

Slipping the Line: The Embodied and Affective Materiality of Gang Territories

by

Amelia Curran

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Abstract

In both popular and academic accounts, one of the defining features of gangs is their strong attachment to turf—the home territory under the control of a gang. However, the concept of gang territory often remains narrowly defined as a static and bounded region claimed, defended, and controlled by gang members; a view that fails to account for versions of space beyond settler colonial models. In contrast, this dissertation uses a new materialist lens to attend to the ways gang territories are made, maintained, and disrupted through the daily practices of a variety of actors. I draw on multi-sited qualitative fieldwork in Winnipeg, Manitoba, a city referred to as the gang capital of Canada. Through interviews with gang and non-gang-affiliated residents, police, and administrators working or living within gang territories, I show that gang territories are made material through various embodied practices that enact these spaces in affective, emergent, mobile, and multiple forms. I argue that central to the materialization of gang territories are embodied regularities that contribute to the multiplicity and mobility of boundaries, to gang space that takes shape as new mobilities and conditions of the body, and as territory that spatializes as the racialized body. This project expands gang research by highlighting gang behaviours and processes outside the scope of criminal enterprise, and by showing territorialization as a process that implicates a broad range of actors. Recognizing the role of multiple actors encourages a relational ethics of accountability between bodies, practices, and place that challenges the often-naturalized connections between race, space, and crime. Understanding gang space as enacted through embodied material practices provides an alternative way to think through, trace, and disrupt these associations.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

I mean like it's tough because a lot of, even non-gang kids, there's like the turfs right, so a lot of our kids who aren't in gangs won't go over to Broadway because you know that's the "B" side right, so they don't want to cross over Portage. Even if they're not in gangs. And like a lot of our kids won't go into the Central Park areas cause that's another turf and just cause if you're recognized as from coming from this area, even though you're not gang involved at all, then you'll still be targeted. There's all these invisible divides that our kids deal with every day... Our kids won't go to the North End, either, it's just not safe for them. If one person sees them and says 'Hey you're from the West End' or whatever then chances are they're going to get beat.

— Youth worker in Winnipeg

This dissertation studies gang territories as urban spaces. Although recognized as a prominent feature of gang life, gang territories remain understudied as spaces within which a variety of bodies assemble, travel, interact, and navigate, or as spaces that are produced through a variety of material practices. In conversation with sociology, criminology, urban studies, and geography, I approach gang territories as spaces related to yet distinct from inner-city spaces more generally, as spaces associated with crime, but not as exclusively criminal spaces, and as spaces through which the social is enacted, rather than on which it is mapped. I acknowledge and explore the connection between territory and gang members but also include other mainstays of these areas: residents, police, and a range of non-human or non-representational bodies that populate these spaces and through which these spaces emerge.

In previous research, I studied the challenges that Winnipeg youth-serving agencies were facing in working with “at-risk youth.” One of the questions I asked youth workers was, “Are there young people you would like to provide resources to but are unable to access?” One of their frequent answers, exemplified in the opening quote, surprised me. I expected the issue to be with the youth—maybe gang entrenchment or addiction. While these situations make it difficult to reach some youth, the problem also lies elsewhere: it exists in the geography of the area. Some young people, a number of respondents told me, cannot access the buildings where youth services are located because of gang territorial boundaries. If a gang line intercepted a young person’s route to a community centre or other service provider, their access could be compromised. While one might expect this to be the case for gang-affiliated youth, it was also true for many non-gang-affiliated young people for whom gang lines are a daily feature of their landscape.

I began to think differently about the inner city. I was struck by the way these lines, these “invisible divides,” were so immobilizing for some yet did nothing to restrict my travels through and around these areas during my research; indeed I had not encountered them—they were totally unidentifiable to me. I reflected that I did not know enough about gang territories as urban spaces, how they are created or maintained, who they affect, or who or what affects them. Gang literature has failed to take their presence, their materiality, seriously. This project starts from this realization. The work for this dissertation began by asking anew, what and where are gang spaces? What are the materials that make them? What are their effects?

Most people have come to know gang territories through media and popular culture. From representations of iconic Los Angeles or Chicago gangs, we know that gang territories are certain blocks or parts of neighbourhoods that are claimed and defended by gang members. In Winnipeg, Manitoba, where this research was conducted, we know that gang territories are found predominantly in the West End, West Broadway, and the North End. In these examples the space of gang territories seems obvious: known for their regional boundaries, territories are delineated by certain streets or landmarks such as rivers, railway tracks, or freeways—lines that distinguish gang space from surrounding areas. Contained within these regional boundaries, gang territories are areas we can find, either in person or on a map, should we know where to look.

Despite being iconic spaces whose regional boundaries are generally known, gang territories can also be stubbornly difficult to find. To many, Winnipeg's B Side, West Side, and North Side gang territories look very much like their corresponding West Broadway, West End, and North End neighbourhoods. People can certainly go to these areas, but there are no identifying landmarks, no walls, and no obvious signs that distinguish these areas from their gang territories. The ambiguity of these areas is apparent even for some people who live in them. In interviews with older, more affluent, often White, residents—those who owned homes or businesses in the area—I would ask, do you live in a gang territory? "I'm not sure" they would respond, "I think so, I've heard I do." Those lines that stop kids dead in their tracks – sometimes literally – are just rumours to other people; they go almost completely unnoticed.

These two experiences of gang boundaries, one as knowable, visible, and tangible, and the other as invisible and relatively inconsequential, are not easily reconciled through classical Euclidean models that present space as a flat surface, singular and traversable, or as a container of actions within which objects and people inhabit particular, mutually exclusive spaces. While a youth and I stand on the corner of Ellice Avenue and Langside Street, we both stand in the West End, but only she stands in West Side gang territory. As I occupy one space, she stands in the same 'place' occupying two spaces: the West End and the West Side. Even while I stand where gang space is 'located,' I am unable to access this additional space. In contrast, others are almost unable *not to* access it, and some are unable to leave. While a West End youth and I stand on this street corner, I only partially share her space. As I cross the street, she is unable to follow. Gang space, for me, is not an inert expanse that I can, if mobile, cross and access. Gang space, for her, is not a singular backdrop.

At the start of this project what interested me about gang territories were not their more infamous characteristics: their crime, their violence, their ethnic or racial makeup, their poverty, and certainly not their levels of "disorder." Indeed, I am skeptical of locating these traits 'within' gang territorial boundaries. While there has been excellent critical scholarship drawing attention to the structural and political causes of these associations (Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson 2008; Hagedorn 1988; Moore 1991; Vigil 2010), it was their spatiality that caught my attention—the way they functioned as invisible yet obdurately physical spaces. However, despite

notable exceptions,¹ gang territories tend not to be a feature of urban studies or geography rosters. Instead, the study of gang spaces has largely been undertaken in the context of criminal justice, where, more often than not, as criminal spaces they become more crime than space. As Ailsa Winton asserts,

The historical dominance of U.S. gang research, and within this criminology, has profoundly shaped both understandings of, and responses to this type of youth organization.... While the pioneering work of Thrasher (1927) on immigrant groups in 1920s Chicago notably did not include criminality as a defining feature of youth gangs, since then, gangs became seen as unilaterally criminal, deviant, pathological, at the expense of more nuanced readings of their motivations, values, practices and organization. (2012: 137)

While gang subcultural theories that emphasized the connection to and conflict over space flourished in Britain (Cohen 1972; Williams 2017/1958), this was not a main focus for U.S. criminologists, including those engaged in gang studies (Kontos & Brotherton 2008). Central gang theories, essentially unchanged since the 1960s, remain instead as “derivations of established theories of individual ‘deviance’ extended to the group” (Kontos & Brotherton 2008: x). Gang territories within this context become portrayed as criminal spaces, their boundaries demarcating the deviant from non-deviant. As such, research on street gangs has tended not to focus on gang engagement with neighbourhood and surrounding spaces, especially in regard to activities deemed normative or mundane (Venkatesh 1997).

In addition to characterizing these spaces as criminal, gang territories are sometimes described as “symbolic spaces,” discussed in terms of what they *mean* to

¹ See Abello-Colak & Guarneros-Meza 2014; Alonso 2004; Bloch 2013; Brown, Vigil & Taylor 2012; Decker 2009; Ensor 2014; Fraser 2013; Graves 2013; Hagedorn & Brigid 2007; Ley 1974; Pickering 2012; Radil 2010; Winton 2012 & 2014.

those who are gang-affiliated (Decker 1996; Horowitz 1983; Papachristos, Braga, & Hureau 2013; Venkatesh 1997). This is one way of contending with their invisibility. As a collection of houses, businesses, churches, sidewalks, short cuts, and roads in disrepair, gang territories hide in plain sight, looking very much like inner-city urban areas more generally. However, while these spaces are invisible to me and to many researchers, they are more than symbolic for many who live there. Gang boundaries, like walls, stop movement. These territories change the way people walk, the routes they take, what they wear, where they cast their eyes—practices I will frame in terms of enacting gang spaces in various ways. They may be invisible to some but they are not immaterial, and foregrounding their symbolic properties can eclipse their materiality. As Tuck and McKenzie warn, the metaphorizing of borders can lead us to forget “that there are those who die every day because borders are not metaphors, but are very, very real” (2015: 41). This project contributes to the study of gang territories by approaching invisibility as a material, rather than symbolic, space—a space made through the daily practices of various actors.

