS ROUTES
#3 King Drive Bus Route
#6 Jackson Park Express Bus Route
#22 Clark Street Bus Route
# 146 – Inner Drive/Michigan Avenue Express Bus Route
#147 Outer Drive Express Bus Route
#151 Sheridan Bus Route
APPENDIX C

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY GARAGES AND BUS TYPES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Garage</th>
<th>Bus series</th>
<th>Routes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 103rd Garage</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000 series seats 39 (2004) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>4000 seating capacity 54 (2008) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>4300 newest and about 54 (2012) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500 seats 23 (2006) special size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Side (Hyde Park, Jeffrey Jump &amp; U of C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Chicago Garage</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000 series seats 39 (2004) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>4000 seating capacity 54 (2008) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>4300 newest and about 54 (2012) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>6400 seats 37 (2000) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly downtown &amp; Express routes (#66, #53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 74th Garage</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000 series seats 39 (2004) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>6400 seats 37 (2000) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 of the busiest routes (#9, #49). #9 Ashland is out of this garage &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>is busiest in service. It is supposed to get Jump routed too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 77th Garage</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000 series seats 39 (2004) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>4000 seating capacity 54 (2008) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>4300 newest and about 54 (2012) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>6400 seats 37 (2000) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 of the busiest routes (#3, #4, #8, #79) and yet smaller buses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F - Forest Glen Garage</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000 series seats 39 (2004) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500 seats 23 (2006) special size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>6400 seats 37 (2000) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>4000 seating capacity 54 (2008) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4300</td>
<td>4300 newest and about 54 (2012) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800</td>
<td>800 series seats 39 (2009) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>900</td>
<td>900 series seats 39 (2007) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lots of downtown &amp; tourist routes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P - North Park Garage</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>1000 series seats 39 (2004) regular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>4000 seating capacity 54 (2008) articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(#22 – more articulated buses observed in 2012 than 2011 where they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>were rare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bus series information from <a href="http://www.chicagobus.org">www.chicagobus.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCE LIST


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Dr. Gwendolyn Y. Purifoye was born and raised in Illinois. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Loyola University Chicago and a Master of Education also from Loyola University Chicago.

Prior to beginning her doctoral program in sociology, Dr. Purifoye enjoyed a dynamic career in student services. When she first began the PhD program in Sociology, she was the Associate Director for Learning Support Services at Loyola University Chicago where she supervised Services for Students with Disabilities, the Tutoring Center, and the Learning Assistance Center - units that provided learning support and academic success services for Loyola’s undergraduate and graduate populations. From 2003-2007 Dr. Purifoye was a Senior Advisor in the Office of First Year Advising at Loyola. Prior to these positions Dr. Purifoye was the Assistant Director of Freshmen Admission and the Coordinator for Multicultural Recruitment for Elmhurst College. In this position she focused on recruiting high school students from Michigan, Wisconsin, Central Illinois, and the city of Chicago and on retention initiatives for students of color.

While a doctoral student, Dr. Purifoye was active in the Students of Color Alliance where she served as Treasurer for two years. Dr. Purifoye was also a graduate student writing tutor for Loyola University Chicago’s Writing Center.
Throughout her professional, personal, and academic career Dr. Purifoye has focused on leadership and service. In November, 2013 she received the highest honor from the university, the President’s Medallion, for her commitment to service, scholarship, and leadership. Dr. Purifoye won the Richard Block award for Student Research in Urban Sociology/Public Policy from the Sociology Department in 2014. At the Graduate School level she won a paper presentation award at the 7th Annual Graduate School Research Symposium in 2014. She was a Teaching Scholar for the 2011-2012 academic year, an Advanced Doctoral Fellow for the 2012-2013 academic year, and earned the Schmitt Fellowship for the 2013-2014 academic year.

In Fall 2014, Dr. Purifoye will join the faculty at Kent State University as Assistant Professor of Sociology at the Stark Regional Campus.
Gwendolyn Y. Purifoye
Loyola University Chicago

MOVING SOCIAL SPACES:
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, MATERIAL DIFFERENCES, AND THE POWER OF MOBILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO

Urban research on stratification in the public terrain has focused on how intentional and unintentional physical arrangements and social conventions limit and enable particular kinds of stratification processes and interactions. This prior research primarily focuses on static places such as plazas, restaurants, sidewalks and train stations and does not give adequate attention to the impact of mobility. As one of the few places where people of different social classes and ethno-racial backgrounds encounter each other, public mobile spaces are sites of the replication of civility and incivility among people of different race, gender, and class positions, and sites of its construction too.

Prior public transportation research mostly focuses on transportation policies and the design and planning of systems and services, yet, surprisingly, far less is understood about how mobile spaces, including buses, commuter rail, and city rail systems, shape face-to-face stratification processes. Little attention is given to the intersection of the physical spaces of buses and trains, social interactions within these spaces, and the landscape along the transit routes. In fact, the role of mobility is meagerly considered, if at all.
This study addresses this gap by examining how race and other inequalities are reproduced and resisted on public transportation systems and through face-to-face interactions and behaviors on these systems. In particular, I show 1) how the materiality of mobile spaces, and their placement in different parts of cities, shapes disparate public transit experiences across different groups; 2) how social interactions and behaviors on these mobile spaces reflect Chicago’s racial social histories and structures; and 3) how inequality is resisted through social interactions in mobile spaces. Through this examination, I bring to the fore the intersection of the micro-level consequences of legacies of racism, which includes class implications, and public transportation systems that are imbued with inequalities. Thus although city buses and trains allow people of color and low income people to physically move into and through integrated places, these mobile but confined spaces replicate, and indeed, intensify raced inequalities while also informing certain class and gendered inequalities, effectively keeping people bound physically and socially.
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

MOVING SOCIAL SPACES:
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, MATERIAL DIFFERENCES, AND THE POWER OF
MOBILE COMMUNITIES IN CHICAGO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

BY
GWENDOLYN Y. PURIFOYE

DIRECTOR: KELLY MOORE, PH.D.

CHICAGO, IL
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