In the City and Out of the Gayborhood:

How Black, Queer Men Contend with Spatial Inequalities in the Pursuit of Urban, Queer Community

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Sociology)
in the University of Michigan
2022

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Dedication

"Go at it boldly, and you'll find unexpected forces closing round you and coming to your aid."
-Basil King

To my mom, Colleen Purrier, who has been a constant source of inspiration, courage, and encouragement

Acknowledgements

This dissertation project has simultaneously been the most challenging and most rewarding experience I have undergone. When I first moved to Chicago to begin fieldwork, I could not have imagined what the next three and a half years would have in store for me. From brunches at noon to drag shows at midnight, the development of this project took me to places, introduced me to people, and showed me sides to leisure and this city that I never would have imagined. For the wealth of new experiences and the in-depth knowledge I now have of Chicago; I am grateful. Although the words written and arguments presented throughout this dissertation are my mine, I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to many that helped me get to this point.

First, my greatest acknowledgement goes to the hundreds of queer men that let me into their lives by talking with me, sitting down for interviews, taking me along on their nights out, and generally displaying a willingness to participate in my study. It is no small feat to be willing to share some of one's most intimate desires, thoughts, feelings, and fears. To be trusted that the information will be respected, well-presented, and thoughtfully considered is a great honor, which I do not take lightly. Especially to those participants whom I've now known for years, I owe a great debt of gratitude for their enthusiasm in helping ingratiate me into many different social worlds and networks. These men taught me more about Chicago, queerness, leisure, desire, and the challenges in navigating them all than I could have ever predicted.

When initially forming my committee, I never thought that I would rely on them as much as I did, however, they provided me with a great amount of scholarly, emotional, and practical support throughout this process. I would first like to thank my dissertation chair, Elizabeth

Armstrong, for providing more assistance than I ever thought possible. Over the course of fieldwork and writing, she provided a consistent sounding board, always willing to look over drafts, discuss emergent themes, and offer support and guidance. She taught me to embrace the messiness of the social world and to think critically and sociologically about it when analyzing data and writing results.

I remember the first day that I met and worked with Jennifer Barber and vividly remember the excitement of having her join my committee. Throughout graduate school, Jennifer taught me how to think attentively about questions that are asked of participants and to be cognizant of the ways that data are analyzed and presented, remaining thoughtful that what are data to me are the thoughts and feelings of others. Alex Murphy provided significant insight into the method of ethnography and pushed me to become a better ethnographer within the field. She challenged me to consider not only how I conducted my study, but how to present it, bearing in mind that every decision about how to frame, contextualize, mask, and unmask spaces, neighborhoods, and participants impacts both what my reader thinks of my presentation of data, but also how my respondents think of it as well. Rob Stephenson was gratefully generous with his time, always willing to provide feedback and commentary. At the creation of this study, his excitement and suggestions, especially around novel ways of mapping, influenced how I structured my interviews, and my data are better because of it. Héctor Carrillo was helpful at the onset of this study in asking critical questions about what data I was going to collect and how I was going to get it. His critical questions led me to be increasingly intentional in how I approached participants and ultimately how I incorporated them into my study. In total, I am grateful to this committee for providing the perfect balance of critical feedback, support, latitude during fieldwork, patience, and engagement with my work.

The University of Michigan's Departments of Sociology and Women's Studies both provided invaluable resources and support throughout my work and I am appreciative for all of the administrative support provided by staff and faculty members, as well as the financial support from the departments. Without such support, I could not have achieved the level of depth and immersion for this study as I had. In particular, I have benefited greatly from discussions and experiences with PJ McGann, Karin Martin, Yasmin Kusunoki, and Renee Anspach.

At the conclusion of my fieldwork and during my analyses and writing, I was fortunate to form many connections with individuals at Northwestern University's Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing. I benefited from conversations with Michelle Birkett and Brian Mustanski both of whom critically engaged with my arguments and provided feedback and novel ways to consider my data. Additionally, I found great support from Jen Zhou, Madeline Oklesen, Andrew Principe, Jasmine Deskins, Rana Saber, and Kate Banner, all of whom provided kind words and encouragement.

Several friends persistently provided support, laughter, and wine throughout this entire process, which helped keep me going in some of my darkest moments. For them, I give special thanks to Bryce O'Tierney, Masaya Yoshida, and Theresa Gregoire. Lastly, I want to thank my family including my parents, Colleen Purrier and John Purrier, both of whom provided guidance and support throughout this entire process. In particular, I would like to thank my mother, Colleen Purrier who was a constant source of support, guidance, laughter, and grace to me from the beginning of this study to the end of writing. Whether it was feeling overwhelmed, stressed out, or just downright tired, she was always there for an encouraging word, hilarious dog photo, or a gentle reminder to always focus on the bigger picture and to never let the negative words in

your head get the best of you. It is because of her that I was able to complete this study and for that reason I dedicate this dissertation to her.

Preface

"You up?" is the text from Dex[1] that appears on the lock screen of my phone as I pick it up after its third vibrating notification. I respond that I am and he quickly replies asking if I want to go up North for brunch and some bar hopping later this evening. I reply "sure", and he writes that I should bring my gym bag and we should meet at the 'L' train station in about 40 minutes. As I see Dex learning against the glass door to the train station in skinny jeans, a black polo shirt, aviators, high tops, and his gym bag, I say a muffled hello as he gives me a hug and says that we should get going. Though just meeting Dex serendipitously at a local coffee shop in my Chicago South Side neighborhood, he has the type of personality that makes it seems like we have known each other for years. As we sit on the first of two trains that we will take to go from Chicago's South Side to its North Side, we pass the almost 45-minute commute with a discussion about Boystown, Chicago's gayborhood.

Though roughly five years my senior, Dex and I have relatively similar biographies in that we both are transplants to the city of Chicago, initially moving to the Chicagoland area for college. He moved from the East Coast to attend Loyola University and I from the West Coast to attend Northwestern University. "When was the first time you ever went to Boystown?" he asks me as he slips his phone into his pocket and looks up at me. "Freshman year, though I didn't start going to the bars until later," I reply, ending with a trailing question of "what about you?" He smirks and says, "same, but I started going out to the bars right when I got here." We both laugh.

[1] For participants, pseudonyms have been used to protect their identity. Wherever possible and whenever warranted, additional biographic, demographic, and/or geographic details will be provided.

Though we are both from urban areas with their own gayborhoods, Boystown represented a queer utopia, if for nothing else, the sheer size of it. As we finally get to the Belmont Red Line stop in Lakeview, it is autopilot for both of us to navigate from this 24-hour train station to the strip of Halsted Street that houses the agglomeration of queer bars, businesses, and institutions.

First getting brunch and then going to the gym, it is soon closer to 5pm as we both get a coffee and walk along Halsted Street. Walking past the various bars brings back memories of seeing these same buildings, bars, and community over a half decade ago. As we peer into the various bars looking for a good time, we decide on Progress Bar[2] and grab seats at the bar near the window gazing onto the nice day. Sitting at Progress Bar and watching the similar surroundings brings back both a familiar feeling of being back home and an uneasy feeling of being gone so long that it's different now. Dex and I spend the evening trading stories of our experiences at the various bars around here. From drinking blue drink[3] at Roscoe's to Musical Mondays at Sidetrack, it seems that we both have a lot of history in this neighborhood.

> As our night continues, I ask Dex how often he comes up to Boystown. He replies: Since graduating college and moving to Pilsen, I don't get up here that often. It's not as convenient as it was when I was living up here in Rogers Park. And, I'm not a 20-something skinny Black kid any longer. At my age [31], the twinks at Roscoe's think I'm over the hill, the pretentious jocks at Minibar think I'm poor,

[2] Following the recommendation and argument of Jerolmack and Murphy (2019), I have provided the actual names of both neighborhoods and sexual venues. This decision is motivated by two theoretical reasons. The first is the recognition that Chicagoan neighborhoods and these queer sexual venues have important and relevant histories. Using pseudonyms would disconnect these histories from these spaces. Second, following a similar strategy used by Grazian (2003) in *Blue Chicago,* by naming these locations and neighborhoods, one is able to experience these settings themselves which can aid in eventual revisits to these sites to confirm and/or challenge the presented findings. At times, certain locations are masked due to confidentiality concerns for their staff members, return patrons, or owners. This decision was made to blur the lines in order to protect individuals for whom could become identified due to their association with these spaces.

[3] Blue drink is a long island iced tea colored with blue curacao

and the management here thinks I'm going to rob the place. Boystown is just not as much fun as it used to be.

As he takes another sip of his drink and looks out the window at people passing by, he comments that "Boystown is just not my game anymore." Unknown to me at that time, the agglomeration of gay bars, clubs, and bathhouses with their rainbow flags, lights, and panoply of parties hide multiple structures of inequality that impact the costs of this leisure, who gains access, and how they are received. As Dex's comment reflects, both personal characteristics (such as age and race) and structural ones (such as convenience) influence the degree to which someone is successful within this neighborhood and these spaces. For some, Boystown represents a queer utopia and for others, a queer community deferred. Therefore, the guiding questions that began my study were: (1) who falls into the utopia versus deferred categories and (2) if queer men aren't frequenting Boystown, then where are they going?

Over the next three and a half years, I addressed these questions by observing the various queer spaces around the city, both located within Boystown and outside of it. Within these spaces, I witnessed who used them and how to find out who was successful, where, and what they had to do in order to be successful. In talking with patrons, staff members, owners, visitors, and regulars, I learned how these queer spaces were not simply used for leisure, but to structure entire ways of organizing queer life in the city. In turn, this dictated how and with whom individuals interacted. The location of queer places helped guide the mechanisms queer men used to understand Chicago's queer sexual landscape and their own personal queer sexual map.

Given this organization, it is unsurprising that when I gave queer men a map of Chicago, they were all too willing and able to circle, star, cross out, and highlight places they go, places they don't, neighborhoods they consider to be good, ones that are bad, and overall, their personal

sexual interpretation of the city. These maps were useful tools in illustrating how and where these men envisioned the queer sexual landscape and their place in it. When reviewing these sexual maps of the city, I sought to find the patterns that illuminated common trends among how queer men understand Chicago's queer sexual landscape. I organized the maps by race, age, job type, educational attainment, and income in the hope of finding the characteristics that resulted in similar maps. Although I noticed similarities at the individual level (for example, certain spaces were selected by older participants or certain nights were selected by Black one), the maps overall remained divergent. On an analytic hunch, I organized the maps by geographic location, putting the maps of those who lived on the North Side in one pile and those who lived on the South Side in another. Viewing these maps with respect to residential location illuminated striking trends within the groups and clear differences between them. Those who lived in North Side neighborhoods identified queer life, leisure, community, and networks only in North Side neighborhoods, and frequently selected Boystown. When asked where else in the city they were aware of other queer networks or communities, the majority were at a loss. In contrast, those on the South Side frequently had more expansive sexual organization maps identifying queer community not only in Boystown and the surrounding North Side neighborhoods, but also across the city and typically on the South and West sides.

Analyzing these maps as a full corpus, they illustrated how individuals that lived among an abundance of queer sexual places are more likely to identify only those areas as housing queer community. They benefit by being able to concentrate their erotic leisure within their residential communities. Those in neighborhoods with a dearth of such spaces were forced to broaden their sexual maps and consider both different neighborhoods and different types of spaces. In other words, some men took for granted the association of sexual community, space, and

neighborhood as being interchangeable, while others had to efficaciously work to create such spaces and networks. Not only was I analytically intrigued by the mechanisms that contribute to differences in sexual mapping by residential location, but also personally interested, as my South Side neighborhood of Pilsen, located in the Lower West Side, was evidently absent of queer sexual spaces. Thus, I turned my attention to understanding how queer men outside of the gayborhood pursued and found queer networks, spaces, and communities.

One day, while sitting at the Jeffery Pub located in the South Side neighborhood of South Shore, I was discussing with some of the nighttime regulars about where they went in the city to find other queer people and places. Though they disagreed with each other about the places they would recommend, they came to an agreement with a comment from Cassius: "If you want to know where people go, then why don't you just go with them?" Initially taking his suggestion that I would simply go along with people on their nights out as jest, I kept thinking that he had a point. Although I am able to ask people where they go and have them diagram their sexual maps of the city, neither method is well suited to illuminate the *in situ* decisions and motivations for how men navigate urban structures in the pursuit of queer place and community. Thus, I employed a go-along interview method where I went along during nights out, and Cassius was the first one to volunteer to take me along. This participatory interviewing method tapped me into the decision-making processes of how queer men maneuvered the city in pursuit of sexual partners, places, and communities, and clarified how urban structures of transportation, neighborhood quality, and partner density stratified the costs endured by queer men. Suddenly, decisions of where, how, and why queer men go to certain neighborhoods or certain venues became not simply about preferences or desires, but instead the product of a confluence of other urban, social, and sexual structures. This study started as a project on queer place-making, but it

evolved into an investigation of the intersections of urban planning, Chicago history, neighborhood effects, transportation insecurity, and queer communities.

As I immersed myself in the lives of the queer men I studied, three analytic questions emerged as useful guideposts for understanding the ways that extant urban and social inequalities stratify the pursuit for sexual community and partners: (1) what do queer men want, (2) what does it cost them to get it, and (3) what do they eventually get? Across both social and geographic locations, their desires were relatively similar. They wanted quality partners, places, communities, and networks. However, stark differences existed in the costs that certain queer men, particularly men of color, endured to access queer spaces, communities, and partners. From financial costs of traveling across neighborhoods to the social costs of feeling an outsider in certain queer places, those living outside of the gayborhood were burdened with addressing any number of costs in their pursuit. Ultimately, the decentralization of the gayborhood shed light on the differences in costs, risks, and results of queer men in the gayborhood versus those outside of it. These findings illustrate how the intersections of urban structures and inequalities have profound impacts on the process and results of queer place-making.

This dissertation exists as the result of hundreds of queer men talking with me, going out in the city with me, sitting down for interviews with me, and taking me along on their nights out. For some, our encounters were merely minutes at one bar on one day. For others, they were near weekly interactions for years. Sometimes my racial position as a white person in predominantly Black spaces led Black men to either distrust me or treat me as a non-entity. Similarly, my geographic position as a South Sider in North Side spaces led some white men to question my motives for living on the South Side or make assumptions which precluded them from having an interest in talking with me. These interactions, in both cases, help highlight the limits of doing

embodied ethnographic work across fieldsites, which in turn, help to illuminate the very social relationships that my participants also had to navigate in moving around the city.

Though my dissertation focuses on the experiences and strategies of queer men, my time in the field was influenced by others as well, including interactions with womxn, non-queer people, neighbors, business owners, participants' families, and city workers. Although my field note data from these other individuals are infrequently reported, these individuals were valuable in helping to provide connections and context for the findings. Similarly, my focus on leisure is only one part of the larger social world in which I was embedded. Though my eventual focus would broaden outside of the bars' walls, the data presented are tied to the structures and strategies of leisure and the pursuit of sexual community, places, and partners rooted within such leisure spaces. Crucially, my relationships with many of my participants, most notably my close informants, were fostered both inside and outside of leisure spaces, including going out to eat, watching sports, listening to music, going to concerts, and quotidian tasks of neighborhood living such as going for walks, riding public transportation, and grocery shopping.

Throughout the dissertation, I have chosen to use the actual names of most of the neighborhoods, sites, and spaces. The intent behind this decision is to emphasize the importance that urban location has on the decision-making process of queer men in their pursuit of leisure and community. For some, their neighborhoods were selectively chosen due to characteristics that they desired or proximity to other important locations including work, religious life, friends, family, or leisure. For others, their neighborhoods are the result of childhood upbringing, familial connections, or financial resources. In each case, these neighborhoods have reputations, histories, lineages, and assumptions that are useful in understanding when considering the impact of geographic structures on sexual inequality. Furthermore, I have chosen to provide the real name

of my various sites, except in cases where doing so would put my participants at risk. Like naming the neighborhoods, this decision was analytically determined because these various bars and clubs, too, have reputations and assumptions attached to them. It is valuable for such assumptions to help contextualize the presented data. Finally, I have provided pseudonyms for the names of my participants. In many cases, I sought to provide additional details to situate them within the various sites including dress, demeanor, or biographical information. This information is only provided in cases where it would not be personally identifying. For some of my participants, the ability to remain anonymous was paramount in their agreement to speak with me. In these cases, additional information is withheld out of respect for their decision to participate in this study and trust me with their thoughts, feelings, and words.

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Abstract

Scholars have paid particular attention to the various ways that queer sexuality is organized within the modern metropolis. Especially through focusing on the development of sexual enclaves and gayborhoods, they have illustrated the ways that these neighborhoods and communities have come to epitomize queer life, culture, and commerce in American cities. Despite the growth of these neighborhoods, many queer men remain excluded, either by force or by choice, and locate their queer participation outside of marked urban, queer communities. This dissertation examines how the gayborhood as emblematic of urban, queer life, coupled with other patterns of urban stratification, have contributed to urban sexual inequality, specifically through the centralization of the gayborhood at the expense of pluralistic understanding of urban, queer place-making. Using a multi-method analysis, I examine the ways that Black, queer men create, produce, and participate in urban, queer place-making outside of the gayborhood. Focusing on how queer men traverse urban space in pursuit of queer community, partners, and spaces, I utilize a combination of qualitative methods to show that urban, queer, sexual inequality is structural, resulting from a combination of multiple types of sexual and urban inequalities. Specifically, I examine how the asymmetrical distribution of queer sexual spaces throughout the city places additional burdens on some queer men in navigating and negotiating access to such places, especially when those spaces are located outside of their residential neighborhoods and among different demographics of people. I further investigate how access to urban resources mitigates one's access to these spaces. Using transportation as a lens to illuminate differences in urban resource allocation, I show how men outside of the gayborhood

more frequently must contend with unreliable, unaffordable, or non-existent transportation options as they navigate the urban terrain. These arguments, taken in tandem, lead urban, queer men to understand the queer sexual landscape in varying ways, many of which benefit the most privileged at the expense of the most marginalized. Finally, I conclude by focusing on the various strategies that queer men outside of the gayborhood utilize to contend with structural inequalities highlighting novel ways of negotiating interpersonal impression management and leveraging community ties to create forms of ephemeral queer communit

Introduction

"C'mon, let's grab some shots before we head out" Jacquan (26, Black, SS) says to Ben (26, White, NS) and myself as he moves from the crowded dance floor of Hydrate to the bar. As Ben and I follow, we all take one last shot before leaving the bar a little before 12am. We all say goodbye and goodnight, leaving in separate directions, to embark back to our respective homes. For Jacquan and myself, it takes a little over 1.5 hours on this Saturday night to venture from the North Side gay bar back to our apartments. For Ben, it takes five minutes to walk around the corner.

As Jacquan and I wait for the Red Line train, he mentions how the DJ tonight was better than usual and recollects the fun that we all had at one of the dance clubs located in Boystown, Chicago's gayborhood: "I'm happy that I decided to come tonight. You know, Ben asks me to come up North all the time because he usually stays out very late. But, you know, he also lives like right there." Though Hydrate is a frequent leisure venue for Lacquan and Ben is one of Lacquan's closest friends who invites him out to Boystown quite often, Lacquan describes how he infrequently stays out as late as he did tonight, lamenting the time and multiple public transit options required for him to get home. The differences between how Ben and Lacquan experience Hydrate are not simply dissimilarities between their neighborhoods, but instead critically reflect structural differences between where, when, and how queer space is situated and utilized in the urban metropolis. For Lacquan, his predominately Black neighborhood is not simply away from Hydrate and Boystown, but comparatively lacks the same type of queer sexual spaces, transportation options, and neighborhood amenities. Thus, when wanting to partake in the queer

leisure, he contends with bearing greater economic, temporal, and social costs. Focusing broadly on urban, queer men who live outside of the gayborhood with a particular focus on black, queer men, I illustrate how these men are bound by various structural challenges in the pursuit of queer space and community within and outside of their residential communities. Furthermore, I demonstrate the variety of strategies that these men use to contend with these challenges and access pleasurable and meaningful erotic leisure.

The placement of queer sexual spaces throughout the city reflects the ways that the postmodern city is sexually organized. As argued by Laumann et al (2004) and their theories of the various ways that urban space and life is highly organized, the location of sexual spaces—defined as sex marketplaces—has a profound impact on where and how people pursue sex partners. Those living among dense networks of sexual spaces, such as Ben, are increasingly likely to find partners and community within their residential neighborhoods, while those who live among sparse networks, like Lacquan, are increasingly likely to expand their sexual leisure outside of their residential bounds (Laumann et al. 2004). Given that many queer men utilize various sexual marketplaces, such as bars and clubs, not only for transactional sexual exchanges, but also for community and other aspects of social life, the location of these venues greatly impacts not only who utilizes these spaces, but how (Simon and Gagnon 1998). Queer men, particularly, are highly sensitive to the placement of sexual marketplaces as they use them to situate queer community among the heterosexual city, representing public fronts of private desires (Bell and Valentine 2003).

Even in cities like Chicago that boast larger queer populations compared to other urban and non-urban locations, the comparatively smaller queer male populations have led scholars to argue for the necessity of queer sexual marketplaces concentrating themselves physically in

order to be efficiently used by queer men (Ellingson and Schroeder 2004). Such concentration has resulted in the construction of not only queer entertainment districts (Mattson, 2014) where sexual spaces are agglomerated, but also full neighborhoods where residents, businesses, and social service agencies all cater to the LGBT+ community (Ghaziani 2014). These sexual enclaves, rebranded as *gayborhoods,* represent physical locations where sexual identity, politics, and community converge to lay material claim to urban space and cosmopolitan consumption (Conner and Okamura 2021, Ellingson and Schroeder 2004, Florida 2002, Ghaziani 2014). Despite representing relatively small urban areas in relation to the larger urban landscape (Weightman 1981), gayborhoods have transition the study of gay enclaves from manifestations of informal queer space to formalized neighborhoods, becoming synonymous with urban queer leisure and community. Even among claims that gayborhoods house various facets of internal strife including structures of racism, sexism , transphobia, and classism, they remain popularized as locations that are an "essential part of LGBT+ life" (Conner and Okamura, 2021). Thus, it is unsurprisingly that urban sexuality researchers have flocked to the gayborhood to study queer populations (Bitterman and Hess, 2020; Hess and Bitterman, 2021; Callendar, Mooney-Somers, and Keen, 2020), community (Orne, 2017; Brodyn and Ghaziani, 2021; Ghaziani, 2014; Greene, 2014), sex (Orne, 2017; Ghaziani, 2017), and leisure (Kanai and Kenttamaa-Squires, 2015; Knee, 2019; Gorman-Murray and Nash, 2017). From sexual fields in Chelsea (Green, 2008) to bustling bars in West Hollywood (Han et al, 2017) to sexy communities in Boystown (Orne, 2017), the gayborhood remains paradigmatic as the backdrop for urban queer sexuality.

The arguable overabundance of scholarly focus on gayborhoods and their representation of urban queer life is not without its critics. Just as scholars have been drawn to the gayborhood to investigate queer community, they too have been critical of conflating the gayborhood with

the typical, average, or desired space of queer life. For many scholars, such critical responses come from a call to broaden the focus of urban, queer sexuality by resisting the assumption of spatial singularity, understanding different gayborhood attachments, or imaging novel forms of urban, queer space outside of the gayborhood. Though acknowledging that the claims of gayborhoods becoming passé or disappearing altogether are unfounded, Ghaziani (2019) argues for the concept of *cultural archipelagos* as a new direction to study non-gayborhood urban, queer sexuality. Cultural archipelagos emphasize the plurality of queer places, neighborhoods, and community by de-emphasizing the attention of *one* queer neighborhood and focusing on the potential for multiple. As Greene (2019) argues, "the complexity and vibrancy of queer communities have never been contained to one area of the city" (27). Similar to how advocates for the pluralism of urban queer space identify the need to expand the opportunity to consider queer life that is contained in one space, scholars have also called for the re-thinking of how gayborhoods are used by urban denizens that are not located within their territorial borders. Greene (2014) capitalizes on his concept of *vicarious citizens* to explore the ways that individuals form symbolic attachments to the iconic urban gayborhoods, even in lieu of material investment. These vicarious citizens are able to recognize, situate, and participate within the gayborhood, while living in other parts of the city. Though not without tensions between those that lay material claims to the gayborhood and those who lay symbolic ones, the concept of various citizens starts to broaden the relationship between sexual space and citizenry within the city allowing for a more dynamic understanding of attachment to space. Finally, scholars have also argued for a re-imagination of urban, queer space that is neither centered within the gayborhood nor seeking to imitate it. Hunter (2010), in his concept of the *nightly round,* illustrates how Black, queer men and women utilize predominately Black, heterosexual spaces

for leisure, sexual partner search, and social support. His findings present the opportunity to consider queer place-making strategies in non-queer locations and thus consider the fuller range of queer leisure.

Though scholars like Ghaziani (2019), Greene (2014), and Hunter (2010) address the calls to focus on more expansive understandings of urban, queer space outside of the boundaries of the gayborhood, others have called for the movement away from cities altogether. Amy Stone (2018), through using a meta-analysis on published LGBTQ geographic research, calls for sociologists to challenge metronormative understandings of LGBTQ life and eschew the "great cities" for an increased focus on the U.S. South, rural queers, and "ordinary" cities. Arguably, this movement would accomplish what Stone (2018) argues as "sociologists need[ing] to confront their own epistemological assumptions about LGBTQ life, particularly the understanding that the most exciting forms of queer life are in major cities in the United States" (10). The call to move away from major cities is well taken up by Mattson (2020) in his exploration of 55 long "small city" gay bars where he argues that outside of large metropolises, queer place is frequently integrated with heterosexual space in contrast to the ways that gayborhoods or "big city" gay bars compete for space by segregating themselves from the larger urban landscape. The focus on less urban or non-urban locations doesn't simply challenge assumptions about LGBTQ life, but also opens up the possibility for understanding a more diverse range of LGBTQ life and the strategies that queer people use to construct such life. Unlike the focus on urban cosmopolitanism and its impact on the ways that queer space is structured, sold, and commodified, non-urban LGBTQ life commonly involves a more intentional focus on how queer people integrate, not segregate, themselves into their other social worlds. Brekhus (2003) in *Peacocks, Chameleons, Centaurs* takes his focus away from the city

and places it in the suburbs where he explores how gay suburbanites utilize a variety of strategies to craft queer identities, seek out queer community, and participate in queer activities. Whereas scholars have focused on how urban queer people create, compete, and disentangle queer place from the large urban landscape, Brekhus (2003) illustrates the strategies of how queer suburban people are less interested in how to separate their identities and spaces and are more interested in the ways to combine them. Whereas cities provide the potential for anonymity (Garber, 2000; Tonkiss, 2005; Milgram, 1970), suburbs, small towns, and rural locations do not afford their citizens the same potential leading to vastly different problems and solutions in how to structure queer life. Brown-Saracino (2011; 2015) demonstrates such difference in her studies of LGB identities in small towns. By arguing against notions of fixed identity, Brown-Saracino (2015) highlights how intra-place variation impacts community and identity formation, thereby calling on scholars to better attune to the ways that differences among cities may yield different conceptions of place. In all cases, Stone (2018), Mattson (2020), Brekhus (2003), and Brown-Saracino (2015) are calling on scholars to consider a wider variation of queer place, identity, leisure, and community, especially such variation which is largely absent in urban environments.

Both the call to expand beyond the gayborhood and its residents and the call to leave the city altogether center on a common goal for sexuality scholars to broaden their investigation and understanding of queer place, community, and leisure, thereby moving away from singular assumptions of queer life in lieu of more nuanced and multifaceted aspects of it. Despite calls to leave the city, especially the so-called "great cities," to accomplish this goal, I argue that we do not need to leave the city, however, we do need to leave the gayborhood. Much of urban, queer sexuality remains entangled with the focus, whether implicit or explicit, on sexual enclaves and

their utility in structuring urban, queer life, thus by moving away from the gayborhood, we are able to more fully investigate a wider realm of urban, queer sexualities.

I address this need by centering the experiences, desires, costs, and strategies of queer men who live outside of the gayborhood and their pursuit of urban, queer space, community, and partners. Focusing on how asymmetrical queer space allocation intersects with inequalities in multiple urban structures including neighborhood quality, public transportation, and racism, I show how Black, queer men, in particular, must navigate multiple intersections of inequalities in pursuing urban queer partners, spaces, and communities. Furthermore, I demonstrate how such men develop intrapersonal and interpersonal strategies to address such challenges and ultimately find themselves successful in both extant and newly created queer spaces. Focusing on sexual inequality as structurally intersectional, I present novel ways to conceptualize, theorize, and analyze queer spaces and strategies while simultaneously deecentering the gayborhood and attending to the ways that urban, queer sexuality is diverse, nuanced, and fluid.

The Chapters that Follow

In the City and Out of the Gayborhood examines the ways that urban inequalities impact the search for queer men to find partners, places, and community in Chicago. I argue that the search process for sexual space and community provides a distinctive lens through which to examine how urban inequalities and asymmetrical queer resources influence processes of queer place-making, especially such place-making outside of the gayborhood. At the macro-urban level, I illustrate how the placement of both urban and queer resources impact the various sexual maps that queer men imagine onto the urban landscape. On a meso-level, focusing on network and circuit creation, I scrutinize how queer men outside of the gayborhood utilize triadic

relationships across places, social networks, and residential spaces to create and produce queer space. Finally, on a micro-level, I attend to the practices of leisure and examine how queer men employ strategies of movement, place-making, and intrapersonal performance to mitigate various costs and barriers in the participants of erotic leisure.

The chapters of this dissertation are organized in two parts, with the first part focusing on the methods, sites, and positionalities of the researcher and the research study and the second part introducing and exploring the various costs endured and strategies created by Black, queer men in their pursuit of queer space and community.

Chapter 1 provides a brief historical, social, and political introduction to the spatial organization of Chicago. I draw upon the various political shifts which have resulted in the hypersegregation (Sampson, 2002) of the city, paying specific attention to the colloquial ways that the "North" and "South" sides of the city have become proxies for racial and class segregation. In the context of this segregation, I illustrate how the development of Boystown, in the North Side neighborhood of Lakeview, was as much a social accomplishment of queer organization as an intentional policy design. Whereas queer space historically has remained dispersed throughout Chicago, I show how the construction of Boystown has both agglomerated and structured urban, queer place. I conclude this chapter by reflecting on how the spatial organization of the city, coupled with the deliberate placement of its gayborhood in a middle-class, White neighborhood, has resulted in the gayborhood itself becoming heavily raced and classed, therefore adding complexities to the ways that queer men across the city map, utilize, and environment queer place.

Chapter 2 positions and delineates the various sites and waves of the study. I provide insight into the various progressions of spaces, methods, and relationships as I structured my 37-month study. In addressing the ethnographic calls of resisting the temptation to place the ethnographer as a neutral observer (Turner, 2002) and the necessity to recognize the inherent partiality of embodied ethnographic work (Haraway, 1991), I outline how my timelines in the field became, on one hand, more specific as my relationships with spaces and people developed, while also became broader as my focus on queer place followed my respondents' feelings and utilizations becoming more expansive. Furthermore, I expand my own position within spaces, neighborhoods, and with respondents as a way to situate myself in the larger narratives presented throughout the dissertation.

Chapter 3 addresses calls from feminist, queer, and queer of color critique theories to further refine and situation my relationships with respondents across fieldsites. As my study involved me living in certain neighborhoods throughout the city, but traversing the urban landscape with those of different races, classes, sexualities, and residential locations, I attend to the various ways that my identities and positions both facilitated and constrained my relationships with certain spaces and individuals. In doing so, I argue for the notion of viewing ethnographic reflexivity as relational, therefore understanding one's positionality through the interpretations, thoughts, feelings, and understandings of one's participants. Furthermore, I argue that by centering participants' interpretations and engagements with the ethnographer and using them to reflexively understand one's own position in the field, an ethnographer can address both feminist and queer calls to address power relations between research and subject.

Chapter 4 begins the second part of the dissertation by introducing the two guiding theoretical frameworks—Laumann et al's (2004) *Sexual Organization of the City* and Ghaziani's

(2009) concept of the gayborhood—as well as highlighting how the gayborhood is collectively centered in the interpretations of urban, queer space. I argue for the decentralization of the gayborhood as analytically paradigmatic of urban, queer sexuality and instead call for an increasingly pluralistic approach to queer place-making. Finally, I argue, through the experiences of Black, queer men, how the decentralization of the gayborhood can help to illuminate the diversity and variety of urban queer space and the plethora of strategies that are employed to imagine, participate, and experience such spaces.

Chapter 5 focuses on the costs, benefits, risks, and experiences endured by Black, queer men as they travel to the gayborhood and the North Side. Using asymmetrical distributions of urban resources and spaces throughout the city, I illustrate how Black, queer men are unevenly incorporated into the neighborhood and must bear costs and develop strategies to find success within this neighborhood.

Chapter 6 turns to the interpersonal strategies that Black queer men, in particular, leverage different types of queer place in order to gain erotic capital and find themselves sexually successful. Through using the strategies deemed, "homothug" and "homeboy," I demonstrate how different presentations of race, gender, and sexuality yield varying results depending on the type of queer space. Thus, these men, are adept at being sexually successful by identifying what games are happening in what spaces and determining how best to structure their sexual performances.

Chapter 7 examines the costs, benefits, and strategies endured by Black queer men leveraging localized and residential ties to develop and partake in queer community within their South Side neighborhoods. By moving outside of the gayborhood, I show how these men

contend both with structural inequalities as well as the development of new forms of queer spaces and communities.

Chapter 8 engages in the ways that those outside of the gayborhood eschew marked queer places altogether and instead utilize unmarked, residential spaces, as the sites for the creation of queer place. I use the notion of *ephemeral queer community* as a strategy that queer men use to leverage unmarked spatial locations, in which they have residential ties, to imagine, create, and manifest queer place. Unlike stable queer spaces, such as gay bars or clubs, these unmarked spaces allow for a new type of queer community construction, specifically one that is ephemeral and temporary. I conclude by illustrating how *ephemeral queer community* addresses one's lack of marked spaces and can alleviate one's feelings of isolation or unwelcomeness within such spaces.

I conclude by discussing how the decentralization of the gayborhood in urban, queer placemaking contributes to an increasingly pluralistic view of urban, queer space and communities and how it highlights the work, struggles, and benefits of Black, queer men who reside outside of the gayborhood, yet imagine and participate in new forms of queer space.

Chapter 1 : Chicago – Never a City Segregated nor so Queer

> You have to tell them that there are gay bars on the South Side. Hell, you'll need to tell them that gay life exists outside of Boystown. – DJ (27, Black, SS)
>
> Is there anything outside of Boystown? Why wouldn't guys just come here for fun? –Marc (24, White, NS)

1.1 Introduction

DJ and Marc are born and bred Chicagoans, both having grown up, attended college, and found employment within the city. Despite the many similarities that these lifelong queer Chicagoans share, the current 8.9 miles in distance from one another prompts them to discuss Chicago's queer communities in vastly different ways. For example, when DJ, a marketing executive who grew up on Chicago's west side but currently lives in the South Side neighborhood of Bronzeville is provided a map of Chicago and its 77 neighborhoods, he immediately discusses his South Side gay haunts. Referencing his own use of these spaces, DJ describes how he has worked hard to construct a type of queer community within his residential neighborhood:

> Bronzeville doesn't really have any gay bars. If my friends and I want a South Side gay bar then we usually just go to Jeffery Pub. It's cool though, sometimes out of the way, but is definitely a place that we go to have fun. If we don't want to go that far, then we will just hang out at some of the dive bars around Hyde Park. The Falcon and The Cove mostly. They aren't gay bars, but definitely have a lot

> of gays that go there, so me and my friends have fun. It beats having to go up North and deal with some twinky white boy or a condescending asshole.

DJ's use of one of the two South Side gay bars and the use of other unmarked neighborhood "dive" bars reflects a common theme among the queer men living on the South Side of the city, specifically how they leverage a dearth of marked queer spaces to carefully select from the extant locations or create queer community in unmarked spaces. For his own personal sexual map of the city, his South Side residential location leads him to create an expansive network of both queer and non-queer places throughout the city. Drawing on his experiences growing up on the West Side of the Chicago, DJ furthers the importance of his expansive queer sexual map of the city by mentioning how he prefers sexual spaces outside of the city's North Side gayborhood, Boystown:

> I grew up over in North Lawndale and it was rough. It's gotten worse over the years, but it was rough growing up with the gangs and shit. But all of my friends, and my gay friends, were all west-siders, so we just hung around over there. It wasn't until college and DePaul that I even went to Boystown. And it was fun and all, but I don't really get Northsiders and they don't really get me….Then I moved to Bronzeville, I just wanted to find places in my own neighborhood with my own friends down here. Didn't want to travel all the time to people who didn't get me.

Arguably, DJ's attachment to the South Side was greater due to his desire to move into Bronzeville as opposed to his lack of choice to grow up in North Lawndale. However, in all cases, DJ reflected on his personal desire to locate queer place within his residential community and in the side of the city in which he was living with people that "got him." Given his

attachment to the South Side, DJ remained adamant in his longing to focus on queer life outside of the North Side.

When presented with the same map of Chicago and asked to identify the various queer communities throughout the city, Marc drew a circle around Boystown and said, "that's it." When pressed to elaborate on any other queer communities he could identify, he leans back in his chair, shakes his head, and says, "Is there anything outside of Boystown?" Like DJ, Marc also grew up in Chicago. His parents, both college staff members, moved to the Ravenswood section of North Side neighborhood, Lincoln Square, a few years before Marc was born. He grew up on the North Side and discussed how, in high school, he waited eagerly to finally go to Boystown:

> I had gone to Boystown with friends in high school and when I had my first boyfriend in junior year, we would go to the coffee shops or restaurants. But I really wanted to go to the bars. I had a curfew, so usually couldn't be out too late, but the weekend times where I could be out later, had so many guys, hot guys (laughs), just standing around. And drag queens. They would all stand around too laughing and smoking. I just knew that I wanted to go into any—all—of the bars and clubs.

For Marc, his relatively close proximity from his North Side neighborhood to the North Side neighborhood of Lakeview, where Boystown is housed, helped facilitate his interest in this community as he could frequently go to and from it. Thus, it is unsurprising that when Marc accepted to matriculate to Northwestern University, a private university in Chicago's northern suburb of Evanston, he would finally realize his goal of making use of the various queer leisure areas of Boystown:

> I first went to Roscoe's when I started college because I had gotten a fake ID. I remember going with a couple of friends and we took the "L" train from Evanston and it was such an amazing time. I definitely drank too much, but spent the whole night dancing and relaxing in their outside area. And, you know, I may have found myself making out with some of the guys.

For Marc, like many queer men, Boystown represented the quintessential urban community and nightlife. Upon his graduation, he, and two of his college friends, would end up renting a two-bedroom apartment in Lakeview. Although described as "cramped" and "overpriced" by Marc was also indicative of a dream realized for him.

Today, the 8.9 miles between Marc and DJ's neighborhoods represent the variances in their experiences growing up in the city, their educational and employment trajectories, and their idiosyncratic desires for community. Despite these differences, however, DJ and Marc speak about their respective neighborhoods in similar terms beaming with pride about selecting into neighborhoods, buildings, and communities that represent the accomplishment of their goals. For DJ, his movement into Bronzeville, the once deemed the "Black Metropolis" and home to significant political, literary, and artistic visionaries such as Ida B. Wells, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Sam Cooke, represented his ascension into the core Black middle class (Lacy, 2007; Pattillo, 1999) of the city. Hence, why when asked to delineate queer space throughout the city, DJ eschewed a focus on the white and North Side queer venues, instead choosing to illuminate both the stable and unstable queer places within and around his residential community. Likewise, Marc's move to Boystown, one of the largest LGBTQ communities in the nation (Keating, 2008), represented the realization of a dream to finally live, work, and play within the queer

sexual enclave that he yearned for growing up. Henceforth, why when asked to reflect on queer communities across the city, he drew a circle around this neighborhood and set his pen down.

DJ and Marc represent a commonality of many Chicagoans, namely that where one lives is one way in which city-dwellers organize the urban population. Not only the historical context of neighborhoods like Bronzeville, but the colloquialisms of neighborhoods such as Wicker Park being home to hipsters, Lincoln Park for the rich, and Englewood as dangerous, impact the ways that individuals think about, map, and experience the city. The 77 neighborhoods that officially represent the city of Chicago are further mapped into three "sides" of the city, specifically the North Side representing north of the Chicago River, the West Side representing west of it, and finally the South Side representing south. Like the neighborhoods that make up them, these sides to carry with them reputations, colloquialisms, stereotypes, and assumptions that guide everything from how individuals interact with the city to urban investment to tourism. Therefore, in Chicago, references to the "North Side" and the "South Side" are not simply geographic markers, but instead are also proxies for the collective ways that Chicagoans organize their social thoughts and feelings about the city. In this chapter, I provide a brief introduction to the construction of the North and South Sides, highlighting the intentional urban planning and developments that are implicated in their development. Additionally, I will provide an overview of certain demographics of these sides in order to place its geography into social context. Then I will elaborate further on the social policies that have contributed to the stark racial, economic, and urban development differences between these sides. Specifically through the lens of housing and housing policy, I will illustrate how the contemporary make-ups of these sides of the city are part and parcel of the intentional decisions made by key political, economic, and business interests. Using this development interest approach, I will lead into the construction of

Boystown, illustrating how the development of this part of the larger Lakeview neighborhood was an intentional urban plan concocted by city officials, private advocacy groups, and non-profits. Finally, I conclude by discussing how these geographic developments led to Boystown becoming a specific *type* of queer space and the implications for how queer men within and outside of the gayborhood experience the sexual organization of the city.

1.2 North Side and South Side

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods. From Zorbaugh's (1929) sociological study into the near north side of Chicago to Sampson's (2011) investigation of neighborhood effects, the now infamous 77 neighborhoods that make up Chicago are said to represent the basic building blocks of the city (Keating, 2008). People create neighborhoods in response to both the natural landscape (like waterways) and to man-made features (such as highways), therefore it is within these building block units that residences, streets, schools, parks, restaurants, bars, grocery stores, and other business all help to provide neighborhoods with the resources, reputations, and repute that define it (Keating, 2008). Although the exact boundaries of where certain neighborhoods begin and end are frequently contested (especially with respect to historical shifts of a neighborhood's population), Figure 1 illustrates how the relative location of these neighborhoods remain delineated within the city.

Figure 1 Nine categories of Chicago's community areas

As illustrated in figure 1, the various neighborhoods throughout Chicago are frequently further grouped into nine larger categories reflecting the geographic relationship of neighborhoods to one another. Both the boundary making of the 77 neighborhoods and the larger nine geographic groups are the result of the historical urban planning and plotting of the Chicago urban landscape.

In 1830, surveyor James Thompson, created the first plat map of Chicago believing that the natural bodies of water and water ways would be useful boundaries for the development of the city. Capitalizing on Lake Michigan to the east, Thompson utilized the Chicago River to create the original three "sides" of city – North, West, and South. As illustrated in Figure 2, the original plat map designed by Thompson in 1830 as "A Map of the Town of Chicago," he utilized the Chicago River, and its branches, as natural boundaries for how to plot out the city. Everything north of the river would become the North Side (with its original boundary as North Ave); everything west would become the West Side (with its original boundary as Wood Street); and finally everything South would become the South Side (with its original boundary of 23rd street). Although the various plats and original boundaries of these sides of the city have changed due to the growth and annexation of the city, the notion of having various "sides" of the city remains.

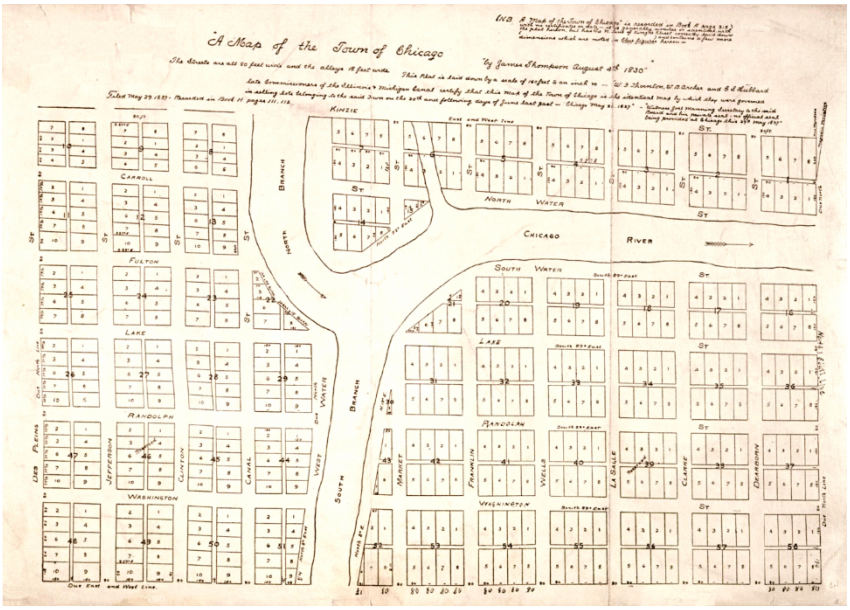

Figure 2 Thompson (1830), "A Map of the Town of Chicago" Plat Map

In the 1920s, after decades of further annexation that expanded the boundaries of Chicago to closely resemble its contemporary boundaries, sociologists at the University of Chicago were the first to divide the city and its acquired townships into 75 "natural areas" using the recently expanded railway system, along with parks and waterways (Keating, 2008). These "natural areas" would later be rebranded as "community areas" in the 1930s and, with the addition of two community areas, would comprise the 77 "community areas" used by the U.S. census in their *Local Community Factbook* for Chicago (Keating, 2008). Today, it is important to note that many of these historical community areas have remained closely resembled to their contemporary neighborhoods, while other neighborhoods have more complicated relationships with their community boundaries. Keating (2008), in her historical guide of Chicago's neighborhoods and suburbs, points out that "few people in Pilsen, for example, would identify themselves as residents of the Lower West Side Community Area" (p. 3).