1.2 Gang Territories as Material Spaces

Gang spaces lack the traditional signposts that tend to bring regional space into being. No one produces official, public maps of the North Side, West Side, and B-Side. There are no gates, no welcome signs, no street signs, no distinctive buildings or architecture to anchor them visibly as gang territories. For a time, graffiti was thought to perform this function of delineating one territory from another (Ley

1974), but further research challenged the neatness of this theory (Adams & Winter 1997; Bloch 2019). Gang spaces also lack the bureaucratic materiality of other less visible regions such as municipalities, catchment areas, school zones, and constituencies that are made to matter through, amongst other things, desks, paperwork, filing, and signatures. Gang space is both regional and difficult to see in conventional ways, making it hard to discern exactly what *makes* these areas regional.

In this dissertation I analyze gang spaces and their production through a ‘new materialist’ lens, drawing on spatial theory that conceptualizes space as a material enterprise, a product of interrelations and actions, not a backdrop to them (Law & Mol 2001; Law & Urry 2001; Lefebvre 1992; Massey 2005; Thrift 2008a). I shift from thinking of gang space as a preexisting surface easily divided up into the distinct principalities of region or as a symbolic space, to thinking of space as ontologically enacted through various material practices. This is to say that I approach space as *made* in material ways that channel “agency through the deltas of persons, materials and movements” (Mackenzie 2019: 16). The point is not to deny the regional, symbolic, or even criminal aspects of gang territories but instead to question the taken-for-granted ways these characteristics dominate how they are understood. I aim to show what *makes* gang space regionally situated—such as through practices of criminalization—and to be open to other forms these spaces take. Instead of already-there spaces that have been claimed by gangs or that contain gangs, I start from the premise that gang territories, like other spaces, are the dynamic and vital product of an assemblage of material actors and their

practices.

Many of these insights come to me from Actor-Network Theory (ANT), whose materialist alignment with a world of things extends also to an interest in spatial relations. Latour (1997) notes ANT's opposition to classical geographical concepts, whose 'tyranny of distance' "tends to impose a single conception of undifferentiated space upon variable landscapes of relations and connections" (cf Murdoch 1998: 358). In contrast, ANT proposes a geography of topologies (Law & Mol 2001) capable of supporting different kinds of spaces. For this reason, Mol suggests that we imagine ANT "as a machine for waging war on Euclideanism: as a way of showing, *inter alia*, that regions are constituted by networks" (cf Law & Hassard 1999: 7). This understanding of space follows general ANT principles: space is made in assemblage through the material practices of a variety of human and non-human actors.

ANT encourages attending to the more complex ways space is made. When practices are foregrounded, spaces multiply: since practices are many, so too are spaces. Additionally, a topological lens encourages the recognition of spaces previously excluded from classical spatial models (Law & Mol 2001). However, having emerged out of the field of science and technology studies (Rohracher 2015), researchers using ANT have primarily conducted anthropologies of the laboratory. Directed at techno-scientific projects, the spaces ANT has been used to study differ from the inner-city spaces of gang territories. ANT and other new materialist authors have been slow to address the materialities of race² and crime.³ This recent

² Some notable exceptions: M'charek 2010; M'charek 2013; M'charek & Van Oorschot 2019; Nayak

scholarship shows that the value of applying ANT-inspired moves to the study of race and crime is in its ability “to generate important diffractions in the study of ‘race,’” for instance in demonstrating how material configurations of race produce human difference and how these differences, “achieve political salience in research and discussions regarding social order and crime” (M’charek & Van Oorschot 2019: 237). These insights have yet to be applied to gang studies. In a recent edited collection on ANT and crime studies (Robert & Defresne 2015), for instance, the topic of gangs was not addressed, its focus leaning instead toward technological advancements of crime control.

Additionally, the focus of ANT studies has been notably directed at the *visible*; indeed, visibility has been a chief concern in its studies, focusing on technologies such as the microscope that are not only visible, but which enable the visibility of other entities. John Law’s concept of the ‘absent presence,’ which suggests, “the constancy of object presence depends on simultaneous absence or alterity” (Law 2001: 616), captures a sense of the invisible. However, the ‘absences’ in his analyses are discovered through a study of the visible: when looking at a (visible) material heterogeneous network, such as an aircraft wing, we must consider the absences that make its materialization possible. But how does one study that which is not visible to start with? How do we begin with the absences in order to find the material networks? Through ANT, an approach based on ‘following the practices,’ it is not immediately obvious how this methodological approach applies within and to spaces that are invisible or toward practices that are difficult to see (Best & Walters

2010; Saldanha 2006; Saldanha 2011; Walters & Moffette 2018.

³ Some notable exceptions: Hayward 2012; M’charek & Van Oorschot 2019; Robert & Defresne 2015.

2013a; Best & Walters 2013b; Salter & Walters 2016; Walters 2014).

To study gang spaces, which lack traditional spatial representational markers and are less tangible than those found within the techno-scientific realm of ANT, non-representational theory (NRT) (Thrift 2008) has been a helpful additional guide. Born of human geography, NRT is designed to account for the ways space takes form through less visible, or less *representational*, practices. Like ANT, NRT studies the social, the subject, and the world processually, or in practice. However, in NRT we see an increased focus on ‘backgrounds,’ such as “embodied and environmental affordances, dispositions and habits” (Anderson & Harrison 2010: 8) rather than on scientific and technological practices. These ‘backgrounds’ provide the material for the ways spaces are made and operate (Anderson & Harrison 2010).

Examining embodied practices for the ways they enact spaces and spatial practices is to bring absence to the fore, to look for the material practices that contribute to an entity’s invisibility. It is to think through how the material is implicated in the invisible, to set one’s sights on the ‘invisibilities’ first, and to trace their existence to material practices. The shift is subtle, but is a move away from thinking of absence as a necessity of materiality, as something the material relies upon, to thinking of materiality as a feature of absence or invisibility: absence relies upon the presence of the material. How, then, do the invisibilities of gang territories rely on materiality? In other words, what are the materialities that produce gang territories as spaces that are difficult to see?

Applying a materialist lens to the study of gang territories implicates a wide assemblage of actors and practices: objects, affects, bodies, and mobilities. This

approach challenges the static, regionally delineated status of gang territories that tends to imply an ontological distinction both from surrounding spaces and from human or non-human entities. Within this frame I keep sight of the ways practices of the body such as race and gender are spatial practices. My emphasis is on the “active, productive, and continual weaving of the multiplicity of bits and pieces” (Anderson & Harrison 2010: 8) through which gang spaces emerge. From this perspective I ask, “how are gang territories *done*”? Leaving open who or what make gang spaces, my interviews go beyond gang members to include interviews with residents, administrators, and police in order to explore the various ways these actors help make, sustain, disrupt, or change gang territories through everyday actions. Within this frame agency and vitality are attributed to a wide array of human and non-human actants that produce and reproduce gang spaces as material entities.

In this dissertation, the word territory is used frequently. In part, this reflects an idiomatic usage. Gang spaces are called territories, and so to study these spaces I refer to them as they are widely and conventionally known (Valasik & Tita 2018). Remaining with the word territory is not intended to signal a pre-determined expectation of what I will find—what one perhaps expects to find as gang territory: a regionally bounded, claimed and defended portion of geographical space. Neither is its usage intended to invoke associations with territoriality in animal ethology and socio-biology.

Instead, being committed to exploring how gang territories are *done* means that I am less interested in what territory is or how territory is defined than in the

practices that bring territory into being in multiple ways for gangs, and the subsequent effects of these spatial configurations. However, it is worth noting some of the ways territory is understood, and how my usage of the term relates to these debates.

'Territory' is most commonly associated with the geography of state power, the boundaries associated with the political institution of the modern nation-state (Delaney 2005). However, an oversimplified equivalence between territory and state—the "territorial trap" (Agnew 1994)—has been challenged (Cox 1991; Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Brenner 2004). A synonymy between state and territory has positioned the territorial state as a fixed container of society rather than as an emerging spatial form in different historical-geographical circumstances (Agnew 1994) and has overshadowed the "innumerable complex territorial configurations and assemblages that shape human social life, relationships, and interactions" (Delaney 2005: 4-5). What has been afforded more dynamism is 'territoriality,' understood as a spatial strategy to control bounded spaces and their resources (Sack 1983).

In contrast, dynamic characterizations of territory (Escobar 2008) are evident in the reframing of *territory* as a process, an effect of socio-technical practices (Painter 2009), as materially, multi-layered productions (Kärrholm 2007), and as material and discursive assemblages (Moore 2005, Correia 2019). Recently, Halvorsen (2019:791) rethinks the "modern, colonial idea of territory" by developing an open definition of territory—"the appropriation of space in pursuit of

political projects—in which multiple (from bottom-up grassroots to top-down state) political strategies exist as overlapping and entangled.”

