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'Walking in My Shoes':

An Embodied, Situational Spatio-Temporal Perspective on Daily Life for Low-income Single Mothers in San Francisco, California

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Executive Summary

The importance of geographic context in understanding poverty in wealthy nations is well-recognized, especially in regard to the persistence and severity of concentrated poverty in American inner-cities. How to conceptualize and analyze geographic context in relation to poor individuals, however, is still a surprisingly under-developed and disagreed upon issue. In addition, the weight of poverty studies still rely on absolute, income deprivation based conceptualizations and measures of poverty, when in fact poverty should be understood as a multidimensional, lived experience. Research areas regarding the geographic context – poor individual relationship such as neighborhood effects, transport and social exclusion and the spatial mismatch hypothesis, treat context as a collection of variables which are delineated by the geographic aggregate of 'the neighborhood', or concern themselves with proximity and travel time issues between poor residents' neighborhoods and resources or activities such as employment and health care. The gist of the matter is that researchers fail to explain *how* space influences individual behavior, and how individual behavior influences space.

In understanding this relationship two important dimensions of context are overlooked: It is both sequential and subject to internal flows. Context is sequential in that it is an experience that unfolds over time for the individual as she moves through time and space and situations change, gaining experiences, emotions and associations which inform her interpretation of and behavior in future situations. Context is subject to internal flows, meaning that as an individual stands still, other people and things move in and out of her range of sensory reception, and she is also able to 'send messages' into the world around her. This project attempted to demonstrate how it may be possible to reconcile these conceptual oversights through the application of an integrated approach of Time Geography and Emotional Geography: An *embodied, situational spatio-temporal framework*. The two key conceptual contributions of this integrated approach is the introduction of *time* when understanding how space interrelates with lived experiences of individuals; drawing primarily on Time Geography's space-time constraint concepts and Action Space model. With this perspective, one can assess characteristics of daily life organization in terms of choice in mobility and activity participation. The other is *thinking through the body* when understanding the subjective experience an individual may have in relating to various and shifting contexts in daily life; drawing primarily on Emotional Geography's embodiment concept. The key strength of this approach in this project has been to capture how experiences of poverty emerge for individuals in concrete situations in daily life through the inter-relationships of personal attributes, spatio-temporal situations and embodied exposure, and to witness how the individual interacts with her context in an attempt to negotiate with these poverty experiences.

I explored the daily lives of 17 low-income single mothers in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. Single mothers were chosen due to the remarkable prevalence of poverty within this group in the U.S. Daily life organization was quite constrained for many women, with a lot of time spent traveling and limited ability to participate in activities outside of base locations. This was

especially true public transportation-reliant mothers of young children. Restricted choice in embodied exposure along the daily path gave rise to experiences of poverty such as vulnerability, isolation, feeling 'stuck', invasion of personal space, and fear. Tactics of 'cocooning' were employed by the women in negotiating with these experiences, attempting to control their sensory reception of the internal flows of context within unpleasant situations, as well as avoiding situations where these kinds of embodied experiences are anticipated.

Integration of the two theoretical frameworks, Time Geography and Emotional Geography, was needed in order to understand the embodied experience of moving along the daily space-time path, as well as to understand how the individual's life is organized so that she encounters situations of embodied experiences of poverty within the fabric of her day-to-day life. The uniqueness of each woman's personal attributes, spatio-temporal situation and embodied exposure in daily life was important in understanding how poverty experiences arise in situations along the daily path, as well as how tactics of negotiation were employed. In short, the approach revealed not only the multidimensionality of poverty experience, but also its highly inter-relational, situational and personal character. This innovative approach has exciting application possibilities in many areas of research that try to understand experiences in daily life within different contexts and for different populations. A comparative study of the daily life experiences of low-income individuals within different urban contexts is one obvious application, as well as virtually any research area interested in understanding user or client behavior in regards to interventions, services or products, for example in drug rehabilitation programs or the spatio-temporal configurations of schools.

Forward

This project came out of my interest in social divisions and disadvantaged populations on the one hand, and the happy coincidence of writing a paper with a fellow research master student who had a basic knowledge of space-time analysis. As we worked together in formulating the idea for a paper, I kept relating this new (to me) framework to the lives of the parents and children I had served as a case manager in a homeless shelter in San Francisco prior to starting this master's program. The idea was born from there, but it is my supervisor, Prof. dr. Martin Dijst, who I thank for embracing the idea, introducing me to the emotional geography framework, and guiding me patiently and empathetically through to the end despite my many struggles with these theoretical frameworks, and the general stress any graduate student can relate to during the thesis process.

I still doubt my success in fully integrating and demonstrating the potential of the approach taken in this project. In retrospect, it may have been a bit ambitious to attempt an integration of two frameworks previously completely unknown to me and then to try to apply it to a topic, poverty, which in itself is ambiguously defined. However, the experience of doing this project has truly been the most valuable aspect of my studies in this program, and I hope to continue to work in these theoretical and topical directions in the future.

I extend my gratitude to the women who participated in this study, many of whom who took great interest and engagement in the project, and were willing to personally reflect on sometimes hard to face topics and follow through with the travel diaries and photo-documentaries within very busy and often stressful lives. I am also thankful to many former colleagues and acquaintances in social services in San Francisco for seeing the potential in this project, and for their assistance in recruitment of respondents. Finally, I would like to thank the classmate involved in this 'happy coincidence', Jan-Jelle Witte, for explaining the space-time approach to me and together exploring together ideas for its application.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the United States today, fifteen-percent (15%) of all families with children live below the poverty level. Among single, female headed families, poverty is remarkably more prevalent at almost 37%. Within this group, African American and American Indian/Native Alaskan mothers are the most vulnerable (U.S. Census Bureau 2008). By now, the feminization of poverty in the U.S. has been well-documented, as a dramatic shift in the household composition of the poor toward single, female headed households with children occurred in the 1960's and '70's (Harris 1993). While the majority of these households receive some form of government assistance, current federal expectations are that single mothers should work their way off welfare, ultimately supporting themselves and their children through the labor market. Studies on poor households have focused on personal attributes that may present barriers to achieving financial independence, identifying individuals who are young, single, Black, female, with many children, and without a high school education or previous earnings or job skills and living in the inner-city as especially at risk of long-term dependence on welfare (Harris 1993:321).

Much scholarship has been dedicated to this final poverty risk-factor - living in the inner-city - as an observed increase in the spatial concentration of poverty in American inner-cities has emerged over the past several decades (Wilson 1990, 1996; Massey 1990; Wacquant 1996). The question has then presented itself: How does geographic context– also referred to as spatial context in the literature - factor into the perpetuation of poverty among groups of people, and how does it influence the experience of the poor individual? For some time now, there has been recognition that better and more careful treatment of spatial context must be given in discussions of disadvantaged populations, however there is little agreement about how to conceptualize or analyze space (Gotham 2003:729). The most widely used indicator of poverty, household income, has been acknowledged as providing only partial information about what the term 'poverty' might describe as a lived experience, saying little about a household's actual standard of living or negotiation of day-to-day life (Rank 2004:22,36). Scholars writing from the livelihoods perspective observe: "*The realities of poor people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic. Income-poverty, though important, is only one aspect of deprivation… In addition to poverty, these include social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation*," (Chambers 1995:173).

Bodies of research interested in this geographic context - poverty relationship are: neighborhood effects (e.g. Wilson 1990; Entwisle 1994; Ellen et al. 2001; Turney et al. 2006), transport and social exclusion (e.g. Church, et al. 2000; Kenyon, et al. 2002), and spatial mismatch research (see Preston and McLafferty 1999 for overview). Neighborhood effects literature treats context as a geographic aggregate - the 'neighborhood' – which possesses characteristics such as high unemployment or scarce institutional resources that relate to individual outcomes of residents. Context is virtually boiled down to a 'rich neighborhood',

'poor neighborhood' discussion. Transport and social exclusion and spatial mismatch research are concerned with issues of proximity or travel time between the poor individual's neighborhood and opportunities or resources outside the neighborhood such as employment vacancies and health care. In short, there is wide recognition among researchers that the relationship between geographic context (also referred to as space in the literature) and poverty is important, but little agreement exists about how to conceptualize this relationship: context is treated as a black box as researchers fail to explain *how* space influences individual behavior, and how individual behavior influences space (Jencks & Mayer 1990; Gotham 2003).

Two important dimensions of geographic context have yet to be incorporated into poverty research, namely, that context is both sequential and subject to internal flows (Dijst 2009). Understanding an individual's lived context as 'the neighborhood' produces an artificial conceptualization of the poor person as an immobile agent existing only within the universe of a residential neighborhood that is sealed off from outside visitors and influences. Context is in fact much more than a permanent, unmoving thing that relates to the outcomes of individuals, for individuals are mobile agents who move through time and space within daily life (Kwan 2009) – from home to child care to work, back to child care and then home again, for example - encountering situations that change and shift as she moves along her path. This produces a *sequential* dimension to context. By passing through and experiencing an unfolding sequence of situations, she acquires information and experiences emotions, and in doing so forms associations and preferences which she uses to assess and imagine future situations. For example, walking past the same street corner where you saw someone mugged the night before – or even a year before - will likely trigger feelings of anxiety regardless of the absence of pending danger today.

This brings us to the second dimension, that geographic context is also subject to *internal flows*. While the individual is mobile in daily life, other people, things and elements are also mobile and cross the individual's path. The individual becomes aware of this crossing of paths through sensory reception: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. And she also 'sends messages' out into the world around her through the same sensory mediums. In a simple example, if you walk along the street and hear your name called by a familiar voice (audio reception) you probably turn around, recognize the individual (visual reception), smile and wave (visual message). If, however, a noisy bus passes on the street at the time your friend calls your name from across the street, the bus noise –being louder and closer – will become part of the internal flows of your contextual experience while his voice may be lost outside your realm of sensory reception in that moment.

While it is evident that there is a relationship between contextual environment and life outcomes of poor individuals, if the mechanisms working between geographic context and individuals are left in the dark, we cannot know how living in a certain place could perpetuate certain behaviors or shape social and economic outcomes (Gotham 2003:728). To give one example, the social isolation argument of neighborhood effects literature posits that living in a high poverty neighborhood makes it harder for a person to find a job than for residents of other types of neighborhoods. Part of this argument is that living in this kind of neighborhood reduces

the chances that this person makes the kinds of social ties that are important in a job search, that is, "*extensive, varied, spatially dispersed, nonkin ties,"* (Turney, et al. 2006:141). But the causal connection between the ways individuals (fail to) make social job search ties and the fact of living in a poor neighborhood is still not established. If the 'right kinds' of social ties are not available in other residents of the poor neighborhood, what keeps an individual from making ties in other physical or virtual places within the fabric of daily life? Perhaps that is a more interesting question.

Here I would like to attempt to formulate an integrated approach which permits a richer understanding of geographic context within poverty research, incorporating more of the dynamic inter-relationships between context and individuals. I refer to this approach as an *embodied, situational spatio-temporal framework*, the essential conceptual contributions coming from Time Geography and Emotional Geography. To begin, Time Geography offers a more sophisticated conceptualization of the relationship between individuals and spatial context by introducing the component of *time* (Hagerstrand 1970). It moves past the simplistic notion of context as a geographical aggregate (such as the neighborhood) because it views people as mobile agents, following individuals' paths through time and space, perhaps traveling widely and freely and engaging in many desired activities, or perhaps quite 'stuck' within a small area without the ability to move easily between activities due to various constraints. More recent feminist contributions remind us of the agency of individuals in coping with and negotiating these space-time constraints (Dijst 2009). An example may be a parent falsely registering her child's address with a relative so that the child can go to a school that is closer to his sibling's childcare center, thereby reducing constraints placed on the parent in traveling between locations. Time Geography facilitates an explanation of how the space-time organization of a person's daily life influences her choices, behavior and outcomes. It acts as a window into the "*dialectical interplay between structure and everyday practice,"* (Pred 1981:15), a process which is continuously unfolding in time and space.

In addition to this space-time organization aspect of daily life, how individuals interpret and attribute meaning to their experiences in moving through time and space is also an important part of the geographic context–individual interrelationship, and has everything to do with understanding behavior and, therefore, individuals' life outcomes as in poverty research. Classically, Time Geography treats the body as a neutral vessel transporting the individual through time and space. However, more recent feminist critics have brought attention back to the body in how individuals experience their paths through time and space (Dijst 2009:12). In order to access this aspect of geographic context, the integrated approach used here applies the concept of *embodiment* from the Emotional Geography literature to everyday life situations (see Davidson, et. al. 2005). Emotions play an important role in our behavior in responding to people or other stimuli within situations. They inform the associations and preferences that we form about places and situations, and they influence our willingness to participate or not participate in certain activities in certain locations based on our past experiences – note the connection to the sequential dimension of context. Hubbard's (2005) exploration of emotions and embodiment in the evening economy found that the decision to 'go out' in certain parts of the city was "*profoundly shaped by the individuals' understandings of the type of emotional*

management that might be required in a given setting," (Hubbard 2005:123). These emotional reactions to and associations with activities and settings are highly individual, "…*with spaces that alienate and alarm some being a fundamental locus of others' self-identity,"* (Hubbard 2005:122). In other words, the way an individual feels about herself is in constant negotiation relative to the different spaces she moves through within the sequential nature of context.

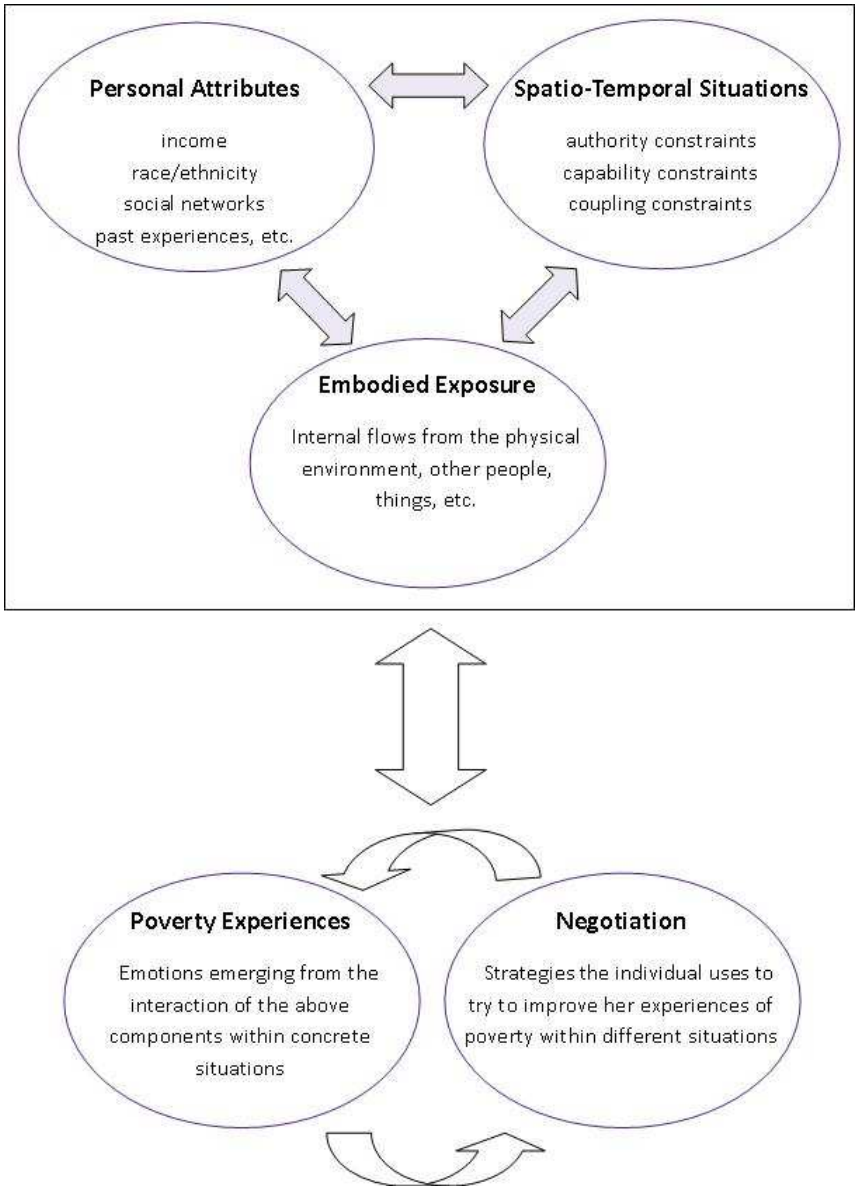
The key idea in the embodiment concept is that in addition to being always at *some location* and at *some point in time* as in classical space-time analysis, we (as individuals) are also always emotionally experiencing the dynamic interaction between the physicality of our own bodies and the materiality of our surroundings, as in the bodies of other people, the incline of a hill, the breeze on our faces and scent from a nearby restaurant, the types of shoes on our feet, and so on, within each situation. The senses possessed by our bodies are the windows we have to receive flows of information about the world around us which we attribute meaning to emotionally and analytically. Our bodies are also our mediums for 'sending out' messages into the world. As Davidson's work on the management and transgression of the boundary between the body and the external world shows, "…*this world is always a world-for-us, interpreted and experienced through our positioning within it,"* (Davidson 2001:284). Indeed, how we feel about ourselves and how we experience the world in any given context cannot be separated from our own corporeality (Davidson 2001:287). Our perspective of space-time organization of daily life can be moved further to incorporate the emotional component into our understanding of context through attention to sensory experience along the space-time path. This positions us well to explore how individuals exercise agency in trying to negotiate with how they experience their space-time constraints and various contexts along the daily path.

Figure 1 below summarizes the key components of this integrated approach. There is the potential to zoom down to the concrete, situational level of daily life of individuals to understand how the various characteristics of the individual and her geographic context inter-relate in time and space to produce experiences of poverty which are subject to negotiation. Geographic context can be understood in terms of the built and natural environment, mobile objects like cars, other people, and events such as day and night and weather conditions. The three dimensions which together can produce experiences of poverty are: 1) *Personal attributes* such as income, race/ethnicity and social networks and past experiences such as domestic violence which influence the way one imagines possible future events; 2) *Spatio-temporal situations* in not being able to fulfill daily life needs and responsibilities due to space-time constraints, not having freedom of mobility, or not possessing time sovereignty; and 3) *Embodied exposure* to different kinds of sensory experiences from the internal flows of contexts along the daily path such as physical discomfort, noise, visual cues, smells and so on. These three components interact in daily life situations to produce poverty experiences, meaning the emotions that emerge for the individual from these situations such as fear, isolation, humiliation, and so on. The individual in response tries to improve her experience in these situations through tactics of negotiation. An example of an experience of poverty emerging out of these interrelationships might be when a person feels fear (*poverty experience*) walking to her car in dark early morning hours in an neighborhood where she has witnessed

violent crime (*personal attribute & embodied exposure*) because her job requires an early start time (*space-time constraint*) and she cannot find a better job due to her educational level (*personal attribute*). She walks on the lit side of the street so that she can better see if someone is approaching, and so that her neighbors can see her if something happens to her (*negotiation*). In another example, a person does not have enough income (*personal attribute*) to afford a car (*space-time constraint*), and so, in the public sphere of the bus (*space-time constraint*) she routinely encounters social interactions (*embodied exposure*) where she feels stereotyped as 'poor' (*poverty experience*) based on her racial appearance, clothing, hair style and so on (*personal attributes*). She makes a point of sitting at the rear of the bus so that she is seen by less people as they get on and off the bus (*negotiation*).

The individual, with her personal attributes - including the way her previous experiences influence how she imagines future events - inter-relates in an embodied way with the spatio-temporal organization of her daily life and internal flows of context to produce situationally specific experiences of poverty in daily life. These experiences emerge for her as emotions which stimulate her to negotiate with her context in order to improve her experiences. Taking this perspective, the multidimensionality of poverty becomes apparent, but also its siutationally-determined and personal character, as each situation is uniquely composed of the attributes and spatio-temporal situations of an individual and the characteristics of a context.

Figure [1]: An Embodied, Situational Spatio-Temporal Framework of Poverty Experience



What, then, are some ways this framework might prove useful in poverty research? While there are certainly many potentialities, I point to three main areas of contribution: 1) The geographic context-individual mechanisms influencing quality of life and outcomes, 2) Human agency of poor individuals in relating with context, and 3) The situationally emergent multiple aspects of poverty beyond income deprivation. First is the potential to shine a light into the 'black box' of the context-individual mechanism involved in influencing individual outcomes of poor individuals. As Pred pointed out some time ago, space-time analysis uncovers the *dialectical interplay between structure and everyday practice*. To understand this dialectical interplay between individuals and geographic context as it unfolds for poor individuals and households

would represent a powerful contribution to current conceptualizations of poverty beyond individual characteristics and static notions of context. As Gotham indicates: "*Rather than viewing space as something that is `out there' (i.e. an impersonal and external force), we can redefine and analyze space as a mediating link between macro-social constraints and actions of the poor. Focusing on this dialectical interplay means viewing space as an object of political struggle, a constitutive component of human agency, and a facilitator as well as constraint upon action,"* (Gotham 2003:729). The second potential contribution of this integrated approach addresses human agency in how space is conceptualized in poverty research. When the individual's mobility, embodied emotional experience and interrelationship with her environment in concrete situations is recognized, the strategies of negotiation she employs to try to improve her experience become evident. And finally, this approach can facilitate a better understanding of the multidimensionality of poverty, moving beyond, as Chambers (1995) has suggested, income deprivation in our understanding of what it means to be poor as a lived experience. As noted, these may include (and are certainly not limited to) social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation.

For practitioners and policymakers, the advancement of these areas of poverty research can lead to the identification of new strategies for improving the quality of life of poor individuals such as the low-income single mothers in this study. Specifically, implementing ways to increase flexibility in daily life organization through greater mobility, time sovereignty and emotional comfort can boost the ability of these women to get around the city and combine the various activities that they need to perform in caring for themselves and their children on a day-to-day basis. For example, what would it need to look like for a very low-income individual in an American city to be able to move quickly, inexpensively, and comfortably throughout the city at all times of day, and to have enough flexibility in their schedule to combine work/study/social service/child responsibilities with other elective activities? A combination of these improvements would not only addresses the basic needs of the household, but may also open up more opportunities for the mothers (as in this case) to create more recreational and educational activities for their children (such as bed-time reading or transport to little league football), as well as create more opportunities for themselves to pursue other life ambitions in coordination with being mothers and caregivers (such as continuing education, taking up a creative hobby, or exercising).

Progress has already been made to understand quality of life from spatio-temporal and embodied perspectives. Research in space-time organization of daily life for households has established that clear differences exist between men and women's abilities to reach urban opportunities outside the home such as potential employment or leisure activities within the confines of their daily responsibilities. This is due primarily to the greater and unequal load of in and out-of-home domestic responsibilities that women still perform, whether employed in paid labor or not (Hanson & Pratt 1995; Kwan 1998, 1999, 2000; Schwanen & de Jong 2008). Studies have examined the difficult daily task that two-parent households perform in attempting to balance child care-giving, household responsibilities and paid labor (Dijst 1999; Schwanen et al. 2007). The unequal load of domestic tasks tends to dictate a highly rigid schedule for women,

more so than for men, strongly affecting their employment status and commuting distances, and reducing their flexibility to choose between other out-of-home activities within the day (Kwan 2000; Schwanen 2008; Schwanen & de Jong 2008). Indeed, this kind of schedule rigidity varies depending on the kind of activity a person is undertaking, where, when, how long it takes, and the background of the person who is performing the activity (Schwanen et al. 2007). Other studies have focused on local spatial configurations of land and transport in impacting quality of life for different lifestyles (Ritsema van Eck, et. al. 2005). There may be, therefore, very informative differences in spatio-temporal organization of daily life between many different socio-demographic groups, for example in regards to income or household composition. However, the aforementioned studies have so far been limited to higher income, more highly educated people of European decent. Moreover, the complexity of negotiating day-to-day activities for single-parents has yet to be examined, as these studies have focused on male-female partnership households.

Research taking a perspective of embodiment on people's experiences has explored the emotional embodiment of disease, treatment and dying for people suffering from mental or physical illness, undergoing medical treatment, or in the process of dying (e.g. Bankey 2002, Dias 2003). Embodiment understanding has also proved useful in research regarding body image and diet, in how we express ourselves and experience emotions through our bodies (e.g. Johnston 1996). Embodiment perspective has also been used to understand aspects of aging, for example, in the spatial marginalization of the elderly and emotional attachment to place (Milligan et. al. 2005). Focus has also been turned to embodiment within specific places, for example, sites of tourism, evening entertainment venues, and 'nature' in how the individual relates to these places through her/his body (e.g. Molz 2005, Conradson 2005). Perhaps most relatable to poverty in the U.S., David Sibley's 1995 book explores the role of emotion in the socio-spatial dynamics of racism. The scope of varied topics that can be explored through embodiment include the potential to understand societal divisions: "*Exploring the relationality of emotion offers a promising avenue through which to advance understandings of dynamic geographies of difference, exclusion and oppression,"* (Bondi, et. al. in Davidson et. al 2005:8.)

Considering the successful application of space-time analysis and embodiment literature on topics involving exclusion and quality of life, one could imagine how an integrated approach of the two might be used to understand lived experiences of poverty. We can take the 'vulnerability' dimension of poverty from Chambers (1995) as an example. In what kinds of situations in daily life does a poor person experience vulnerability? One can imagine a person who waits at a bus stop in the middle of the night on a deserted and 'unsafe' street for a bus that he or she is not confident will arrive on schedule. How does it contribute to a feeling or condition of vulnerability in this context if the person appears to belong to a certain 'racial' group, is very young or very old, pushes an infant in a stroller, is male/female/transgendered, has the appearance of a certain level of wealth or lack of wealth? And, why has this person arrived at this situation in the first place? What types of work, education or childcare institutions impose schedules that would make someone travel at that time of night? Why does the person not travel by more reliable and secure transportation? Why does his or her path take him or her through this area of the city? What past experiences has she or he had at this

bus stop (or others) in the past that may influence the how she/he feels standing there? In order for vulnerability to emerge, as in this example, all these factors must come together in an interactive, dynamic and unfolding way between the individual and the context in real time on the ground in concrete situations.

Due to the high prevalence of poverty among single, female headed households in the U.S., low-income single mothers were recruited to participate in this study. The aim of this study is to explore the potential for an embodied, situational spatio-temporal approach to gain a richer understanding of geographic context in poverty research, and to facilitate a better understanding of poverty as a lived experience, focusing on how multiple aspects of poverty beyond income deprivation such as powerlessness and vulnerability emerge in daily life for the individual. The following overarching and sub-research questions are asked:

What is the relation between personal attributes, spatio-temporal situations and embodied exposure with poverty experiences in different spatio-temporal contexts for low-income, single mothers? And, how do these women negotiate in time and space with these experiences of poverty?

a) *How do personal attributes interplay with spatio-temporal situations in organizing daily life for this group of women?*
b) *How is organization of daily life related to embodied exposure and experience of spatio-temporal situations for these women?*
c) *How do these women negotiate in time and space with experiences of poverty?*

The following theoretical chapter reviews key concepts from poverty research, space-time analysis, and embodiment literature. A methodological description of the case study discusses the selection of the location of the study, data collection, respondent recruitment and compensation, respondent characteristics, and analysis methodology in brief. Two analysis chapters are presented. The first assesses the flexibility/constraint of organization of daily life for the women as determined by space-time constraints. The chapter begins with a biographical sketch of respondents, followed by a discussion of home and other daily activity bases, transport modes, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) access, and finally, an assessment of action space characteristics. The second analysis chapter explores themes and situations of embodiment in daily life and tactics of negotiation employed by the women to improve their experiences, while integrating spatio-temporal analysis from the previous chapter. Finally, a discussion and conclusions chapter reflects on the application of this integrated approach in understanding the daily lives of low-income single mothers in San Francisco, and discusses possible policy implications and future research directions embracing this approach.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Section 2.1

This chapter starts with a review of poverty research in wealthy nations, with an emphasis on the United States, discussing the way that poverty has been conceptualized and measured, some trends in American poverty over the past several decades, and lastly, approaches that are being taken to re-conceptualize poverty beyond absolute income terms. Then, the academic literature regarding the relationship between poverty and space is reviewed. Next, the two main theoretical contributions to the integrated approach of this study are presented: Time Geography and Emotional Geography. Hagerstrand's Classical Time Geography is presented, followed by an explanation of the Action Space model used in this study. Critiques of Classical Time Geography regarding the actor's agency and importance of understanding experiences of the body when moving along the daily path are discussed. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the Emotional Geography literature, describing the work of scholars in the field on experiences of embodiment.

Section 2.2 Poverty Research – conceptualization, measurement, trends & explanations

- *Conceptualization, measurement and trends*

After Wilson's famous 1987 publication, *The Truly Disadvantaged,* the large resurgence of academic interest in poverty in wealthy nations such as the United States has maintained momentum into the 21st Century (Brady 2003:715-16). Despite the large number of sociological studies of poverty, the fundamental issues of conceptualization and measurement of poverty have remained ambiguous and contentious within the academic community, with most research falling back on an absolute 'poor' or 'not poor' poverty line derived from household income. The basic idea of the poverty concept is historically quite quantitative and absolute, and the reliance on income in identifying 'poor' individuals has been criticized as flawed as an unreliable measure of exclusion resulting from lack of resources, which is what most poverty research claims to measure. Indeed, finding a "*unique objective scientific measure on which everyone can agree"* has been likened to the search for the Holy Grail (Nolan&Whelan 1996:2-3).

In the U.S., the definition and measurement of poverty has remained basically unchanged since it was officially developed in 1965. It was developed during the Johnson administration by the social security administration and is based on household consumption. Some are of the opinion that the measure was developed conservatively so that the Johnson administration's *War on Poverty* program goals might be more practically attainable in terms of the number of people served (Brady 2003:717). Although the measure has been adjusted for inflation over the past decades, it has been criticized as no longer reflecting the actual standard of living of a family

after the 1960's as, among other important changes, there has been marked increased participation of mothers in the labor force and related rising needs and expenses for child care and health insurance (Brady 2003:718). Also, the rising living standards and increases in consumption by U.S. households since the 1960's makes the antiquated measure an inadequate gage of living standard relative to the rest of the population. The "*commonly accepted*" international measure of poverty is that individuals falling below one-half the median individual income of a given spatial aggregate (such as a country or economic region like the EU) are below the poverty level. This standard is at least commonly accepted in Canada and the European Union (Osberg 2000; Atkinson 1998). Despite these criticisms of the income poverty measures, most poverty studies continue to rely on absolute income conceptualizations of poverty wherein a family or individual is either 'in' or 'out' of poverty (Brady 2003:716), without sufficiently problematizing the connection between income and deprivation: "*… it is vital that the relationship between income and deprivation is examined and understood if poverty is to be measured with confidence*," (Nolan&Whelan 1996:3).

Given the extensive poverty research that has been produced over the past several decades, some trends of poverty in the U.S. have become apparent. One such trend has been come to be known as the 'feminization' of poverty in the 1960's and '70's, a term first coined by Diana Pierce in 1978 (Harris 1993). These decades saw an increased rate of divorce and unwed childbearing that was unprecedented in the U.S., and the proportion of families in poverty became increasingly headed by single women as a result. Another trend in American poverty is the 'racialization' of poverty, meaning that scholars have examined the ways in which racial stereotyping of non-White groups in the U.S. exacerbates the challenges faced by low-income individuals belonging to these minority racial and ethnic groups – especially African Americans - through systematic institutional racism and marginalization in the work force (Peak 1997). Another trend has to do with the shift in geographic dispersion and concentration of poor people in the U.S. The notorious formation of inner-city ghettos in cities in the United States is well-documented (e.g. Wilson 1987, 1996; Massey 1990, 1996; Wacquant 1996), as poor households have become increasingly concentrated in the inner-city neighborhoods of cities like Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Oakland, Detroit, and Philadelphia since the 1960's. The reasons that have been offered for explaining the concentration and persistence of poverty in inner cities in the U.S. will be addressed later in a review of academic explanations of poverty. Trends in the approaches taken by the United States government in addressing the problem of poverty have also changed over time, at least partially in response to the demographic changes discussed above. Prior to the 1960's shift of the poor household profile toward single female-headed households concentrated in inner cities, welfare policy in the U.S. was designed to move able-bodied adults (mostly men) into the labor market, while providing cash assistance to the elderly, disabled and single women with children (often widows). As the poor household demographic shifted from relatively stable families headed by a husband who worked and a wife who stayed home and cared for the children to single women with children, federal welfare programs providing cash aid to increasing numbers of work-exempt single mothers with children started looking very impractical, and attention started to shift to criticism of 'welfare dependency' among the poor from the 1970's onward. 1988 saw the beginning of major welfare reforms in the U.S. designed to move welfare recipients, including single

mothers, off of welfare and into the workforce (Harris 1993:318-19). This trend continues in welfare policy in the U.S. today, as single mothers are expected to receive welfare cash aid only as a temporary and time-limited assistance to be used while returning to the labor force.

Academic interest in the impact of income deprivation on individuals and families is diverse and extensive, and beyond the possibilities of comprehensive review here. To name a few major areas of poverty research, the psychological effects of income deprivation have been examined, especially in the case of single mothers and the negative impact the emotional stress of income deprivation has on parenting quality and, in turn, child behavior outcomes (McLoyd, et al. 2008; Byrne, et al. 1998; Jackson, et al. 2000). Similarly, lower academic and cognitive outcomes for children growing up in poor households have been observed (Kaiser 1996). Low-income individuals are more at risk of losing housing and becoming homeless, especially when facing extra challenges like mental health illness, substance abuse, weak social networks, and having spent time in jail or prison (Jencks:199522). Low-income populations in the U.S. have also been observed to have higher risk of exposure to violence – both in the residential environment and within the family household (DuRant, et. al. 1995). In a final note, the social networks and social capital of the inner-city poor have been of great interest as related to the instrumental support that can assist in finding a job, providing temporary housing, informal child care, and so on. The meaning of social capital in this study is understood on the individual – not community or group – level as the: "*ability to secure benefits through membership in networks and other social structures*," (Portes 1998:8).

- *Explanations of poverty in the U.S.*

Explanations of why poverty persists in the United States can be roughly grouped into two approaches: the culture of poverty argument and structural arguments. The 'culture of poverty' was famously coined by Oscar Lewis in his 1961 anthropological study of a poor urban family in Mexico. He viewed poverty as something that is passed between generations through the hopelessness and marginalization that the parents feel, and a resulting attitude of living for the present that involves behavior such as not saving for the future and underutilizing public services. In the decades following Lewis' famous studies of Mexican and Puerto Rican urban poor, the feminization, racialization and urban concentration of American poverty was starting to become concerning for many social scientists and policy-makers. Some of the more conservative critics of 'welfare dependency' during this time took Lewis' culture of poverty explanation and applied it to explaining the observed shifts in American urban poverty. The famous 1965 Moynihan report argues that the African American community is value-deficient as an explanation for the gross over-representation of African Americans in poverty. Charles Murry's 1984 book, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy*, views the trends in poverty noted above as the product of a shift in values of poor households from individual responsibility to entitlement, in partnership with a shift in the 'rules of the game' for rational choice making of households within the welfare programs context of the Johnson Administration's 'War on Poverty'. Essentially, Murry argues that it became more rational for poor women to stay unwed and have children in order to receive welfare, and that this change in the 'rules of the game' created a counter-culture, welfare-dependent poverty which was quite the opposite of

the hard-working, proud, independent poor he characterized in the pre-'War on Poverty' United States.