Despite contestation between boundaries of community areas and neighborhoods, as Zorbaugh (1929) argues in *The Gold Coast and the Slum,* the effect of distance is not simply geographical, but also is social. The relationship between space and the social is explored by scholars that utilize the neighborhood as the foundational spatial unit to investigate how various conditions influence the actions and well-being of residents, both individually and collectively (Shaw and McKay, 1942; Shaw, Zorbaugh, and McKay, 1929; Bursik, 1988). Contemporarily, neighborhood effects scholars have turned to frameworks such as social disorganization theory or social network theory to identify the relationship between demographics, resources, and census indicators on outcomes such as crime, health, mobility, or collective efficacy (Sampson, 1999, 2001, 2011, 2019; Sampson et al, 1997; Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997). In all cases, there lies an underlying recognition that not all neighborhoods are created equal and such

spatial inequality begets other forms of inequality, thus, "some neighborhoods contain most of what a household needs on a regular day, while others require residents to travel beyond their boundaries for basic services (Keating, 2008: p. 1).

The distinction between which neighborhoods and community areas house high levels of resources and those which don't are not evenly distributed throughout the city. As the Voorhees Center for Neighborhood and Community Improvement at the University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs found when investigating historical income inequality throughout the city, there are significant economic trends that have bifurcated the income distribution between the North Side and both the South and West Sides, combined. As depicted in Figure 3, which spatially illustrates the weighted average individual income of the various areas of Chicago, relative to the larger seven county metro area, it is clear of two conclusions: (1) the increasing disappearance of Chicago's economic middle class and (2) distinct differences between the North Side and the other sides of the city. Most relevant, the comparison of the North Side, which houses the greatest concentration of blue, or very high income (40% above average), and the South Side, which houses the greatest concentration of red, or very low income (40% below average), remain in stark contrast to one another.

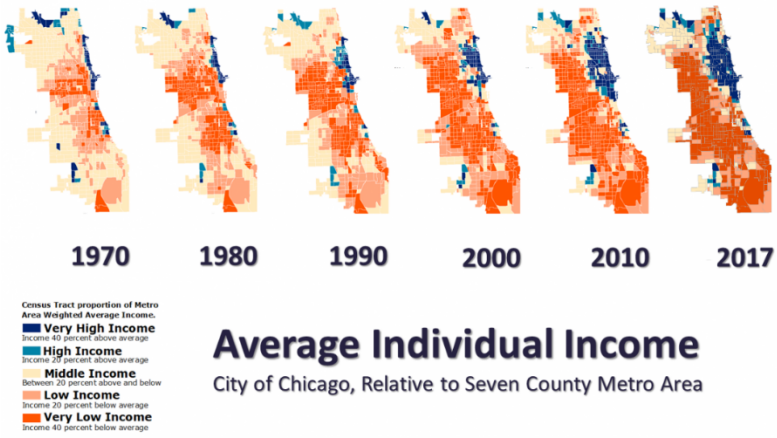

Figure 3 Average Individual Income across Chicago Census Tracts

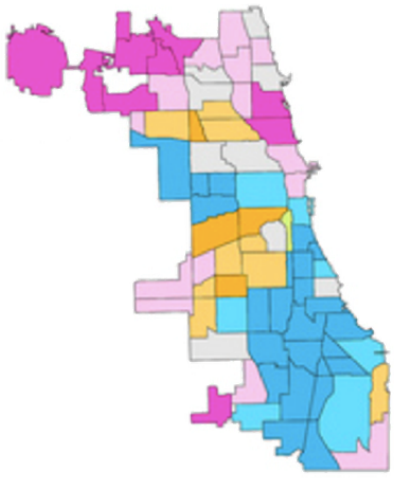

Figure 4 Collapsed Racial Makeup across the 77 Community Areas of Chicago. (Pink = White-Majority ; Blue = Black Majority)

This pattern, although concerning at face value, is further problematized when looking at the racial demographics of the city. Figure 4 collapses the racial makeup of the 77 community areas of the city, using pink to demarcate neighborhoods with a white majority population and blue to demarcate neighborhoods with a black majority population. As seen, average income is not the only characteristic that is segregated throughout the city. The South Side is not only Black-majority, but also features neighborhoods with some of the highest proportions of Black residents, including many of the dark blue neighborhoods representing a 99% Black population[4]. In contrast, the North Side includes the greatest concentration of white populations, including the only two dark pink neighborhoods that border the lake, which include Lincoln Park (Chicago's most affluent neighborhood) and Lakeview (where Chicago's gayborhood, Boystown is located). These levels of racial segregation have risen to the level of hypersegregation, which Massey and Denton (1988) define as meeting four out of the five dimensions of segregation: unevenness, isolation, clustering, concentration, and centralization,[5] have continued to grow and become more pronounced, specifically noting that over half of the block groups in Cook County became less racially diverse in the 1990s (Talen, 2006). The differences in demographics and economics

[4] Which, given the standard error of the data and analysis, is the highest percentage any one specific community area can receive.

[5] For a full description of these dimensions, refer to Massey and Denton (1988) and for a research note on the application of these dimensions, refer to Massey and Tannen (2015).

between the North and South sides of the city have profound impacts on the various reputations and qualities of life afforded within these neighborhoods.

As illustrated in Figure 5, which collapses violent crime rates (per 1000) by community area with Dark Green representing a lower rate and Red representing a higher one, the rates of such crimes remain equally separated to the patterns reflected by both average household income and racial demographics, with the North Side representing the lowest amount of such crime and the South Side representing the highest. Considering all of these trends complementarily, Chicagoans used the terms "North Side" and "South Side" as proxies to reflect the racial, economic, and safety delineations of various neighborhoods with "North Side" becoming synonymous with white, middle-class, and safe and the "South Side" becoming synonymous with Black, lower-class, and dangerous.

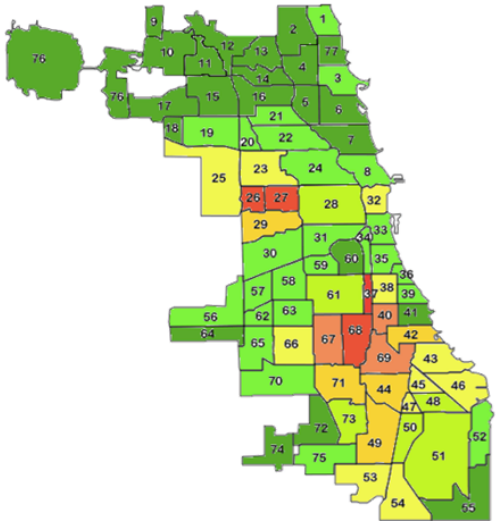

Figure 5 Average Violent Crime Rates Across the 77 Community Areas of Chicago (Dark Green = Fewer; Red = Greater)

Divided We Stand; Separated We Live

"How did Chicago end up like this?" was one of the audience questions during a Civic Talk at the Chicago History Museum's exhibit entitled *Race: Are we so different?"* This talk, a moderated event with journalist Natalie Moore, historian Joy Bivins, and social activist Dr. Lisa Lee, was a complement event to an exhibition that explored the science, history, and lived experiences of race and racism in the United States. Laughing, each panelist limits herself to a brief response which is, across the board, housing segregation. At this answer, the man sitting next to me, an older, Black man, most likely in his late 50s, who engaged me in conversation when walking through the exhibit and then sat next to me for the talk, turns to me and whispers,

"damn right. The North Side got developments and Targets and the South Side got projects and dilapidated lots." For some the answer of how and why Chicago looks the way it does today is a complicated one steeped in urban planning, sociology, psychology, history, and economics. For others, like this gentleman and the panelists, the answer is relatively straightforward: housing segregation.

Like other Northern cities around the turn of the 20th century, Chicago found itself an increasingly popular destination for Southern Blacks leaving their Jim Crow states in lieu of greater opportunities in the city of big shoulders. The period of 1910-1940 saw some of the most drastic increases in Black populations migrating to Chicago, which resulted in the construction of what was known as the "Black Belt" in Chicago's South Side, specifically a series of streets and parts of neighborhoods that were primarily black. In 1920, at a time in which there were no census tracks in the city that were all Black, the Black Belt was 3 miles long and only a mere ½ miles wide (Hirsch, 1983). By the 1930s whole neighborhoods were Black and eventually in the 1940s, ¾ of all Black residents lived in neighborhoods that were 90% Black; ½ of these residents in neighborhoods that were 98% Black (Diamond, 2017). The expansion of Black residents started to see even more significant increases in the post-WWII climate where between 1940 and 1943, some 70,000 Black migrants moved to Chicago, representing an increase of 25% of the total Black populations (Diamond, 2017: p. 104). As the Black population continued to rise, Chicago found itself increasingly strained due to the effects of the halt on new construction during the Great Depression. Thus, by the end of 1943, the city found itself in a housing shortage, most notable within the Black Belt that hadn't seen an expansion of its territory in years, resulting in an estimated 375,000 inhabiting an area suited for no more than 110,000 (Diamond, 2017; City Data, 2015).

At the government discussion of the overcrowding situation within Chicago's Black Belt led by Robert Taylor (the same Chicago Housing Authority directory for whom the legendary public housing projects, the Robert Taylor Homes, would be named), the first in a long historical line of racially motivated housing practices would be implemented by private landlords and slumlords. Recognizing the strife of overcrowding, many property owners identified the opportunity to engage in price gouging practices for apartments within the Black Belt, while simultaneously halting upkeep and maintenance due to a lack of alternative options (Diamond, 2017). Wanting to escape these poorly run housing units and in search of more affordable housing options, many Black residents started to move about the South and West sides of the city, even in neighborhoods where they increasingly found themselves unwelcome.

At the increasingly geographically mobile Black population, many neighborhoods, property owners, realtors, and financial institutions would begin to engage in practices of redlining, white flight, and housing covenants as ways to protect the white color line of their neighborhoods. Redlining is a financial practice of using spatial data to identify neighborhoods, communities, and areas that are deemed to be of higher risk of default (also known as 'risk maps') as a strategic mechanism for financial institutions to deny mortgage lending to certain areas (Xu, 2022). In Chicago, the practice of redlining began as the result of New Deal Era federal policies and the creation of the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). In an attempt to restore faith in the post-Great Depression America, both the HOLC and FHA acted as dual federal mortgage bailout and guarantor organizations,[6] helping to provide refinancing capital to borrowers in foreclosure and

[6] Today, the FHA continues to serve in this capacity, along with Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Ginnie Mae, all under the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which serves as a federal mortgage association and purchaser for financial institutions.

financing capital for banking institutions to continue to lend (Xu, 2022; Hanchett, 2000). As a result of this lending, both the HOLC and FHA created urban "risk maps" where they identified (or "redlined") certain areas where they would not provide such financial guarantee. The result of these maps was the banking institutions were unwilling to underwrite mortgages within these redlined areas. The FHA risk map for Chicago was the only available single-family mortgage map, created in 1938, and eventually the HOLC risk map would be created in 1940 (Xu, 2022). Providing a disproportionate favoritism to new construction in "low-risk" areas, most funding went to white, suburban communities or affluent urban neighborhoods, while inner-city and minority neighborhoods were redlined out due to risk. The overall U.S. homeownership rate benefitted greatly from these organizations increasing from 40% in the 1930s to 65% by 1995; however, only 2% of government-backed loans went to Black borrowers between 1945 and 1959 (Hanchett, 2000).

These practices of redlining made it challenging, if not impossible, for many Black residents to afford to purchase housing, especially in areas like the Black Belt. Compounding the effects of redlining was the process of white flight, or the movement of white populations out of neighborhoods that started to see an increase in Black residents. As Kruse (2013) illustrated in *White Flight,* much of this movement was of white residents leaving urban environments for suburban communities. Though some like Frey (1979) argue how both racial and nonracial factors of urban environments contribute to the exodus of white populations from cities to suburbs, these racial influences most frequently contributed to the intra-city movement of white populations from one Chicago neighborhood to another. This intra-city movement accounts for why neighborhoods like Englewood and Pilsen, which at the turn of the 20th century were predominately Irish strongholds are now predominately Black and Latinx ones, respectively. The

patterns of white flight would contribute to certain neighborhoods "turning" throughout Chicago, leading to lower property values, less interest from realtors, and eventual redlining, which served as a prohibitive factor to new residents affording extant housing options.

Finally, even when Black residents found neighborhoods that could qualify for government-backed mortgages and were not on the verge of white flight, they still faced difficulties with the creation of racial covenants that restricted the selling of property in certain areas to non-white people. On the South Side, the neighborhood of Hyde Park and the home neighborhood to the University of Chicago, was well known for such practices. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the University of Chicago, citing concerns that Hyde Park was neither a slum nor a world class city, the University would discreetly fund a series of community "revitalization" organizations and expand their own real estate holdings to help maintain the racial covenants of Hyde Park (Chicago Maroon, 2017). Hirsch (1983) elaborates the tensions that the University found itself in with publically calling for greater racial integration and diversity, while simultaneously investing in keeping its Hyde Park home racially segregated. Eventually, the Supreme Court case, *Shelley v. Kraemer (1948),* would set the precedent that racial covenants were in violation of the fourteenth amendment. Though the lingering effects of such practices remain seen today explaining why many of the streets in Hyde Park do not run continuously to its southern neighborhood, Woodlawn, a neighborhood that did not have many racial covenants, but which was impacted by patterns of white flight, therefore becoming the predominately Black counterpart to its northern neighbor.

The combination of formal and informal practices of residential and racial segregation would eventually be replaced by city led initiatives outlined and led by Mayor Richard J. Daley. Upon his election in 1955, the first Mayor Daley (of which his son would eventually also be

mayor of Chicago), ran on a superficial platform of renewal and revitalization for Chicago promising residents, business leaders, and the greater United States that Chicago would rightfully take its place as one of the great cities of the country (Diamond, 2017). As Cohen and Taylor (2011) phrased in *American Pharaoh,* Daley represented the most powerful local politician that America has every produced more interested in the accumulation and retention of power than any initiatives of renewal or revitalization. He carefully selected individuals, personally, for every position in Chicago's government from ward committee members to department heads. He doled out resources to his friends and allies and issued rebukes and punishment to his adversaries. Daley's influence over the city and the larger Democratic party was not part of the political game, but as Robert Kennedy once remarked, was "the whole ball game" (Cohen and Taylor, 2011).

Critically, Daley came to power at a time in which Chicago was influx, experiencing a mass exodus of residents from the city to the suburbs, a disappearing middle class, and an increase of poor Black residents from the South. Thus, his city hall's impact on urban renewal saw an invigoration within the city including the construction of the nation's busiest airport (O'Hare International Airport), the largest skyscraper (the Sears Tower), and the nation's widest expressway (at 14 lanes across, the Dan Ryan expressway) (Cohen and Taylor, 2011). These institutions would become the framework for an increase in tourism, the impetus for the University of Illinois to build a Chicago campus, the construction of one of the I'm largest exhibition spaces in the nation (McCormick Place), the luxury Magnificent Mile, and the expansion of a unionized labor force through factories. He amassed these accomplishments, however, through an explicit commitment to racial segregation and a political desire to maintain the Black-White color line that had segregated the city by annexing boundaries between Black

and white neighborhoods. Daley utilized the creation of highways, schools, and business districts to create urban boundaries between Black and white neighborhoods as a strategic plan to stop the integration of Black residents into white neighborhoods. For example, out of concern for his own neighborhood of Bridgeport, he slated the Dan Ryan Expressway to run between Bridgeport (to the west) and Bronzeville, a Black neighborhood (to the East). To date, Bridgeport and Bronzeville still are heavily separated with their populations remaining racially segregated. His use of urban planning to push poor Blacks to disadvantageous parts of the city, while replacing centrally located neighborhoods with working class whites lead to some of the significant demographic shifts that are still observed today. For instance, DJ's neighborhood of North Lawndale went from being 87% white to 91% Black in the 1950s and 60s as a result of planning initiatives to insulate the Loop business district from the West side (Diamond, 2017).

Most significantly, however, were Daley's housing policies concerning the use of vertical housing projects. Interested in creating a respite from Black residents expanding outside of the city's Black Belt into white neighborhoods, Daley oversaw the building and expansion of housing projects that he placed in Black neighborhoods, eventually creating the country's most densely packed high-rise towers which later became known as the State Street Corridor on the East side of the Dan Ryan Expressway, bounded away from the West side white neighborhoods (Cohen and Taylor, 2011). If practices of redlining, white flight, and racial covenants are argued to have created Chicago's first ghetto, then these housing policies and the expansion of public housing projects created the second (Hirsch, 1983; Biles, 2001). In 1955, approximately 2/3 of the population in public housing were Black, with nonwhites constituting 73% of the families moving into public housing units throughout the city. By 1959, the proportion of Blacks in CHA housing projects rose to 85% (Biles, 2001). Between 1955 and 1966, Chicago's city council

approved 51 public housing sites, 49 which were to be placed in Black neighborhoods. By 1968, of all of the public housing units in Chicago, 91% laid, by CHA's own account, "in areas which are or soon to be substantially all Negro" (Biles, 2001). The racist housing policies of Daley would contribute to the further expansion of the Black ghetto in Chicago and the persistent practices of racial segregation. Even when garnering attention from the rest of the country, individuals were seldom successful in challenging the formal and informal housing programs. As Dr. King once remarked after a failed protest in Marquette Park on August 5, 1966 challenging the practices of racialize practices of not selling properties to Black residents, "I've seen many demonstrations all across the South, but I can say that I have never seen, even in Mississippi and Alabama, mobs as hostile and as hate-filled as I'm seeing in Chicago (Waxman, 2020).

Though the practices of redlining, which have since been disbanded, and the use of densely constructed public housing projects, which have since been demolished,[7] may seem like historical relics to a city that has seen over 40 years since the end of Daley's tenure as Mayor, these policies and practices help to explain how and why Chicago's North and South sides remain as racially segregated as they are. Massey and Denton (1993) in *American Apartheid* describe how the persistence of residential segregation results in significant inequality with respect to Blacks being prevented from participating in practices of spatial mobility. By constricting such mobility, Black neighborhoods have resulting differences in spatial patterns, specifically that Black neighborhoods are more economically diverse due to the constriction of residential choice (Immergluck and Smith, 2003). The overwhelming consequences are what Wilson (1987) describes in *The Truly Disadvantaged,* as the increased social isolation,

[7] The infamous near north side housing project, Cabrini-Green was demolished in 2011 and the south side housing project, Robert Taylor Homes, in 2007.

deprivation, and dislocations found among Black neighborhoods[8] and Black residents. Thus, there remains a kernel of truth in the man's comment that the North Side got development and the South Side got projects.

Here Come the Queers

> I'm from Corydon, IN. You know what is in Corydon, IN? Absolutely nothing. I knew I had to get out of there, but wasn't sure that I could get into UIC. Or afford to go. But it worked out, so I graduated high school and moved that summer to Chicago. I was so excited. Everything was so much bigger. I remember during my first week that I went to the gay students association, I forget their name, but I was finally getting out and actually meeting other gay students. After some late night event, a few of the guys asked me if I wanted to go to Boystown that weekend. I was excited, so I said yes and one of the guys said that I would really enjoy it as it's Chicago's gay neighborhood. I remember thinking: so, did Chicago give it a certificate or something? Like, congratulations, it's a gay. But then during my first trip there, I was looking at all of those rainbow statues and I read one of the plaques and, sure enough, Chicago said it's officially gay.

When Tyler, a 23-year-old, white, recent graduate of UIC first went to Boystown, his first memory is of the 25 foot rainbow pylon and bronze plaque that, as Tyler said, made it *officially* gay. Though pylons, rainbow painted crosswalks, and a renovated LGBTQ community center, helped to demarcate Boystown as an "official" queer community, these statues and places are the result of intentional social and political organization, initially at the grassroots level and eventually at the city governance level. Like other large cities, the post-Stonewall period

[8] Wilson (1987) refers to these neighborhoods as "ghetto neighborhoods," however works such as Pattillo (1999) demonstrate how some of these neighborhoods contain Black middle-class elements.

beginning in the 1970s saw a proliferation in more overt queer political organizing an efficacy. In cities like San Francisco, Armstrong (2002) highlights how the number of gay organizations in the city between 1964 and 1999 grew from 6 to 276, illustrating how the second rupture in a larger progression of gay politics led from gay liberation to a *gay identity movement.* This increase in both the types and diversity of queer organizations was also seen in Chicago, as the darkened leisure and community spaces of the past (De La Croix, 2012) were giving way to open, loud, and proud spaces and organizations of the future.

The increase in visibility of queer organizations, spaces, and residents in the North Side neighborhood of Lakeview, which was itself undergoing an increasing expansion of city investment, property values, and average income, contributed to a rise in collective queer organizing and garnered attention from city hall with respect to the 44th aldermanic ward.[9] Suddenly, gay rights became an opportunity for progressive Black candidates to appeal to growing white voting population on the North Side (Stewart-Winter, 2016). One of the first successful candidates to leverage this growing queer population was Harold Washington, the first Black Mayor of Chicago elected in 1983. Despite initial objections regarding alliances with the queer community, Washington worked to coalition build with this expanding community that found common ground with respect to community investment, neighborhood creation, and civil rights. Thus, in 1983, the white, queer population of Lakeview helped tipped the balance for Washington, paving his way, and his agenda, into city hall. Though, the initial history of how Chicago became known as a city of neighborhoods remains obscure and contested, many ascribe it to Ernest Burgess and his colleagues at the University of Chicago that created the first community area maps of the 77 areas around Chicago. For Washington, these community areas

[9] The 44th ward is the aldermanic ward that encompasses Boystown and most of Lakeview.

were of particular importance in how to envision the resource allocation around the city. Diverting from Mayor Daley's initial investment into the downtown business districts, at the expense of the more spacious neighborhoods, Washington used the concepts of neighborhoods to move resources from the central business districts to the surrounding neighborhoods (Pacyga and Skerrett, 1986). Although most likely less from altruism as from political capital, the movement to focusing on the neighborhoods of the city helped push forward a political shift from focusing on citywide investment to focusing on neighborhood investment.

In 1989, the election of Mayor Richard M Daley, son of Richard J Daley, would continue this neighborhood and community level investment. Unlike his father, the second Mayor Daley was less pugnacious in policies that reified housing and racial segregation[10] and more interested in shifting Chicago politics from being *a* city of neighborhoods to being *the* city of neighborhoods. Like Washington, this political shift was more likely motivated primarily by establishing a strong voting base (which would be successful as Daley was continually elected for the next 22 years), however, had the effect of turning city hall's attention to community-level investment. One part of this strategy was demarcating certain neighborhoods and investing in their branding. For example, Daley would approve funds for 18 meter high Puerto Rican flags in the Puerto Rican neighborhood of Humboldt Park, he would ride in a pink Cadillac in Boystown during the Pride Parade in 1989, and he would collaborate with Black leaders in Bronzeville to celebrate (or arguably exploit) their cultural heritage (Diamond, 2017). In 1997, he officially launched the "Neighborhoods Alive!" initiative, which utilized a $800M bond campaign to fund neighborhood investment, community programs, and a greater exposure to the various *types* of neighborhoods around the city. Despite public opposition for the investment in the creation of a

[10] In fact, Richard M Daley would oversee the eventual demolition of both the Cabrini-Green and Robert Taylor Homes housing projects, both of which were expanded under his father.

gay neighborhood, Daley would utilize this campaign in the eventual investment of $3.2 million in Boystown, which included the rainbow pylons and plaques described during Tyler's visit.

The use of these pylons which included 10 pairs with 40 plaques situated on a ½ mile corridor in Boystown, named the Legacy Walk, helped make Chicago one of the first cities in the country to officially distinguish a gay neighborhood with physical landmarks (Stewart-Winter, 2016). One consequence of such a deliberate investment from the city in marking certain neighborhoods including everywhere from Greektown to Chinatown to Boystown, was that it reflected a city interest in the various turf battles and competition over space. With neighborhood demographic shifts and limited urban space, the competition over neighborhood space can be intense, bitter battles that often led to persistent conflicts that eventually sorted individuals into even smaller enclaves. Henri Lefebvre (1974) refers to this process as one of *production of space.* In the cases of the city using resources to install flags, pylons, buildings, or plaques, it was intentionally helping to produce designated, urban space.

Though the formalized ways that Lakeview became increasingly marked and celebrated was seen as a win for the rise of queer politics in the city and in the establishment of agglomerated and institutionalized queer place, the gay movement in the city that led to such achievements was seldom the movement that queer people of color or white women imagined as speaking directly to their daily concerns (Stewart-Winter, 2016: p. 96). The consequence of this situation was that as gay politics became specialized in Lakeview, queers of color began to associate it, not only with sexual liberalism, but also with whiteness and property ownership (Stewart-Winter, 2016: p. 109). As Stewart-Winter (2016) wrote: "The location of gay institutions in Lakeview was not deliberately an act of racial exclusion, and yet it represented one of the ways in which even as gay people became more visible everywhere, gay visibility came to

be associated with whiteness" (p. 109). This association would lead many queer men, especially queer men of color and those who lived outside of Boystown to have complicated and strained relationships with the neighborhood.

Conclusion

As its history illustrates, Chicago is a city of commonalities, complexities, conflicts, and conundrums. On one hand, it is the city of Jane Addams and immigrant resettlement hopes. On the other, it is the city of angry mobs and Dr. King's disappointment. Chicago is home to some of the most accomplished architecture of the 20th century, building skyscrapers that reached up to the sky, but also to the construction of housing projects that held families down on the ground. As Richard J. Daley alluded to in his housing policies and Richard M. Daley in his neighborhood initiatives, Chicago may be a city of neighborhoods, but not all neighborhoods are created equal.

By mapping out the larger social arena of Chicago and placing it in historical context, this chapter provides an introduction into the spatial and social terrains that queer men must navigate. Through understanding how the social and political histories of the North and South sides of the city were intentionally configured and designed through funding initiatives, housing policies, and racial segregation, we can better understand the importance of space, shedding light on how community and neighborhood level differences impact how one views, understands, and navigates the city. These differences further help to contextualize where, why, and how queer men move throughout the city illuminating the differences in sexual mapping, spatial utility, personal decision making, partner selection, and urban experiences between men like DJ and Marc. In the following chapter, I elaborate on my particular research methods for how I travelled, observed, and analyzed the motivations, experiences, and desires of queer men across a segregated city.

Chapter 2 Methods and Sites

In this chapter, I reflect upon what it means to do ethnography within and across queer sexual worlds situated in the urban neighborhoods, spaces, and fields of Chicago. I conducted 37 months of ethnographic research in three distinct, but interrelated waves. In the first wave, between 2016 and 2017, I completed 14 months of field research, geographic mapping, and interviews, focusing on marked queer spaces (such as bars and clubs) across the city and eventually narrowing on three bars and one restaurant on Chicago's North Side and two bars on Chicago's South Side. I intentionally began my fieldwork with observations across multiple sites of leisure, including bars, clubs, lounges, coffee shops, and restaurants. Throughout this wave, I intentionally developed relationships with staff, performers, and patrons to cultivate an insider knowledge of the various queer worlds located around Chicago. I used these connections to conduct both *in situ* and formal semi-structured interviews, and developed a series of maps, both alone and with participants, of the queer worlds of the city.

Whether geographic, symbolic, or mental, the various 'maps' of queer spaces illuminated the variety of ways queer men thought of and experienced queer life and leisure in Chicago. Realizing that the differences in these men's maps and perceptions were not just a result of differences in identities, ages, or even neighborhoods of residence, I began to go-along with queer men on their nightly rounds (Hunter, 2010). These go-along interviews (hereby referred to as "go-alongs") comprised the second wave of my ethnographic study between 2017 and 2018. For eight months, I went along with 41 queer participants as they traversed the urban landscape

in the pursuit of queer leisure, partners, and community. From the practical questions such as "where are we going?" to the experiential ones of whom does one find attractive, I gained insight into the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and decision-making processes as the men were having them. This phenomenological insight illuminated not only how and why these men crafted their queer worlds in the ways they did, but how such creation was shaped by personal, relational, and structural considerations.

By understanding the ways queer men created their own maps of sexual worlds, I was able to **see** the nuanced and innovative ways they imagined queer space and community outside of marked spaces. For the third wave of this study, I focused primarily on the spaces and strategies used by queer men to imagine, create, and disrupt queer community outside of marked queer places. From 2018 to 2019, I used go-alongs to identify non-queer neighborhood spaces that my participants used to create queer community, focusing on those outside of the gayborhood and other cultural archipelagos (Ghaziani, 2014) around the city. Specifically, using three neighborhood bars on the south and west sides of the city, I explored the imagination and production of queer place in non-marked spaces. By beginning the study with the most publicly marked queer places and then traveling with queer men as they navigated urban queer worlds, I examined how the concentration of marked queer spaces in a few neighborhoods creates opportunities and challenges for queer men to find, engage with, and create queer community.

2.1 Mapping the Sexual Landscape: August 2016 – September 2017

"Yeah, you're going to want to move" is what I hear as I turn and see a tall, young-looking guy in a gray hoodie and black jeans walk into the bar. Holding my half-finished drink, I ask why. The man is adjusting the two drawstrings on his hoodie looking slightly past me to the specials board and then looks down to where I'm sitting: "Because this is where the old people sit. Every

afternoon, the same group of old guys come in after work or watching tv or whatever in hell old people do and they sit in these same seats on the corner. Unless you're chasing daddies, you'll want to move." I initially laugh at his statement but look at his serious expression and stop. He continues: "You ever been at the Cosmo Lounge before?" I shake my head no and explain that it is my first time. He grabs my shoulder, signals to the bartender, and leads me to the other side of the bar. "Well then, cutie, let me buy you a drink and tell you about this place."

This young man, James, a 24-year-old graphic designer at a tech startup, provided my first introduction to a North Side gay bar after my move to Chicago. He would continue to buy me drinks throughout the night and tell me all about this bar, the Cosmo Lounge. James described what nights they played what music, when were the drag performances, and how the patronage changed by day and by time of day. Providing an abbreviated history of his first foray into the North Side queer nightlife scene, he recounted his first time at the Cosmo Lounge and how he was attracted to their soundtrack of hip hop and top 40, appreciative of their drink specials, and indebted to their early morning liquor license that allowed him to hang out with friends (and potential hookups) until past 2am. At last call, James and I exchanged contact information and he walked me to the train stop before walking the two blocks home to his apartment.

My encounter with James at the Cosmo Lounge began my 14 months of observation of queer places, neighborhoods, and communities across Chicago. After my move to Chicago during the latter part of the summer in 2016, I began my research with time spent in local bars, clubs, and neighborhoods. Although settling in my two bedroom apartment on Chicago's south side, my research observations commenced in Boystown, Chicago's gayborhood (Ghaziani, 2014) tucked on the east part of the Lakeview neighborhood on the North Side. The decision to

begin in Boystown was both practically and theoretically motivated. On one hand, this community is the most recognizable queer community in the city (and one of the largest gayborhoods in the country). Given this status, Boystown houses the greatest concentration of queer places in Chicago. Aside from the practical applications of starting with the most recognizable queer community in the city, beginning in Boystown also offered the theoretical benefit of being the same sexual enclave that centered Orne's (2017) sexy communities, accommodated Greene's (2014) vicarious citizens, became Ghaziani's (2014) gayborhood, and contributed to Blair's (2018) study of LGBT racialized violence.

Through starting with general observations of sites of queer leisure, I began to make connections with patrons and staff members across a spectrum of venues, populations, and neighborhoods. As I became recognized as a regular in various spaces, I began to cultivate more significant relationships with individuals who would become my informants. These individuals (hereby referred to as 'informants' to distinguish them from the more cursory participants I met across the various spaces) proved valuable in my mapping of queer spaces and community as they served as translators for me, both vouching for my presence and interpreting my thoughts, feelings, and understandings within spaces and communities. By vouching for my presence, informants helped others make sense of me, thus in turn aiding me in tapping into a wider array of social networks. As James and I, for instance, became closer throughout the months (and eventually years) of fieldwork, he introduced me to his friends and other regulars that he knew. It was through these introductions that I was able to expand my own network of participants and achieve a broader insight into queer life. Even when James wasn't at the Cosmo Lounge, his friends and other regulars knew me as "James's friend," which provided clout during my

observations in the form of free drinks, places to sit at the bar, and introductions to other patrons, performers, and staff members.

In many sites, especially predominately white spaces on the North Side (such as the Cosmo Lounge), informants like James helped make my participant observation in the spaces more expedient by expanding my influence and therefore reaping the rewards of leisure perks (such as free drinks) and increased access (such as being introduced to performers). In other sites, particularly predominately Black spaces on the South Side, my informants were not simply helpful, but were crucial for vouching for my presence. Consider the first time that I went to a South Side gay bar, Jeffery Pub, after my move to Chicago.

I entered Jeffery Pub a little after 2pm on a blistering hot day and was immediately thankful for the air conditioning and darkness. I sit down near the corner of the bar and Dajon, one of the bartenders I met during pilot observations prior to my move, comes over: "Wassup? You finally moved in?" I reply that I had and continued to describe the arduous process of moving as he grabs a Miller Lite (remembering my drink from months ago). I end up buying him one as well as we catch up. On the other side of a bar is a younger Black man drinking a Hennessey and orange juice and watching one of the televisions. Dajon asked me if we knew each other, and I shook my head. He calls down to the man, "Dante. Come on over here and meet my friend, Morgan." Dante sets down his drink and walks over to where I am sitting and introduces himself and asks me where I moved from. As we continue to talk about Michigan and Chicago, Dajon says that he will buy both of us a drink and that Dante should move closer. He thanks Dajon for the drink and moves to the chair next to me. Throughout the rest of the afternoon, Dante, Dajon, and I continue to talk--mostly about music, sports, the weather, and what's on tv. Eventually Dante asks how I know Dajon. Dajon interjects, "Oh we are old

friends." Dante barely hides his questioning look and I provide additional context describing my move from Michigan to Chicago, what I was here doing, how I met Dajon months ago during some of my first observations, and which South Side neighborhood I recently moved into. He replies "cool" and adds that he lives over my way, too, asking me if I had been to various bars and restaurants around Pilsen, Little Village, Back of the Yards, and Chinatown. To his visible surprise, I had been to many of the places to which he referred. By the time that Dante was leaving Jeffery Pub, we had already exchanged numbers and agreed to meet back up with each other at the Pub on Saturday.

Similar to how James acted as an informant for me in the Cosmo Lounge, Dajon acted as one in Jeffery Pub by frequently making connections and vouching for my presence. In both the North and South Side venues, my ability to meet and get to know other regulars and staff members was frequently predicated on these types of introductions, especially from those that held clout and status within the space. However, in the above reaction, Dajon doesn't simply vouch for my presence at the Jeffery Pub, but rather accounts for it. In ways that James never had to at the Cosmo Lounge, Dajon provided both an introduction to Dante in addition to a backstory for how he knew me and why I was there. Given that "in most research settings, there is little to no precedent for the presence of an ethnographer in daily life", the translation work of my informants, such as Dajon, was necessary for me to gain access to participants and to allow me entrance into in-depth information from such access (Churchill, 2005) Throughout my initial observations, I would cultivate a total of 13 informants --6 on the North Side and 7 on the South.

After initial months of general observations and participatory experiences in queer spaces across the city, I moved from focusing on mapping the larger queer sexual landscape to understanding how such spaces were used within this landscape. This shift allowed me to

develop a personalized ethnographic sensibility (Simmons & Smith, 2017) where I focused on how queer men found, participated, and leveraged these locations in their quest to find partners, community, and leisure. Based on my *in situ* interviews and geographic mapping, I analytically selected 5 spaces to center my participatory observations. These spaces included three on Chicago's North Side: Progress Bar, Roscoe's, and Little Jim's and two on the South Side: Jeffery Pub and Club Escape. Though these sites represent neither random nor perfectively comparative spaces, they all anchor queer leisure within their respective communities, sharing commonalities such as a long-standing presence, a diverse array of events, populations, and themed nights, and were described by a majority of participants as places that one begins, ends, or passes through on their nightly round.

During the course of the week during these months of fieldwork, I spent between five and seven days per week conducting fieldwork and, on average, 1-2 days writing fieldnotes and memos. On a typical research day, I would leave my home around noon traveling to the neighborhood of the bar or club at which I was planning on starting my night. Depending on the site, I would arrive at the neighborhood after 1-1.5 hours on public transportation and then would spend the early afternoon either walking around the community or going to a coffee shop to plan my night. Although some of my sites opened at noon, I usually didn't show up at any of the bars before between 4 and 5 pm (especially since both Progress Bar and Roscoe's don't open until 5pm). Although I would go to my sites alone, I would frequently run into my informants or other patrons who were also regulars, which, over time, started to guide my decisions about where and when to go to which establishment. On average, I spent between 4 and 9 hours on an outing where I would talk with staff members, patrons, and performers. Building on the carceral ethnographic principles of using one's body as a site of data (Orne, 2017), I would always

engage in the events and activities of the nights, which ranged from drag shows to cookouts to dancing. This decision was beneficial as it moved me from a passive observer to an active participant within the space, allowing my participants and informants to interact with me as a comrade, as opposed to strictly a researcher (Adler & Adler, 1987)[11].

Given the locations I was observing, it was not possible to audio record conversations, bring a laptop computer, or use a notebook; all of which would have been seen as flagrant violations of the cultural rules of the space and would have created physical and social distance between myself and my participants. Thus, I made quick jottings on my phone when in the field (Emerson 2011). Especially with the rise of online technologies (such as text messaging, Snapchat, Grindr, etc.), it is not seen as out of place to be on one's phone within a bar. This was an effective way to record notes, names, and key details, jotting questions for future follow-up with my informants, and, at times, verbatim quotations[12]. To write more detailed notes, I would retire to the washroom or outside (usually where people were smoking) to expand on the notes.

[11] Similar to the methodological decisions of scholars like Hoang (2015) and Orne (2017), both of whom engaged in fieldwork within drinking establishments, I consumed alcohol with my participants while in my fieldsites. Although moderating my alcohol consumption (typically resulting in 1-3 alcoholic drinks over a 8-13 hour period), I utilized the purchasing and consumption of alcohol as strategic ways to connect with staff members, patrons, and owners. Given the types of fieldsites in which I was routinely engage within, the lack of consumption of alcohol would have created social distance between others and myself as it could have been interpreted as out of the normative social practices of the space. At no point during my fieldwork did I consume alcohol in excess to the point that my perceptive abilities were impaired, to unsafe levels, or in situations in which my safety would have been compromised. Throughout my study, I only had three participants who did not drink and, in those cases, I mirror their non-alcoholic consumption.

[12] To differentiate between approximate quotations and verbatim ones, every quotation presented in quotations is verbatim. The ability to provide verbatim quotations in these fieldsites were made possible by the method in which I used my phone to take notes and jottings. In spaces where one having their phone is not interpreted as incongruent due to the prevalence of smart phones, texting, and hookup apps, I was able to blend into the social space while recording notes on my phone. Any specific names mentioned are pseudonyms in the text. Furthermore, quotations, even verbatim ones, were edited for clarity in situations in which pauses, abrupt starts and stops, or hesitations were not impactful of the quotation. Finally, in cases where potentially identifiable information was said in a quotation, I either removed the quotation altogether, edited it for clarity and protection of my participant's identity, or provided an approximate account. These decisions were made during the qualitative data analyses.

At the end of the night (or early morning), I used my time on public transportation to expand such jottings and once out of the field I would develop more narrative fieldnotes.

The participatory observations and *in situ* conversations were useful in providing accounts on not only what spaces were used by whom, but how. The focus on *how* queer places were used shed light on the diverse ways that queer men used queer leisure and how these ways were shaped by structural considerations such as where one lived, how one was able to get to and from the space, and which night one attended the space. In the tradition of Orne (Orne, 2017) and Hoang (Hoang, 2015), I paid special attention to the ways that the type of leisure space shaped the behaviors and interactions of the participants. I attended to where in the city people were coming from, why they chose the specific location, and their interactions with staff members and other patrons. These observations added additional context to the mapping of queer leisure spaces by illuminating the interactional factors that contributed to the ways individuals created their personal urban queer landscape.

Finally, I complemented these observations with 12 semi structured interviews (8 with informants) with queer men who engaged in various aspects of queer nightlife. Unlike my *in situ* interviews and conversations, these interviews were all conducted outside of any specific leisure location, were audio-recorded, and averaged 81 minutes (with a range between 61 and 129 minutes). I recruited interview participants both through online media (such as Facebook) and my observational field sites and encouraged participants to reach out to friends and other connections for a modified snowball sampling. These interviews were less analytically useful in their ability to illuminate the ways that queer men used leisure spaces. These interviews were helpful, however, in providing an opportunity to dialectically discuss themes emerging during observational fieldwork and to get additional context for why individuals choose certain

neighborhoods, bars, or nights to locate their leisure. Drawing on White and Stephenson's (2014) community mapping techniques, I provided interview participants with a map of Chicago and had them diagram their thoughts, opinions, and understandings of the city, queer communities they knew about, their own personal queer communities, and their typical nights out . This tactile approach was useful in both data collection and subsequent analyses. With respect to data collection, the mapping provided an opportunity for participants to concretely address rather abstract questions. By asking participants to locate and discuss neighborhoods and other community areas with respect to questions of desirability, stereotypes, safety, and perceptions, these maps provided an interactive way for the men to literally map out their thoughts, feelings, and understandings of the city generally and of queer community specifically. Furthermore, these maps were analytically useful in understanding the ways that where one lives or the transportation options available impacts perceptions and usage of different queer communities throughout the city. In total, the leisure site and community observations, *in situ* and semi-structured interviews, and geographic mapping all aided me in mapping that urban queer sexual landscape of Chicago.

2.2 Traversing the Sexual Landscape: October 2017 – May 2018

> "Hey, where is Alex? Wasn't he coming out with us tonight?" Jeremy asks Derek as he returns with drinks for both Derek and I as we sit looking out the open windows of Roscoe's. Derek immediately takes a sip of his drink and replies, "I was texting Alex earlier and I think that he was going to stop at the Lucky Horseshoe for a drink." I add that Alex mentioned the possibility of just meeting us all at the Cosmo Lounge before the performance. As Derek nods in acknowledgement while Jeremy scoffs and rolls his eyes before saying that "after

> another drink, or two, we should just head on over to the Cosmo Lounge, because Alex won't make it there on time." After another 40 minutes, and two drinks, Derek, Jeremy, and I head over to the Cosmo Lounge for one of their drag shows and, sure enough, 15 minutes after the beginning of the show, Alex shows up. At the end of the show, we all discuss where we should go next and after some bickering between Jeremy and Alex, decide on Little Jim's for one more drink before calling it a night.

This excerpt from a Monday night out with three North Siders (Jeremy, Derek, and Alex) illustrates how queer men incorporate multiple places in their nightly round and how the decision-making processes were frequently made in the moment based on factors such as friends, availability of venues, and events. Though my observations at various leisure spaces illuminated how these institutions were leveraged by queer men to pursue partners and community**,** they seldom reflected the combination of spaces in creating networks of leisure participation through one's nightly round**.** To understand this movement and the decision-marking processes involved in how queer men moved about urban space and institutions, I conducted a series of go-alongs (Kusenbach, 2003) with queer men where I would venture along with men as they went along on their nights out.

Unlike extemporaneous encounters of movement, such as moving from one bar to another during the night, these go-alongs were intentional interviews where I would arrange to accompany my participants on their "natural" outings and I would ask questions, observe, listen, and participate during their night out to understand their experiences, practices, and thoughts (Kusenbach, 2003). In total, I conducted 41 go-alongs with 29 men, not including the various friends that came and/or joined at some point and at least one go-along with each of my

informants. These go-alongs were pre-arranged and would include designating a meeting location and discussing a tentative plan for the night. For some of my informants whom I knew for years, we started at their house or apartment to get ready. For others, we would meet at a bar, restaurant, or public transit stop. Though most of these interviews began between 6 and 7 and ended between 12 and 1, the earliest started at 1:30pm and the latest ended at 3:45am. For most of the go-alongs, participants either brought with or met up with other friends (usually 1-2), however, 7 of the go-alongs (6 with informants) were conducted one on one. During these go-alongs I would ask inductive questions of my participants, especially concerning their motivations, thoughts, feelings, and actions during the night. Additionally, I would make notes of the locations, populations, modes of transportation, and scenery as we moved about urban space.