In this dissertation, an ontological orientation to territory draws on literature emphasizing its material, contingent and assembled forms. While the “state” may be at play within these assemblages, for instance through police practices of territorializing, I decentre territory from a sovereign grip, choosing instead to employ a ‘flat’ ontology: my focus is on the everyday production of territories that materialize in multiple ways through a variety of practices (human, non-human, intentional, or non-intentional). It is important to note that this does not entail a rejection or denial of more static, regional versions but instead a curiosity about how these forms and other less recognizable forms of territory come to be. The aim is to recognize how territory, as a spatial model, is produced in multiple ways and what the effects of these territorializations are.

The use of the word ‘gang’ should similarly be addressed. While the ontological status of gangs is not the object of this study, I recognize along with other critical gang scholars (Winton 2012; Fraser 2013; Kintrea et al. 2008; Alonso 2010) that the words ‘gang’ and ‘gang member’ imply a false uniformity. Not only are gangs highly heterogeneous, varying in structure, actions, intentions, and type of member, there is also a constructionist argument that we have drawn a false distinction between gangs and other social groups such as soccer hooligans, which has in turn changed the way these groups have evolved (Katz & Jacob-Jackson 2004). These concerns challenge the idea that when we refer to gangs we refer to a social object with particular features and parameters. Similarly, the word ‘gang’

carries certain moral connotations that other groups or associations do not. Richardson and Kennedy (2012: 444) caution against the use of the word gang as an “empty signifier” that makes discussions around gangs “vulnerable to political manipulation and hegemonic strategies.” Having evolved from meaning ‘to go’ in early Germanic, it began to denote a set of things or people who go together in the early seventeenth century, and later acquired negative connotations that implied criminal activities. Richardson and Kennedy suggest that increased reflexivity regarding what this word means is necessary in order to see issues relating to youth crime and delinquency more clearly. I agree with these positions and further note the assembled quality of ‘the gang,’ which has been enacted through various material and discursive practices, including those of race, gender, and class. While I do not wish to imply that gangs are not real, I would like to stress that their reality is an *uninevitable* achievement, and not a natural outcropping of criminality or deviance.

Lastly, the use of the word ‘space’ deserves a note. In *Place in Research* (2015), Tuck & McKenzie make the case for using the word ‘place’ over ‘space’. In contrast to the use of space—which tends to be used to describe the global, modern, and progressive—they argue that the specificity and rootedness of place is what makes it important for the social sciences. While I use ‘space’ to describe gang territories, it aligns with Tuck & McKenzie’s critical place inquiry methodology. They emphasize the mobile, shifting, and performed nature of place, understand it as shaped through practices and able to influence social practices, and conceptualize place as interactive and dynamic.

However, despite these similarities, the concept of place, as they admit, retains a sense of locality, tradition, and, as others argue, implies a sense of exclusion and inclusion (Massey 2005). While these traits are convincingly challenged by Tuck & McKenzie (2015), they reflect the qualities people expect of gang territories, qualities I did not want the use of 'place' to unintentionally emphasize. Instead I tend to use "the seemingly more abstract" concept of space, recognizing it as "abstract and concrete, produced and producing, imagined and materialized, structured and lived, relational, relative and absolute" (Merriman et al. 2012: 4). However, depending on the context, both 'place' and 'space' may be used; neither implies a static, pre-formed, or singularly configured entity.

My commitment to an ontological approach, one that assumes reality is brought into being rather than out there waiting to be found, is expressed in my methodological approach, which focuses on the daily practices that bring gang territories into being in various ways. This approach is employed to enable, firstly, the possibility of identifying versions of gang spaces that have previously been difficult to recognize as either material or spatial. Paying attention to practices brings unexpected forms of space into view. The materiality of bodies and the ways affect, movement, and iterative stylization form space in multiple—both regional and extra-regional—ways becomes apparent.

Secondly, a focus on practices challenges the assumption that space, as a form, is universally accessible. When space is thought of as a preexisting flat or container-like entity, it becomes common sense that it can be found, explored, and mapped with the right tools. However, as my first encounters with gang territories

suggested, my ability to locate gang space did not align with an ability to access it: even as I was shown these boundaries I was unable to enter their material reality—they are spaces that cannot simply be *found* if you go to *where* they exist. Far from being a methodological limitation or failure, though, through this observation I suggest that invisibility and inaccessibility should be recognized as features of sociological work, a view that parallels the call to incorporate “secrecy as a topic of study and an underlying condition for inquiry” (Rappert 2020: 132; Walters & Luscombe 2020). A study of gang territorial practices allows for contemplation of alternative or unconventional gang spatial models. However, the intent is not to circumvent practices of invisibility, but to contend with them and to acknowledge the need to leave room for spaces that cannot universally be found.

The title of this dissertation references a gang colloquialism—*slipping the line*—, which means to cross the boundaries of home territory into rival gang turf. The saying, however, seems to also neatly capture the general sense of this project. If we think of conventional models of space that use volume and region as its main attractions, we see the ways lines have particular import. These sorts of spaces rely on lines: lines that divide, lines that contain. *Slipping the line*, in this sense, is a good analogy for the new materialist analysis that attends to the ways space is enacted in ways that defy, or *slip*, those conventional spatial lines. Indeed, gang-affiliated youth use this term in similarly unconventional ways. As I expand on in Chapter 4, *slipping the line* is not only used to reference crossing regional boundaries, but also in ways that suggest gang territories function as hybrid geographies accessed or transgressed in embodied and multiple ways.

1.3 Structure of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2 I provide an overview of both the ways space has been approached in gang studies literature and the theoretical framework I use to conduct my spatial analysis of gang territories. I situate my project within new materialist literature, especially ANT and NRT. Chapter 3 follows with an account of my methodological approach and methods: a relational ethnography that attends to “processes involving configurations of relations among different actors or institutions” (Desmond 2014: 547).

My analysis chapters are loosely organized under the headings of three categories of human actors who live, work, or travel through gang territories: gang members, residents, and police. Working from the information I collected, these themes emerged inductively, but not exclusively or naturally. The organization of data is always an *uninevitable*⁴ achievement, and other thematic organizations are also possible. Themes of technologies, embodiment, and mobilities crossed through all my analyses, and thus through all three analysis chapters.

Chapter 4 focuses on the practices of gang members. However, gang turf emerges in unexpected ways. Urban landscapes both demarcate and hide boundary lines. Drug dealing practices allow boundaries to expand, contract, fade away and remerge. Hybrid geographies enact the body as out of bounds, even while the

⁴ As Andrew Smith suggests, it be possible to construe this material in other ways: “the aura of inevitability...accrues, retrospectively, to journeys that are absolutely uninevitable in sociological terms” (2006: 48).

person remains, regionally, within gang boundaries. Embodied territory extends, concentrates, and dissipates through gang colours and tattoos. Chapters 5 and 6 move beyond the territory of gang members by attending to the actions of non-gang-affiliated residents and police, respectively. In Chapter 5 I examine witnessing—a practice through which gang boundaries come into view for residents as relations of interiority and exteriority. Gang territory also locates as new forms of embodied mobilities, especially for young racialized residents. Chapter 6 follows with a focus on police practices. I argue that law enforcement does not simply enter and exit gang territory but produces it—indeed, reinforces it—often in ways that spatialize the racialized body. Together, these chapters shift attention away from gang territories as spaces claimed by gang members and that contain (illicit) gang activities, and toward the ways these spaces come to be through daily, diffused practices. Despite their invisibility and their reputation as symbolic spaces, I present gang territories as material spaces, and showcase this materiality as mobile, multiple, emergent, and embodied.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Literature Review

Although space is rarely the explicit focus of gang research, the *where* of gangs has been an indispensable aspect of understanding how and why gangs form and proliferate, their levels of crime and violence, strategies for intervention, and issues of gang identity and status. In both popular and academic accounts, one of the most defining features of street gangs is their strong attachment to turf—the home territory under the direct control of a gang (Klein 1995; Ley & Cybriwsky 1974; Miller 1975; Spergel 1990). This “unmistakable and defendable area, forming a discrete zone of influence,” is constructed, according to *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Criminology* (Valasik & Tita 2018: 840), through “both the built environment (i.e., roads, highways, railways, buildings, etc.) and symbolic barriers (i.e., spaces demarcated with graffiti).” The primacy of place for gangs is reflected in the observation that many gangs name themselves after the locations they occupy (Leap 2012; Monod 1967; Moore 1991; Rafael 2007; Salagaev & Safin 2014; Thrasher 1927). While gangs’ relationships with the street has changed over time (McLean, Deuchar, Harding & Densley 2019), academic definitions of gangs commonly continue to include a spatial component, for instance through referencing youth in neighbourhoods (Klein 1971), or who are street oriented (Klein 2005, cf Decker, Melde & Pyrooz 2009). Indeed, the terms ‘youth gangs’⁵ and

⁵ The term ‘youth gang’ commonly refers to gangs whose members are youth and young adults. In the US Department of Justice publication, *Youth Gangs: An Overview* (Howell, 1998) defines youth gangs as “typically composed only of juveniles, but may include young adults in their membership.” Canada’s Public Safety Agency similarly notes that a youth gang refers to an organized group of

'street gangs' are often used interchangeably, making *who* they are synonymous with *where* they are.