Structural explanations of poverty in the U.S. most often focus on how large-scale economic and institutional factors influence individual behaviour. Among the most well-known structural explanations of post-1960's American poverty is provided by William Julius Wilson (1987; 1996). For Wilson, the severity and extent of poverty in American inner-cities is a product of the interaction between racial segregation on the one hand, and other changes in society on the other. These changes refer to the relative decline in demand for low-skilled workers due to macro- and national economic trends, and the outmigration of more mobile inner-city Blacks to the suburbs in the 1970's which had been delayed due to racial discrimination. Because, Wilson argues, poor African American inner city residents were disproportionately impacted by the decline in demand for low-skilled labor, especially in the manufacturing sector, the neighborhoods where many low-skilled African Americans lived became concentrations not only of low-income households, but also of joblessness. The effects of increasing joblessness, he argues, were further aggravated by the middle-class outmigration. As these higher income Black households left the neighborhood, their leaving not only further concentrated poverty and joblessness, but also resulted in the deterioration of neighborhood institutions such as libraries, community centers and schools. The result was an inner-city neighborhood with highly concentrated poverty and joblessness, weak institutions, and by-products such as high crime rates and low-educational attainment.

Wilson understands joblessness as the key mechanism perpetuating many undesirable (from the larger society's perspective) behaviors of poor, inner-city residents. Growing up in a household with unemployed parents and in a neighborhood with high unemployment means being prepared for ghetto life, but unprepared for interaction (and employment) in larger society. It inhibits the development of pro-social habits and behaviors such as rational planning, adherence to routine, recognition of hierarchy, a sense of self-efficacy, and so on. Wilson also attributes increased crime among adult black males and a weakening of the nuclear family structure to persistent and concentrated joblessness. Massey also takes a structural view of American poverty, but places more weight on the importance of racial segregation and discrimination in the American housing market in creating extreme poverty and marginalization in the American inner-city (1990; 1996).

- *Moving past income conceptualizations of poverty*

As we have seen, the most conventional way to conceptualize and measure poverty is in economic terms such as household income, expenditures, assets and access to credit. However, other lines of thought are beginning to question and open up this conventional, income-based dialogue around what poverty is and how it can be understood. The two most prominent areas of work in this regard draw from research in both wealthy and developing nations: social exclusion literature and livelihoods approaches.

The proliferation of the term social exclusion in more recent literature regarding social inequality reflects a trend towards reexamining the conventional definition of poverty in wealthy nations (Brady 2003; Vranken 2001 among others). In this line of thought, understanding poverty solely in terms of income is far too narrow. It should be understood as one dimension of the broader, multidimensional concept, social exclusion: "*Crucial aspects such as the processes leading to poverty, the 'structure of the daily life of the poor' and their social networks, and the spatial dimension of social exclusion remains under-researched*," (Vranken 2001:71). This line of research questions: is poverty is a situation or a process? Is it an individual condition or a socially connected phenomena, relative to society as a whole? Is it one aspect of social exclusion or a thing in its own right?

Although coming from international development scholarship, the livelihood approaches are similar to the social exclusion literature, in that they reflect a shift in thinking about poverty from national income to people-centered analysis. A livelihood can be defined as '*the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets and intangible assets. Employment can provide a livelihood but most livelihoods of the poor are based on multiple activities and sources of food, income and security'* (Chambers 1995:174). Amartya Sen's (1982) capabilities approach posits that the purpose of international development is to improve human lives by expanding the range of things a person can be and do in her or his life "*such as to be healthy and well nourished, to be knowledgeable, and to participate in community life*," (Fukada-Parr 2003:303) not simply increasing per capita consumption. This involves removing obstacles such as illiteracy, ill health, lack of access to resources, or lack of civil and political freedoms. This approach can be difficult to operationalize in policy, however, as identifying and prioritizing the capabilities necessary to expand choice in life can vary from one community or country to another, and across time (Fukada-Parr 2003:305). In regards to livelihoods of low-income people in wealthy nations, Sen has pointed to the deficits of understanding poverty in purely income terms, as 'social functioning' requires different resources from country to country: *"Relative deprivation in the space of incomes can yield absolute deprivation in the space of capabilities. In a country that is generally rich, more income may be needed to buy enough commodities to achieve the same social functioning, such as "appearing in public without shame","* (Sen In: Osberg 2000:848).

Livelihoods research is concerned with understanding deprivation in multidimensional terms in addition to and beyond income (Chambers 1995), and understanding how these dimensions relate to the individual or household's daily life. Along this line of thinking, the assets vulnerability approach emphasizes the value of taking the starting point of thinking about what poor households *have*, rather than what they do not have (Moser 1998). Thinking outside of the income deprivation box, assets vulnerability approaches look for easy to recognize tangible assets such as labor, human capital such as education and literacy skills, as well as productive assets such as housing, and quite intangible assets such as household networks and social capital (Moser 1998:1).

Section 2.3 Poverty and Space

Gotham (2003) presents an interesting critique on the treatment of space in poverty research, noting that while poverty researchers agree that space is important, "*there is little agreement as to how to conceptualize space and how analysis of space should proceed*," (Gotham 2003: 729). Poverty researchers have refrained from opening the 'black box' of space, treating it as a "*backdrop or geographical demarcation that reconstitutes space as a heuristic device to detect, represent and explain broad societal processes*," (Gotham 2003:727) ambiguously linking macro-level contexts to individual outcomes. In both qualitative and quantitative poverty studies that bracket out space, the location of the study is conceived of as a geographic aggregate which is reduced to variables of interest, with the result that the "*holistic or Gestalt of place setting is lost,*" (Labao 1996, In: Gotham 2003:727).

Keeping these criticisms in mind, we now review the literature which has addressed the link between poor individuals and space. Much attention has been paid to the trend of spatial concentration of poverty in urban areas of the U.S., as well as Canada and Western Europe, in the later part of the 20th century, although the U.S.'s urban ghettos still represent the extreme examples of poverty concentration. Research has been concerned with how certain neighborhoods becomes 'poor' over time in contrast to other wealthier neighborhoods (Van Kempen 2002), and how the characteristics of a neighborhood influence life outcomes of its residents. The literature presented here is interested in how space interacts with the poor individual's life outcomes and quality of life, specifically neighborhood effects literature, as well as research linking transportation with social exclusion, and issues of proximity to jobs for inner-city residents.

Firstly, neighborhood effects literature is interested in how certain characteristics within the geographic aggregate of the poor neighborhood relate to life outcomes and behavior of residents. Statistical evidence has shown that there is indeed a correlation between neighborhood characteristics and individual behavior, but researchers fail in explaining how they are correlated (Bauder 2002). Three mechanisms have been proposed: 1) Peer groups negatively influence the behavior of the youth in the neighborhood; 2) Adult role-models in the neighborhood pass their pathological behavior (unstable employment, welfare dependency, being unmarried, etc.) on to youths; and 3) Physical infrastructure and institutional networks in the neighborhood such as schools are weak and provide inadequate services. Critics such as Bauder argue that neighborhood effects literature is based on a discourse in which the behavior of poor neighborhood residents is pathological, and detached from the wider political-social context.

Church, et al. (2000) provide an engaging discussion of transport and social exclusion. They identify two approaches that have been taken: categorical and spatial. Categorical approaches examine the certain demographic groups which are disadvantaged in relation to transportation (the elderly, the physically impaired, those without unpaid employment, for example). However, these categorical approaches rarely acknowledge the multidimensionality of why an individual might be transport disadvantaged , and neither do they consider geographical factors

at play. The second, spatial approaches, have focused on the problems caused by poor public transport access to rural areas and poor neighbourhoods (Church, et. al. 2000:195). The authors emphasize the need to consider the multidimensionality of the issue, and call for attention to the specific activities certain groups of individuals desire access to through transport use. However, they take a strictly area-based analysis. For example, they propose relating the characteristics of a neighborhood with high rates of exclusion from a particular societal resource, such as poor health outcomes, to travel time to clinics and hospitals.

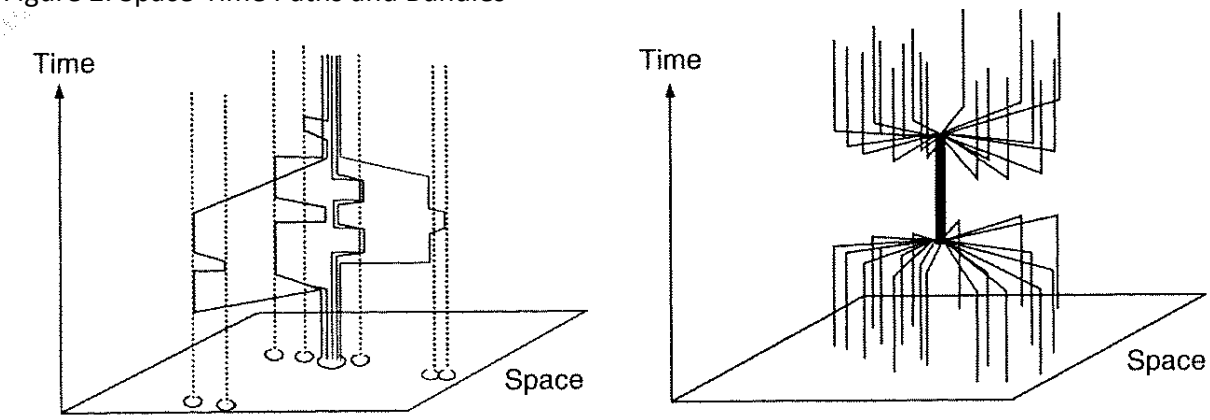
The final body of research to be addressed here was introduced by John Kain's 1968 publication, *Housing Segregation, Negro Employment and Metropolitan Decentralization,* namely, the Spatial Mismatch Hypothesis. It argues that one of the primary reasons for the poor labor market outcomes of Blacks in US cities is the spatial disconnection between Black workers and jobs that is created by the suburbanization of low-skilled jobs on the one hand, and housing market discrimination which prevents Blacks from following the jobs from the inner-city ghettos to the suburbs on the other hand (Gobillon et al. 2007:2401). Since then, researchers have adopted more expanded versions of this original hypothesis (Preston&McLafferty 1999), but still focus generally on the spatial accessibility of inner-city, low-skilled workers to jobs (see for reviews Holzer 1991; Kain 1992; Ihlanfeldt & Sjoquist 1998; Preston & McLafferty 1999). Research is done at the aggregate level and most often employs a gravity model, focusing on the number of jobs located within varying distances of areas where the residences of low-skilled, inner city workers are concentrated (such as zip-codes or Census tracts) (Ihlanfeldt 2006:409; Hellerstein 2008:467; Gobillon et al. 2007:2402). A distance-decay function discounts jobs the further away they are from the residential area in question. So, while Spatial Mismatch research explicitly links space with poor individuals' outcomes, it is limited to ideas of proximity and commuting times to jobs, and employment outcomes.

Section 2.4 Time Geography and Space-Time Analysis

Time Geography is interested in understanding people in terms of their uninterrupted 'path' through time and across space. Initiated from Hagerstrand's 1970 landmark work *What About People in Regional Science?* (see Dijst 2009 for an overview of the origins and scope of the Time Geography approach), this approach understands that everything that is materially based in the world is in 'movement' even when physically stationary because of the passage of time. We can think in terms of daily paths, yearly paths, life paths, and so on. These paths – of people, things, elements, – cross each other in what are referred to as stations or bundles. Figure 2 below illustrates individual paths through time (looking vertically) and across space (looking horizontally), observing how they cross paths and bundle at certain points. The illustration to the left depicts the daily paths of the members of a family, how they start the day at home together, depart for their various activity locations during the day, and return home to sleep. The illustration to the right depicts the daily paths of school children, beginning the day at various home locations, joining at the school location for the middle of the day, and then parting ways again for home. In another example these paths could have included the passing of a rain cloud or bus or any other number of people and things that may have created a path within the time frame and area of space of interest. We can see immediately how there is a

sequential element to the path each of us experiences, as we learn from and make associations with past situations along our path, and anticipate future situations we think may occur in the future.

Figure 2: Space-Time Paths and Bundles



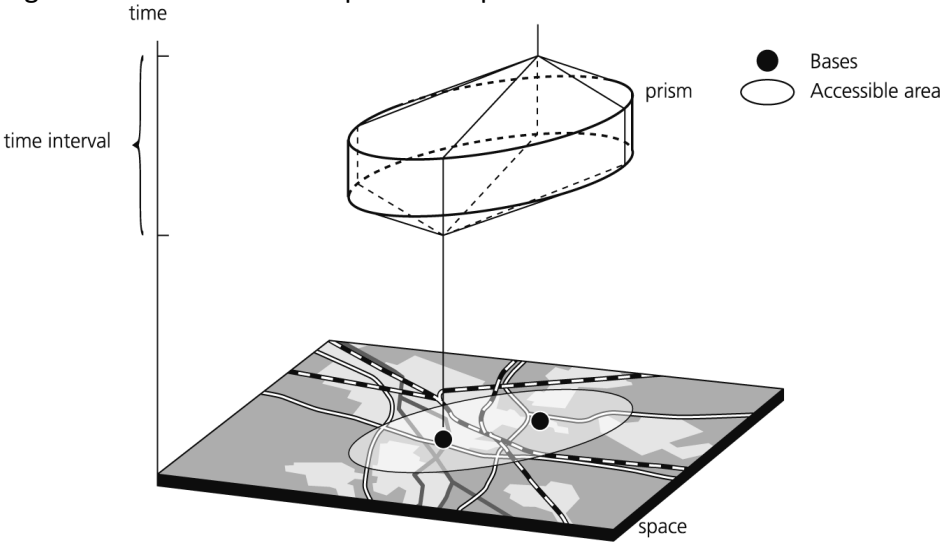
(From: Dijst 2008:2)

In Classical Time Geography, the paths people take through time and space are shaped by three constraints: capability constraints, coupling constraints, and authority constraints. Capability constraints arise from a person's biological, mental and instrumental limitations such as the need to eat and sleep, the knowledge and skills to utilize forms of transportation, or the monetary resources to pay for a convenient housing location. Coupling constraints arise from the necessity for various paths of people and things to come together at the same time and location to complete an activity. For example, most people can relate to the difficulties that can arise from scheduling a large dinner party with several households, as everyone has their own schedules which are subject to demands from work, child care, and so on. This brings us to the final category of constraints, the authority constraints, which are imposed on the individual's space-time path in the form of regulating the access individuals have to activity places through social rules, laws, financial barriers and power relationships (Dijst 2009:2). Employers typically require presence at the work place during a certain time window each weekday, and traffic laws require that cars drive exclusively in designated car lanes and with the direction of traffic, in another example.

The family member paths and school children paths in the figure above provide an illustration of the way daily life is organized for these individuals, based primarily in these examples on what is known in Time Geography as base locations. Base locations are the places where certain reoccurring activities (such as sleep, bathing, dressing, working or studying) take place in relatively fixed time frames. Home is the most obvious base location example, as the family members and school children paths start and end at these locations during the daily path, typically eating dinner, sleeping during night hours, eating breakfast, and bathing and dressing at this home location. The amount of time available to travel between base locations, such as home and work, is known as a time interval. Depending on the amount of time available within the time interval and the speed of travel between bases, there may be flexibility to participate

in other activities at other locations. Figure 3 below provides an illustration of the amount of time available, distance between bases, and speed of travel, or the Space-Time Prism. All the activity places that can be visited within a given time interval is projected by the prism onto the ground, known as the Potential Action Space. In other words, the Action Space is the space that is accessible to the individual within the spatio-temporal demands of her bases. The action space can be linear, in the case of a trip between bases that consumes the available time interval. It can be elliptical in the case of a trip between bases that provides enough time left over within the time interval that an extra stop can be made between bases. And finally, it can be circular in the case that a time interval begins and ends at the same base location, in the example of traveling to the grocery store after arriving home from work before dinner must be cooked (see Ritsema van Eck, et. al. 2005 for an example of an application of the Potential Action Space model).

Figure 3: Potential Action Space and Space-Time Prism



(From: Dijst 2008:3)

The Actual Action Space model – the model applied in this project - is similar to the Potential Action Space model, but the distinction is that it represents not where a path could *potentially* go during a time interval (given temporal demands, travel speed and distance between bases), but where a path *actually* went within the available time between bases (Dijst 1999:195-6). So, the linear, elliptical and circular action space characteristics are still interpreted in the same way as a Potential Action Space, but with the understanding that the constrained or flexible nature of the action space is a representation of what the person actually did during the time interval, instead of where she may have been able to go.

Criticism of Classical Time Geography has been offered by structuration theorists, feminist geographers, and those interested in the relational perspective of geography (Dijst 2009:11). Anthony Giddens criticized Time Geography for treating people as if they are independent of their social settings in daily life, relying too heavily on description of behavioral routines without questioning the origins of the constraints, base locations and so on that shape the

routine (Dijst 2009:12). Feminist Geographer, Gillian Rose, offers an important critique of Classical Time Geography, namely that the body in Time Geography is reduced to a neutral vessel which carries the person along a path through time and space (Rose 1993). All bodies are treated equally in relation to space. In doing so, differences between individuals regarding gender, race, age, physical wellness, and so on are lost in how the individual experiences and behaves along their path through time and space. The individual's awareness of the internal flows of context are lost, meaning that if we reduce the body to a neutral vessel of transport, the information gathering capacity of the body within context– sight, sound, touch, smell, taste – and the impact of contextual information on the individual's experience and behavior is also lost.

Section 2.5 Emotional Geography

Gillian Rose's request to bring the body into spatio-temporal understanding of people's lives relates to a growing body of literature called Emotional Geography. Within the first decade of the 21st century there is talk of an 'Emotional Turn' in geography, wherein a "*spatially engaged approach to the study of emotions*" recognizes that emotions are not "*entirely interiorized subjective mental states*", but that they have a spatial and temporal character (Bondi, et. al. 2005:1-3). The potential for a marriage of spatio-temporal and emotional geography perspectives is clear. Certain places can give rise to certain emotional experiences, and in turn, emotional experiences can inform associations and preferences that we make about certain places (see Hubbard 2005). The key contribution Emotional Geography makes to this integrated approach is the concept of embodiment. The body is (re)introduced into Time Geography's space-time path with this concept because it takes the body as the starting point for understanding how we feel about ourselves and how we experience the world in any given context. In fact, our experiences in context cannot be separated from our own corporeality (Davidson 2001:287). As the old saying about snowflakes goes it is also true for people that 'No two are alike' in the way we relate to context through our unique bodies. The importance of racial and gender appearance, age, clothing and grooming, physical ability and so on is reintroduced into our perspective on the space-time path as the individual relates to the physical elements of the context (e.g., navigating broken city streets in a wheel chair) as well as the social elements of context (e.g., being judged as wealthy by others based on clothing and hair style). Understanding of experience of the individual along their path is much richer with this concept because we begin to pay attention to the internal flows of context as they are sensed by the individual through her body, and the emotional experience this sensory reception evokes.

We can take an example of a research application of the embodiment concept. Phil Hubbard (2005) uses an emotional geography lens in examining the efforts of urban regeneration of city centers as evening leisure centers in Britain. To him, the main point is that while design and planning efforts are well-intentioned in bringing people 'back' to the city center for entertainment and consumption, they will not be successful unless the different emotional experiences that people have in the city center context and alternative (suburban) leisure contexts are understood. Each person's uniqueness in past experiences, desired and anticipated

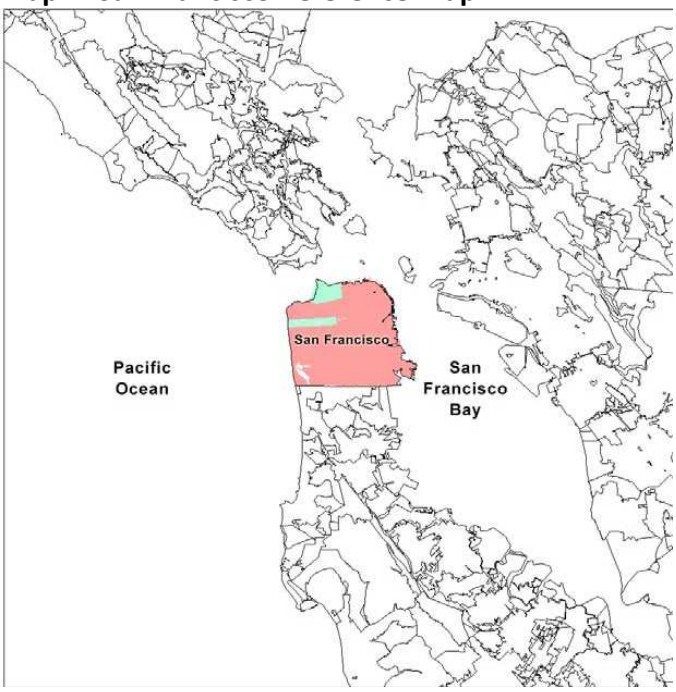
future experiences, and corporeality is central to understanding how different people relate differently to encounters with different places. He finds that varying levels of desire for 'personal space' is an important factor for night-time consumers of suburban leisure venues. The desire for 'personal space' reflects the wish of the individual not to have to negotiate boundaries of self (Hubbard 2005:124) which can be blurred (to both positive and negative affect) by interaction with others, physical and mental alteration from drug consumption, pregnancy, illness, or exposure to extreme sounds or smells or temperatures, to give a few examples (see Bondi, et. al. 2005; Davidson 2001; Morris&Thomas 2005; Collis 2005). The way the context and the person's body inter-relate produces these emotional experiences of 'personal space' and boundaries. For example, people desiring a quiet, non-invasive and relaxed experience will be more likely to travel to the suburban leisure venues because they can dress in casual clothing which does not attract attention, and visit venues (such as movie theaters or restaurants) that are more spacious, quiet and designed for people who know each other to enjoy themselves together, instead of creating opportunities (like the crowded club or bar) to interact with strangers. The more easily manageable experience of the suburban venue arises out context-corporeal dynamics such as the low proximity of other bodies, the infrequent and more controlled opportunities for interaction with strangers, the relative quiet, and the comfortable feeling of casual clothing. The city center leisure centers (clubs, bars, restaurants and such) create much more different embodied experiences for visitors, such as greater chances of interaction with other people, feelings of spontaneity and unpredictability, 'going with the flow', and having greater choice and variety.

This study entails an attempt to integrate the conceptual strengths of Time Geography and Emotional geography that have been discussed here into an embodied, situational spatio-temporal approach. The following chapter describes the methodology used in the application of this approach with a group of low-income single mothers in San Francisco, California. The chapter discusses the study location, respondent recruitment efforts and characteristics, and an explanation of analysis methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Location

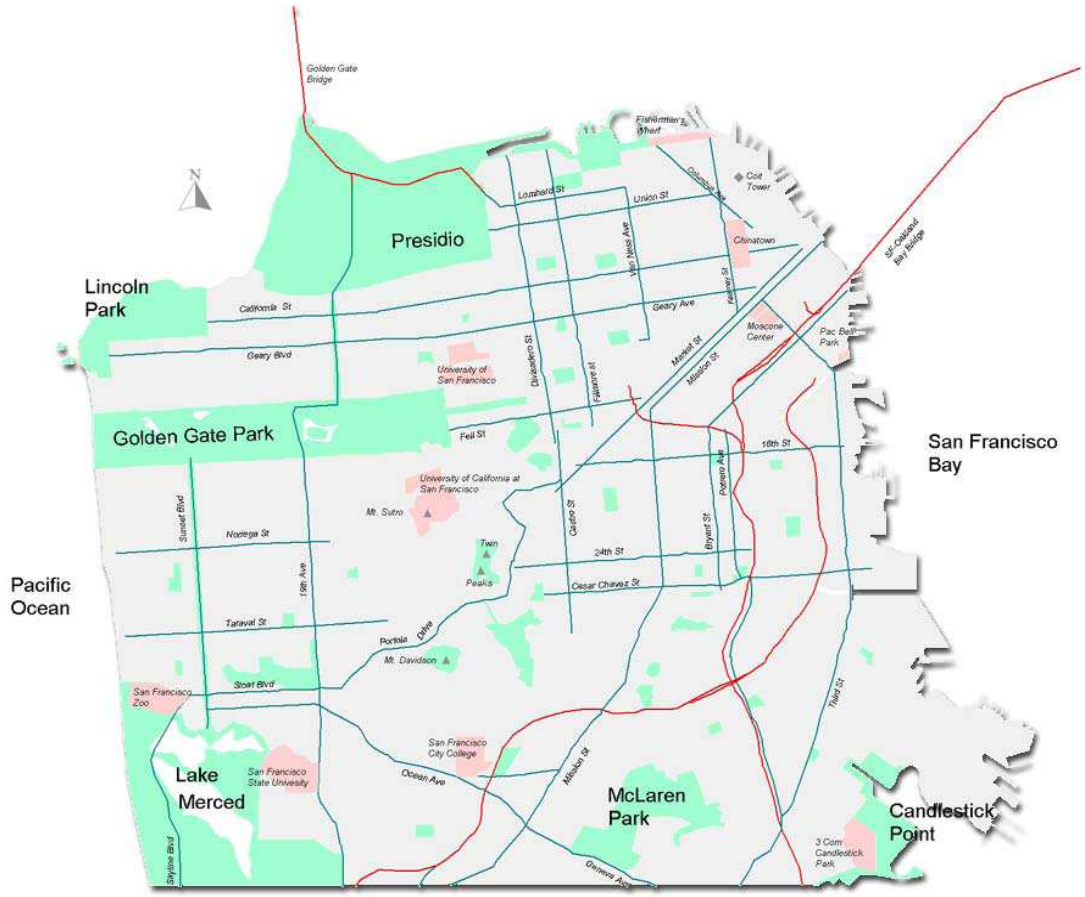
Map 1: San Francisco Reference Map



(SFDPH 2000)

San Francisco was selected as the location of the study due to its socio-economically diverse population, and the pre-established contacts I have in the social service sector that facilitated respondent recruitment. The many cities surrounding the San Francisco Bay in California comprise the San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose Metropolitan Area, commonly called the 'Bay Area' (see map above). This metropolitan area is the 5th largest in the United States, and has a very racially and ethnically diverse population. The City of San Francisco itself lies at the tip of a peninsula in the Bay Area with the Pacific Ocean on one side and the San Francisco Bay on the other. By itself, the city encompasses only 47 square kilometers or about 7 miles by 7 miles. Map 2 below provides a general sketch of the major streets and landmarks of the San Francisco City, depicting the freeways crossing the city in red, the major parks in green, and the universities in yellow. The financial district is found in the north-east corner of the city. The Golden Gate Bridge connects to San Francisco in the north at Presidio Park, and the Bay Bridge connects to San Francisco in the east near the financial district. The well-known Golden Gate Park is easily visible on the north-western side of the city.

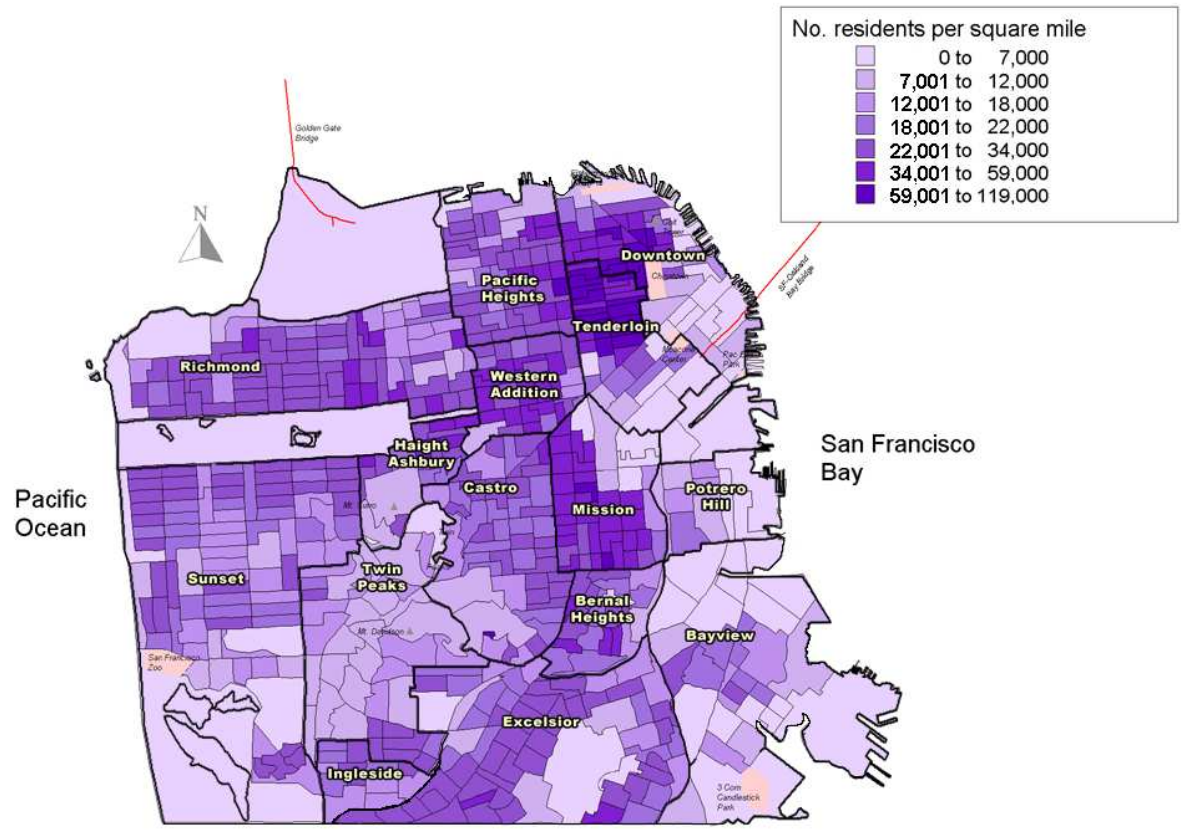
Map 2: San Francisco Landmarks



(from SFDPH 2000)

San Francisco has a modestly growing and recently even declining population of approximately 776,000 residents. The small area of the city, however, means that it is the second most densely populated city in the U.S. behind New York (US Census Bureau 1998). The distribution of population within the city is found in Map 3 below. The city's high cost of living deters growth in number of inhabitants, and the number of families in the city actually decreased from the 1990 to the 2000 census due to high costs of living and housing.

Map 3: Population Distribution in San Francisco



(from SFDPH 2000)

The largest racial/ethnic groups are White Non-Hispanic (44%), Asian-Pacific Islander (31%), Hispanic (14%) and African American (8%). Note that the 'Asian' and 'Pacific Islander' categories were combined in this city data. Please see *Box 1: Racial and Ethnic Terms* below for usage of racial/ethnic category terms in this study.

Box 1: Racial and Ethnic Terms

The racial and ethnic categories used in the 2000 U.S. Census are adopted in this study in order to compare the study sample with the larger San Francisco population. Five main categories of race and ethnicity as used in the 2000 federal census, described below[1]. Respondents of the 2000 U.S. Census were asked to identify with ***one or more*** of the categories below, a departure from the previous Census.

1) *"**White**" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicated their race or races as "White" or wrote in entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish.*
2) *"**Black or African American**" refers to people having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. It includes people who indicated their race or races as "Black, African Am., or Negro," or wrote in entries such as African American, Afro American, Nigerian, or Haitian.*

[1] http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-1.pdf

3) *"**American Indian and Alaska Native**" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment. It includes people who indicated their race or races by marking this category or writing in their principal or enrolled tribe, such as Rosebud Sioux, Chippewa, or Navajo.*
4) *"**Asian**" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. It includes people who indicated their race or races as "Asian Indian," "Chinese," "Filipino," "Korean," "Japanese," "Vietnamese," or "Other Asian," or wrote in entries such as Burmese, Hmong, Pakistani, or Thai.*
5) *"**Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander**" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicated their race or races as "Native Hawaiian," "Guamanian or Chamorro," "Samoan," or "Other Pacific Islander," or wrote in entries such as Tahitian, Mariana Islander, or Chuukese.*
6) *"**Some other race**" was included in Census 2000 for respondents who were unable to identify with the five Office of Management and Budget race categories. Respondents who provided write-in entries such as Moroccan, South African, Belizean, or a Hispanic origin (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Cuban) are included in the some other race category.*

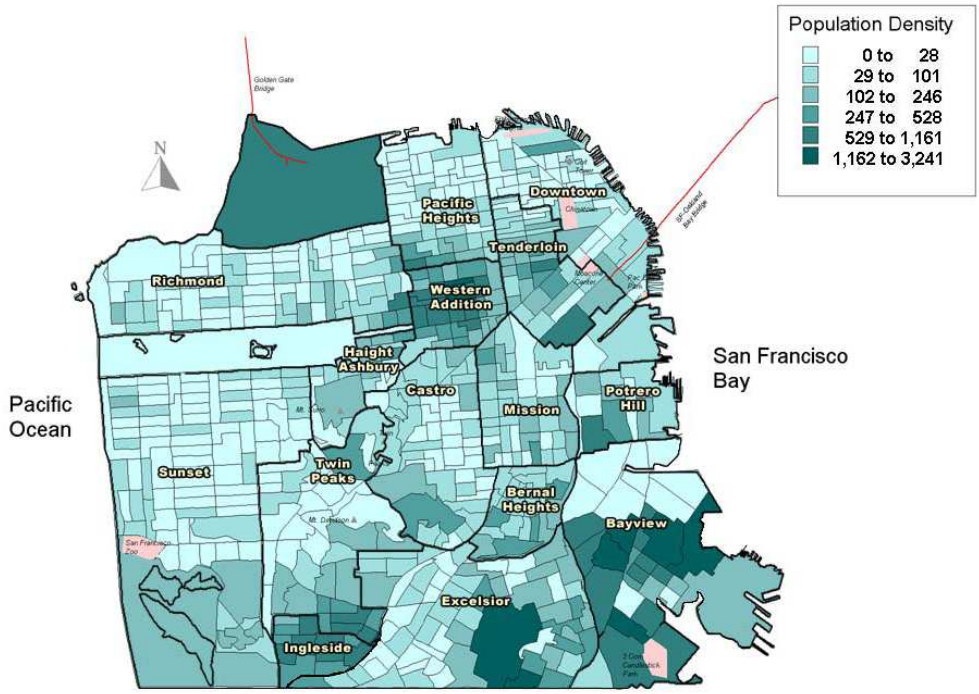
In a separate question, census respondents are asked if they are *'**Spanish/Hispanic/Latino**'*, meaning that they have origins in a Spanish-speaking country. If, for example, a person identifies as 'Black' and also as 'Hispanic,' she will be identified as 'Black, Hispanic'.

This study uses these 5 main categories plus the Hispanic/Non-Hispanic distinction, and appends the study participant's self-identified race/ethnicity as a secondary racial/ethnic category if different. For example, one woman with Palestinian ancestry would be identified as 'White' in the U.S. census, however, she self-identified as 'Arab' in the study. Therefore, she will be referred to in this study as 'White, Arab' in order to grasp how she sees herself in society and still be able to make comparisons to the larger population.