I tried to follow my participants on nights out that they planned, while working to minimize my influence on decisions about transportation, locations, or friend groups. In some cases, this was accomplished by reflecting questions back to them (for example when asked where we should go), in others it was by demonstrating my active participation in the night's activities (such as singing karaoke or dancing). Though deviating from the complete naturalness of these nightly rounds as individuals infrequently have researchers accompanying them on their trips while asking questions and taking notes, the rooting of these trips in my participants' nightly rounds proved valuable in illuminating the multifaceted ways that queer leisure and community are pursued and found in the nightlife economy. Furthermore, the interactive nature of this method provided an opportunity for my participants to narrate the ways they thought about, travel within, and engage their own urban queer landscapes. This narration proved cathartic for men to share insights and feelings not normally discussed in their social groups. For example, Jeremy, a white, 23-year-old graduate student on the South Side, who initially

expressed skepticism about me traveling along with him (specifically though the question of: "So, you are just going to be with me? Like watching me?), used the go-along to discuss his frustration of dealing with travel to the North Side of the city, where his friends live:

> **Jeremy**: "I like them, I do. But, like, I have to quickly get ready and then check the bus schedule and it takes an hour to get up there [Boystown]. It just is annoying to always be the one traveling."
>
> **Morgan**: "Have you suggested meeting down South to your friends?"
>
> **Jeremy**: "Yeah, but they never want to come down here. They claim that it is because we don't have that many places to go. Which I guess is true. But also I know it is because they don't want to travel down here. I mean, they complain all the damn time anytime they visit me. But there are more bars up there, so I get it. But still, they're probably pre-gaming right now and I'm on a fucking bus."

True to Jeremy's estimate of travel time, we were on a bus and then a train for a little over an hour. During this time, Jeremy expanded on his frustration with always having to travel North and his feelings that his friends were inconsiderate in not thinking about him when making plans. Despite his ranting, when we walk into Hydrate and meet up with his friends, everyone took a shot and all was forgiven—at least for the night.

This initial conversation with Jeremy illustrates the degree to which participants were able to narrate their nights out, but also provide additional insight into their personal biographies and relationships with spaces, places, and people. One key benefit of go-alongs is how participants narrate the associations they have within their environments. For Jeremy, traveling with him as he traversed urban space from the South to the North side provided an opportunity

for him to comment on the mechanics of transportation and his thoughts and feelings about transportation, space, and his friends' decisions where to locate leisure.

The potential for participants to narrate their nightly rounds allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the perceptions, biographies, and interpretations of their social groups, community places, and decision-making. However, these go-alongs also provided insight into how, and how much, queer men engage with their structural environments, such as neighborhoods, sexual spaces, and transportation. Drawing on geographer Seamon's (1979) awareness continuum, where he distinguishes various human encounters with space positioned on a continuum from most separate to most mergence, Kusenbach (2003)argues that as individuals move through space, their commitment and concentration within the space varies. For both Seamon (1979) and Kusenbach (2003) the strength of attachment to one's environment is critically interrogated. The phenomenological approach of Kusenbach (2003) provides the opportunity for the ethnographer to learn more about both the *degree* of environmental engagement and the *qualities* of such engagement. Distinguishing between degree and quality of environmental engagement is useful in shedding light on the ways that the same (or similar) structures were experienced differently by participants.

For example, in the above excerpt with Jeremy, the degree to which he considers transportation is significant as it impacts decisions such as when he will leave, how long he has to get ready, and when to communicate to his friends about his arrival. In practice, decisions about where to go and when are crucially dictated by how he will get there. In contrast, on a go-along with Albert, a 34-year white accountant living on Chicago's North Side, public transportation is rarely a consideration as he is within walking distance of multiple gay bars and clubs. During our night, Albert suggested that we "hop on the Red Line for a couple of stops" in

order to avoid the January cold. However, he clarified that he usually just walks because it is "easier." When considering transportation, the degree of engagement with public transit differs for Jeremy and Albert as Jeremy finds it critical in the planning of his night out, while Albert finds it peripherally expedient to avoid a five block walk in the cold. By highlighting differences in degree of interaction with various environmental characteristics, these go-alongs provided insight into who had to be concerned with certain urban structures in contrast with who didn't.

The differences in interaction with urban structures were not only observed with respect to degree, but also with the qualities of environmental engagements. Just as the same structure could impact one's decision making in different ways, the same place could require different types of work for different people. For example, later at night at the Cosmo Lounge, a bouncer and security guard were at the door to monitor capacity, check identification, and provide support for the bartenders and bar backs in the event of rowdy customers. During both my observations and my go-alongs these bouncers and security guards were more stringent in their review of identification than many of the bars and clubs on the Boystown strip, which only had bartenders check identification (and only occasionally at that), though less stringent than some of the larger bars that provided more intensive services such as bag checking, hand-stamping, cover charges, and uv-light checks. Given the near-ubiquitous need to provide identification at 21 and over bars, the bouncer at the Cosmo Lounge rarely encountered individuals unable to provide identification. Just because the Lounge did not turn people away didn't mean that they did not use this review process differently for their patrons. Consider a go-along with Rashaad a 28-year-old, Black, CTA employee from the South Side and his two friends, Kap (31, Black, South Side) and Jax (27, Black, South Side), as we moved about their nightly round:

> Rashaad, Kap, Jax, and I were finishing our drink at Hydrate when Jax suggests that we all "hit up the Cosmo Lounge" next. Kap finishes his tequila neat and quips back that he wants to go to a place where he can sit because he is tired on leaning on the wall. Jax grunts as he pulls out his phone, while Rashaad, with his more calming demeanor, points out that it is still early enough to grab a table there. "Whatever" Jax says as he puts his phone in his pocket, downs the rest of his beer, and puts up the hood of his jacket. As we are walking to the Cosmo Lounge, Rashaad and I are talking about how frequently he goes to the Lounge because I've only seen him there a few times. He answers: "Yeah, I really only go on Thursdays. Maybe the occasional Friday. I'm just not up there that much unless I'm with these *niggas.*"

As we approach the entrance, we see that the security guard is already sitting on his chair by the door. Jax and Kap stop abruptly before getting to the door while Jax grabs his ID out of his pocket, pulls down his hood, pulls up his pants, and walks forward to hand the security guard his license. The security guard looks at his license, moves it along his fingers to presumably see the hologram, looks back at Jax, back at the license, and finally hands him his license and nods him into the bar. Kap is behind Jax already holding his license out but having completed a similar set of transformations including removing his sunglasses, putting the gold chain around his neck under his shirt, and pulling up his pants. The security guard, again, scrutinizes his license and then lets him in. Rashaad and I approach at the same time, continuing our conversation and presenting our licenses. The security guard takes his license and looks him over as Rashaad zips up his hoodie and places his hands in his pockets. Before handing back his license to Rashaad, the security guard asks, "what's in your pocket?" to which Rashaad replies, "nothing, just my

phone, man." He responds with a grunt and a head nod to enter the club. The security guard nods me in without taking my ID or asking any questions.

After we are all in the Cosmo Lounge, Rashaad finds a table and sits with Jax as Kap and I go up to the bar to open a tab and grab drinks. As we are waiting for a drink, I ask, "So, is security always like for you?" He looks at me and questions, "like what?" I clarify, "where you hand over your license and also change your appearance subtly." "Oh, do I do that? I mean, they always kinda a hassle to get in here when they have that white boy for security. I usually prefer the *nigga* with the cornrows." As we get back to the table, I pose the question to both Rashaad and Jax, both of whom require the same clarification as Kap as to the subtle changes they all made to their appearance prior to interacting with the security guard. While discussing these slight adjustments to appearance, they all described instances where the bouncer or the security guard at the Cosmo Lounge and other North Side bars would routinely create difficulties with gaining entry. Jax described how his changing of hairstyles has prompted security guards to not believe his license was his; Kap recounted a time when he had to wait to the side while a manager used an UV light on his license, while others walked past; and Rashaad related a time when he was questioned by security on whether he was at the right place because they weren't planning on playing "trap or gansta rap music." In all three cases, the interactions with aspects of the nightlife environment (in this case, security) were more challenging than both their North Side and, more likely, white counterparts.

The focus on the various qualities of environmental interaction during the go-along with Rashaad and his friends highlights two important facets of this method – (1) the ways that mundane processes can be proxies for larger social relationships and (2) the power of the go-along interview to provide access to experiences not easily accessible via either participant

observation nor interviews. Because I was walking, talking, and engaging with Rashaad, Jax, and Kap as they engaged with queer spaces and community structures, I was able to observe subtle changes in deportment as they moved from space to space. The behaviors would have been invisible with other qualitative research methods, such as interviews. In the above example, the seemingly mundane processes of gaining entrance to a bar was saturated with layers and context, which ultimately provided a thicker (Geertz, 1973) understanding of my participants' experiences. Additionally, the go-along process is apt at addressing the limitations of participant observation, specifically, its inability to uncover the impact of structures and place on people's actions. In the case of the Cosmo Lounge, I had encountered Rashaad multiple times while observing in the space, however, these observations were limited to illuminating how Rashaad perceives the space and how such perceptions impact his behavior. As individuals are rarely asked in "natural" settings why or how they acted in the ways that they did, much of participant observation relies either on speculation or conjecture about the motivations, feelings, desires, and impacts of place on people and vice versa. In sum, go-alongs provided a strategic opportunity for me to gain in-the-moment insight of my participants, while also complementing my initial observations and interviews with thicker and more stimulating data.

2.3 Changing the Sexual Landscape: June 2018 – January 2019

Seconds after I knock on the front door, I hear Lacquan (26, Black, South Side) scream to "come in" and that it's "about damn time that I got my motherfucking ass" to show up. I laugh and reply "screw you" as he hands me the newly opened bottle of Hennessy. As I step over his barbell weights to walk with him to his bedroom where he is getting ready, I ask what our plan is for tonight. He is holding up two different jackets, one black and one red, "which should I wear?" I reply that he should wear the black and he throws the red jacket on his bed, while taking another

drink of the cognac and putting on his coat. “So, I’m thinking we’ll hit up on the Pub and then leave with Matt (31, Black, South Side), Dante (29, Black, South Side), and maybe Dajon (56, Black, South Side), if he gets off work, to Billy’s Bar.” I nod in agreement, we both take another drink, and then walk the approximately 10 blocks to the Pub from Lacquan’s place. After hanging out at the Pub for a few hours, Lacquan nudges me on the shoulder and asks if we should hop on the bus and head up to Billy’s Bar where we can meet Dante and Dajon (Matt decides to stay at the Pub). I say sure as we close out our tab, grab our Ventra cards, and head out.

As we get into Billy’s Bar, I immediately hear Tanya, the bartender, scream my name as she comes over to greet Lacquan and I as we sit down at the corner seats. After a few minutes catching up with Tanya, as well as some of the other regulars that are sitting around, Lacquan gets his Hennessy neat and I get my PBR and we sit at a table by the window. In roughly an hour and a half, both Dante and Dajon enter Billy’s Bar, say hi to Tanya, order drinks (a vodka cranberry for Dajon and a pitcher of Miller Lite for Dante), and then meet up with us at the table (which is Dajon’s favorite). While we sit at the table, Lacquan consistently invites other guys that he sees, knows, or wants to know over to our table. Some of these men stayed for a quick hello, while others sat down and talked for a while, taking breaks to follow Lacquan outside for a smoke break. At the end of the night, Lacquan and newly met Adrian head back to Lacquan’s place as he bids Dajon and I adieu for the night.

Though all the interactions of the night mirror many of the ones on other go-alongs, this one diverged in a critical way—namely, Billy’s Bar is a neighborhood dive bar and not a gay bar. In contrast to most go-along interviews that almost exclusively were located among a rotation of queer spaces including gay bars and clubs on both the North and South sides of the

city, some, like this one, incorporated non-queer spaces into the nightly round. Though my participants were able to craft their nightly round in any way they desired, the reliance on marked queer spaces was common, even among nights out that made use of multiple sites. In cases like those with Lacquan, participants, almost exclusively South Side participants, would also incorporate non-queer spaces located within or close to their neighborhoods of residence. Interestingly, these spaces, during these go-alongs, were exclusively used to meet up with queer friends, stage queer events, or meet potential hookups (whether planned outside of the space, for example, on a site like Grindr or unplanned with men met at the bar). Thus, even though Lacquan frequented Billy's Bar for a variety of purposes (ranging from watching sports to their karaoke), he used this unmarked space to imagine and create a type of temporary queer place.

The common theme of unmarked queer spaces being utilized and leverage to create queer community, leisure, and place prompted the third wave of this study, which focused on a participant observation and *in situ* conversations of queer leisure and community within non-queer spaces. Conducted between June 2018 and January 2019, I focused my attention on three neighborhood bars located on Chicago's South and West sides of the city. These bars included Billy's Bar, The Hangout, and Tempe's Tavern. Like my initial wave of participant observation and the focused observations conducted during it, I analytically selected these sites due to their incorporation in the nightly rounds of my participants. Both during go-alongs and observations, these three bars were frequently used by my participants to pursue sexual partners, search for queer leisure, and create queer community. As these spaces were located either directly in or adjacent to the neighborhood where I lived, I had the added benefit of establishing an insider perspective as a neighborhood resident and located much of my local leisure participation within these spaces. Given this vantage point, I was able to interact with the space as a neighborhood

bar in addition to a site of queer community. These multiple positions provided insight in observing the strategies, desires, and practices of queer men to locate queer community within non-queer space.

The observations and ethnographic strategy mirrored the data collection in wave 1 with two distinct differences: (1) alternative positions within the space and (2) including presumably heterosexual members into fieldnotes. Due to the neighborhood position and reputation of all three of these bars, these spaces frequently served multiple purposes for multiple people. For example, on Sundays they would become popular hangouts to watch football games, or during the day they catered to different crowds than they did at night. Given the multiplicity of social realms held within these spaces, I intentionally structured my observations to be conducted across a variety of dates and times to provide a broader context for these sites of leisure. This breadth allowed me to situate multiple participants within the realms, however, also meant that my position became read differently by the other members of the bar depending on my social interactions. For example, regulars who usually saw me during the day or on certain days would inquire what was going on when my days or times changed or when I was with a different social crowd than I was observed with previously. This structure provided me the challenges of developing rapport with individuals who found it difficult to interpret me in various positions. However, this also provided me the opportunity to use these moments of questioning to ask for additional clarification or information, especially around topics which I was assumed to be privy to considering my own regular status.

Along with the structured observations within non-queer spaces, these observations also presented the opportunity to speak with presumably heterosexual people. These neighborhood bars were non-queer spaces, thus my fieldnotes were expanded to include observations,

conversations, and encounters with a more sexually diverse population. In many ways, this expansion proved fruitful as it provided a counterbalance to the experiences being described by my queer participants. For instance, as my queer participants were creating queer events within these spaces, how were the non-queer patrons interpreting these events? Were they read as queer? Did people care? If they did, how did the space accommodate multiple perspectives? In a similar fashion to my expansion of my population, I also needed to expand the various ways that I interacted with queer participants within these spaces. In contrast to gay bars and clubs where most of my participants were sanctioned to perform more outwardly queer dress styles, performances, and mannerisms, these bars, even when used to imagine queer community, led many queer men to implore more discreet mannerisms or non-overt queer signals. Thus, I had to become more accustomed to the various discreet queer signals, while also ensuring to respect (and protect) my participants' level of *outness* within the space. Even among those who were out and were using the space to create a type of temporary queer space, the ability to remain circumspect remained paramount. The observations within these neighborhood spaces provided the natural progression of this study as I moved from how queer men utilized some of the most visible spaces and worlds to how they created some of the most invisible and temporary ones.

2.4 Writing the Sexual Landscape: February 2019 – February 2022

At the culmination of my fieldwork, I made the personal and analytic decision to remain in Chicago, on the South Side, to analyze, write, and ultimately defend my dissertation. Given my history with the city, this decision was partially motivated by my personal desire to remain in the urban setting as opposed to leaving the field altogether to analyze and write. However, more critically, this decision was predicated on a desire to remain with my participants, neighborhoods, and fieldsites as I commenced analysis. Initially, the benefit of analyzing and

writing in the field were that I was able to remain connected to my fieldsites, which allowed for an ease in validation of information as I was coding my data corpora. By remaining connected to these sites, I was able to confirm pertinent information about their events, locations, staff members, and other characteristics which provided me the ability to further contextualize my data.

However, as I was writing and analyzing, another benefit of remaining in the field quickly emerged: my participants were interested in being engaged in the analysis. Because I continued to live in my South Side neighborhood and was continuing to locate my own leisure participation within and alongside my fieldsites, many of my participants, staff members, bartenders, owners, and other patrons would routinely question how the process was going and would interrogate me about my arguments. For example, on a brisk Wednesday in November, I end up walking into Jeffery Pub and found myself in a conversation with some of the older regulars in the late afternoon. “Have you finished your book” one of them asks to which the other replies, “he’s not writing a book; he’s writing a paper.” They both looked at me for confirmation, to which I respond that I am continuing to analyze the data and plan out my arguments. “Well, now you have to tell us one” asks the first gentleman as he flags down the bartender and orders both myself and him another drink. I thank him for the drink, take a seat, and begin to explain the argument that I was most recently working on, specifically the focus on differences between transportation resources on the North and South sides and how it impacts how individuals use space. As I finish describing my initial interpretations, the second man replies, “hmmm, I’ve never thought about it that way. That if people don’t use buses then how do they get around here because nothing is really that close. That’s interesting.” I give him a sly smile as the other man sitting at the bar adds, “makes sense, but, I mean, who is really going to

be taking a bus around here anyways. Especially late at night. People are either going to go to Club Escape or the Pub, but not both. And then they would probably just drive when wanting to go home."

As I furiously took notes on this conversation, I realized that this conversation represented a significant benefit in my analysis, specifically, having my respondents evaluate and provide feedback on my own interpretations of events, decisions, strategies, and spaces across the South Side. Some of my key informants, such as Dante and Marquis, relished the opportunity to provide their feedback and ideas on what I was working on. Their ideas helped provide additional context or information about a specific fieldnote, event, or incident. Especially as they both had lived on the South Side far longer than I had and had more direct experience with the individuals within these spaces, their insights proved invaluable in helping to correct inaccuracies, provide additional context, or provide the history of people, places, and things that I was including in my writing. Though I sometimes disagreed with my participants or deviated from their own interpretations of certain events or people, these conversations were useful in providing both a type of internal validation, but also a type of confirmation.

In addition to confirmation and validation of fieldnotes focused on details, events, situations, or neighborhoods, my participants also were valuable in providing insight into the presentation of data, including how to describe people, how to present quotations (especially verbatim quotations), and the types of language that I should include. For example, when needing to present quotations with racialized terminology (such as *nigga,* the colloquial version of the n-word racial epithet), I first asked Dante his thoughts in navigating being a white researcher presenting data on Black respondents. After giving me a quick laugh, he adds, "don't' you just report what people say? Why would you change it?" As he and I continue our discussion

he adds: “I think that you write what people say. You would write down faggot without thinking about it. I just think that if someone didn’t want to use that word, or use that word around you, then they would have chosen a different word. But you can’t change their word.” As he finishes, he calls over another patron and relays the same question to which the seemingly mid-30s Black male adds, “I would just include the words that people say. You didn’t make it up. You are just writing that a nigga used the word nigga. Ain’t nothing wrong with that.” In these cases, my participants were helpful in me attending to racial dynamics, by engaging with their own ideas and suggestions on how I should and should not present data throughout the dissertation. I would follow through on their suggestions while also using work such as Brown (2011) as helpful guides in how to not only analyze and understand my data, but also how to present it in a meaningful and participant centered way.

Through continuing to follow-up with my participants, reporting back on my findings, and remaining critically engaged with my fieldsites, I was able to achieve an iterative process of analysis by addressing calls of feminist and queer ethnographers to concentrate on addressing power imbalances between the researcher and the researched, while ensuring to foreground the participant voices that have the potential to be silenced in the analysis. In the next chapter, I delve further into my own positions across my various fieldsites, paying specific attention to the ways in which I negotiated being simultaneously an insider and outsider across spaces. Drawing on a queer of color critique, I argue for understanding ethnographic reflexivity as relational, using one’s participants’ understanding of the researcher as an analytic way to shed light on how a researcher can best understand their position in the field by focusing on the positions that their participants map onto them.

Chapter 3 A Blond-Haired Shorty and a South Side Slummer: Towards Ethnographic Reflexivity as Relational

"Come on in, sweetie, grab a chair, and cool down" were the first words that Cat (Black, Woman), a 49-year-old bartender said to me as I first visited the Jeffery Pub during a hot June day. As part of my initial pilot observations of queer spaces throughout the city, I arrived at Jeffery Pub after walking around its home neighborhood of South Shore for hours in the morning. Partially motivated by my apartment search, I took the opportunity on a warm Friday to explore the neighborhood and its various businesses, communities, and residential enclaves. Although not finding the South Side apartment that I would eventually move into during that day, I gained valuable insight into the placement of bus stops, grocery stores, restaurants, and drug stores. Thus, my entrée to the Jeffery Pub was both intentional (as I knew the name) and serendipitous (as I was walking around its neighborhood and came across the bar during my walk).

Sitting down on the chair at the Pub, in the now-late afternoon, I smile at Cat as she walks over from behind the bar and give a quick smile to the two other women sitting at the bar. Both in their early 50s, the two women, whom I came to know as Thema and Sadie, looked at me and gave me an ever so slight smile while both picking up their drinks. While sitting at the bar, I felt as if I interrupted a private conversation as the room became silent. This silence was broken when Cat asked what I would like to drink and I replied that I'm not sure as I looked over the backlit alcohol bottles on the bar. "Well then, let me get your some of my Fag punch" she replies as she grabs two liquor bottles from the bottle well behind the bar. "What is fag punch?" I

inquire never have hearing that drink before. Before Cat could respond, Thema adds, “it is basically a Long Island with double the alcohol and three times the size. I laugh and reply that I’m excited, but will probably have more than one before I’m done. “Honey, a skinny thing like you, I’d be impressed if you are still walking after two” Cat says as she puts the drink down in front of me and leans on the back bar. I take a sip and respond that it is definitely delicious…and strong. This comment garners a round of laughter from Cat, Thema, and Sadie whom all return to their drinks, yet not their conversations.

As I check my phone and continue drinking my drink, Cat inquires if this is my first time to the Pub to which I respond yes. I mentioned that I’ve heard of the bar previously from friends, but have never been to it to which Cat nods, while checking her phone. “So, what brings you here today” is what I hear from down the bar where Thema’s friend, Sadie, has turned to face my direction. I say how I’ve spent the morning walking around and doing some apartment hunting, but to no success. “Which buildings have you been looking at” Sadie asks as I provide a list of buildings that I either visited or spoke with the owners. At my list, both Sadie and Thema chime in with their commentary:

> The building off 71st that you described is ran by this Black man that inherited the building from his father. I would avoid it because he lives up North somewhere and never comes down here. Also, he won’t do any maintenance. Pangea is a horrible real estate company and run trash buildings. We lived in one once and they never got around to fixing shit. Remember that Thema? Yes, I was there and it was so fucking stupid.

As I take notes on my phone about their comments and eventual suggestions of some buildings to look at, Thema questions, “so what are you doing here at the Jeffery Pub?” Before I can

provide a reply, Sadie interjects, “what do you mean why he is here? It’s a gay bar, Thema, isn’t it obvious?” “No, I mean, and don’t take this wrong, but why is a white boy like you here? There just niggas around here.” At this question, both Sadie and Cat put down their respective phones and look at me, illustrating their own interest in my answer. I described my initial research interests and my motivation for understanding the role in how different urban spatial locations impact queer partner search. Thema and Sadie, who, as it turns out, have been a couple for over 20 years, nod along to my description of the project, asking follow-up questions such as why queer populations, which other neighborhoods am I looking at, will I include lesbians, and if my research is about health. I reply in kind about my theoretical motivations around why queer populations (including wanting to focus my attention on communities with which I have a personal connection), a list of other South and North side neighborhoods, that lesbians are not explicitly included in my analyses, and that I am not focusing on health outcomes, such as HIV.

“But why then move to the South Side” Thema asks after providing her appreciation in my motivation in working with queer populations of which I’m a part of and not focusing solely on health. Although having answered this question many times previously when initially designing and gaining approval for this study, being asked in the field was a different experience altogether. As now Cat, Thema, and Sadie have all directed their attention towards me, I explain how too frequently studies of queer life revolve around certain spaces such as gayborhoods or gay bars that are patronized by white, cisgender, queer men and then the researchers speculate on the experiences of queer persons of color within such spaces. Though these studies provide valuable insight into the diverse urban experiences within marked queer places and communities, they seldom illuminate the diverse spaces that queer people use. I mention how I want my study to be different and instead focus on queer men who live outside of the gayborhood and how they

experience urban sexual lives. I end by saying that if I expect my participants to let me into their worlds and entrust me with their experiences, then I need to find ways to become a community member within these neighborhoods and not simply a spectating visitor.

I finish my description as Cat brings me another Fag punch and comments, “well shit, you ain’t an ordinary white boy up in here are you?” We all laugh at her comment as she says that this drink is on her and Sadie adds, “these niggas around here are going to love you. Doesn’t hurt that you look like the perfect snowflake for them.” I take a sip of my drink as Thema, Sadie, Cat, and I continue to talk with them providing me suggestions on which nights to come to the Pub, which nights to go to Club Escape, and that they want to introduce me to some of the regulars. We agree to meet up again next Tuesday and before they both leave the bar, both Thema and Sadie give me a big hug and Thema says, “I didn’t know what to think about you walking up in here, but you’re definitely interesting.”

As they both left, I stayed at the bar for a couple more hours talking and getting to know Cat. Learning that Friday nights are ladies’ nights at the Pub, Cat introduced me to the various “nights” at the Pub with her own commentary and suggestions about when I should come (specifically Tuesdays and Saturdays she thought would be good days). After my third drink (and still having the ability to walk much to Cat’s joking surprise), I leave the Pub and get on the bus to return to the temporary apartment that I was staying at while I searched for a permanent place. While on the bus and typing my jottings into my phone, I spent the time reflecting on the various conversations that Cat, Sadie, Thema, and I had at the Pub. At the time what I took for granted as conversations were instead investigations into my positionally within the space. The questions about who I was, why I was there, and what someone who looked, talked, acted, and dressed like me would be doing in the space all illustrate the degree to which my participants

were intentionally interrogating my existence and motivations into their various spaces, communities, and neighborhoods. For Sadie and Thema, my position in the space transcended similarities and differences in identities (such as sexual, gender, or racial identities) and included motivations and reasons for being within the neighborhood and within the bar. For them, the various aspects about who I am was as important as what I was doing there. Whether on the North or South Side or with white or Black participants, these interrogations would reveal the various relationships between my participants and myself in various settings and illuminate how similarities and differences led to heterogeneous understandings of actors, actions, and places.

By considering these dialectic relationships between my participants and myself—the researcher and the researched— and attending to feminist and queer calls to address power imbalances embedded in these relationships, I argue for understanding ethnographic reflexivity as a relational practice. Using a relational approach positions reflexivity as a thought exercise about our own positionality as researchers and foregrounds our participants' thoughts and feelings about us in the field as they understand them. For Sadie and Thema, I was required to account for my differences and justify my motivations before they would further engage me in conversation or allow me to become privy to many aspects of insider knowledge. Whether in the field or within interviews, I gained valuable insight into my own position by focusing on how others perceived me, what they asked of me, and how they made sense of me in their social worlds. In this chapter, I draw upon two case examples from different field sites within my study to illustrate the value of relational reflexivity by illustrating how respondents came to make sense of me within the space, the effects of such sense-making and the influence on the data received. Using Ferguson's (2004) queer of color critique framework, I illustrate how relational reflexivity seeks to position reflexivity as crucially intersectional by presenting the relationships between

ethnographers and their participants as not simply insider versus outsider, but rather as multifaceted, complicated, and robust. Furthermore, I draw upon Munoz's (1999) concept of disidentifications to illuminate how differences in identities and social positions can present useful opportunities for challenging the segregation of identities (sexual, gender, class, race, etc.) and avoiding the "monocausal" and "monothematic" arguments of "insider" and "outsider" in considering ethnographic positionality. I conclude by discussing how relational reflexivity furthers feminist and queer calls to attend to power imbalances by requiring researchers to be heedful of how their participants place the researcher, and understand their position, within social worlds.

3.1 A Blond-Haired Shorty: Reflections from the South Side

On an early Saturday evening, I am sitting at the Jeffery Pub and talking with some of the other regulars, including one of the security guards and Dajon, who is bartending, when Izaak walks in with two of his friends. From the other end of the bar, I hear, "oh damn, there's my blond-haired shorty. I had a feeling that my night was going to be good" as Izaak walks towards me. He gives me a hug while sitting down in the chair to my right and calling over Dajon to order a Hennessy neat. As he gets settled, he waves over his other two friends and makes introductions while they both order drinks and Izaak and I catch up. Although just over a week since we last saw each other at Club Escape, he regales me with stories about his work, his mom's recent birthday, and drama that some of his 'homies' are having with the law. As I express sympathy for their legal troubles he shrugs and says, "they've been there before; it's fine." We continue to talk while his friends slowly join into our conversation. His friend, Kordell (29, Black, SS), whom I have seen at Club Escape before but never interacted with, points in my direction and asks if I've been to

some of the other bars around here because I "look familiar." I reply that I've been to Club Escape and that is most likely from where Kordell knows me in which he replies with a nod before taking another sip of his drink. The third friend, Quinn (26, Black, SS), who was also Izaak's roommate until last year when Izaak got a place of his own, adds, "so you must really like niggas to be spending all yo' time around here." "Nah man, he my shorty and is writing like a book or some 'bout the South Side. He smart" Izaak replies immediately giving me a wink and my hand a squeeze. "Ah fo' real? That's wassup" Quinn says as Kordell adds, "yeah, but he must get a lot of attention for being the only snowflake around here. I can't even tell you the last white boy that I saw around here." Continuing with the conversational banter I jokingly remark that "of course, I do alright around here. Probably better than alright to be honest." My comment is met with roaring laughter and a round of clinking glasses.

Sexualized banter, such as that between Kordell, Izaak, and Quinn, was common while I was in Black, queer spaces on the South Side. Frequently, participants would inquire if my motivation to be in these spaces was predicated by a desire for sex, especially with Black men. It was not uncommon for patrons to ask if I had an interest in "Black dick" or "Black ass," if I wanted to hook up, or ask further questions about my sexual experience with Black men. As gay bars are known for housing many practices of sexual pursuit, such sexual commentary is neither uncommon nor unexpected. However, this language and questions reflect a set of strategies that participants utilized to make sense of my presence within the space. For many, I was a type of space invader (Puwar, 2004) whose body was seemingly out of place within these South Side gay bars. Thus, questions about my sexual motivations served dual purposes including both satisfying curiosity and making sense of my position within the bar. For men like Quinn and Kordell, they were able to make sense of my presence by questioning if it cohered with their

world view that a white man would utilize these spaces primarily for the search for Black partners.

Outside of erotic questions, Black, queer men within these spaces were intrigued by my presence and questioned my motivations and desires; frequently using them as litmus tests for how well I could be trusted. As Dajon noted on multiple occasions, "we are all sissies up in here, but we don't see a lot of them looking like you." Though his comment was not meant in a malicious way, it did reflect how South Side men would make assumptions about my sexual identity, while catechizing my intentions for choosing South Side gay bars (especially in contrast to the white gay bars of Boystown). Bravon (34, Black, SS), for example, when first meeting me, asked explicitly why I don't go up to Boystown and hang out at those gay bars. I replied that I also frequently go up to the North Side and have been known to frequent many of those bars including Progress and Sidetrack. "Ah, so you don't just come here" he said as he trailed off and took another drink and continued, "I like Progress sometimes and maybe Hydrate, but there's just so much bullshit to deal with up there. Their security is always so uppity. Though you probably don't have to deal with that. Shit, and the Twinks. No offense, but all them twinks just ain't my thing." Bravon gives me a smile as he gestures with his drink every time he talked about his dislike of the twinks of Boystown. I reply that I didn't take any offense as I'm not a Twink to which he laughs and says "fair."

As Bravon became a regular at both Jeffery Pub and the Falcon, he and I would frequently see each other, typically taking the opportunity to say hello, engage in conversation, and buy each other drinks. His initial questioning of whether I went to Boystown was a habitual question asked of me when people first met me. Like Bravon, these men were attempting to make sense of me by better understanding my own sexual map of the city and then questioning

my engagement with this map. As evidenced, once I listed some North Side gay bars, Bravon elaborated on his own thoughts and experiences within these spaces. Though critically important is how Bravon's reflection on our shared involvements were tempered with statements like "you probably don't have to deal with that" and "no offense" as useful markers that we had different impressions. Illustrated by men like Bravon, Izaak, Quinn, and Kordell, my presence within South Side queer spaces was frequently questioned, interrogated, and examined as these men sought to make sense of me within their space.

The effects of this sense-making impacted the degree in which I was able to acclimatize to these spaces including talking with participants, being trusted with interviews, and being granted access to insider information, typically in the form of gossip, anecdotes, and personal thoughts. For some men, like Izaak, I gained access by his understanding of me as erotically interesting, for others, like Bravon, I gained access through successfully narrating my own understandings of queer space throughout the city to his satisfaction. In both examples, how participants came to make sense of me shaped how they interacted with me within the space. Unlike other patrons who never came to make sense of me within the space, the ones who did became close confidants, interview participants, and entrusted translators to insider networks. For example, consider the experience of one of the Saturday night drag shows at Jeffery Pub.

As the main dance floor is almost completely full with a growing line around the block outside, the drag show is about to begin. After talking with some of the regulars in the outside courtyard, I return to my seat between Dante and Izaak while we watch the lights lower and the performance begin. As we are sitting at the bar, we turn our seats around to face the stage, while also continuing to talk with TeeJay who is behind the bar and is become busier as the night continues. After the first performance, the queen, Miss Thang, takes a bow and immediately

jumps into her next performance as she gets off stage and walks around the dance floor to a lot of applause…and tips. As she is singing, she walks along the bar and both Dante and I give her a couple of ones, which she accepts, while climbing onto my lap and tussling my hair. Once she gets off, she walks back on to the stage to finish her performance to loud applause and she grabs the mic. "Okay. Okay. Shut the fuck up now. I get it. You love me" she screams into the microphone as she addresses the audience. "I wasn't sure about showing up tonight because I thought you'd all be poor niggas and by looking at these tips; I was right." The audience erupts in laughter as Miss Thang catches her breathe and waits for the audience to quiet down. "Now, who is this cutie sitting at the bar? Not you. You ain't cute and you know it" Miss Thang jokes with one of the patrons before pointing at me. Dante, who is laughing, gives my shoulder a slight push as Miss Thang walks to the edge of the stage and starts talking to me. "Come on up here" she says as I shake my head, "ah poor baby, don't be scared. Can everyone give him some encouragement?" The crowd erupts in applause as Dante pushes me from my chair and I walk on stage. Miss Thang runs her hands through my hair and puts the microphone to her lips, "so what is a white boy like you doing here this late? Are you lost? Because if you are then I would be happy to take you home for protection." The audience continues their eruption into laughter while I also join in and she pulls me in closer. "What is your name" she asks and I respond "Morgan." "Okay. Morgan. What are you doing here? You tryna get freaky tonight?" Before I can respond, Dante yells, "That's Morgan. He is always here." "Oh so you know what you're getting yourself into? Is that your boyfriend screaming out for you because if he is then you can do better" she retorts with raised eyes and laughter from the audience. I reply that he is not and she continues, "I won't ask if you are a top of a bottom. Give some of these thirsty motherfuckers a fighting chance. Well, Morgan will be right over there at the bar and will be

accepting free drinks and big dick." She ends her commentary with a kiss on my cheek as I return to the bar getting a free shot from both TeeJay and Dante.

As the night progresses, I am inundated with other patrons coming up to me and asking how my night is going and engaging me in conversation. Though I left this night with more notes, and phone numbers, than received in most of my fieldwork nights, it presents a critical insight into the effects of being understood within the space. Miss Thang bringing me on stage and asking what a white boy was doing in this space was a similar question to those from Thema, Sadie, Kordell, and Quinn, specifically one that was intended to illuminate who I was and why I was in this space. Critically, Dante, as both a regular and a Black, queer man, provided the necessary credentials for people to understand me as a type of insider within the space. By telling people that I was a regular to the Pub, many queer men were able to see me not as a complete outsider observer but instead as a type of insider participant. The effects of this sense-making led to an increase in trust resulting in fostering stronger networks, connections, and relationships, especially with whom held different identities.

The ways that Miss Thang, Dante, Quinn, Kordell, and Dajon all came to understand my position within the space illuminate the ways that relationships and networks have a profound effect on building trust and understanding between researchers and participants. Although I shared many identities and qualities with each of them, I was neither a perfect insider to the space due to my race nor a complete outsider due to my sexuality. Thus, the negotiation of my positions within these Black, queer spaces was typically hinged on my ability to have others "vouch" for me, which then allowed people to understand my own position within the space differently. By focusing on the ways in which positionality and reflexivity are relational, one can also illuminate how insider and outsider positions are neither universal nor static and must be

continually negotiated. For example, some men like Dajon saw me as erotically desirable, which allowed him to make sense of me within the space and therefore start to develop an insider position. Others like Kordell, whom I met through Dajon, made sense of my disidentification (1999) within the Black space by illustrating how my stark difference in race may be useful in others talking with and trusting me. Though viewing reflexivity as relational allowed me to center my participants' feelings and understanding of myself, therefore guiding my own position within the space, it is critical to note that not every patron within the space developed, or were interested in developing, a relationship with me. For some, I was interpreted as a type of space invader (Puwar, 2004) not to be trusted. Others simply ignored me within the space. In both cases, various iterations of disidentifications and either the resulting insider status or outsider avoidance, provided useful frames for me to reflect on what it meant for my body to be in the space and highlighted the potentials of relationship building within and across similarities and differences.

3.2 A South Side Slummer

By considering reflexivity relationally, an ethnographer is able to gain deeper insight both the relationships between himself and his participants and how these relationship may either inhibit or facilitate the types of data one is able to get. For example, the relationships that I established within my predominately Black field sites illustrated the ways that participants were able to see me as not just an outsider, but as an insider as well. This position, similar to Collins's (1986) concept of an outsider within, allowed me access to trade on my queerness thus allowing me access to spaces in which I would have seemingly been denied as an outsider. Though not every patron accommodated my presence, many regarded my queerness and residential position within

the neighborhood as valuable in interpreting me as an insider, even despite multiple differences. In these instances, viewing reflexivity as relational allowed me to better understand how participants were able to reconcile out multiple positions and identities to view me not solely as an outsider and instead as a different *type* of insider.

In contrast, the viewing of reflexivity as relational also is a productive framework for interrogating one's own insider positions within sites where one is seemingly more similar than different. Consider my conversation with Dennis (27, White, North Side) and Fred (32, White, North Side) at Roscoe's in Boystown. As I walk into Roscoe's on a relatively warm Friday night in March, I pay the cover and then go and find a seat near one of the back windows before getting a drink. As I return to my seat two men, Dennis and Fred, have sat down on the other side of the bar. We exchange pleasantries and introductions as Dennis and Fred turn to each other to engage in conversation and I pull out my phone. After another round of drinks, Dennis turns to me and inquires on how my night is going. I reply that is going alright and ask him about his night. "It is going great. We were just at Scarlet but got bored, so ended up coming out here before going home." I nod and reply that their plan sounds enjoyable and ask if they live close. "Well, I do. I'm just over on Broadway. Fred lives in Edgewater, but will probably just crash with me tonight. That is if I don't find anyone better." He ends his comment in a laugh indicating his jovial nature towards his comment. I laugh as well as Dennis asks if I live close. I reply that I live down south in Pilsen. "The south side" Dennis asks inquisitively. I reply yes and take another drink as he grabs Fred's arm and says, "Fred, this guy, sorry I forgot your name, is from the South Side." Fred, slightly jarred from being pulled around on his chair provides a quick introduction himself while asking what I was doing up in Roscoe's. I mention how I've been coming to Roscoe's for years including that this was one of the first gay bars that I went to while

in college. Dennis replies, “okay, but then why not live up here? What is even in Pilsen anymore except for gangs and poverty.” He laughs at his own comment while Fred answers, “maybe Morgan is just a South Side slummer.”

After roughly 5 more minutes of talking, both Dennis and Fred get up to get another drink without saying anything and without returning. Though “slumming,” is a term historically referring to the use of disreputable locations, frequently in working-class neighborhoods or ethnic enclaves, by affluent whites (Heap, 2009), Fred’s use of it was even more interesting. In this exchange, his use of *slumming* was an explanatory comment seeking to make sense of what someone who looked and acted like me would not only be on the South Side, but also why eschew the opportunity to live in the gayborhood. Like other North Siders, Fred and Dennis have centered their queer leisure and social maps around Boystown, thus those who didn’t were seen as needing an explanation as to why not. In my case, the explanation was that I was *slumming*.

Though this interaction with Dennis and Fred was one of the most explicit interactions with North Siders and their questioning of my living on the South Side, many North Side queer men found my decision to not residentially locate myself within the gayborhood to be either odd or suspicious or both. For instance, when meeting up with some of my North Side participants after the gym at Lark for the Tuesday happy hour, the bartender, my two participants, Jack (31, White, North Side) and Victor (29, Black, North Side), and I were all at the bar talking about an upcoming vacation that Jack was planning. During the conversation, a discussion about where everyone was living came up and the bartender, presumably around his early to mid 20s, says that he is surprised that I would’ve chosen to live on the South Side. I inquire why and he says, “no offense or anything, but what is really down there. When I moved to Chicago, I knew that I had to live in Boystown because we have everything here. Honestly, I don’t really go other

places because I don't to. Why would you not want that?" Victor, who grew up in Chatham on the South Side, laughs and mockingly asks me, "yeah Morgan, why would you not want that?" We all laugh as I ask the bartender if he ever goes to the other queer spaces across the city to which he replies, "I didn't even know there were other gay bars that aren't around here. Maybe could check it out someday."

Although his response lacked sincerity, the bartender engaged in a similar practice to other North Siders when presented with individuals selectively choosing to live away from the North Side, namely questioning their motivations and then providing a description of how Boystown centralizes queer resources. For men like him, the decision to not live in Boystown is incongruent with the ways in which they structure their sexual maps of the city. The viewing of living on the South Side and discussing queer spaces and communities outside of the gayborhood served as a prohibiting contradiction for many North Side queer men who found the incongruence to be a critical difference between us. Similar to how Dennis and Fred chose to not continue any engagement and walk away, the bartender at Lark, too, become more attentively interested in my North Side participants providing pleasant, albeit absent, service to me for the rest of the night.

In considering the ways that individuals form attachments to their residential communities and especially how queer men privileged within the gayborhood work to defend it, my living outside of the neighborhood created difficulties within many of my North Side fieldsites. In a comparable way to how my residential location on the South Side provided entré into South Side spaces, it instead provided a barrier to North Side ones. Especially in spaces which seemingly reflected my identities as white, middle-class, educated, the geographic difference was exacerbated by those who found how I crafted my own sexual map to be too

different than theirs. In focusing on not only my understanding of my position within these spaces, but instead relationally using my participants and their understandings of me, I gained greater insight into the complexities of not being seen as an insider, while attempting to justify how I wasn't a complete outsider.

3.3 Conclusion

When Judith Stacey (1988) questions whether there can be a feminist ethnography, she turns decidedly to two areas of contradiction within ethnographic methods, specifically the relationships between researcher and research subject and between research study and product. In both contradictions, Stacey (1988) directs her attention to the ways in which power imbalances can put research subjects at markedly different risks than the researcher, specifically how they are bound in their social environments more so than a researcher who is free and able to leave and how the eventual product is an analytical telling from the perspective of the researcher. Though her eventual answer is that there can never be a completely feminist ethnography, only partial ones that seek to address power imbalances and bring to attention the various quandaries that are embedded in this method, Stacey (1988) provides a call for ethnographers to better consider power, reflexivity, and positionality in their work ultimately echoing Clifford's (1986) argument that "…a rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representation tact" (p.7).

In this chapter, I shed light on the attention to power in arguing that reflexivity is relational and providing a framework for ethnographers to consider their positionality through the lens of their participants. In considering two field examples of how my participants found similarity across differences and differences within similarities, I illustrate how ethnographers

are never able to perfectly be insiders nor outsiders within the field. By moving beyond this false dichotomy, ethnographers can start to challenge the notions that our positions are inherently stable and thus can open ourselves up to be scrutinized, pulled apart, and undone by our participants and by our sites (Rooke, 2009). By demonstrating a willingness to be questioned, challenged, and evaluated in my South Side field sites, I was able to bring to the forefront the ways that my participants viewed me as both a person and a researcher within the field. In doing so, I began to understand myself and my position using their notions, languages, ideas, expectations, and feelings. The result is addressing embedded power imbalances with a greater focus on intersectionality and radical inclusivity choosing to operate within the field and delineate within the research product not only how I positioned myself with my work, but how my participants came to position me on their own terms.

Finally, by leaning into understanding and experiencing multiple disidentifications— "ways in which one situates oneself both within and against various discourses through which we are called to identify" (Munoz, 1999)— I was able to shed light on the ways that apparent similarities and community memberships can hide dissonances that can create strife between the researcher and the participant. Through focusing on some of my North Side participants, I showed that apparent similarities which under less theorized conditions may lead one to believe me an insider created the conditions for differences to become more pronounced and important in the relationship building process. Viewing reflexivity as relational helps to center participants and requires the ethnographer be held accountable for articulating the ways in which they were interpreted within the field therefore beginning to address feminist calls to address power imbalances (Stacey, 1988), queer calls to deconstruct discourses within ourselves (Rooke, 2009), rhetorical calls to focus on disidentifications (Munoz, 1998), and finally queer of color critiques

to center the voices, opinions, and values of those most pushed to the margins (Ferguson, 2004). In the following chapter, I begin the second part of my dissertation by introducing the conceptual and theoretical frameworks which I will use to argue for the decentralization of the gayborhood in the study of urban queer placemaking and to guide the further analyses of how Black, queer men outside of the gayborhood navigate their search and pursuit for queer space and community.