While space is an indisputable aspect of gang life, the definition of territoriality that has endured is fairly limited: in relation to gangs, territoriality implies: (1) that the gang's activities (playing, hanging-out, partying) are concentrated within a "turf"; (2) that the turf is relatively clearly bounded; (3) that the turf is defended against invaders and that fights with other gangs center on intentional invasions of territory; and (4) that members and their families live inside the territory (Moore, Vigil & Garcia 1983: 184). In practice, this perceived homogeneity of gang turf is challenged, taking form as: the street corner (Whyte 1943), the street, the block, or neighbourhood (Thrasher 1927), the ghetto (Brown et al. 2012), the housing project (Brown et al. 2012), the apartment house (Miller 2008), the prison (Moore & Garcia 1978; Skarbek 2014), in schools (Adamson 1998; Davis 1992; Hagedorn 1998; Hutchinson & Kyles 1993), on school buses (Hutchinson & Kyles 1993), and as the local, global, and 'glocal' (Winton 2012)—locations that are variously implicated in the emergence, development, operation,

adolescents and/or young adults (2007). In Winnipeg, although street gangs are frequently referred to as 'youth gangs,' through the 1990s the Winnipeg Police's Street Gang Unit began documenting an increase in adult involvement with street gangs (Giles 2000). Indeed, by 1994 adults accounted for half of the total membership of street gangs in Winnipeg (Giles 2000) and some Aboriginal gangs in the city are characterized by inter-generational membership. This is a trend that gang researchers have also identified (Horowitz 1983; Moore 1978; Vigil 1990). Moore (1991) maintains that "gang members remain tied to the gang into adulthood because job networks have degenerated, and low wage, exploitative labor remains the only employment option" (cf Giles 2000: 29). Broadly speaking, the terms gang, youth gang, and street gang tend to be used interchangeably to denote "an organized group of adolescents and/or young adults who rely on group intimidation and violence, and commit criminal acts in order to gain power and recognition and/or control certain areas of unlawful activity" (Montreal Police Service, cf Government of Canada 2007: 1), and are distinguished from prison gangs, ideological gangs, hate groups, motorcycle gangs, and gangs whose membership is restricted to adults (Howell 1998).

longevity, and identity of gangs.

The variations between, and changing nature of, gang territories documented by researchers has done little to disrupt the expectation of gang territories as static and regionally bounded spatial forms. Given the important role that space plays in our understandings of gangs, it is surprisingly under-theorized and underexplored, and conceptualized largely through Western scientific models. In the next section I provide an overview of some of the main ways gang territories have been understood—often implicitly—as spatial forms in gang literature.

2.1.1 Chicago School's Ecological Theory

When it comes to social scientific understandings of 'criminogenic' space, the influence of the Chicago School of Sociology cannot be overstated (Hayward 2012). Grappling with increasing levels of immigration, crime, and delinquency in the early twentieth century, scholars at the University of Chicago sought answers in the changing urban landscape of their rapidly growing city, claiming that the key to understanding crime "lay not in studying the traits of individuals but in studying the traits of neighborhoods" (Cullen & Agnew 2011: 90). Key theorists of the Chicago School approached the city and urban life as an ecological system (Burgess 1925; Park & Burgess 1925; Wirth 1938). Biological metaphors stressed the natural evolution of cities into distinct competing yet symbiotic areas and a predictable evolution through developmental stages, including stages of deviance and disorder.

Frederic Thrasher's seminal work *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago* (1927), offered one of the earliest sociological accounts of gangs as a

product of their environment, in contrast to the previously theorized “gang-forming instinct” (Puffer 1912). Thrasher argued that gangland formed in “geographically and socially interstitial” (1927: 22) places of the city—inner-city areas populated by high numbers of European and African Americans immigrants residing in overcrowded tenements near the factories they worked at. These were areas of great transition, rapid population growth, ethnic heterogeneity, and poverty—features that Thrasher believed contributed to a level of social disorganization that increased the likelihood of deviancy. These ecological conditions, he argued, prevented the development of informal social control, the absence of which contributed to an environment “naturally selected” for gang formation. Gangs thus formed as the result of the interaction between young people and the physical and social environment.

The ecological underpinnings of the Chicago School established a spatial model for thinking about gangs and about crime more generally. Since ‘the neighbourhood’ was the geographic unit responsible for a naturally emerging gang territory and the basic unit of territorial attachment (Thrasher 1927), gangs came to be understood as spatially contained units with internal dynamics that differed from the rest of the city. This orientation meant that the study and treatment of gangs necessarily began in their geographical area since this was where one would find, prevent, intervene, and/or control gangs. Indeed, when gangs are assumed to naturally and spontaneously develop out of neighbourhood conditions, thinking of gangs as existing outside these boundaries becomes difficult: gangs and territory are, after all, formed in tandem.

The evolutionary framework of the ecological model suggested that people adapted to their spatial environment over time. Early Chicago School theorist Roderick McKenzie argued that one's physical location was a consequence of the struggle for survival; individuals or groups who lived in the better neighbourhoods were simply more adapted to their environment than those who lived in poor inner-city areas (Gottdiener, Budd & Lehtovuori 2015). This is obviously not a neutral theoretical move. When we position disadvantage as a temporal stage of development, political and economic policies that target conditions of marginality are difficult to justify against the underlying logic that these natural spatial adaptations will work themselves out over time. While for early Chicago School scholars it was not race or ethnicity but neighbourhood conditions that promoted deviance and the formation of gangs, these theories drew a connection between ethnicity, disorder, time, and space—a correlation that could, if one was not careful, be implicitly construed as causation.

The Chicago School's focus on city and neighbourhood influenced future researchers to consider environment, if not always territory, as fundamental to gang studies (Venkatesh 1997). However, the emphasis on environment was pursued in ways that may not have been anticipated. Despite evidence that Thrasher was more interested in documenting "the situation complex" of gang life than in setting forth an argument for social ecology (Dimitriadis 2006; Katz & Jackson-Jacobs 2004), and notably did not include criminality as a defining feature of youth gangs, his work has largely been used to support criminological investigations of gangs (Winton 2012). In part, this direction was fostered through the popularity and evolution of the

concept of social disorganization.

2.1.1.1 Social Disorganization Theory

Many of the ways we understand gangs have developed out of social disorganization theories (Decker et al. 2013). Thrasher's original conception of social disorganization, which suggested that gangs form through "learned behaviors" in communities with weak societal controls, established the basis for cultural deviance theory (Shaw & McKay 1942): economic disadvantage, racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility lead to the breakdown of traditional social institutions such as the school, the church, and the family (Bursik & Grasmik 1993; Mares 2010; Sampson & Groves 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls 1997), and promotes gang involvement as an alternative institution (Decker et al. 2013; Chettleburgh 2007; Chin 1996; Howell & Decker 2013; Howell, Egley & Gleason 2002; Huff 1996; Klein 1995; Rizzo 2003; Spergel 1995). Ideas of social disorganization similarly underwrite control theories (Agnew 1992; Gottfredson & Hirschi 1990; Klemp-North 2007; Reiss 1951; Reckless 1961) such as strain theory (Merton 1938); differential opportunity theory (Cloward & Ohlin 1960); routine activities theory (Cohen & Felson 1979; Felson 2008; Felson & Boba 2010) and crime pattern theory (Brantingham & Brantingham 1984). These theories generally argue that a deteriorating social structure promotes delinquency since people become disposed to offend in order to satisfy short-term gains. In contrast to the original use of the concept, the main thrust of social disorganization theories has been to understand the link between gang boundaries, crime, and violence across America (Brantingham, Tita, Short & Reid 2012; Kennedy, Braga & Piehl 1997;

Papachristos 2009; Tita & Greenbaum 2009; Tita & Radil 2011).

The spatial implications of social disorganization theories are two-fold. Firstly, it promotes an underlying message that gang territory is not only naturally emerging, it is also naturally violent and deviant. Secondly, these theories continue to reinforce the idea that gangs are a geographically delineated phenomenon: factors found *within* these zones—their levels of poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, rates of transition, the state of housing, population growth—weakens social control and allow for gangs and other deviant behaviours to flourish. As a result, gang boundaries that once marked where gangs formed, soon became boundaries around how and where one *intervened*.

2.1.1.2 Intervention

In the late 1960s, the focus of gang research started to shift from theories of gang development toward strategies for gang prevention and intervention (Klein 1971; Spergel 1966; Short & Strodbeck 1974). Decades of gang research asserting that gangs emerge from spaces of disorder and violence made it common sense that interventions were not only necessary but also that these interventions were necessarily geographically oriented. Although methodologically different from the data-rich neighbourhood ethnographies of the Chicago School, quantitative and survey-driven studies maintained the neighbourhood- and city-focused spatiality of the previous era by developing community-level interventions (Decker et al. 2013) that sought to lower crime rates and decrease gang participation (Brotherton 2019; Feeley & Simon 1992; Katz and Jackson-Jacobs 2013). Instrumental in this approach were Spergel (1966), Klein (1971), and Short and Strodbeck (1974) who developed

and evaluated programs designed to deal with the ‘gang problem’ (Jones, Roper, Stys & Wilson 2004).