San Francisco is a demographically unbalanced city with certain neighborhoods having disproportionately higher concentrations of African American, Chinese, Pacific Islander and Hispanic residents, and these neighborhoods having lower median incomes than the city-wide median, and higher rates of violent crime. Thirty-six percent (36%) of San Francisco's residents are foreign born, as compared to 26% in the state of California and 11% nationally. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of San Franciscan families speak English at home, compared to 62% of families in the state of California and 81% nationally. About 11% of San Franciscan residents are below the federal poverty level, compared to 14% in California and 12% nationally. African Americans in San Francisco are the most grossly overrepresented in poverty at 25% of the group below the poverty level.[2] To give an idea of the uneven distribution of demographic groups throughout the city, Maps 4 through 8 below show the distribution of San Francisco residents identifying as African American, White, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander and Other and Unknown Race/Ethnicity.

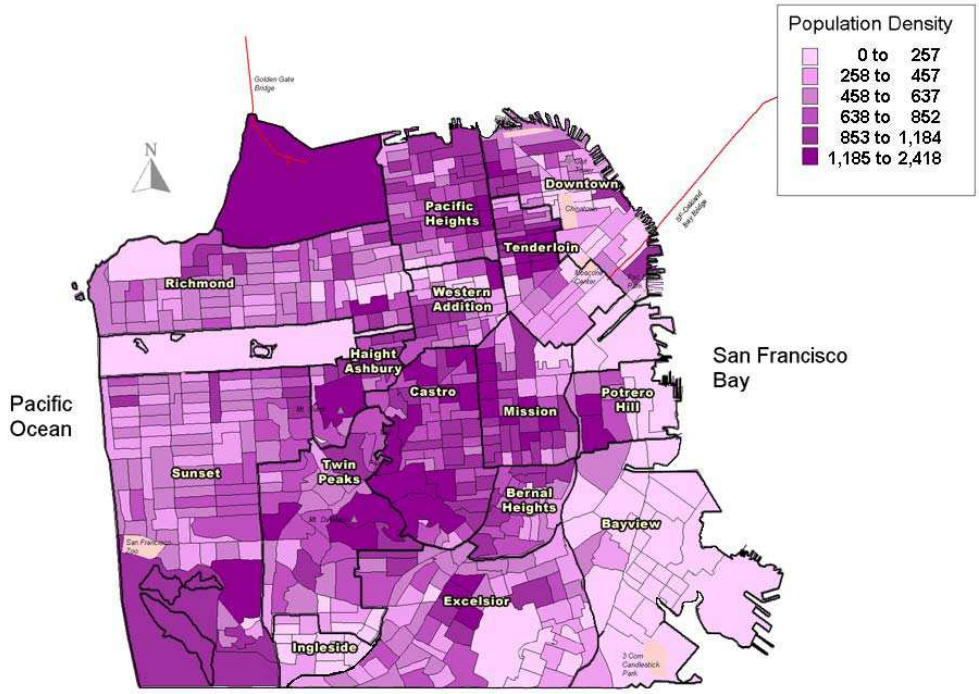
[2] San Francisco Demographic Profile. Accessed August 15 2009. URL: <http://www.sfgov.org/site/uploadedfiles/mocd/demoprofile.pdf>

Map 4: Distribution of African American Residents in San Francisco



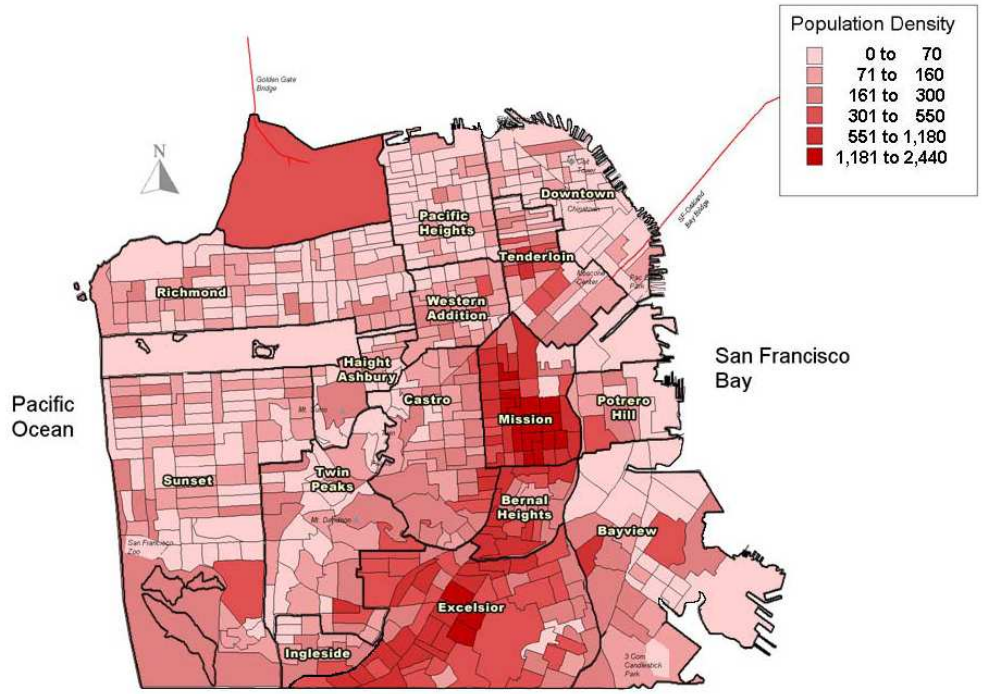
(from SFDPH 2000)

Map 5: Distribution of White Residents in San Francisco



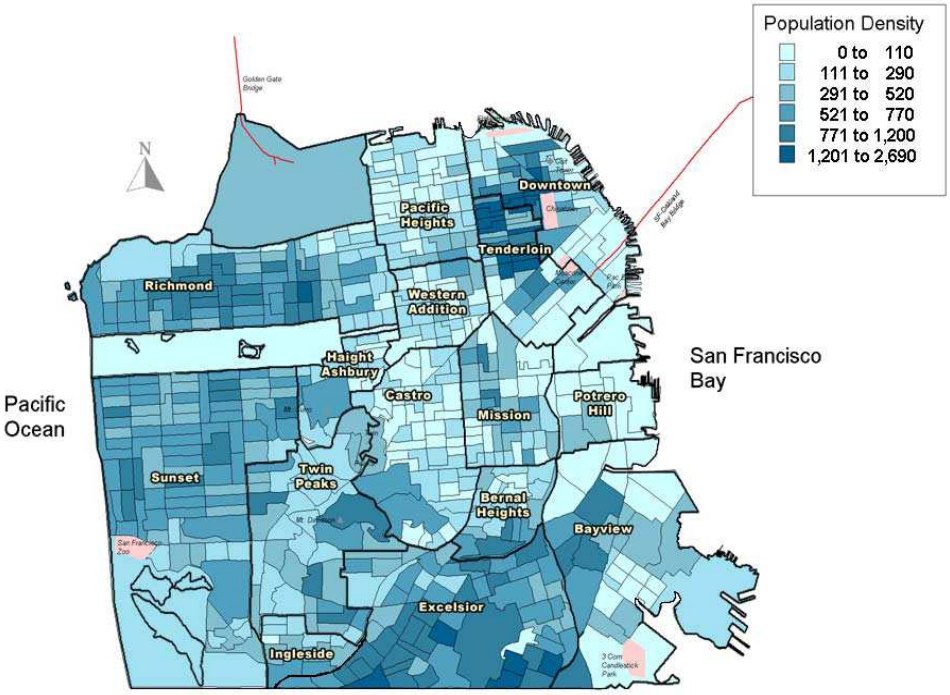
(from SFDPH 2000)

Map 6: Distribution of Latino Residents in San Francisco



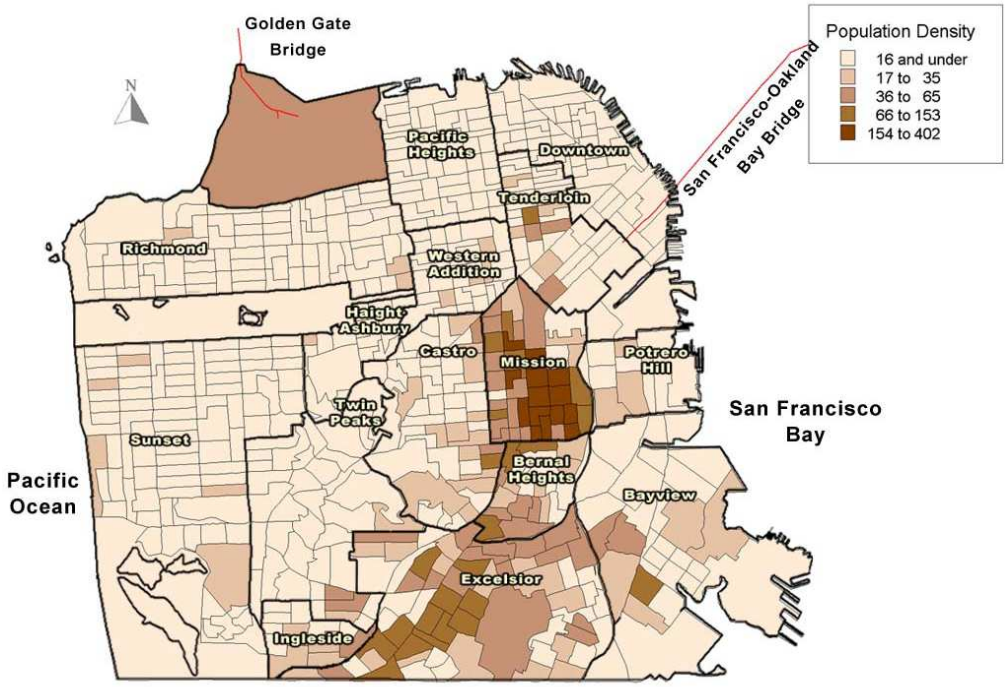
(from SFDPH 2000)

Map 7: Distribution of Asian/Pacific Islander Residents in San Francisco



(from SFDPH 2000)

Map 8: Distribution of Other and Unknown Race/Ethnicity Residents of San Francisco



(from SFDPH 2000)

The San Francisco Human Services Agency operates one of the largest urban welfare administration programs in the country. Financial aid for families is referred to in the State of California as *CalWorks*. These federally provided and locally administered funds are for poor families with dependent children. In January 2007 there were 4,775 families in San Francisco receiving welfare. 2,628 of these families were single-parent headed households.[3]

3.2 Data Collection

An introductory interview and a second interview were conducted with each respondent.[4] Before the second interview, each respondent completed a travel diary and took photographs of their daily routine for one day. The introductory interview was fairly structured and lasted about one hour. It gathered basic background socio-demographic information about the respondent and her household such as household composition, income sources, housing and employment history. This background information was helpful in understanding the characteristics of the participant's current life organization, and also historical biographical events that inform her perspective and approach to daily life.

[3] San Francisco Human Services Agency Website. Accessed 15 August 2009. URL: < http://www.sfhsa.org/old/files/CalWORKS_Quarterly_Report_Single_2-Parent_Households/January2007CalWORKs012parentHouseholds.pdf>

[4] A complete data set was collected for each respondent except one, who did not complete a second interview.

At the end of the introductory interview the respondent was presented with a blank travel diary along with an explanation of how to complete it. See Appendix [1] for travel diary instructions and Appendices 2 and 3 for examples of completed diaries. Travel diaries were collected in order to assess the characteristics of organization of daily life in the flexibility or constraint experienced in different time intervals during the day, daily trip frequency and duration, routes, and modes of transportation. Participants selected one day to complete the diary, being asked to select a day of the week that is 'typical' and most representative of their normal weekday routine. Participants were asked to document every trip that was made during the diary day, providing departure and arrival times, street addresses, modes of transportation, and activities performed at the destination. All participants returned a travel diary. Some participants successfully completed the diary with legible and logical sequences of activities. Other participants with less literacy skills found it more challenging to complete the diary in a thorough and understandable way. These diaries were clarified in a separate, short interview in the most extreme cases, and other diaries were clarified at the beginning of the second interview.

A disposable camera with film was provided to each participant. Participants were asked to document their normal day with pictures, taking at least one picture per entry in their travel diary, and also taking pictures of things or scenarios in their day that are stressful, relaxed, enjoyable, frustrating, etc., and also the environments they traveled through and modes of transportation used in the day. The photographs were very useful in promoting discussion in the second interview about how participants experience their routines and the contexts that they pass through in daily life. Asking participants to take photos during the diary day also enhanced their awareness of how they experience different situations in daily life which might otherwise be overlooked as mundane. It should be noted that some participants did not take photographs on the same day as the travel diary as requested. Never-the-less, these photographs were still of what the participants described as a 'typical' routine.

A second semi-structured interview lasting about one and a half to two hours was conducted. The travel diary and photographs were used to facilitate discussion about the subjective experience of each respondent in following their daily routine, including experiences of embodiment in different situations along their daily path and environments throughout the city of San Francisco.

3.3 Respondent Recruitment

Seventeen (17) low-income, single mothers were interviewed between September and November 2009. As the purpose of this study is to explore the theoretical integration of two frameworks, a statistically representative sample was not sought. Respondents were recruited through several social service-oriented organizations and agencies throughout San Francisco including day-care centers, housing assistance agencies, CalWorks work and education programs and early childhood development organizations. Flyers were distributed to these organizations and a recruitment presentation of the study was made for a group of clients of one organization. The 17 women who participated in the study heard of the study through the

following sources: word of mouth (9 respondents), CalWorks Work and Education Program (5 respondents), child development organizations (1 respondent), and child care centers (1 respondent).

Respondents meeting the following criteria were targeted:

1. *Single women with at least one dependent, school-age child at home.* There is no supporting partner (financially or logistically) in the household.
2. *Households below federal poverty guidelines and/or welfare eligible*[5].
3. *Some history of work or educational diploma, but less than a college degree.* Women who fit the 'typical' single parent welfare recipient educational background in California (high school degree or less) were targeted (CDSS 2004). An effort was made to recruit women from this group with a variety of types of routines and schedules. For example, unemployed, employed, studying, etc.
4. *Residents of San Francisco.* Parameters of residential area were established to minimize the number of contextual variables. At the same time, effort was made for a variety of neighborhoods around the city to be represented in the study. Limiting the study to San Francisco and vicinity also encouraged efficiency in finding respondents and interviewing respondents.
5. *Race/ethnicity composition reflective of single-parent welfare recipients in San Francisco.* Efforts were made to include a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds in the study, the goal being an approximate reflection of the single-parent, welfare receiving family population in San Francisco: 51.3% African American, 17% Hispanic, 16.5% Asian, 10.8% White , 4.3% Other/Unknown, , 0% Native American, 0% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.[6]

3.4 Respondent Compensation

Respondents were compensated $60 US for their time and effort in participating in the study. Given the sum of money proposed to be spent on participant compensation and the financially vulnerable characteristics of respondents, it is relevant to address the debate over whether or not to financially compensate social research participants. The main worry in compensating participants is an issue of validity given the possibility that participants might tell us what they think we want to hear in order to get paid for their participation. We would ideally like to think that social research participants should only be involved in research if they feel motivated to "tell their story," and some researchers worry that paying participants creates a culture of expectation in which participants always expect financial compensation for their time and exposure which in turn could jeopardize future studies carried out on a limited budget. There is also concern that financial compensation that is too high may drive an individual in hard financial circumstances to participate in a study when she or he would otherwise feel more

[5] Guidelines of San Francisco welfare eligibility available at: http://www.sfhsa.org/old/CalWORKs.htm
[6] Some categories were combined to correspond with the U.S. Census categories. Source: San Francisco Human Services Agency. URL: http://www.sfhsa.org/old/files/CalWORKS_Quarterly_Report_Single_2-Parent_Households/January2007CalWORKs012parentHouseholds.pdf.

comfortable to decline (McKeganey 2001:1237). This final concern is perhaps the most worrying for this study given the financial hardship of the subjects. However, researchers know very little in fact about how financial compensation effects respondent participation and behavior in studies. Yet, it is quite a common, if little talked about, practice (McKeganey 2001:1238).

My choice to pay participants in this study is based on a recognition of the value of the participants' time on the one hand, and the minimal positive impact the results of this master's thesis can claim in the lives of participants. Precisely because of the financial hardship being experienced by my respondents, it is especially relevant that they be compensated financially for the time that they spend talking to me instead of pursuing other money-making activities. Also, it is difficult to argue that this study will have a direct or indirect positive impact on the lives of women in the study, even if the long-sighted motivation for choosing this topic would wish to have such an impact. The study is carried out as part of a master's thesis which by nature is intended for my own personal academic and professional advancement as a student, and unlikely to be published and thereby impact public policy.

3.5 Overview of Respondent Characteristics

The table below summarizes a few characteristics of each respondent: age, race/ethnicity, number of children in the household, monthly household income, monthly per capita income, rent (when available), monthly per capita household income after rent (when available), highest educational level attained, and current occupation. Respondent names are fictional.

At a glance, one can see that the group was largely African American women in their early 20's to mid-40's, usually with 1-2 children. Most participants were full-time students at the local community college and working part-time at the time of the study. All had monthly incomes far below the San Francisco median household income. Group characteristics and the study's success in meeting its target group is explored in more detail below.

Table 1: Respondent Summary Table

Respondent	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Children in Hh*	Monthly Hh Income	Monthly Per Capita Hh Income	Rent	Monthly Per Capita Hh Income after Rent	Highest Education	Occupation**
Tara	23	African American	1	$ 518	$ 259	$ 285	$ 117	Some College	FT Student
Karen	46	African American	1	$ 750	$ 375	Unknown	Unknown	High School Diploma	Unemployed
Whitnee	46	African American	2	$ 802	$ 267	Unknown	Unknown	High School Diploma	Unemployed
Jennifer	40	African American	2	$ 1,010	$ 337	$ -	$ 337	Some College	FT Student
Laura	43	African American	2	$ 1,170	$ 390	$ 325	$ 282	Some High School	Unemployed
Yvonne	45	African American	2	$ 1,400	$ 467	$ 125	$ 425	Some High School	PT In-Home Care Provider
Mylandra	37	African American	5	$ 1,908	$ 318	$ 612	$ 216	Associate's Degree***	FT Student
Irene	40	African American	3	$ 1,945	$ 486	$ 573	$ 343	Some High School	FT Security Guard
Patricia	45	African American	3	$ 2,490	$ 623	$ -	$ 623	Some College	FT Student
Sharon	26	African American	2	$ 2,525	$ 842	$ 92	$ 561	Some College	FT Student
Tenesha	28	African American, Puerto Rican	2	$ 902	$ 301	Unknown	Unknown	Some High School	Unemployed
Ronice	24	African American/White	1	$ 1,199	$ 600	$ 400	$ 400	Some College	FT Student
Chesa	36	Asian, Filipino	2	$ 1,364	$ 455	$ 103	$ 420	Bachelor of Science in Tourism	FT Student
Maribeth	37	Asian, Filipino	3	$ 1,779	$ 445	$ 200	$ 395	Associate's Degree***	FT Student
Jay	36	White, Arab	1	$ 1,800	$ 900	$ 600	$ 600	High School Diploma	FT Preschool Teacher
Alyssa	28	White, Non-Hispanic	1	$ 1,529	$ 765	$ 176	$ 677	Some College	FT Student
Noemi	29	White, Hispanic	1	$ 1,385	$ 693	Unknown	$ 693	Some College	FT Student

Overall, respondent recruitment was successful in meeting the five (5) respondent criteria discussed in Section 3.3 which aimed at mirroring the single-parent family welfare recipient population in San Francisco. Important departures are in the areas of race and ethnicity, age and educational attainment. Below please find a comparison of the sample with the five (5) target criteria:

1) ***'Single women with at least one dependent, school-age child at home.'*** The women were all single with at least one dependent, school-age child at home. Some women, it should be noted, had a boyfriend living with sometimes. However, all identified as single mothers, and none had a partner living with them who took equal responsibility for their children.

   The number of children supported by the respondent's income ranged from 1 to 5 children. In some cases, the respondent had other children living with friends or relatives, but those were not included in this count because in no case did the respondent maintain financial responsibility for a child outside the household. Most participants (76.5%) had 1 or 2 children in their care, with only 4 having 3 to 5 children. This corresponds with the single-parent household welfare recipient population in San Francisco in general, with the vast majority of recipient households having 1 or 2 children (81.8%)[7].

   Participants' ages ranged from 23 to 46 years, with the average age being 36 years old. The group was fairly evenly distributed between those in their 20's, 30's and 40's, however, the largest group fell in the 40 to 49 age range, and the smallest in the 30 to 39 range. The group was older than the general single-parent welfare recipient population, 45.7% of which is between 13 and 19 years old, 29.1% between 20 and 29 years old, 18.5% between 30 and 39 years old, only 6.5% between 40 and 49, and 6.8% over 50.[8]

2) ***'Households below federal poverty guidelines and/or welfare eligible.'*** All household incomes in the study are welfare eligible[9]. Household monthly income was measured here inclusive of all forms of income such as employment, child support, scholarships, food stamps[10] and all federal cash assistance such as CalWorks cash aid, student financial aid and disability insurance. Participants' household monthly income ranged from $518 to $2,525. Most participants (65%) had monthly incomes between $1,000 and $1,999, or $12,000 to $23,988 per year. This compares to the San Francisco City median household income of $55,221 per year[11]. The lowest income in the group

[7] San Francisco Human Services Agency. URL: http://www.sfhsa.org/old/files/CalWORKS_Quarterly_Report_Single_2-Parent_Households/January2007CalWORKs012parentHouseholds.pdf.
[8] Id.
[9] Guidelines of San Francisco welfare eligibility available at: http://www.sfhsa.org/old/CalWORKs.htm
[10] Food stamps are vouchers provided to welfare recipients in order to purchase basic food items. These vouchers are accepted at most major grocery store chains.
[11] Bay Area Census 2000. URL: <<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanFranciscoCounty.htm>

($518/month) may be explained by the participant's choice not to apply for welfare cash aid even though eligible, and instead to rely on her parents' support in purchasing needed items such as diapers, gas, car insurance, etc. The highest incomes are explained by the participants' receipt of student financial aid and scholarships.

Participants' households had a per capita income range of $259 to $900 per person per month, or $3,108 to $10,800 per year. This is far lower than the San Francisco City median per capita income of $34,556 per year[12]. The highest number of participants fell within lower per capita income ranges, with the number of participants decreasing as per capita income increased. After any current welfare cash aid or food stamp income is subtracted from the respondents' household incomes, all respondents meet the San Francisco Department of Human Services welfare eligibility criteria.[13] Calworks eligibility is determined by whether a family falls below a monthly household income cut-off, which increases with household size.

3) ***'Some history of work or educational diploma, but less than a college degree.'*** The women in the study were slightly more educated than the 'typical' single parent welfare recipient in California (usually a high school degree or less (CDSS 2004)). In terms of degrees obtained, the group was reflective of the welfare population in that most had a High School diploma or less, and only one a college degree. Many of the women, however were attending a community college and therefore had 'Some College.' These women were taking prerequisite classes in order to finish a high school degree or transfer to a 4-year university. One woman received a Bachelors degree in Tourism at a university in the Philippines, however she has been unable to find work with that degree in the U.S. The number of students in the study also reduced the variety of types schedules that I had aimed for in recruitment. This is due mainly to my recruitment efforts at the City College of San Francisco CalWorks Education and Training Program office, and the word of mouth recruitment that followed from participants in that program.

4) ***'Residents of San Francisco.'*** All respondents were residents of the City of San Francisco, with the exception of one who lives 4 street blocks from the border of San Francisco in the City of Daly City, and another who lives in a city adjacent to San Francisco, South San Francisco. Although these two lived just outside the city border, their other base locations were within the City of San Francisco. Further discussion of respondents' home locations will be made in the following chapter.

5) ***'Race/ethnicity composition reflective of single-parent welfare recipients in San Francisco.'*** The 17 participants in the study only partially reflected the racial/ethnic make-up of San Francisco (S.F.) single-parent welfare recipients as discussed above, with

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[12]Bay Area Census 2000. URL: <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanFranciscoCounty.htm>
[13] Family Size/Minimum Basic Standard of Adequate Care (MBSAC) guidelines available at: http://www.sfhsa.org/old/CalWORKs.htm

an overrepresentation of African American participants and White, Non-Hispanic, and an underrepresentation of other groups, especially Hispanic and Asian (see *Table 2: Racial and Ethnic Composition of Participants* below]. This may be due to the large number of women who came to the study by word of mouth, meaning that many were recruited through their own social networks.

Two (2) of the 17 participants were foreign born (12% of sample), both from the Philippines.

Table2: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Participants (n=17)

	Number of Participants	% Participants	% S.F. Single Parent Welfare Pop.
African American	11	64.7%	51%
Asian	2	11.8%	16.5%
White, Non-Hispanic	2	11.8%	9.2%
Other/Unknown	1	5.9%	4.3%
Hispanic	1	5.9%	17%
TOTAL	*17*	*100%*	*99.9%*[14]

3.6 Analysis Methodology

Analysis was performed in roughly two phases. The first attempted to describe and explain the respondents' organization of daily life. Basic statistics were calculated from the travel diaries regarding trips and activities made that day (frequency, duration, routes, modes of transport and so on). ArcGIS was used to plot each respondent's bases, extra stops and paths (specifying transportation modes) as recorded in the travel diaries. Demographic data from the U.S. Census Bureau regarding income and race/ethnicity of the San Francisco population was mapped according by Census Tract. The respondents' bases, stops and paths were projected with these demographic layers in order to explore the contexts of the respondents' daily paths in general terms of the city's demographic landscape. Next, the addresses, departure and arrival times of the travel diaries were translated into Action Spaces in ArcGIS (see Chapter 2 for an explanation of the Action Space model). In doing so, each time interval during the diary day was assessed as to the degree to which the respondent was constrained in having only enough time for travel between bases, or flexible in being able to participate in activities in other locations during the interval. In the second phase of analysis, a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) program, MaxQDA, was used to code the second interviews for embodiment and negotiation related themes in day-to-day life. Photographs taken by respondents were used to visualize and illustrate their embodied experiences.

[14] Percentages displayed here as reported from the Human Services Agency.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS – ORGANIZATION OF DAILY LIFE

4.1 Introduction to Analysis

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

What is the relation between personal attributes, spatio-temporal situations and embodied exposure with poverty experiences in different spatio-temporal contexts for this group of low-income, single mothers? And, how do these women negotiate in time and space with these experiences of poverty?

a) *How do personal attributes interplay with spatio-temporal situations in organizing daily life for this group of women?*
b) *How is organization of daily life related to embodied exposure and experience of spatio-temporal situations for these women?*
c) *How do these women negotiate in time and space with experiences of poverty?*

Analysis is organized into two chapters. The synthesis of the findings of these two chapters is discussed in the concluding chapter of the thesis, ultimately addressing the over-arching research question of this project: *What is the relation between personal attributes, spatio-temporal situations and embodied exposure with poverty experiences in different spatio-temporal contexts for this group of low-income, single mothers? And, how do these women negotiate in time and space with these experiences of poverty?* In this first analysis chapter, we begin by addressing sub-question a): *How do personal attributes interplay with spatio-temporal situations in organizing daily life for this group of women?* This question relates to more traditional ideas of spatio-temporal organization of daily life, drawing upon Classical Time Geography's concepts of authority, capability and coupling constraints. In our case, we strive to operationalize the meaning of being poor in daily life beyond financial definitions by extending analysis into the spatio-temporal realm. A biographical sketch of respondents is made, followed by a description of participants' home bases, daily activities, transportation mode and ICT availability. Then, participants' Action Spaces are examined in order to assess and discuss the nature of daily life organization for the group in relation to factors such as transport mode and different times of the day. Finally, the organization of daily life of two women in the study is compared in order to uncover the way personal attributes and spatio-temporal situations shape daily life is organization in unique ways for each person. The second analysis chapter which follows will address sub-questions b) and c), regarding embodiment in situations of daily life, and tactics of negotiation in time and space with experiences of poverty.

4.2 A Biographical Sketch of Respondents

Before embarking on the daily paths of participants, it is important to have a rough understanding of their backgrounds. Everything from housing stability/instability to the ability of family members to provide financial or practical support has spatio-temporal connotations regarding how daily life can be organized for any individual.

- ***Housing, Employment, Services, Social Support***

The employment history of most participants might best be characterized as inconsistent and minimum wage. Some participants had very consistent employment histories in house-cleaning or waiting tables before substance abuse interrupted employment. These participants are in recovery and have returned to school at a community college. Other participants always had very sporadic employment, going on and off welfare and minimum wage jobs and working informally doing hair or selling drugs while living in subsidized housing. The younger participants in their early 20's had part-time jobs such as medical assistant or hospital clerk before going back to school at a community college. One older participant, Yvonne, has worked over a decade as a construction worker in a union. Her employment depends on her position on a union waitlist. She works very part-time as an in-home care provider while she waits. Another participant, Patricia, had a long career in community mental health, first as a counselor and then as a program director. Her employment was interrupted by alcoholism and mental health problems, and she has also returned to school after going through recovery.

Most participants have lived most their lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, with the exception of Mylandra, who moved to San Francisco from Missouri as an adult, and Jay who moved from Palestine at 21 years old after growing up in Indiana. Some spent a few years living in other neighboring cities of San Francisco or other parts of California. One lived in two other states. But most were raised and have lived the balance of their adult lives in the San Francisco. As we will see below, most of the women have had shaky housing histories, with over half having episodes of homelessness in the past. In general, the participants have shared rental housing with friends or partners and other households, have lived in government subsidized housing of different kinds, or have lived in shelters/motels/cars when homeless, or in residential treatment programs when recovering from addiction. Tenancies at each location are usually short, about 1 to 2 years. Only one participant owned a house with her husband before their marriage ended.

Almost all participants have received welfare, including food stamps and free bus passes, and used subsidized childcare, and/or subsidized housing of some kind. About half have accessed substance abuse recovery services, and/or homeless and domestic violence shelters and the accompanying case management and therapy. Several have accessed a job and education program through welfare, eviction prevention, rental move-in assistance, and/or student financial aid. All these services come with mandatory and regular appointments and paper-work.

The majority of women in the study (11 out of 17) were raised in low-income families themselves. Some of these families had very consistent employment, although low -paying, and lived consistently in a subsidized housing project or in houses they had bought several decades ago. Two women, Maribeth and Noemi, come from immigrant families – Maribeth from the Philipines, Noemi from Mexico. Their parents always worked minimum wage jobs and rented low-quality market rate housing. A few of the 11 women from low-income families came from families with extensive histories of substance abuse and homelessness, and had very inconsistent work histories. These low-income families do not provide any substantial financial support to the participants today. Six of the women (6 out of 17) were raised in more middle income families. These families tended to own their own businesses, such as a local mortuary, and have very stable rental or owned housing in the mid- to lower income neighborhoods of the city they live in. All but one of the women from a slightly higher income family still receive financial support from their parents, either in the form of purchases or bill payment, or by providing free housing in the case of the two women and their children who have moved back in with their parents, Patricia and Jennifer.

When asked which individuals (if any) provide support in getting through daily life, the participants most often named individuals who live in or work in San Francisco. The few named who live out of town were all family members who provide emotional support by phone. Family members living or working in San Francisco– parents, siblings or cousins - were most often cited as sources of support (11 times). Boyfriends and/or fathers of their children were named as sources of regular support by 5 participants. Fathers of the children of the participants were most often not a part of their lives because they are in and out of prison, the mother has pushed them away due to lifestyles that they deem 'unhealthy' for their children such as drug use or sales, the relationship ended poorly between the couple (including abuse), or as in the case of Noemi, the fathers of her children had been deported due to drug-related crimes. On the other hand, a few boyfriends and/or fathers of participants' children are extremely present and supportive. Alyssa, Tara and Sharon receive extensive daily support from the fathers of their children even though their relationships as couples have ended or are 'on-again-off-again.' Jennifer's boyfriend also provides daily and very substantial support in caring for her children from a previous marriage, including transportation for both herself and her children to and from daily activities. Social workers were named an equal number of times as sources of regular support (5 times). The participants who named a social worker as part of her support system were also participants who had had the most extreme need for social services in the past, and had spent considerable time receiving services from homeless shelters, drug rehabilitation facilities, child protective services, and so on. These were Laura, Irene, Noemi, Chesa and Whitnee, all of whom were homeless in the past. These participants feel supported by social workers in resource-related ways connected to housing, clothing, food, etc, as well as feeling they have someone to tell their troubles to. School or work peers were named twice (2) as sources of support, a church community was named by Mylandra, and a child's school principal was named by Tenesha.

The quantity and quality of support that the participants get in daily life from the people they know varies a lot within the study group. When asked how they receive regular support from

others, the most common answer comes in the form of helping to watch or transport their children when they cannot physically be there. The supporting individuals pick up or drop off their children from school or day care, in emergencies or unexpected events or on a regular basis, and/or are available to watch the children when the mother needs time to do other activities she cannot do with the children such as study or go to appointments. Similarly, support also commonly comes in the form of transportation, receiving car rides to and from regular activities such as classes or methadone dosing appointments. Significant financial support from others was only true for 4 of the women, and in these cases it was the participant's parents or the father of their children who provided purchases or free housing. Finally, emotional support – having someone to talk to when you've had a bad day and provide encouragement and enjoyment in daily life – was also an important way participants feel supported. Although a few participants enjoy very substantial support in the above areas, and a few have virtually no one but themselves to rely on, the balance of women in the study are responsible for most daily tasks themselves, and receive regular support for a small amount of their total responsibilities for themselves and their children.

- ***Extra-financial Challenges***

Overwhelmingly, the women in the study have faced other significant challenges to their livelihood besides having low incomes. The most prominent challenge in the group was experiences with homelessness (10 out of the 17 respondents). At some point in their past, these participants had been without their own housing, most often staying in family homeless or domestic violence shelters or sleeping in hotels, cars or friends' living rooms with their children. One woman, Maribeth, lived a year on the streets while her children stayed with her mother. Total time spent homeless ranged from 1 year to 8.5 years among participants. All but three of these cases are attributable to substance abuse (heroin, crack cocaine or methamphetamines) partnered with a lack of financial resources to counter-balance the effect addiction was having on their lives; primarily the loss of employment. In fact, 9 out of the 17 respondents had a self-identified history of substance abuse.

The women who did not become homeless due to substance abuse became so due to domestic or family violence (Chesa and Jay) or childhood homelessness (Sharon). Chesa, an illegal immigrant from the Philippines, escaped an abusive relationship in the U.S. with her two children and was unable to support herself and her two children in housing. In fact, 4 respondents have a history with domestic violence. Jay became homeless for several years after escaping an abusive marriage arranged by her family at age 16. Her family threatened to kill her and twice discovered her location in shelters in San Francisco. Born in the U.S., she moved to Palestine as a teenager with her family members after the death of her father. At 21 she returned alone to the U.S. without any job skills, housing or social networks to fall back on. Sharon was homeless on the streets with her mother from ages 0-5 and then spent the rest of her childhood in foster care. Alyssa was also living on the streets with her mother from ages 0-5, spent the rest of her childhood in foster care, but then also spent another 3.5 years homeless and working as a prostitute as an adult to fund her heroin addiction.

Five (5) of the women with a history of substance abuse identify as still in recovery from their addiction and are actively participating in recovery programs of different intensities (from residential treatment to weekly support groups). Four women have had cases opened by Child Protective Services, related to the drug abuse and homelessness.