Chapter 4 Centering and Decentering the Gayborhood: Navigating Urban, Queer Life Outside of Boystown

"This your first time here" is what I hear as the bartender comes over, lightly tosses a coaster in front of me, and leans on his elbows the bar. I reply that I had been to Replay years ago when I was finishing up as an undergraduate, but this was the first time that I had been since returning to Chicago. "Well, welcome back" he says with a big smile, while continuing "our drinks probably haven't changed too much, bourbons on the side here and a list of beers on tap up on the wall. I'll give you a minute and be back. As he walks away an older gentleman next to me, probably in his late 50s, white with brown hair, and a tailored dark blue suit, asks, "so where did you move from?" I reply that I had just moved from Michigan to which he responds that he grew up in Dearborn, Michigan and moved to Boystown about 30 years ago. "Wow" I say and ask him what brought him to Boystown. He replies:

> I got a job. I was working for an appliance company up in Michigan and one day my boss walks in and says there's a position that he thinks I'd be good for in Chicago. Now, I had never lived anywhere but Michigan, but thought, what the hell. So I took the job and moved here that summer. Now, around here was different back then. I mean, we always had gay bars, but it has definitely gotten bigger around here. I used to just go to the same few places and see the same few people. Now there are a lot more options.

His recollection of Boystown "back in the old days" continued as I got my drink and he got another. After a while he introduces himself as Frank and asks if I live around here. I laugh and

say that I don't and that I'm just up here for work, but stay on the South Side. To that, he gives a look of surprise and then questions why I would stay on the South Side. I mention how I found a great place, but also like the vibe of the South Side. "What vibe is that? Crime?" He replies and I follow-up questioning if he spends a lot of time on the South Side of the city, or even other parts of Chicago. He replies that he will occasionally go to some of the other North Side neighborhoods to visit friends or go to a restaurant, but mentions how he finds that he rarely needs to leave Boystown because "the neighborhood has everything a gay guy could want." After finishing my drink and closing my tab, I bid adieu to Frank, who shakes my hand and says that he looks forward to chatting with me again. I smile and leave the bar.

Walking out into the summer night along the Boystown corridor on Halsted between Belmont and Addison feels electric. The sidewalks are filled with people standing around, talking, laughing, and walking. The various bars provide a multicolored fluorescent glow as the sun starts to go down. The gyms, coffee stores, grocery stores, Center on Halsted, retail shops, and restaurants all have people moving in and out of them. The wind provides an ever so slight reprieve from the humidity, however, as the streetlights come on, the energy of the neighborhood just seems to heighten as the night continues. Walking through Chicago's gayborhood of Boystown is in stark contrast to my home neighborhood on the South Side which, although boasting many sites of leisure itself, pales in comparison to the bright lights and bustling sidewalks of this entertainment district. However, hidden under the bustling nightlife, rainbow flags, and commemorative pylons represents a neighborhood of contradictions. One that simultaneously advertises itself as being Chicago's *queer* neighborhood where all are welcome, while business owners engage in hiring private security to prohibit loitering outside of their doors (Block Club Chicago, 2020) and residents call town halls for the limiting of South and

West Side youth of color using the various spaces. Thus, while men like Frank may find that predominately white, middle-class gayborhood to be a queer utopia that "has everything a gay guy could want," others like my neighbor, Jimmy (29, Black, SS) describes it as "just another pretentious white neighborhood with too many Starbucks and too expensive drinks."

The differences between how Frank and Jimmy view and description Boystown is not solely the result of biographical differences, but geographic ones as well. As Hubbard (2018) critiques, sexuality has always had a spatial context, even when such work is culturally situated illustrating that sexuality has a geography in addition to a biography. The community that Frank has called home for 30 years and in which he doesn't feel he needs to leave is the same neighborhood that costs Jimmy money and time trying to access. Furthermore, the same places where Frank becomes a welcomed insider; Jimmy is a suspicious outsider. The ways in which Frank and Jimmy can view the same neighborhood, same sexual venues, same community, and same environment and reach drastically varied conclusions, feelings, and interpretations illustrates the valuable and insight role that space has on sexuality. Especially in light of the historical context described in Chapter 1 regarding the development of Chicago neighborhoods, the making of the sides of the city, and the attachments that Chicagoans have to their neighborhoods, where one lives has a profound effect on how they understand the city, where they go, what they do, how they get there, and who they see. Queer men, in particular, are highly sensitive to the impact of space as queer leisure spaces provide public fronts to private desires (Bell and Valentine 2003), becoming the venue for community building, social support (Hunter 2010), entertainment (Orne 2017), political organizing, and sexual partner search (Green, 2011).

In this chapter, I contextualize urban, queer sexuality through both the lenses of how such sexuality is geographically organized and how the rise of queer sexual enclaves, contemporarily

rebranded as gayborhoods has agglomerated urban, queer resources and has unequally distributed costs and risks for certain queer men to access sexual space, communities, partners, and leisure. Similar to the inequality in Chicagoan neighborhood construction, I begin this chapter by drawing on Laumann et al's (2004) *Sexual Organization of the City* to bring attention to the various ways that urban sexuality is organized in the post-modern metropolis and the various intended and unintended consequences of such organization. Then, I transition to focusing on the rich of the gayborhood as a rebranded sexual enclave that was agglomerated resources and attention given to queer place-making. Here, I will analyze how the gayborhood, for some, represents an accomplishment of urban, queer organizing (Stewart-Winter 2016) and, for others, a dream deferred for sexual inclusion within the city. I elaborate on how the sexual organization of the city and the rise of the gayborhood has created both an overabundance of attention in centering the gayborhood as paradigmatic of urban, queer sexuality and thus overly correlating "queer" and "urban" with these sexual enclaves. Finally, I argue for a decentering of the gayborhood within urban queer place-making, instead focusing on how moving away from conflating the gayborhood as the quintessential urban, queer space can illuminate the various challenges, spaces, limitations, and opportunities that both exist and are utilized by those trying to imagine queer place-making outside of the gayborhood.

4.1 Sexual Organization of the City

Hubbard (2018) in his introduction to a special issue of the journal *Sexualities* argues the importance of the study of space when considering sexuality in that "the sexualized self is always a spatialized self" (p. 1296). He maintains the role of space as analytically paramount, even as researchers delve into analyses of the cultural or social configurations of sexuality, arguing that one must attune to the role that geography plays in facilitating, inhibiting, or

impacting sexual conduct. Though the focus on geographic spatiality is not novel in the study of sexualities, it remains a fruitful arena to explore the ways that space and place structure the search for sexual partners and community, especially in ways that this search process is stratified and unequal. Laumann et al (2004) emphasize the importance of spatial organization and the impacts of geographic position in *The Sexual Organization of the City,* where the authors capitalize on the theoretical motivations of scholars like Robert Park ([1927] 1967) in their interest of how urban processes are ordered and what affects such ordering. They begin their inquiry by arguing that:

> The way in which sexual partnering is organized is not random, genetically predetermined, or uniform. Depending on the communities in which they live, the networks in which they are embedded, and the institutions with which they come into contact, people solve the problem of finding sex partners in different ways… (Laumann et al, 2004: 6-7).

Given the lack of randomness and the lack of uniformity of these interpersonal interactions, Laumann et al (2004) claim that processes of sexual partnership are fundamentally local processes with individuals increasingly meeting those they are within close geographic proximity, belonging to the same organization, finding themselves within the same social network, or living in the same neighborhood. These spatial relationships and connections help explain why the choice of sex partners and the outcomes of such relationships are consistently patterned within and organized by particular communities, social networks, organizations, and meaning systems (Laumann et al, 2004). The ways in which Laumann et al (2004) analyze these spatial relationships is through viewing neighborhoods as sex markets—defined as the "local social and cultural structures that limit or channel sexual behavior" (p. 8). This market-based

approach is useful in investigating the ways that neighborhoods and communities house a plethora of spaces, institutions, and networks that directly impact the ways that individuals seek and find sexual partners and communities. By focusing on the spatial relationships that impact the search for sex partners and the importance of urban space as a facilitator of sexual transactions, this approach to urban sexual organization acclimatizes to the ways that differences in urban structures, accesses to resources, and availability of communities all affect the processes of outcomes of different individuals' sexual search process.

If neighborhoods are viewed as sex markets that imbed the larger processes of sexual pursuit, then the specific venues which are used to house such sexual exchange are defined as sexual marketplaces—or the specific places where one goes to find a sexual partner. These sexual marketplaces become of particular importance given that the more or less they are organized can help to either find or inhibit sexual partnership and community selection. As Laumann et al (2004) found in their Chicagoan neighborhood with the pseudonym "Shoreland," the large density of sexual marketplaces including bars, restaurants, and clubs was of great importance in facilitating the sexual partner selection of Shoreland's residents. Therefore, the more densely agglomerated such sexual venues, *or marketplaces,* are, then the more efficient the processes of using them to pursue sexual partners and communities. The consequences of such agglomeration of sexual venues are that some individuals are more able to easy access sexual space, whereas others in more sparse areas are more restricted in their spatial options and therefore their potential partner networks.

The utility in viewing the city as sexually organized is that it emphasizes the role that geography plays in impacting how individuals interact with urban structures and consequently how such structures either make easier or more challenging the pursuit of sexual spaces, partners,

and communities. Given the authors' central premise that an interrelated set of social forces organizes sex markets and influences outcomes, such organization has critical ramifications for queer men as they already find themselves in thin dating and sexual markets (Rosenfeld and Thomas, 2012). Though the arguments presented in the *Sexual Organization of the City* seek to center the relationship of space on sexuality, its critics heed its overt focus on rational choice as reducing complex process to market-based logic. Hennen (2014), for example, reasons that market-based approaches to the study of sexuality problematically reduces human sexuality to a cost/benefit analysis. Whereas many scholars argue that these market approaches remain apt in the analyses of spatial influences on sexual practices given that many sexual venues are "sufficiently market-like," the reduction of sexual interactions that are guided by complex factors which are personal, situational, and structural to a mere economic metaphor is limiting in demonstrating the ways that larger urban structures either facilitate or constrain access to quality erotic leisure by stratifying risks and costs.

4.2 The Gayborhood and Queer Place-Making

"Do you think Chicago has a gay community, or even multiple gay communities" I ask Harry[1] during our interview. He sits back in his chair taking a few moments and replies:

> We [had] multiple communities before and now there's like two communities, but the gay community is shrinking. It's literally shrinking in Chicago because we are being pushed out of Boystown. If you look at the neighborhood now, lot more families, lot more kids. Andersonville used to be all lesbian, we are moving into their area now, a little bit. But again, it's shrinking a lot in the past three years.

> [Today] it's literally Halsted to Addison and Andersonville. That's the only two gay communities we have in Chicago.

For this white 43 year old customer service representative who has lived on the North Side for the past nine years, the "shrinking" of the gay community is equated with the changing demographics of Chicago's gayborhood including an increase in straight residents (Hess and Bitterman, 2021; Brodyn and Ghaziani, 2018) and families (Ghaziani, 2021), along with an exodus of queer men to other neighborhoods (Ghaziani, 2014; Sullivan, 2005). Thus, when asked to identify the neighborhoods in which he would describe as housing queer residents or where he would recommend queer people reside, it is unsurprising his map only reflects the neighborhoods of Lakeview (where Boystown is housed) and the surrounding communities (See Figure 6). Harry's association of Boystown representing the gay community in Chicago is not only a common understanding among queer North Siders, but also among queer South Siders. As described in Chapter 1, Boystown has long been groomed by city hall, the political and economic elite, and public impression to become *Chicago's Rainbow Neighborhood* (GoPride, 2019). As tempting as it is for scholars and individuals to consider these rainbow-laden gayborhoods as paradigmatic of contemporary queer sexual organization in the modern metropolis, these gayborhoods reflect more of an achievement of the sexual organization of the city, rather than the cause of it. Castells (1983) in the *City and the*

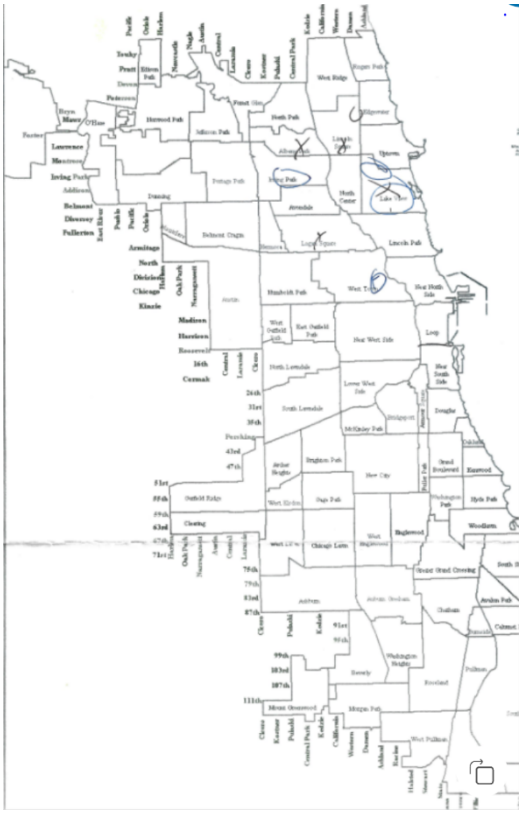

Figure 6: Harry's Sexual Map

Grassroots, inextricably links spatial organization with gay power and culture arguing that gay territoriality is instrumental for housing the places where queer people could feel safe, create community, and develop new lifestyles. Ultimately, these gay enclaves would develop a "city within a city" for queer people (Castells, 1983; Castells & Murphy, 1982; Lauria and Knopp, 1985).

Contemporarily, the concept of the gayborhood is a rebranded type of sexual enclave transitioning it from the gay ghetto to queer community (Ghaziani, 2014). As framed by Ghaziani (2014), gayborhoods are defined by their (1) distinct geographical focal point; (2) uniquely gay culture; (3) large concentration of gay and lesbian residents; and (4) cluster of commercial spaces run by and/or catering to gays and lesbians (p. 2). The concentration of various queer venues coupled with a heightened queer population helps illuminate the focus that gayborhoods have on structuring urban, queer men's sexual maps. Similar to Harry, every one of my respondents, regardless of social or geographic identity, marked Boystown on their maps of queer communities throughout Chicago, even when they personally didn't use Boystown as a social scene. It is because of the gayborhood's centrality in structuring queer leisure for queer men that scholars are too piqued by these spaces and flock to these communities in their own analyses of urban, queer life. Orne (2017), for example, in their ethnography by the same namesake, *Boystown,* uses the gayborhood as the backdrop for investigating how Boystown, despite more centrist and homonormative (Duggan, 2002) politics, continues to house sexy and raunchy alternative cultures.

Despite the growth of these commemoratively geo-bound gayborhoods, they continue to reflect a minoritized urban, queer experience clustering queer place within a small urban land mass (Weightman, 1981) and amidst a declining queer population (Brown, 2013). As Brown

(2013) argues: “in both popular media and academic literature, there seems to be a wide recognition that the gayborhood is not just changing but receding in size, scope, and function” (p. 457). This recession is further argued by Ghaziani (2014) who posits that depending on whom one asks, gayborhoods in large metropolitan areas “might appear on a list of endangered species” (p.2). As the gayborhood is increasingly argued to be “post-gay” or “post-mo” (Nash, 2012), it is becoming increasingly common for queer men to follow in the footsteps of men like Jimmy and eschew the gayborhood altogether either prioritizing other (and frequently more diverse) neighborhoods (Gorman-Murray, 2016), creating new forms of queer communities (Ghaziani, 2019), or leaving the city for suburbs and rural areas (Christensen and Caldwell, 2006). Though the increasing social acceptance of queerness has led to an arguable decline in the significance of the gayborhood as compared to sexual enclaves back in the 1980s and 1990s (Ghaziani, 2014), scholars have also illustrated how the gayborhood is not universally inclusive to all queer people. The various racial, gender, and class exclusions that occur within the gayborhood contribute to significant structures of exclusion, frequently leading the gayborhood to be seen as primarily existing for the privilege of middle-class, white gay men (Gorman-Murray, 2016; Blair, 2016; Greene, 2021; Nero, 2005; Rosenberg, 2017; Adams-Santos, 2022). Nero (2005), in particular, focuses attention to the ways that the arguments of multiculturalism within the gayborhood are frequently unfounded when considering the various ways that “gay ghettos” remain both “racially homogenous” and “white inner-city outposts.”

Even among robust discussions of the future of the gayborhood and whether they are passé, on the decline, or irrelevant in an age of an ever growing acceptance of the LGBTQ community, scholars continue to turn their analytic attention to how the gayborhood both persists within the city and how urban space is transformed by new strategies of queer place-making that

occur outside of it. Amidst an ever-growing urban, queer population that resides outside of the gayborhood, many queer individuals continue to hold extra-neighborhood, or symbolic, attachments to the gayborhood. Greene (2014) in his concept of *vicarious citizenship* illustrates how individuals create "meaningful forms of community attachment, identification, and investment" to the gayborhood, even in absence of residential ties (p. 99). For vicarious citizens, the demographic and institutional transformations of the gayborhood are addressed through forming symbolic attachments to these neighborhoods and defending them against exterior threats of becoming passé due to an increasingly heterosexual presence. Even as the gayborhood becomes seen as a harbinger for white middle-class consumption (Gorman-Murray, 2016) and the site of increasingly racially tense environments (Blair, 2016; Adams-Santos, 2022; Greene, 2021), vicarious citizens are "diverse racial, socio-economic, and aged-based populations who protect and defend gay neighborhoods" (Greene, 2014, p. 113). These citizens represent not only complications to the arguments around the demise of the gayborhood, but also highlight diverse attachments to neighborhood space that transcend residential ties.

Whereas Greene's (2014) *vicarious citizenship* is analytically useful for highlighting the pluralistic ways that individuals may cultivate utility and attachment of the gayborhood, Ghaziani's (2019) *cultural archipelagos* address the plurality of urban, queer neighborhoods and communities altogether. As Greene (2019) identifies, "iconic gay neighborhoods have always existed alongside other spatialized expressions of queer life" and thus "a framework advancing the spatial plurality of queer communities in cities is long overdue" (p. XX). Ghaziani's (2019) concept of *cultural archipelagos* addresses this need to resist the urge to focus on singular expresses of urban, queer life, especially through the assumption and centering of the gayborhood as the epitome of urban, queer space. These archipelagos defined as "new clusters

for specific subgroups of people" are useful in illustrating how, in practice, queer people form many types of queer communities throughout the city and do not simply locate such community creation within the gayborhood (Ghaziani, 2014; 2019). Resisting viewing racialized critiques within the gayborhood, such as Nero's (2005), as inherently deficit driven or problematic, Ghaziani (2019) calls on a generative approach to view the gayborhood as just one expression of queer sexuality. By viewing queer sexual communities as pluralistic within the city, the notion of cultural archipelagos can help draw attention to the various ways that queer sexual expression can be diverse, multifaceted, and exist outside of the confines of one neighborhood. Citing Lavers (2009), Ghaziani (2019) attunes to the ways that racial and ethnic minorities create their own cultural archipelagos, which arguably can be seen as types of gayborhoods that exist outside of the white, middle-class spaces described by Gorman-Murray (2016), Nero (2005), and Rosenberg (2017).

Though the "world of urban sexualities is spatially plural and culturally complex" (Ghaziani, 2019, p. 9), scholars have questioned the extent to which ethnic queer concentrations of enclaves should be branded as new types of gayborhoods. Carillo (2019), for instance, cites the same arguments of Lavers (2009) presented in Ghaziani (2019), however, cautions against viewing these concentrations as mere copycats of mainstream gayborhoods. Such caution arises from a desire to not erase the "social and cultural processes" that give rise to these enclaves by assuming that they are reflecting similar versions of mainstream gayborhoods, which may skirt the various class, migration, ethnic, and racial motivations for certain communities and neighborhoods to be created outside of extant queer neighborhoods. By considering a more pluralistic approach to the study of urban, queer sexuality, cultural archipelagos not only eschew the false dichotomy of queer versus straight spaces (Browne and Bakshi, 2011), but they also

illustrate how the city becomes a fruitful laboratory of the creation of multiple *types* of queer spaces. The transformative nature of these gayborhoods and the novel ways that queer people relate to them may help assuage the concerns of their demise, however, the gayborhood persists as a markedly loud and proud symbol of urban, queer culture that impacts how queer people envision the sexual landscape of the city.

4.3 Chicago's Queer Sexual Landscapes

> "Honestly, I can't think of other gay bars throughout the city, only really know the ones in Boystown. I mean, with all of the ones here, why would anyone go anywhere else?" –Matt (28, White, NS)

> "Boystown is where I would say that most of the gay bars are located. But you basically just find the same guys at each of the bars. If you really want to have fun without some white twink bothering you, then I would suggest a place like Second Story in the Loop or Jeffery Pub in South Shore." –Jacque (35, Black, SS).

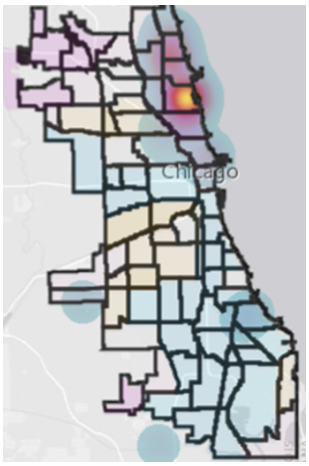

Figure 7 Heat Map of Queer Leisure Spaces in Chicago

Despite living miles apart in Chicago, when asked where one would recommend to queer men to experience nightlife, both Matt and Jacque immediately began with discussions of Boystown. The agglomeration of queer leisure spaces within Boystown, and spilling over into the surround North Side neighborhoods, remains central in the structuring of queer men's sexual maps of the city, regardless of where they live. In the example of Matt and Jacque, their residential communities and personal sexual maps may diverge,

however, their initial recognition of Boystown as being synonymous with queer leisure is consistent. As illustrated in Figure 7, a heat map of the various queer leisure spaces throughout Chicago, it is unsurprising that Matt and Jacque immediately connect Boystown to queer leisure, given that Chicago's gayborhood houses over 95% of the queer leisure spaces within the city. Weightman (1981) in her analysis of queer geography, found that not only were queer institutions clustered within sexual enclaves, but they such enclaves represented a slim amount of space relative to the rest of the city; finding in Chicago, 65% of gay organizations were found in less than 1% of the total city. Given the small amount of land area that groups queer leisure spaces together, the majority of urban queer men do not reside within these gayborhood locations. Thus, the impact of this concentration extends beyond just *where* sexual spaces are located to *how* the location of these spaces impact the sexual landscape of the city.

When presented with a map of Chicago (see figure 2) and asked to identify queer communities and spaces throughout the city, Jackson, a 30 year old white North Sider asks, "Well, where on this map would Boystown be? I mean, it is right in the same. Boys-town." After pointing out Lakeview, the neighborhood that houses it, Jackson grabs a blue pen and draws a star (see figure 3) as he describes how if he had to provide a recommendation for a night out to any queer man, that he would only suggest Boystown because, "it has a lot of different bars and clubs. No matter what someone is into, there is some place there that they can enjoy." Despite that

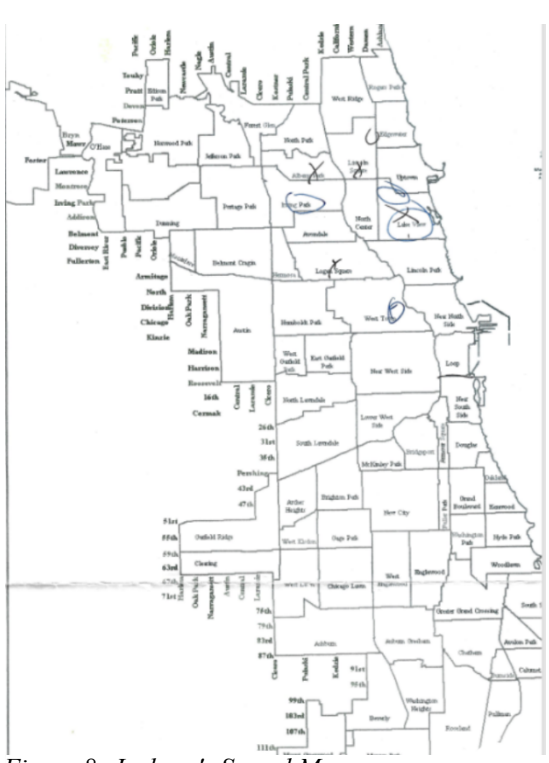

Figure 8: Jackson's Sexual Map

Jackson only goes out with queer friends in Boystown, he doesn't live in the gayborhood, instead residing in an adjacent North Side neighborhood and identifying numerous neighborhoods that he would consider "queer-friendly" despite not locating leisure participation including Edgewater, Uptown, Logan Square, and Pilsen (reflected on the map as the Lower West Side). Jackson's inclusion of Boystown as the central area for queer leisure mirrored every semi-structured interview respondent. In fact, every respondent, regardless of where they lived or even where they personally located their own queer leisure, all *began* with identifying Lakeview.

As the interviews progressed, it became clear that although all respondents may have begun with discussing Lakeview, that they quickly differed when reflecting on the rest of the city. In the cases of Jackson and Matt, neither of whom live in Boystown, but both within whom locate their queer leisure participation, they not only started with Boystown, but they ended with it as well. When directly asked about the location of other queer spaces around the city, Jackson replied: "you know, I think there used to be a gay bar in the loop, but I'm not sure if it is still there." Answering the same question, Matt said: "there are some gay bars in Rogers Park, but they are specific bars. One is a leather club. The other one is mostly for daddies, I think. I don't go to them, but I have friends that live along the [bus] 22 route that have mentioned them." In both examples, they were able to allude to the possibilities of queer spaces being located in other areas of the city, however, qualified such allusion with not being sure or hearing about them second hand. This trend was common among the North Side respondents, many of whom not only located their participation within Boystown, but who also questioned the motivations for any queer men to search for community or leisure anywhere else.

The lack of understanding such motivations was spurred by the ties that North Siders had to their residential neighborhoods and the relatively close proximity of these neighborhoods to

Boystown. Matt, as an Edgewater resident for the past 6 years, described his motivation for moving to Edgewater as wanting to be close to Boystown, but not have to pay the high rental prices that Lakeview commands[1]. This close location between Edgewater and Boystown meant that Matt could frequently make use of the queer leisure, while not having to traverse the rest of the city, which resulted in him solely locating queer leisure within the North Side, while also having a lack of understanding of other parts of the city. For example when asked about the neighborhood South Shore, he remarks, "is that a neighborhood in Chicago?" While discussing the various queer bars within South Shore, he continues, "Honestly, I would never travel that far south. I don't even know how to get there. And like, why would I travel there to go to a gay bar, when there are so many here that are closer? And probably better." For North Siders like Matt, the agglomeration of queer space within the North Side meant that many didn't see a point in searching out for queer spaces outside of the gayborhood, thus frequently didn't know of spaces or neighborhoods across the South and West sides of the city. In fact, the only North Siders who discussed the South Side were those who either had friends that lived down there, went to school there (for example, the University of Chicago), or had work related reasons. Justin, a Black, 29 year old, North Sider whose non-profit work frequently took him to the South Side neighborhoods of Woodlawn, Englewood, West Englewood, and South Shore, was able to locate on his map (see Figure 9) various South Side queer communities and spaces. Though, like the

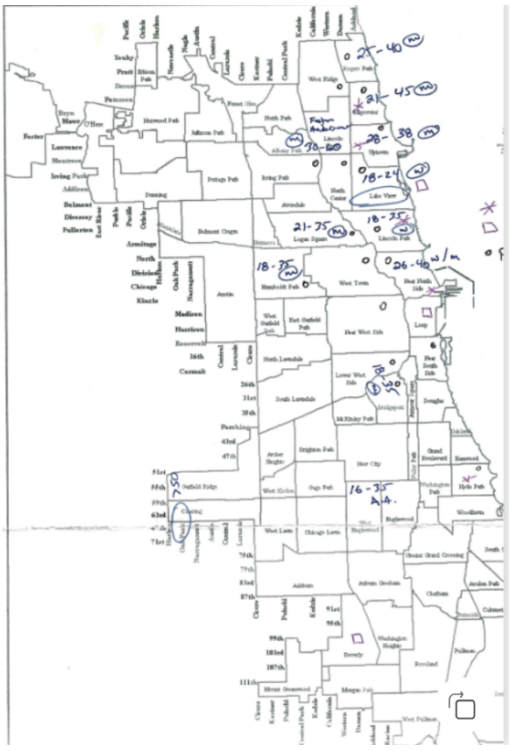

Figure 9 Justin's Sexual Map

other North Siders who were able to identify these communities and spaces as well, qualified them by saying: “South Shore definitely has a gay community. I should say, gay, Black community. But the gay bars down there aren’t anything like the ones up here. I wouldn’t consider them to be the same at all actually. To be real, if those guys want to have fun and actually hang out with other gay guys, they may as well just come up here.” Ultimately for many North Siders, the concentration of queer space in few urban neighborhoods either shielded them from other urban sexual spaces or made such spaces irrelevant within their sexual maps.

Just as this dense concentration impacted the sexual maps of North Siders, it also impacted the sexual maps of South Siders. As aforementioned, all of the interview respondents began their mapping of Chicago’s queer sexual landscapes with Lakeview, however, whereas North Siders stopped after Boystown, many South Siders continued to reflect upon the various communities and spaces located throughout the city. For example, Andre, a Black 46 year old living in Hyde Park, began narrating his sexual map by circling Lakeview: “Of course, there is always Boystown. It can be fun up there; just depends on the night. If you’re not careful, then you’ll find yourself as Roscoe’s with a bunch of privileged kids and overpriced drinks.” He continues, “I go up there a lot with friends, but we also hang out a lot in Woodlawn. There’s a lot of gay guys who live around there that I know. I will also go to Club Escape a lot and sometimes Jeffery Pub, so I guess I’ll circle South Shore. In the summer, I go to Jackson Park a lot. And Hyde Park for the Cove Lounge.” In contrast to the sexual maps of men like Matt, Andre’s map was more expansive with him identifying multiple neighborhoods, spaces, and context for using which space and when. Critically, Andre describe a common trend among the South Siders which was to identify Boystown as a site of queer leisure, but then to contrast it with other alternatives. For instance, Andre begins his mapping by stating that “it can be fun” at Boystown,

but then qualifies such fun with the potential for higher costs and less desirable crowds, which motivates him to also use other spaces outside of the gayborhood. Similarly, Jacque, a Black 35 year old South Sider, also qualifies the experience of Boystown by identifying it as a location for queer leisure, but that there are alternatives, which he sometimes enjoys even more. While many of the Black South Siders would include comments relating to the racial and class composition of Boystown (predominately white and middle-class), all of the South Side respondents cited the need to find other sexual spaces outside of Boystown in consideration of the added social and financial costs of accessing such spaces and the desire to have closer proximate access of queer community within one's residential community.

Timothy, a white 26 year old South Side, began his map with Lakeview, but then continued to highlight spaces on both the South and West Sides of the city where he frequently used to hang out with gay friends and to find queer community. When asked what prompted his seemingly intentional search for non-gayborhood queer community, he replied: "I do like going up to Boystown. My friends and I will go to Scarlet or grab a drink at Progress Bar. But it's not as much fun for me as it is for them. They all live up there, so they run into friends and other people they know. They are basically regulars. So every time I go up there, I'm always just a *friend* they are taking out for the night. It gets tiring always feeling like a guest or a third wheel to their other friends." The feeling of being tired with Boystown was a common theme among the South Siders, many of whom had similar stories to Timothy of being outsiders in the spaces or in their friend groups due to not living up North. The search for queer space outside of the gayborhood was challenging for many of the men. They described the need to use the few marked queer spaces on the South Side for a variety of purposes, the practice of finding non-

queer or private places (such as house-parties) to create queer community, or the employing of public spaces (such as parks) as queer social locales.

Though North Siders and South Siders found much agreement in their mapping of the queer sexual landscapes of Chicago, their maps remained overall divergent. The agglomeration of queer leisure on the North Side created opportunities for North Siders to position their residential and leisure lives nearly in tandem with one another. The result was that these men were able to benefit from a myriad of closely located sexual marketplaces where they were able to develop an insider relationship and ultimately have little reason to have to leave to other neighborhoods to find queer community. In contrast, this agglomeration created significant costs for those on the South Side as the men frequently had to negotiate access to queer leisure spaces outside of their residential neighborhoods or had to work to create leisure outside of the gayborhood. The asymmetrical placing of queer leisure in few, hyper-concentrated, urban spaces contribute to the material creation of centralizing the gayborhood by differentiating access, experiences, and utilization of queer leisure, privileging those who live close to such spaces at the expense of those who don't.

4.4 Decentering the Gayborhood

As shown by the divergence in maps between North Side and South Side queer men, the creation of the gayborhood and its structuring, agglomerating, and clustering of queer resources into one particular neighborhood at the expense of others has profound impacts on the ways that queer men broadly throughout the city come to understand and map queer space. Although scholars such as Ghaziani (2019) and Greene (2019) bring to the forefront the necessity to better consider the plurality of urban queer space and community, for many scholars and queer men alike the

gayborhood remains central in the understanding of urban, queer sexuality. Just as Orn**e's** (2017) ethnography of Boystown suggests, these gayborhoods are arenas where queer men can create "sexy communities" and "commun[ities] bound together by sex" (Baldor 2018; One 2017), however, they are unevenly utilized by queer men, particular queer men of color and queer men living outside of these enclaves. Given the limitations of the gayborhood in structuring urban, queer life, scholars should attend to both the challenges that the gayborhood creates for those who live outside of them and the opportunities to analyze urban, queer place-making in increasingly pluralistic ways.

To address this theoretical gap, I argue for a decentering of the gayborhood in studying urban place-making and instead call for a broader focus on the ways that those who live outside of the gayborhood experience costs and risks and employ strategies and schemes in order to imagine and participate in urban queer life. The decentering of the gayborhood in the analyses of how queer men, for example, pursue queer space serves two fruitful goals. The first is that it illuminates the plethora of urban, sexual communities, spaces, and practices that exist outside of the gayborhood. Such decentering draws greater attention to the ways that individuals who find themselves increasingly excluded from the white, middle-class, cisgendered, homonormative gayborhood continue to persist in the creation of queer space and communities. Secondly, the decentering of the gayborhood also allows the potential to better understand the work, compromises, and costs some individuals bear in their pursuit of these spaces. Though scholars have critically analyzed the ways that gayborhoods become complicit in practices of racial violence (Blair 2018), sexual racism (Orne 2017), and discriminatory boundary making (Greene, 2014), there is seldom analytic attention provided to the quotidian costs and structural limitations experienced by those who live outside of these neighborhoods. By considering the various

intersections of inequalities and structural considerations that either facilitate or inhibit participation within these neighborhoods, I foreground the experiences of Black, queer men who live outside of the gayborhood and the work, strategies, and costs endured in their ability to create, pursue, and participate in urban, queer leisure.

In the following chapters, I highlight the specific ways in which urban and social inequalities interplay with the development and pursuit of queer sexual communities to stratify the costs and risks endured by queen men who reside outside the gayborhood. Centering the experiences of Black, queer men on the South Side of Chicago, I attend to the various structural costs and innovative strategies involved in the pursuit of queer sexual space. As I show, Black, queer men are found betwixt and between competing options of where and how to locate queer space within the urban landscape and how best to strategically place themselves within such spaces. In Chapter 5, I explore the challenges in traveling to the North Side to utilize Boystown. Juxtaposed against the experiences of those living with the gayborhood, I demonstrate the added challenges and differing experiences of Boystown based on one's residential and social location. I build upon these arguments in Chapter 6 by illuminating the ways that Black, queer men craft various interpersonal presentations in order to gain erotic capital across various spaces. In Chapter 7, I decenter the focus on the gayborhood and other North Side venues as I focus on the ways that Black, queer men utilize queer spaces within their own residential neighborhoods, while contending with various forms of asymmetrical resource allocations and structural challenges. Finally, in Chapter 8, I further explore the strategies that these men use to imagine, create, and participate in ephemeral queer space part and parcel of their residential neighborhoods and within their home communities.

Chapter 5 Traveling North

> "Honestly, I like going to Boystown. Usually will just drive up there to save time, but it's a good enough time. Definitely a lot of options of places to go—bars or clubs or quiet restaurants. A nice mix I would say" -Leonell (35, Black, South Side).

Once I placed a map of Chicago in front of Leonell, a 35-year-old business development professional from the South Side, he immediately draws a large circle around the North Side neighborhoods of Edgewater, Lincoln Square, Uptown, North Center, Lincoln Park, and Lakeview and describes these neighborhoods as the main 'queer communities' within the city. With Lakeview in the center of his circle, I ask him why he identifies these neighborhoods as housing his preferred queer communities. He laughs and replies, "Oh no. These are definitely not my communities" as he draws a circle on Chicago's South Side neighborhoods of South Shore, South Chicago, Avalon Park, Hyde Park, and Kenwood and, as he sets his pen down, "these are where I consider my communities to be." I apologize for the miscommunication and ask him to elaborate on why he began with the North Side neighborhoods. "Listen, I like Boystown because it is fun to go out in. Roscoe's is my jam, even though I am too old. But I also know that I am not, I don't know how to say this, I am not what Boystown wants." I press him further to elaborate, "I have some money, so I guess maybe the bars like that, but I have no desire to live up there because it is too far away. And I'm an average, hairy Black guy in his 30s. Boystown wants young, white, smooth guys. Hell, I'm like Scuff and Boystown is like Grindr.

Similar to my other participants, Leonell was quick to begin with the identification of the gayborhood as emblematic of queer community and space in the city. However, once pressed further about his relationship with the neighborhood, he contextualizes his relationship with Boystown by identifying the various challenges in utilizing the gayborhood, explicitly the temporal challenges of it being "too far away" and the social challenges of it housing different demographics than Leonell (specifically young and white). Similar to other Black, queer men, Leonell was prudent in constructing an expansive sexual map of the city and identifying critical differences between where he goes out and where he considers his queer community to exist. Though these men may use the gayborhood for leisure, and some even become various citizens of the neighborhood (Greene, 2014), their quickness to identify the North Side as housing queer spaces, but elaborate on the South Side as housing queer community demonstrates their complicated relationships with using North Side spaces and communities.

In this chapter, I further expand on the structural complexities of Black, queer men living outside of the gayborhood using Boystown as a site of queer sociality. I begin by discussing how North Siders utilize Boystown, placing special emphasis on the ways that the agglomeration of queer places benefits North Side queer men by providing an abundance of sexual marketplaces and consequently makes their queer sexual pursuits more expeditious. I continue by demonstrating how those who live outside of the gayborhood, but still travel North to use the same sexual marketplaces are not afforded the same expeditious benefits due to contending with being perceived as an "outsider" or a "tourist" across many of the spaces. Finally, I draw attention to the ways that urban structures such as access to reliable transportation options further problematize those on the South Side and their ability to move about North Side urban space.

5.1 Living within the Gayborhood

After hanging out with James (29, White, North Sider) and Blake (31, White, North Sider) at the Lucky Horseshoe for their afternoon go-go boy entertainment, we all decide to grab some dinner at Lark before going to Roscoe's. As we enter Lark, we all decide to eat at the bar, so grab three chairs and wait for the bartender to come over. As Leon, the white 34-year-old bartender who is dressed in jeans and a white tank top, walks over he gives me a hug and says, "Morgan. I usually only see you on Tuesdays. What're you up to?" I mention to him that we all were just at the Lucky Horseshoe and then introduce him to both James and Blake, whom he shakes hands with while taking our drink orders and then walks away. As he leaves, James, Blake, and I plan our night out. "We definitely need to go to Roscoe's because I promised my friend Kimberly that I would stop by and say hello" says James. "Ugh, I hate Kimberly. She is too old for those mini shorts she wears and honestly, girl is trashy" replies Blake as our drinks come. James takes the shot that he ordered with his beer and says, "Fuck off, man, we will have to stop by to say hello. I'm thinking maybe Scarlett after that though. What do you think Morgan?" I respond that Scarlett seemed fine, while adding that the performance at Scarlett will be starting at 10, so we definitely have a lot of time. James, nodding along in agreement, adds, "let's just walk around and see which place has something going on. It can't be that hard to find something on a Saturday night."

As we finished our dinner, ordered another round of drinks, and continued to talk, we eventually took James's suggestion and just walked around looking at the various bars and clubs along the Boystown strip to find our next location. We settled on grabbing a drink at Sidetrack before heading to Roscoe's and then eventually Scarlett where we ended the night. The circuit-level movement from one sexual space to another was only made possible by the concentration

of queer sexual spaces within Boystown. For North Siders like Blake and James, both of whom live within walking distance of Boystown, the proximate access to a variety of sexual spaces meant that James could've easily suggested 'just walking around' as a strategy to find spaces. This strategy reflected a common one used by many North Siders who located their queer participation within Boystown where their nights were frequently not planned out by place, but rather predicated on the expectation that they could just walk around and be able to find a place, event, or party.

In practice, the abundance of queer sexual spaces in a small area made this walking around strategy effective as North Siders were able to find events, bustling clubs, or bar-hosted parties with little to no planning. In fact, the ability to not be tethered to a specific space or agenda was a motivation for some men to live in the North Side and to use Boystown as their nightly playground. This well demonstrated by Trent, a Black 31-year-old retail associate who recently moved to East Lakeview from the South Side neighborhood of Chatham, describing how he was ready to both live closer to the loop, where he work, and wanted to live in a neighborhood with more queer leisure opportunities. For Trent, the ability to have his nightlife highly concentrated in one area was a significant advantage that he focused on during our go-along.

Trent and I agreed to meet at his apartment on the top floor of a two-flat on a side street in East Lakeview. As I got buzzed in and walked to his door, he opened it wearing sweatpants and a tank top and welcomed me in by saying: "Hey. I didn't know that you would be early. I'm still getting ready." "Oh sorry, I thought we were meeting at 5pm" I reply. "Yeah, but like 5pm, gay standard time. You know, like 5ish because we are still getting ready or pregaming or just late (laughs)." I laugh along with him as he offers me a glass of water and says to make myself

comfortable and that he'll be ready quickly. At 5:20, he is finally ready in his skinny jeans, black boots, and purple shirt with the top two buttons open. I ask where we are going and he responds: "I don't know yet. I just figured that we would grab a quick bite somewhere and then just see what is going on tonight."

As Trent and I headed out to grab dinner at T.S. Tequila, he describes how he prefers going out on Thursdays because he finds more enjoyable events happen within the Boystown bar scene, as compared with Friday and Saturday. "Don't get me wrong" he remarks, "I like going out on the weekend too, but during the weekend a lot of the clubs around here do the same thing. Pop music, club kids, maybe a drag show. Sometimes I just want something different." Though to Trent, "something different," almost exclusively referred to different music or events. He lauded that he was now located in an area where he could be this selective with venues, nights out, and events, as compared to his experience living in Chatham. While at the restaurant, he said:

> I liked living in Chatham. I grew up in Morgan Park and then moved to the Medical District for college (at the University of Illinois at Chicago), so always lived relatively south. After graduating and getting a job, I had friends living in Chatham, which is why I moved there. It was great living with them and then eventually getting my own place, but there isn't much to do there. I had tried going to Club Escape and Jeffery Pub, but neither were really my scene. Maybe I'm just not Black enough (laughs). Anyways, I was always coming up to Boystown and going to the different bars here, usually with friends that already had places in mind. While I enjoyed myself, I never really felt like I fit in and it

didn't help that I always had to watch the time and plan how I was getting home. Almost every time, I would be leaving and my friends would still be out.

As Trent took a break to sip some of his beer and eat some fries, I prompted, "What do you mean that you didn't feel like you fit in?" He continued:

> I didn't fit in because people didn't know me like they knew my friends that lived around here. I remember one night, we were all out at Sidetrack and guy after guy after guy kept coming up to my friend, [Aaron], and I asked how he knew all of these guys that kept coming up to him. He told me that one of them he sees at the gym and another one works at the Whole Foods. It made sense, but even when I got another drink, the bartender asked if I was with Aaron, I said yes, and he replies that he sees Aaron a lot at Little Jim's and could I tell him that he says hello? I said sure, paid for my drink, and then went back to my friend. It was then I realized that I was basically just a tourist here, someone enjoying the space, but not really knowing the community.

As a South Sider turned North Sider, Trent exemplified common feelings and sentiments among both groups of men. For example, the feeling of being an outsider within queer spaces due to lacking the proximate location to them was recurrently a feeling experienced by South Siders. In contrast, the desire to "know" queer community through frequent associations with the concentration of the queer leisure spaces of Boystown was commonly a persuading factor for North Siders to justify their residential location choice.

After dinner, Trent and I moved from the restaurant to Progress Bar for a drink because Trent saw "the really cute bartender that pours heavy for him." As we enter the bar, both the bouncer and bartender immediately recognize Trent and start to ask him about his night and what

he has been up to since the last time he was there. He regales them with stories of sexual escapades over the weekend, a curt description of work, and then ends with introducing me to both of them. The bartender, Corey, laughs and says, “Oh honey, we know Morgan. If you think you come in here a lot, then you haven’t met Morgan.” We all laugh as Corey gives me a hug and we order drinks. As Trent and I move over to a table, he questions how I know Corey, especially as someone that doesn’t live on the North Side. I tell him that this is one of the regular places that I go when I’m up North working or after working out at the gym just blocks away. He nods, pleased enough with my explanation, and I ask him the same question. He smiles and says that he comes in here a lot with both Aaron and another mutual friend of theirs. As we are sitting and talking at the table, no less than five other guys throughout our time at Progress Bar come up with Trent to say hi.