2.1.1.3 Policing

Social disorganization theories also influenced the policing of gang crime, and exploiting the local geography became an important component of gang-specific crime control policies (Valasik & Tita 2018). Placed-based policing strategies such as crime prevention through environmental design and situational crime prevention strategies were used to curb opportunities for crime by changing environmental conditions. Spatially targeted policing used curfews, civil gang injunctions, and other forms of surveillance to prevent gang members from gathering in public settings. This order-maintenance approach to policing reflected the popularized “broken windows” theory (Wilson & Kelling 1982), which postulated that signs of disorder are a precursor to increased criminal activity in neighbourhoods (Harcourt 2009). This theory was responsible for the development of by-laws such as the anti-gang loitering ordinance imposed by the Chicago police in 1992—an ordinance that led to the arrest of over 42,000 people in two years (Harcourt 2009). More recently, geographic information system (GIS) software has been used to study the role that space/territory plays in shaping the distribution of gang violence by mapping the distribution of various crimes within gang territories (Valasik & Tita 2018: 8).

Despite the Chicago School’s emphasis on ethnographic methodologies, its work was overshadowed by the scientism of the ‘city as a social laboratory’ (Park & Burgess 1925) approach. Statistical demographics allowed readily quantifiable results that invited a “rational policy-oriented ideal” that attracted government

networks interested in the control and ('risk') management of crime (Hayward 2012: 445). As a result, "micro processes at street level are stripped of their inherent specificity, meaning and serendipity" (Hayward 2012: 445-6). While these geographies of crime reflect long-standing Chicago School spatial assumptions (Hayward 2012), they are expressed through the belief that efforts to control gang crime are best centered within the boundaries of territory or neighbourhood.

2.1.2 Group Processes

While on one hand the Chicago School influenced the understanding of gang territories as regionally bounded areas, on the other, neighbourhood-focused studies have led to wider conceptions of gang space. Research on dynamic social interactions and processes (McGloin & Decker 2010) focuses on gang events like joining the gang, leaving the gang, or taking part in gang crime (Decker et al. 2013). While this research still positions gang members as fundamentally a product of their local communities (Papachristos, Wildeman & Roberto 2015), it challenges assumptions about the regionally bound nature of gang crime and activities. Gang violence, rather than staying contained within the boundaries of gang turf, has been shown to span an individual's social network (Papachristos et al. 2012; Papachristos, Hureau & Braga 2013; Papachristos et al. 2015). Similarly, as gangs accumulate sufficient street capital to evolve, territory is defined less physically and more relationally—from bounded physicality to interpersonal and abstract connections (McLean et al. 2019). Access to public transportation and cars has also afforded gang members greater territorial flexibility (Decker & Van Winkle 1996;

Hagedorn 1988; Valasik & Tita 2018), and the frequent relocation of gang members has meant that territory and residence may be two separate areas (Moore, Vigil, & Garcia 1983)—indeed, in one study, 59% of gangs resided outside the boundaries of their claimed turf (Valasik, Gravel & Tita 2016, cf Valasik and Tita 2018).

Conventional understandings of gang territory have also been challenged through the concept of gang “set space” (Tita, Cohen & Engberg 2005). While previous research focused predominantly on macro-geographies such as the neighborhood, “set space” recognizes the importance of subareas that act as the group’s “life space,” such as parks, alleys, or street corners. This approach shifts the spatial unit of analysis from one large, homogeneous, and static version of territory to gang space as it is used in practice. In these process-oriented studies, gangs are presented as “a dynamic phenomenon, adapting and responding to the conditions of their local environment” (Valasik & Tita 2018: 11)—a move that challenged common ideas about the nature of neighborhood territoriality (Bursik & Grasmik 1993).

2.1.3 Structural Analysis

While a focus on group process allowed researchers to see the flexible and dynamic ways that gangs interact with and move through space, it left unquestioned that gangs emerge from, and can be intervened upon, within (roughly) territorial lines. In doing so, an important boundary persisted: gangs were studied largely in isolation from broader structural factors. This oversight was addressed by scholars who criticized the human ecology model for functionalist undertones that

positioned race and class as ‘natural’ spatial groupings, and for ignoring powerful economic, political and cultural forms of organization that produced particular spatial, and racial, patterns of inequality (Blau & Blau 1982; Brotherton 2019; Brown et al. 2012; Gottdiener et al. 2015; Gottschalk 2006; Hagedorn 2008; Morris 2017; Snodgrass 1976). Rather than being a natural part of the evolution of cities, social disorganization was now being linked to racial and other forms of inequality (Wilson 1987; Sampson & Wilson 2013 [1995]).

Work on the structural and systemic origins of gangs drew attention to factors such as, “the loss of jobs due to the deindustrialization of the American economy... policies that channeled blacks into dense, high-rise public housing; the lack of investment in keeping up the housing stock in inner-city neighborhoods; and urban renewal that displaced African Americans from their homes and disrupted their communities” (Cullen & Agnew 2001: 93-4). As Hagedorn asserted, “The history of gangs in Chicago is fundamentally a history of race, or more precisely racism, though also inextricably tied to class and space” (2006: 205). This confluence of factors influencing the emergence of gangs has been theorized in terms of “multiple marginality” (Vigil 2010), a framework that links the many ways that youth are marginalized in society to their eventual involvement in a gang.

In Canada, similar research has focused on the “spatially concentrated, racialized poverty” of Aboriginal street gangs, which have been “traced to the impact of global economic restructuring, to neoliberal forms of governance—and to colonialism” (Comack, Dean, Morrisette & Silver 2013: 7; see also Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson 2008). Comack et al. argue that Aboriginal street gangs are the

legacy of colonial spatialization evident in the ways “the European settler society pushed Aboriginal peoples off their historic lands onto economically marginal reserves” and Aboriginal children were “forcibly seized by the state and confined in residential schools” (2013: 16). As Aboriginal writer Nahanni Fontaine (2006) argues, “Aboriginal gangs are a product of our colonized and oppressed space within Canada—a space fraught with inequity, racism, dislocation, marginalization, and cultural and spiritual alienation” (cf. Comack et al. 2013: 17).

Looking at structural conditions of street gangs changes our understanding of gang spatiality: it implies that the origins of, and solutions to, gangs are found in economic and political decisions and policies responsible for disproportionately consigning African Americans, Aboriginal peoples, and other racialized groups to spatially confined areas—in geographies of racism that extend outside and beyond neighbourhood and territorial lines. Gangs, in this sense, are an adaptation to wider social and economic landscapes than neighbourhood or turf boundaries can contain.

2.1.4 Globalization

Research on the structural conditions of gang emergence, proliferation, and persistence has been extended within studies of gangs and globalization. “As new global processes exacerbate existing inequalities and create new ones,” Winton argues, “gangs may be seen as a barometer of increasingly widespread societal failings” (2014: 407). As processes of globalization reshape and reconfigure inner-city areas (Fraser 2013), studying gangs within this “wider context of exclusion” (Winton 2014: 407) problematizes universalist assumptions of gang territory. In contrast to the view of the gang as a “fixed, static, criminal street organisation,

controlling a territory for specific economic ends,” Fraser asserts that, “gentrification and displacement have resulted in shifting boundaries and more fluid conceptions of ‘turf’” (Fraser 2013: 970-2). While some authors argue that gang research in the global context can be overly concerned with the development of a common international definition of gangs (Fraser & Hagedorn 2018), it also allows for local, grounded comparisons within a broader structural context (Fraser & Hagedorn 2018: 46). The latter approach avoids re-spatializing gangs as a now-global monolithic entity by bringing nuance and variation to trans-national sites.

One of the topics currently attracting attention is the global proliferation of gangs (Decker et al. 2013), spurred, Winton argues, by the “concern that increased transnational interconnectivity may lead to national problems of violence and conflict spilling over into other (western) nations” (2014: 403). While some scholars argue that gang movement and growth is attributable to expanding drug entrepreneurialism (Howell 2007), others assert that gang formation is minimally affected by the diffusion of gang members from other cities (Hagedorn 1988; Huff 1989; Maxson 2014). These latter scholars instead draw attention to the global context of gang *culture* through the proliferation of media, videos, and social networking, which transmit American gang identity to youth across the world (Hagedorn 2005; Hagedorn 2008; Papachristos 2005; Pyrooz, Decker & Moule Jr. 2015). However, whether gangs or gang culture are being globalized, both views reposition gang territory as increasingly diffuse, and gangs—or at least gang culture—as increasingly unrestricted by traditional boundaries.