Five (5) out of seventeen (17) have a criminal record, mostly related to drug possession or sales, but also some small-scale theft and fraud. One woman is still on probation.

Two women have forms of depression for which they receive disability income from the government.

Four women have experienced other forms of trauma in their lives besides domestic violence, one being Jay who was sold into marriage, ran away, and was subsequently threatened and pursued by her family. Two others have had teenage sons shot and killed in street violence. Another has repeatedly witnessed homicides in the housing project she grew up in and in which she still resides. Two women were sexually abused as children, and several other women expressed concern about sexual abuse as a potential and even likely threat to their children.

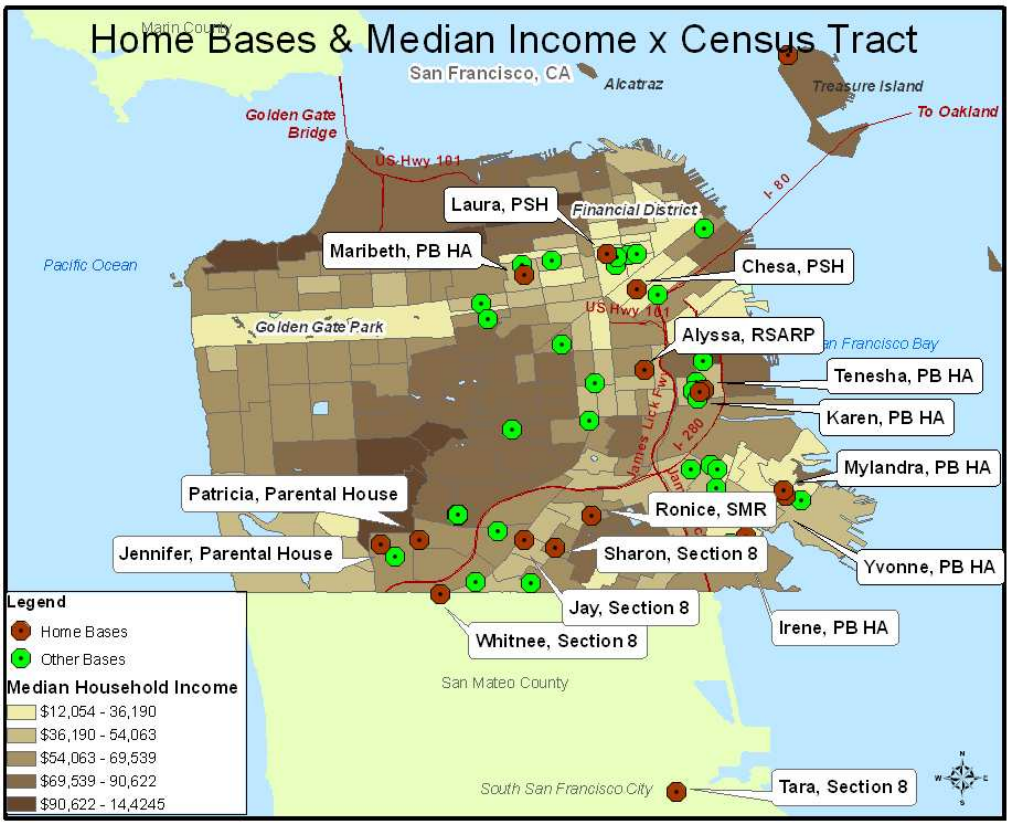
Five women in the study did not have a history with any of the issues discussed above, even though they came from varied backgrounds. These challenges – homelessness, substance abuse, criminal record, exposure to domestic and street violence (DuRant, et. al. 1995; Jencks:1995:22), etc - hit low-income groups especially hard in the U.S. Many of the women are in periods of reorganization, recovering from and feeling the lasting effects of these challenges. In the sections below, we will see how the impact of these extra-financial challenges is often substantial in shaping the spatio-temporal situations of participants in organizing day-to-day life. Because these disruptive events or conditions are so unfortunately common among low-income populations, these periods of reorganization should not be viewed as anomalies in the way daily life is organized for low-income populations, but instead as part of the character of that life organization.

4.3 Home bases – Housing Types and Locations

Map 9 below shows the location and housing type of each participant. As one can see, participants live generally in eastern and south-central San Francisco in correspondence with the lower median household income areas of the city. The two exceptions live on Treasure Island (part of San Francisco City), and South San Francisco City. All but 3 participants live in some kind of government subsidized housing: Six out of the 17 participants live in a *Project-Based Housing Authority ('PB HA')* units (see Box 2: *Explanation of Housing Types* below for an explanation of housing type terminology). Four participants live in market rate housing with a *Portable Section 8 Voucher ('Section 8')*. Three participants live in a *Permanent Supportive Housing Program ('PSH')*. Two participants live in their *parents' house*. One participant rents a room in a *Shared Market Rate ('SMR')* apartment, meaning that she and the other tenants have a market rate contract together. And finally, one participant lives in a *Residential Substance*

Abuse Recovery Program (RSARP). All live in census tracts in the lower two and middle median household income categories in the city.

Map 9: Home Bases and Median Income by Census Tract*
**See Box 2 for explanation of abbreviations of housing types in the map.*



Box 2: Explanation of Housing Types

Project-Based Housing Authority Unit (PB HA): Tenants live in one of many multi-story buildings constructed together on the same plot of land by the government to house very low-income households. These households pay 1/3 of their income in rent.

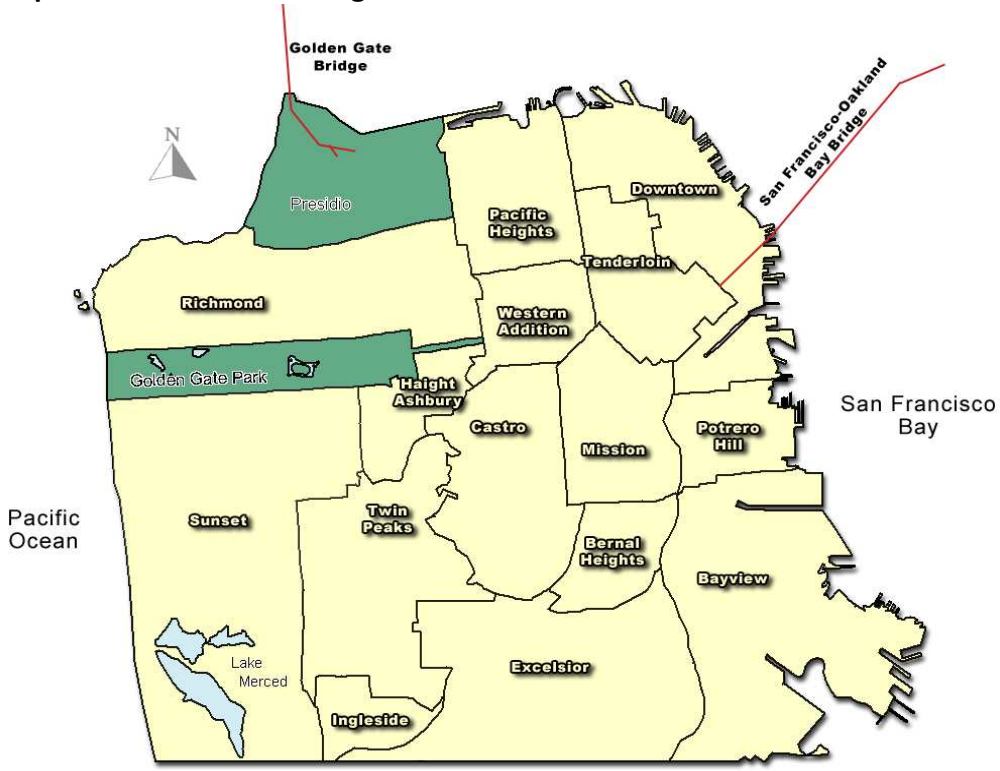
Portable Section 8 Voucher (Section 8): The voucher holder lives in market rate housing and pays 1/3 of their income towards rent, while the government pays the landlord the rest of the value of the rental. The major difference from Project-Based housing is that Section 8 holders can live anywhere in the city (although landlords tend to discriminate against Section 8 holders), while the Project-Based unit tenants must live in the Project that was holding a vacant unit at the time that their name came to the top of the Housing Authority waitlist.

Permanent Supportive Housing Program (PSH): As in Project-Based units, tenants also typically pay 1/3 of their income towards rent. However, they also receive supportive services on-site, such as counseling and case management in order to support them in staying in housing. These housing programs are designed for very low-income individuals and families who have a history of homelessness and are deemed at risk of becoming homeless again.
Parental house: Two participants moved back in with their parents and live rent-free in the parent-owned house.
Shared Market Rate Housing (SMR): Renting a room in an apartment or house that is shared with other households.
Residential Substance Abuse Recovery Program (RSARP): Participants of the recovery program live in a house with other people in recovery from substance abuse. Residence there means receiving clinical support by 24-hour on-site staff, complying with a curfew, attending support groups, and having house 'chores', among other requirements.

Map 10 below provides a rough guide to the locations of the main neighborhoods of San Francisco. The women in the study live in neighborhoods in the lower two and middle median household income categories in the city. Five participants live in neighborhoods having the lowest yearly income range in the city (see above map), illustrated by the lightest shade of brown ($12,054 – $36,190). Chesa (age 36, 2 children) and Laura (age 43, 2 children) live in Permanent Supportive Housing programs in the Tenderloin and SOMA[15] neighborhoods towards the north. Both neighborhoods are notorious for drugs, crime and street homelessness even though they are downtown near the financial district (see *Photographs 1: A Few Participants' Neighborhoods*). Mylandra (age 37, 5 children), Irene (age 40, 3 children), and Yvonne (age 45, 2 children) live in Housing Authority Projects in the Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhoods[16] towards the south, neighborhoods also known for low-income housing projects and gang violence and drug activity. These relatively isolated neighborhoods are far from the business districts of the city, and bus service is limited. Very few amenities such as full-service grocery stores exist in Bayview/Hunter's Point, SOMA or Tenderloin.

[15] South of Market Area (SOMA) neighborhood is depicted as part of the Tenderloin neighborhood in the *San Francisco Neighborhoods* map.
[16] Hunter's Point neighborhood is depicted as part of Bayview in the *San Francisco Neighborhoods* ma.

Map 10: San Francisco's Neighborhoods



(San Francisco Department of Public Health 2000)

Photographs 1: A Few Participants' Neighborhoods

BayView/Hunter's Point

Downtown/Market Street

Tenderloin

Western Addition

Mission

Potrero Hill*

Crossing bridge from Treasure Island to San Francisco

OMI

Excelsior/Daly City border

**Note, respondents are not depicted in any photographs.*

Four participants live in the city's second lowest income neighborhoods ($36,190-$54,063), seen in the second lightest shade of brown on the map. Of these 4, 3 live in Project-Based

Housing Authority units. Maribeth (age 37, 3 children) lives in Project-Based Housing in the Western Addition neighborhood to the north. The Western Addition borders quite wealthy and service-rich neighborhoods and is close to downtown even though it contains many Project-Based, low-income buildings and is known for gang violence and drug activity. Tenesha (age 28, 2 children) and Karen (age 46, 1 child) also live in the second lowest income range in the Potrero Hill neighborhood in Project-Based Housing (see *Photographs 1*). Potrero Hill neighbors the Bayview/Hunter's point neighborhoods and has similar characteristics. It is known for its high concentration of Project-Based Housing, gang violence and drug activity, however, it is experiencing a higher level of gentrification which raises the median household income of its census tracts. Jay (age 36, 1 child) also lives within the same income-range in the Excelsior neighborhood (see *Photographs 1*), a mostly residential neighborhood with some amenities but far from downtown and the financial district. She lives in a market rate apartment with a Portable Section 8 Voucher.

Five participants live in the city's middle income neighborhoods ($54,063-$69,539), although three of these participants' homes are on the border with a lower income tract. Sharon (age 26, 2 children) and Ronice (age 24, 1 child) live in the Excelsior neighborhood described above. Sharon lives in market rate housing with a Portable Section 8 Voucher and Ronice lives in shared market-rate housing, renting a room in a an apartment shared with 3 other households. Alyssa (age 28, 1 child) lives in the Mission District in the central-eastern area of the city, a district known for many Latino businesses and residences, rich in amenities and central in the city, but known for gang violence and drugs. She and her son live in a residential drug treatment program with several other households of women in recovery and their children, and have staff present in the house at all times. Finally, Jennifer (age 40, 2 children) and Patricia (age 45, 3 children) live in OMI[17] to the south-west, another middle income neighborhood. Both have moved back in with their parents and live rent-free in the parent-owned house. The OMI is quite residential, with an amenity rich mall in the area but few other services (see *Photographs 1*).

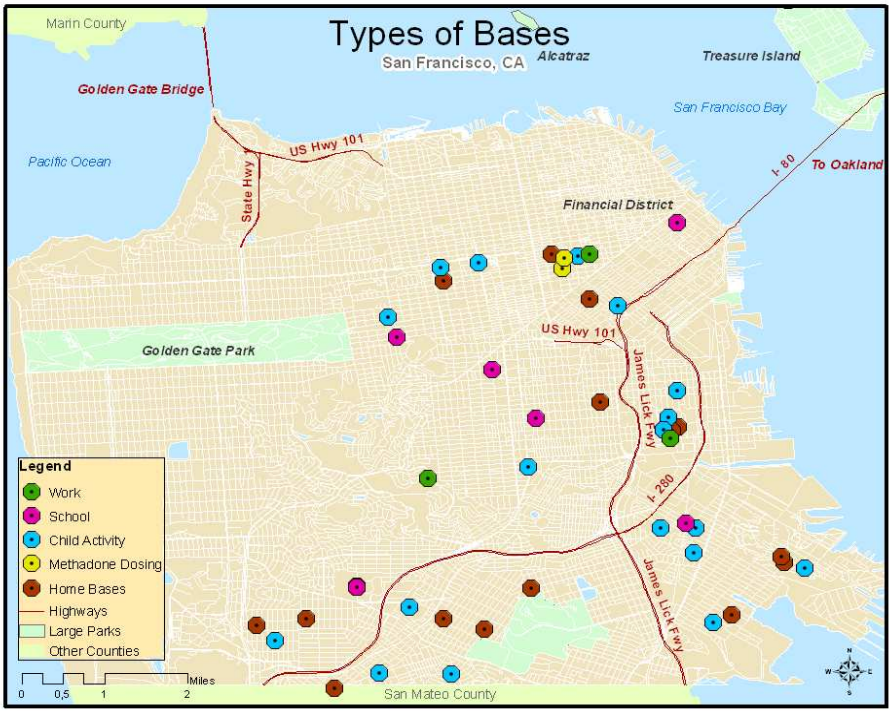
One participant, Whitnee (age 46, 2 children), lives in market-rate housing with Section 8 just over the border to the south in Daly City (see *Photographs 1*) in a neighborhood which is equivalent to a second-to-lowest or middle income range neighborhood in San Francisco such as the adjacent Excelsior neighborhood described above. Noemi (age 29, 1 child) lives on Treasure Island in permanent supportive housing seen at the top-right corner of the map. Treasure Island is unique in that it is an island in the middle of the San Francisco Bay, connecting to downtown San Francisco by the Bay Bridge on one side and the City of Oakland on the other (see *Photographs 1*). Treasure Island has no grocery stores and virtually no amenities. Bus service off the island is limited. Tara (age 23, 1 child) lives outside of San Francisco in the neighboring city, South San Francisco. Her neighborhood is comparable to San Francisco's middle income neighborhoods such as the OMI described above.

[17] OMI neighborhood is depicted as part of Twin Peaks neighborhood on the San Francisco Neighborhoods map.

4.4.1 Other base locations

Besides home, participants travel to other base locations in the city, meaning that they have other locations in the city where they have to perform a mandatory activity within their daily or weekly routines. The most common bases besides the home for participants are children's activity locations and participants' school or work locations. *Map 11: Types of Bases* displays the various types of bases around the city involved in the participants' routines. Note that the home of the participant living in South San Francisco, and home of the participant living on Treasure Island are not visible at this scale. Children's activity locations involve dropping off and picking up children from child care centers or schools or after school programs. All participants have at least one child activity base location. Many of the participants are students. Most have one location in the city where they attend classes each week. However, a few have two class locations. The two full-time and one part-time employed participant have one work location. Two participants have a base location which is part of a substance abuse recovery program. These two participants are recovering heroin addicts and are required to pick up methadone doses from a treatment clinic about 3 times per week.

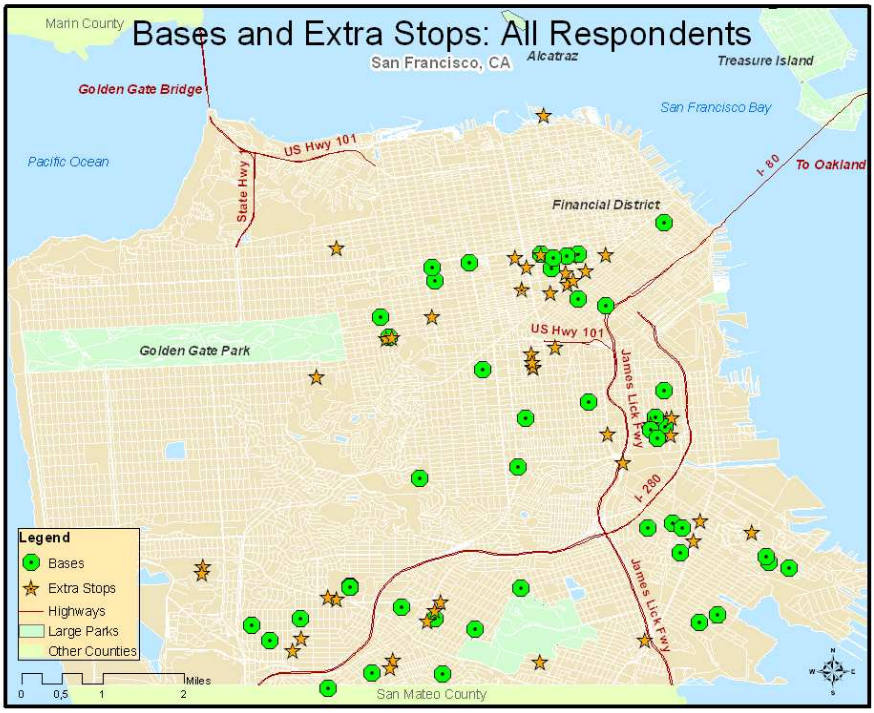
Map 11: Types of Bases



4.4.2 Extra stops

Extra stops in the day are in some ways just as important as base locations and their activities. Extra stops for this group were at the grocery store, to buy a Halloween costume for a child, to inquire about kindergartens, to buy medication, to take a daughter to the emergency room for a twisted ankle, to drive a friend to the BART station, and so on. As we can see from *Map 12: Bases and Extra Stops*, most extra stops were made as close to the participants' base locations as possible. The extra stops located at a distance from the group's bases were all reached by car with the exception of two or three. Efficiency in travel is important to participants' ability to coordinate various activities in their day. Also, cars appear to give greater flexibility in reaching activities outside of the base areas.

Map 12: Bases and Extra Stops



4.5 Transport Modes

Participants were asked what their primary forms of transport are in daily life. A primary form of transport here means that the respondent uses that form of transport at least once a week. The most common forms of primary transportation reported were bus (10 / 17 or 59%) and walking (10 / 17 or 59%). The participants' rate of bus use is a big departure from the general San Francisco population, 31% of whom use public transportation to travel to work.[18] Walking was reported almost exclusively as a connecting mode of transportation between bus stops. Eight of the women (47%) reported owning a car, while 70.2% of households in the general San Francisco population own a car[19]. All of the car owners reported driving their car as their primary form of transportation and reported never or very infrequently using other forms of transport. Three women (18%) reported receiving car rides from others as one of the main ways to get around. Two (12%) use BART, the local light-rail system, at least once a week. One participant (6%) reported riding a bicycle on a regular basis, however she did not do so on her diary day. None reported using taxi with the exception of emergencies such as a child's trip to the hospital.

[18] Bay Area Census 2000. <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanFranciscoCounty.htm>
[19] San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency Fact Sheet, November 2009. <http://www.sfmta.com/cms/rfact/documents/SFFactSheet2009_November2009_FINAL.pdf>

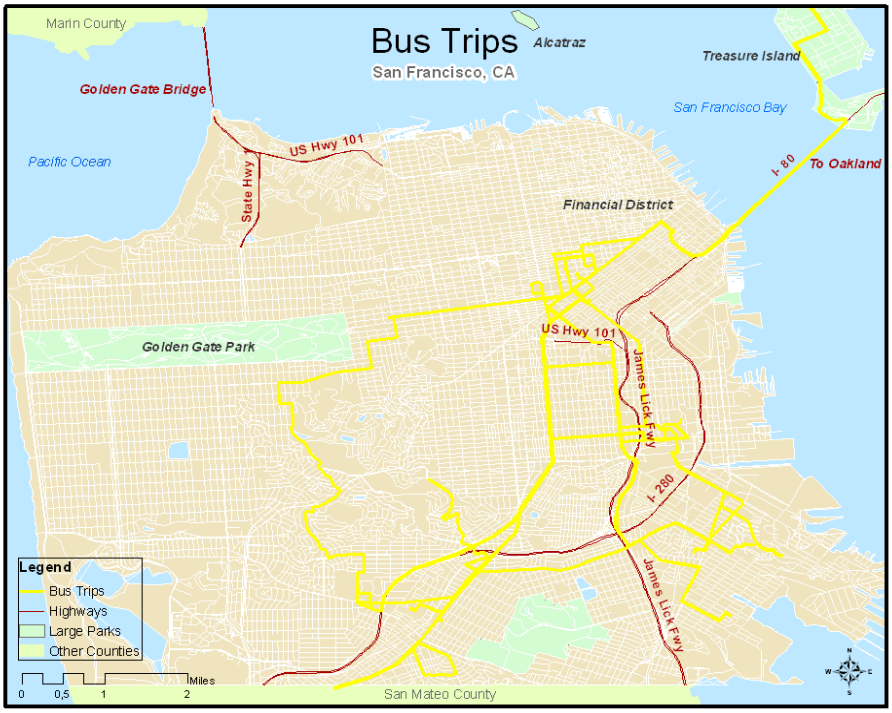
When asked why they did not use certain modes of transportation, participants responded in the following way: Those who did not drive a car regularly did not do so because they do not own a car, and reported that they could not afford to buy a car or the costs associated with car ownership. All reported that taxis are too expensive. Most reported that the light-rail system (BART) is too expensive, the main reason most likely being that the rail system is not included in the free bus pass provided by welfare programs. Bicycles are not used because they are viewed as an unsafe and impractical form of transportation, meaning that the participant did not think she would be comfortable or able to transport herself and her children to the various bases in her day faster than by bus or car. Walking was reportedly only useful for connecting to the bus, BART system or rides from others because the amenities and bases participants need to access are most often not within practical walking distances of each other. The only participants who did not use the bus regularly were car owners. The car owners who chose never to use the bus did so because they dislike the experience of riding the bus, and because they find they can do more and travel further in the day by car. The following chapter will further explore participant perceptions about and experiences in different modes of transportation.

Map 13: Walking Paths below displays all walking trips taken by participants on their travel diary days. We can see that walking trips are indeed short, connecting trips between bases and other modes of transport, primarily bus. What appear to be very long walking trips in the south-central and south-eastern neighborhoods are in many cases the combination of individual participants' trips which coincided because major bus line stops are located on the same streets. However, participants in these neighborhoods, especially the south-eastern neighborhoods of Bayview/Hunter's Point and Potrero Hill do tend to walk further distances than other participants. This is because bus service is less frequent and less reliable in these neighborhoods than in other parts of the city. The tight bunch of short walking paths visible in the north-eastern neighborhood, the Tenderloin, were created by four participants accessing methadone dosing clinics, free meals programs and housing clinics in this neighborhood with a high concentration of social service providers

Map 13: Walking Paths

Bus trips taken by participants are seen below in *Map 14: Bus Trips*. When compared to the Map 15: Rides from Others and Map 16: Car Trips below, we see that car trips (either the participant driving or someone else) are much more direct and extend longer distances than bus trips. Bus trips tend to wind up and down city streets while cars access the fastest streets and freeways as often as possible. Bus trips take much longer to arrive from point A to point B because they stop at bus stops frequently, do not typically travel on freeways, and must follow a pre-conceived route that is not necessarily the most direct route to an individual's destination. Also, unlike cars, one cannot walk out the door and walk directly into a bus and drive off. Bus rides must be coordinated with bus stop times. If a bus is 'missed,' either because the individual was late arriving to the stop, because the bus is off schedule, or the bus was too crowded to pick up more passengers, one must wait for the next bus, from 5 to 30 minutes depending on the frequency of the bus line, the time of day, and the day of the week. In neighborhoods with high crime rates, one participant reports, the police service will contact the bus service and instruct them not to drive into the neighborhood if the police are conducting a search, arrest, or other activity that could be potentially dangerous for passengers or drivers. Therefore, participants generally perceive buses as having longer trip times and various degrees of uncertainty as a mode of transportation.

Map 14: Bus Trips

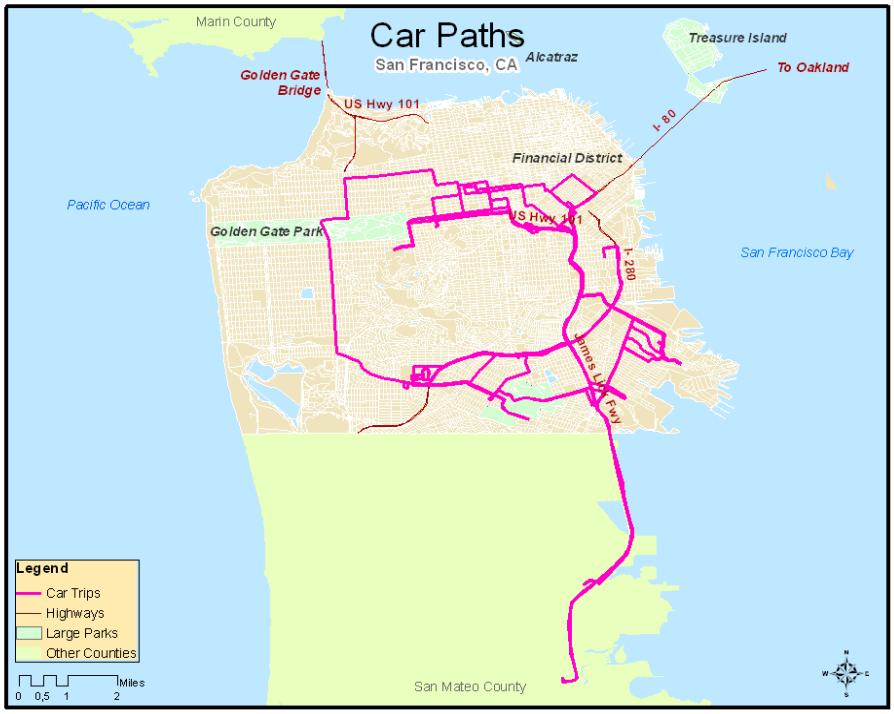


Car trips are depicted in *Map 15: Rides from Others* and *Map 16: Car Trips* on the following page. Compared to bus trips, trips made in cars extended much further out of the base areas of participants, extending even into other cities and counties south of San Francisco, as in the case of Tara who lives in South San Francisco City and performs her daily activities in San Francisco, and Ronice who drove south from San Francisco to a large mall that has good deals on couches. In general, participants traveling in cars made extra stops in their day more frequently and further away from bases. The increased flexibility that cars provide to perform these kinds of extra activities is demonstrated by Patricia, who has had a car her entire adult life. In the past several months her license was suspended. She continues to drive, but less frequently and in places that she perceives, founded or not, to be less risky for being pulled over by the police. Her Alcoholic Anonymous support groups are located in a neighborhood across the city from her home. She chose this group because she identifies well with the participants. However, now that her access to her car is curtailed, she finds herself attending these meetings less and less. This makes her feel that she is not taking care of herself. Travel by car provides greater choice. In another example, Maribeth lives within walking distance of a Safeway, a grocery store she finds too expensive. Instead, she drives to a FoodsCo, a discount grocery store about 10 minutes by car: *[I]t kind of makes me feel more in control. In control of my life. I can make better decisions. Like, for example, my decision like going to FoodsCo 'cause it's cheaper, not 'cause I have to go to Safeway because it's closer. There's a Safeway by my house like 5 blocks away. If I didn't have a car I wouldn't be going to FoodsCo,* (Maribeth, age 37, 3 children).

Car rides from others have the added benefit of not having to look for parking or dealing directly with the hassle of driving and traffic, points of stress expressed by all car drivers in the study. For participants like Jennifer, Alyssa and Tara, being chauffeured by a boyfriend to and from bases and extra stops is a great source of relief. In all of these cases the boyfriend is able to support them in this way because he does not have a 'traditional 9-5' job, one being a seasonal roofer, another a drug dealer, and another a handy-man. On the downside, receiving rides from others means depending on the other to depart on-time, and to be there for pick-up on-time. Otherwise, the rider ends up waiting, and this can result in strain or conflict in their relationship with the driver.

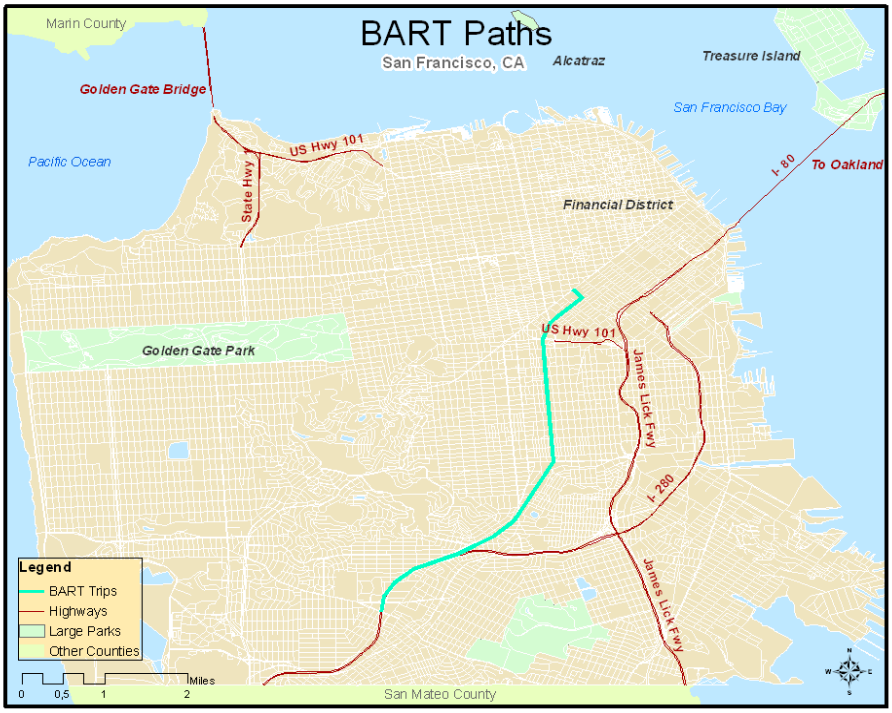
Map 15: Rides from Others Paths

Map 16: Car Paths



BART, the San Francisco Bay Area light-rail system, was used by only one participant on the diary day (see *Map 17: BART Paths* below). As discussed above, many participants perceive BART as too expensive, most likely because the bus pass provided by welfare does not include the BART system. Although BART's coverage of the city is limited, for certain trips it can save a lot of time. For this reason, Noemi chooses to pay for two BART trips each day out of pocket because she perceives the time savings as counterbalancing the financial expense. Traveling from Treasure Island every morning to the downtown neighborhood of the Tenderloin, she drops off her son at child care and then walks to a clinic in the same neighborhood for a methadone dose. Then, she chooses to take BART to the south of the city where her classes are instead of taking the bus. She estimates this BART trip saves her about an hour in her total daily commute.

Map 17: BART Paths



4.6 ICT access

Beyond, the 'traditional' modes of transportation discussed above, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) are increasingly a way people connect to other people and information, and perform certain activities that would otherwise require physical mobility such as online bill payments and job applications. ICT's of course include the cell phone, television, computer and internet. Even the ability to use more 'traditional' ways of getting around and connecting such as taking a bus or driving a car are greatly benefited by and at times even requiring the use of ICT's in order to navigate them. One example might be looking up online bus schedules or driving directions in order to arrive on-time at a job interview in a never before visited location.

The women in the interview all have cell phones, most using the cell phone as their primary phone. For most participants, their cell phone is extremely important to them as it is the most consistent way they can contact and be contacted by other people and services. Yvonne, for example, relies on her phone to receive a call from her construction union that a job is available. If she does not respond promptly her name will be dropped to the bottom of the list. She also feels reassured that if something happens to her children during the school day someone will be able to contact her wherever she is. Only 7 out of 17 participants (41%) have land-line phones in their homes, and use them primarily as a number to provide to bill collectors. All but one participant has a television, and 14 out of 17 have cable television in their

homes. The women who do not have cable say that they cannot afford it, and one participant said she did not want her children watching too much TV.

Ten (10) out of 17 participants (59%) have a computer in their home, although only 7 out of 17 (41%) have internet access at home. All but one woman in the study expressed a lot of enthusiasm about having a computer and internet at home if they did not already, even though quite a few have no or very limited computer skills. These women all perceive a potential benefit from having a computer and internet at home and learning how to use it. The one woman who did not want a computer said that she did not know any ways that a computer could be useful. For all participants, the reason for not having a computer or internet access is not being able to afford it. A few women with computers obtained their computer in alternative ways. For Chesa and Maribeth, they were donated to them by a shelter they had stayed in. Noemi found her marginally functioning computer abandoned near her house. And Sharon's computer was assembled by a technologically savvy friend she met at the community college who combined used computer components, and then installed pirated software. Fifteen (15) out of 17 participants report having internet access outside of the home, mostly at social service centers, or the community college. The two who do not have internet outside of home, one does not know of anywhere to go, and another said she could find out but does not try because she does not know how to use a computer in the first place. For all but two participants who do not know how to use a computer, they utilized social workers or a friend to look things up for them online.