Trent routinely checks his phone saying that some of his friends were also thinking about coming out tonight, but they weren’t sure at the time that Trent and I were leaving. While looking at his phone and seeing no text messages, he opens up his Grindr app and says, “usually when I’m out, I’ll see who is around. Sometimes hot guys will be able at places around here, so I can use that to figure out where to go next.” He holds up his phone to show me a picture of a shirtless white guy less than 500 feet away from us and explains that he is currently over at Hydrate and mentioned that Trent should go over there. Trent puts his phone down having a inquisitive expression and biting his lower lip and says that we should go check it out. “Who knows, he may have a friend for you” he jokes. As we move over to Hydrate, Trent is once again bombarded by numerous guys saying hi and checking in. When asked where he knows them from, he mentions that some he knows from Hydrate, others from other bars around, and some from other stores throughout Lakeview. At about 1am, Trent has found his mystery Grindr man

and he and I settle up our respective tabs as we end our go-along with me calling for an Uber and Trent walking arm-in-arm with his new friend, grinning, and telling me that he will "hit me up tomorrow. But not too early tomorrow because he will be busy tonight."

My go-along with Trent presents one of the most illustrative experiences of how the concentration of queer space both motivates and benefits North Siders in their nightly rounds. Part of why Trent was drawn to moving to Boystown was the ability to feel like an insider within the multitude of queer leisure places that Boystown has to offer. Though arguably Trent achieved what he initially admired about his friend Aaron's position within these leisure spaces, the agglomeration of queer space further benefited Trent by providing numerous locations to structure his queer community and leisure. As the night started, Trent was adamant that we didn't need a plan and instead would just walk around and see where the night took us. This unstructured plan was made possible by the surfeit amount of leisure spaces from which to choose, which allowed Trent to craft his nightly round around spontaneous decisions such as which bartender was working or which cute guy from Grindr was where.

The proximity of these queer leisure spaces didn't simply benefit North Siders when they were having a successful night out; it also helped mitigate the experiences of those having an unsuccessful night by providing alternative potential options. Just as Trent moved from space to space searching for cute bartenders or potential hookups, men also moved among these spaces when there either not successful within the space or not finding the space conducive for their specific purpose. For example, when Cameron, a white 23-year-old bank teller, found the crowd at Hydrate to be "too small" and deemed it "dead" for the night, he left and walked 1.5 blocks to Progress Bar. Sitting down next to me, he waves over the bartender, orders a gin and tonic, and takes off his coat. Looking at me, he inquires, "You know why Hydrate is dead tonight?" I shake

my head and respond that I didn't even know it was dead. He laughs and says, "Yeah, I was just there. I expected it to be packed, but I guess guys didn't want to come out in the cold? I don't know. Looks like Roscoe's is slow too. I wonder if Sidetrack is." As his drink comes, he stops talking enough to take a breath and a drink and starts to relax into his chair. "You go to Hydrate a lot?" I inquire. He responds:

> "Yeah, I do. It is basically my favorite club around here. But only when you have a lot of guys in it. When it gets dead, then I usually just find another spot. Sometimes Roscoe's if I want to dance or sometimes Replay if I just want to chill. I was going to check out Replay tonight, but I saw this guy that I tried to hit on last time and it didn't really work. Wasn't in the mood to deal with *that* drama tonight, so I'm here."

As Cameron describes how he ended up at Progress Bar, his movement throughout the various spaces illustrate another latent benefit experienced by North Siders due to the concentration of queer leisure spaces, namely, the ability to move from field to field when one is unsuccessful in one's pursuit. Part of the reason that Cameron enjoys Hydrate as much as he does was explained to me because he likes the types of guys that are frequently there. He says that he doesn't go on the hip-hop nights, but many of the other nights have younger twinks, which he says is exactly what piques his interest. During this night, when the club wasn't commanding a large crowd, Cameron was able to leave and just find another space without traveling too far. Furthermore, as Cameron sees a failed hookup in another bar, he is able to selectively "avoid the drama" and find another space. The numerous queer leisure spaces packed into the entertainment district of Boystown provide the necessary conditions for queer men to move about various sexual fields carefully choosing locations like selecting those which arouse one's interest (like Trent) or

avoiding ones that temper it (like Cameron). As Cameron said, “Boystown is kind of like a candy store. No use settling for something you don’t like when there are so many options.”

5.2 Visiting the Gayborhood

In crafting their nightly rounds, Trent, James, and Blake not only benefited from the concentration of queer leisure space, but rather structured their entire rounds around it. The underlying notion that one could both efficaciously select spaces in which to be successful and then move to another when unsuccessful reflects one of the biggest advantages for North Siders within Boystown. Although such advantage is not intrinsically tied to one’s residential location, the close proximate location to such sexual spaces allowed North Siders to utilize these spaces in different ways than their South Sider counterparts, ultimately having different experiences within them. As Trent explained and demonstrated during our go-along, his experience of Boystown changed significantly when moving north as he was able to have more proximate access to various sexual spaces, run into other community members that used the same spaces, and ultimately become a recognized as a local regular. In contrast, South Siders, through lacking the same proximate access to these sexual spaces, were neither afforded the same opportunities nor community clout to employ the same strategies as their North Side counterparts.

“I don’t know, how much money does the brotha have?” Tarik (35, Black, South Side) asks in follow-up to the question of which neighborhoods in Chicago would he recommend a recently moved queer man should live. I prompt him to expand on why he is asking that, in which he replies: “Because if he got money, then I would definitely suggest Lakeview or Uptown or Edgewater. I mean, he is probably going to be partying up there all the time anyways. If he don’t, then I would suggest Bronzeville, Kenwood, or South Shore. More space for your money, even if nothing is really around there.” Tarik’s map (see figure 3) represented one of the

more robust maps when thinking about the queer worlds throughout Chicago. The Baltimore native turned long-time Chicago South Sider explained how he spent more of his leisure time in Boystown, however, over the years had met many other gay men who lived around the city, many of whom introduced him to queer communities, especially those on the South and West sides. As he narrated, "I know Austin has a big gay community. And South Shore does as well. I knew about South Shore because of the bars out there, but only learned about Austin because my ex-boyfriend lived there. Funny thing is that I met him at Sidetrack. I don't think if I was with him that I would've even known about it." When asked further about why he wouldn't have known about the queer community in the west side neighborhood of Austin, Tarik answered: "It is an older community; a lot of guys in relationships. My ex liked the neighborhood enough, but it isn't a gay community that does things. Like there aren't bars or anything. And I hate the green line (laughs)." As the only respondent to describe a queer community in Austin neighborhood, Tarik's comments of it resembling more of a bedroom community, lacking queer leisure, and transportation difficulties were common among most respondents when describing the South and West Sides of the city. Even as Austin is Chicago's second largest neighborhood by land mess and third most densely populated neighborhood (after Lakeview), as Tarik remarked, "it isn't a place you go to if you don't have to."

For many of the men that identified South Sides neighborhoods as being home to queer community, it was recurrent that such identifications were qualified with comments similar to Tarik's, namely, queer community existed in such neighborhoods, but queer leisure did not. Given the disconnect between queer community and leisure, many South Side men became "vicarious citizens" (Greene, 2014) of the North Side venues, choosing to locate much of their leisure and sexual partner pursuit within such spaces. Tarik, himself, describes how he only

enjoys going to Boystown specifically because of the numerous spaces and events. Though South Siders still used North Side queer spaces, their experiences in them seldom reflected the experiences of North Siders like Trent and James. One of the most marked differences was the lack of community clout within such spaces as expressed in the feeling of being an outsider within them. Even Tarik, a man who has spent over a decade going to the various queer spaces in Boystown, mentioned that he liked the bars, however, was frequently met with interactions or encounters that reified that he wasn't seen by many as being part of the queer community. One time, he describes:

> "It was pride and my friends and I had just finished the parade and were trying to get into Roscoe's. We finally got in and the entire bar was packed. Standing room only. Anyways, we end up running into some of their friends that they knew from the Center [on Halsted] and this one guy that lived in their building [off Addison]. We invite them to chill with us and we're talking and one of them asks if I live around here and I say no, I'm down South. He laughs and says, 'well, I hope you don't get shot.'"

The man's comment to Tarik, though seemingly innocuous, represents one of the ways that North Siders drew divisive boundaries around community membership within Boystown by employing comments that depicted the South Side as dangerous, poor, or undesirable. When asked how that comment made him feel and how he responded, Tarik said, "Oh, I just let it go. I mean, I don't live where he does and he is never going to come down to where I live, so no use wasting my time." Despite Tarik's bravado of just "letting it go," the reception of South Siders as outsider to these spaces reflects the ways that South Siders lacked the community clout needed to use them as beneficially as their North Side counterparts.

This outsider feeling was demonstrated during my go-along interview with South Sider, Deshawn, a Black 28-year-old program manager, who decided, on the Friday evening, to travel up north to go to Hydrate. I text him as I'm walking to his apartment building and he replies that he will be right out and said that I should look over for a silver Honda Accord, which will be our Uber. He walks through the gate of the fence that surrounds his apartment building, gives me a hug, puts on his sunglasses, and says that the Uber should be a minute away. We see the car coming on the other side of the street, thus cross the street, and get in. Once in the car, I ask, so what is going on at Hydrate? Deshawn replies: "I don't know. Maybe nothing. But today is ladies' night at the Pub, so figured we should go somewhere else (laughs)." During our car ride, Deshawn explains how he prefers the music at Hydrate more than other North Side venues, though typically only goes up there for their Hip-Hop night (on Thursday).

As we get to Boystown, it is already about 7pm, so we immediately go over to Hydrate which, although not packed, has already started to garner a crowd. We both get carded as we enter and then go over to the bar where Deshawn orders a Jack and Coke and I a Vodka Cranberry. As we are drinking our drinks, Deshawn looks around and comments on the crowd: "You know, I'm not usually up here on other nights. I guess the hip-hop nights are the only ones that niggas show up for." The club starts to get more and more patrons as the night progresses and Deshawn and I find ourselves splitting our time between the dance floor and bar. At one point, Deshawn starts chatting up this white twink whom he buys a drink for and invites over to where we are standing. I am introduced to him as we all talk about how the night is going, the various guys that came out to the club, and what were our next plans. Deshawn says that he is hungry and suggests the recently opened Big Jim's, along Halsted, on the Boystown strip. The twink nods and says that he should "hit him up when he is done so that he could come over to

[Deshawn's] place." Deshawn, grinning, replies, "That's wassup. But I live South Side. Woodlawn. You can definitely come by though." "Ah, sorry, I thought you lived around here. I'm not really looking to go that far tonight and I can't host" replies the twink as he walks away. Deshawn, looking slightly disappointed, motions for us to leave and we head out to Big Jim's for some food.

As we get into Big Jim's, there are only a few tables that are occupied, however, we decide to sit at the bar where Cassie (38, White, Lesbian) is the bartender for the evening. As we sit down, order drinks, and look over the menu, I ask Deshawn if that happens a lot when he goes out, namely, does he get hit on and then find that guys don't travel to the South Side. He explains:

> I mean, I don't come up here that much, but yeah. Whenever I meet a North Side guy, he will only want to do things around here. Like, I get it, there's a lot to do, but also I don't know that many people up here, so don't like coming just to chill.

While recognizing that Boystown offers many spaces and things to do, Deshawn illustrates how the lack of knowing people or living up north impact his experience, such as mitigating sexual success. As we get our food and eat, Deshawn reflects on both this experience and his others in Boystown:

> I guess it is fun to come sometimes, but I just don't really fit in, y'know? I will sometimes go with friends to Hydrate or Progress Bar, but I don't know people around here. And they don't really know me. So every time I come up here, I feel like, I don't know, like a tourist maybe. It sounds stupid, but like I come for a few hours and then go home.

Not only are Deshawn's feelings not stupid, they reflect a similar sensation described by Orne (2017) in their ethnography of Boystown, where they mention how outsiders to Boystown used spaces like a 'gay Disneyland.' Though Orne (2017) reflected more on the use of the spaces by social outsiders (such as straight women), Deshawn describes a similar utility of the spaces, specifically that he uses them as entertainment spaces and not community spaces. This utilization contrasts the experiences of many North Siders who located all entertainment, community, and leisure within these spaces, frequently finding themselves running into people they knew, becoming regulars, or attaching symbolic meaning to the various locations.

5.3 Traveling up North

> Cassius: How long did you say the bus was going to be?
>
> Morgan: The ventra app said 8 minutes, but that was about 15 minutes ago.
>
> Cassius: Damn, the app now doesn't even show the bus coming. Screw this, let's just go to the pub.

Where queer sexual spaces are located throughout the city matter because they impact how much one has to do in order to travel around urban space. From the planning of which space to select, how one can get there, and how one would get back home, access to transportation options frequented mitigated how some men pursued and found queer community and space. As evidenced by the excerpt above between South Sider, Cassius (25, Black) and myself as we were waiting for the J14 bus to go up North to Hydrate, the impact of transportation (in)security led certain individuals to both efficaciously plan out transportation options when crafting nightly rounds and have a set of alternatives, either with respect to transit or spaces, ready if such transportation options proved challenging, expensive, or non-existent. Like Cassius, those living

outside of the gayborhood, more frequently discussed transportation considerations as compared with their North Side counterparts when traveling to and from North Side neighborhoods. Given the agglomeration of urban, queer sexual marketplaces within North Side communities, those living outside of these neighborhoods were further disadvantaged by bearing disproportionately higher costs in moving about the city to find queer space and community. I elaborate on the ways that transportation resources either structured, facilitated, or inhibited the utility of the gayborhood by stratifying the costs endured in accessing them.

Rather than simply focusing on urban transit structures as resources, I examine how such structures intersect with the asymmetrical distribution of queer spaces benefiting those that live within North Side communities at the expense of those living within South Side one. In having to make decisions about where to go, how to balance time and cost in urban mobility, and how long to use certain spaces, I argue that those who reside outside of the gayborhood bear additional financial and temporary costs in pursuing queer space within the gayborhood. My argumentative approve is presented through the structure of a night out, where I illustrate how South Siders contend with transportation considerations in deciding where to go, navigating how to get there, and determining how and when to get home. Through using a temporally analytic approach, I found that South Siders more commonly used transportation as a deciding mechanism during their *nightly round* thus mitigated their access and utility of gayborhood spaces.

5.4 Where Are We Going

> When I first moved to Uptown, I thought being so close to the Wilson [Red Line] stop was going to be really loud and annoying, but it's actually pretty awesome.

When I want to go out, I just hop on the train and then see what's up." –Adam (29, White, NS)

As 29-year-old, Adam, an IT support consultant, and I walk from the gym to Drew's on Halsted to grab a drink, he describes his move from the downtown neighborhood of River North to the North Side neighborhood of Uptown: "I was thinking about moving to Lakeview, but I pay half for a one bedroom [in Uptown] that I would have paid for a studio [in Lakeview]. And being so close to Wilson means that it only takes a few minutes for me to come down here." While drinking, Adam persisted to provide stories of the nightly escapades that he was now having since he moved to his North Side neighborhood, finding his proximity to the CTA Red Line to have facilitated his nightly rounds in more significant ways than when he was living downtown. Despite that both Uptown and River North have multiple red line stops, being just two stops away from Boystown meant that Adam found his queer leisure participation to be even more expeditious now being "just a few minutes" away. Similar to how James, Black, and Trent were able to capitalize on the agglomeration of North Side queer space and employ laissez-faire strategies of "just walking around" to find queer leisure and community, Adam was able to capitalize on the efficient and plentiful transportation options of the North Side to "just hop on the train and then see what's up."

For many North Siders that surrounded themselves in or around Boystown, the experience of reliable, plentiful, and efficient transportation options meant that they did not need to consider transportation when crafting their nights out. In practice, few did. As Esther, a Chicago Public Librarian and self-described public transit aficionado, once explained, North Side train stops were incorporated into neighborhoods: "It is not surprisingly that when you are walking around up North that you find buildings close the stops, sometimes just a matter of feet

away. There isn't an expressway up there, so the city had to build the tracks and stops intertwined through the communities. As they grew and developed, building developers and city planners would work in tandem in create walkable communities, which meant thinking about location to El stops." Esther's point was well evidenced by walking around neighborhoods and seeing how public transportation stops were placed in close proximity to each other, and also how the tracks navigated around buildings with businesses clustered around stops. Even aside from the larger transfer station stops like Belmont (in Lakeview) or Wilson (in Uptown), smaller North Side stops (such as the Addison Red Line stop near Wrigley Field or the Wellington Brown Line stop near the hospital) would frequently have coffee shops, restaurants, and other retail establishments within feet of them. The placement of el stops throughout the neighborhoods coupled with the clustering of businesses around such stops meant that they tended to be safer and more accessible to community residents like Adam. As we finished a shared appetizer and a third drink, Adam and I settled up our respective bills as he prepared to meet friends for a late drink at Sidetrack to continue his rightly round and I prepared to catch the train. By the time that I returned to my South Side neighborhood in about 1.5 hours via a train and a bus, Adam had already texted asking if I was "finally home" and sending a selfie of him at Progress Bar with his friends as they left Sidetrack.

For North Side queer men, they benefited not only from plentiful transportation options, but reliable ones as well. For Adam, his easy access to a 24-hour train (one of only two train routes in the city that runs 24 hours) was coupled with easy access to multiple bus lines and frequently available rideshare services (such as Uber or Lyft). As such, Adam never described concerns about moving around urban space, regardless of where in Boystown he was going, with whom, or at what time. Given these transportation options, North Siders rarely discussed

transportation plans or used them to motivate their leisure participation. Like the strategy of 'just walking around,' they would just 'hop on the train.'

Comparable to how the strategies of North Siders like Trent or Cameron seldom reflected the experiences of those living outside of the North Side, South Siders rarely were afforded the privilege of assuming that transportation options were accessible, available, or affordable. In an analogous way to how the twink in Hydrate rebuffed Deshawn's invitation to go back to his place citing not wanting to "travel that far [south] tonight," Deshawn, too, frequently cited transportation as a prohibitive factor in traveling to North Side venues. For example, on a Wednesday night as Deshawn and I are hanging out at the Falcon Inn, he checks his watch and says that it is about 7pm and asks if I think we should switch venues and go somewhere else. I ask him where he wants to go and he says that we could head up north to go to one of the drag shows that is happening, mentioning that he believes it starts around 11pm. I nod saying that we could in which he responds, "ah dang, bus 6 stops running at like 12am doesn't it?" I reply that the last bus south from loop typically is a little after midnight, but that he probably wouldn't be able to catch it. He sighs, takes a sip from his beer, and says that we could just go over to the Pub because it is closer and bus 15 is running. For those outside of the gayborhood, nightly rounds frequently started around questions focusing on where he was going, how would he get there, and how he would get home.

The comparable, but alternative, strategy to making adjustments to the venue was to make adjustments to the means of transportation. Especially when desiring to travel north, but faced with inefficient transit options, many men opted to circumvent their initial transportation plans in lieu of more time direct ones. Trey, a Black 32-year-old nurse, texts me that he is about 10 minutes away from the Cove Lounge in Hyde Park where we are planning on meeting up

before our go-along. I respond that I'm already at the bar and have saved him a seat. He responds with a smiling emoticon next to a sushi one. He walks into the Cove and is instantly noticeable standing at 6'5" dressed in a camel hair trench coat, black jeans, a silver chain around his neck, and his Nike high-tops. We exchange greetings and hugs as he apologizes for being late, while taking off his coat and flagging down the bartender for a drink. He orders a PBR, the same thing I am drinking, takes a long sip and asks "so, wassup." I smile and we discuss how the week has been going, the unseasonably cold temperatures in early Fall this year, and how our football teams are doing (mine the Seattle Seahawks and his the Chicago Bears). We continue to talk as we both get another beer and I ask him what the plan is for this evening. He says that we will be meeting up with his friend Kai at Progress Bar after Kai is done with work, which is supposed to be around 7pm.

I ask Trey additional questions about Kai as it is about 5pm now and end with questioning when Trey would like to go, ensuring to leave enough time to catch the bus 6 and then either the train or the bus from the loop. He pulls out his phone and texts Kai that we are about to leave and should be up north soon, but expresses no urgency to Kai as Trey and I will grab a drink and save him a chair. Kai texts back within the minute and tells Trey that some event is going on at Millennium Park and that downtown traffic has been re-rerouted. Unbeknownst to both of us, Kai is correct, and Trey says that it'll take forever for us to get up to Boystown with buses being rescheduled. We both pull up the ventra app and, sure enough, all of the bus 6 routes are delayed with some being out almost 27 minutes. Shaking his head, Trey says that we should still go and that he will just get a Lyft. As he opens his Lyft app, he sees that none are around. "Shit" he remarks as he closes the app and opens up Uber. "Okay, so there's an uber that is 13 minutes away." As he goes to order it, he sees that it is currently under surge pricing

and the cost, which usually ranges between 23-30 from Hyde Park to Lakeview, is now $57. “I guess everyone had the same idea” he says as he orders the uber and tosses his phone, gently, but still forcefully onto the table. I add that I am willing to split the cost with him, but he shakes away my suggestion and says that it is fine: “just the way it sometimes goes.”

Once in our Hyundai Uber, I ask Trey if he takes Uber a lot in which he replies, “Just sometimes. Mostly in the winter if I’m late to work or if it’s real cold. I don’t really want to be waiting outside in the cold waiting for a bus that is always running late and always crowded.” I nod and add that I, too, have an aversion to some of the freezing temperatures that Chicago gets in the dead of winter. I further prompt Trey about his use of rideshare services to get to and from venues during his night out, which leads him to elaborate: “I only take Uber if it gets really late or if I’m too smashed or something to just take the CTA. Or if I’m meeting friends and had to work late, it is just quicker.” Nodding in agreement at the fact that rideshare options are frequently quicker (in this case reducing our transit time from Hyde Park to Lakeview more than half), I remark that Uber and Lyft are not always the most affordable options to move between the North and South Sides of the city. He laughs and agrees: “Sure as hell not.” He continues, “And that is why I try not to use them that much honestly. But after midnight, there is no other option, so a lot of time, you just have to suck it up.” As we arrive at Progress Bar almost 30 minutes sooner than initially planned, I buy the first round (as Trey, again, refuses my offer to cover part of the surged-priced Uber).

For both Trey and Cassius, their nightly escapades around the city both began with and were impacted by the transportation options available. Unlike their North Side counterparts, the decision about *where* to go was not determined through laissez-faire walking around or playing it by ear. Instead, these decisions had to be thought out including considering the current time,

what transportation options were available, the various costs of such options (with respect to both time and money), and how much one was willing to bear such costs. For Cassius, the time costs of waiting became too great, which led him to reconstruct his night by replacing initial plans and changing venues. Unlike Cassius, Trey, when confronted with an increasingly time intensive commute, chose to stay the course, which led him to bear an extremely high economic cost in travelling to the North side. Even in the cases where South Siders didn't confront transportation issues, they still had to consider the various options available and the benefits or drawbacks of such options when determining venue selection. Deshawn, for instance, when desiring to choose his next location, had to consider how long and how much such transit options would entail, which, in turn, led him to select certain venues (such as the Pub) over other ones (such as Hydrate).

Though the consideration of transportation options may have started the night by having men ask *where are we going,* the phenomenological impact of transit structured how men made decisions about how they moved about various venues and spaces. Critically asking and answering the question of: *where are we going, next?* For most of the men, nights out were rarely confined to one location and frequently involved multiple locations, structured in particular ways. These locations and this movement provide the structural potentialities for what Adam and Green (2013) refer to as "circuits" – or "assemblages of actors who are linked to the extent that they rub elbows in some of the same sexual sites over time, but without the ties of interdependency normally associated with social networks" (Adam, et al, 2008). In considering circuits, men like Deshawn, Trey, Cameron, Trent, James, and Blake may all be using the same sexual spaces (at least the same North Side sexual spaces), however, the ways that they move about these spaces illustrate very different circuit-level experiences. For North Siders, the close

proximity to many sexual spaces lessens the impact that transportation options has on deciding how to craft a nightly round. As evidenced by the ways that James and Blake were able to strategically move among sexual fields based on their desire for the evening (dancing) and how Trent was able to begin his night grabbing dinner and then moving onto spaces based on staff that were present or Grindr opportunities, North Siders were able to put together circuits without thinking about how they would be able to move among these sites. Conversely, South Siders' circuits frequently incorporated planning about how and when to arrive, stay, and leave certain locations.

As I meet up with Joe (31, Blatino, SS) and his friends, Raphael (29, Blatino, SS) and Jose (34, Latino), at the west side bar, The Barrel, we start our go-along at their local neighborhood haunt. "I know this ain't a gay bar, but this is typically where we start our nights" Joe says as I order the same drink as him, Modello in a can. I reply that it is completely fine as both Raphael and Jose get situated, order drinks, and we all get introduced. After discussing what everyone has been up to this past week and chatting with the Bartender, Roberto, as he brings over pretzel sticks, I ask what our plan is for the night. "Shoot kid, we going to Jackhammer[1]" Jose answers with a big smile and a wink. We all laugh and Joe interjects, "Nah, we ain't going to scare you. But we were thinking the Lucky Horseshoe. Maybe see what sexy dancers they have tonight." I nod as Joe gets us all another round and talk to Jose about how I am no stranger to the Jackhammer. Joe, Raphael, and Jose talk about how no matter where they end up going when they all hang out together, that they pregame at The Barrel. It was unsurprising that these men constructed their nightly round by beginning at one venue, usually just for drinks ("pregaming") or a small snack, which was a common occurrence for both North and South Siders. James and Blake, during our spontaneous adventure among multiple venues began at

Progress Bar for a "quick drink" before progressing to another venue. Trent, after leaving his apartment, went to T.S. Tequila for food before planning out the rest of the events for the evening. As the men conferred and agreed on a plan, we finished our drinks and discussed how should we get up North. Both Jose and Raphael checked Uber and Lyft and complained about the high cost for rides on this Friday evening. The only alternative was taking the CTA Pink line and then transferring to either the Brown or Red lines while in the loop. This was an easy decision for the men who shied away from the extra cost of a rideshare option in lieu of the more time exhaustive option of the train.

As we are on the train, we take turns swapping transit horror stories regaling each other of travel stories on trains and buses, usually late at night, and the various issues that arise. As Joe facetiously remarks, "The red line always is there, but at night, it gets bad." We all nod, when Raphael asks if I live on the west side of my neighborhood, in which I remark yes and qualify that I live over the by the various warehouses and packing plants. "Ah damn, you got that sweet 24-hour bus, no wonder you always out so late." I laugh and say that I do live on the other side of Blue Island, which has one of the city's 24-hour buses. Our discussion of various transit experiences further highlights the ways that South Siders both thought of, and experienced methods of urban mobility. The identification of the red line as a form of transportation that, especially at night, could get "bad," was a statement rarely discussed by North Siders, most of whom only found the red line as expedient. Or Raphael's statement about me living by a 24-hour bus and his recognition of such location to this bus as a resource—one that seldom was expressed by North Siders, many of whom had access to multiple overnight (or OWL) bus services.

After about 50 minutes, we all finally arrive at the Lucky Horseshoe and get seats at the bar, where a blond, toned, go-go boy is dancing. We order drinks as Raphael and Jose walk around the bar and Joe and I cheers our drinks and look at the entertainment. “Man, there are a lot of white people here tonight. No offense” Joe says looking at me and then turning his head around to view the rest of the bar. I laugh and reply that no offense was taken and agree with him that this Friday night clientele is far less racially diverse than other times that I had been to the Lucky Horseshoe, including featuring almost all white go-go boy dancers. Jose and Raphael return to where we are sitting and Raphael mentions the same thing as Joe and both Joe and I laugh. “Why don’t we go to the Jackhammer?” Jose questions, this time not facetiously. “Nah, we just got here and I don’t want to catch the 22 bus. Just walk around again.” Joe answers with slight annoyance in his voice. As Jose orders another drink and huffs away, Joe describes how he knows that he sounds mean, but that Jose “always does this.” Namely, they all end up going up North and then Jose wants to keep changing venues. Though, unlike the venue selection and movement of someone like Trent, Jose’s movement frequently involved going to other North Side neighborhoods –just enough to be too far to walk, but not far enough away that one was traveling for long periods of time. “I just don’t want to spend my entire night on a bus or in a car” Joe ends, punctuating his comment with a large swallow of beer.

For Joe, the consideration of how one is going to get to other venues impacts how he creates his nightly round and thus how he experiences his circuit. When traveling North, many South Siders found themselves making decisions based on how accessible transit was, either, like Joe, wanting to avoid additional movement to different neighborhoods or not wanting to stray too far from the modes in which they would use to return home (in our case this evening, the red line). By having to consider how transportation can impact the movement between sexual spaces,

South Siders, like Joe, created very different circuits than their North Side counterparts. Even when using the same spaces, frequently these spaces were selected and paired together due more to ease of access (such as avoiding a bus or remaining close to train stops) than to an intrapersonal or interpersonal reason (such as Cameron's avoiding a failed hookup or Trent's seeking of a Grindr hookup).

In the end, Jose, Joe, and Raphael all decided that our next location should be Sidetrack for a couple more drinks before heading home. Similar to other circuits where queer men selected a venue to pregame the night then one to experience an event or a specific atmosphere and finally a place to get a nightcap, these men, too, carefully planned how they would move about spaces. As we arrive at Sidetrack, the bar remains especially packed, even for a Friday night at 9pm. We manage to get in and then decide to sit on their outdoor patio because it is still quite warm outside. Jose and Raphael offer to grab us drinks as Joe and I hand them cash and then walk out to the patio. With the patio full, we end up joining another group, mostly of late 20-something white men, who are seated by the railing. As Jose and Raphael return, we are all talking about our respective nights detailing the various movements through the Boystown spaces, including our progression from the Lucky Horseshoe and their progression from Scarlet to Roscoe's to here. They describe how they may hit up an after-hours bar, Little Jim's, after this, but they are not quite sure. Raphael asks, "Do you all live around here, or something?" One of the men replies, "Yeah, just right over there (points northeast with his finger). You?" "Nah, I live in Bronzeville" Raphael says. The men, after asking if Bronzeville is near Hyde Park and the University of Chicago (because they have a friend who is a graduate student at the university), all note how far Bronzeville is from Lakeview. "Fuck, who you telling?" Raphael says while finishing his drink. As the night progresses, we eventually leave Sidetrack in order to catch the

red line back to the loop, where Joe and I get on our respective buses, Raphael remains on the red line in order to catch his bus further south, and Jose gets on the green line to go southwest.

In many ways, the go-along with Joe, Jose, and Raphael illustrated one of the most pronounced ways that transportation impacted North Side venue decision making and circuit creation. Not only did the night begin with figuring out where to go and how to get there, but frequently, discussions arose about where to go next and how to get there. From Joe's snub of Jose's suggestion of going to the Jackhammer to choosing venues that were within walking distance of one another once up North (the Lucky Horseshoe and Sidetrack are only a few blocks away from each other), thinking about how one could move about spaces helped to guide the overall circuit. Unlike North Siders who frequently were guided by personal feelings and desires when crafting their circuit, South Siders visiting North Side neighborhoods used transit as a driving mechanism in situating their night out.

"It's that time again for you homos to go home, or at least get the fuck outta here," Jeremy, the white 26 year old bartender screams to the various patrons at Progress Bar after he announces last call and prepares to start cashing out those with tabs. At the end of every successful, or even unsuccessful, night out, one's nightly round must end and individuals must leave the various leisure establishments to either go home, or at least go to someone's home. Though everyone must eventually leave the bar, the timing of when one leaves and the cost of going home varies widely depending on where one goes out and where one lives. As shown, those outside of the gayborhood are frequently tasked with navigating lengthy transportation options to neighborhoods outside of their residential communities or unreliable transportation options within them. Given these difficulties, these men must make the decision of whether to go

home earlier and benefit from more expedient transportation or stay out later and traverse fewer and more costly options.

As Trent described in our go-along interview, when he was living in the South Side neighborhood of Chatham, he routinely found himself having to leave bars and clubs before his friends, sometimes hours before, in order to get home. Though he was using the same Red Line 'L" train as men like Adam, his ride expanded more than double the amount of stops and included a bus line (albeit a 24 hour bus) that would take him west from the 87th Red Line stop to his home. At its swiftest, Trent's Lakeview to Chatham public transportation took over an hour. In order to navigate this time intensive commute, Trent had to constantly check the time, plan his route home, and ensure that he could both safely and efficiently use these transportation options to move about urban space. The decision to leave early from queer leisure spaces put Trent in the position of feeling like an outsider or, in his words, a "tourist" within these spaces, especially compared to his friends, like Aaron, who didn't have to navigate long transportation options, thus could stay out later.

Although Trent would eventually alleviate his seemingly *outsider* relationship within Boystown leisure spaces by moving to the North Side, available transportation options continued to impact one's relationship to queer space. For North Siders frequenting the dense network of queer bars and clubs in Boystown, the decision of whether to stay out or go home was frequently a personal choice as Cameron once remarked, "I stay out if I'm having fun, but once a place is dead, then I'll usually just go home." As a North Sider living near Boystown, Cameron echoed many of the similarities of other North Siders, namely that their night out was dependent on how well their evening was going. In contrast, South Siders found their decision to be a more

pragmatic one, balancing the various benefits and costs of expedient transportation versus enjoyable leisure.

5.5 Going Home

Damien (37, Black, South Side) texts me that he is running late, but will get to Little Jim's soon, punctuating his text with a series of emojis. I reply with a 'thumbs up,' while I wave down the bartender and order another PBR from the bartender. As I am scrolling through my phone and listening to the surprisingly packed bar, Damien walks in with a huff, falls into the chair next to me, and says, which out of breath, "hi." I laugh, flag down the bartender, and ask if he is okay. "Yeah, I've just been running around all day and am finally ready for some fun." He flags down the bartender and orders his normal drink of a Jack and coke, while pulling out a folder $20 bill from his front pocket, setting it on the table. We discuss our plan for the evening, which includes going to Hydrate for one of their drag shows that begins at 10:30. After a couple more drinks and catching up at Little Jim's, we end up going over to Hydrate where we meet up with some friends that Damien met last time at Hydrate and order drinks. As the show starts, we all order drinks, laugh, and cheer during what one of Damien's friends describes as the "best show this month." As the show comes to an end, the lights are turned down lower and the music is increased as other patrons flood the dancefloor. One of Damien's recently found friends buys shots for us all and says that we all should go over to Sidetrack because "Musical Mondays" should still be going. Damien and I both take our shots as he checks his phone, recognizes the time is almost midnight and says, "shit, we have to go if we are going to make bus 6, then we need to go like now." As we prepare to head out, one of his friends grabs his arm and says, "nooooooooo. Come to Sidetrack with us." Damien laughs while pushing his hand off and says that he will probably see them around.

Even though it is almost midnight on a Monday, the Boystown strip of bars and clubs remains bustling and packed with men standing outside bright bars laughing, smoking, and enjoying the last of the summer evenings. Damien and I scurry past the groups of late night denizens in order to get to the Red Line, where we run up the stairs and catch the recently arrived train to 95th. As we find seats in the half full, fluorescent lit train, we continue to discuss the show and the night. Right before the train moves from the elevated tracks to the subway ones, I ask Damien about his friends that we were hanging out with at Hydrate. He describes: "Who? Them? Nah, they ain't my friends. I just met them at Hydrate a few weeks ago and now we occasionally hang out for the shows. Let me tell you: they can get crazy as fuck." I laugh as Damien continues to expand on nights out during the Hydrate shows and his various escapades with his newfound friends. "Do you ever go with them to Sidetrack or other bars after?" Damien shakes his head and replies: "I have like once, but usually don't. They hang out very late around there. Maybe I'm just getting old or just tired, but I don't really want to be out that late in the middle of the week. Plus, I don't want to uber all the time home. Shit's expensive." As our train arrives at its Lake Street stop, we both run up the escalator to try and get on the bus 6 at State/Lake. Seeing no sign of the bus, Damien pulls out his phone and tries and tracks the bus, finding that it is running behind schedule and should arrive in arrive in about 8 minutes. It arrives in 16 minutes.

The delay in CTA's bus 6 was the only thing that allowed Damien and I to get back to our respective South Side neighborhoods that night. If we had missed that bus, then there would have been no other public transportation options to my neighborhood at that time and Damien would've found himself having to take another train and a South Side overnight bus to get home. Though this evening was purely luck, transportation options commonly impacted how South

Siders structured their night out. In the case of Damien and me, the planning of how to get home meant that the nightly found of his other "friends" was untenable as staying out late meant expensive transportation options (such as the uber that Damien didn't always want to take because of the expense). Although Damien frames his decision to leave as not wanting to be out late in the middle of the week, the decision to leave when we did was predicated on the available options to get home which, for some, was more calamitous in their enjoyment of queer leisure.

For illustration, Kap, a Black 22-year-old South Sider, described not being able to stay out as late as his other friends in Boystown as a feeling of "FOMO" or fear of missing out. Meeting one day at Sidetrack after he sits next to me, Kap and I immediately bond over football, the South Side, and Hennessey. One Friday, we end up talking about how frequently he goes up to the North Side and what he typically does up here. He mentions how he spends most of his time going to North Side bars and clubs because "they are just better," preferring either Hydrate or Sidetrack because he "sometimes is in the mood for hip-hop and sometimes for showtunes." Despite his frequency of using Boystown queer spaces, Kap describes how his friends will usually go to 3-4 places in a night because they live on the North Side: "I wish I could party like they do, but they stay 'round here, so I just can't." As I prompt further to understand why Kap can't "party like they do" he explains that it's easier to stay out later when living close to the various leisure locations, especially for going to after-parties or hooking up, because then one can easily go home without worrying about bus or train schedules or if one has enough money for a rideshare. Kap's fear of missing out was a common theme among South Side men in North Side spaces echoing the notion that their early departure from these spaces left them missing out on events, additional sites on one's nightly round, or potential sexual opportunities.

5.6 Staying Late

"C'mon, let just get one more shot," Danny (25, White, NS) says to his friend Sammy (27, Black, SS) and me as we are an hour away from last call at Progress Bar. Sammy yells back, "bruh, we need to get going soon. It's late." As Danny runs up to the bar to get another round of shots (and a cranberry and soda for me), Sammy pulls me aside and asks, "Progress is really steppin' up tonight. And, I'm going to have to catch an uber anyways. Want to hang out and split a ride back south?" I check the time on my phone and notice that it is well after midnight and my bus will be running once every 30 minutes once I get back to the loop, so I nod and respond, "fuck it. Let's stay." Danny returns and at the news that we are going to stay, gives us a big hug and tosses his shot back. "To our health" he says.

When faced with the decision to balance earlier and expedient transportation options with later and enjoyable leisure, many men, North Siders and South alike, chose the latter. Similar to how the Jeffery Pub became 'different' and transitioned to a 'freakier' environment later at night, many other queer leisure spaces, too, shifted from entertainment spaces to sexual marketplaces. Thus, men like Kap and his FOMO, were not purely a fear of missing out of additional leisure time within the spaces, but rather a fear of missing out of the potential of leveraging extant queer spaces to pursue hookups and sexual partners. In a similar fashion to the ways that transportation logistics induced certain men's decision to leave early in order to catch available trains or navigate safe passage, late night and early morning transportation asymmetries between the North and South Side added both temporal and financial costs to certain men's nights out. These costs, whether experienced in time navigating less than efficient transit options or in increased financial tolls meant that South Siders disproportionately bore costs and difficulties in not only accessing sexual space, but experiencing the full range of sexual possibilities within them.

As the night ended, Sammy, Danny, and I all stood outside of Sidetrack as Sammy and I waited for our uber. “Do you want us to give you a ride” I ask Danny as our uber is still seven minutes away. “No, I’m okay. I just live around the corner.” He replies while checking his phone and asking if one of the guys on Grindr is hot or not. “Yeah, he definitely is not hot. Stop chatting with him and just block” Sammy comments, while asking again, “bro, we can still just drop you off.” “I appreciate it, but honestly, I basically just live right there. I walk home all the time after the bar closes. Just wish I wasn’t going home along. What about him?” Danny answers while showing his phone to Sammy who rolls his eyes and asks what kind of car we are looking for the uber. I say that it is a Honda and point to a red Honda Civic that has just turned onto Halsted. As the driver pulls up, Sammy and I bid adieu to Danny, get in the car, and drive off.

“Okay, I’ll say it, that boy’s a lot” Sammy remarks as we ride along the surface streets of Lakeview waiting for the driver to get on Lake Shore Drive. I laugh and reply that he is, but it was fun. “Oh, fo’sure. I’ve never seen Sidetrack like that before, though” Sammy says as he turns off his phone, opens his window a little bit, and slouches back into his seat. “You go there a lot, though. How was today different?” I ask as I time open my window to enjoy the warm evening air. He replies:

Man, you never stop doing that sociology thing, do you? (Laughs) Yeah, I do go there a lot, but am never out this late. I usually always leave by 11pm to get back downtown with enough time to catch the bus. The last time I was at Sidetrack for last call was when one of my friends was DD’ing[1]. And that mother fucker still made me pay for his parking.

As we continued to ride along Lake Shore Drive to return to our respective South Side neighborhoods, Sammy and I continued to talk about the night and reflect upon what late night Sidetrack is like, which he describes it as “daddies finding their twinks while listening to

Streisand." Our uber drops me off first and I ask Sammy if he is going to be okay: "boy, get outta here. I'll text you" he replies as I close the door and walk back to my apartment.

The transition from Sidetrack as a casual bar with Ru Paul Drag Race showings, "Musical Mondays," and various rooms and patios for patrons to listen to music to a sexual marketplace fueled by hookup apps, sexual innuendo, and no strings attached partner searchers illustrates the transformation that was common among many marked queer spaces. As most were open from either 12pm, 3pm, or 5pm until 2am or 4am, these spaces changed and were changed by the differences in patronage and atmosphere. Sidetrack, like Jeffery Pub, catered primarily to an older crowd at earlier times in the night, however, by the time it was approaching last call, the patronage was a more mixed crowd including younger patrons and those that ended up there at the end of their nightly round, typically having gone to multiple venues prior. Though Sammy, Danny, and I were able to experience this transition firsthand, the costs of experiencing that transition was varied.

As Danny mentioned multiple times as Sammy and I were waiting for an Uber, he lived only a couple of blocks away from Sidetrack and was comfortable walking home in the well-lit and still very populated streets. Though his close proximity is not necessarily indicative of all North Siders, many benefit from the plethora of available 24-hour transportation options including buses and the Red Line train to navigate their transportation home. Even for the brief 10 minutes that we all were waiting outside of the bar, droves of men were exiting the bar for either the bus 22 stop or the Red Line Station. Similar to how Adam who doesn't live in Lakeview, but lives in close proximity to the Wilson Red Line stop described the advantages of being able to just go out and know that he has access to reliable transportation, North Siders benefit greatly from such expeditious accessibility. This benefit manifests in the experience of

men like Danny who are able to frequently utilize venues like Sidetrack for early evening drinks and early morning hookups.

Although Sammy described the night as being enjoyable, his initial hesitancy in staying out late was not predicated on a lack of desire, but rather a recognition of the added costs caused by it. As described, Sammy infrequently is able to experience the change from entertainment space to sexual marketplace due to wanting to ensure to make his bus in time to go home.[2] When he does manage to stay out late, he then either relies on his friends who have cars to drive him home (though laments having to contribute to parking) or purchases a rideshare. At the end of our specific night, splitting the cost, was only $18.43, though if he was paying it just for himself, it would amount to $36.86. For South Siders, the use of sexual venues outside of their residential communities, especially late at night, comes with added costs not experienced by those that are able to access more reliable and cost efficient modes of transportation.

These added costs are not only experienced in the financial costs associated with movement from the North Side venues to one's South Side residence. Noticeably, costs are also endured in whether or not one is even able to find alternative transportation options to unreliable, inefficient, or absent commuter transportation. For example, after spending a late evening at Hydrate, I end up saying goodnight to the bartender and the patrons whom I was hanging out with in order to leave for home. Particularly wanting a more expedient transit alternative to the over hour-long commute, I pull out my phone and order an uber. After ordering the car, I put my phone back into my pocket and feel it vibrate. "Your driver has cancelled the ride" shows up on my notifications. I proceed back to the uber app and order another car. 3 minutes later the driver cancels the ride. Finally, after 5 times, I finally have an uber driver that agrees to the ride and picks me up in 7 minutes.

As I get into the white Toyota Camry, I thank the driver for picking me up and explain the difficulty that I experienced with having multiple drivers cancel the ride. "Ah yeah, makes sense" the driver comments in which I respond with a question of "what do you mean?" He answers:

> I don't usually go further South from South Loop. Had too many bad experiences going to those parts of the city. And like when I drop you off, I will turn off my Uber because I just don't want to pick up some of the people over there. Too many of them get in my car smelling of weed or drunk and I just don't want to deal with that.