The impact of globalization on gang identity has also been linked to

processes of “deindustrialisation and ghettoisation [that] have intensified the spatial immobility of many” (Fraser 2013: 972, see also Hagedorn 2008; Pickering, Kintrea, & Bannister 2012; Wacquant 2008; Winton 2012), leaving local space as one of the last resources available to marginalized youth. As Fraser explains, “As the opportunities, spaces, and futures available to young people...have been reconfigured, so the fixity of locale has retained a powerful place.... Identification with a local ‘gang’ becomes the confluence of area identity: a root of identity, status, and carnival in an uncertain and unsteady world” (2013: 981-2). In Canada, Ezeonu (2014) links the immigration system to the growing ‘gang’ problem. Despite immigration policy that emphasizes education and professional skills, ethnic and racial minorities remain excluded from the Canadian job market on arrival (Ezeonu 2008a), leaving them spatially confined to marginalized neighborhoods where membership in gangs provides one of the only means of escaping poverty (Ezeonu 2008b). These arguments again call into question spatial models that locate gangs as locally emergent, suggesting instead that transnational practices of race manifest in spatially concentrated ways: the globalization of gangs is not exemplified in the transnational proliferation of gangs but in the re-entrenchment of local gang territorial lines.

Another take on the effect of globalization on gangs is found in Ailsa Winton’s work on the geographies of the ‘transnational’ gangs, or *maras*, of Central America. International migration flows and deportations from the United States to South America has meant that “although *maras* function according to territoriality, the final attachment is to the gang, and defense of territory is merely the vehicle

through which to display and perform this identity, such that the barrio has taken on a *symbolic* rather than physical significance” (2012: 143). Yet, the borderlessness of gang practices does not mean that gangs have become detached from space. Since gang identity remains attached to the individual as they move through the city, she argues that “gang identity is not so much *dislocated* as it is *relocated*: it has meaning beyond the territory of their *clika*, in the different spaces of the city, and more widely in the region” (Winton 2012: 143). Her work is important for highlighting the ways gangs operate not only *in* glocalized space, but *as* glocalized space—a valuable step forward in thinking about gang space in dynamic and embodied ways.

Work on gangs and globalization has invigorated discussions of gang space. While globalization can appear to undermine the importance of space for increasingly fluid and mobile gangs and gang identities, it remains necessary to heed Thrasher’s early emphasis on local and situated accounts of gangs (Fraser 2013). Thus, notions of glocalization change the scale at which gangs originate and operate—emerging from transnational processes and being enacted translocally (Winton 2012), while global communication networks facilitate, if always unevenly, relatively ‘borderless’ flows of information” (Winton 2012: 139).

2.1. Conclusion

Thinking of space as natural and cohesive—the legacy of The Chicago School’s theory that urban populations adapt *to* space as an already-there feature of cities—obscures the ways in which spaces are produced as gang territories. While critical gang scholars have done valuable work linking gang spaces to other

structural or globalized practices and policies, these approaches rarely challenge the regional and volumetric spatial models of a limited yet pervasive Western scientific tradition. Scholarly research on gangs and gang territories, despite the spatial connotations, tends to treat space as a backdrop—an already-there surface upon which the “social” is mapped and re-mapped. While work on the materiality of space, its multiplicity, and its dynamism has a long history in critical and cultural geography, sociology, and philosophy (Mumford 1989; Sennett 2002), it rarely infiltrates the work of gang studies (although see, for example, Venkatesh 1997 and Winton 2012). Bringing in a new materialist lens draws into the fold various ways gang spaces are made by and through a multitude of actors and practices.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The significance of space to our understanding of gangs has long been recognised. However, in much of the literature, space is often taken for granted as something relations, such as gang activities, happen within or upon and thus it is only indirectly addressed. While space has been used as a means to understand some aspects of gangs more fully, especially their emergence, criminality, control, and, less commonly, gang member identity and behaviours, these accounts rarely challenge the models of space being used or explore the ways these spaces are made through everyday practices. In this project, gang space moves to the foreground.

The ubiquitous understanding of space as simply a backdrop to, or container of, natural and social phenomena, is far from obvious or neutral: instead, it has its own ontological history. In part, it can be traced to models of Euclidean space in

which objects inhabit particular, mutually exclusive spaces. In this model, space and objects interact, but are not co-constitutive: it is a commonsense tendency to want to say that the space was there before the object arrived, and the object, while it may need space to exist, exists within it, not because of it (Urry 2001). Of particular concern to the study of gang space are the ideas of region and territory.

Regionalism, another form of Euclideanism, depicts the world as a flat surface that can be divided into principalities of varying sizes. Regionalism describes the way territory is most commonly depicted for gangs: as areas of land whose boundaries demarcate both the distinction between and separation from surrounding areas.

Euclidean and Newtonian models of space underpin our understanding of gang territories as static and fixed containers within which gang life unfolds. While these theories certainly describe some spatial configurations, including some gang territorial forms, they tend to eclipse the existence of other versions of space (Law & Urry 2004). Law and Urry argue that the predominance of these models can be partly explained by their alignment with nineteenth-century preoccupations: “with fixing, with demarcating, with separating” (2004: 403). Indeed, we imagine both gang and state territory as a geographical space that demarcates an internally contained collective identity (Rousseau 1792), “ideally expressed through dominance over land and physically marked with borders” (Walther & Retaille 2014: 193). These views of space that suited the concerns of European nation-states fail to adequately address the social reality of “the fleeting, the ephemeral, the geographically distributed, and the suddenly proximate” (Law & Urry 2004: 403); they fail to acknowledge other ways spaces can be made and used.

In a similar move, feminist geographer Doreen Massey (2005) suggests an overlap between Euclidean spatial models and colonial enterprise. As a regional surface, space becomes something that social relations take place *in* or *on*, a view that facilitates colonial histories of crossing, conquering and territorializing space. Conceiving of space as a continuous and given surface positions those who cross and conquer space as active makers of history; Indigenous populations are seen as passively residing ‘on’ this surface, and thus lacking active spatial histories.

The way we represent space matters because it changes the way we understand and then act towards space and its inhabitants (Harvey 1989). While regionalization is beneficial for some groups, it has some serious disadvantages, most notably “the tendency to freeze what is often a highly dynamic situation” (Thrift 2008: 98). When we take the spatial models that underpin social phenomena for granted we risk failing to recognize the complexity of both space and those who ‘inhabit’ these spaces. As McKittrick asserts,

Geography’s discursive attachment to stasis and physicality, the idea that space ‘just is,’ and that space and place are merely containers for human complexities and social relations, is terribly seductive: that which ‘just is’ not only anchors our selfhood and feet to the ground, it seemingly calibrates and normalizes where, and therefore who, we are. (2006: xi)

When we think only of what happens in space rather than *of space*, the connections between space and what happens “therein” are missed.

In this dissertation I approach gang territories as material spaces enacted through a variety of practices and by a variety of actors. This analysis leans on a century of spatial theory refuting the idea of absolute space—space that is taken as natural, given, essential, measurable, and within which people and objects are

located, and through which they move. Theorists (Castells 2004; Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 2005) have instead emphasized the materiality of space, claiming that space is produced and organized in conjunction with the mode of production. Space, argues Lefebvre (1991), “is not a neutral and passive geometry. Space is produced and reproduced and thus represents the site of struggle” (cf Urry 2002: 25). Massey (2005) organizes her conception of the material production of space into three propositions: the first is that space is the product of interrelations, as opposed to a container of interactions; the second emphasizes the multiple histories, stories, and trajectories through which space and place are produced and exist in multiplicity and contemporaneous plurality—space as “the simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey 2005: 9); and thirdly, space should be viewed as always under construction. Space is embedded in material practices and is thus always in the process of being made.

These and other critical Marxist theorists bring life to the concept of space. However, the materialism underpinning these accounts tends to remain tethered to the mode of production, implying to various degrees that the structuring of space is functionally tied to the reproduction of capitalism. While gang studies that have focused on economic and political structuring have provided invaluable insight, structural analyses may miss some of the intricacies and nuances of gang spaces and limit the way they are defined and studied. In contrast, the work of Classical sociologist Georg Simmel, for whom social space was “a crucial dimension of social interaction and also of cultural formations” (Frisby & Featherstone 1997, cf Zieleniec 2007: 34), reminds us of the rich spatial life in daily interactions. For

Simmel, space was “a crucial and fundamental element in human experience because social activities and interactions are and must be spatially contextualized” (Zieleniec 2007: 34).

The legacies of these strains of spatial theory are found in recent analyses that extend the material and everyday production of space to include the agency of things (Thrift 2008). This new materialist⁶ approach, developed over the last 20 years, takes up the subject of matter more literally, bringing attention to our “ineluctably material world” filled with physical objects, natural environments, and our own corporeality (Coole & Frost 2010: 1). Challenging matter’s reputation as inert and passive, new materialisms “affirm matter’s immanent vitality,” an ontological stance that asserts matter is both made and contributes to the making of realities (Coole & Frost 2010: 8). This is not to deny the influence of economic and political systems on space, but to advance a “renewed” materialist approach (Coole & Frost 2010: 4) that recognizes the many entanglements of the material world.

The corollary of reimagining matter was a subsequent revitalization of space. Although new materialism takes matter as its focus, assigning agential properties to matter disrupted the category of space within which matter was once passively located. As matter becomes reconfigured as “a dynamic and shifting entanglement of relations, rather than a property of things” (Barad 2007: 35), space becomes one of the relations of its configuration, both contributing to and formed through material

⁶ As Coole and Frost (2010: 4) note, the designation of ‘new’ in new materialisms is not intended to deny a rich materialist heritage, but is instead meant to draw attention to the “unprecedented things...currently being done with and to matter, nature, life, production, and reproduction. It is in this contemporary context that theorists are compelled to rediscover older materialist traditions while pushing them in novel, and sometimes experimental, directions or toward fresh applications.”

practices. Space becomes part of the ontology of objects, and objects become part of the ontology of space.