A few participants had had computer and internet at home for several years. These participants came from families with relatively higher incomes and employment stability. For a couple of participants, having a phone with internet access is very important to them and provide an alternative way of accessing the internet for email, driving directions and so on since they do not have internet at home. They said, however, that they would prefer a computer for more substantial projects like doing online research for school or applying for jobs

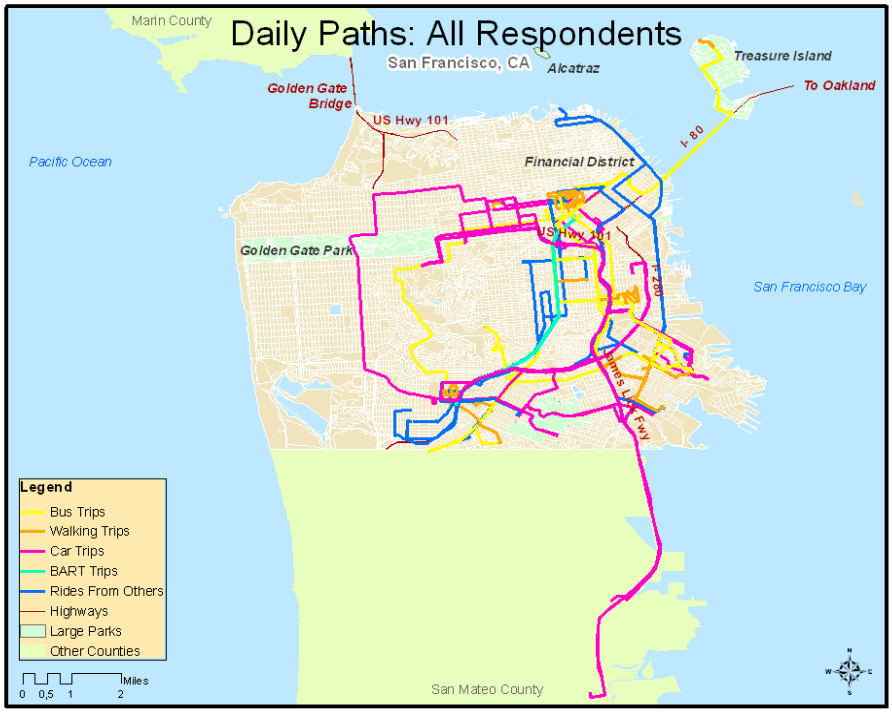
4.7 Organization of Daily Life – Action Spaces

The previous sections have introduced some of the important components that may influence the organization of daily life of the low-income, single mothers in this study: current life circumstances regarding household composition, support from others, income, and so on; aspects of each person's biography that create challenges or assets in negotiating life in the present; home base locations and housing types; bases and extra stops in the 'normal' weekday routine; transportation mode use and availability; and access to ICT's. This section will explore how these elements converge in spatio-temporal terms to influence the way daily life is organized for these women, and how that in turn impacts their quality of life in being able to choose to participate in activities within the fabric of daily life (Dijst&Kwan 2005; Ritsema van Eck, et. al. 2005). First, the constrained or flexible nature of time intervals between base locations is assessed by examining the daily paths and Action Spaces created during participants' diary days. A few observations of Action Space patterns within the group are made in regards to the time of day of the interval, the transport mode used for the time interval and

the household composition of the traveler. Then, a comparison of contrasting cases of daily life organization between women within the group is made in order to explore how each woman's spatio-temporal situation is unique and how it shapes her daily life. In examining each woman's spatio-temporal situation, the Time Geography concepts of *capability constraints*, *coupling constraints* and *authority constraints* (see Dijst 2008) assist us in understanding how the host of components discussed above, such as household composition, transport mode options, and base location temporal restrictions, converge on the individual level, shaping daily travel and activity participation behavior. To review, *capability constraints* refer to biological, mental, and instrumental limitations. *Coupling constraints* refer to the necessity for people to come together at a certain time and location with equipment and other materials for joint activities. *Authority constraints* refer to the regulation of access of individuals to activity places through social rules, laws, financial barriers, and power relationships (Dijst 2008:2).

The map below (*Map 18: Daily Paths: All Respondents)* shows the travel diary day paths of all respondents, color-coded by the form of transportation they used for each trip. All but 3 participants stayed within the borders of San Francisco City on their diary day. The most obvious exceptions are the two car trip paths (pink) that extend far south past the city border. One path is made from the participant living in South San Francisco who traveled up the highway to and from her daily activities in San Francisco City. The other car path going south into San Mateo County was by a participant whose bases are all within San Francisco City, but who took the same highway further south that day to buy a couch at a mall. A third participant's yellow bus path extends south just past the border of San Francisco into Daly City where she lives. A fourth participants' bus and walking paths stand out on the north-east corner of the map, taking her to Treasure Island (part of San Francisco City) where she lives. The 'hollow' area in the center of the pattern made by participants' paths is due to a hill range in the middle of the city. Paths were presumably routed around these hills in order to save time.

Map 18: Daily Paths: All Respondents



For the most part, paths are concentrated in the eastern and southern sides of the city in correspondence with the concentration of the groups' bases, meaning participants are choosing (or forced) to contain their trips within a relatively tight area around their base locations, with the exception of a few participants. This might mean, in quite general terms, that the environments of home, work/school, child activities and so on, dictate the kinds of environments experienced by this group in daily life.

The three most obvious exceptions to this pattern were three car trips (two pink 'Car Trips' and one blue 'Rides from others'), depicted in the map above: 1) the pink path extending south by the participant who went to buy a couch at a mall; 2) the large 'C-shaped' pink path in the western side of the city made by a participant driving her car to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting; and 3) a blue path traveling north from the Financial District by a participant whose boyfriend drove her to lunch on the wharf.

Within their travel diary day participants spent, on average, about 3 hours traveling (2 hrs, 58 min.), a considerable amount of time considering the City of San Francisco only encompasses 46 sq. miles (about 119 sq. kilometers) [20]. While not comparable in terms of *total* travel time in the work day, it is striking that the average total travel time to and from work for San Francisco residents in general is only about 1 hour[21]. The lowest total travel time in the group was 1 hour

[20] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0667000.html
[21] Bay Area Census 2000. URL: <<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/counties/SanFranciscoCounty.htm>

and 14 minutes, and the highest an impressive 4 hours and 43 minutes. The median average trip duration was 22 minutes, ranging widely from 9 minutes to 42 minutes average trips duration among participants. On average, participants made 7.5 trips during the day, ranging from 5 to 19 trips. It should be noted that short walking trips, on a college campus for example, was also counted as a trip made that day and accounts for several of the high number of trips made by some participants. The participants performed activities in 4 neighborhoods on average, ranging from 2 to 5 neighborhoods within the group.

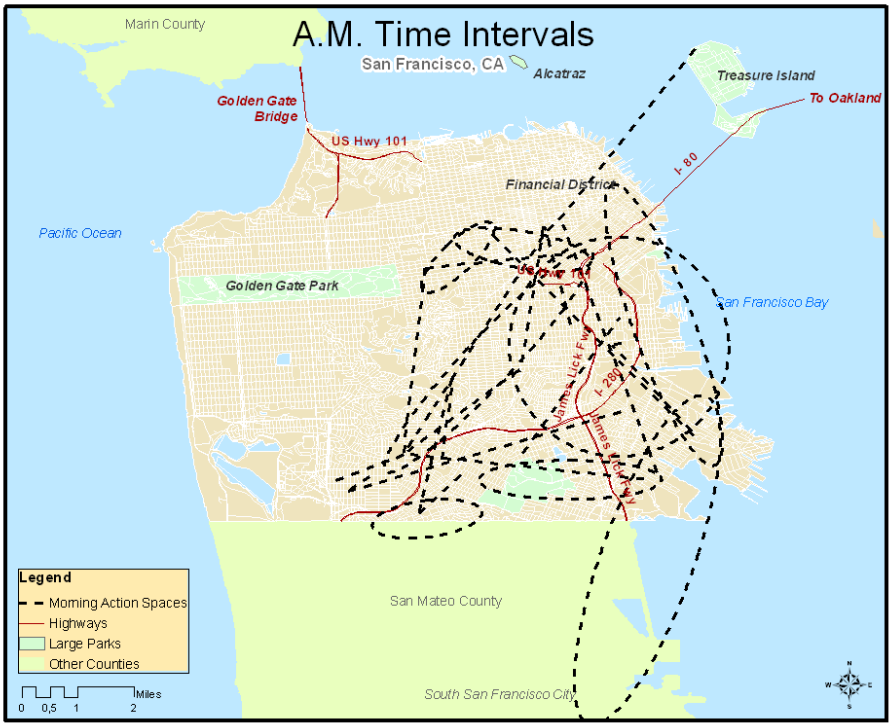
The constraint or flexibility each participant experiences in participating in activities during her routine weekday is approximated by examining the Action Spaces each woman created within the time intervals of her diary day. An Action Space is the area that contains all the activity places that an individual is capable of visiting within the time allowed her between her base locations such as home or work (see Ritsema van Eck, et al. 2005:124 and Dijst&Kwan 2005). Because the transport speed within the road network of San Francisco is not incorporated into analysis here, the use of the Action Space model should not be interpreted as Potential Action Spaces (Dijst 1999b), meaning the area participants are *potentially* capable of visiting within a time interval, but should be understood instead as a representation of the area participants *actually* traveled within during each interval of their diary day (see Chapter 2). Time intervals are the trips between bases; in this group's case home, child activity locations, school/work, or methadone dosing clinic. The flexibility or inflexibility experienced by the participant within time intervals to make extra stops between base locations is represented by the shape of the Action Space. The shape is determined by the locations of the two bases the participant traveled between within the time interval (such as home and work), and the extent to which the participant traveled outside of the most direct route between bases to make extra stops (such as the grocery store). A very inflexible time interval would be represented by a *linear action space*, meaning that only enough time was available to travel directly from one base to another without any extra stops along the way. An *elliptical action* space represents a more flexible time interval, allowing the participant to make one or more extra stops before arriving at her next base destination. A *circular action space* represents a time interval in which the participant traveled from and back to the same base in order to run an errand during the day, for example, traveling from home to a doctor's appointment and then back home (Ritsema van Eck, et al. 2005:124).

- **Morning Rush**

A few striking patterns were seen within the group's Action Spaces and are worth mentioning despite the small sample size. Firstly, as the women themselves expressed in interviews, morning time intervals are much more constrained than afternoon intervals which allow a little more flexibility to run extra errands. Action spaces created during morning hours are more often linear or narrow elliptical [*see Map 19: A.M. Time Intervals*], meaning that the time it takes to get from home to other bases is entirely or almost entirely occupied by direct travel. This is because almost all mothers in the study have to drop-off one or more children at child

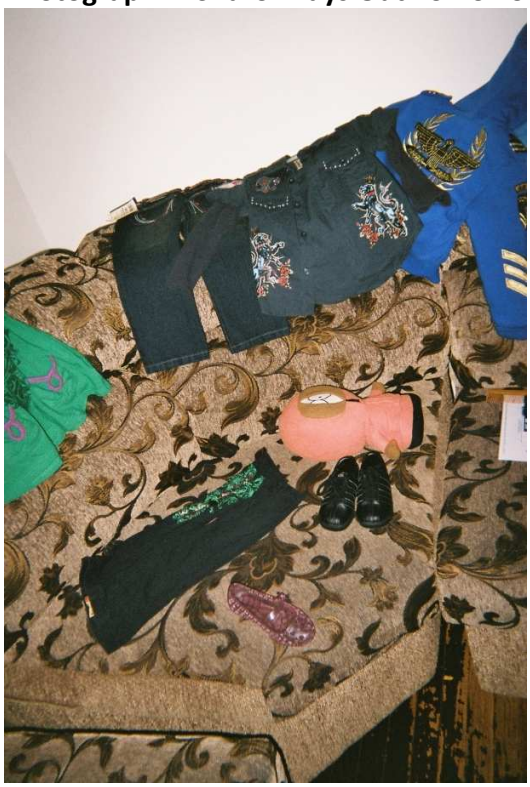
care or school before continuing with their own activities. Child care centers and schools have narrow 15-60 minute drop-off windows in the morning which the parents must coordinate with their own prompt arrival to school or work.

Map 19: A.M. Time Intervals



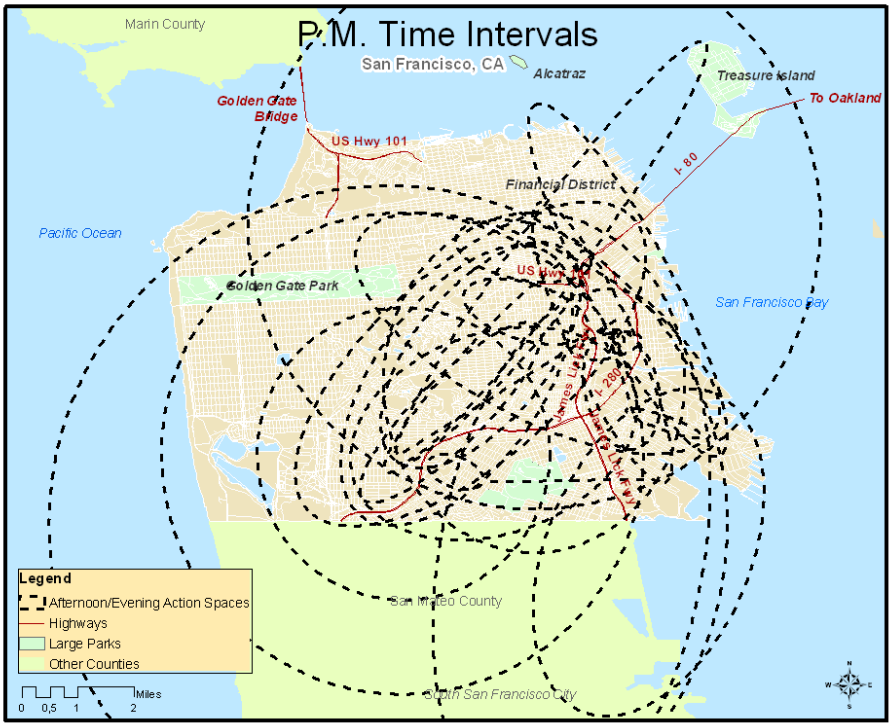
The mother's responsibility of child drop-off of course also means having to get the children and herself ready and out of the door on-time in the morning in order to arrive on-time at the child care center or school. Almost all participants expressed stress in the morning in readying themselves and one or more children. Maribeth (age 37, 3 children) describes why mornings are the most inflexible points in her day: *Well, because they [children] don't want to get up. Like my 9 year old, 'help me pick my clothes', or, 'I don't like this outfit'. And the 5 year old, I'm trying to teach him more like you can do it, dress yourself, but he's a mama's boy. So I have to help them. Then they have to eat breakfast and sometimes they don't want cereal. They want something more hardy. And my oldest son, he is hard to get up in the morning.* Many participants describe strategies they use to try to overcome this morning rush. Mylandra (age37, 5 children) and Jay (age 36, 1 child) both get up at 3 am each weekday morning in order to have 'alone time', complete activities for themselves like studying, cleaning the house and preparing themselves for the day. Then, they wake their children and begin the process of getting them ready and out of the door on-time. Many parents prepare breakfast and lay out the children's clothes the night before, as seen in Sharon's photograph below (age 26, 2 children).

Photograph 2: Sharon Lays Out Tomorrow's Clothes



Afternoon time intervals, on the other hand, are much less constrained [*see Map 20: P.M Time Intervals*], as illustrated by the wider elliptical and circular action spaces. Participants often use this time to run errands after leaving work or school before picking up their children and continuing home. Afternoon flexibility is provided by a more generous pick-up time window at child care centers and after school programs (1-2 hours), the greater likelihood that a friend or relative might be available to pick up the child(ren), and the guarantee that stores and offices are open for running errands.

Map 20: P.M Time Intervals



The constrained nature of morning time intervals versus afternoon intervals is a product of several space-time constraints: 1) authority constraints imposed by child care and school drop-off/pick-up times and adult school or work arrival times and the consequences associated with non-compliance; 2) coupling constraints created by the child(ren)'s inability to ready themselves or to arrive at or leave school or childcare without an adult; and 3) the related capability constraint created by being a single parent with low financial resources, as other parents may be able to pass off or share the child transport responsibilities with a partner, or pay for a nanny to transport their children. As with all bases, child activity bases involve time windows of access which must be coordinated with the temporal demands of other bases and extra stops in the participants' day and the transportation mode(s) available to them. Consequences for violating child base time-frames include not being allowed to leave your child at the center if you drop them off too late or too early that day, or being fined by the minute if you pick up your child too late. School drop off, especially for younger children, must be done after school staff are present to supervise children at the school, and before the bell rings for class, about an hour time window. After school, children must be picked up promptly, otherwise they must wait in the principal's office. If this happens too often, the parent is scolded by school officials and in extreme cases Child Protective Services will be notified.

Tara (age 23, 1 child) exemplifies how difficult it can be to organize daily life within these space-time constraints. Tara lives in South San Francisco City and studies to be a medical clerk

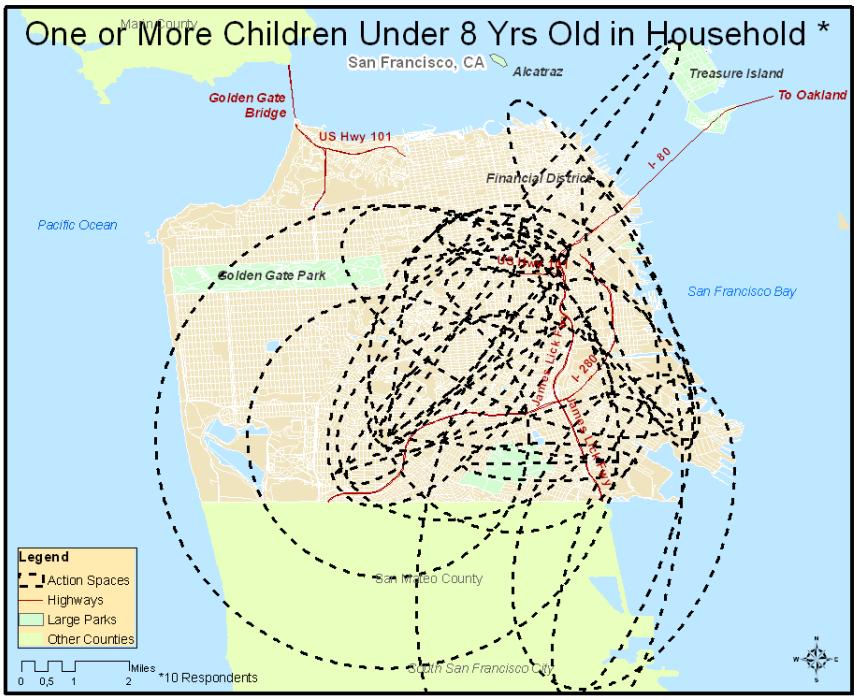
downtown in San Francisco's northern-most area. She chose a subsidized child care center near her mother's house in the south-eastern neighborhood of Bayview in San Francisco. The reason for this was to have someone near her son during the day while she was away in case he needed to be picked up. The 8-8:15 am drop-off window at this particular child care center, and her 8 am class start time in downtown San Francisco were, therefore, no problem. She would drop her son off at her mother's house around 7:30 and continue on to school before 8 o'clock while her mother dropped her son at child care during the allowed time window. Now that her mother has moved outside of San Francisco, however, Tara is forced to simply be late for class each day until she can transfer her son to another child care center. The obvious answer might be to have the father of her son who lives close to the child care center drop off their son. However, the father's affiliation with a rival gang makes it unsafe for him to travel into the area of the child care center. And so, he is prevented by his own authority constraint from assisting with child transport.

Photograph 3: Patricia Looks at Watch After Missing Morning Bus

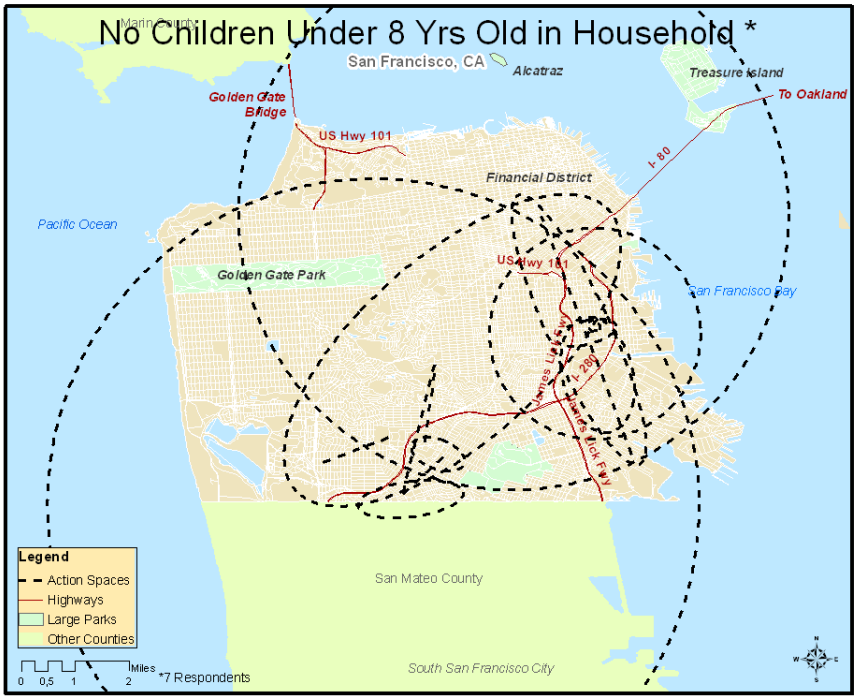
- **Young Children**

The impact of child care and school drop-off/pick-up responsibilities for this group is also illustrated by the difference observed between Action Spaces created by participants with one or more children under 8 years old in the household, and participants without a child under 8. The age of 8 was chosen as an approximation for when a parent might feel comfortable letting an older child take the younger to school or for the child to go on their own. Although the size and shape of action spaces is not very different, the additional number of time intervals (trips between bases) for parents of young children is striking [see *Map 21: One or more children under 8 yrs old in household* and *Map 22: No children under 8 yrs old in household*].

Map 21: One or more children under 8 yrs old in household



Map 22: No children under 8 yrs old in household



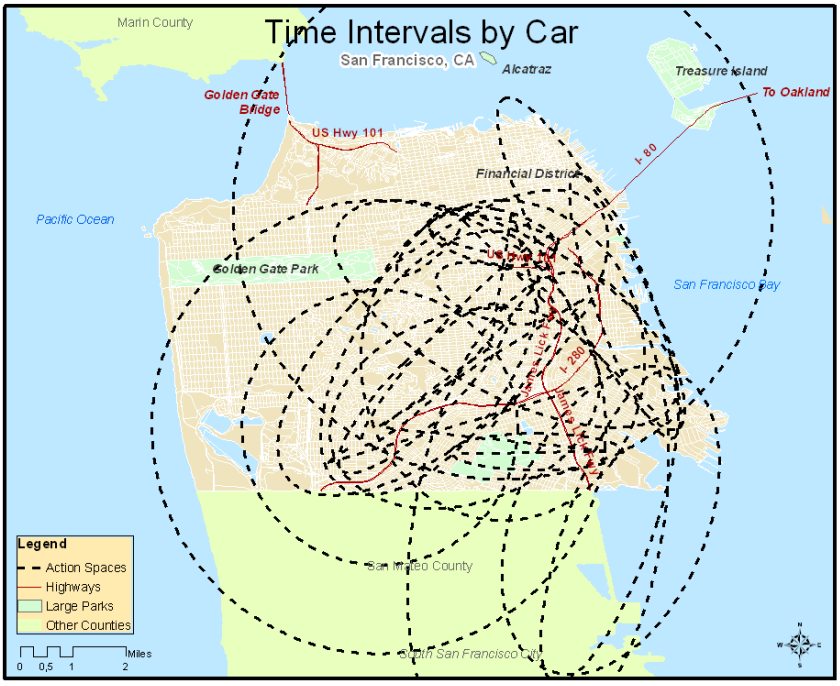
Parents of young children more often have to drop-off and pick-up young children from school and/or child care than parents of older children. And, since this group of single parents often does not have a second adult who can share this responsibility and cannot afford a nanny, the child's school or childcare becomes an additional base for the parent and imposes additional space-time constraints on the parent's ability to comply with the authority demands of her own activities. The ways in which some participants receive sporadic or regular support from others in child transport and care is explored in some of the case examples that follow. Participants without young children have less bases to coordinate with as they feel that it is safe for an older child to be taken by an older sibling on the bus to school, or for older children to take themselves to school alone. It should be noted when observing the maps below that there are 3 more participants that have children under the age of 8 than participants without, but this still does not account for the additional number of intervals for parents of young children.

Photograph 4: Noemi's Son on Bus

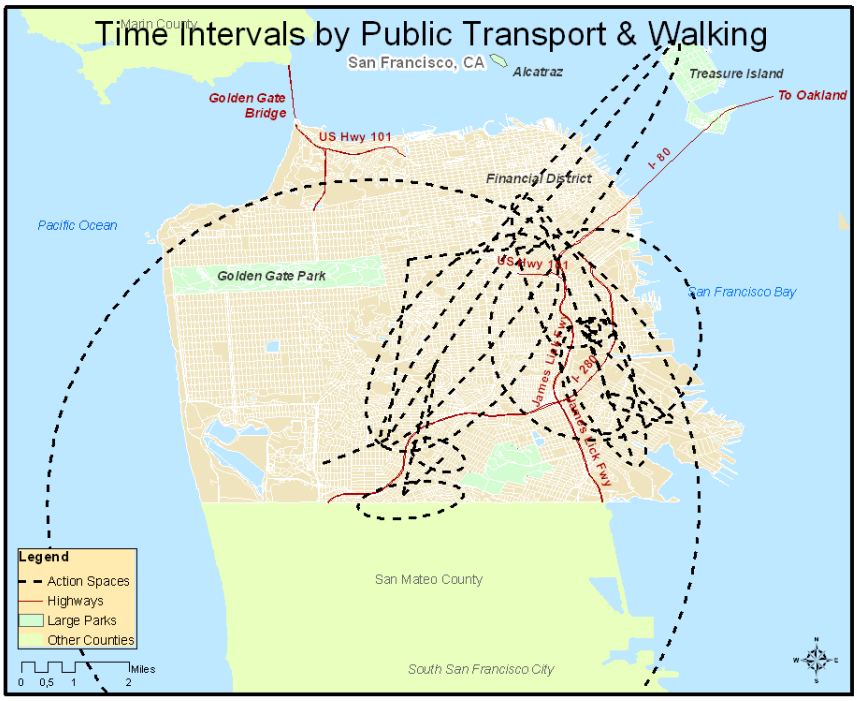
- **Car versus Public Transportation**

Another apparent difference is seen between Action Spaces created by time intervals navigated by car, and time intervals navigated by public transportation. Action Spaces created by car trips [see *Map 23: Time Intervals by Car*] are bigger, broader (elliptical or circular), and extend further beyond the east of the city where the group's home bases are concentrated. In contrast, Action Spaces created by public transportation trips [see *Map 24: Time Intervals by Public Transportation*] are more concentrated around home base locations in the city, are often linear and are less prolific. In other words, when participants have access to a car (either their own or a ride from someone else), they are able to travel more quickly between bases, making more opportunities available to run extra errands outside of the most direct route.

Map 23: Time Intervals by Car

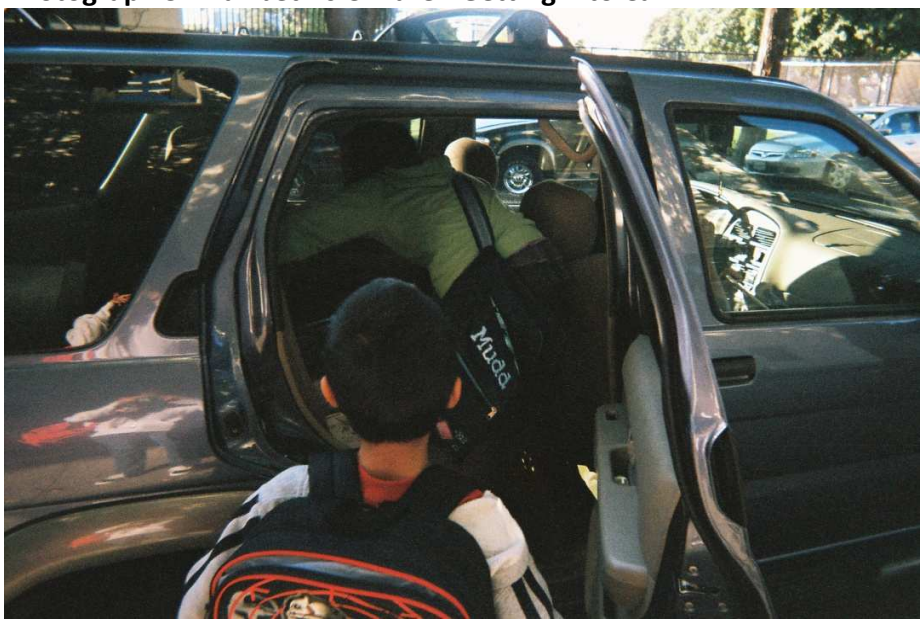


Map 24: Time Intervals by Public Transportation



Relying on the bus or train means that it takes longer to get from one base to another and that there is much less choice in the route you take from point A to point B. This reduces possibilities for extra stops to be made during the day between bases. The inefficiency of the public transport system in San Francisco and the inability of many participants in the study to have a car is cited by participatns as one of their most important space-time constraints. Yvonee (age 45, 2 children) explains how she feels about having a car compared to relying on the bus: *I love my car [laughing]! I just love it. I mean it's convenient. It just does wonders for me. I mean, sometimes I have to be somewhere and I'm running late. I can just jump in and go instead of having to wait for the bus. Even if I might get a ticket I'm like at least I'm on-time.* Tenesha (age 28, 2 children) agrees with Yvonne's comparison: *Way quicker. 'Cause the car is more faster anyway 'cause all you stoppin' is stoppin' at stop signs. With the bus you have to stop at every stop for every person to get on, so it's like with the car you goin' right there.[…] If I miss a bus I start walkin'. I like to walk anyway.* Maribeth's (age 37, 3 children) commute from home to her children's school used to take 45 minutes on public transportation. Now, she arrives in 20 minutes by car: *Oh, ya, oh my god! A car is a life-saver for me. 'Cause I wouldn't be able to do it. Then my day'd mostly be spent on the bus, and the kids on the bus.*

Photograph 5: Maribeth's Children Getting into Car



When asked to imagine how life might be different with a car, Chesa (age 36, 2 children) exclaimed: *A car! Oh, Julia! It would change everything! Oh my goodness, I can be at my school in like 20 minutes! [snaps fingers] Just like that [laughing]. And I'm really good in traffic. [Stops laughing] Of course it's just a dream, so… ya it would change everything. Time consuming – I could be on-time. […] If I had a car from here it's probably going to take me just 5 minutes [to the childcare center]. It's not gonna take me 20/25 minutes just to get there! And of course I have to talk to the teacher, what do they need and things like that. So that's something, too, you know. It adds up the time. And from there I can go straight to my school without waiting for the 43 [bus]. The 43 stops so many from Masonic! It stops every corner! […] You know how*

many? I counted. It's like more than 20! Oh, it's driving me nuts! And it depends on the hour, too. There are some stops there are no passengers but they have to stop there to pick up some people. Oh, it's driving me nuts!

Several participants with cars described having greater choice and independence of movement by car. For example, Maribeth (age 37, 3 children) chooses to drive to a budget grocery store in another neighborhood instead of shopping at a more expensive grocery store within walking distance of her house. Patricia (age 45, 3 children) attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in a neighborhood on the other side of the city because she identifies more with the members of that group than those in her own neighborhood. Now that her license is suspended, however, she is not attending meetings as often because it takes too long to get there, and feels that she is not able to take care of herself as a consequence. Patricia: *Actually just* doin' *my life is more difficult. The car gave me a lot more autonomy and independence. Ya, more so the autonomy.[…] For me, it's more about bein' able to move unrestricted. There's a certain amount personal freedom, disconnection you have in a car when you can just like go when you want. As opposed to the bus where you really have to be on somebody else's schedule 'cause they don't run for you.*

4.7.1 Individual Cases of Accessibility

We will now contrast a two participants individually in order to see how the individual's spatio-temporal situation in transportation modes, schedules, base locations, and her personal attributes in family composition, biography and so on comes together to shape the way daily life is organized. We will compare two cases: Chesa (36 years old, 2 children), and Alyssa (28 years old, 1 child).

- **Chesa**

Chesa is a 36 year old single mother with two children, ages 3 and 4. She is a full-time student at City College of San Francisco, working on an Associate degree in Nursing. Schooling expenses are paid for through a welfare program. If she can afford it, her ultimate goal is to attend San Francisco State University and obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Chesa has a Bachelor of Arts in Tourism from a university in the Philippines, but has been unable to find work with this degree since she moved from the Philippines to the San Francisco Bay Area with her sister in 2001 seeking better job opportunities.

A couple years after moving to the Bay Area, Chesa started dating and eventually moved in with a man. After the birth of their first child he became physically and mentally abusive. She tried to leave him but he coerced her into returning and became more abusive, locking her in his apartment for 6 months. She escaped with her children and stayed in a domestic violence shelter in the East Bay. Shortly, he discovered her location and they were transferred to another shelter in San Francisco. Despite a restraining order she is still fearful of him and she rides a different bus home from the police station every week when she drops the children off for supervised visits with their father.

Chesa leaving her abusive partner initiated 3 years of homelessness for her and her children, moving from one domestic violence or family shelter to another in San Francisco. After three years, the family obtained a heavily subsidized unit in a low-income supportive housing program in the South of Market Area (SOMA) neighborhood of San Francisco. This type of housing program is designed to provide extra on-site support to families who are especially at risk of becoming homeless again. She attends regular mandatory meetings with her case manager in the housing program as well as free therapy sessions for herself and her children to help them cope with domestic violence experience. At the time of the interview, she and her children had been living there for seven months. Chesa currently receives welfare on behalf of her children and has a part-time job at City College, bringing her household *per capita* income to $455 per month. Because of her illegal immigration status, she does not qualify for federal student aid. Both her children attend the same child care center in the Western Addition neighborhood of San Francisco. Child care is free to her due to her low-income status.

Map 25: Chesa's Action Spaces below depicts the accessibility Chesa experiences in her daily life, following the path taken on her diary day. Bases, such as home, school or work, are depicted by green octagons. Extra stops are marked with stars. The path she took is indicated by colored lines. In her case, she walked (orange line) or took the bus (yellow line).

Map 25: Chesa's Action Spaces

On the travel diary day in question, Chesa spent 4.5 hours traveling, the same amount of time she spent attending classes and working, and the highest travel time in the study sample. As we can see, Chesa's day consisted of three main time intervals: 1) Home to Child Care; 2) Child Care to School; and 3) School to Home. The first two time intervals, occurring in the morning, were very constrained (linear action spaces). Her afternoon interval from school to home was less constrained (elliptical action space). Her general routine consists of leaving her apartment in the SOMA neighborhood (marked, *Home*) at about 7:45 a.m., walking a couple of blocks to the bus stop with her kids, and then taking a bus to their child care in the Western Addition (marked, *Child Care*). She is permitted to drop them off between 8 am and 9:30 am. This trip takes about 45 minutes. She then walks another block and a half and catches a different bus south to attend classes and work a student job at City College Ocean Campus (marked, *School*). This trip takes approximately 45 minutes as well. Her morning commute from home to school will vary between 1.5 and 1.75 hours, depending on how long it takes to say good bye to her children at child care and, consequently, how long she will wait for the next bus to City College.

Although other participants experience particular time pressure in the morning, Chesa's morning commute takes an exceptionally long time. As Chesa says: *[T]he time-consume from the transportation is the one big factor of my delay in everything.* This is due to the capability constraint created by her inability to afford a car or taxi and her reliance on public transport and walking,

and how far her child care center is located off of the trajectory between home and school. Being isolated through domestic violence and recently immigrated, her limited social networks reduce her chances of knowing someone to carpool with or give her rides. Also, the low-income bus pass from welfare allows her to ride the bus, but not the light-rail system, BART, a much faster form of transport within the city. She used bicycles in the Philippines regularly but does not in San Francisco because she feels her children are too young to cycle in the city.