Wondering whether this was a strategy of this one driver or a common practice, once home, I searched through some online Chicago Uber message boards that allow Uber (and Lyft) drivers to exchange comments, ask questions, and provide tips. While searching through the message boards, I see multiple threads dedicated to drivers discussing their perils of providing rides on the South Side. As one user wrote, "I'm not racist, but I'm not going to Englewood. Too many issues with riders trying to report me and get out of paying for their ride. I guess, if you're living in the ghetto then makes sense you can't afford a car." This comment was one of many listed on the forums devoted to discussing problems with South Sider rides and riders among which many use the terminology of the "ghetto" or the "shit side of the city" as proxies for South Side neighborhoods. To complement these personal observations, many drivers provide advice on how to avoid providing rides to South Side neighborhoods. As one writes:

> If you ever have to drop someone off south of 26th, then I would suggest turning off both your Uber and Lyft apps and then drive back to the loop. If you don't want to go there at all, then you can just decline the ride. If anyone complains or

> you have to respond to an Uber inquiry, then just tell them that you thought you were ending the night, so you cancelled the ride. And then you changed your mind. It's not like they can prove that otherwise. Safe driving everyone!

This user's comment reflected the common theme of many drivers in providing strategies for either not accepting rides to South Side locations or turning off their location when on the South Side so as to not accept riders. The consequence of such strategies is added challenges in using rideshare applications to move around South Side locations including fewer drivers, less available rides, and higher prices (including more frequent surge pricing.[3'Given my personal challenges in finding accessible and affordable rideshare options on the South Side, I was not shocked that these practices existed, but was stunned at how common they are.

5.7 Conclusion

The agglomeration of queer places within specific neighborhoods has significant consequences in the ways that queer men not only map out and locate, but also participate and experience queer nightlife. As this chapter has shown, for men like James, Blake, Trent, and Cameron, the accessibility and clustering of queer places allow them nearly unfettered access and ease in moving from one sexual field to another. Thus, throughout their nightly rounds (Hunter, 2010), they are able to employ laissez-faire strategies, carefully selecting venues based on personal desires. The benefit of such easy access to an array of sexual venues is that these queer men are able to carefully craft circuits of queer venues increasing the likelihood of success in finding sexual partners, community, and pleasure. Furthermore, such concentration of queer spaces within one neighborhood allows the queer men of that neighborhood to develop insider relationships with the spaces and their patrons. As Trent illustrated, when living on the South

Side, he was consistently pushed to the margins of the types of entertainment and leisure that these sexual venues could provide. Lamenting his friend Aaron's relationship with the spaces, Trent found that by locating himself within the same residential neighborhood as this entertainment district that he, too, was able to develop extra-spatial ties and become recognized as an insider within these spaces. These various benefits in access and strategies are in part facilitated by the result of clustering numerous venues in proximity and housing them in one neighborhood.

However, as shown by Tarik's commentary on Chicago having multiple queer communities, but only one queer entertainment district and Deshawn's experience during our go-along, the agglomeration of queer spaces within a white, middle-class gayborhood is far from beneficial for those living outside of it. In contrast to the benefits experienced by North Side queer men, South Side queer men must navigate being an outsider to spaces that neither reflect their geographic nor social positions in order to utilize the gayborhood.

In practice, both North and South Side queer men shared a common desire in wanting to find accessible sexual leisure and have the ability to select into spaces and fields where they would be successful. However, the South Side queer men found themselves contending with limited community connections and structural difficulties in accessing pleasurable queer space within the gayborhood. Despite sharing a common desire, those living outside of the gayborhood had to bear additional costs balancing being outsiders within North Side spaces. Like Deshawn, South Side queer men had to negotiate their positions within these spaces and frequently found such negotiation less than fruitful than others that had residential ties to the surrounding neighborhood and could use such ties to foster more intimate connections with patrons and space. The next chapter will build upon the impacts of an asymmetrical distribution of queer

spaces, focusing specifically on the interpersonal strategies that Black, queer men use to gain erotic capital within and outside of gayborhood leisure spaces.

Chapter 6 Homeboys and Homothugs: How Black, Queer Men Negotiate Racial Stereotypes and Sexual Fetishism

As Jadyn (23, Black, SS) and I show our IDs to the bouncer and walk into Progress Bar, he immediately points to an open table near the window: "go grab that table and I'll get us drinks. You drinking Grey Goose and cranberry, or getting a grown-up drink tonight?" I roll my eyes at his facetious comment as he grins as he walks up to the bar, handing the bartender his credit card to start a tab, as I grab the table. After he returns, he sets the drinks on the table as he pulls out his phone and takes off his sunglasses before sitting down. "Well, cheers, motherfucker. Finally we got out here. It's been a minute," he says before we say "cheers" and take our first sips. As Jadyn and I continue talking and catching up, a tall, slender, white guy about my height comes over to our table and says to Jadyn, "oh hey man, what's up?" Jadyn looks at him incredulously and asks if he knows him. "Yeah, we talked last week at the drag show," the man replies, now leaning on the table. "Nah, I wasn't here last week. Must be someone else," Jadyn continues while checking his text messages on his phone and making very little eye contact. "Oh, I could've sworn it was you. Sorry. This other guy looked exactly like you," the man says as he walks away. Jadyn looks up at the guy as he is leaving and comments under his breath, "y'know, not all of us niggas look alike. Step off." The guy continues to walk away from our table without making any further acknowledgment. Jadyn puts down his phone, picks up his drink, and says, "this is why I fucking hate Boystown."

Jadyn, a 23-year-old Black, part-time music producer and part-time server, sits back in his chair looking out the window before commenting that the amount of times that he is mistaken for someone else at Progress Bar or Hydrate is significant, especially considering the relatively few times that he finds himself in Boystown from his South Side neighborhood of Fuller Park. When I question how that makes him feel, he expands:

> I mean, just look around, with the exception of the bouncer sitting on his little chair over there, there ain't many niggas around here. It's still early, but still. If I'm coming up here, then I got to be on the hunt for white boys. But some are annoying as shit, like that one over there coming up to me like I'm the only Black guy he ever seen in here. *Puh-lease.*

I further inquire how often he comes to Boystown on the hunt for white partners. He laughs at my phrasing of "partners" over "boys," however, replies:

> Not too often because it's hella far and only sometimes the music up here is good. But I don't like some white, twink ass. You know, that small little bootie on a guy that's wanting a BBC.[13] Here, look at this guy on Grindr, I just saw. (Jadyn opens his Grindr app and shows a profile of a 24-year-old white man with the profile heading, 'fun rn,[14]' and a cropped picture of his chest and torso). This is the type of boy that I'm looking for (as he shows a description that reads: 'Here for a fun time, not a long time. Been awhile since I had a BBC. Any blacks around to fuck this boy into tomorrow. Black+++ Masc+++ Fit+++).

[13] BBC refers to "Big Black Cock," a euphemism for a Black man's supposedly large endowment.
[14] Rn refers to "right now"

As Jadyn presses the "favorite" button on his profile, he closes the app, and puts his phone down. "See, that is why I like coming up here. Want me to fuck some tight lil white ass," he says with a laugh as he gets up to get us both another drink.

Spending the evening with Jadyn, first at Progress Bar and then eventually at Sidetrack, illustrated how men like Jadyn craft racial and sexual performances, both online and off, to gain erotic capital and find potential partners within North Side spaces. Throughout the night, his usually mild mannered, albeit ambitious, personality, gave way to an aggressive, assertive, and overly flirtatious one with comments about him being an animal in bed, wanting to fuck like a stallion, and ravage a twink with his massive dick. For Jadyn, playing with racial stereotypes and scripts allowed him to capitalize on the controlling images of the brute or the large endowment of Black men to interest white partners (Collins 2004; Paulson-Bryant 2005). As our evening came to a close around 1am, Jadyn and I part ways at Sidetrack with him giving me a hug, kiss on the cheek, and a wink as he called an Uber to meet up with his Grindr "favorite."

The agglomeration of queer place in few, White, middle-class neighborhoods and a dearth of them elsewhere, impact how Black men use white spaces and what they must do to be successful. Aside from the community and socializing purposes of queer leisure venues, these arenas also provide a space for queer men to pursue sexual partners. Like Jadyn, those outside of the gayborhood must make decisions on whether to travel to queer places outside of their residential neighborhoods and benefit from more spaces and fields to select from or whether to use a more limited selection of residential, queer locations in their home neighborhoods. The location of Chicago's gayborhood in a neighborhood that is 77.6% white, with 28.5% of households reporting a household income of $150,000 or more (CMAP, 2021), adds extra

burdens to Black, queer men who live on the South Side, who must contend with not only being a geographic outsider to these spaces, but a racial one as well.

In order to find sexual space and partners in the city's gayborhood, these men employ strategies of adherence to racialized controlling images (Collins 2004) that make them successful under the white gaze by challenging singular notions of sexual racism (Orne 2017; Plummer 2008; Smith, Morales, and Han 2008) through practices of self-fetishism (Miller-Young 2008). Others resist these images and stereotypes by situating themselves in Black spaces away from the white gaze, where they are able to explore more expansive presentations of Black queerness. I conclude by illustrating how these different strategies—either playing or resisting—are useful in contending with the effects of bifurcated sex marketplaces by achieving a similar result: namely, erotic capital and sexual success.

6.1 Controlling Images

Collins (2004), in *Black Sexual Politics*, calls for a new framework and empirical understanding of the intersection and interconnected ways that queerness and blackness work in multifaceted ways to shape various gendered, racial, and sexual relations. Specifically, Black sexual politics "consist of a set of ideas and social practices shaped by gender, race, and sexuality that frame Black men and women's treatment of one another, as well as how African Americans are perceived and treated by others" (Collins 2004:7). Central to her model is the concept of "controlling images," iteratively developed by Collins (1986, 1990, 2004) as the intersectional depictions and imagery that result from (and justify) structural racism. With respect to Black men, controlling images of the buck, brute, or rapist shape how Black men are perceived by white society. These controlling images reduce Black men to their bodies and limit the range of "authentic" Black presentations that are accessible and intelligible. The reduction of Black men

to physical embodiment can be observed through contemporary images such as the athlete, rapper, or gangster that center physical strength and sexual prowess. As Collins (2004) argues, these controlling images rest in our social and cultural norms and are moved, performed, and interpreted differently across space, time, and people.

Despite the mutability of these images, they arguably manifest themselves as "truths" in our social consciousness, leading to such presentations not only framing and restricting Black masculinity, but also becoming the social scripts used to convey and evaluate "authentic Blackness." By tying authenticity to portrayals that are frequently more fiction than fact, Black men are forced to either select performances that fetishize stereotypes or risk unintelligibility in not being seen as "really Black." Caught between the prison and the closet, Black, queer men face heightened scrutiny of their performances, simultaneously evaluated by Black community for their ability to perform Blackness and by queer communities for their ability to perform queerness. Such scrutiny is further exacerbated by the various spaces in which Black, gay men are tasked with navigating racialized and sexualized performances. Bowleg's (2013) analyses of the identity intersections of Black, gay men highlights the role of spaces in impacting how 'Black' or 'gay' one must achieve to successfully 'pass.' Her participants frequently found themselves downplaying or hiding gay identity in Black spaces to be integrated within Black communities. Though, as Green (2007) found, white queer communities are infrequently an alternative safe-haven for Black, queer men as they are unequally incorporated within these communities due to structures of racism creating symbolic boundaries that problematize full community membership.

Racial and sexual presentations are not only impacted by the space in which they are performed, but also by the audience that is there to receive such performance. Harris (2008)

highlights the role of the audience's gaze: "European American scrutiny and evaluation play a major role in shaping the adjustment, performance, and social relations of African Americans" (p. 9). Thus, the white gaze both evaluates and veils diverse presentations of Blackness, by holding it up to white standards and expectations. Capitalizing on Cooley's (1902) *Looking Glass Self* theory, Harris (2008) shoes how the cultural messages and images of Blackness create schemas for Black men to draw upon, which are then interpreted and evaluated by the white gaze and ultimately contribute to perceptions and self-perceptions of Blackness. Controlling images are tools of power that seek to reduce Black, queer men under the white gaze to objects of sexual aggression, physical dominance, and animalistic desire. Harris's (2008) arguments are useful metaphors in understanding the performative aspects of controlling images as techniques of power; though, as Collins (2008) responds, the veil created by the white gaze cuts both ways—simultaneously acting as a mechanism of power restricting presentations of Black to those of controlling images and as an opportunity for Blacks to re-appropriate and take control of the narrative. Collins (2008) shows that the veil is "not a simple fence—rather, it constitutes a permeable border space where Black humanity must decide how much to reveal to non-Blacks, under what terms, and why" (p. 9). I argue that Black, queer men use competing, but related, strategies to negotiate racial stereotypes and sexual fetishism to gain erotic capital and be sexually successful. As I show, some men, like Jadyn, use the veil to capitalize on controlling images and the white gaze to take control of the narrative, while others use the veil more opaquely to shield themselves from the white gaze and explore more diverse presentations of Blackness.

6.2 Stereotypes and Self-Fetishism

Collins's (2004) conception of controlling images most closely resembles the ways that stereotypes are created and cultivated as ways to impact people's views. At face value, they are the characteristics associated with a group and its members that guide people's perceptions and responses to that group (Dovidio, Hewstone, Glick, and Esses 2010). Black, queer men find themselves positioned between a series of racial and sexual stereotypes around masculinity (Collins 2004), sexual prowess and hypersexuality (Ghaviami and Peplau 2013), physique (Poulson-Bryant 2011; Wilson et al 2009; Husbands et al 2013) and temperament (Teunis, 2007). These stereotypes have profound effects on the ways that Black, queer men perform sexuality and how such performances are interpreted in interpersonal interactions (Dovidio et al 2010). For instance, stereotypes around endowment, stamina, or position may lead partners (or potential partners) of Black men to make assumptions about their sexual practices such as being overly promiscuous (Bowleg 2013; Hequembourg and Brallier 2009), aggressive (Wilson et al 2015), or adhering to certain positions (Husbands et al 2013).

Though these stereotypes guide the thoughts, feelings, and expectations that white gay men have about Black, gay men, they also have an influence on the sexual strategies that Black gay men use to gain erotic capital within and across sexual spaces. Research on the impact of sexual stereotypes within sexualized spaces has commonly highlighted the influence of "sexual racism" or the specific ways that racism is maintained in sexual contexts including, but not limited to, the internet, pornography, bars, clubs, and anonymous sexual encounters (Plummer 2008; Smith, Morales, and Han 2018). A familiar frame for the study of sexual racism is to draw upon racism frameworks, such as Feagin's (2006) systemic racism theory, in order to understand how the sexual stereotypes of Blacks, under the white gaze, are used to maintain white

supremacy and ultimately stratify various structures of erotic capital (Green, 2008). Smith, Morales, and Han (2018) use Feagin's (2006) theory in interplay with Green's (2008) sexual fields to illustrate the various ways that sexual stereotypes disadvantage Black, queer men in queer spaces by illustrating how men do not conform to white sexual ideals, and therefore are assessed as lacking erotic capital (Green 2008) and, as a result, are more commonly rejected as potential partners (Callander et al 2012).

The studying of sexual racism in this way is useful for emphasizing how racism operates within sexualized spaces and how it contributes to structures of desire that elevate whiteness as the desired default (Han, 2008a, b). However, these studies have a latent assumption that sexual stereotypes are inherently problematic, dehumanizing, and detrimental for sexual success. Though one should be cautious of using the banner of "sexual freedom" as an excuse to ignore the racial implications in how sexual stereotypes caricaturize sexuality (Hunter, 2011; Ransby and Matthews, 1993), one also must be wary of relying on "politics of respectability" as a way to create one dimensional assumptions about the impact, utility, and effects of sexual stereotypes (Hunter 2011; Reid-Brinkley 2008; Rose 2008). Shimizu (2005), in her study of hypersexuality in *Miss Saigon,* cautions against the uniformity of interpretation of racialized images and sexuality:

> "The normal versus abnormal framing of sexuality has important implications for the interpretation of racialized images. To assume that sexuality gives bad impressions of racial subjects keeps us from looking at how these images critique normative subjectivities" (p. 248).

To assuage the potential pitfalls of a reductionist account of racialized sexuality, Shimizu (2005) posits the concept of a *bind of representation* to draw attention to the ways that "racial subjects

undergo hypersexual interpellation, on both sides of the stage, as a productive and formative social and political experience" (p. 248). Thus, hypersexuality, and the stereotypes associated with it, can become both an experience of power and powerlessness for minoritized spectators and actors (Shimizu 2005). The concept of a "bind of representation" provides a framework for understanding the ways that Harris's (2008) veil can be both transparent and opaque, allowing for the possibility that sexual stereotypes and performances can be both productive and marginalizing across different contexts and for different people. Capitalizing on the potential for sexual stereotypes to be both productive and marginalizing, Miller-Young (2008) introduces the concept of *illicit eroticism* to address the racialized gender politics that are produced within the sexual economy: "the illicit erotic economy symbolically and strategically produces gender identities *through* the commodification and manipulation of private (sex) acts" (p. 264, italics in original). Illicit eroticism, thus, stands as an attempt to refigure the racial logic of sexual respectability and normativity.

Part of such reconfiguration is the ability for subjects to engage in self-fetishization, which allows Black sexual subjects within the public sphere to create a "dialectical tension with the historical politics of respectability" (Miller-Young 2008: 286). The same sexual stereotypes and assumptions that Smith, Morales, and Han (2018) and Han (2008a,b) argue categorically disadvantage Black men in sexual spaces can be reframed under Miller-Young (2008) as potentially strategic if such men are able to embrace the controlling images of hypersexuality on their own terms. Strategies such as self-fetishization open new spaces for desire and pleasure for Black, queer men to explore the multiple facets of their identities and craft performances to be sexually successful.

6.3 Playing with Images

Hakeem (28, Black, SS), Marcel (31, Black, SS) and I grab a quick dinner before walking to a hosted "urban" party at a North Side event space. As the party begins at 11pm, we decide to grab a drink at Progress Bar and meet up with some other friends of Hakeem planning to attend the party as well. As we approach the door, the bouncer provides me a small smile and nods me in, while asking to see identification for both Hakeem and Marcel. Once inside, we end up taking the last three seats at the bar and order drinks. While waiting for our drinks, Hakeem and I talk, while Marcel opens his Grindr and Jack'd applications, revealing a cropped photograph of his bare chest down to his briefs with him holding a bottle of Remy Martin in one hand and flipping off the camera with the other. His profile rreads: "come play with my BBC" and his description states, "Up here for a party, but ready to P-A-R-T-Y. Let me be ur dl thug tonight. No fems, just ain't my thing. White+++ twink+++ fit+++ Bubble Butt+++". As he scans the profiles, he selects a 27-year-old white user with a similar photo on his profile and shows Hakeem: "what you think of him?" Hakeem takes Marcel's phone to get a better look: "boy, you need to put on clothes. I dunno, did you read his profile? He seems thirsty as fuck." Marcel takes back his phone before taking another drink and says, "that's what I like about him. He seems like he's horny and wants nine inches of fun to play with." Hakeem laughs, "so what you going to do? Help find home someone with a nine-inch dick or pray that yours grows like Pinocchio?" Marcel ignores Hakeem, while messaging the user with the ubiquitous "sup?" before locking his phone and putting it back into his pocket.

Like Jadyn, Marcel is also apt at playing with stereotypes to appeal to white partners within white spaces. As we were traveling North after initially meeting up at a local South Side watering hole, Marcel described how his plan was to get some ass tonight because "there is

nothing better than white boys at an urban party like than a thug." He spent his train ride crafting his Grindr profile, replacing his face pictures with torso ones and his more general description with an explicit one. While at Progress Bar, he capitalized on stereotypes of down-low culture, aggressiveness, thug culture, and endowment to craft a front stage presentation (Goffman, Presentation of Self) catering to the white gay men's myths and fantasies about Black men's sexuality. Especially using the stereotype of Black men's endowment (the "BBC"), Marcel plays with white men's fascination with Black masculinity by carefully crafting a profile with allusions to endowment and sexual appetite. As Poulson-Bryant (2005) argues, when it comes to the size of Black men's penises, "white people believe in myths" (p. 11). Marcel uses this myth to find partners.

As Hakeem's friends arrive, he makes introductions with me knowing one of them and Marcel knowing two, and we get drinks and grab a table across from the bar that better suits the larger group. We talk about the plan for this evening. Hakeem's friends describe hoping that the party is enjoyable because they have been swamped with work and could use some fun. Marcel nods even though he is focused on his phone, occasionally looking up to take a sip or add a quick quip to the conversation. One of Hakeem's friends looks at Marcel and inquires about what is so interesting on his phone. Hakeem jumps in and says, "oh, you know, he is just being a ho for them white boys. Trying to get some ass as usual." Marcel laughs, while not taking off his eyes off his phone: "I'm just horny. What can I say?" The friend takes another drink from his beer and comments, "I'm just not into white boys like that." At his comment, he turns to me, places his hand on my shoulder and adds an obligatory, "no offense, man." I wave off his comment as he continues:

> I've tried hitting up some snowflakes,[15] but it just never works out. Either they are not interested or they are looking for some gangbanger. True story, one actually asked if I'm in a gang? Like, what in the actual fuck? I dunno, just seems that they just want to be Blacked and I'm just not wanting that. Fucking is fun, but I don't want to be some pet or some fetish for a Boystown twink.

Another of Hakeem's friends nods along in apparent agreement, though one adds that he doesn't have a racial preference, but is not interested in being a fetish. At this comment, Marcel remarks, "And this is why neither of you are hooking up tonight." Both of the men scoff at this comment as Marcel continues to regale the table with stories of his sexual conquests with "white boys" emphasizing how many could "barely handle him" or "told him that he was the biggest they ever had." For Marcel, the images that Hakeem's friends find problematic and therefore reject are available scripts for him to use to his advantage in gaining erotic capital in white spaces. The exchange shows how self-fetishism is not universally utilized or desired, illustrating how the bind of racial performances, for some, contributes to a sense of powerlessness, while for others it offers a sense of power.

As we finish our drinks at Progress Bar, we walk over to the warehouse-like event space where the party is taking place. "First stop the bar and we getting shots," one of Hakeem's friends yells as Hakeem slides his arm through mine and walks to the bar. Hakeem's friends grab the shots and then move into the larger dance floor area to find a high-top table, while Hakeem, Marcel, and I wait at the bar for our friends, watching the already dancing patrons. Marcel grabs my Vodka Soda from the bartender and hands it to me, while whispering in my ear: "Damn, some of these guys are fine tonight. Look over there." He points to a group of 20-something

[15] Reference to a white person in a sexual context.

white “jocks” outfitted in tank tops and skinny jeans, while raising his drink to get their attention: “I think that’s my cue,” he says as he squeezes my arm and walks over to them. Hakeem and I continue to talk and look around before joining his friends at a table to the side of the room near the growing audience by one of the stages. While standing, we both watch Marcel, who has ordered another drink, and is talking with the group of white men that he approached. As one of the men is consistently pointing to Marcel’s arm, Hakeem laughs and says, “it is always the tattoos with these twinks.” His comment is reaffirmed as Marcel removes his blue polo shirt revealing a skin-tight Black tank-top and his well-tattooed arms. Two of the men stare at his tattoos with one of them occasionally touching his bicep. As Marcel returns, smiling like the Cheshire cat, he talks about how the guys really like his tattoos and wanted to see more of them. Given Marcel’s musculature, clean shaven appearance, and sexualized performance, it is unsurprising that he was garnering attention from white patrons who chose to attend an “urban” party advertised with Black male models and a selection of Hip-Hop, Rap, and R&B music.

When Marcel wants to go outside to vape, he nudges my shoulder and asks if I want to come with him. I say yes and we leave to the front sidewalk along the Boystown strip, while he pulls out his vape. “So, those guys really liked your tattoos, eh?” I comment to him. He nods his head and explains that one of them just got his first tattoo, some design on his wrist, and is really interested in them. He kept asking where I got mine done, and I told him that I had a friend that does work in a parlor on the South Side and he wanted to know if I’ve always had them done at a tattoo parlor. Laughing, Marcel says that he had to tell him yes, stressing that it wasn’t like he got them in prison or anything.

The interaction between Marcel and these patrons illustrates the role that controlling images have in both how he performs his race and sexuality within the space and how such

performance is read by others. The possible assumption that someone who looks like Marcel, especially with his tattoos, could have spent time in prison draws on working-class images of the Black thug and criminal (Collins, 2004). Even though Marcel debunks such assumptions, these images provide an accessible language for the white patron to map onto Marcel working to make his appearance intelligible. However, these frames are not unidirectional as Marcel, too, capitalized on these images to guide his dress, composure, and language to pique the attention of the white patrons. Like his Grindr profile, he is apt at using extant stereotypes and fetishes to author his presentation and therefore control the narrative. In this regard, even as Marcel ends up leaving the night for a Grindr hookup, with a North Side white guy, he can break the bind of representation that these images are inherently dehumanizing, negative, or dangerous, thus using such images to his advantage to achieve erotic capital in fields where he would be assumed to be disadvantaged (Green, 2008; Han, 2008; Plummer, 2008).

Though much of Marcel's performance capitalized on his ability to use racial stereotypes to his advantage to craft successful sexual performances, he also used his South Side residential location as cultural script for white men, under the white gaze, to evaluate his sexual performances. Similar to how racial and sexual stereotypes guide erotic presentations, the stereotypes associated with the South Side though, on one hand, are used to disadvantage such residents as geographic outsiders, but on the other, can be used as frames to further contextualize sexual performances of hypersexuality and aggressiveness. For Marcel, coming from the South Side, helped provide a language under the white gaze that he could use to "prove" or "justify" that he was a *real* thug, despite evidence to contrary. Izaak, a 37-year-old Black, bisexual who moved to the North Side neighborhood of Andersonville 7 years ago after completing his law

degree describes how, when he lived on the South Side, he would come up to the North Side for white boys:

> (Laughs) Yeah, I remember in my 20s, I was living over in Chatham. Just cheaper y'know. But I would come up here all the time to go to Roscoe's or Sidetrack or Spin back in the day. It was fun because all of these white boys would think I'm this dangerous South Side nigga. I remember this one skinny white boy that I met at the gym around here that I hooked up with. He kept asking if I was in a gang and what it was like to live in the ghetto. I know that Chatham isn't the ghetto, but man did it get this boy off.

At his story, I questioned whether he would actively play up being a thug, to which he replied, "a little bit, I guess, but not really. I knew a lot of guys wanted to get Blacked down, so I gave them the animal that they wanted – an aggressive top who didn't kiss and fucked all night. Hey, I kept my dick wet a lot because of it."

Though Izaak rebukes the notion that he actively played up being a thug, he did use stereotypes of hypersexuality and aggression to guide his sexual performances to be successful under the white gaze with men that desired the dangerous South Sider. "Do you still try and Black down guys be being an animal now?" Izaak laughs at my use of his words and replies: "nah, just doesn't work anymore. Hard to convince someone you're a thug when you're a lawyer living in a $1800/month apartment next to a weekly farmer's market. Now I'm just general Black North Sider." The fact that his change in residential location changed his ability to tap into controlling images and play with them successfully exemplifies the role in spatial location on these presentations. When Izaak was living on the South Side he was able to use his location to add authenticity to his presentations of Black, queerness under the white gaze. Capitalizing on

the stereotypes of the South Side as dangerous, his location provided an opportunity for him to contend with being an outsider within North Side white spaces by using sexual presentations that themselves fetishized his location. However, once moving to the North Side, the change in geographic location made him less able to leverage stereotypes of the South Side to engage in the same practices of self-fetishization, therefore calling into question the perceived authenticity of his performances under the white gaze.

6.4 Resisting the Stereotypes

Though men like Jadyn, Marcel, and Izaak are interested in crafting self-fetishized presentations to acquire erotic capital under the white gaze, albeit with differing levels of success, not all Black, queer men are interested in such practices. As demonstrated by some of Hakeem's friends, some Black, queer men either have no interest in white partners or have no racial preference, but do not desire to become someone's fetish. These men find themselves wanting to shield themselves from the white gaze, instead wanting to explore more diverse presentations of Blackness and queerness not tied to images designed for white spectators. Thus, instead of playing with racial and sexual stereotypes, these men seek to resist them in an attempt to explore different self-authored performances.

While at Club Escape, Quintin, a 33-year-old Black bartender at a downtown bar, describes to me and two other patrons sitting at the bar his last trip up North to Hydrate for their weekly Hip-Hop night. As this night is known for a more racially diverse population (compared especially to the predominately white residential population of Lakeview), Hydrate becomes a popular destination for many Black, queer men to travel to the North Side. Quintin describes his night as "alright" and ultimately "unsuccessful" as he neither was able to find a hookup nor found his sexual interest piqued throughout the night. Like Marcel, Quintin, too, changed his

Grindr profile to one showing his faceless torso, but his description text was less accommodating for the search for white partners reading: “What’s up Fam. You have a cool ass down to earth dude that is just looking for fun. NOT INTERESTED IN WHITE DUDE. Not interested in being your BBC top. Will block if you HMU.” His profile was structured to reflect his preference for men of color (specifically Latinos, by his own admission), however, he also made apparent his aversion to conforming to fetishized racial or sexual fantasies. Unlike Marcel who used such racialized imagery to reframe the narrative catering to white men’s fetishes, Quintin resisted such expectations.

When asked to expand further on his Grindr profile and his unsuccessful night, Quintin describes:

> I’m not a racist or anything; I’m just not interested in white guys. It’s like I go up to Boystown and suddenly half of them think I’m going to jump them and the other half want to jump on me, so I get to deal with either being a wet dream or a criminal. I just want to listen to music, dance, and maybe fuck.

I nod along at his description and follow-up inquiring why, if his desired partner is not white, then why travel to Boystown, where most of the men are white. He continues:

> Cause I like it ‘round here, but it’s the same guys all the time. Even when going to the Pub; you just see the same people over and over again because they are the niggas that all live around here. I sometimes just want a different environment and to meet different people. But to tell you the truth, even the Black guys up there acting white with their superior attitudes and comments. Talking trash ‘bout the South Side because they be living up North.

Quintin's experience at Hydrate exemplifies the difficulties of Black, queer men outside of the gayborhood as they attempt to craft racial and sexual performances in resistance to cultural images and stereotypes. They make decisions about whether to contend with the more limited spaces and networks of their residential communities or more expansive networks outside of their residential community, where resistance to self-fetishized presentations are less likely to be rewarded. One such strategy to address this difficulty is to use Black, queer spaces on the South Side as arenas to police white-centric racialized fetishes and allow for the more liberating exploration of other racial and sexual presentations. Rashaad (29, Black, SS), a life-long South Sider, frequently described to both Dajon and me how he prefers the Jeffery Pub to other queer venues throughout the city because he doesn't feel tokenized and can act more like himself.

On a Saturday night, I get into Jeffery Pub a little before 6pm intending to get a seat before the rush of the eventual club-goers later in the evening. As I enter the bar, I see a group of regulars and say hi to everyone as I walk to an empty seat next to Rashaad, whom I've only seen a couple times before. "Rashaad, right?" I ask. He nods and replies, "you that white boy that always up in here. Morgan or something?" I laugh at his characterization, though am impressed he remembered my name given that we had barely interacted. As Dajon comes over with a beer, I end up taking it and we catch up, while Rashaad and his friends chime in at various moments. As the evening progresses and more patrons come to the bar in preparation for the DJ tonight, Rashaad grabs his Hennessey with a splash of orange juice as he turns to say something to the DJ getting ready in the DJ booth. As he moves around, he gets bumped by a younger Black man in True Religions and a grey tank top, who scoffs under his breath and proceeds to keep walking. Rashaad yells, "excuse you." Both the man and his apparent friend next to him turn around,

which prompts Rashaad to continue: “don’t think you can come in here looking like some thug, bumping into people, and thinking you own the place.”

At Rashaad’s outburst, the two men walk away without comment. As Rashaad turns back around to his friends and the bar, he takes another sip of his drink as one of his friends is giving him a pointed look. He gives him a look back and says: “What? They just rude and thirsty. Guys like that be coming in here and making trouble. If they ain’t gunna act right then go somewhere else. Go down to the park or some.” Though seemingly an over-reaction to being accidentally bumped into at a bar, Rashaad’s outburst illustrates a common way men police the bounds of acceptable Black and queerness within these spaces. Unlike the North Side spaces where men like Jadyn and Marcel craft their sexual presentations to please the white gaze, these South Side spaces provide an opportunity for Black, queer men to resist the explicitness of the white gaze.

In a more in-depth conversation with Rashaad and two of his friends on a humid summer night during one of our go-along interviews, he further discusses his personal feelings around conforming versus challenging certain racial and sexual stereotypes:

> **Rashaad**: These men in here ain’t thus. They ain’t out here hustlin’. They come into Jeffery Pub or Club Escape and act all hard and tough. Really they actin’ the fool. That shit may fly up North, but I live down here ‘round them. Grew up with a lot of them. They are sissies just like the rest of us.
>
> **Friend 1**: They just want to act tough.
>
> **Rashaad:** Right. But them corner boys ain’t tough. Why they tryna be them. They just always stirring shit up tryna be something they ain’t.
>
> **Friend 2**: Why you ever care? Some of them Disciples are fine.

> **Rashaad:** They ain't Disciples. They ain't even thugs. Like listen, bangers don't come in here. Bruh, who you foolin'? It's like those DL niggas. How you telling me you DL and at a gay bar. These men just be lying tryna be something tough. Wish they'd admit it. You a sissy. You fuck men. Probably get fucked by men. Stop playin'.

Rashaad's position illustrates one of the commonalities among Black, queer men who resist relying upon racialized images to craft their sexual performances, namely, the policing of Black, queer men who draw on these stereotypes to guide their sexual presentations. The outburst in the bar, thus, was less about the specific situation and more about Rashaad's challenge to Black, queer men that use dress, iconography, and temperament to emulate images such as the thug or the gangbanger.

The challenging of self-fetishized performances was a common tactic used by Black, queer men who sought to create more diverse and expansive presentations of Black, queer masculinity. Strategies of resisting sexual and racial stereotypes were common in venues such as the Jeffery Pub or Club Escape due to their location within predominately Black neighborhoods and communities. Though the location of these venues allowed men like Rashaad to resist such stereotypes by placing them outside of white neighborhoods and the white gaze, it was also in these locations that challenges arose about how best to navigate non-stereotypical presentations of Blackness. Unlike venues in queer neighborhoods, queer venues outside of such gayborhoods have to contend with patrons negotiating discursively queer presentations within the bar and acceptable Black presentations outside of it.

Walking into Jeffery Pub one rainy Saturday afternoon, I join Lamar (59, Black, SS), who is behind the bar, along with two patrons who stopped in for a drink while waiting for the

bus. One of the men, Raul (26, Blatino, SS) is showing off a picture of his boyfriend Derek (25, Black, SS) at a party for his birthday. With his boyfriend in drag, Lamar quips that he "couldn't be walking around here like that." Raul curtly replies, "my boyfriend knows how to come correct" before slamming his money on the bar, pushing his chair, and hastily exiting the bar.

Although a mixture of defending his boyfriend, a tad too much to drink, and worrying about missing the bus, this exchange and the emotions expressed illustrate the tensions faced by those who resist more traditionally masculine presentations, both inside and out of the bar. Though Lamar's quip speaks more to his opinions of the surrounding community and safety, it signals the stereotype that Black, queer men must conform to the controlling images of hypermasculinity to gain respectability within the Black residential community. Though this viewpoint was held most by the afternoon old-timers at Jeffery Pub, it was also present among the younger club-goers of both the Jeffery Pub and Club Escape. Staff and patrons at both South Side venues repeatedly discussed the relationship between these queer clubs and the communities in which they were located. For example, bartenders Lamar and Booker (56, Black, SS), would talk about the types of behavior that one could engage in within the bar, but which should be avoided outside of it. Booker described, "if you want to come up in here and get down with another nigga, you can. But you sure as hell not do that out there (points out the window)." Lamar, on another night, expressed, "everyone around here knows that type of bar this is. And most won't give you any problem. But that don't mean you spread your business around." The division of acceptable resistance to stereotypes is commonly reference by the colloquial expressions of "comin' correct" or "actin' right" – both, in this context, refer to one's ability to adeptly recognize the differences in social norms between spaces and adjust one's behaviors accordingly.

Similar to the ways that those that play with self-fetishism must attune to the spaces, contexts, and situations in which they present their performances in order to be read as both intelligible and authentic, those who structure their performances in opposition or resistance to these images must also acknowledge the context in which such performances yield erotic success. Chaquille (27, Black, SS), a local resident of South Shore, discusses how he balances his acting within his residential community and his presentations within Club Escape:

> I live close to the bar, just on the other side of the Jewel really, so it's an easy walk. And I'm a bigger guy, so isn't like anyone is going to mess with me. When I was to the bar, though, I just like to throw on my hoodie and jogger and keep my head down. No reason to draw attention. No reason to really talk to anyone. There aren't many people out here anything. But I will also take my hoodie off when here, though. Like to show off a little (he points to his arms and laughs).

Once in Club Escape, Chaquille describes himself as a "power bottom," using more markedly feminine mannerisms and performances to attract his desired partner, who he describes as a masculine, Black top. In resisting assumptions of the hypermasculinity of Black men, Chaquille draws upon a wider range of sexual and gender performances to attain erotic capital within the space. Such strategies like Chaquille's become successful with the Black, queer venues as they provide a dislocation from the larger heterosexual neighborhood and a reprieve from the white gaze. The ability to resist stereotypes and explore more expansive facets of Black, queer sexuality aids in the search of potential partners by allowing for a broader structure of erotic desire. As Green (2008) constructs in his delineation of the three features of a sexual field, structures of desire reflect the ways that sexual schemata are typologically organized in a hierarchical relation to one another, setting the rules of the game for a specific field. In the case

of the Black, queer venues, the structures of desire for Black, queer men are able to be relatively more extensive than their white counterparts, allowing for the opportunity for more sundry sexual demonstrations to be rewarded and desired by partners.

The discursive dislocation of these queer venues provides spaces that simultaneously allow for the exploration of Black identity and the protection of a queer one, benefits those Black, queer men that seek to resist the powerlessness of sexual and racial stereotypes in limiting their presentations and performances. Raul's boyfriend, Derek, who sometimes performs as a drag queen, demonstrates the power in the utility of these spaces when replying to Booker's question of why he does drag:

> I played sport and did the athlete thing. Stayed in the closet too long. It's boring after awhile. The first time that I went to a drag show, my other gay friends love the queen, but they all agreed that she wasn't attractive. Wasn't masculine. Apparently, she was good enough to give tips to and dance along with, but not to fuck. I remember thinking: why are we doing this? Why are we all trying to look like rappers? Or bangers? Why do we want to be the guys that treat us like shit? Once I started doing drag, I started to realize that I didn't have to act that way. Like I unlearned what it was like to be a man in order to perform as a woman.

Clearly, Derek has been asked this question many times, especially as a 6 foot, solidly built, Black man. However, he was able to lift the veil of controlling image expectations and begin to disambiguate cisheteromasculine expectations from his sexual performances and ultimately create and benefit from spaces that allowed personal and sexual rewards for such presentations. When asked by another patron, "that's cool and all, but do you fuck when you are all up in drag," Derek gives a half smile and responds, "please, I get hit on all the damn time around here.

Remember, a lot of the most masculine guys around here that act like kings are all just waiting and wanting to take home this queen (snaps fingers)."

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the interpersonal strategies that Black, queer men use to contend with unequal access to urban, sexual space, and the effects they have in stratifying potential sexual partner networks. Contrary to static arguments of the inherently problematic nature of racialized and sexualized imagery, these men were able to employ distinct, but related, strategies to use these images in their structuring of sexual performances to be successful in their respective fields. As Laumann et al (2004) argued, the placement of sex markets has a significant effect in structuring networks of potential partners. The fact that Boystown has agglomerated queer sex markets means that such spaces are readily used by their predominately white and middle-class communities, therefore reflecting those values and ideals. As the Black, queer men that played with race illustrated, the ability to reconstitute one's sexual and racial narrative allows one to break the bind of representation (Shimizu, 2005) and craft erotically desired presentations of race (Nash, 2014) through self-fetishism (Miller-Young, 2008). Men like Jadyn and Marcel self-fashion their front stage presentations as ways to capitalize on how the white gaze views Blackness to be sexually successful. Thus, the playing of racial stereotypes can help men outside of the gayborhood, especially Black men, contend with both geographic and social costs of pursuing partners, by portraying themselves as exotic and desired sexual subjects.

Not all Black, queer men find utility or solace in the appropriation of self-fetishism or the crafting of performances that seek to reap benefits under the white gaze. This chapter has shown that Black, queer sexual venues provide a place for such men to craft and be rewarded for more diverse presentations of Blackness and Black queerness. As shown by the men who turn to local

spaces to find partners, they actively police the space, allowing for an environment that lifts of the veil of the white gaze as an attempt to explore other *types* of sexual arrangements. As Rashaad calls out patrons that he believes too closely conform with the racial stereotypes of Black, he helps to create an environment where men like Chaquille are able to use to explore presentations of Black, queer sexuality that are not explicit tied to stereotypes of aggressiveness, masculinity, or assertiveness. By Chaquille working to create boundaries in his own presentations within and outside of these queer venues, he helps in establishing social norms that allow these Black, queer venues outside of the gayborhood to provide an explicit border between the queer world and the straight one. Finally, these borders allow for men like Derek to explore, challenge, and experience diversely novel forms of racialized sexual presentations. In sum, these interactive strategies of playing with or resisting sexual and racial stereotypes show the costs that those outside of the gayborhood endure in contending with spatial inequality and asymmetrical partner distribution. In the follow chapter, I will detail the ways that those outside of the gayborhood, create, produce queer space outside of marked queer places (such as bars and clubs) clarifying the ways that new types of queer place can address structural lopsidedness in the placement of venues and therefore the search for queer community.

Chapter 7 Staying South

"Where is Quan (27, Black, South Side) and Navier (29, Black South Side)" Marquis asks no one in particular while sitting at the bar at Jeffery Pub. "I think they went up to Hydrate. Isn't Hydrate doing something with hip-hop tonight" replies one of the regulars who doesn't look up from his phone. Marquis shakes his head as he pulls out his phone and sends a text message to Quan asking if he is planning on coming out to the club tonight. While not waiting for a response, Marquis turns to me and says, "I don't know why them niggas always be going up there. They never find anyone to fuck and its hella expensive compared to around here." Though both Quan and Navier are some of Marquis's closest friends, his personal aversion to going to Boystown as opposed to hanging out in his residential neighborhood of South Shore frequently made him critical of the motivations for his friends to partake in the gayborhood. On multiple occasions, Marquis was one of the most vocal opponents to the gayborhood lamenting the types of people who live in Lakeview, the trouble caused by many of the bar owners, the time and cost of traveling, and the cost of drinks at the various bars. Aside from his personal aversion to the gayborhood, Marquis's critiques were shared by many of my South Side participants that either sought to locate queer space and community outside of the white, middle-class gayborhood or a desire to imagine queer space within the extant locales of their residential communities. Regardless of motivation, many Black, queer men, in particular, developed strategies to find queer space and community within their South Side locations.

Despite this motivation, the imagination and placement of queer space in Chicago's South Side were not without their own structural challenges. In a comparable, but opposite way,

to how the agglomeration of queer space helped to facilitate circuits of locations during one's night out, the marked lack of queer space structurally denied the same ability for South Side queer men. Thus, unlike gayborhood leisure locations that could afford to cater to certain clienteles, themes, or populations, South Side queer leisure locations were frequently required to balance competing interests and populations within the larger urban, queer community. Furthermore, without the ease of reliable public transportation, the few South Side locations were challenging to navigate thus forcing many of the men to either develop strategies to move about urban space without transportation or forego incorporating multiple locations during one's night out. Considering the structural differences between lack of spaces and unreliable transportation options, South Side queer men, particular Black, queer men, were required to address such structural challenges finding innovative and strategic ways to develop, cultivate, and participate in queer leisure on the South Side. From conflicts between groups of queer people within the same space to an inability to create leisure circuits, I delve into the various structural challenges faced by Black, queer men outside of the gayborhood and the resulting complications in addressing these challenges. To illustrate these points, I begin with a discussion on how the agglomeration of queer resources within the gayborhood leads queer men broadly throughout the city to associate "queer" with "Boystown," while allowing those who live in the gayborhood to be relatively unknowing about other queer spaces and requiring those who live outside of it to become increasingly expansive with their sexual maps of the city. Then, i particularly focus on marked queer spaces on the South Side and the challenges of having spaces accommodate multiple purposes, points, and people. Finally, I delve into the complications created by a lack of transportation resources and how this lack of resources is further exacerbated by few and far between queer places.

7.1 Are there gay bars outside of Boystown?

The agglomeration of queer space on the North Side didn't simply impact queer men's experiences within North Side queer spaces; it also impacted the North Siders consumption of queer spaces outside of the gayborhood. Just as Matt couldn't think of queer spaces outside of the gayborhood, many North Siders found themselves hesitant, oblivious, or opposed to searching for and using South Side queer spaces. For example, on a late Tuesday night, I decide to grab some fries at Big Jim's before going to the train to go home. Once I get to the restaurant, the bar is almost completely open with only an older Black man sitting at the far left side. I decide to sit at the bar, order a beer and fries, and then pull out my phone. Before I'm halfway done with my beer, the older gentlemen, has grabbed his beer and has moved just one stool away from me. "So how is your night, young man?" I look up from me phone, give a slight smile, and tell him that my night is going well and ask how his night is going. He says that it is going well and that he just came out for some dinner because his partner was working late and he got hungry. After our initial introduction, we spent the next couple of hours talking as both he and I ate. He inquired about what I was up to that night and I said that I was at Progress Bar for a bit and then met a friend at Sidetrack for one drink before coming here and was getting ready to head home. He asks me how Progress was tonight and I reply that they had some pretty good music and definitely a lot of dancing, but not as busy as it usually was. When asked where I usually go, I respond Jeffery Pub has become my usual haunt, especially on a Tuesday. He looks inquisitively at me and says, "The gay bar down south?" I respond yes and ask if he has ever been. He laughs and says, "Nah. I ain't ever go down there. I'm surprised some white boy like you is down there." We discuss how I live on the South Side and have been going to Jeffery Pub

for years which he replies to by saying that I should move to Lakeview because there are better bars, it's a safer community, and there's just more to do.