2.2.1 Actor-network Theory

John Law (2002) notes that in Euro-American common sense a materialist understanding of space is difficult to comprehend primarily because we are not accustomed to recognizing the *work* of producing space. This oversight is countered in the relational materiality of actor-network theory (ANT), which draws attention to how entities, such as spaces, are *done*. Like other new materialisms, ANT proposes a radically relational way of understanding the world. Entities—objects, texts, institutions, humans—have no inherent qualities but instead take form through their relations with other entities (Law 1999). This principle of generalized symmetry (Callon 1986) treats human and non-human actors as having equal worth in the relations, or networks, that make up the social.

In addition to relationality, ANT draws on another new materialist concept, that of performance or practice. If entities achieve their form as a consequence of relations, then entities can be thought of as *performed* in, by, and through those relations (Law 1999)—relations that need to be repeatedly performed for the network object, or entity, to continue to succeed. Anne-Marie Mol shifts to the language of “practice” to capture this idea, suggesting “ontologies are brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices” (Mol 2002: 6). As Mol notes, when we foreground “practicalities, materialities and events, reality becomes something done in practice” (Mol 2002:

12-13). Insisting on the performative character of relations, including those that constitute space, shifts the emphasis from asking *what is*, to a curiosity about *how things happen*. Effects, rather than ends, become crucial (Mol 2010).

The ANT principles of relational materiality and performativity have consequences for the way we understand space. While we are most familiar with thinking of space as part of the natural order of things, and as distinct from the objects that inhabit it, ANT shows that both space and objects are produced through heterogeneous assemblages (Law 1999). Recognizing the performative and enacted nature of space suggests that there are other spatial possibilities, hybrid geographies that challenge the space/matter binary: since practices are many, so too are spaces. Space is also implicated in the enactment of certain realities. In *The Body Multiple: ontology in medical practice* (Mol 2002), space is part of the relations that help bring a disease and a body into being in multiple ways. While Mol (2002) does not explicitly envisage the type of space enacted through a multiple object like disease, she demonstrates how different versions of atherosclerosis happen across various sites of the hospital. This spatial separation is part of what makes a singular object also multiple.

By encouraging researchers to follow practices, ANT's materially oriented ontology offers a way for spatial alterities that are 'other' to Euclidean space to become visible. However, ANT inquiries into spatialities have been predominantly focused in the area of science and technology, with alternative spaces tending to correspond to a variety of medical and techno-scientific objects. Additionally, these studies locate in highly visible and accessible places with recognizably material

objects⁷, for instance, in laboratories or hospitals filled with medical and administrative devices. While the networks these objects form may be elusive, their materiality is not. Indeed, ANT has been criticized for ignoring those things that cannot be translated into network terms (Lee & Brown 1994), an omission that contributes to the ongoing othering of things less visible. While post-ANT studies have done much to address concerns of othering in their work (Mol 2002; Law 2004) and have taken on themes of bodies, passions, and spatialities (see Law 2009), researchers in other fields have more consistently and thoroughly addressed issues of space, corporeality, affect, and other non-representational matter. Thus, while ANT encourages a focus on how spaces are done, its techno-scientific bent provides a limited model for understanding gang territories as material spaces. Given the invisibility of gang spaces, their practices—more embodied than scientific and technological—are not always easy to see, let alone follow.

2.2.2 Nonrepresentational Theory

The invisibility of gang spaces and the obscurity of their members—who are difficult to find, potentially dangerous to approach, unwilling to talk, and have little trust in consent form promises—made the practices of gang space appear so unlike the laboratories of ANT that the directive to ‘follow the practices’ evaded me. Those who did not self-describe as gang-affiliated were also elusive subjects. Not only do marginalized minors exist on the other side of a difficult ethics process, as indeed,

⁷ To be fair, Bruno Latour has noted an interest in *secrecy*, however his use of the term is not synonymous with *invisibility*: “In STS, we study things that are entirely secret. I mean, not explicitly made secret, but just denied. Things that interest nobody, and so no one pays any attention to them. I am more interested in that” (Salter & Walters 2016: 22).

do the police, it was also not obvious to me what to ask, where to look, or what to follow. However, as my interviews with people who lived, worked, or traveled through gang territories progressed, the materiality of gang space did slowly become apparent to me—sometimes through objects, sometimes through the built environment, but most notably through the mobile dispositions of the body. Gang space, I realized, was being made as the body.

While the body is far from absent in ANT literature (see Latour 2004; Mol 2002; Mol & Berg 1998), it is often featured in the context of scientific and technological materiality, and is not typically the main driver of material enactments. This is a delicate claim to make given the relationality inherent in these studies, but I think it is fair to suggest that Mol (2002), for instance, leans more toward how the body is enacted through the material practices of the hospital than toward how the body enacts the materiality of medicine. This contrasts against the like-minded approach to the social/spatial world found in the geographical tenets of nonrepresentational theory (NRT) (Thrift 2008). Employing many of the main principles of ANT, NRT again understands space as an assemblage made through the material practices of both human and non-human actors. However, in contrast to ANT's commitment to generalized symmetry, nonrepresentational geographies have tended to be more attentive to the expressive and affective practices of the human body in the practice of space (Cadman 2009).

NRT proved helpful in navigating a space that presented without obvious materiality. Originating in geography, Nigel Thrift (2008) developed NRT in opposition to what he saw as an overreliance on the cultural politics of

representation that tended to miss “much of the nonintentional, nondiscursive, and elusory nature of the everyday world” (Cadman 2009: 456). Instead, “non-representational approaches locate the making of meaning and signification in the ‘manifold of actions and interactions’ rather than in a supplementary dimension such as that of discourse, ideology or symbolic order” (Anderson & Harrison 2010: 2). Applied to gang spaces, a focus on representation might encourage, for example, a discursive analysis of the ways gang territories are represented as criminal spaces in various media, but be less suited to capture the mobile embodied dispositions and emotions of these spaces. Encouraging material explorations of what is not easily seen, especially as it pertains to the body, NRT encouraged me to overcome the tendency to assign a ‘symbolic’ designation to these spaces despite their less visibly locatable materiality.

Thrift’s emphasis on “the undisclosed and sometimes undisclosable nature of everyday practice” (Cadman 2009: 456) was valuable in helping me think through the ways that gang spaces are made material through mobile, expressive, and affective bodies that have been overlooked as material, as practices, and as space. New materialist accounts, such as ANT and NRT, distance their relational and ontological materialism from the use of grand narratives to explain and underwrite the social. Their point is instead to recognize the richness of the world, proposing that it is from “the active, productive, and continual weaving of the multiplicity of bits and pieces that we emerge” (Anderson & Harrison 2010: 8). This is a “lyric materiality” (Tiffany 2000, cf Thrift 2004: 123), an effort to reinstate heterogeneity, alterity, and enchantment back into materialism (Bennett 2010; Law 2004).

This approach to complexity, situatedness, and everyday materiality is not a-political. Instead, “this kind of depiction of a rich and sensuous materiality suggests a very different kind of ethos of engagement with the world” (Thrift 2014). As Thrift, drawing on Latour, writes,

Even nowadays, of course, some geographers still persist in believing that it ought to be possible to explain space and other like concepts in such simple terms that you should be able to understand what is going on straight off. But increasingly this kind of simple-minded approach has come to be understood as more likely to be a part of a desperate attempt to try to reduce the wonderful complexity and sheer richness of the world in ways which mimic the predictable worlds of those privileged few who have the ability to make things show up in the way they want them to. (2008: 96)

To embrace enchantment in social research is to acknowledge that “everywhere there is agency” (Law 2004: 134), a sentiment that counters the othering that comes with denying the agentic properties of much of the social world.

Learning more about the ways the world is made and remade in material ways offers the potential for bringing to light new practices of intervention. However, the action-oriented politics of new materialisms that emphasizes the opportunity for disruption in everyday assemblages has encountered critiques that these accounts fail to connect to the multiple power geometries, and their trajectories of inequality, that shape our social space (Tolia-Kelly 2006). Catherine Nash counters Thrift’s claim that NRT is ‘radically contextual,’ by arguing that his attention to expressive body-practices exists in the “free-floating realm of the experiential above the social and cultural world,” rather than in the “social and cultural contexts in which gendered and racialized bodily practices are learnt, performed and subverted” (2000: 658). As Tuck and McKenzie caution,

“performances and practices cannot exist outside of “extrinsic sources,” such as cultural configurations of power and past colonial histories... We must also consider the role of power in our day-to-day understandings and experiences of materiality and place” (2015: 35).

These important considerations are beginning to be addressed in new materialist literatures, for instance, by authors who seek a materialist ontology of race (M’charek 2004; Nayak 2010; Nayak & Jeffrey 2013; Saldanha 2006) and gender (Haraway 1991). For instance, Nayak extends Thrift’s claim that “emotions are largely non-representational” (Thrift 2004: 60) by considering the way emotions materialize as race (Nayak 2010), while M’charek (2005; 2014) shows the entanglement of race and technology through the history of a DNA reference sequence. These authors offer valuable examples for how race and other embodied practices can be studied alongside other materialities, an essential directive for studying the ways racialized minorities embody gang spaces.