Photograph 6: Chesa's Bus Arrives

The second factor regarding the inefficiency of base locations may also be understood as a capability constraint when considering Chesa's biography and how it influenced the establishment of her current bases. Being homeless, she was happy to accept the housing that was offered to her while in shelter. She was much less capable of determining her home location than most people. Her current child care location was determined by its proximity to her previous DV shelter when her children were enrolled. Because of the years of instability and trauma the children experienced from homelessness and domestic violence, she chooses to leave her children at this child care location instead of relocating them somewhere along the path between home and school. She feels that by doing so she protects them from further experiences of instability: *Before we'd been moving in and out of shelters. I didn't want to confuse them anymore. And I wanted that school specifically because Johnny started it 3 years ago so I want the consistency as much as possible.* Previous homelessness and domestic violence determined her current home base location, limit her ability to change her children's base location, and continue to influence her organization of daily life.

On this particular day she spent about 4.5 hours at school. After finishing classes and work, she typically leaves again by bus, either to pick up her children from child care or to run errands if she can arrange for a friend to pick up her children for her before child care closes at 4:30 pm. On this travel diary day, a friend was able to pick up her kids, so she left school and took a bus for 55 minutes to the San Francisco United School District office to inquire about kindergartens

for her oldest child (marked, *SFUD Office*). She walked 30 minutes home to drop off her heavy book bag and then took a bus 25 minutes to the produce and meat market by her house in the Mission District (marked, *Grocery Market*). Finally, she bused 20 minutes home to eat dinner with her friend and children at her house, ending the day at 8 p.m.

The support received from this one friend provides the most important potential for flexibility in Chesa's schedule. In return, Chesa shares her already limited financial aid from welfare with her friend. Chesa has no family in the area and did not meet many people while she was with her abuser. Chesa: *Sometimes I can't pick them up in the afternoons so I ask my friend. Like today I have a busy schedule. Sabel, I always ask her 'cause we help each other out since I met her in the [domestic violence] shelter and she's not qualified for some of the [social] services. So I told her, whatever I can afford to help you out like in terms of food stamps, or like she needs some help with translation because she's limited – she's from Ethiopia – so she's limited in her English. So I help her out with what to do if she has paperwork that she can't understand. So in turn she's helping me out with my kids. We're like family, 'cause all in the shelter are women, like a community. Like in my country [Philippines] the culture is mothers to mothers helping each other. So we apply that here. So far she's very nice in helping me out.* Sometimes, however, she feels that her friend has too many problems of her own to always be there for her. She especially feels the absence of her family members on the East Coast and in the Philippines and regrets that they cannot be there to help her: *It's just me and my kids. And sometimes it's so hard.*

In addition to her daily child care, school and work time parameters, she also has an appointment once a week with a therapist close to her house, and a meeting with her housing program case manager about once a month. Every Saturday she drops off and picks up her kids for 9 am-3 pm supervised visitation with their father at a police station in her neighborhood. These all represent authority constraints associated with involvement in the social services and legal systems. These systems provide services but also significantly structure the daily life organization of service recipients. Besides base locations of home, child activities, school/work and methadone dosing, participants also named other service related mandatory activities that occur on a less than weekly basis, but at least once a month. Cumulatively, they add on an extra mandatory activity at least once a week. These include appointments with welfare or social service case workers, therapists, support groups, doctor's appointments for themselves or their children, and so on. These must be worked into the 'normal' schedule on a weekly basis.

In summary, Chesa's history of homelessness and domestic violence produces the capability constraint of not being able to choose major base locations, in turn elongating her daily commute. The capability constraint imposed by reliance on slow public transportation exacerbates this long commute. Her weak social networks as a result of her domestic violence history make her reliant on one friend's help in creating opportunities for flexibility within her day. Ultimately, Chesa's current situation permits quite limited accessibility. Her schedule is so strained that once her son goes into kindergarten in different location than his sister in the fall, Chesa is not sure how she will be able to meet the existing demands of her schedule and may have to sacrifice her own class schedule in order to reach an additional base location.

- **Alyssa**

Alyssa is the 28 year old mother of a 16 month old boy. She lives in a communal setting in a transitional housing program for recovering drug addicts. She and her son share a room with another woman and her baby, and they live in a house with several other mothers and children. She has her High School diploma and attended one year of university after high school before dropping out. She is now a full-time student at City College, taking general requirement classes with the goal of eventually completing a Bachelor's in Social Work from a State University. She would like to work with women who experience drug addiction or homelessness, or to work in the Child Protective Services agency.

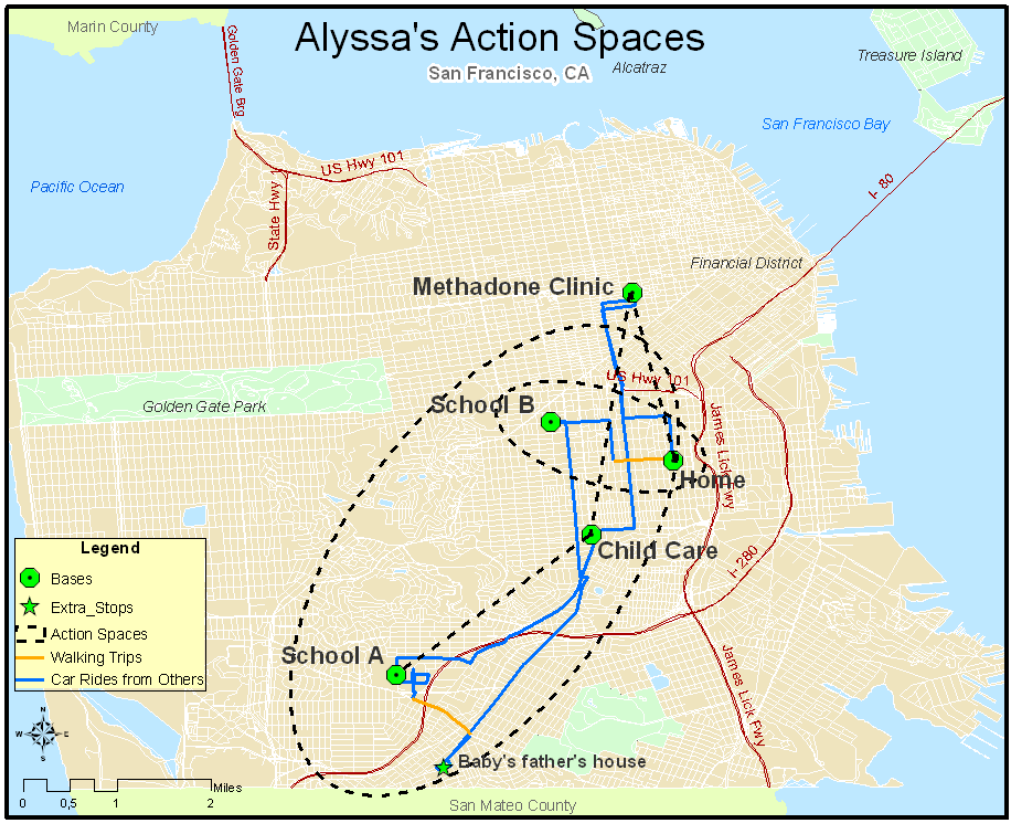
Alyssa is White. She was born in San Francisco, and lived with her mother on and off the streets until the age of 5 when she was placed in foster care. She lived with 8 different families until being placed with her last family at the age of 10 in the North Bay. At the time of the interview Alyssa had been clean for 15 months. However, the prior 3 and a half years she was addicted to heroine and living on and off the streets and in hotels with her boyfriend, working as a prostitute to fund her habit. Her son was born addicted to heroine and she went into a drug detox facility. Her son was temporarily placed in foster care but then returned to her. She hopes to move into her own housing within a year. Alyssa is working part-time as a student worker at the college and receives welfare and a small amount of child support from her baby's father, bringing her household per capita income to $764.50 per month. Her son has free child care paid by welfare for up to 42 hours per week.

Alyssa's action spaces are seen in the map below (*Map 26: Alyssa's Action Spaces*), as well as the paths she took on her diary day. She walked (orange line) and got car rides from her son's father (blue lines). She has a large number of bases, producing 5 time intervals in her day. Like other participants, morning intervals are the most constrained, creating linear action spaces: Home to Methadone Clinic; Methadone Clinic to Child Care; Child Care to her first class location (School A). Afternoons are more relaxed (elliptical), with intervals from her first class location (School A) to her second class location (School B), and then Home. Unlike most participants, she has three bases that must be reached in her morning commute instead of two, and two bases in the afternoon instead of one. The additional bases are due to her methadone dosing clinic and additional class location. Her routine generally consists of leaving her house in the morning around 8:30 am and being driven by her son's father to her dosing appointment at the methadone clinic in the Tenderloin neighborhood downtown. On this diary day, the trip took 18 minutes. She had her weekly counseling appointment, leaving the clinic 1 hour and 13 minutes later. She then walked to a convenient corner for her son's father to pick her up, and they drove to the Mission District to drop off their son at child care. The trip took 10 minutes and they stayed 10 minutes to talk to teachers. Her son's father drove her another 5 minutes to the City College Ocean Campus (*School A* on the map) where he dropped her off.

She stayed 4 hours and 35 minutes wherein she took classes on campus and worked out at the school gym. At 3:30 pm she left the college and took two buses to her baby's father's house in

the Excelsior neighborhood, a 30 minute trip. Her baby's father has already picked up their son from child care. An hour and 45 minutes later, after having dinner, her son's father drove her to her night class at another class location in the Mission District, a 25 minute trip. Her 3 hour class finished 15 minutes early, so she walked several blocks towards her house and met her son's father and son with his car on a street corner. She did not like to be seen standing outside her class waiting for him to pick her up while the other students got into their cars and left. The walk took about 15 minutes. The drive to her house was another 5 minutes. She and her baby were dropped off at home and she finished the day at 9 pm.

Map 26: Alyssa's Action Spaces



The temporal parameters of Alyssa's day are primarily shaped by her class schedule, child care drop off/pick up hours and methadone dosing times each day. As with another participant recovering from heroine addiction, Noemi (age 29, 1 child), methadone doses must be picked up between 8 am and 2 pm at a clinic in the Tenderloin neighborhood on their assigned days of the week. Consequences for not picking up the doses include relapse into addiction, re-activation of a Child Protective Services case previously closed, or potential loss of housing for the participant who lives in a residential substance abuse treatment program. Alyssa has a particularly high number of other authority constraints as she has several obligations to her drug recovery program and the welfare agency. Unless she has an approved class at night, her

transitional housing program enforces an 8:30 pm curfew on weekdays. She is required to attend a support group at her transitional program once a week, attend a weekly counseling session at the methadone clinic, a Narcotics Anonymous group once a week, meet with her recovery sponsor once a week, and then inevitably has one other appointment related to a doctor's appointment for her or her son or an appointment with a welfare case manager or a school counselor. Her home location is also out of her control, as it is determined by her participation in drug rehabilitation. Alyssa's schedule is so strained that she chose her child care location based on its convenience relative to the other bases, rather than the quality of the provider. She expresses the stress of this packed schedule: *It's a definite domino effect. It just makes it so that I can't- you know what I've started doing lately that really helps me? I've been praying lately. Because I get to the point where I just feel like I want to slow down and I can't 'cause I got stuff to do.*

Perhaps the saving grace of Alyssa's daily schedule is the willingness of her son's father to drive her and her son between most of her bases. Alyssa has the option to bus, walk or BART, but finds it much easier and faster to receive rides from her son's father. Athena spent 1 hour and 32 minutes traveling on her diary day, and 7 hours and 10 minutes attending classes and working out at the school gym. She made 9 trips - including walking trips on campus - averaging 10 minutes each. The vast majority of traveling time was spent in car rides with her son's father. She gets rides from her son's father to and from appointments, child care pick up/drop off, and school 3 to 5 times a week. He always takes her to and from her weekly night class and early Monday appointment at the methadone clinic. Although Alyssa and her son's father are no longer a couple, he is active in her and his son's life: *We are co-parents. And we are good at it*. *[…] [H]is father really helps me out. For real. I don't even feel like a single mom. He's on it. For real. I'll say something like, 'Thank you' for taking him to a doctor's appointment'. But he'll say, 'He's my son, too!' But most of the girls in the house here, they don't have it like that. They really are single mothers. I'm only a single mother because I have full custody of my child. He's got a really, really good father.* Alyssa expressed a feeling of regret that she relies on her son's father for transportation help, feeling that she should be able to do it on her own: *Because sometimes I feel that I get dependent on the time I get from those rides*. Alyssa also relies on a good friend that lives in the neighborhood to take her son if she needs help. She and her roommate also help each other in watching each other's children when needed, referring to her roommate jokingly as her *in-home help*.

Photograph 7: Alyssa's Son and Father of her Son, Car in Background

Alyssa also takes the bus frequently and takes BART twice a week. She has a free bus pass from welfare. She walks frequently to connect to bus lines, preferring a longer walk from home to a main bus line instead of taking two buses to her final destination. The capability constraint of not being able to afford a car appears again in Alyssa's case, as she has never owned a car but would really like to. She only takes taxis in emergencies, citing the cost of the ride and absence of a car seat for her son. She would like to get a bicycle and try carrying her son within her neighborhood.

In Alyssa's case, she experiences a high number of authority constraints from her participation in drug rehabilitation and involvement in welfare and Child Protective services. On the other hand, her capability constraint of not being able to own a car is compensated by her son's father's willingness to provide car transportation, and other close relationships Alyssa has maintained. Her organization of daily life is quite constrained, but her relationships and the assets these people offer make her negotiation of her daily life possible. Her determination to continue with her courses and drug rehabilitation in order to improve her and her son's lives is undoubtedly an additional asset to her: *I could get a job now to support us but it's not gonna last forever. We're not gonna be able to live on minimum wage or $15 per hour forever. I'm trying to end poverty for me and my son. I'm trying to <u>end</u> poverty. I'm not just trying to get a job or a career. I don't want him to face the same things I face. And he's not going to. And I'm sure of that. I continuously meet with an academic advisor so that I'm making the right decisions in choosing my classes. I feel like I'm on my way. I'm not just going to school, I'm working towards something.*

4.8 Chapter Conclusions

This chapter aimed to answer the question: *How do personal attributes interplay with spatio-temporal situations in organizing daily life for this group of women?* In general terms, this group

of low-income single mothers in San Francisco experiences a high degree of constraint in daily life organization with a lot of time spent traveling each day (about 3 hours per day on average). Being single parents, their daily routine necessitates coordination of time windows between several bases for themselves and young children, and for many, travel is slowed by a high reliance on public transportation and/or rides from others. Time intervals in the morning hours are especially constrained. For several women in the group, daily life exposes them to quite homogenous contextual experiences in the sense that their activities and travels are limited to their neighborhoods or neighborhoods similar to their own.

Although there are some general themes of daily life organization within the group, each woman's personal attributes shaped her spatio-temporal situation in ways that created unique constraints and opportunities in how she organizes her daily life. Take social capital, for example. Having the support of someone who has a flexible schedule and a car can make a world of difference for a mother who is reliant on public transportation and has several bases during her day. In another example, participation in a drug recovery program can create extra bases in the participant's daily life in that she may be obligated to visit a clinic and/or support group several times a week within permitted time-windows. The amount of disposable income available to a person is an obvious constraint on that person's ability to own and maintain a car as all women in the study desire to do. In a final example, the individual's personal biography can influence how she organizes her daily life, as we saw in the case of Chesa in choosing not to relocate her children to a more convenient childcare location as a strategy for protecting her children from further instability after an extensive period of homelessness.

All women in the study expressed feeling too busy and not having enough free time. One woman said that she gets 32 hours of child care a week, but feels like she spends most of that time on the bus. When asked what they would do with more free time, the most common response was the desire for more 'me time' – more time alone without the kids to simply do nothing, to window shop, or take up art again, for example. Other participants wanted more time to exercise, or to be able to allow their children to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as a football team, and to be able to transport them to and from the activity. Many women would like more time to spend with her kids doing 'fun' activities instead of having to choose between, for example, cooking a healthy meal and reading to them. Some women would like to be able to continue their studies even as their children's base locations proliferate when they move to separate schools as they age. Several who were studying said they would like to work part-time if they had more time.

When non-car owners were asked what they would do if they had a car and could therefore travel more easily, they responded that they would like to be able to 'get away.' For one woman that meant going with her daughter to a certain duck pond in Golden Gate Park on the other side of the city that they used to frequent when they had a car. For another it was going to the beach to walk in the water. For several, it was being able to visit family out of town. The following chapter will continue with an exploration of the embodied side of mobility for this group of low-income single women. How are different modes of transportation experienced around San Francisco? Does this influence the choices participants make in trips and activity

participation? Why is it important to be able to 'get away'? What kinds of embodied experiences are had within situations in daily life? These and other questions will be explored next.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS – Embodiment on the Daily Path

On my feet, just walking in my shoes. I was just sitting there thinking, like, only I guess you know what you go through every day, where your feet go, and just what you do. And, I don't know, I'm grateful for my feet.

-Noemi, age 28, 1 child, explaining why she took this photograph of her feet.

Photograph 8: Noemi's feet

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The following chapter explores the embodied experiences of the low-income, single mothers in this study as they move along their daily paths – the walk to the bus stop in the early morning, the interaction with the clerk at the court house, the music played in the car on the way home, and so on. The aim of the chapter is to answer research sub-questions a) and b): *How is organization of daily life related to embodied exposure and experience of spatio-temporal situations for these women?* And*, how do these women negotiate in time and space with experiences of poverty?* We can recall the words of Chambers (1995): "*The realities of poor people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic. Income-poverty, though important, is only one aspect of deprivation… In addition to poverty, these include social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation*," (pg 173). The descriptive words he uses, especially social inferiority, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness and humiliation, come into being as emotions which emerge from the experiences of low-income people as they interact with the sequence of physical and social contexts in their daily lives. This interaction is always interpreted and imagined by the individual through some sort of sensory experience (sight, sound, touch, etc.), and framed by residual feelings and memories

drawn from past experiences. The concept of embodiment (see Davidson, et. al. 2005) will be utilized in this chapter to think *through* the body in understanding how these experiences of poverty come into being for this group of women in their daily lives, and how they interactively engage with these situations of poverty in order to try to change the experience in their favor or minimize undesired effects. I will focus in on how much choice this group has in being exposed to desired and undesired stimuli, and the agency expressed by the women in encouraging the most positive experience for themselves.

The daily paths and activity spaces depicted in the previous chapter gave us a sense of the quality of life experienced by these women in terms of the constrained or flexible nature of their daily life organization, given each woman's spatio-temporal situation and personal attributes. Now, we explore what it means to them to navigate these daily paths from within their bodies, experiencing a variety of activity places during the day (home, grocery store, bus stop, school, etc.), and passing through a variety of moving spaces along this path (traveling through different neighborhoods on the bus, in the car or by foot, for example). It becomes apparent that each individual's unique configuration of personal attributes, space-time situation, and embodied exposure encountered in daily life are inter-related, and that they can work together to give rise to the poverty experiences in situations of daily life.

5.2 Home as the Safe Place: *'This is where my shelter is.'*

For almost all women in the study, home is the safest, most comfortable place in day-to-day life. Home, in this case, means inside the physical structure of the apartment, house, or rented room in which the participant and her children live. This is the place where the day begins, family members leave the house and then part ways for their respective activities, and where they come back together to end the day. For the women like Patrice, Ronice and Tara who live in the group's higher income neighborhoods, home is a feeling of comfort and safety where one can relax and be with family members. Ronice and Tara, who are both in their early twenties, also extend this feeling of comfort to their mothers' houses. For Patricia, comfort is extended to the neighborhood because she grew up there and feels safe there:

> *The neighborhood. Well, more so the house. Like I said I don't really feel like there's a sense of community there. But, I feel safe and comfortable there because I grew up there.*
> -Patricia, age 45, 3 children. OMI neighborhood resident.

> *My room. And I like to visit my mom's house. That's it. Feeling safe, ya.*
> -Ronice, age 24, 1 child. Excelsior neighborhood resident.

> *Author: Any other places in your city in your day-to-day life that are comfortable and happy?*
> *Tara: Home.*
> *Author: Ya, any other places?*
> *Tara: I like home. I like to be home. I like my mommy's house. Wherever my mommy is.*
> -Tara, age 23, 1 child. South San Francisco City resident.

Photographs 9: Inside Participants' Homes, below, depicts some of these home places that

the women identify as the most comfortable and safe places in their day-to-day life. Besides Laura's bedroom (top left photo), the rooftop garden of her supportive housing program (top right photo) is one of her favorite places. It is shared with the other residents of her building but scarcely utilized by anyone but herself. It overlooks the downtown San Francisco skyline, and is filled with plants and flowers and places to sit:

> *…[M]y favorite place is the garden. 'Cause I get to relax. I get to think. My mind gets to expand. I do breathing exercises. It's my favorite place.*
> -Laura, age 43, 2 children, Tenderloin neighborhood

Laura's rooftop garden allows her to feel contained and safe from the unpleasantness of the streets of her Tenderloin neighborhood which has apparent drug sales and use and street homelessness. At the same time, the open view of the roof across the downtown San Francisco skyline gives her a feeling of expansion of her mind and relaxation from the plants and flowers around her. Her income is too low to live in a more pleasant neighborhood, so she selects from the contexts available to her. Similarly, from within the comfort her house, the sound of the rain hitting Yvonne's window is a relaxing experience (middle left photo): *I just love to hear the rain. It makes me so relaxed*. The contained and safe nature of Sharon's house allows her to let her toddler son run free in the living room while she readies herself for the day in another room (middle right photo). Jennifer is a full-time student at City College. She describes what her desk area (bottom left photo) means to her in terms of a space that facilitates her success as a student:

> *It means peace and tranquility. It means power, really. It's power 'cause – wow, that picture- I'm getting' some good information, I'm utilizin', I'm good. It's power for me. It's really powerful.*
> -Jennifer, age 40, 2 children, OMI neighborhood

Karen (age 46, 1 child) enjoys keeping her house clean and tidy (bottom right) so as to make it a place where she and her son can relax and spend time together.

Photographs 9: Inside Participants' Homes

Laura's dog on-top of her bed

Rain hitting Yvonne's window

Laura's roof-top garden

Sharon's son at play in the living room

Jennifer's empowering desk area

Karen's tidy bedroom

For the women in the study who live in the most dangerous neighborhoods of San Francisco, home not only represents a place of relative comfort, but also a place to try shelter oneself from undesirable people and other undesirable stimuli in the world 'out there.' The kinds of social interactions and potential for danger that these women anticipate in their residential neighborhoods cause them to avoid these unpleasant experiences by selecting to stay at home:

> *No, I don't be goin' nowhere. I don't be dealin' with people. Only time I leave out is when I have to. Other times I'm in my house. That's how I am. If I gotta go out there in the real world, I'll be there. But this is where my shelter is. I don't have to hear nobody mouth [speak unpleasantly]. I don't have to worry about nobody tellin' me what to do. This is me all up in here. So I don't like goin' in nobody else's house. Sittin' in they house. They atmosphere don't feel right. But you comfortable in your house and you ain't comfortable in nobody else's house. So I don't go nowhere.*
> -Tenesha, age 28, 2 children. Resident of Potrero Hill.

> Author*: Are there any other places besides San Francisco where you hang out? Like Oakland, or Berkeley…*
> Irene*: No, 'cause me, I don't really hang out. I don't go to no clubs, no nothin'. 'Cause that's*

> *where you get shot at, when you go to a club. They say, when you be in a crowd, that's when the bullets start flying. So, I don't hang out. I be in the house. […] Me, I don't' hang out. 'Cause you know, a bullet ain't got no name.*
> Author*: When you think of the city of San Francisco, what are the places where you feel safe and you feel comfortable?*
> Irene: *Where I feel safe and comfortable at? To tell the truth? In my house.*
> Author*: Anywhere else besides your house?*
> Irene: *No, just my house.*
> -Irene, age 40, 3 children. Resident of Bayview/Hunter's Point.

For some women, this feeling of needing to be at home in order to be safe becomes quite isolating and immobilizing:

> Jay*: Ya, I'm stuck! I'm stuck! […] I am! [laughing] I don't like to experience outside. That's the thing. I'm not really a social person. I don't like to experience all the way out there. I feel uncomfortable if I go out of my comfort zone. I feel very uncomfortable.*
> Author*: Can you describe what your comfort zone is?*
> Jay: *Bein' in the neighborhood. Me bein' in my comfort zone is bein' at home. I'm a home person. I don't like bein' out there. When I was younger I was out there. But now that I have him [son] I can't be out there anymore. I was crazy when I was younger. I didn't have nobody to worry about.*
> -Jay, age 36, 1 child. Excelsior resident.

For Jay, the world 'out there' represents danger. Now that she is a caregiver for her son, she views her exposure to the risks she perceives in leaving her neighborhood and house as too high for her son's well-being. For Jay, this universal feeling of fear of 'way out there' is probably very influenced by her past experiences with her family. Upon being sold into marriage by her family in Palestine they threatened her life. She fled and has been living in fear of their pursuit ever since. This particular personal attribute darkly colors how Jay feels moving around the various contexts of city. Yvonne also uses the physical containment of her project-based low-income housing unit to keep 'out there' at bay, but more because of the environment of her residential neighborhood. While she would like to leave the neighborhood, she is restricted by her income. She contrasts the suburban city of Antioch where her relatives live to her Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhood:

> *I mean like it's really different from this. Ya, it really is different. The area, everything. It's so quiet and peaceful. And I mean, wow, wow, wow, I love it! Here it's just so noisy. There's always something going on. Just close the door and let them knock. And don't answer. But yes, over there it's so quiet, so relaxing.*
> -Yvonne, age 45, 2 children. Bayview/Hunter's Point resident.

Yvonne negotiates with this 'noisy' environment by using the physical barrier of her door to reduce her unwanted exposure to the people and activity in her neighborhood. However, while she can close the door, she still listens to them knocking, and the sound intrudes the sanctuary she attempts to make in her house. Tenesha, who called her home her 'shelter', describes how this physical barrier between herself and 'out there' is constantly under threat from

penetration by bullets and the behavior of her neighbors:

> *And these bullet holes are all in these walls and stuff. I mean the other night I had to dip on the flow [run for cover] 'cause I think they shootin' in our hallway. It sounded like it was right there. And you can hear the bullets hittin' the gates [security gates on the front doors] like this, 'Ping! Ping! Ping! Ping!' And I'm yellin', 'Ya'll get down! Y'all get down!' Grabbin' my kids, 'Y'all get down!' That's why I pray every night. If they shootin' down the hill – my window right here. If they shoot this way – my window right here. If they shoot this way – my window right here! Three points of arrows just right to me. We can't duck and dive nowhere, we can't hide nowhere. In the hallway we can still get hit. We down underneath the bed.*
> *-Tenesha, age 28, 2 children*

For Tenesha, the integrity of her home as a shelter is weak; literally within the line of gun fire. When asked to imagine how it would be different if she could have her ideal home and feel safe she responded:

> *I mean, a little bit more peace for myself. I can think. I don't got to have so many worries thinkin' somebody gonna knock on my door or piss on my floor – piss in front of my house – or smoke crack in front of my hall way. Stuff like that is different. I don't got to worry about nobody knockin' on my door askin' me for nothin'. I don't' got to worry about nobody comin' to me just comin'. No. No, I'm somewhere else where we ain't got no traffic like this.*

Even when her house is not penetrated physically by bullets, she still experiences the sounds of the bullets hitting the security gate on her front door, the smell of urine and crack in the entryway to her unit, the sound of people knocking wanting something from her. For Tenesha, her home feels less like a self-contained sanctuary and more a highway for what she calls 'traffic'. So, while for most women in the study home is the safest, most comfortable place in daily life, the safety and social environment of the neighborhood can determine the extent to which the women can use the physical space of 'home' to negotiate the experience they desire at home and eliminate exposure to undesirable stimuli coming from outside. The more that women like Tenesha, Yvonne, Irene and Jay feel the need to reduce their exposure to the undesirables in the world 'out there', the more tendency they have to isolate themselves and immobilize themselves inside their home, a tactic of context selection which in turn quite constrains freedom of movement. We saw in these examples how personal attributes such as past traumatic experiences or not having enough money to live in a more pleasant neighborhood relate to encounters with embodied experiences such as feeling fear from the sound of gunfire in the neighborhood or intrusive neighbors knocking on the door. How these women try to improve their experiences in these situations, mainly by avoiding them by staying at home, means that they restrict themselves spatially, effectively self-constraining their daily paths. These tactics of negotiation in turn impact their spatio-temporal situation.

5.3 Leaving home and going 'out there'

As we saw in the previous chapter, all participants move outside of the house to reach work, school, a child's day care center, or the grocery store. Upon departing the house and beginning a trip from one base to another, the women pass through their home neighborhoods, the spaces created by the modes of transport available to them, and a variety of other dynamic contexts involved in getting from point A to point B to the activity places involved in their days. The kinds of emergent experiences that the women will have as they move through their day might be determined by who they are (past experiences, how they present to the world), the kinds of environments passed through (socially, physically, and so on), their mode of transport (car, bus, walking), the time of day and so on. We see how the way daily life is organized for the women influences the kinds of embodied experiences they have along their space-time path in daily life. This section will examine the kinds of experiences the women encounter moving through their days, the ways in which they manage boundaries of self (Hubbard 2005) between themselves and the people and things 'out there', and including the ways in which they seek to create more positive emotional experiences in daily life through tactics of negotiation.

For Mylandra and Irene, getting to work or school on-time in the morning means leaving the house while it's still dark (at least during winter months) – an authority constraint of their employers. Mylandra and Irene both live in Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhoods in low-income housing projects because they are unable to afford housing in a more desirable neighborhood – a personal attribute influencing the spatio-temporal siutation. Their neighborhoods have a high incidence of violent crime, and they both express concern about being physically attacked – a potential constraint on their mobility arising from embodied exposure to the characteristics of their neighborhood. We see how personal attributes and spatio-temporal situations of the individual can converge to place the individual in situations along their daily path that involve exposure to undesirable embodied experiences which in turn can potentially constrain the space-time path. Within these embodied experiences, both women find ways of coping with the feelings of vulnerability for the simple fact that the authority constraint of their employer and their desire to keep their jobs is more powerful. Mylandra describes leaving her house at 4 am and walking to her car:

> *Well, the car is right up the steps; it's always right in front of the house, but there's many times – there's been two killings on the steps where I stay. There's straight up been two people killed on those steps. Goin' down to they house somebody come behind them and get them. So it's kind of hard, like, hmmm, is somebody behind me? But I really don't trip off that because I know in my heart that God protects me.*
> -Mylandra, age 37, 5 children. Bayview/Hunter's Point resident.

For Mylandra, this daily experience of anxiety upon leaving her house is bare-able because of her spiritual faith. Similarly, Irene says that she does not feel fear in her morning walk to the bus stop during dark hours but does express concern about being physically attacked, an apparent contradiction produced by her emotional experience of fear and the internal rational that she employs in order to minimize this feeling of fear. She copes with this concern by

placing her confidence in what she perceives as enhanced security from the street lights and more police patrol in morning hours than at night. She also feels protected walking with her teenage son. Below she discusses how the street lights make her feel less likely to be attacked:

> Author*: What do the street lights do for you? Why do you feel more safe with the street lights?*
> Irene*: Because they on and we can see. Like if somebody tried to attack us, we can see 'em.*
> Author*: What do you think could happen to you in the morning?*
> Irene: *Anything! You can get raped, anything. […] That's the main thing you gotta watch. Somebody could hit you in the head. You wouldn't know.*
> -Irene, age 40, 3 children. Bayview/Hunter's Point resident.

Photograph 10: Irene & son walk to bus stop in morning, Bayview (shoulders visible)

Photograph 11: Yvonne's Bus Stop, Bayview Neighborhood, evening

In both of these examples, the women's experiences of fear while walking in the dark emerge through the relation of the woman inside her body to the physical world around her, an example of embodied exposure which, in this case, results in an emotional experience of fear for the woman. Aversion to being outside the house in the darkness was a common theme among the group. There is a preference to be in the house with the children before dark and especially a reluctance to be on public transportation or walk on the streets at night. Maribeth (age 37, 3 children) says before she had a car she rarely took the bus at night, trying to complete her travels before darkness: *" 'Cause I didn't want to be on the bus at night. It was dangerous. For me and for the kids. So my whole schedule had to be everything before dark."*

Chesa (age36, 2 children) does her grocery shopping at less expensive markets in the neighborhood adjacent to hers, the Mission District. What she hears about the neighborhood from the news compels her to travel in that neighborhood at night only if a friend can accompany her (see Photograph 12 below):

> *Chesa: After we finished the grocery shopping I took that picture because they said Mission is crazy street at night and not comfortable. I usually do my shopping at day-time. Not unless really an emergency. Sometimes we go at night time but I always go with Sabel.*

Author: What are you uneasy about at night-time at Mission?

Chesa: Probably because what I heard in the news most of the time. You know, gun shooting in there. Like when was that? Three months ago from 16th to 24 there's two incidents. Like every time you go there there's an officer driving around, so it feels secure a little bit but it's also kind of uneasy because of that. Something might happen and you don't know who's gonna be the next victim. So, I took that picture to show where I'm shopping and the bus route I'm taking. It's number 14 going back to 8th and Mission.

Photograph 12: Chesa's bus back home from grocery shopping at night

Darkness in this neighborhood means danger and unpredictability for Chesa, so she avoids it at night whenever possible and when not possible she draws on her social capital (a personal attribute) to help her improve the experience. Similarly, Tenesha (age 28, children) draws on social capital for rides at night and Alyssa (age 28, 2 children) avoids certain areas of the city more at night. They feel that the 'crazy' people come out at night, explaining why they restrict travel at night:

Alyssa: *The darker it gets the more I avoid places. 'Cause the freaks come out at night. [laughing]*

Author*: What kind of freaks? What do you they do? What are you nervous about?*

Alyssa*: The same thing we've been talking about about drugs and stuff. The later it gets the more freaks come out. Not like, freaky freaks, but like: Blaah! Freaks.*

Tashara*: I mean it's just… too many wierdos that come out at night and do different things, you know what I'm sayin'? You can't trust people. You can get robbed. People don't care about you and your kids. People drive crazy. Accidents happen, you feel me? And my nerves*

> *is bad. I just wanna go home. Make it home with my babies, safe, before it get dark and get us in. And if it is dark, I be gettin' a ride.*

The logic and rules of the daytime seem to disappear when darkness comes, and what was more predictable and safe during daytime becomes freakish, drug introxicated, uncaring and untrustworthy. The desirable thing is to get inside the house before darkness and stay there, constraining one's mobility in order to avoid negative embodied exposure. Yvonne expresses anxiety when she forgets something in her car at night on her Bayview subsidized housing project street:

> *Like by 8 o'clock we in, we eat, everything's done. I hate when I forget something in the car or something like that and I have to go back out. I'm like, man! 'Cause then I have somebody watch because I don't like to go out alone.*
> -Yvonne (age 45, 2 children)

Exposure to the unpredictability of the streets and public spaces like the bus at night is a fearful experience for this group of women. Whether or not a woman experiences embodied exposure to these fearful night-time situations depends on her personal attributes and spatio-temporal situation, like the financial means to live in a 'safe' neighborhood, ownership of a car or social capital that provides access to a car, or an authority constraint from an employer who requires an early or late start/end times which in turn necessitate traveling to or from the house before day-break. For those women without access to a car, their most frequent tactic of negotiation is to avoid night-time travel outside the house whenever possible, self-constraining their path during dark hours.