Commonly hearing this reaction, I asked him if he ever goes to any of the gay bars outside of Boystown, specifically those down south and he says, "You're telling me that there is more than one gay bar down south? Never knew that." Though no one would be expected to know every venue across the city, this gentlemen's lack of knowledge about South Side queer venues and his resulting surprise at learning that there is more than one, was generally the response from North Siders. By agglomerating queer space within few communities, the other queer spaces across the city become both less known and less utilized to those outside of the neighborhoods in which that are located, resulting in stark differences in the consumption of these South Side spaces.

7.2 South Side Queer Spaces

These differences center on how queer men utilize the various places and how they moved about them. The dense concentration of queer spaces facilitated North Siders, like James and Trent, in just showing up, walking around, and finding one's desired venue, space, or field. Furthermore, as Cameron illustrated, the benefits of this density is that when one place is "dead" or when one is unsuccessful, one can easily move to a new place. However, in locations where queer space is far scarcer, the strategy of "just walking around" is ineffective and the benefit of just moving from one field to the next is inexistent. Thus, South Side queer men have to leverage few spaces to meet many desires and purposes. By not having a plethora of queer sexual spaces, the spaces exist must be able to be used for a variety of purposes. Unlike the bars in Boystown that come to be known for catering to specific clientele (such as Sidetrack being known for an older crowd) or used for specific purposes (such as Roscoe's being known for dancing), South Side queer bars

must accommodate various clienteles and purposes. For example, Jeffery Pub, one of the two South Side gay bars caters to both queer men and women, young people and old, and individual desiring community and others desiring sex. To meet these various purposes, the Pub hosts a series of themed nights catering to specific clienteles (such as Forbidden Fridays as ladies' night and Blame it on the alcohol Saturdays catering to queer men) and has extended hours (hosting an older and more community centered crowd in the late afternoons and early evenings and a younger, freakier crowd in the late evenings and early mornings). Though the extended operating hours and theme nights help to allow the space to be diversely utilized, there are frictions that exist when different crowd collide. Consider a Tuesday night event:

I get a text from Lee that there is going to be an event held at the Pub around 7pm tonight and that I should check it out. When I ask what the event is, he explains that it is sponsored by the Chicago Black Gay Men's Caucus and it will include a variety of coming out experiences of various gay, Black men. I reply that the event sounds interesting and end up getting on the bus from my house to head over to the pub. As I get there, I end up grabbing a stool at the far end of the bar as Lee gets me a Miller Lite and says that the event should be happening around 7:30. As the evening is still early, I end up talking with some of the others at the bar, as the security guards and one of the night bartenders sets up chairs by the main stage. As they are getting set up, a group of women walk in and flag down Lee to ask when the Quare Square lesbian performance reading will start. He replies that tonight the Caucus has the space as the women, the organizer as it turned out, pulls out her phone to show an email confirmation that they reserved the space. Not knowing how to advise, Lee calls the owner and discusses the situation. Jamal, the owner, tells Lee that he doesn't know, but they got double booked and will need to share the space. At the telling of this situation, both the organizers for the Caucus and for Quare

Square are visibility and audibly annoyed this solution. As 8pm comes around and Lee gets off his shift, he ends up sitting at the bar next to me as the mixed lesbian performance reading / gay black men's coming out stories event begins.

During the event, in which the crowd comprised both of men who came out for the Caucus event and women who came out for the Quare Square event, there remain a series of tensions and frustrations, most notably from the organizers. "Hey, will the brothas at the bar, shut the fuck up? This young woman is trying to tell her truth and you are being loud as fuck. Damn" shouts the Quare Square organizer at two young Black men sitting at the bar talking and laughing at the spoken word poetry. "We're sorry. Continue on talking about your first period" one of the men says as multiple men burst out laughing. The performer continues. After the first performances, I see Dante who has walked in and invite him to come and sit with Lee and me. He sits next to me, orders a drink, and asks what is going on. As I recount the situation that unfolded earlier and how this event has become an amalgamation of the two organization's events, he shakes his head and quips that both of the organizers hate each other and he asks if there has been shouting yet. I laugh as I nod my head before the Quare Square organizer tells Dante and I to "shut up and be respectful." He rolls his eyes and we continue listening. After about 30 more minutes, the Quare Square presentations end which prompts not only a round of applause but the exodus of every woman from the space. The Caucus organizer responds to such exodus by inquiring how Quare Square can demand respect from them and their audience members and then just up and leave, citing such a move as "rude." "Fuck off, we will never be using this space again" the Quare Square organizer remarks as she leaves.

As the Caucus event comes to a close, Dante, Lee, and I continue to drink and talk at the bar. "So, that was intense" I say to no one in particular. Dante smiles and says that this has

happened multiple times before, usually when the Pub will plan a ladies' night or a guys night and then something happens. Overhearing Dante's comment, Marquis, a Black 34-year-old regular himself adds, "Yeah, but I just don't understand why all them girls get so angry? Why don't they do their event on ladies' night? They come in here and just take over the space and then upset when other people don't want to do their event." Marquis's comment on Quare Square hosting their performance on ladies' night, which is known as Forbidden Fridays, was a common sentiment among the queer men whenever lesbian events were scheduled or planned, usually sparked by the fact that many of the queer male regulars didn't show up at the bar on Fridays. Then tensions that arose during the Quare Square / Caucus situation were emblematic of the larger pressures for South Siders to leverage few spaces to meet multiple purposes. Not only for queer men, but also for queer women, spaces like Jeffery Pub were crucial in the structuring of South Side queer leisure because, as Lee pointed out, "there's nothing else around."

The lack of alternate queer spaces had implications that transcended just who used the space and when, but also how people used the space and why. For example, when Cameron found himself on the North Side not enjoying one space, he was able to benefit from the multitude of alternate spaces in order to find another. His decision to move about sexual fields reflect Green's (2011) argument around the interactional structure of sexual fields where one not only has to learn the game and craft successful performances, but also come up with strategies to "save face" when unsuccessful. In Cameron's situation, he was able to change sexual fields when he wasn't successfully in one field due to a lack of other patrons and avoid another field fearing being unsuccessful due to a failed hookup. Cameron was ultimately able to play the sexual field by simply moving among the various options.

This strategy is ultimately curtailed when spaces become limited and alternate options become few. For instance, the contention between Quare Square and the Caucus stemmed not only from an organizational mistake, but from the lack of alternate venues from which to select to hold these events. Though the organizer of the Quare Square event may have pledged to not return (which wasn't followed through upon given their event in the following month), the reality is there are no other spaces around the neighborhood or even the surrounding neighborhoods where such event could be held. This reality is experienced not only by the negotiation of events or theme nights, but also by the South Side patrons that utilize such spaces. Unlike the sexual fields described by Green (2008) where individuals selectively choose spaces where such sexual games and status orders are learned, played, and performed with the intent of individuals finding the fields where they are successful, South Side queer spaces house multiple fields within the same space, requiring individuals to contend with multiple games and status orders in their pursuit of sexual partners and communities.

Marquis, who frequently lamented Forbidden Fridays at Jeffery Pub as Friday was one of his nights off and he was relegated to Club Escape to find other queer men, described: "I'm not really into the thuggish guys, so Club Escape doesn't really do anything for me. But it's the only place around on Friday and I want to just stay around here. I guess I could get on Jack'd, but same thing really. I still go to Club Escape and guess I just hope to find someone hot that thinks I'm hot too. Ain't like there is anything else I can do 'round here." Marquis associated Club Escape as catering primarily to "thuggish" guys, which was a common association given the non-descript location of the club, the stripper entertainment, and its reputation as a popular DL hangout, however, also noted that he still used it despite not finding the men or the location particularly desirable. Furthermore, Marquis was rarely sexually successful at Club Escape given

his more feminine and mild-manner appearance and personality. Under ideal circumstances where such queer spaces are more readily available, Marquis could both recognize that he was unsuccessful within such field and select another once, however, given the scarcity of alternative spaces, he was burdened with trying to negotiate other games and status orders within fields where he's unsuccessful.

7.3 Traveling Around the South Side

After waiting almost 30 minutes for the J14 bus, Cassius, annoyed, grabs my arm and says that we should just walk to the [Jeffery] Pub. A born and bred South Sider, but recent transplant to South Shore, Cassius, a newly promoted sales associate, describes how part of his move to South Shore was because of an easier commute to his downtown job: "Being over in Roseland, there ain't shit. But I thought that moving here would be better, but I ain't got a car and the buses still shit. How does a bus not come for 30 minutes?" As we are walking along Jeffery Boulevard, the J14 bus finally drives by as Cassius screams "fuck" while flipping it off. I laugh and say, "isn't that how it always goes? You spend all the time waiting for a bus that doesn't come and then leave and it comes?" He pulls down his sunglasses and looks at me perturbed before walking on. As we get to Jeffery Pub after about a 10-block walk, we both sit down at the bar and Lee comes over to give me a hug and to ask if I want a beer. I respond "yes" as Cassius orders a Hennessey neat and we relax in the cool air conditioning of the bar.

After finishing our first drink, Lee walks over with another and asks what we are doing for the rest of the day. As he makes a sexual comment about both of us, I laugh, and say that we were planning on going up to Hydrate, but spent an awful amount of time waiting for the J14 bus so decided to come here instead. Lee nods his head in apparent agreement as he says that the J14 bus has been running behind schedule all week, as has bus 15 and the night bus, N5, the other

two buses that service this part of South Shore. This time, I nod along as Cassius pulls out a cigarette and goes into the back courtyard area to have a smoke. While gone, Lee and I talk about how our respective weeks are going as two more regulars walk into the bar. We all exchange greetings as they take the two seats on the side of me, and Cassius returns from outside. "Are there no buses running today?" asks one of the newly entered men. "We were just over at Club Escape and wanted to grab the bus at 75th, but we waited and waited and then decided to just walk." Lee comments that we were just talking about this as Cassius adds that "nothing in this fucking city works right anymore."

Though Cassius's reaction to a delayed and missed bus may appear to be an over-reaction to the situation, his anger more aptly illustrates the frustration that many South Siders experienced when dealing with few public transit options. Unlike North Siders who could draw from trains, buses, and rideshares to meet their mobility needs, South Siders were rarely provided such options, usually only having either bus routes or train routes as being accessible. Without these options, these men had to be strategic in how to plan for and utilize transit options in structuring their nightly round. In the case of Cassius and me, he adapted to inefficient transportation options to the North Side by changing his intended venue. This strategy was frequently used by South Siders who met difficulty with transportation with adjustments to their nightly rounds. Given that most of the queer spaces are located on the North Side, the result of this strategy was usually replacing North Side nights out with South Side locations. For both Cassius and Deshawn, planned trips to events like drag shows or venues like Hydrate were predicated on leaving at the right time and having the transportation options to do so.

Though queer sexual spaces may be disproportionately located on the North Side, transportation issues didn't only impact movement to the North Side, but rather also mitigated

how South Siders were able to move about marked queer spaces within their own communities. While the case of Cassius exemplifies how South Siders contended with transportation inefficiencies moving about the city by replacing North Side venues with closer and more accessible South Side ones, it doesn't illustrate the persistent difficulties that many South Side queer residents had to address when navigating localized movement within their own neighborhoods. Such localized movement was impacted by transit constraints in two significant ways: accessing reliable transportation to move about spaces and negotiating safety while doing so. Though nightly rounds to the North Side began with discussions about how to get there, nightly rounds around the South Side typically began with questions of whether it was even possible. For instance, when South Shore resident and Jeffery Pub regular, Jerome (29, Black, SS) described the marked queer spaces that he made use of in his neighborhood, he emphasized that his desire to go to the Jeffery Pub was more about close proximity to his residence than a particular fondness for the bar over alternative options, specifically Club Escape. When asked to elaborate, he said: "I've been to Club Escape a few times, but it's far away and niggas be crazy out here. I ain't wanna be walking around there at night." His comment, said at the exact moment that the Pub's jukebox was between songs caught the attention of two of the older regulars, Denise (58, Black, SS) and Thomas (61, Black, SS), who joined in the conversation by mentioning that Club Escape is also "not by anything else" and that is why "no one goes up there to that overpriced, trashy joint."

To the credit of both Denise and Thomas, Club Escape is tucked away in a small building across from a small shopping center and around a gas station, two auto repair replaces, a check-cashing location, multiple empty "for rent" store-fronts, and a variety of residential two-flats. It's location away from other sites of leisure and its hours spanning long after the closing of places

like the grocery store and the body shops contribute to its reputation of being in a less accessible location than the Jeffery Pub. The claims of no one going to Club Escape was more hyperbole of Denise and Thomas, both of whom had a preference for the Pub and neither of whom had been to the Club in years. However, the clientele of Club Escape tended to be far more localized than other marked queer venues including both Jeffery Pub which was frequented by a more expansive south side population and North Side venues that drew a crowd from around the city. A Club Escape regular, Reggie (36, Black, SS) explained how this was partially due to transit difficulties in getting to and from the bar. He elaborated on how he only lives a few block away, by the hospital, and is neither a "small guy nor hood nigga," so he didn't have a problem walking to and from the bar. Similar to Jerome and his preference for Jeffery Pub, Reggie was motivated by close physical proximity, which allowed him less restricted access than those that had to contend with various transit options. However, others that sought to locate queer participation at Club Escape would have to address limited public transportation options (including no train stations, few buses, and no overnight bus service) and unsafe parking options (both the grocery store parking lot and the neighborhood street parking are known places for car thieves). When asked how others find their way to the Club, Reggie comments that "they either live around here or come here with friends that do."

While both Reggie and Jerome utilized their close proximate location to their respective South Side queer leisure locations as a primary explanation for why they selected such spaces, their overall comments regarding difficulties in moving around their neighborhood were regularly expressed by South Siders. It was common to hear discussions of queer men selecting one site or the other due to living near them, having access to a particular bus (such as the J14 facilitating access to Jeffery Pub or the 28 facilitating access to Club Escape), or having friends

that had cars and didn't mind driving. These discussions didn't simply illuminate how mobility considerations led one person to select one venue over another, but also explained why these marked South Side queer venues were not utilized in a circuit-like fashion as compared with the experience of those using North Side venues. Despite being about a mile away, queer men infrequently combined both Club Escape and Jeffery Pub into their same nightly rounds, usually echoing the sentiments expressed by Reggie and Jerome, that they either didn't live near the locations or lacked the desire or resources to feasibly move about them. Further curious about the intentional lack of using these marked queer spaces as circuits in one's nightly round, I text Dante to see if he would meet me for a drink at Jeffery Pub. Apparently starved for a night activity, he replies almost instantly, "ight. You buy the first drink."

We meet up at Jeffery Pub right before 8pm when Lee is off shift (and before the drink prices increase) and place orders for multiple drinks to lock in the lower rate. "Wassup shorty" Dante says with his usually deep voice and calm demeanor. I smile as we end up talking with some of the regulars that are also sitting at the bar and playing music from the jukebox. "Doesn't your friend the DJ, Ruff 'N' Stuff, play over at Club Escape on Saturdays?" I ask Dante as he turns in his chair and faces me. "Yup. Why?" "Just curious. Should we go over and see him?" I follow-up. "Nah. We already here. And you've seen him before. He's good, but not like, leave what I'm doing and go listen good." Dante replies while pulling out a cigarette. "Want to come out with me as I smoke?" I say yes and follow him out to the back courtyard. While outside and sitting on the bench, I ask Dante why he goes to either Club Escape or Jeffery Pub, but rarely both in the same night; especially as I have been with him as he has moved among spaces on the North Side. He remarks, "Dunno really. Just usually ain't wanna walk. And I tend to come here first, so I'd be walking there and then walking back. I guess I could, but I don't." I nod at his

explanation, which makes sense when considering that he does like closer to the Jeffery Pub than to Club Escape. “We should do it sometime. Grab a drink here and then go to Club Escape for one of their shows” I add optimistically. Dante laughs while finishing his first cigarette and lighting another while he says no. “Why Not” I ask. Dante answers:

> ‘Cause them shows be happening late and ain’t gunna be walking around these corners that late. Especially with a white boy (points at me). You see those kids on the corner out there? Yeah, they ain’t selling newspapers or spreading the word of god.

As I furiously make notes in my phone,[1] I say that he frequently goes to multiple bars and clubs when he goes up North or will pregame with friends at his apartment before going to the Jeffery Pub or other non-queer locations such as the Falcon Inn. He shakes his head and provides a toothy smile: “That’s different. And you know that’s different.” “How?” I say as he sits down next to me on the bench, which prompts his reply:

> It’s different because those places [up North] are just like right there. Aint too hard to just walk next door or walk down a block. Here, there aint anything else. No lights, no stores, no buses. I’ve done it before and I’m not saying it’s dangerous or nothing, but it’s different.

As I have walked between these two South Side queer spaces at night frequently, Dante’s comment of the lack of certain resources such as streetlights, other businesses, and transportation option is well evidenced in the mobility around South Shore. More pertinently, however, is what is coded and alluded to in the ‘difference’ to which Dante discusses. The fact that North Side spaces are “just like right there” demonstrates how the closeness of such venues facilitate movement, especially in contrast to the South Side where “there ain’t anything else.” The

difficulty of transit and movement between these venues further exacerbated the limited options on the South Sides by making it challenging for many to utilize these spaces in concert within their nightly rounds. Thus, not only are South Siders burdened with more limited spatial options, but the lack of accessible and reliable transportation further mitigates the utility of these options.

While transportation concerns may have required South Siders to balance nights out with safely getting home on the North Side, they also had to confront such transportation difficulties in determining how long to stay out on the South Side. Though South Side neighborhoods don't benefit from the same density of queer spaces nor are the few spaces routinely arranged in one's nightly round, queer men were still required to balance transportation options and possibilities in structuring their night out. Unlike traveling to and from the North Side, the transportation questions were rarely about whether certain transportation options would be more time-intensive and centered more frequently on whether they were even possible. One of the reasons that many South Siders didn't utilize the South Side queer venues as part of a nightly round circuit was in part due to the distance and lack of transportation options connecting them. As Dante cites in his explanation of why he doesn't use both Club Escape and Jeffery Pub as part of a sexual circuit, the lack of proximity and available transportation makes movement challenging. However, another impact of transportation insecurity manifested itself in restricting how long individuals were out at these spaces altogether.

While sitting at Jeffery Pub talking to the bartender, TJ (32, Black, SS), I feel someone come up behind me and grab my shoulder. As I turn around, I see Lee and his friend Michael (61, Black, SS) come up behind me. I give them both a quick hug as they sit down and ask what is Lee doing here on his day off. He says that he and Michael were just at the Falcon and wanted to get a drink before heading home. I nod along as he describes his evening and I drink my beer

when he questions, “what are you doing here so late?” I check my phone and laugh that it is only 9:40 to which he responds that he usually sees me leave by 8. I laugh and say that he usually doesn’t see me on Saturday nights, which leads Booker (39, Black, SS, Straight), the security guard, to add: “yeah, this kid can clean up around here when he stay out late, shoo[1].” Everyone laughs as Michael buys a round for Lee and I and shots for us and TJ. As we finish our shots, Lee turns to me and asks if I’m going to stay for the drag show at 12pm and get turnt[2]. I laugh while saying no and mentioning that I will have to catch my bus much earlier than that because the J14 ended around 9:15, so I’ll have to take the 15 to the 47th Red Line station to go downtown and then finally to catch the bus 60. He responds, “whatever you say” with a Cheshire grin as he turns back to Michael.

“I hate how the J14 ends so early on weekends. Makes no sense” is what I hear from the guy sitting next to me on the other side. “Me, too” I respond. He takes a sip of his drink and asks, “can I buy you a drink?” I reply “sure,” and he orders me a Hennessy on the rocks. I pick up the drink, “I’m Morgan.” “Rashaad” he says. We both watch the BET music videos on the television while continuing to talk. Rashaad, a Black 26-year-old restaurant server dressed in a graphic print green hoodie with True Religion jeans and Nike Air shoes, talks about he lives further south and takes the J14 home, however, runs into difficulties with transportation when wanting to come out to the club at later times during the day, considering the bus stops early. I not in agreement and say that, for me, it means difficulties in staying out later on Saturday nights and enjoying the ‘Blame it on the alcohol’ events when my transportation home takes over 1.5 hours. “So you’re not staying out too much later tonight?” he asks. I reply, “not tonight, but I do usually like to stay out for the party every once in a while. My friend, Lee here (points to Lee) always is

talking about how the atmosphere changes later at night." "It's true" Lee quickly interjects. Rashaad smiles and adds "preach."

The change in atmosphere that Lee explicates, and Rashaad agrees with, is best articulated by TJ who describes the late night Saturday atmosphere as one where "people just get freakier. The drinks are flowing, the music is playing, and the dance floor is filled with niggas tryna get some." Especially on Friday and Saturday nights, which are presented as ladies and guys nights respectively, Jeffery Pub draws in its most significant crowds of the week. Rivaling its North Side queer counterparts, suddenly the quiet, tucked away bar boasts a line out the door replacing those sitting at the bar watching television to those on the dance floor dancing to music. From DJs to drag shows, the events at Jeffery Pub start around 11-11:30pm and continue on to the early hours of the morning.[3] Unlike the North Siders, such as Trent and Adam, who are able to leverage their close proximate access to their selected venues to be out until 1 or 2am and have access to multiple transportation options and safely get home, South Siders using South Side venues, even those in their same neighborhood, are faced with considering how one gets home as a significant factor in when to leave. For South Siders like Cassius and Deshawn who were adept at considering transportation options in their decision making of whether or not to travel to the North Side, they also were skilled at considering options of how to move about their own neighborhoods when using South Side venues.

Cassius, who despite his preference for the hip-hop scene at Hydrate, is a regular at Jeffery Pub usually finding himself there a few times a week from late afternoons to (relatively) early evenings (typically leaving by 8 or 9). Despite his youth and muscular build, he rarely finds himself at the Pub for Saturday evening festivities nor other late-night shenanigans. As we are both sitting at the bar on a rainy Wednesday afternoon, I ask why he never goes to the Saturday

parties. He replies: “Because I live [further south]. Those parties are fun, but if you’re looking to hookup then you gotta be here until 2 or so. That’s when these thirsty niggas start heading home. But I ain’t gonna be walking [that far] at 2.” Though Cassius never explicitly describes his neighborhood of South Shore as *dangerous* per se, he routinely mentioned a difference between ‘dangerous’ and ‘people actin’ stupid,’ as a reference to the level of interpersonal crime throughout the neighborhood (Chicago Tribune, 2021). For Cassius, the difficulty in navigating safe transportation options serves as a prohibiting factor for him to stay out late at night. Similar to other South Siders that recognize how the Pub changes its atmosphere late at night becoming a “freakier” place, transportation options, or the lack thereof, mitigates the ability to fully use the space. Thus, in a similar fashion to how South Siders miss out of the utility of North Side spaces as particular sexual marketplaces at later hours, they too are constrained in their abilities to use South Side spaces as sexual marketplaces due to an inability to safely and efficiently move about their own neighborhoods.

For Aiyden, when not at the Pub, he frequents local non-queer venues around his residential neighborhood. One reason he goes to the Pub as much as he does is that he has friends that drive and will frequently give him a ride on their nights out. Given this more expedient form of transportation Aiyden and his friends are frequently those who line up to get into the Pub late at night on Saturdays. Tonight, however, when asked where his friends were, he replies, “they didn’t want to come out tonight, so I just decided to come out here myself.”

As the night progresses, both Aiyden and I end up running into other guys that we respectively know and dance, chat, and drink together as the drag show happens and then the DJ starts playing music. At a little after 2am, I head to the back courtyard for some air and see Aiyden sitting on the picnic bench smoking a cigarette and looking on his phone. “How’s your

night going" I inquire, while taking a seat next to him. "Alright, I guess. I was chatting up this fine lightskin brotha and was going to take him home, but then he started talking about being a top and I'm a top, so I figured, whatever and just let it go. Then came out here. Want one?" Aiyden responds while offering me a cigarette, which I decline and respond about how that sucks about the guy. He takes another drag on the cigarette, nods, and puts his phone back into his pocket. I mention that I'm about to take off and he says that he'll come with me because "he's not finding any action tonight."

We both walk back into the Pub, give our goodbyes to the bartenders, and then walk to the front where Efrem and Khalan, the security guards, are standing. He both give them handshakes before walking through the door to the bus stop located right outside of the bar. "Bro, this bus is like 18 minutes out" Aiyden remarks as he checks to the N5 overnight bus that will take us to the 47th street Red Lines station to catch the Red Line north to the loop. After waiting 18 minutes for the bus, 28 minutes riding to the station, and 15 minutes for the Red Line train, we are finally on the train. "We should've just taken an Uber" Aiyden says as he rests his head on the handrail and laments how much longer public transit takes that his friends with a car. "You don't usually stay out at the Pub this late without your friends, do you" I inquire as we riding the train. He replies that he doesn't and when prompted as to why responds:

> Because this, bro. I wasn't planning on staying out this late tonight, but was having fun. It sucks because it'll be hours before I get home and then I just want to crash. I like my friends, but I also like that they have a car and I can just get a ride. Like, it only takes about 20 minutes to get home while driving and that's surface streets. We've been either on this train or waiting for this train well over

20 minutes. And look at these people (points to other passengers), they either homeless or crazy. This is the only problem with the Pub, getting home.

As the Red Line gets into the loop, Aiyden gets off a few stops before me in preparation for another bus to take him west to where he lives. I, too, once getting off the Red Line, wait for another night bus to take me back home. Once home, I give Aiyden a text to ensure that he got home safely, which he did, after our respective multi-hour commutes.

As Aiyden mentioned, one of the reasons he is hesitant to utilize Jeffery Pub at later hours without his friends is due to the lack of accessible transportation. Although he is able to utilize a serious of commuter transit options, the multiple buses and trains make such decision to stay out, not a financially costly one, but a time inefficient one. Like Aiyden, South Siders are frequently tasked either having to content with overly expensive and scare rideshare options or inaccessible and convoluted public transit ones while structuring their nights out. Not only do such transportation options constrain how one structures one's nightly round, but they also impact how long one can utilize various sites of sexual sociality.

7.4 Conclusion

The agglomeration of queer resources and spaces within the gayborhood do not only impact the ways that individuals come to understand the sexual landscape of the city, but also impact how people interact with the sexual landscape. For North Siders, Boystown becomes a centralized moniker for queer, urban life within the city in which they take-for-granted the existence of other queer life, spaces, or communities existing outside of the gayborhood. As evidenced by Matt's lack of knowledge about other spaces or questions on why anyone would seek to locate queer space outside of Boystown, the centralization of the gayborhood obfuscates the plurality of queer space. Thus, those outside of the gayborhood are increasingly tasked with developing strategies

to decenter its role in structuring their urban, sexual lives. As show in this chapter, multiple stakeholders must leverage a dearth of queer, sexual spaces (such as Jeffery Pub) in an attempt to produce queer place, which commonly leads to competition and strife in this negotiation (such as that between Quare Square and the Chicago Gay Men's Caucus).

In addition to this competition over limited space, Black, queer men outside of the gayborhood must contend with fewer urban resources that discount the laissez-faire strategies described in chapter 5 and instead create limitations in the creation of sexual circuits. Despite the numerous challenges, limitations, and difficulties faced by Black, queer men seeking to imagine queer community and space outside of the gayborhood, these men are adept at creating novel strategies to address such difficulties. Even as men like Cassius and Aiyden face challenges in moving about South Side spaces due to perceptions of potential crime and a marked lack of transportation resources, they find ways to address these challenges through leveraging interpersonal networks (such as relying on friends with cars) and selecting closely proximate spaces in which to participate. In sum, although the types of circuits, locations, and movement strategies differ greatly among those available in the highly resourced gayborhood and the comparatively less resourced South Side, Black, queer men are apt at finding their desired queer partners, communities, and spaces. In the following chapter, I further elaborate on the interpersonal and structural strategies that Black, queer men use to create novel forms of queer community by imagining queer space as ephemeral and fleeting. Through developing strategies to create queer space outside of marked locations (such as gayborhoods, gay bars, clubs, etc), these men illustrate the opportunities to not only decenter the gayborhood in understanding urban, queer community, but also to decenter the role of fixed, queer locations.

Chapter 8 Not a Gay Bar: The Search for Ephemeral Queer Community

As Zaire (29, Black, SS) and I reach our CTA Pink Line station and get off the train, his phone vibrates in the pocket of his jeans and he pulls it out, rolls his eyes, and shows me a home screen full of text messages from Jamir (33, Black, SS). The latest message reads, "we are all at the Hangout. Got the karaoke machine. Where tf r u? (sic)" "He knows we are coming from downtown. Don't know why he had to blow up my phone with this nonsense," Zaire comments as we start to walk down the stairs. Despite the slight annoyance in his voice, I know that Zaire is excited for what has become a biweekly karaoke night with some of his neighborhood friends at a local dive bar, because he spent about half our train ride explaining how this night came to be. He described:

> Jamir had just moved to Pilsen from Uptown. Maybe Andersonville. One of those neighborhoods up North. Well, he was crashing with Louis (38, Black, SS) when he first moved down here and kept inviting Louis to go up to Sidetrack for their Musical Mondays. I think he was trying to get a group going. Well, you know Louis, he wasn't going to haul his ass up North for some show-tune queens and fruity drinks. So, Louis started to bring him along to the Hangout bar. Then one day, he asked the owner, Jerry, if he had a karaoke machine and if he could use the extra room for a karaoke night. I think we were all surprised when Jerry said yes.

As Zaire and I exited the train station, now in the pouring rain, we quickly jaywalk across the street and head into the Hangout. As we walk in, we notice that both the owner, Jerry, and one of the other regular bartenders, Ronaldo, are behind the fully packed bar with patrons watching a basketball game. As we enter, I give Ronaldo a quick wave as I follow Zaire into the side room, where 7 guys are sitting around tables and booths underneath dim lights and facing a karaoke machine. As we walk over, Jamir's voice carries, "finally you are both here" and he gives both Zaire and I a quick peck on the cheek. "You know we were coming from the loop and the trains were delayed," Zaire comments as Jamir waves it away. "Morgan. Without a drink. It's almost criminal. Let's get you a drink honey" Jamir says as he wraps his arm through mine as we walk up to the bar.

Ronaldo comes over attentively and asks what we would like to drink. Jamir jovially replies, "Give me a cocktail that will make me make some bad decisions tonight." Ronaldo laughs at this request and quips back, "This is going to be your third drink, so I think bad decisions are guaranteed at this point." With a pointed stare, Jamir continues the banter, "Bitch, don't be counting my drinks." As this banter comes to an end, Ronaldo looks at me and asks, "PBR? Maybe a shot?" Knowing my regular drink, less the shot, that I get at the Hangout, I nod yes as I hand over a $20 bill and turn my attention back to Jamir. "So, you have a pretty big crowd today. All your friends?" I ask. "Some of them are. One I met here a few days ago and invited out. And you know the skinny white boys are some friends of Zaire. I think they work together. One wants to sing Mariah, so we get to do that later," Jamir replies as Ronaldo brings over my beer and shot and starts making his cocktail. "You like Mariah Carey, though," I retort as I take the shot. Jamir responds:

> Yeah, I guess. One of them just be talking 'bout how she Black and everything. I guess she is some mixed Black, but also not really. Just a weird comment to make to me who is Black. But I won't be shady all night to the white boys. I mean, I'm happy you're here.

He slides his arm through mine again as I jokingly respond, "good save," and Ronaldo brings his cocktail. We both thank Ronaldo for the drinks and return to the group.

The night continues with the men signing Aretha, Mariah, Frank Ocean, and others, with varying degrees of success. Though Jamir's attempt to not be "shady all night to the white boys" was less successful, the group drank, talked, and laughed alongside the backdrop of the music. The men discussed who they were hooking up with, where else they were going out, their jobs, their friends, and how frequently they came out to the Hangout because, as Jamir mentioned to two of them: "I've never seen you here in my life." As we were talking, it came out that all the men were local to the Pilsen neighborhood, living within walking distance of this bar. For most of them, this space was one where they came after work or to grab a quick drink before hopping on the train. As one of Jamir's suspicious white boys commented, "I come here a lot to watch the game with my roommate, but never knew that so many gay guys lived around here." Jamir quips back, "Yeah, we are everywhere in this city" while standing to go outside, in the still pouring rain, to have a cigarette.

As he walks out, Zaire, whom I barely talked to since getting off the train earlier, and I go up to the bar to get another drink. Despite almost two hours having passed, the bar remains completely packed with even the side tables full of patrons. As Ronaldo holds up his finger to indicate that he will be right with us, the owner, Jerry (late 40s, White, SS), walks over with a bag of pretzels and says: "Morgan, let me get you a cup of these pretzels, I know you like them."

I smile and thank him as he continues: “I’m not used to seeing you out this late. But then again, I am use to seeing you (points to Zaire) staying out here pretty late, so I guess makes sense. He drag you out here?” Jerry asks while handing me a cup of pretzels (which I do really enjoy). Zaire feigns an over-the-top hurt expression, while smiling and laughing. “Actually, Jamir was the one that invited me out for this karaoke night. I mean, Zaire has been begging me to come to have someone else who cannot carry a tune, so you’re partially right.” Again, Zaire plays along with his mannerisms as Ronaldo comes over and takes our drink orders. “I would have never thought you are a karaoke person” Jerry comments. Though not wrong, I reply sarcastically that “I would have never thought you would have a karaoke machine.” Jerry laughs at my response and agrees with me that he never thought he would end up getting a machine himself, but when Jamir asked if he had one and if he could use the side room for some karaoke events, he reluctantly said yes. He continued:

> To be honest, I was surprised because I didn’t think the gays still did karaoke. But what do I know? He and his friends are good customers and we don’t use that room that much, so figured, what the hell. But I told him that this isn’t a gay bar. I don’t mind the gays, but don’t want this place becoming a gay bar.

Jerry, a late 40-something, heterosexual, Irish bar owner who grew up on the South Side where he lived his entire life, had commonly expressed his concern of the Hangout becoming known as a gay bar, especially as his queer clientele continued to increase. Despite these concerns, however, the Hangout continued not to be known to neighborhood residents as a *gay bar,* and Jerry continued to welcome queer patrons… and gladly accepted their money. As Jamir re-entered the bar, now soaking wet, after smoking his cigarette, he took a sip of my beer and walked with Zaire and I back to the group. After we sit down and hear about the weather outside

from Jamir, I ask him, “Why did you start hosting these karaoke nights?” Jamir gives a large grin as if the question is a compliment and says, “Because they are like our own interactive version of Musical Mondays. Better music. Cheaper Drinks. And just as gay as ever.” At his response, it became clear: this may not be a queer bar, but it is a queer place.

Within this South Side neighborhood, queer men have to actively pursue queer place. Like others outside of the gayborhood, these men are presented with few, and costly, options to pursue queer space. They can choose to draw upon *vicarious* claims of citizenship and travel to North Side queer spaces where they negotiate being seen as “outsiders” or “tourists” within the gayborhood. In contrast, they could frequent some of the few queer establishments on the South Side and bear the economic and temporal cost of navigating unreliable transportation to and from the venues. In both cases, queer men must make decisions about what compromises they are willing to make to pursue queer place and community. However, as evidenced by Jamir, queer men outside of the gayborhood have a third option to respond to a lack of marked queer places within their residential neighborhoods. Namely, they imagine *ephemeral queer community* and create such community within and alongside their neighborhoods and their local leisure sites.

In this chapter, I draw upon Grazian’s (2005) “search for authenticity” framework to illuminate how queer men outside of the gayborhood search for authentically queer spaces within their residential communities and how they imagine queer place as ephemeral as a strategy to achieve such authenticity. First, I will outline how authenticity, especially as it relates to the nighttime economies of leisure, is constructed. Focusing on the argument that “authenticity itself can never be authentic, but always must be performed, staged, fabricated, crafted, or otherwise imagined” (MacCannell, 2013; Peterson, 2013; Fine, 2003; Grazian, 2005, 2018), I connect this search for authenticity to the creation and understanding of *ephemeral queer community.* I argue

that the creation of authentic queer place through ephemeral queer community is motivated and accomplished through strategies of either mimicking stable queer place or by imagining divergence from it. Using two non-queer, local, dive (or neighborhood) bars, the Hangout and Billy's Bar, as the backdrop for these strategies, I illustrate how queer men contend with lack of local venues through leveraging neighborhood spaces and community connections.

8.1 Search for Authenticity

As Grazian (2003) walks his readers through the urban jazz and blues clubs of Chicago in *Blue Chicago,* he frequently returns to questions of "authenticity." He holds up an analytic mirror to the various ways that patrons, staff, and spaces co-create "authentic" blues experiences through desires, performances, and presentations. This authenticity can "refer to a variety of desirable traits: credibility, originality, sincerity, naturalness, genuineness, innateness, purity, or realness" (Grazian, 2018: p. 191). Simply, authenticity is the ability for individuals to recognize something as legitimate or real. For example, the blues musicians and club owners have a vested interest in their patrons identifying the space and the music as authentic to attract commerce and recognition (Grazian, 2003). Likewise, other musical genres are also held to standards of authenticity to convince individuals of their legitimacy and value. Rap artists are expected by their listeners to "keep it real" and use specific racial and class imagery to be seen as "real," even when the artist flouts these requirements such as hailing from a middle-class neighborhood (McLeod, 1999). The search for authenticity within cultural products stems partially from a desire for individuals to gain status among their peers and within their environments (Peterson, 2005). For instance, Fine (2004) illuminates how untrained collectors, when collecting art, draw upon narratives about how they discovered an artist, especially in the cases in which such discovery happened in impoverished, rural, or destitute environments. In these cases, both the

producers and the consumers of experiences (Grazian, 2003) and products (McLeod, 1999; Fine, 2004) engage in exercises of symbolic production where they may disagree about the specific symbols that connote authenticity, but agree on the necessity of demonstrating it, especially given that this search is never ending (Grazian, 2003).

Grazian (2018) provides describes strategies for both the production of and search for authenticity including: (1) assigning authenticity, (2) staging authenticity, and (3) performing authenticity. This process begins with the mechanisms through which authenticity is produced: "As a socially constructed myth, authenticity is produced through discourses that valorize certain qualities and assign or attribute them to cultural objects" (Grazian, 2018: p.192). For example, the use of rainbow flags, cultural icons such as Lady Gaga or Madonna, and drag shows are cultural products that can be used demarcate authentic queer space. Once individuals understand cultural products as markers of queer space, one can use them to stage authenticity. As argued, "entertainment venues promote themselves on the basis of their staged authenticity and synthetic atmospherics" (Grazian, 2018: p. 193). Thus, for gay bars, the hosting of drag shows is one way that a space can be staged and ultimately sold to patrons as a queer venue. Especially in situations where unintended patrons utilize the space (for example, straight women going "on safari" in Boystown as described by Orne (2017)), the staging of venues is one way that they remain recognizable as queer spaces among changing patronage demographics. Finally, performing authenticity requires "elaborate strategies of impression management and emotional control" (Grazian, 2018: p. 6).

The cultural practices of assigning, staging, and performing authenticity are useful in understanding the various ways that individuals and spaces work to create marked places. For instance, the decision of the Daley administration to suggest and help fund the rainbow pylons in

Boystown relies on a strategy of using cultural products and discursive symbols to create an authentically queer neighborhood (much in a similar fashion to how gay bars rely on similar cultural products to differentiate themselves from straight bars). Likewise, Jamir's karaoke event at the Hangout exemplifies an example of creating authentic queer place in an otherwise unmarked space. From his choice of music to his demeanor to the queer members, Jamir intentionally staged an event that resembled more stable queer places (such as a gay bar) in an attempt to create queer place in a sexually unmarked space. Though the strategy Jamir used to create authentic queer place in an unmarked space may be similar to the city's demarcation of Boystown, it differs in a crucial and analytically important way: permanence.

8.2 Imagining Ephemeral Queer Community

In contrast to the strategies used by stable queer places, such as the gay bars in Boystown, Jamir had no interest in creating a marked queer bar. As the evening came to a close, and everyone walked home, the Hangout returned to its unmarked status as a South Side neighborhood dive bar. By creating a temporary and fleeting queer place, Jamir was instrumental in creating *ephemeral queer community.* The practices of ephemeral place-making refer to the ways queer place is imagined, created, and used in spaces that are not coded as queer most of the time. The focus on such ephemeral place-making is not novel to the study of sexual community. Stillwagon and Ghaziani (2019) call on "sexuality researchers to shift their focus from permanent and fixed places to those which are temporary and transient" (p. 875). Using pop-ups, or temporary events, as their unit of analyses, they illustrate how the use of temporary and transient spaces expands and complicates our geographic imagination (Harvey, 2005) beyond fixed areas (Greene, 2014) and stable institutions (Mattson, 2015). For example, the Guerilla Gay Bar movement that involved queer patrons "taking over" heterosexual bars and making them safe spaces for queer

people become a social phenomenon, challenging the notion of what a gay bar is (Islas, 2009). These "take overs" involved groups of queer people selecting a date and time to go to a heterosexual bar and transform its clientele to a primarily queer one, which resulted in it becoming a safe space for queer people and queer expressions. Though the Gay Guerrilla Takeover organization focused on the ways in which such "take overs" helped to create safe spaces for queer people, these events pose a question about authentic queer placemaking. Namely, what *exactly* is a gay bar and if all the patrons within a bar are gay, does it become a gay bar?

Events like guerilla gay bars and queer pop-ups are, in practice, similar to the creation of an ephemeral queer community as they represent a more fleeting form of placemaking that "transforms how a place looks and feels to group members, how they interact with the area, and their territorial aspirations about it. These spatial practices and collective interactions change an existing 'space' into a special and powerful 'place'" (Stillwagon and Ghaziani, 2019:877; Gieryn, 2000). Jamir's karaoke event transformed the existing space of the Hangout into a queer place within it, even while such transformation was temporary for that night, those people, and in that space.

The motivation behind creating ephemeral community or temporary place isn't solely from a desire to create transient space that can be replicated anywhere, but rather as a strategy to imagine queer placemaking outside of the confines of extant spaces. Stillwagon and Ghaziani (2019) highlight how "pop-ups provide a temporary third space (Oldenburg 1989; Putnam, 2000) for queer people who construct them in contrast to existing spaces, many of which they perceive as inaccessible, unaffordable, exclusive, and sometimes discriminatory" (p. 877). The use of ephemeral spaces as a reprieve from exclusion and discrimination found in other spaces is

evidenced by the Black queer women studied by Adams-Santos (2021) who found that Black femme pleasurescapes emerged as ephemeral spaces intentionally avoiding dominant queer spaces, including Boystown, and other queer venues interpreted as unwelcoming and not pleasurable. In this way, ephemeral spaces also serve as needed alternatives for queer people to escape the effects and confines of other forms of discrimination, marginalization, and ostracism within queer spaces. As Adams-Santos (2021) found, the intentional creation of ephemeral space created the opportunities for Black lesbians to imagine new forms of community and erotic spaces, especially spaces where members felt freer to explore aspects of their identities that weren't rewarded in more mainstream environments.

Similar to the way that Black lesbians reimagine the creation of erotic space, queer men outside of the gayborhood, too, imagine ephemeral or fleeting queer spaces as a strategy to leverage their community networks and neighborhood spaces. The consequence of such strategy is that these queer men are able to contend with asymmetrical distributions of queer venues and negotiations of outsider statuses by avoiding the need to travel to queer sexual venues located in other neighborhoods, especially to those in Boystown. By doing so, the creation of ephemeral queer community within residential spaces allows those outside of the gayborhood to benefit from their residential connections, localized intimate networks, and insider status. In the creation of ephemeral queer community, men search for authenticity within fleeting queer places by employing distinct, but related tactics, including either mimicking stable queer place in unmarked spaces or by intentionally creating spaces that differ creatively from fixed queer institutions.

8.3 Mimicking (Stable) Queer Place

As I sit at the bar at Billy's Bar talking with the bartender, Kayla, I feel someone tap my shoulder and then hear a familiar voice. "Wassup stranger," Dante questions as he sits down in the seat next to me, signaling Kayla for another Hennessey neat. "Not too much. How are you?" I inquire as Dante pulls out his wallet and sets a stack of $5 bills on the bar. "I'm good; I'm good. Just was at the Pub and then we all decided to come out here," Dante responds as he points to a round table in the corner of the bar by the window where Dajon, Craig, Dante's friend Jelani (27, Black, SS), and an older Black man whom I never met are sitting. Craig gives a slight wave and smile as I wave back. "Fun time at the pub," I inquire as Dante gets his drink and starts to take a sip. "It was alright. Jelani and I were there for a couple of hours and then Dajon invited us to come here after his shift, so we decided to come along. You know how freaky Billy's Bar gets at night," Dante answers. I smile at him, while providing a half nod as he continues to sip his drink. Looking up at one of the televisions above the bar, he asks if I am a Dallas Cowboy fan (referring the football game that is currently playing), to which I respond that I am not. "Well then, why are you sitting over here with the straights. Grab your, what is that, Grey Goose and cranberry? and come be part of the family," Dante says, while spinning my chair around and grabbing my drink.