These contexts during the day can also be subject to intensive exposure for the traveler. For example, when the traveler arrives at the bus stop alongside a street or in the center division of a street she must stay stationary lest the bus arrive while she is not there. So, waiting at the bus stop means placing ones' self within a context which is exposed to a flow of potential interactions with the people and cars moving along the street. Physically removing ones' self from the interaction is not an option unless you are willing to risk missing the bus. Being exposed to these kinds of situations in travel is again determined by the interaction between the individual's personal attributes and their particular space-time constraints. In this case, a lack of income necessitates travel on public transportation and residence in a neighborhood these women perceive as dangerous and undesirable. Tenesha provides a good example of how waiting for the bus exposes her to other people and behaviors which she finds disturbing. She describes waiting for the bus on Third Street in the Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhood en route to her remedial High School class:

> *I feel uncomfortable because it be too much goin' on down Third way period. Nigga's [men] rollin' up on you [talking to you from their car], drama all the time, people talkin' to theyself. Nigga's like tryin' to get at you, they see somebody they want to get with, they tryin' to talk to you. If you don't want to, 'Well, fuck you then, bitch.' Just totally disrespectful.*
> *-Tenesha, age 28, 2 children. Potrero Hill resident.*

Photograph 13: Tenesha's 3rd Street bus stop, morning

Tenesha's ability to manage her boundaries of self is compromised by the bus stop because of how this context limits her ability to discourage interaction with those around her in a socially aggressive environment. Ignoring the man in the car who is hitting on her and trying to engage with her is the only tactic available to her. However, her refusal to interact elicits a verbal reaction from the man which Tenesha experiences as *just totally disrespectful*. So, Tenesha's experience waiting for the bus on her way to a class entails feelings of vulnerability to those who wish to invade her personal space and feeling disrespected.

For bus riders like Tenesha, exposure to undesired stimuli does not stop once the traveler has connected to the bus from her home. Generally, riding the bus for this group of women is experienced as an extended exposure to other people's bodies, disease, unpleasant odors, unpleasant behavior and potential physical danger. For example, Whitnee (age 46, 2 children), a regular bus rider, describes people smelling *funky* on the bus and arguing and using drugs. Tara (age 23, 1 child), who uses a car her parents bought for her, describes the kinds of experiences she avoids by not taking the bus:

> *I don't know, it's just really rowdy and a lot of noise. Lots of people. It's very crowded and they're very rude. Bumping into you. And they have all their bags. And I don't want their bags touching me. You know, they come from the market and they have their little fish or their food. […] No I don't like the bus, I hate the bus. I can't do this.*
> -Tara, age 23, 1 child

Because Tara's parents are able to supply her with a car – an example of social capital interplaying with the spatio-temporal situation - she is able to negotiate her experience by taking the car and not the bus, thereby avoiding the unpleasant exposure to people, smells, and so on. Patricia (age 45, 3 children) described an incident on the bus when a woman was *coughing and haukin'* and spit on the floor of the bus. For Patricia, this was *the nastiest thing in creation*. These women describe the bus as a place where their bodies and those of the passengers around them come into such close proximity that the boundaries of the bodied self (Davidson 2000) are blurred in unpleasant ways. Exposure to body odor, the smell of fish in someone's market bag, people's bodies and extensions of body (such as a bag) touch the women and make them feel invaded and uncomfortable.

Exposure to other passengers' speech and gestures can also be disturbing. Tenesha illustrates how traveling on the bus can entail very intense social stimuli for her, going so far as to list the bus lines which she finds unpleasant to ride:

> *Tenesha: What buses you sayin' that is? Ok, I'm gonna say the 19, the 53, the 9, the 14, the 22, the 33, you can keep on goin' girl!*
> *Author: What about them?*
> *Tenesha: They all ghetto.*
> *Author: So, why? How? What does that mean?*
> *Tenesha: Because the ghetto get on the bus. Bums. They talk too much. They disrespectful, they talk about people. If the guys stinks, let him stink. You don't have to tell the whole bus and have him feel like shit. I mean come on, that's wrong.*
> -Tenesha, age 28, 2 children. Potrero Hill resident.

Photograph 14: Tenesha's list of 'ghetto' bus lines

Tenesha goes on to describe an incident where two young men got on the bus and pretended to have guns, scaring the other passengers. The possibility that they would have guns was very real to her, and she was afraid they *was gonna come out sprayin' on each other.* Every time Tenesha departs on a trip she anticipates exposure to these kinds of behaviors and interactions from other people. These experiences become part of her personal attributes which in turn influence how she imagines future events. Her way of altering her experience in these contexts is to listen to her iPod from the time she leaves her house until she reaches her destination. In doing so, she creates a 'smooth ride' for herself on the bus:

> *I have an iPod on, see? When I'm on the bus and stuff I got my iPod on. 'Cause I don't got to hear nobody talkin' and they bullshit, talkin' on the phone like they ain't got no sense and shit. Or somebody get on the bus and they just got out of jail, or they fit to go hussle [drug dealing], what bitch they knocked, or – it's just a relief. And just relax. And have a smooth ride all the way where I need to go without me hearin' anything but my music.*
> -Tenesha, age 28, 2 children. Potrero Hill resident.

Tenesha negotiates with almost intolerable exposure to upsetting behavior and dialogue of the people on the bus by self-selectively blocking hearing reception and simultaneously customizing the audible stimulation she receives in the form of her own music. At the same time, by wearing earphones in her ears, she is sending out visual signals to those around her that she does not wish to interact. This is an example of how these women sometimes make conscious moves inwardly in response to unwanted stimuli, creating a sort of cocoon for themselves in unpleasant environments.

Jay provides another example of how some women modify their sensory reception as a way of negotiating with the feelings of discomfort experienced in the daily route between home and

other bases. As with Tenesha, Jay wears ear phones and listens to her own music. This helps her to relax when she is waiting at the bus and feeling anxious about getting to work on-time. However, she wears only one earphone, leaving the other ear open to receiving any messages about suspicious people around her:

> *Jay: I always have one piece in my ear. The other one I have to keep aware of who's around me. So that's the first thing I do when I leave from the house. I always have one piece of the earphone in my ear listenin' to my music.*
> *Author: What do you mean by keep aware of who's around you?*
> *Jay: I'm always watchin' my back. I'm always watchin' who's around me, who's in front of me. Who's actin' weird, who's actin' suspicious. Like I said, it' just me, it's just me for what I went through in my life so I'm always suspicious of everybody.*
> *Author: What kinds of things are you looking for that would tip you off? I mean be a red flag for you?*
> *Jay: People standin' around me and actin' weird and they'll keep lookin' at me. Or putting their hands in their pockets. That kind of stuff. That kind of stuff.*
> -Jay, age 36, 1 child. Resident of Exelsior neighborhood.

This heightened awareness of her surroundings is a *24/7* state for Jay upon leaving her house, and even though she feels compelled to monitor her surroundings, she self-diagnoses herself as *paranoid*:

> *You get used it. I'm, I'm used to it by now. You know, it's just a habit now. You know, that's it. It's just a habit for me. Like, I'm always looking, that's it. Even when I'm on the bus. I know who' sitting in front of me, in back of me, on the side of me, who's standin' in front of me. You know, it's just me bein' paranoid. That's exactly what it is. It's paranoia.*
> -Jay, age 36, 1 child. Resident of Exelsior neighborhood.

Jay listens to music in one ear while monitoring externally for danger with the other ear. She also influences her emotional experience outside of the house with what she wears. She wears a large, puffy black jacket at all times and in all kinds of weather whenever outside of her house. She calls this jacket her *blankie*. It provides her with a physical feeling of large, comforting envelopment against her fears in the 'outside world', and she thinks it also sends out a message of inapproachability to those around her. Her coworkers thought she looked like a drug-dealer when she first started her current job because of the jacket, and her boss has asked her not to wear it at work. She also says that bus drivers have told her she looks *mean* in her black jacket.

> *I'm always wearin' black, you know. […] And I will not change the color of my jacket. I will not change how big it is. It's like my blankie, you know? And even when it's hot outside I still take it with me 'cause that's like my blankie. I'll take it off during the day but I'm gonna put it on by the time I leave at work. That's like they say, it's my blankie. It's my security. […] It's like I've been wearin' it for years and I don't want to change. I don't want to change to something new. Even though one of my co-workers bought me a brand new jacket. It's black, but it's not puffy like the one I wear.*
> -Jay, age 36, 1 child. Resident of Excelsior neighborhood.

Clearly, the qualities of the jacket (color, size, puffiness and so on) are important to Jay. In addition to the physical sensation of comfort produced by the jacket, the black color and puffiness of the jacket create what could also be interpreted as an amorphous, urban camaflouge. As a woman, disguising the shape of her body could be an attractive option for discouraging comments or looks from men. And at the same time, wearing a jacket that is associated with drug dealing or other criminal activity gives Jay the illusion of toughness as she moves through her day and therefore discourages engagement by those around her. So, her past traumatic experience with her family (a personal attribute) influences how she emotionally experiences embodied exposure outside of the house, and in turn, she modifies her her physical appearance (a personal attribute) in the course of negotiating with these feelings.

Lastly in this section, we will explore embodied exposure to the more physically demanding aspects of traveling by bus; an unattractive element of public transportation for the women. We recall from the spatio-temporal analysis of daily life organization that reliance by public transport is one of the heaviest space-time constraints on the group. In addition to the slowness, limitation in route choice and so on, travel by bus can also be physically straining – a physical experience which is felt emotionally by frustration, invasion of personal space, and embarrassment. Transporting young children to their bases in combination with women's other schedule demands was also found to be a quite constraining aspect of the spatio-temporal organization of the group. These two factors – public transport and having young children – are not only constraining in space-time terms, but also produce unpleasant embodied experiences when coming together on the situational level, as many of the women described how difficult it is to travel by bus with young children. Alyssa, who has a one-year-old son, avoids taking the bus whenever possible with her son because of how physically difficult it is to carry him and his large stroller onto the bus and navigate through the bus to a seat, as well as how much interaction this process demands of her with the other passengers on the bus. The experience is so meaningful for her she wrote an essay on it for her community college course. She feels she invades the other passengers' personal space as she has to ask them to move and even hold her child while she makes her way with the large stroller to the back of the bus to sit down. Her stroller is particularly wide and hard to maneuver, and she characterizes it as a 'stiff person' who she has to move. Below Alyssa describes the experience as she wrote in her essay:

> Alyssa: *I have a really big, deep stroller. A Jeep stroller. It's made by Jeep. It's like an almost $400 stroller that his godmother got me. And it's like this long, about that wide [gestures with hands]. It plays music. Has 16 inch tires. It's really big. And it doesn't have swivel front tires, so I have to lean it back to move it from side to side. It's kind of like a stiff person that I'm moving, trying to get to move. So the norm that I'm breaking is invading people's space – personal space- on a regular basis when I'm getting on the bus. Not only that but it takes me a while to get situated. I have to set him down. If the bus is crowded I will ask people to hold my baby so I can fold up the stroller. […]*
> *The normal way is that I announce things first, 'I'm coming through!' And if they don't believe me right away – like sometimes they'll just do this [pulls feet towards chair] - but I'm like, 'I'm <u>not</u> gonna be able to get through here, and I gotta get this stroller to the back of*

> *the bus!' So I'll pull but they'll be like, ugh, and they'll try to squeeze their legs up. I just kind of guide them through it. And they're ok with it.*
>
> Author*: That sounds like a huge theater event on the bus.*
>
> Alyssa*: Totally, everybody gets involved with me and him.*
> -Alyssa, age 28, 1 child

Alyssa's stroller becomes a physical extension of her own body, making the space a person would normally occupy on the bus not big enough for her and her son. This demands that she interact with the passengers on the bus in order to try to persuade them to grant her more space (see *Photograph 15: Other passengers on the bus* below). She feels invasive and invaded at the same time, as everybody gets involved with her and her son on the bus whether she desires that interaction or not. Maribeth also describes the physical strength and coordination necessary to get herself, her two young children and toddler son on the bus before she had a car:

> Maribeth*: I had a stroller and it's not very stroller friendly. When Matthew was little he had a stroller and I'd need the stroller when I go places. And if the bus is really crowded you have to pull the stroller up. So if he's asleep I have to take him out and hold him. Get Annabel and Ryan on the bus. Make sure we all stay together and we all find a seat.*
>
> Author*: So, you're holding him in one arm and dragging up the stroller?*
>
> Maribeth*: Mm, hm. And if there's no seats, ok... there's a lot of people who will give up their seats for you. And if someone did I'd rather have the two of the kids sit down on one to keep them close. And they can hold onto the stroller and I have Matthew. Or if Matthew's awake I have the two youngest sit down.*
> -Maribeth, age 37, 3 children

Photograph 15: Other passengers on the bus

Maribeth and Alyssa both describe an embodied experience of strain and physical effort in getting themselves, their children, and a stroller on the bus. They also describe how the relation between their bodies and the extensions of their bodies (their stroller and children) with the other people in the bus make it necessary for the women to ask for space on the bus, engaging in interaction with strangers. Maribeth also describes how waiting for the bus with her children at an island bus stop with lanes of car traffic on either side exposes her children to potential physical harm from passing cars:

> *Maribeth: When the bus stop was on the island and the kids were there I didn't like it 'cause you're on an island and cars are there and there's just one little rail. The kids would want to jump on the rail or they didn't want to stand in one place or if there were lots of people trying to get on the bus they could step off the curb and get hit by a bus. Ya, it's not safe, it's small. It's dangerous because people who are trying to get on the bus, they know it's crowded. They'll push and they'll shove.*
>
> *Author: And you're worried about the kids?*
>
> *Maribeth: Ya, so we end up having to take the next bus so it takes longer.*
> -Maribeth, age 37, 3 children

The dynamism of this bus stop context and how it relates corporeally to Maribeth and, by extension, her children, is palpable: buses pulling up and driving off, cars passing in opposite directions on either side of the island, her children playing on the rails protecting them from oncoming traffic, passengers spilling out of the crowded bus and pushing waiting passengers to the edge of the island towards oncoming traffic. Clearly, this embodied experience of the dangerous and almost chaotic flows of cars and people in relation to the bodies of her children – extensions of her own body – produce a very anxious experience for Maribeth. So anxious

that she is willing to delay her trip and take the next, less crowded, bus, altering her space-time path and spending more of her temporal budget for the day on travel.

Riding the bus also means that the weight of personal items such as bags of books or groceries must be carried on the body instead of relieving oneself of these items in the trunk or back seat of a car while traveling. Like experiences of traveling with small children, the experiences of transporting bags on the bus demonstrates how public transport is not only spatio-temporally constraining, but also produces situations of negative embodied experiences. Patricia (below) describes the weight of paper grocery bags when she travels from the grocery store to home by bus, as the bags rip and become awkward to handle. Doing this task by bus also means she has to go at a time when there will be less people on the bus so that there is room for herself and her bags. When her children were younger she took a taxi to the grocery store for this reason. Yvonne also describes the awkwardness of the grocery bags, and she also feels the presence of the other passengers, but this time because she feels embarrassed by inconveniencing them in making them wait for her to get on the bus with all her bags:

> *[T]he paper rips, and there's people, you know. You got to pick out a good time to go when there's not a ton of people. You know what, I mean when my kids were younger I caught cabs to grocery shop. Can't do it.*
> -Patricia, age 45, 3 children

> *Yvonne: When you don't have a car and you go grocery shoppin' and you're strugglin' with the bags on the bus. Oh, it's so embarrassing! And then the bus driver – you have to have him wait for you. And everybody else is on the bus and you're trying to grab your stuff and get on the bus and they're lookin' at you. The bus is on you. Man! There you go again, everybody's lookin' at you like, 'I wish you'd hurry up!' Ya, I don't like that.*
> -Yvonne, age 45, 2 children

Yvonne's expresses embarrassment from being a spectacle for the bus driver and passengers as they watch her and wait for her to struggle with her bags and get on the bus, producing a feeling that *the bus is on you*. In addition to the physical strain of carrying bags and the scarcity of space that can be occupied by bodies and other items on the bus, the public environment of the bus means that it also creates situations of spectacle as we also saw in the example of Alyssa's 'stiff person' stroller. Several other women also reported using a taxi to go grocery shopping when their children were younger, as the physical strain of carrying groceries and guiding the bodies of their children is too much to handle, especially within a crowded bus:

> *When I didn't have a car I tried to do all the grocery shopping at once so I'd only take a cab once. It's expensive. I can't carry all those things by myself. I can carry a couple bags, but not lugging it around and stuff.*
> -Maribeth, age 37, 3 children

Photograph16: Items carried on the bus – groceries and book bags

Public transport travel for this group goes beyond being spatio-temporally constraining, to entailing exposure to potential threats and undesired interaction from strangers on the street and on the bus, physical strain and awkwardness of transporting bags, strollers and children on the bus, as well as exposure to the elements and topography of the walking terrain. It can involve experiences of invasion of personal space due to the proximity of other people's bodies. It can involve feeling invasive when having to occupy more than a single body's space on the bus because of extensions of the body such as a stroller or children. And it can involve feeling like a spectacle within the public sphere of the bus. The women negotiate with these embodied experiences of the bus by avoiding the context whenever possible, selecting less crowded times of day to travel, wearing clothing that makes them feel comfortable and discourages interaction from others, listening to music from headphones in order to block out the context and discourage interaction and comfort one's self with positive associations with the music, and interacting with other passengers in order to negotiate more space and assert the right to be on the bus.

5.4 The Car: Mobility, comfort, protection and status

The women in the study – whether they were car owners or not - were extremely enthusiastic about car travel, and all women without a car desire to own one. To these women, a car represents the possibility of moving around quickly, freely and independently between bases with bags, strollers and children, affords more choice in where they go, shields them from the undesirable exposure to stimuli on the bus and on the streets when connecting to the bus (as discussed above), is a symbol of social status, and provides the possibility of 'escape' from the

stress and mundanity of daily life. Laura and Irene, neither car-owners, reflect on the practical side of traveling by car because it is faster and provides protection:

> *[Stutters] Girl! The bus stop at every damn bus stop. The car, you just keep on rollin'. Plus there's always a fight on the bus. And you don't have to deal with the snobby attitudes of the bus drivers they be havin' some freakin' attitude. They really do. Talk about the wrong side of the bed, they woke up on the wrong side of the house! And there's no safety either. It's not safe.*
> -Laura (age 43, 2 children)

> Author*: If you had a car, how do you think that would change your life?*
>
> *Irene: Oh, it'd change a lot. 'Cause I have a car then I'd be able to travel. I can go to each grocery store. And then I won't have to rush. I can take my time.*
>
> Author*: Why do you have to rush when you don't have a car?*
>
> *Irene: 'Cause it be dark, and I ain't tryin' to carry all them bags.*
>
> Author: *What about the darkness?*
>
> *Irene: 'Cause over there where I stay at, that's really a bad neighborhood. For real. It really is a bad neighborhood.*
> -Irene (age 40, 3 children)

Photograph 17: Nightime view from the protection of Ronice's car*

**Note the photographs of her children near the stearing wheel, personalizing the space.*

For Alyssa (age 28, 1 child), her son's father's willingness to give her car rides to her methadone dosing appointments in the Tenderloin neighborhood where she used to use drugs and work as a prostitute is a matter of survival for her recovery process. She describes quite vividly how the embodied experience of the internal flows of being on those streets triggers her impulses as an addict, her body responding *'instantantaneously'* to what she receives from the context through her senses:

> *I don't want to see people smoking crack when I'm walking down the street. Mostly I don't want to hear the calls of people who are saying that they got it: "What's up? It's right here. I got you. What you need?" All that shit. I don't want to hear that because that is going to ring really loud in my head whether I have urges to use or not. It's gonna ring really loud, really familiar because that's what I used to run towards. So, I'm still trying to break the sort of automatic habits that I've grown accustomed to as a drug addict – those things that happen instantaneously, my body responding to what I hear, and familiar people who are gonna be like, "What's up? I got one for you." I want to avoid that.*

The car is faster, more direct, avoids the undesired exposure on the bus and streets, permits choice in shopping at the best store instead of the closest, and affords more travel hours during the day because the women feel safer in a car than on foot or bus when traveling in unsafe neighborhoods. The car also provides a contained, personalized and familiar environment:

> Author: *And then what's it like being inside your own car?*
>
> Sharon: *It's comfortable. It's me and mine. I can listen to the music I want to listen to. I don't got to worry about nobody coughin' on me and my kids' neck or our backs or whatever the case may be -like all in my face. None of that. It's just me and my two kids.*
> -Sharon (age 26, 2 children)

Photograph 18: Selecting Music in the Car

Photograph 19: Eating an apple in the contained & sanitary environment of the car

Sharon even goes so far as to have tinted windows in her car. Although illegal (and sometimes attracting the attention of the police), it allows her to see outside of her controlled environment without others seeing in. It also makes her feel more comfortable riding in the car with her boyfriend who is in a gang, as certain areas where she travels in the city are in rival gang territory.

By association, cars make the women feel '*not so low-income*' as Maribeth put it (age 37, 3 children), saying, *'It makes me feel a lot better.'* They feel more successful and responsible and can move around independently. When the women without cars find themselves in a situation where their 'car-lessness' becomes apparent, they feel inferior by comparison. Alyssa describes how she felt waiting outside her college class for the father of her son to pick her up in his car. She is taking an evening Spanish class and describes the other students as professionals who come to class in nice clothes to learn Spanish as a hobby or for professional enhancement. In contrast she sees herself as a recovering drug addict who is going back to school as a way out of poverty for herself and her son:

> Author*: So what does the car mean to you in terms of adding to that whole picture of how you feel in comparison to these other students?*
>
> Alyssa: *I'm having a hard time putting words to it but it's like they walk out to their cars and 'beep, beep,' [mimics sound of disarming alarm system in car]. Or some of them, their style is their art portfolio and their bicycle. That's their style. That's their thing. So it's not really even about the cars, it's about something… I'm not sure. Well, I don't have a problem if he's coming [son's father] – I guess this is good to analyze this. If he's coming and he's there – he knows I normally get out at 9 o'clock. But I got out at 8:45 and he was still all the way across town near Ocean. So I was going to be standing out there for about 20 minutes. And that was the difference: me standing out there waiting while everyone else is passing towards their destination and me waiting, depending on somebody else.*

-Alyssa (age 28, 1 child)

Within this everyday situation of Alyssa's path, her feeling of inferiority and dependence arises from seeing her more wealthy and mobile classmates move with speed and self-determination, seeing the 'style' of the art portfolio bicycle rider, and hearing the 'beep, beep' of the car alarm. This sound is the customized response of the car to its owner, signifying the command the car owner has over his or her transportation. In contrast, Alyssa is standing stationary, dependent, and without the luxury of selecting her 'style' of transport. Within this situation, her feeling of comparative inferiority was so intolerable that she left – walking for 20 minutes in the direction of home to be picked up along the way by her son's father, rather than be seen standing outside the class. When asked why the car is so important in how she sees herself, she responded:

> *Well, I think that has developed a feeling that I'm associating with having something more than I have.*
> *And then I have to think, well what do I want right now? What I want is stability. I'm not ashamed or afraid to say – I'd stand up and tell my whole class in a composition that I'm writing in Spanish right now that I'm living in a transitional house right now and trying to make my way to the top. I'm totally ok with that.*
> *But, me wanting to make what I have right now more than it really is because it feels better. Something to be proud of. Me standing there waiting on somebody else to give me a ride because I haven't figured out my own mode of transportation is not something I'm proud of. Just standing there with no purpose and no direction.*
> -Alyssa (age 28, 1 child)

Talking more with Alyssa reveals she has plenty of 'purpose and direction' in life, as she expresses committed determination to improve her life and that of her son through obtaining a college degree. However, this situation of public 'car-lessness' makes her feel like she appears to be a less directed and responsible person than those around her. Possessing a car means much more than convenient, comfortable and safe transportation. It says something about the *kind* of person you are, and the extent of what a car says to Alyssa is quite meaningful:

> *If I had a car it would totally be personalized. It would be my car. My first car, first of all, and it would say something about me. I would have a car seat in the back seat. And I would have something, something substantial that I was living for. It's not the material item of having a car. It's what having a car says about you: I'm busy, I have things to do, I can take care of myself, I'm on-time, I depend on less people in my day to get from point A to point B. And if I'm maintaining a car that means I'm responsible because if the tickets get too much you're not – people who maintain cars are responsible people. They have to be otherwise it doesn't last long.*

The kind of transportation a person uses is a symbolic differnetiator of social status for this group of women. Maribeth (age 37, 3 children) rode the bus until she had enough money to buy a car in the past year. She identifies a typology of the kind of people that ride on the bus:

> Maribeth*: Ya, well for me there are two people on the bus. […] I see people that are like environmentally concerned. The other ones 'cause they don't have a car. They can't afford a car. 'Cause I'm sure they wouldn't be on the bus if they could have a car. Especially, like, God – 'cause I have a lot of kids myself – you actually see families going on the bus. And I just feel like I'm grateful I have a car. It is not easy. It is not easy riding the bus with your kids. It's not.*
>
> *Author: So you think there's kind of a stereotype that people know about on the bus that there are two kinds of people? There are people that they have money but they choose it as some sort of ethical, environmental thing?*
>
> *Maribeth: Ya, 'cause you see them in their business suit.*
>
> *Author: And there's people who just can't afford not to be there.*
>
> *Maribeth: Ya, or they ride the bus 'cause they don't have no place to go. 'Cause when I was homeless, that's what I used to do.*

Photograph 20 below illustrates the two 'kinds' of people that Maribeth speaks of on the bus. The older White man with the bicycle helmet and professional shirt sits on the same bench as a young Black boy in a sweatshirt carrying a back pack. While of course it is not possible to know their backgrounds, the visual messeges they send out are interpretted by Maribeth in this way. The professional shirt signifies education and wealth, while the visible bicycle helmet tells everyone around him that the bus ride is part of an environmentally conscious commute on his bicycle – a choice. The hooded boy rides the bus instead of being driven to school by parents, presumably because they do not have a car – a necessity. The racial appearance of the passengers contributes to the assumptions of their social status given the higher prevalence of poverty among African Americans in San Francisco (and the U.S. in general).

Photograph 20: Maribeth's 'two kinds' of people on the bus

In a final observation on the issue of cars within this group, cars also represent opportunities for trying to create especially positive experiences in daily life through context selection, providing examples of "*…instances where individuals move self consciously in an effort to work up on their emotions,*" (Conradson 2005). Yvonne takes her car sometimes to the beach on the other side of the city: "*Just go and get away and go outside, like at the beach. The San Francisco Beach. Ocean Beach. Oh, I love the beach. […] I like to get in it. And just let the waves hit me. I just like the ocean.*" She seeks this context because it provides the therapeutic sensation of the waves hitting her body, giving herself positive emotional experiences through her body's sensory reception of the context. In another brief example, Irene will sometimes walk from her Bayview house to the San Francisco Bay shore: "*I'd go out and go sit by the water. Just to get away. Get a peace of mind.*" Viewing the expansiveness of the water helps her feel peaceful within the routine of daily life, but it is only accessible to her during daytime because she does not feel safe walking at night and does not have a car. Other examples of 'getting away' were given by the women, traveling in a friend's car to a casino in a neighboring city, or driving half the distance to Los Vegas and then renting a fancy car in order to play out a fantasy of a more luxurious lifestyle in Los Vegas for the weekend.

The ability to seek escape from daily life in this way is limited by transportation options on the one hand, but also by the knowledge of 'what is out there' and where to go. Some women had very little geographic knowledge of the city of San Francisco beyond their own neighborhood and neighborhoods like their own. These women in the study tended to live in the lowest income neighborhoods. Tenesha (age 28, 2 children), for example, has lived her entire life in the Potrero Hill subsidized housing project, and two generations before her also live there. She has very little employment history, and her daily activities for her children and her remedial high school class take her only to the neighboring and similar Bayview neighborhood. She describes going to the San Francisco wharf with her kids for their birthdays, but besides that does not

have any ideas about where she would like to go more often if she had a car: *"'Cause I never really did too much to know where to go, you know what I'm sayin'?"*

5.5 Situations of Judgment and Inferiority

As Alyssa described in her situation of waiting outside the evening Spanish class for her son's father to pick her up in his car, emotions of inferiority arose for her because of her embodied experience of the comparative wealth of her classmates: the 'beep, beep' of the car alarm, the visual presentation of the stylish art portfolio toting bicycle rider. Similarly, Marbeth's visual assessment of the other bus passengers means that she was also aware of how she appeared to others as someone who rides the bus out of necessity. All women in the study described situations that they encounter in daily life where their embodied experiences of the context make them feel comparatively inferior or judged as inferior by others. Noemi (age 28, 1 child) describes how the downtown shopping district of San Francisco makes her feel 'out of place' because of the people she sees there and the way she thinks they see her:

> *I mean, recently I've never gone to a place where – well if I go to Saks Fifth Avenue I'll feel out of place. Of course! Cause I don't have no money. I mean that place Saks Fifth Avenue, places that rich people - or Union Square - sometimes I feel out of place. People have money, the type of people that go there. Like I just wish – sometimes I think things would be so much easier if I had money. That's what I sometimes think. If I could just go into the store and buy anything I wanted. […]*
> *I guess I feel like I don't belong there. I guess, people with money, they're well taken care of. They do their hair, they do their nails, they dress nice. I don't do my hair, I don't do my nails. And I guess you can tell when somebody doesn't do their nails and their hair every day, you know. They look polished. And I feel like I don't look polished every day. I can if I want to, I can be polished a day. But I probably look all fatigued and probably I look different. I probably feel different too because I know I don't have no money. My weight even will probably play into it because I feel like these clothes don't even fit me. Or like everybody in here is skinny as fuck. Or 'cause I do my make-up the way I do my make-up because I still have like a Chola-ish make-up look. […] And I think people know and notice, like, that I was in a gang before. And I'm Latina so people probably assume, 'Oh, she's like a Chola.' Or, 'Oh she's a gang banger,' you know? So they would be intimidated by that. Or, I might even be you know serious, and they're like 'Oh my god she's mean muggin',' and I'm not even. Or I'm just havin' a bad day. […] Like it's a different kind of people. Like there's hardly any Latinos out there, nobody that I can really relate to.*
>
> Author: *So do you kind of tend to avoid those kinds of places in the city?*
>
> Noemi: *It's not that I avoid them. It's just that I don't really have no business over there.*

Noemi's proximity to the 'polished' bodies of the people in the downtown shopping center triggers a whole set of thoughts and feelings in her about how she thinks they perceive her. She feels like she looks like she has no money, looks overweight, is assumed to be a gang member and that she may even appear mean and intimidating to some people in these contexts. Her body – the clothing, the size, the make-up, the ethnic appearance – becomes extremely important to how she feels in relation to what she sees around her. And these feelings – of

appearing poor, overweight, 'unpolished', a criminal, an ethnic minority – make her feel out of place, perhaps contributing to her feeling of having 'no business over there'. She extends these feelings to other high-end shopping areas and wealthier neighborhoods in San Francisco. For Maribeth (age 37, 3 children), feeling unwanted or out of place in a context also has to do with how the people around her interact with her. She also gave the example of feelings she has in the San Francisco downtown shopping center:

> *Well, they weren't asking me if I need help. They asked everyone else like if they needed a shoe size or something like that. They didn't ask me. […] They're ignoring me, making me feel less than. Like I don't have any money to buy shoes or anything. Like I'm just here to browse.*

She feels the store employees judge her based on her personal attributes - the way she dresses and looks - feeling that the other shoppers are well-dressed and she is dressed like she '*has no money*.' She also feels that being Asian contributes to the discrimination of the store employees, and she notices that they are White and well-dressed. The behavior of her children also makes her stand out:

> *They're thinking [the store employees] – my kids are excited 'cause they never see all these beautiful things and stuff. And they want to touch everything. And I'm like 'Don't touch anything!' And they can see that. They're probably thinking, oh, she's poor and ghetto.[…] I don't like going to those places. We wanted to see Bloomingdales 'cause it was brand new. You know? But I'm not gonna go back there again 'cause I can't afford anything in there. And just looking around they think that I'm gonna… I have a feeling they think we're shop-lifting. Like we're being watched.*

Like Noemi, Maribeth feels disrespected, judged as inferior and even suspected of being a criminal. Maribeth also reflects on how she anticipates being uncomfortable in certain contexts. She gives the example of walking in the Financial District where *'everyone's in business suits'* and she feels they ignore her and judge her as a single mother and think '*Look how many kids she has!*' Before going to these places she already has a feeling that she does not belong there:

> *You can feel sometimes- you just have that feeling. It's a feeling. It's just like you know you don't belong here already. And you don't feel that much, like – no one ever smiles at you! […] If I saw some person with like four kids and they're acting up I would empathize with her 'cause she probably does it by herself and probably she's been doin' a lot in life. But you know what? I make those judgments too. Like if I go to nice places I already make a judgment that they're judging me.*

Maribeth negotiates with these embodied experiences of judgment and inferiority by avoiding the places where she thinks they may take place. When asked which places she tries to avoid she responds, "*I don't really venture out into other neighborhoods that much."* By 'other' neighborhoods she means neighborhoods with wealthier residents such as the Marina District and Pacific Heights, both quite close to her Western Addition neighborhood but much more expensive places to live. The South of Market location of her children's school is part of the financial center of the city:

> *Maribeth: I don't venture out into other neighborhoods where I don't feel comfortable. I mean the only reason why I go to South of Market is because my kids go there. Or the only reason why I go over here to the Marina is because my son goes to school there. I would feel comfortable grocery shopping in my neighborhood 'cause I know the people around me. I wouldn't go to Pacific Heights if they had a big sale on apples or something.*
>
> *Author: You wouldn't?*
>
> *Maribeth: No! […] Say, for example, Pacific Heights is having a grand opening. First one hundred people get free whatever. I wouldn't even go there because of the feeling I get like I'm out of place. That I don't belong there. I wouldn't. Unless… No.*

She included several other high-income neighborhoods in her list of places to avoid, including North Beach, Nob Hill, Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, and St. Francis Wood. She describes St. Francis Wood as a '*gated community*,' clarifying that there are no actual gates around the neighborhood, but that it is has '*really big mansions*,' and therefore feels out of bounds. Maribeth avoids the high-end shopping center and the wealthy neighborhoods even if they have opportunities, as in the simple example on the apples for sale. Her personal attributes of racial appearance, clothing and hair contribute to an embodied experience of inferiority in relation to other people in these places, and in order to avoid these experiences she self-imposes a constraint on her space-time path around these places.

In a final example of embodied feelings of judgment and inferiority along the daily path, Patricia (age 45, 3 children) describes these feelings of judgment that she often encounters in situations of daily life. Patricia is African American and has a couple of front teeth missing. She worked in the community mental health field for 13 years, working her way from case manager to program director. Substance abuse and mental health problems caused her to lose her job, her marriage and her house. She is now going back to school at the community college as a first step back into the work force. She tries to articulate exactly what happens in the interactions between herself and the other people in the context, with them first judging her based on her visually apparent personal attributes, and how she negotiates with the situation based on the invisible personal attribute of her past professional experience and high income:

> Patricia*: I get that a lot and it really doesn't matter what area I'm in, really. It's like you said, it's about the color of my skin. And unfortunately because I've got these teeth missing, an added element of that kind of 'you don't belong here'. But I carry inside of me this feeling, this thought, this belief that I belong anywhere I go. You know, and I've had the 1,000 dollar bags, and I've had the home, the nice cars and all that and so it can be disconcerting. And most of the time I'm just aware of it so I can stare it in the face and say 'whatever'. I'm here. I'm taking up your space whether you like it or not.*

Clearly feeling like one is being denied the right to 'take up space' is part of these experiences of inferiority. For Patricia the experience is 'disconcerting' because she feels judged by people who have the same material wealth (designer bags, house, cars) that she had before her addiction. She feels that some people she encounters interpret her visual appearance – race, missing

teeth, older clothing – as signifiers of lower social status. She makes eye-contact in those situations in order to assert herself:

> Patricia*: Ya. And I notice they get uncomfortable when I do that. I just look at them. And I notice that that something will change or kind of… it really is subtle and it's invisible until you know it. Like, someone who hasn't had that experience wouldn't understand that I can just look at them and then we're ok. Or, the other thing that happens for me is that I start to talk and then that changes people's perspective. 'Cause I think that people have a preconceived idea, a prejudice about who they think I am.*
>
> Author*: Can you just name that? Just be blunt. Who do you think they think you are before you make the eye contact?*
>
> Patricia*: Some probably ghetto, ignorant Black person. That's what I feel. And then I open my mouth and I start talkin' and then there's a change. I mean I can't tell you how many times people look at me and say 'Oh!'. 'Oh!' really with a sense of shock and amazement. Like you can't believe I'm articulate. You can't believe that I'm intelligent. You know, you can't believe what?? […] That's why I said those subtle, little non-verbal and verbal cues that we can give to each other. […] And like can recognize like. And so people are shocked when they go 'Oh!'*

Patricia negotiates within this situation by engaging the other person through eye-contact and speech – the kind of eye-contact and speech that she feels asserts herself as a social equal, something that 'like' can use to recognize 'like'. She feels that this adjusts the way people think about her:

> Patricia*: That I can actually hold a sentence together, you know. That I can actually formulate some thoughts and actually say some things that are intelligent. And not just be mouthin' off words, that there is some real thought. Some intelligence behind the words. That's the part that pisses me off, but it also energizes me because I get so angry when people make that assumption. And my automatic assumption is to show you that I'm not who you think I am.*
>
> Author*: That's kind of tiring though.*
>
> Patricia*: It is. It can be. But that's why again I move around in the areas I do move around in so I'm minimizing those interactions. 'Cause I get it in African American neighborhoods too! You know what I mean? 'You think you're better than us?!' No.*

Again, we see that in order to avoid these embodied experiences of feelings of judgment and inferiority and the effort of negotiating within these situations, Patricia avoids the places where she anticipates she might encounter people who will judge her. Several other examples of situations of judgment and feelings of inferiority were given by the women, including Yvonne's (age 45, 2 children) feelings of being ignored at by a court house clerk after serving a man in front of her in a suit, '*Like we're nothin'. We're not important.*' Or, in another example, Tenesha (age 28, 2 children) is often profiled as a drug dealer by the police who patrol an intersection notorious for drug sales in the Mission District where she shops at a meat market. Anticipation of these kinds of experiences in places such as shopping centers, institutions such as the court house, or certain street corners restricts the terrain in the city that is open to each of these

women as they self-select the contexts they travel through in an attempt to improve their daily life experiences.

5.6 Chapter Conclusions

Within this group of women, the degree of choice that each woman has in being exposed to unwanted embodied experiences along the daily path depends on how daily life is organized according to their spatio-temporal situations– the character of the environments of their base locations and paths between bases, the forms of transport available to them, the times of day they must move between bases, the instrumental support they receive from other people and so on. Their personal attributes – racial and ethnic appearance, previous experience, how they dress and style their hair, and so on – are very important in influencing how they feel people perceive them and treat them in these situations. Some of these embodied experiences – walking in the dark to the bus stop in a high-crime neighborhood, unwanted interactions with strangers on the bus, anticipating and experiencing judgments of social inferiority at places like the shopping mall or financial district – produce emotions that can describe the experiences of this group of poor women beyond income deprivation, such as fear, vulnerability, invasion of personal space, feeling 'stuck', isolation, or feeling socially inferior or unwanted. The women deal with these experiences by negotiating within the situations, using items they bring with them such as clothing or ear phones, how they interact with other people. They also negotiate by avoiding these situations altogether, making temporal and geographic selections of context, for example, taking the bus at a less crowded time of day and avoiding travel at night whenever possible, or, avoiding places where unwanted embodied exposure is anticipated such as higher income neighborhoods. In addition to avoiding and negotiating within situations of undesired embodied experiences, some of the women also described ways they try to create especially positive experiences for themselves in daily life through context selection, for example to feel the waves at the beach or 'get away' for the day to a casino in another city. The ability to get away, however, was limited for those not owning a car and not having geographic knowledge of the city.

This chapter and the previous chapter have applied an integrated Time Geography and Emotional Geography approach to understand how these low-income women's lives intertwine with the contexts of their daily life. In the previous chapter, the way daily life is organized – in terms of travel time and opportunities to participate in activities and so on - provided an important, but rather dry view of what life is for this group of women in space-time terms. On the other hand, the embodied experiences within situations of daily life of this chapter provided rich and colorful windows into moments of lives of these women. However, without the integration of the spatio-temporal perspective, these moments are plucked out of the bigger picture of the way daily life is organized for the individual. When integrated into analysis together, these two views help us to understand the experience of traveling along the daily space-time paths of this group of women. And, they reveal how embodied experiences emerge because we have a framework for understanding why the women find themselves in the situations giving rise to these experiences in the first place.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final concluding chapter I will review the objective and approach of this project, present and discuss the main conclusions drawn from analysis, and reflect on the study context while relating it to possible policy implications and future research directions.

Section 6.1 Project Aim and Approach

This thesis project explored how geographical context can be understood more richly in poverty research, moving beyond static conceptualizations of context, and viewing poverty as an inter-relational and situational experience which is embodied by the poor individual. I explored the daily lives of 17 low-income single mothers in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. Single mothers were chosen due to the remarkable prevalence of poverty within this group in the U.S. (37%) (U.S. Census Bureau 2008), and the dramatic shift of the composition of poor households in the U.S. toward single female headed households in the final decades of the 20th century (Harris 1993).

I pointed to two areas of criticism in existing conceptualizations of geographical context in poverty research: 1) That context is treated as static, and 2) That researchers fail to fully explain the interrelations between context and poor individuals. Regarding the first, the daily life context of any individual is not static but quite dynamic (Kwan 2009). Context is both *sequential* and subject to *internal flows* (Dijst 2008). Context is sequential in that it is an experience that unfolds over time for the individual as she moves through time and space and situations change. In this way, she gains experiences, emotions and associations which inform her interpretation of and behavior in future situations. Context is subject to internal flows, meaning that as an individual stands still, other people and things move in and out of her range of sensory reception, and she is also able to 'send messages' into the world around her. Regarding the second criticism, although a large body of research has concerned itself with poverty and residential neighborhood, the role of spatial context in poverty research has been treated as a black box. Namely, researchers fail to explain *how* space influences individual behavior, and how individual behavior influences space (Jencks & Mayer 1990; Gotham 2003).

This project attempted to demonstrate how it may be possible to satisfy these conceptual oversights and gain a new perspective on poverty experience through the application of an integrated approach of Time Geography and Emotional Geography. I referred to this approach as an *embodied, situational spatio-temporal framework*. The two key conceptual contributions of this integrated approach is the introduction of *time* when understanding how space interrelates with lived experiences of individuals; drawing primarily on Time Geography's space-time constraint concepts. With this perspective, one can assess characteristics of daily life organization in terms of choice in mobility and activity participation. The other is *thinking through the body* when understanding the subjective experience an individual may have in

relating to various and shifting contexts in daily life; drawing primarily on Emotional Geography's embodiment concept. The key strength of this approach in this project has been to capture how experiences of poverty emerge uniquely for individuals in concrete situations in daily life through the inter-relationships of personal attributes, spatio-temporal situations and embodied exposure, and to witness how the individual interacts with her context in an attempt to negotiate with these poverty experiences. These following research questions were asked:

What is the relation between personal attributes, spatio-temporal situations and embodied exposure with poverty experiences in different spatio-temporal contexts for low-income, single mothers? And, how do these women negotiate in time and space with these experiences of poverty?

a) *How do personal attributes interplay with spatio-temporal situations in organizing daily life for this group of women?*
b) *How is organization of daily life related to embodied exposure and experience of spatio-temporal situations for these women?*
c) *How do these women negotiate in time and space with experiences of poverty?*

I looked to scholars writing from the sustainable development field for clues as to what kinds of experiences of poverty we might expect to find among the women in this study: *The realities of poor people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic. Income-poverty, though important, is only one aspect of deprivation… In addition to poverty, these include social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation*," (Chambers 1995:173). The study took place in San Francisco, California, a city with a socio-economically diverse population and disproportionate distribution of demographic groups between neighborhoods. The 17 respondents were low-income, single mothers who reside in San Francisco or a neighboring municipality. Each completed a one-day travel diary of all trips and activities performed during a 'typical' week day. During the diary day each respondent created a photo-documentary of the places and situations they encountered. Asking respondents to take photographs of their path served two purposes: firstly, to provide me with visual information about the kinds of places the respondents' daily paths take them and to help me ask insightful questions regarding embodied experiences, and secondly to encourage respondents to be more aware of how they experience different situations along their daily path that might be otherwise overlooked as unremarkable. An introductory interview was conducted with each participant before their diary day to gather background information about personal attributes including a sketch of major life experiences such as relationships, housing, and employment. A second interview was conducted after collection of the travel diary and camera to explore each woman's experiences of embodied exposure along the daily path and how they negotiate with this exposure, utilizing the pictures to facilitate the discussion. Travel diaries were analyzed in ArcGIS, assessing the Action Spaces created by each woman, and calculating basic statistics regarding trips taken (average duration, frequency, and so on). Interview content was analyzed for embodiment related themes with MAXQDA.

Section 6.2 Main Conclusions and Discussion

'Following' the women through their daily space-time paths and embodied experiences with this approach proved fruitful in gaining a richer understanding of the interplay between geographical context, the individual, and experiences of poverty. In this group of low-income single mothers in San Francisco, the space-time aspect of this approach shed light on deprivation-related themes regarding constraint in organization of everyday life, meaning that many of the women have very little free time for activities beyond responsibilities of work, study, social service appointments and/or children, spend a lot of time traveling each day due to slow public transportation and having to drop off and pick up children from their activities, and/or go to mandatory social service appointments, have reduced consumption choice in 'shopping around' for household goods or services, and generally have quite geographically concentrated daily paths. The embodiment aspect of this integrated approach allowed the project to move past describing the women's daily lives as simply constrained in the spatio-temporal dimension to reveal themes regarding the limited degree of choice many of the women have in being exposed to different kinds of embodied sensory experiences within the various situations encountered along their daily paths according to their particular daily life organization and spatio-temporal situation. Many of these situations represent poverty experiences which invoke emotions of fear, discomfort, anxiety, invasion of personal space, being 'stuck', socially and/or geographically isolated, or judged by others as socially inferior. And the women respond to these poverty experiences along their daily path by negotiating with their sensory exposure within the situation, a tactic I call 'cocooning', and which I will explain below.

The emotional experiences of poverty which arose out of daily life situations for this group of women in San Francisco indeed speak quite well to Chamber's description of poverty as involving experiences of *social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation.* This approach was able to zoom us down to the ground to 'see' the situations where these experiences arise for each woman within the fabric of time and space of daily life, and to try to imagine how the various elements of these situations become experiences for her through her sensory reception of the world around her. A principle contribution of this approach has been to demonstrate how experiences of poverty are *unique* to the person, place and time, manifesting themselves out of the interrelation of each woman's personal attributes, spatio-temporal situation, embodied exposure in daily life, and how she negotiates with each experience. The ability to provide perspective on not only the multidimensionality of poverty, but also its highly situational and personal character was a new insight of this project.

We can take the idea of 'the neighborhood' to demonstrate this point. Instead of having a relatively simple one-way relationship with its residents' experiences, this approach demonstrated that geographic context in poverty research must be understood in much more highly dynamic and inter-relational terms with the individual in order to understand its impact. For example, two women living in the same subsidized housing project in a very low-income neighborhood with high rates of violence can have very different paths and embodied

experiences in daily life depending on - to name a few major factors - the locations of their activity bases, their degree of mobility, access to social capital, the types of embodied exposure they experience within the sequence of situations of their daily path and how they negotiate with their experiences. For example, one woman in the housing project might have greater mobility because of her car, and have activity bases around the city for employment and study. Because of her long-time activity in her church and friendship with the pastor's wife she is invited to events with theologians and other highly educated people, and bought a car very cheaply from a church member who wants to help her. Her daily path moves through various contexts around the city, providing possibilities for crossing paths with people, ideas and resources outside the geographic delineation of her neighborhood. Her car provides her with substantial control over her exposure to the places she travels through, and allows her to customize her environment, selecting her music, air temperature and the people she travels with. Because her embodied experiences in moving in and out of the neighborhood in her car are generally positive, she does not restrict her travel and attends church events which require travel even in the evenings.

Another woman in that same housing project could be unemployed and have multiple generations of family members living there with whom she does not get along. Without a car or activity bases in other parts of the city and little social capital to draw on from her very weak and geographically concentrated social network, her daily path might be extremely constrained to her neighborhood and her geographic knowledge of the city quite low. Traveling by bus she is directly exposed to the potential for violence in her neighborhood, unwanted interactions with passersby, and visual reminders of the lack of resources of her neighborhood as she travels on foot, waits at the bus stop, and rides on the bus. Because she expects unpleasant experiences when moving around her neighborhood she stays inside her house most of the time and especially avoids travel at night. In short, the potential for experiences of poverty to arise is much greater for the second woman than for the first, even though they live in the same housing project, in the same neighborhood. And the differences in embodied experiences they have influence their behavior – as in the second woman's self-imposed constraint on her daily path.

Clearly experiences of poverty are highly unique to the individual. However, if we zoom out to the group-level of this study, some themes of poverty experiences emerged that are worth mentioning and that I suspect may speak very generally to the San Francisco urban context of this study, especially given the poor public transportation, car-dominated city streets, prevalence of violent crime in low-income neighborhoods, and unequal distribution of resources around the city (businesses, parks, public services, and so on). In general terms, constrained daily life organization for this group was more experienced by women relying on public transportation, having young children who require being accompanied on transport, weak social capital, and/or having several mandatory social service appointments per week. Danger and discomfort when moving between home and other bases were experienced in the context of living in neighborhoods with high rates of violent crime in partnership with being reliant on public transportation. Women living in these neighborhoods who travel by car also experience fear while walking to their car, but much less the discomfort, vulnerability and

invasion of physical space of public transport users. For all women, night-time is perceived as more dangerous and prefer to be home before dark. The women who had very limited geographic awareness of the city had grown up and lived in low-income neighborhoods most or all of their lives and had little formal work experience. Almost all women in the study reported having regular interactions in daily life that made them feel judged as inferior, or that they do not feel wanted in certain places. Women with a more flexible organization of daily life either had access to a car or did not have very young children. However, women who had young children but no car in combination with committed instrumental support from others could also experience flexibility in participating in elective activities, running errands in distant parts of the city, being able to 'shop around' for groceries, and so on.

By zooming down to the concrete situational level of daily life, this approach also allowed us to see the way in which each woman negotiates with her experiences of poverty along her daily path. Within this group, a practice of negotiation I refer to as 'cocooning' became apparent, meaning the efforts each woman makes to try to control her embodied exposure to the internal flows of context as they enter into her sensory range of experience (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) within each situation, as well as trying to control the flows of sensory messages she sends out from her cocoon into the world around her (such as speech, outward physical appearance, and body language). The types of cocooning practiced by each woman were also unique to the individual and the context. To give an example, like many women in the study, being low-income often means encountering situations in day-to-day life where embodied experiences of social inferiority arise because others in the context make judgments based on visual personal attributes such as hair and clothing style, racial appearance or missing teeth. In our example, the woman might avoid these situations through context selection – constraining their paths away from certain neighborhoods or shopping centers. However, she may find herself obligated to participated in a situation where her embodied exposure to internal flows of the context make her feel comparatively inferior, for example, by seeing the expensive furniture of an office lobby where she is waiting, and the designer clothing of the people around her who are avoiding making eye-contact with her. In an attempt to negotiate with this feeling of being 'out of place,' she may try drawing on her previous professional experience to engage with the people around her in types of speech she thinks others will recognize as 'educated', thereby sending messages out of her cocoon in order to influence the context around her in her favor. If her attempt to engage those around her fails, however, she may retreat into her cocoon as another way of modifying her embodied exposure to the situation. She may sit in a chair and listen to music through earphones and read a magazine, blocking out the voices of those around her, removing the visual cues of inferiority from her sight, and sending out a visual cue that she is not available to interact visually or verbally. Embodied exposure to this context causes her to retreat into her cocoon, effectively excluding herself from being an active participant in the situation. Thinking through the body in this example allows us to understand how these situations manifest themselves as experiences for the individual requiring tactics of negotiation which in turn can, as in this example, produce self-excluding behavior. The context and the individual interrelate and in doing so they modify each other.

As general themes of poverty experiences emerged within this group of women in San Francisco, so too did themes of cocooning tactics used by the women. One reoccurring cocooning practice within the group was selecting contexts; avoiding the bus and preferring car travel, isolating oneself at home, not traveling at night, avoiding places where feelings of judgment or inferiority may take place such as shopping malls, wealthy neighborhoods or public institutions, and so on. Many women also used clothing and music earphones to customize sensory experiences while discouraging interaction with others and blocking out disturbing conversations when it is not possible to physically remove oneself from the situation. Some women tried to overcome feelings of being 'stuck' or stressed in day-to-day life through context selection; 'getting away' and 'letting loose' by going shopping or to a casino in another city, going to the beach to feel the therapeutic sensation of the waves or looking across the bay to achieve a feeling of expansiveness. The ability to access these sources of negotiation within daily life, however, was greatly limited for women without access to a car.

The experiences of poverty and tactics of negotiation within this group of low-income single mothers in San Francisco arise out concrete situations within the space-time fabric of daily life, and are shaped by a relational configuration of the individual's personal attributes, her space-time situation, the kinds of embodied exposure she encounters and how she negotiates with her experience. 'Poverty', as a static blanket term, is broken down in this way, permitting us to understand it as *local, complex, diverse, and dynamic (Chambers 1995),* an above all, inter-relational. In order to get down to this experiential level of daily life - moving past the black box 'neighborhood' idea of context in poverty research and moving past thinking of poverty as a list of individual or household indicators - the two theoretical approaches of Time Geography and Emotional Geography needed to be integrated. We had to recognize that the day-to-day reality of any group of people involves movement through a path of sequential situations in time and space, that this path is subject to various constraints, and that as a person moves through time and space she is constantly receiving messages through her body from the world which are interpreted by her in a largely emotional experience.

Section 6.3 Study Reflection and Implications for Future Research and Policy

In trying to understand people's experiences and behavior in relation with context there are of course many lines of approach. We can choose to distill geographically aggregated information into several indicators which we relate to the individual on the computer screen. We can take a birds-eye view of the individual and watch her as she moves along the map. We can sit down with her and engage in a dialogue in which we ask for her view of the world. We can spend time with her at home or at work and observe her. And so on. I think what this approach offers is something different. This approach asks us to try to 'walk a day in the shoes' of our respondents, as the old saying goes, and imaginatively inhabit the body that takes this person along her path in life, seeing with her eyes, listening with her ears, sensing the world as it presses, brushes, or bumps up against her, and ask ourselves how the unique configuration of her attributes and her context have led her to have these experiences.

I think there are exciting possibilities for the application of this more holistic framework in understanding experiences in daily life within different contexts and for different populations. First instance, one can imagine the value of a comparative embodied, situational spatio-temporal study of the experiences of low-income single mothers in, for example, a city in the Netherlands versus an American city such as San Francisco. Studies of these populations in the Netherlands have yet to take this approach, examining more the strategies taken by respondents to maintain their households and the meaning they attribute to their lives (e.g. Ypeij 2009). There are surely great differences in the experiences of poverty between mothers in San Francisco and mothers in Amsterdam, for example, given the contrast between their respective contexts. For instance, the Netherlands, in contrast to the United States, is famous for its bicycle friendly, flat cities and well-organized public transportation systems (bus and train). Daily life activities such as child transport, grocery shopping, and so on can be carried out on a virtually free and independent (if slow) form of transport by bicycle, assuming these activities are geographically concentrated. It would be informative to see how daily life organization and embodiment experiences may differ in regards to this and many other contextual aspects.

There is an obvious need for greater social value to be placed on public transportation and alternative forms of transport in the American urban context such as bicycles and related infrastructure such as bicycle lanes and bicycle parking, as this study clearly indicates that transportation is a primary factor in influencing the quality of life of low-income people, both in the practical organization of daily life and in embodied exposure experience. Beyond improving the bus system in frequency and hours of service to low-income neighborhoods, free bus passes for low-income individuals should be extended to all forms of connecting public transportation such as light-rail systems and ferries so that their entire journey is taken into consideration. Car sharing systems should be made more explicitly available to low-income people, not only in reducing cost of car share programs to low-income individuals, but also in locating the pick-up and drop-off locations within low-income neighborhoods and at connecting points to public transportation lines.

Beyond, demonstrating the need for better transportation for low-income people, a key insight that can be drawn from this approach is that the user's *experience* in using any system or service must be understood on a very embodied as well as practical level. For example, beyond constructing bicycle lanes and installing bicycle stalls in American cities, what would be necessary to make a parent feel safe taking his or her child to school on bicycle within an urban context dominated by cars and narrow city streets? Or a commuter coming from another city by utilizing multiple modes of transport (including bicycle) in the path from home to work? Or a woman who returns home from work during dark hours? The potential bicycle rider's needs must be understood with consideration for the same dimensions as the women in this study: personal attributes, spatio-temporal situation and embodied exposure.

Thinking beyond the topic of this study, this approach has an apt application in virtually any research area interested in understanding user or client behavior in regards to interventions, services or products in a variety of fields and industries. Within the health field, for example,

how could we better understand compliance issues in outpatient drug treatment programs with this perspective? If the location of the methadone dosing clinic means the program participant must walk past the same people with whom she likely purchased or used drugs in the past, does that decrease the likelihood she will show up for doses consistently or even increase the likelihood of a relapse? How does requiring on-site (versus 'take home') dosing several times a week impact the way her daily life is organized considering her particular spatio-temporal situation? In general, service-oriented programs' understandings of their clients spatio-temporal situations could be examined with this approach to see if adjustments need to be made in program structure and requirements. In the education field, students' embodied experiences within different spatio-temporal configurations of schools could be another interesting application in relation to different groups' attendance rates, participation and focus in class, study behavior and so on.

To conclude, this thesis has explored the application of a new, integrated approach in understanding the relationship between individuals and geographic context and lived experience, taking the case of daily life for a group of low-income, single mothers in San Francisco, California. The approach was useful in exposing not only the multidimensionality of poverty, but also how inter-relational, situationally-specific and personal it is. The individual and her context penetrate and push against each other, revealing an exchange between the two that may not be equally balanced, but also is not congruent with absolute ideas of constraints and choices. Taking a daily life approach such as this may not be glamorous view of human life – picking out dramatic, life altering events that mark our lives – but it recognizes the profundity of the mundane daily life routine and the small moments we encounter along our paths, because those paths and moments are unique to each of us and constitute the substance of our immersion in the flow of life.

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Appendix 1: Travel Diary Instructions

HOW TO COMPLETE THE TRAVEL AND ACTIVITY DIARY

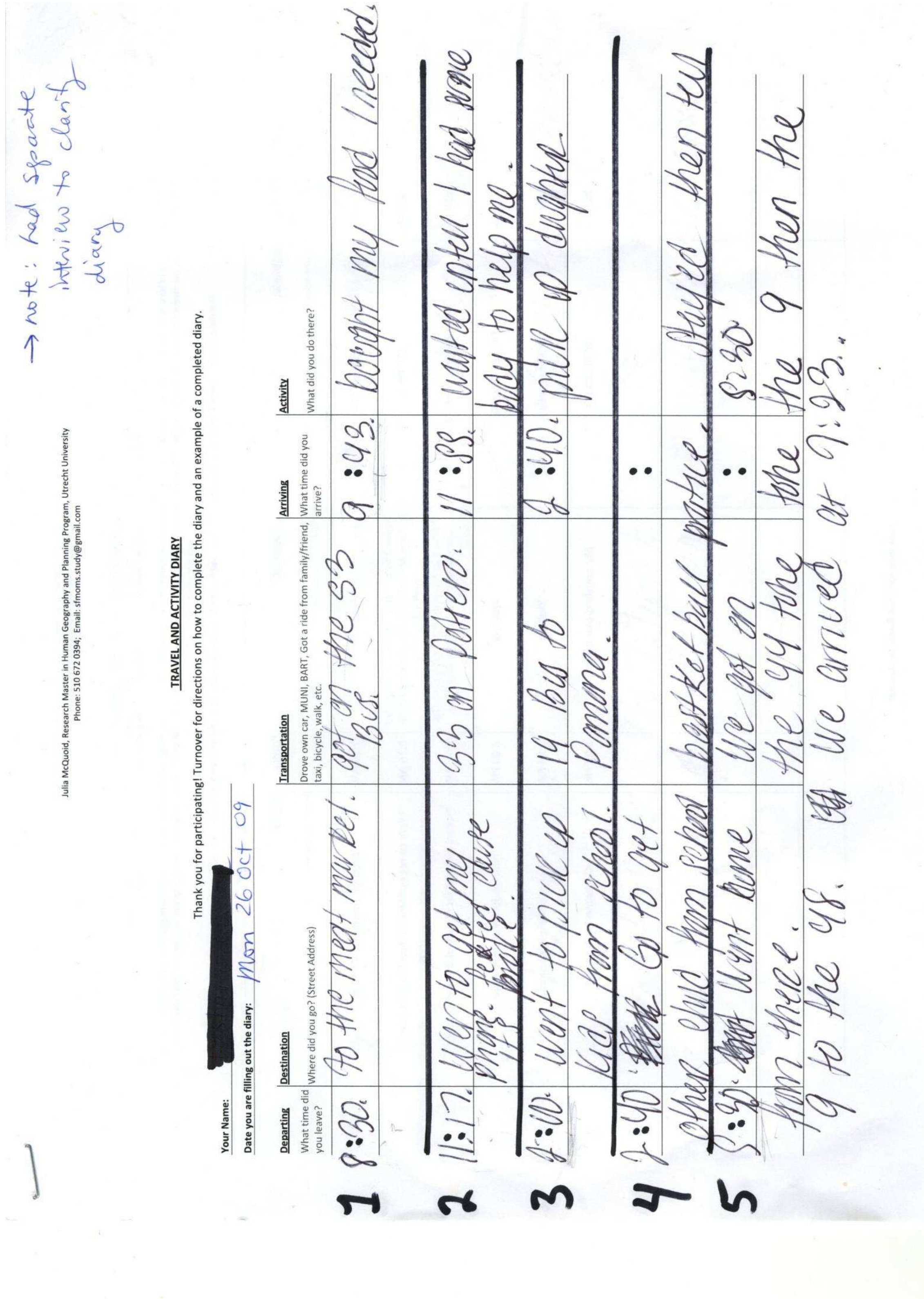
Thank you for your contribution to this study on the organization of daily life of tight budget single moms in San Francisco!

Below is an example of how to fill out the travel diary. Please be sure to write down EVERY trip you make on your diary day, being as detailed as possible about when you left and when you arrived, how you got there, the street address or intersection where you went, and why you went there. It is best to write down each trip as soon as possible during your day so that you don't forget things like the exact times and addresses.

The main idea is to write down how your day went so that someone else can imagine exactly where you were, what you did, and when you did it.

SAMPLE:	Departing	Destination	Transportation	Arriving	Activity
	What time did you leave?	Where did you go? (Street Address)	Drove own car, MUNI, BART, Got a ride from family/friend, taxi, bicycle, walk, etc.	What time did you arrive?	What did you do there?
	7:15 AM	180 Fair Oaks Street, San Francisco	Walked	7:35 AM	Drop off Justin at child care
	7:45 AM	172 7th St.	Walked to bus stop at Mission and 23rd St., took MUNI #14 to Mission and 7th St., walked to work	8:15 AM	Work as receptionist at Best Western Hotel
	4:30 PM	Mission street and 22nd	Walked to bus stop at Mission and 7th, took MUNI #14 to Mission and 23rd, walked to stores	5:15 AM	Picked up food for dinner at a small grocery
	5:45 PM	180 Fair Oaks St.	Walked	6:00 PM	Pick up Justin at child care
	6:15 PM	17 Orange Alley	Walked	6:35 PM	Dinner at cousin's house
	8:00 PM	3050 22nd St	My cousin drove me home	8:20 PM	Go home for the night

Appendix 2: Example of Completed Travel Diary (first page)



→ note: had separate interview to clarify diary

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Phone: 510 672 0394; Email: sfmoms.study@gmail.com

TRAVEL AND ACTIVITY DIARY

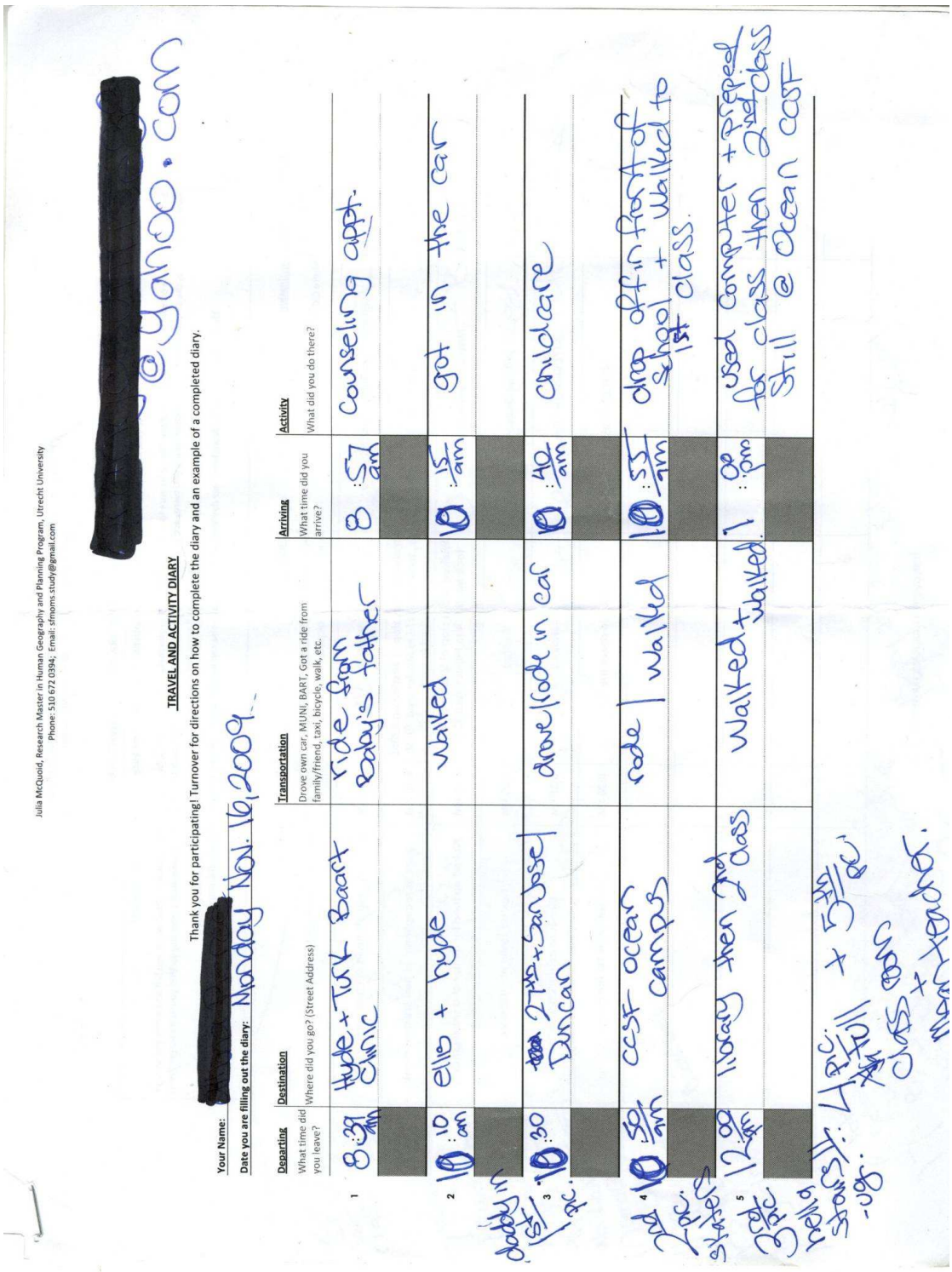
Thank you for participating! Turnover for directions on how to complete the diary and an example of a completed diary.

Your Name: [redacted]

Date you are filling out the diary: Mon 26 Oct 09

	Departing What time did you leave?	Destination Where did you go? (Street Address)	Transportation Drove own car, MUNI, BART, Got a ride from family/friend, taxi, bicycle, walk, etc.	Arriving What time did you arrive?	Activity What did you do there?
1	8:30	to the meat market.	got on the 33 bus	9:43	bought my food I needed.
2	11:17	went to get my phone. texted cause broke.	33 on Potrero.	11:55	waited until I had some body to help me.
3	2:10	went to pick up kids from school.	19 bus to Pomona.	2:40	pick up daughter
4	2:40	Go to get other child from school	basketball practice.	:	Stayed then tell
5	5:55	went home from there.	we got on the 44 take the 44 take the	:	$2.50 the the 9 then the
		9 to the 48.	we arrived at 9:23.		

Appendix 3: Example of Completed Travel Diary (first page)



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[redacted]@yahoo.com

TRAVEL AND ACTIVITY DIARY

Thank you for participating! Turnover for directions on how to complete the diary and an example of a completed diary.

Your Name: [redacted]

Date you are filling out the diary: Monday Nov. 16, 2009

	Departing	Destination	Transportation	Arriving	Activity
	What time did you leave?	Where did you go? (Street Address)	Drove own car, MUNI, BART, Got a ride from family/friend, taxi, bicycle, walk, etc.	What time did you arrive?	What did you do there?
1	8:30 am	Hyde + Turk Boart Clinic	Ride from Baby's father	8:57 am	Counseling appt.
2	10:10 am	ellis + hyde	walked	10:15 am	got in the car
3	10:30	27th + San Jose Duncan	drove/rode in car	10:40 am	childcare
4	10:50 am	CCSF ocean campus	rode / walked	10:55 am	drop off in front of school + walked to 1st class
5	12:00	library then 3rd class	walked + walked	1:00 pm	used computer + stopped for class then 2nd class Still @ ocean CCSF