I follow Dante over to the crowd where I take a seat between Craig and Demarcus (51, Black, visitor), the man I didn't previously know who is in town visiting and a close friend of Dajon. After introducing myself to Demarcus and hearing about how he used to live in Chicago decades ago (which is how he met Dajon), the conversation turns to the evening. Jelani discusses how he and Dante ended up going to the Pub after initially hanging out with friends at Jackson Park, where they had set up a BBQ. "We weren't planning on going out tonight, but then

thought, what the hell? Neither of us are working tomorrow and we could use a little fun." At Jelani's explanation, Dante makes a quip about him needing some *fun,* stressing the double entendre of him looking for a hookup, while both Craig and Dajon laugh and Demarcus chimes in saying that "there is nothing wrong with a young buck wanting to play." We all laugh and lift our glasses in tacit agreement to Demarcus's statement as Dante adds that the pub was still a little dead when they ended up leaving. Saying that it was surprising for a Thursday night, Dajon adds that it most likely will pick up later today because, even at 9pm, it is still early.

As Demarcus and Jelani go outside to smoke, Craig offers to buy another round and he and I walk up to the bar to order drinks for the table. "So, how have you been? Haven't seen you around the Pub lately. Was just asking Dajon about you, but you know him, he don't know anything," Craig asks me as I explain that I have just been busy lately but am hoping to go out there this Saturday. He orders drinks from Kayla and says that he is also planning on going out on Saturday but is meeting up at Billy's Bar beforehand. He adds that I should text him when I'm about to leave and maybe we could get a drink at the bar before heading out to the Pub. I nod in agreement as Dante walks up behind us: "You forget about us sitting over there. I know it don't take this long to get drinks." I roll my eyes at his comment as Craig grabs a pitcher of beer and a Vodka Cranberry for Dajon and walks over to the table. "Damn, those are some fine lookin' niggas over there" Dante says as he points to two Black men sitting across the bar, both wearing basketball shorts and tank tops. He continues, "They keep staring at me too. Or maybe you. I don't know if they want a snowbunny or not, but after this next drink, you know I'm going to find out." I laugh at his comment as we grab the remaining drinks for the table, including our own, and walk back to the table. Once back, Dante immediately points out the two men sitting at the bar. Everyone agrees that they are incredibly *hot.*

As the night progresses, Billy's Bar becomes increasingly crowded, almost becoming standing room only by the time that 11pm comes along. Around 11, Dajon, Craig, and Demarcus all say that they need to go home to which Jelani remarks, "I guess it is that time for you old men to get to bed." Dajon retorts, "At least we will know who will be in our bed." Laughing, Jelani responds, "I don't think that is the flex you think it is," alluding to how going home alone may not be preferable to hooking up. As they leave, Jelani and Dante, respectively, take the seats on each side of me as we are all now facing the interior of the space. Jelani wraps his arm around my shoulders and says, "So which of these fine ass niggas you planning on taking home tonight? Don't tell me your type are those gym rats that Dante (he reaches over and hits Dante in the shoulder) keeps eyeing?" "Ah, I see his type," Dante remarks as he points to a tall Black man with a cropped fade, white tank top (colloquially referred to as a wife beater), a gold chain around his neck, and sagging True Religion Jeans. "Damn, white boy likes them thugs, eh?" Jelani responds as we all laugh; though far more amusing for them than for me. "I mean, he isn't *not* attractive, but this isn't a gay bar and he probably isn't even gay," I reply as I take another sip of my drink. "You're playing, right? Billy's Bar is basically the gayest non-gay place around here. Half of these guys just came from the JPub or Club Escape. Hell, the other half probably about to leave and go over there," Dante adds while picking up my now empty glass and telling me to follow him.

We walk up to the bar, and he sets down both his and my glass while waiting for Kayla to come over to get another drink. As we are waiting, Dante leans his back against the bar while suggesting that I, indeed, should go over and talk to the guy…or at least buy him a drink. I laugh off his comment as Kayla comes over with refills. "So, Kayla, see that guy over there?" Dante asks while pointing at the man. "The one that looks like a bigger version of Nick Cannon?" She

replies, which, to both Dante and I, is a perfect description of him (though arguably a younger version of Nick Cannon). Dante nods his head yes and asks if he is *family.* Kayla replies that he comes in here all the time and she only ever sees him talking with other guys. While continuing to stare and think further, she mentions how he sometimes goes out with Deshawn and his friends. "Well, there you have it. No straight guy hangs out with a bunch of sissies for nothing," Dante says immensely proud of himself. "Why would you even have guess that he is gay?" I question as we walk back to the table. To this question, Dante sets down his drink, squares his chair so he is facing me, and begins:

> Billy's Bar is basically a gay bar. It's not just that these guys come in here on their way to other bars, but they flirt, hookup, hang out. Christ, Billy's Bar does karaoke. Who do you think made that happen? It's a great place to start or end one's evening. Sometimes even both if the Pub or Escape is dead. If only you knew how many times I took one of these guys home with me, then you wouldn't even have asked if these guys are gay.

Much to the chagrin of both Dante and Jelani, I end up leaving alone a little after midnight as I catch the last bus. As described by Dante and alluded to by Jelani, Billy's Bar represents a type of queer place for them. In a similar way that gay bars are seen as being authentically queer places by their ability to provide safe spaces for the pursuit of queer sexual partners, the demonstration of queer sexual expression, and the housing of queer sexual community, Billy's Bar, too, provides a similar *type* of space for queer men. However, unlike stable gay bars, it doesn't mark itself as solely a gay bar, nor does it rely upon the iconography of gay bars including rainbow flags and queer cultural discourses. Instead, its place as a queer place is created through the various ways that individuals assign queer sensibilities to the place and then

further perform queerness within it. As Dante and Jelani experienced, this space became queer as they incorporated it within their nightly round, and as Dante further explicated, it is a common experience for Billy's Bar to be used by queer men as part of their nightly queer escapades.

Like how queer North Siders such as Ted, Kirby, and Trent used stable gay bars throughout Boystown in combination with one another to craft circuits of leisure spaces and entertainment, so too did South Side queer men use spaces such as Billy's Bar. By using similar strategies, those outside of the gayborhood were able create ephemeral queer community. They layered their movement among extant South Side venues their nightly rounds. As Dante and Jelani illustrated, they leveraged their queer sensibilities to create authentic queer place within unstable spaces. Ephemeral queer community wasn't created within Billy's Bar just by the presence of queer men, but *how* they used the space.

Reflecting on the ways that South Siders responded to few marked queer sexual venues by supplementing them with various unmarked places, I ended up calling Deshawn and inviting him out to grab a drink at Billy's Bar. After years of knowing one another and, at one time, almost becoming neighbors, we had become close confidants and frequently used Billy's Bar as a location to grab a drink or to meet up with friends. On a surprisingly warm fall evening, Deshawn walked into Billy's Bar and found me sitting at the bar talking with some of the straight regulars at the bar and the bartender, Daniel (late 50s, Black, SS). He walked up and gave me a quick side hug as he slouched into the seat to my left and ordered a beer with a Jack Daniels chaser. "It's warm as fuck outside. Did you notice that too?" Deshawn asked me as he paid for his drink and took his shot. "Yes, I did notice that. My bus didn't have air conditioning, so that was fun getting over here." I replied as I put my phone away in my pocket. He shook his head, held up his class to cheers, and took a drink from his beer. "You going to the Pub tonight

or staying here for the karaoke?" he asks. I responded that I would probably stay here and he replied with a "good call," further expanding how it was ladies night at the Pub and he personally disliked Club Escape. I inquired about his plans and he mentioned that he had some friends that wanted to stop by for karaoke after pregaming at a mutual friend's house. "So, you're saying they are going to be turnt when they get here?" I posit. "Well, I think that has already happened considering one of them sent me a GIF of a dancing cucumber. Either he is *very* excited for tonight or already is blazed or drunk or both," he replies. We both laugh at his description as I inquired further about his friends

> You know one of them, TJ. He used to be a bartender at the Pub, but now is a bartender down in the loop. Making a lot more money than before. The other one is TJ's boyfriend and one of their mutual friends that I've met a few times. Nothing too special, but he is nice enough. Can't hold his alcohol for shit though, so he gets real freaky real quick.

At his description, I ask if they are all gay. "Well, yeah, obviously. Why do you think they are coming out here for karaoke?" he replies incredulously. As the night progresses and his friends show up, I say hello to TJ, whom I have also known for years at this point, while introducing myself to his new boyfriend and their mutual friend. As we all get another drink, we end up moving to a high-top table as we wait for the karaoke to begin. While sitting at the table, TJ takes the opportunity to make the rounds throughout the bar exchanging hellos, hugs, and pleasant commentary to many of the audience members, regular patrons, and Kayla (who has since replaced Daniel as the bartender). When he returned, I quipped about how popular he is and he shook his head in disagreement with a big smile, commenting that most of these people he knows from the Pub (when he still worked there). As TJ once again took his seat, both he and

Deshawn start talking about how many of the guys that are coming in they see at other gay bars or queer spaces throughout the South Side. When asked what TJ's plan was after karaoke, he described how he and his boyfriend are going to quickly check out the Pub to see what's going on over there before just heading home.

Despite living in a neighborhood with markedly few queer sexual venues, men like Deshawn and TJ used spaces like Billy's Bar to envision and participate in queer community. L Grazian's (2003) blues patrons came to understand a specific club as "authentic" by the type of music played, the look of the musicians, and the location, South Side queer men come to recognize spaces as authentically queer through the presence of other South Side queer men using the space in a circuit fashion similar to the way queer men moved among North Side venues. Similarly, the strategies of queer men outside of the gayborhood are reminiscent of the guerrilla gay movement that showed how a space can be *queered* by having queer people use it as such. By mimicking the queer sensibilities of stable queer places, men such as Jamir and Jelani created and participated in ephemeral queer community by using non-queer spaces in authentically queer ways.

8.4 Diverging from (Fixed) Queer Place

For Jamir, Jelani, Deshawn, TJ, and Dante, the ability to mimic the queer sensibilities of gay bars, for example, represents their strategy to transform straight bars into ephemeral queer community. Incorporating non-fixed spaces into queer nightly rounds and relying on such spaces to house queer performances and presentations helps to make a space a *queer place* and thus combats the disadvantages of not having access to many fixed queer venues. However, not all South Side men desired to replicate more traditionally recognized queer venues, especially those venues that located in neighborhoods and communities that reflect numerous intersections of

racial, class, and gender marginalization. Instead, many men viewed the ability to imagine queer place as ephemeral as an opportunity to push the boundaries of queer authenticity queer place (and place-making). Some men outside of the gayborhood focus less on negotiating their position into outsider queer sexual venues and instead visualized how they could create new types of queer place.

One strategy that queer men used to create ephemeral queer community that diverged from the staging of fixed queer place is to decenter the implicit and explicit structures of whiteness. Especially within gayborhoods like Boystown, which is overwhelming white and middle-class, the ability to imagine queer space outside of these racial and class status orders can prove useful for Black, South Side queer men to develop novel forms of authentically queer places where they are less likely to feel like racial and geographic outsiders. On a late Tuesday night, around 9pm, Dajon is about to get off his shift at the Pub and asked if I would like to go and grab a drink at Billy's Bar. After having been at the Pub for the past 5 hours, I decide that a change of scenery would be appreciated, so I nod my head yes, cash out my check, and grab my coat as I get ready to get on the bus with Dajon. Dajon, with his usually cheerful attitude and relaxed demeanor, and I wait patiently for the local bus to take us a couple of neighborhoods north to Billy's Bar.

As Dajon and I get to Billy's Bar, he walked over to the bar as I noticed Rashaad sitting at the far end of the bar. "Rashaad," I say as I walk over him to him. "Shoot, what you doing here?" he asks while standing up and giving me a hug. I reply that I came with Dajon after his shift at the Jeffery Pub and ask him how long he has been here. He points over to his friend, Craiglen (24, Black, SS), who is talking with some of the girls that are regulars at Billy's Bar during the late nights. As Dajon walks over to give Rashaad a quick hug, he points a table where

he has set his drink and I say that I will be right over. Rashaad pulls out a one hitter from his backpack and asks if I want to come outside with him and Craiglen, prefacing how it is "a nice night outside." I say sure as I follow him to the door where Craiglen excuses himself from his conversation and walks out with us. We talk in a small alcove by the front door:

Craiglen: "Sup? I'm Craiglen."

Morgan: "Morgan"

Rashaad: "Ah shit. You two not know each other? My bad. Craiglen, Morgan has been at Club Escape when we there a lot and I'm sure you've seen him at the Pub."

Craiglen: "Cool. Cool. Nice to meet you, bruh."

Morgan: "You too man. So, what made y'all come out to Billy's Bar tonight?"

Craiglen: "Oh you know, we just wanted some drinks, music, and no bullshit."

Rashaad: (Laughs) "What he means is that we were going to go to Hydrate, but we are not in the mood for driving or white boys."

Craiglen nods in agreement with Rashaad's description and tosses his cigarette on the ground and says that he is going back inside and asks if either of us would like another drink. I shake my head as Rashaad says "yes, and a chaser this time." Standing outside in the relatively warm evening, Rashaad and I continue to catch up and talk about our respective nights. He mentions how he wasn't planning on coming out, but Craiglen was "in the mood to get out" which he jokes is code that he is horny. "And you both decided to come here instead of the Pub or Club Escape," I ask referencing the two marked gay bars on the South Side, where Rashaad is a regular. He walks over to the Divvy bike locking station and takes a seat on one of the locked bikes and lights another cigarette before responding:

> Yup. We wanted a different vibe. Like I said, we were going to go up to Hydrate, but then it got late and it's so far. I wasn't in the mood to drive and neither of us wanted to pay for an Uber or take a bus. After having some shots at my place, we decided that we just wanted something lowkey tonight, so figured we would come here. As you can see, there are a lot of thirsty niggas coming in here tonight.

He finishes his cigarette but is reluctant to go back into the bar right away, choosing instead to sit on the locked bike for a little while longer. "It is sometimes nice to be able to hang out with guys that are actually around here and not have to play all of those games at those other bars and clubs," Rashaad says in an almost retrospective tone.

We both walk back into the bar where I join Dajon and Rashaad joins Craiglen and we both continue our respective nights. Rashaad and Craiglen's evening out at Billy's Bar reflected a common way that South Side queer men found the right "vibe" in creating ephemeral queer community within this space. Unlike mimicking the sentimentalities of stable queer places, they instead used this space to envision a different type of ephemeral queer community, specifically one that stood in contrast to traditional gay bars, and especially the gay bars on the North Side. In their case, South Side queer men were able to completely eschew the gayborhood and instead leverage their own community ties to spaces such as Billy's Bar to create a type of ephemeral queer community that resisted both the North Side and whiteness. Craiglen and Rashaad's connection of "bullshit" to "driving and white boys" demonstrates their association of gayborhood leisure venues with additional costs, both in difficulty traveling around the city and in the racial unevenness between them and the predominately white gayborhood. For them, Billy's Bar doesn't represent a different *type* of queer place, but rather an *alternative* to fixed,

queer places, especially those in which they identify difficulties getting to, enjoying, and succeeding in.

Through manipulating neighborhood spaces that more reflect the demographics and "vibe" of the surrounding residential neighborhood, those outside of the gayborhood create fleeting forms of queer community that are useful in decentering the implicit whiteness of gayborhood venues. These men imagine, create, and use types of queer place that differ from those of stable venues. These types of ephemeral queer community represent an authentic type of queer place as the queer men recognize these spaces as locations to orient themselves with queer networks, perform queerness, and ultimately foster queer community.

Though many South Side queer men used spaces such as Billy's Bar to create queer community outside of the frames of whiteness, many frequently also used these spaces to envision queer community outside of the North Side, thereby imagining ephemeral queerness without geographic constraints. As shown in Chapter 5, South Siders frequently bore economic, temporal, and social costs traveling to North Side locations, where they routinely found themselves positioned as "outsiders," "tourists," or "space invaders." To address the costs of having to negotiate differences between localized residential communities and remote queer ones, those outside of the gayborhood found ways to create ephemeral queer community that decentered North Side geography.

As Jordan (29, White, SS) walked into the Hangout, accidentally slamming the front door, he quickly took a seat at the end of the bar, while Ernesto, the bartender, walked over to get him a drink. "Tecate with a lime, please," Jordan answered when asked what he was drinking as he took off his coat, shook his head, and cleaned off his glasses. "Finally made it?" I ask as he got himself situated. "Yeah, sorry, work went long and then I was behind slow walking people

and this weather is shit. Anyways, hello and cheers," he says while holding up his glass. I had first met Jordan when I initially moved into my South Side apartment. While walking his dog, he noticed the various movers taking my furniture from a rented uhaul truck into my apartment. He walked over to say hello and we ended up talking for about 20 minutes as he provided advice on the restaurants that I should check out, the local bars, the good grocery stores (and equally important, the bad ones to avoid), and finally the location of a late-night taco truck only a block away from where I was moving. As we finished our conversation, specifically because his dog was ready to continue her walk, we exchanged numbers and he mentioned how I should check out the Hangout sometime. I assured him that I would, and we both went back to our days. After months of seeing Jordan and a number of his friends, whom all made Wednesday night their regular night at the bar, I was finally invited to join this group.

Jordan referred to the group as a space for "queers to just go out, have some drinks, and stay the fuck away from the clubs." When asked how this group came to be, he replied:

> Well, I used to go up to Boystown. I mean, when I was younger it was a lot of fun. But now that I don't live around there and am older, I just feel out of place now. I remember the last time I went to Roscoe's a couple of months ago and some twink called me 'daddy.' I was standing there thinking that I'm 29 and nowhere old enough to be his daddy. After a few more trips to places like Sidetrack and Progress, I realized that it wasn't fun. Maybe I've gotten too old or maybe the commute has gotten too long. Either way, I decided that I wanted to have a queer space where myself and my friends and new queers around here could meet up and drink without all of the club scene and without having to sit on a train for an hour.

Though Jordan increasingly found himself unsuccessful in the venues that at an earlier age and living in a different neighborhood he once was, his description of wanting a space away from the "club scene" and one "without having to sit on a train for an hour" demonstrated his desire to locate a type of queer place—no matter how temporary—within his neighborhood.

One Wednesday night, when hanging out with Jordan and some of his other friends, they, too, reflected similar sentiments specifically a desire to meet up with queer people and talk about queer things in a space where they already had ties. For example, one of the newest members of this group, Max (31, Mixed, SS), described how he found out about this group because he was already a regular at the Hangout coming to the bar "around 3-4 times per week." It was at the Hangout that he met Jordan and then decided to join the group because he liked the "low-key opportunity to be around other gay guys without having to go cruising, clubbing, or hop on grindr." For Max, like the other men, the ephemeral nature of this group was seen as a benefit. Most of the members also found themselves coming to the Hangout for drinks, to watch sports, or to listen to music in non-queer ways, so the nature of this group cohered with their desires to remain in a space in which they had ties, while designating certain times and conditions to activate queer place-making. What initially started as a general queer meet-up, over time, transformed into a type of ephemeral queer place, as these members increasingly recognized it as a type of queer place through the connections, discussions, and openness of associating with other queer men.

Analogous to the ways that Rashaad and Craiglen used Billy's Bar as a location to create queer community outside of the shadow of whiteness, Jordan and his group used the Hangout as a location to create queer community outside of shadow of the North Side entertainment venues. In both cases, however, these queer men found residential locations where they already had

personal and community ties and they leveraged those ties to create a type of queer community that was temporary, fleeting, and overall ephemeral.

8.5 Conclusion

Research on ephemeral, temporary, or pop-up queer place-making overwhelmingly focuses on the ways that events, spectacles, or groups turn geographic spaces into meaningful places. This chapter extends such scholarship by focusing on the ways that such ephemeral queer community creation not only turns unmarked spaces into marked queer places, but also how such ephemerality represents a type of authentic queer community. Though Jamil's karaoke events or Dante's nightly rounds may create fleeting queer places, they both represent queer community that is assigned, staged, and performed as authentically queer; even when such communities emerge and disappear within the urban landscape. Furthermore, I illustrate how the creation of ephemeral queer places and communities is multifaceted and not uniform. For some, these places emerge from a desire to replicate stable queer venues located outside of one's residential neighborhood. For others, it is an opportunity to address the various inequalities that exist within fixed gayborhoods by imagining new forms of queerness and queer community that exist outside of the gazes of race or geographic location.

In my examination, this chapter shows how the creation of ephemeral queer community is one strategy that those outside of the gayborhood employ to contend with the dearth of marked queer places within their residential communities. As illustrated in Chapter 5, South Side queer men are materially placed outside of the gayborhood by the agglomeration of queer spaces in different neighborhoods that contribute to unequal costs in accessing such spaces as one feels as an outsider, tourist, or invader. Through employing strategies to imagine, create, and experience queer community without having to bear the costs of traversing the urban landscape or

negotiating intrapersonal positions in foreign communities, those outside of the gayborhood mitigate costs and find quality erotic leisure within their personal networks and neighborhoods.

Chapter 9 Conclusion

Months after the conclusion of my fieldwork and amidst data analyses, I receive a text message from Dante, which reads: “MORGAN. Let’s grab a drink tonight. Dajon and Craig are heading over to Billy’s Bar around 8.” As I read his text message in his voice, I smile and laugh as I respond, “DANTE. Sounds good. See you then.” At 8pm, I show up at Billy’s Bar. Immediately walking in, I am greeted by multiple regular patrons that I frequently shared drinks, meals, and conversation with over the years of fieldwork. Walking into the bar is at once very familiar and also very different. After months of being outside of the field, I returned to find the regular patrons and the staff are the same, while the college students that frequent this space have since changed. I sit down at the bar and Kayla comes over and gives me a big hug before asking if I would like my usual Grey Goose and cranberry. I cannot help thinking that after all of this time that I, too, have finally become a regular. As I continue to connect with those sitting around me, I suddenly feel someone give me a hug from behind and turn to see Dante wearing a faded t-shirt, oversized jeans, and a new pair of Timberland boots. “Where the fuck have you been hiding?” he asks with a playful edge in his voice. As he sits down in the chair next to me and quips with Kayla about my relative absence and now sudden return, I respond that I am in the process of analyzing fieldnotes, reading over interview transcripts, and trying to figure out my analyses. “Hold up, you still haven’t graduated. Shoot” he interjects with a toothy smile and raised eyebrows. “I guess when you aren’t studying these spaces that you just disappear?” he continues, this time with the same edge, but less play.

Kayla brings Dante his drink and we start to catch up as Dajon and Craig walk in together and come and join us. Kayla comments that "the whole gang is back together," as Craig starts to bombard me with questions about how everything is going. Dajon gives Dante a fist bump and me a hug before taking a seat and saying: "I hate sitting at the bar, but for you (points at me), I'll sit here as we catch up." I feign appreciation remembering the numerous times at both Jeffery Pub and Billy's Bar that he sat at the bar by his own choice, however, kept this comment to myself. As we sit together, we use this opportunity to catch up, sharing with each other any number of life updates. Dante got a new job. Dajon moved to a new apartment. Craig both moved to a new apartment and got a new job downtown. And I moved even further south to a new condo. We continue to order drinks and talk as Dajon plays some music on the electronic jukebox and Craig regales Dante with stories of his new job. As we sit at the bar, a lull in conversation prompts Craig to ask me: "so, you're done studying, right? What did you find? Have you written anything yet." Taking the questions, one at a time, I smile and respond that I am done studying and am in the process of writing, however, have yet to analyze all the collected data and am working on the arguments. Dante interjects, "c'mon give us a taste. Unless it is some boring academic thing, then just say, it's boring." He laughs at his own comment, however, the sincerity of his expression along with the quietness of both Dajon and Craig signals that they are interested in hearing anything about the findings. I assuage, "well, I have started to notice some differences between queer men's experiences of the North Side and the South Side, so I am looking into the ways that queer men find space and community, and how these ways differ based on where one lives." Craig takes a sip of his drink, "whoa, I wasn't expecting you to be like *smart* smart." We all laugh at his comment.

"So you are saying that the South Side is worse? Like we don't have gay, I mean queer, people?" Dante questions while ordering another drink and handing my glass to Kayla to buy me another. "Not at all" I quickly reply, while continuing: "So far, I'm noticing how the ways that queer men find places and community are just different. For example, in Boystown, one can just walk around and find queer places, but in South Shore, which also has gay bars, one cannot. Findings like that." "So, which is better, the North Side or South Side?" Craig asks. I respond that it isn't about better or worse, but rather is about more or less costly. "So like it's harder for us South Siders to go out to gay bars because they are all basically on the North Side and we have to try and get up there. Things like that?" Dante asks inquisitively. "Exactly." I confirm. At this point, Dajon gets up to play some more music, while Craig walks to use the washroom. Leaving just Dante and I, he says: "that is interesting because it is like true, but also not true in the obvious ways." Interested, I prompt him further to clarify what he means. He continues: Like, we have gay bars. But they usually just have the same people go to each one. It's just everyone around here. So, it's hard because we have bars, but they are different bars than say Hydrate. I get it. I get it. Actually, I was just having this problem on Grindr. Was chatting with this cute little Latino twink and we vibing and saying all the right things. I want to meet and hookup and he agrees and asks for my address, so I ping it in the app. He then tells me that he didn't realize that I live in the ghetto and he ain't risking it. The next day, I see he blocked me. Dante's usual demeanor of a little arrogance and a lot of sarcasm is replaced with an almost somber expression. Though knowing that Dante routinely finds himself successful in pursuing sexual partners, my heart quickly sank as he described contending with potential partners that were unwilling to traverse urban space and instead found solace in blocking him.

Dante is among one of the South Side queer men that I spoke with, went along with, and interviewed that were relatively successful in finding sexual partners and community within the South Side. Similar to men like Jelani or Deshawn, Dante was able to employ various strategies of queer place-making, willing to bear multiple financial and social costs, and make compromises with respect to places, transportation, and partners, all in order to be successful both on the South and North Sides. Though many would consider the success of these men to be of luck, in fact, it is of skill. The skill to create and cultivate strategies to contend with structures of urban stratification such as unreliable transportation, unwelcoming communities, and asymmetrical venue placement, all while emerging successful. Though, the central question faced by those outside of the gayborhood was never whether or not they are successful, but rather, what it costs and how high are they willing to go to pursue queer community and erotic pleasure.

The decentralization of the gayborhood and the focus on Black, queer men on the South Side are, first and foremost, ones of spatial organization. In the context of viewing the city as sexually organized (Laumann et al 2004), queer men outside of the gayborhood highlight the ways in which sexual organization is not equalitarian, but instead is stratified, disadvantaging the marginalized at the expense of the privileged. By taking an intersectional approach to the study of urban, queer place-making, I show how decentralizing the gayborhood highlights critical differences in risks, benefits, and costs endured by queer men in the pursuit of sexual leisure and community. Focusing on these differences, I show how Black, queer men outside of the gayborhood create innovative and strategic schemes to develop resources, create spaces, and address structural inequalities. Privileging a pluralist approach to the study of sexual communities helps identify the diversity and variety of *types* of queer spaces, communities, and

networks that are embedded within the modern metropolis. The focus on these novel forms of sexual placemaking represents a fruitful dimension of analytic inquiry to better understand the decisions, experiences, and consequences faced by queer men that are either foreclosed out of the gayborhood or choose not to participate in it.

9.1 Queer Space is Work

As illustrated by the various ways that queer men outside of the gayborhood navigate asymmetrical costs in utilizing the gayborhood (Chapter 5) or contending with structural inequalities and costs located within their residential communities (Chapter 7), living outside of the gayborhood and creating queer space is work. As illustrated by the Black, queer men outside of the gayborhood, the amount of time, energy, and planning that it takes to traverse urban space, create new spaces, or acclimatize into extant spaces outside of one's community is significant. For example, when Deshawn travels to the North Side venues, he must be ever cognizant of how he ingratiates himself with a queer community that is geographically foreign to him. Or when Marquis resides in an area with few marked queer, sexual spaces, he must develop strategies to gain erotic capital among fields where multiple parts of his personality are not interactively desired. As scholars increasingly focus on the ways that queer sexual enclaves and spaces are pluralistic and varied among the urban landscape, it is equally crucial to consider how the development of pluralistic spaces and communities do not equally alleviate the problems of asymmetrical resource allocation, feelings of being an outsider, or structural barriers to experiencing these communities. When considering the entire urban landscape, it is paramount to analyze the novel forms of queer community, places, and resources that queer people are constructing and juxtaposed these forms alongside structural asymmetries of inequalities embedded in neighborhoods, networks, and resources.

9.2 Queer Space is Costly

Similar to highlighting how those outside of the gayborhood are tasked with an increased amount of work in how they utilize the urban metropolis to create, find, and experience queer community and leisure. As evidence by the examples provided in Chapters 5 and 7, those that live in areas with few queer places are burdened with expensing time and money in traversing urban space. Although it is quixotic to think that large cities with multiple forms of public transportation, such as Chicago, mean that traversing urban space is easy, affordable, or efficient, the provided examples help shed light on the hours of waiting for and riding public transportation and/or the hundreds of dollars spent on parking, gas, and rideshare cars endured by those not privilege to correlate their residential community within the gayborhood. As sexuality is increasingly understood as a cultural amenity and sexual venues as entertainment, it is useful to consider the ways that such amenities and entertainment are not equally utilized by queer people due to aspects of urban inequalities such as transportation insecurity. Therefore, increased focus should be given to not only the queer sexual venue options that are available, but also what is required in order to even access them. As illustrated, some people are bearing very high costs to move about space and venues, whether in their neighborhood or not.

9.3 Queer Space is Innovative

Lastly, the experiences of Black, queer men navigating the production and consumption of queer space outside of the gayborhood helps illuminate numerous strategies that queer men use to contend with urban and sexual inequalities. The various costs and work that those outside of the gayborhood must endure obscures a more complex picture of the innovative strategies that these men use to find partners, communities, and spaces. As illustrated in both Chapters 6 and 8, Black, queer men are apt at developing and employing strategies to partake in queer sociality,

find queer partners, and participate in queer community. Thus, it is important for scholars to resist the temptation to reduce certain areas or communities as integrally lacking. As shown by many of these South Side men, those outside of the gayborhood are not inherently disadvantage nor unsuccessful, but rather utilize a more diverse range of strategies to find queer communities and spaces.

Appendices

Appendix A: Map of Chicago

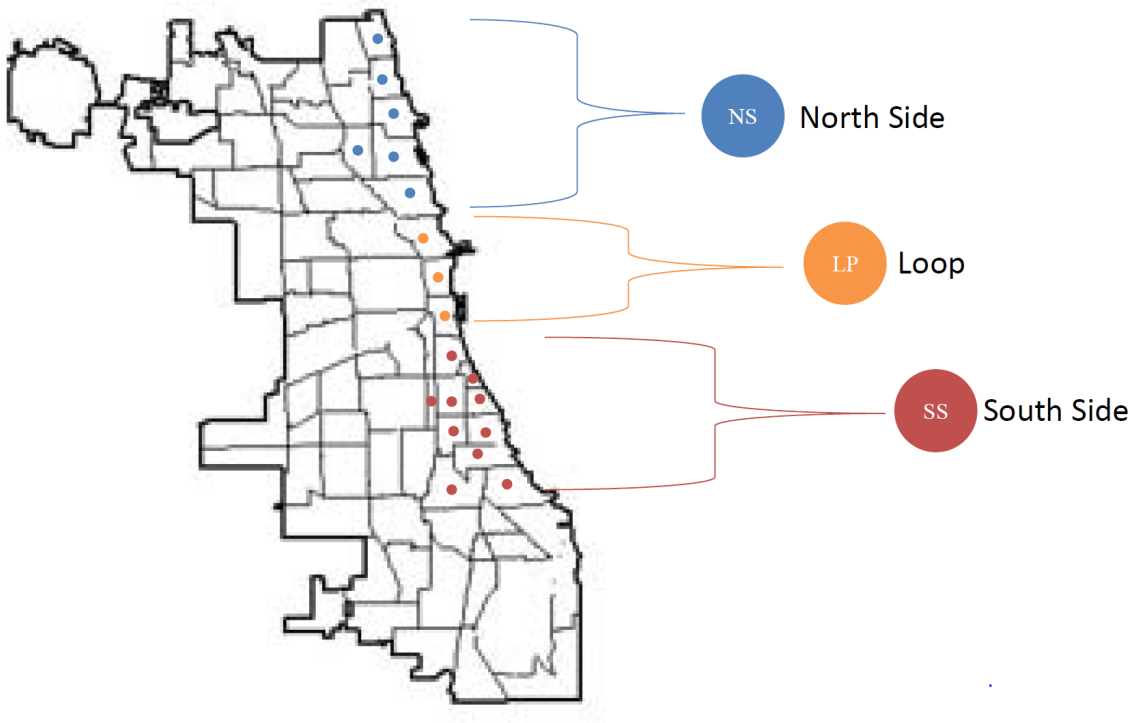

Figure 10 Map of Chicago

Appendix B: Participant Demographics Survey

Who's Online?: The Search for Sex and Love on Online Social Networking Sites

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PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION

The first page should **ONLY** be completed by the **INTERVIEWER**. **ALL** other pages should be completed by the **PARTICIPANT.**

Interviewer Name: _____

Interview Date: _____

Participant Identification Number (RIN): _____

Who's Online?

Greetings and thank you for agreeing to participate today!

The purpose of this study is to better understand the ways that online users of social networking sites (such as Grindr) search for sexual and/or romantic partners on the sites. The following questions are intended to tell us more about your social characteristics, romantic, and sexual history. *Please remember that any and all responses you provide are strictly confidential.* Your name does not appear at any point on this form and you will not be asked to provide the names of others. Please answer each question as truthfully as possible and feel free to skip any answer at any time.

---

1. What is your Month and Year of birth?
   Month _____ / Year _____

2. What is your current age?

   _____ Years

3. Where were you born?

   City _____

   State/Province _____

   Country _____

4. Where did you grow up?

   City _____

   State/Province _____

Country _____

5. How long have you lived in Chicago?

_____ Years

_____ Months

6. How long have you lived in _____ [NEIGHBORHOOD]?

_____ Years
_____ Months

7. How would you estimate your current Household income in the past 12 months?
   - ☐ Less than $10,000
   - ☐ Over $10,000 but less than $25,000
   - ☐ Over $25,000 but less than $50,000
   - ☐ Over $50,000 but less than $100,000
   - ☐ Over $100,000 but less than $150,000
   - ☐ Over $150,000 but less than $200,000
   - ☐ Over $250,000
   - ☐ Other:

8. What are your sources of income?

9. Do you currently work for pay?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

10. How would you describe your current job/occupation?

11. How would you describe your current socioeconomic status (Middle Class, Lower Middle Class, Upper Class, etc.)?

12. How would you describe the highest level of education that you have obtained?

- ☐ Less than the 8th grade
- ☐ Some high school (grades 9-12), but no diploma
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalency (G.E.D.)
- ☐ Some college, but no degree
- ☐ Associate's degree or technical certification
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Doctoral or professional degree
- ☐ Other:

13. How would you describe your current relationship status?

14. How would you describe your gender?

15. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

16. Sexual Behavior: What types of people have you been sexually active with? Choose one (or more) of the following:

- ☐ I have only had sexual encounters with men.
- ☐ I have primarily had sexual encounters with men, but I have also had occasional sexual encounters with women.
- ☐ I have mostly had sexual encounters with men, but I have often had sexual encounters with women.
- ☐ I have had about the same number of sexual encounters with both men and women.
- ☐ I have mostly had sexual encounters with women, but I have often had sexual encounters with men.
- ☐ I have primarily had sexual encounters with women, but I have also had occasional sexual encounters with men.
- ☐ I have only had sexual encounters with women.
- ☐ I have never had a sexual encounter.
- ☐ Other:

17. Romantic Behavior: What types of people have you been romantically active with? Choose one (or more) of the following:

- ☐ I have only been in romantic relationships with men.
- ☐ I have primarily been in romantic relationships with men, but I have occasionally been in relationships with women.
- ☐ I have mostly been in romantic relationships with men, but I have often been in relationships with women.
- ☐ I have been in about the same number of romantic relationships with both men and women.
- ☐ I have mostly been in romantic relationships with women, but I have often been in relationships with men.
- ☐ I have primarily been in romantic relationships with women, but I have occasionally been in relationships with men.
- ☐ I have only been in romantic relationships with women.
- ☐ I have never been involved in a romantic relationship.
- ☐ Other:

18. At what age did you first have sex?

19. How many sexual partners would you estimate that you've had in your lifetime?

20. How many romantic relationships would you estimate that you've had in your lifetime?

21. When did you first download Grindr?

22. In addition to Grindr, where else do you meet persons for sex and/or romantic activity?

- ☐ Bars
- ☐ Clubs
- ☐ Bathhouses
- ☐ Other Online Phone Applications
    - Including:

- ☐ Computer or Internet Applications
    - Including:

- ☐ Other:

23. How many Grindr users would you estimate that you have chatted with or messaged in the past 6 months?

24. How many Grindr users would you estimate that you have chatted with or messaged in the past 1 month?

25. How many Grindr users would you estimate that you have met in person in the past 6 months?

26. How many Grindr users would you estimate that you have met in person in the past 1 month?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

Greetings and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Throughout this interview, I am interested in better knowing where you go out, how you meet people, where you find sexual partners, and your thoughts about the gay community in Chicago.

[Talk through the consent form: Do you have any questions? Is there anything I can help clarify?]

INTRODUCTION

1. I would like to start to get to know you a little bit more. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

[A lot of the introduction is rapport building. The goal is to get the participant to start to talk about themselves, where they live, and what they do. Although a lot of this information is also found on the demographics survey, these questions can start to illuminate the effects of previous relationships and the decision to live in certain communities, both of which will be important later in the interview].

2. What is going on in your life right now? Anything major?
3. Where do you work? What do you do?
4. *[Based on the demographics survey]* When did you move to Chicago? Why?
    a. Where in Chicago have you lived?
        i. *Ask about what prompted someone to move to a different neighborhood and what they think of where they live and where they have lived. Their current neighborhood will be listed in the demographics survey. From where they live, construct a movement path of where they've lived throughout the city.*

[The goal of this question is to better understand how an individual made the decision to live in a specific part of the city. Think about employment, previously relationships, communities, and economic factors.]

5. Do you live alone?
    a. If so, is that important for you to live alone?
    b. If not, whom do you live with?
6. Are you currently in a relationship? *Relationship is broadly defined. Anything from marriage to FWB to regular buddy.*
    a. If yes, how do you feel about this relationship?
    b. If not, are you wanting a relationship? Are you actively searching for a partner? What type of relationship are you interested in?
7. Have you ever been married?
    a. If yes, can you tell me about this relationship? Where did you meet your ex? What happened with the relationship?
8. Do you have children?
    a. If yes, how old? What do they do?
    b. If no, do you want children?

LARGER GAY COMMUNITY / GAY COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO

Before we delve into where you go and what you look for, I'm curious to hear your thoughts about the gay community in Chicago.

9. How would you describe the gay community in Chicago?
10. What communities are you apart of? How welcomed have you found these communities?
11. How welcoming have you found the gay community?

[Provide a map of Chicago] Here is a map of Chicago with neighborhood boundaries divided into triads (I will point out the rough estimates of what is commonly considered the North Side, Loop, and South Side. I will also point out some common landmarks in order to help participants orient themselves, specifically I will point out: (1) 95th and Dan Ryan, (2) University of Chicago, (3) Millennium Park, (4) Michigan Avenue, (5) Boystown / Lakeview.

12. On this map, where is the neighborhood that you live in?
    a. How would you describe this neighborhood? How would you describe the types of people who live there?
13. If you have to describe the types of people who live in different parts of the city, how would you describe them?
14. When you go out, can you identify where you go out?
    a. How would you describe this neighborhood? How would you describe the types of people who live there? The types of people who go out there?
15. Are there other gay spaces (bars, etc) that you know of throughout the city and where are they?
    a. How would you describe this neighborhood? How would you describe the types of people who live there?
    b. Why do you / do you not go to these spaces?

WHEN YOU GO OUT

Now I want you to think of what you like to do when you go out.

16. In general, what are the types of places you like to go?
    a. Bars, clubs, bathhouses?
    b. Do you want live music, club music, drag shows, performances, quieter places?
    c. Do you go out with friends or go alone?
17. What places would you consider yourself a regular at?
    a. Why?
    b. How did you come to spend a lot of time at that space?
    c. Do you know the bartenders? Bouncers? Staff?
    d. Are there other regulars that you notice? How would you describe them?
    e. How do you think the staff would describe you? The other regulars?
18. Can you walk me through the last time you went out, either wanting to find a sexual partner or happening to find a sexual partner? Starting from getting ready…
    a. Where did you go? Why this place? Whom did you go with?
    b. How did you get ready? How did you get there?
    c. What did you do at the place?
    d. Did you dance? What music?
    e. Did you drink? What did you have to drink? Did you buy others drinks? Did others buy you drinks?
    f. Whom did you meet? Did you hookup?
    g. How did you get home?
    h. Was this night typical for you when you go out? How so? How not so?
19. Where you go out, what types of guys are seen as attractive?
    a. How so? How do you know?
20. What types of guys are seen as unattractive?
    a. How do? How do you know?
21. How are more attractive men treated differently than less attractive men in the gay community?
    a. Have you seen this play out at a bar, club, bathhouse, etc? How so?
22. How important is physical appearance when searching for sexual partners?
    a. What do you look for?

b. Have you ever changed your appearance because you thought it would make you appear more attractive?

23. When finding sexual partners, what are you looking for?
    a. How do you ensure that you get what you want? Have you ever not gotten what you want? Why?

GRINDR (AND OTHER SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES)

Now that we have talked about how you go out and meet sexual partners, lets talk about how you use online social networking sites (like Grindr, Scruff, Jack'd) and how you find sexual partners on them.

24. Why do you use [applications]?
    a. When did you first download them? Why?
    b. Have you ever deleted and re-downloaded the application? Why?

When thinking about Grindr *[or the other applications based on what they use]…*

25. Can you walk me through your profile. *[Looking at profile]*
    a. Why did you select this picture?
    b. How important is having a picture?
    c. Do you ever contact users without a picture and/or reply to users who contact you without a picture?
    d. Why did you provide these stats? Have you ever embellished these stats?
    e. Why didn't you provide this information *[ask about specific pieces of one's profile that weren't complete]?*
26. Can you tell me a little more about what you look for on [application]?
    a. What users do you contact?
    b. What users don't you contact? Why?
    c. What users do you respond to?
    d. What users don't you respond to? Why?
27. How frequently do you check Grindr?
    a. Where do you check Grindr?
    b. What are you looking for when you get on Grindr?
28. Can you walk me through the last hookup that you have from a partner met on Grindr.
    a. Who contacted whom?
    b. Why did you contact / why did you respond?
    c. What did y'all talk about? What was the conversation?
    d. Where did y'all meet? How was this decision made? How was travel coordinated?
    e. What did y'all do? How was this decided?
29. How do you feel advantaged on Grindr? How do you feel disadvantaged? In what ways?

a. How do you feel like your physical appearance is an advantage or disadvantage in looking for sexual partners?
    i. What aspects of your physical appearance do you consider to be more advantageous for you to find a sexual partner?
    ii. Least advantageous? [Why?]
b. How do you feel like your race is an advantage or disadvantage in looking for sexual partners?
    i. What aspects of your race do you consider to be more advantageous for you to find a sexual partner?
    ii. Least advantageous? [Why?]
c. How do you feel like your age is an advantage or disadvantage in looking for sexual partners?
    i. What aspects of your age do you consider to be more advantageous for you to find a sexual partner?
    ii. Least advantageous? [Why?]
d. Are there other aspects of your lifestyle that you feel makes you advantageous on Grindr? Disadvantageous? [Why?]

30. Can you tell me about your creepiest or strangest conversation that you've had on Grindr?
    a. What made it strange?
31. Do your friends know you are Grindr? Do you have friends who also use grindr?
    a. If yes, what information do you share with them?
    b. If no, why not?
        i. Are you embarrassed? Ashamed? Guilty?

PERSONAL SEXUAL DESIRES ***[Only ask if the answers to these questions do not come up naturally throughout the interview].***

32. Do you consider yourself in a subculture (eg. twink, bear, cub, otter, daddy, etc.)?
    a. What qualifies you as a part of this subculture
    b. Do you look for sexual partners in this same subculture?
33. How do you display sexual position (top, bottom, vers) on Grindr?
    a. How do you see others' sexual positions being displayed?
    b. Are these sexual positions able to be negotiated?
    c. Do you consider this position a type of identity?
34. What sexual activities do you practice?
    a. Orgies? Threeway? Bondage? Kink? Oral? Anal? Barebacking? [Others]
    b. How are these activities negotiated?

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

35. If a gay man just moved to Chicago, what advice would you give him about going out and meeting partners?
36. What advice would you give him about going online and meeting partners?
37. When you first responded to participate in this study, what were your expectations of the types of questions that would've been asked? Was anything asked that you weren't expecting? Was anything not asked that you thought would've been asked? *[Follow-up with these questions as necessary].*

38. Finally, do you have any questions for me?

[Turn Tape Recorder off]

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. If any questions arise later on, please do not hesitate to reach out to me via the study email.

[Ensure to hand a set of business cards for the study and to encourage other possible participants to contact the study for an interview].

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