Approaching gang territories from a new materialist lens that pays attention to the multiple and varied everyday materialities of gang territories helps illuminate the conventional model of gang territory as one enactment among others, and encourages the recognition of other spatial models of territory. This is important because, for gangs, the use of the word territory as it is commonly understood emphasizes the claiming of, or ownership over, space, which quietly infers illicitness to these spaces. When space is understood as singular and singularly owned, gang territories appear as illegally co-opted spaces, a perspective that makes their control, criminalization, and suppression appear both common sense and justified.

Mike Davis (2009) argues that thinking spatially about crime encompasses three main stages. The first is to ask where crime happens, the second is to consider how places can be altered in ways that reduce crime, and the third is to consider how we come to know about space and crime and what we do with that knowledge. To these, this dissertation adds: how are spaces of crime—in this case gang spaces—*done*? Guided by spatial theory that disrupts Western Euclidean legacies, I bring gang spaces into the foreground, emphasizing the multiple ways gang spaces are made, maintained, and disrupted in material ways by multiple actors. ANT's attention to material practices, extended through NRT's attention to mobile embodied dispositions, has directed my ideas on space, and—as Chapter 3 describes—have additionally informed my approach to collecting and analyzing information on gang spaces.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction and Research Questions

Influenced by my theoretical orientation that views spaces as assemblages of contingent and ongoing material practices, I bring an ontological approach to my methodology through a relational ethnography. Instead of using immersive participation to learn what gang spaces are, a relational ethnography focuses on process and practice to understand how spaces come to be. This methodological approach was intended to address the following questions:

What kinds of spaces are gang territories?

What practices achieve the regionality associated with gang territories, and do other, more obscured forms of gang space exist alongside these enactments?

What actors contribute to the enactment of gang spaces?

How do gang members, residents of these areas, administrators working in these areas, police officers, and other non-human actors bring these spaces into being through daily material practices?

What material practices enact, maintain, and disrupt these spaces?

What reciprocal effects do these practices of space have on those who encounter them?

In what ways is space bound up with race and other material practices of the body?

The larger question around which this dissertation coheres is *how do practices of gang space contribute to the spatialization of race in ways that both promote and reflect longstanding hierarchies of control and subordination?*

In response to these questions, I propose that applying a materialist lens to gang territories brings visibility to the bodies—in the widest sense—responsible for spaces that have otherwise been obscured through conventional understandings of space. These questions are designed to unsettle our conceptions of gang space as static, bounded areas—geographically, materially, and socially—and in doing so, to unsettle narrow, and especially natural, associations between gang spaces, race, and crime.

3.2 Locating the Field

3.2.1 Winnipeg Gang Territories

Throughout this dissertation, I document the ways these spaces emerge in multiple, mobile, and embodied ways. However, there is a popular, more authorized reality of gangs found through official sources that I contend with. While I intervene on and add to this conventional understanding of gang spatiality, my access to gang territories as an ethnographer relied first on encountering them as regional and urban locations. My aim is not to discredit these more popularly agreed upon versions of gang spaces in Winnipeg. Indeed, the way gang territories are understood through official sources, such as the police and media, are relevant enactments that inform the ways people describe, navigate, and encounter gang territories. I describe this ‘authorized’ version below. It is not, nor is it intended to be, a comprehensive history or overview of Winnipeg and its gangs. Instead, it quickly sketches a sense of the gang landscape in Winnipeg. My analysis chapters are set against this landscape while adding complexity and multiplicity to its

narrative.

Incorporated as a city in 1873, Winnipeg is at the centre of Treaty One lands at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine River—a location with a 6,000-year history of Aboriginal habitation and trade. Although Winnipeg is the capital city of a province founded through the armed resistance of the French-speaking Métis in 1870, as the Canadian government removed the Aboriginal population to reserves and residential schools, the Metis were similarly expelled (Kives 2014). This began to change in the 1950s as increasing numbers of Aboriginal people migrated to cities in Canada (Kalbach, 1987, cf Brandon & Peters 2014: 10), including Winnipeg. Currently, Winnipeg's population of ~765,600 (City of Winnipeg 2019) comprises 12 percent Aboriginal residents—the highest percentage of any major Canadian city (City of Winnipeg 2018), and continues to undergo significant demographic transition. The proportion of Canadians identifying as Aboriginal is expected to increase to more than 5 percent of the Canadian population by 2031, and already more than one in ten Winnipeggers is Aboriginal, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit residents (Brandon & Peters 2014).

Alongside this growing demographic, population growth is also driven by international immigration. Results from the 2016 census show the share of Canada's recent immigrants living in the Prairie Provinces has more than doubled. Winnipeg, which makes up 2.2 percent of Canada's total population, has 4.3 percent of all recent immigrants, a group that, for the first time has more people coming from Africa than Europe (Macdonell 2017). As Manitoba's growth has slowed in part because of interprovincial migration (Dow 2019), the Manitoba Provincial Nominee

Program encourages immigration to support Manitoba's economic development (Government of Manitoba 2016).

Prior to the 1980s, Winnipeg had almost no gang activity⁸ (Giles 2000). While newspaper reports of gang-like activity increased after World War II, the term "gang" was loosely used to describe a host of group activities that did not adhere to any particular 'street gang' definitional guidelines (Giles 2000). The Main Street Rattlers—the city's first Aboriginal gang—formed in the early 1980s, followed by three more Winnipeg 'youth gangs': the Maidens, the Native Warriors, and the Rockers, in 1985 (Giles 2000). In 1989, gangs emerged on the Aboriginal reserves north of Winnipeg (Giles 2000). By the end of the 1990s four gangs had become a permanent fixture in the city—Indian Posse, the Deuce, the Manitoba Warriors, and the Native Syndicate—establishing street gangs in Winnipeg as primarily an Aboriginal phenomenon (Giles 2000).

In 2020, gangs remain part of Winnipeg's landscape, with long-standing and well-established gangs operating in defined territories throughout the city (Public Safety Canada 2012). Commonly referred to as the Aboriginal street gang capital of Canada, the Winnipeg Police Service estimates that there are 1400-1500 active gang members involved in as many as 35 gangs citywide; individuals of Aboriginal descent compose 75 percent of these gangs (Griffiths & Pollard 2013). However, over the last 15 years, newcomer gangs have become increasingly prominent in the city, due in part to the lack of sufficient resources for newcomer kids (Blunt &

⁸ One exception was Winnipeg's Dew Drop Gang, which formed in the city's North End in 1949. Wearing 'Chicago Block' gray hats, the Dew Drop Gang engaged in fights, disturbances, and robberies before disappearing in 1950 (Giles 2000).

Reimer 2019). As 2019 saw a spike in gang activity (Blunt & Reimer 2019), the provincial government announced the details of *Manitoba's Guns and Gangs Suppression Strategy*, which “will focus on the identification, arrest and dismantling of gangs, criminal organizations or violent crime groups, especially those involved with illegal firearms and illicit drugs” (Government of Manitoba 2019).

The high degree of disorganization and splintering of gangs and the ‘floating membership’ of gang members (Froese 2019) makes a comprehensive synopsis on gangs and their territories in Winnipeg a difficult task. However, as it is conventionally understood, Winnipeg gang territory is found predominantly in three areas of Winnipeg: The North End (North Side gang territory), the West End (West Side gang territory), and in West Broadway (West Side gang territory).

The North End/North Side

Developed in 1812 as long narrow farming lots for settlers, the North End of Winnipeg is one of the oldest parts of the city. With the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1882, it became economically and geographically separated from the rest of the city by one of the largest rail yards in the world. By the early twentieth century, the area—by this time, largely populated by immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe—was characterized by extreme poverty. While the rail line brought prosperity to the city, the North End suffered. Until bridges were built in 1904 there was no safe passage over the tracks, which forced land values further down because of its isolation and inaccessibility (Historical Buildings Committee 1981). It remains the poorest area of the city.

The suburbanization and deindustrialization of the 1960s that saw many

immigrants leave the North End corresponded with the migration of Aboriginal peoples from Manitoba reserves into Winnipeg, many of whom located in the North End where rent was most affordable (Silver 2010). While in 1951 there were 210 Aboriginal residents in Winnipeg, by 2006 there were 68,380, the largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada (Silver 2010). The North End remains a predominantly Aboriginal area, and it is here that Winnipeg's first gangs emerged.

One of the gangs currently operating in the North End is The Indian Posse, or IP, which formed in 1988 with a manifesto that called for reclaiming 'native pride' by force (Friesen 2011). Involved in a wide variety of criminal activities such as armed robberies, home invasions, break and enters, and drug trafficking (Mederski 2013), Indian Posse leaders and members were and continue to be frequently incarcerated. Despite their reputation for disorganized and needlessly violent activities, they expanded across the Prairies to become, by the 1990s, the largest gang in Canada (Friesen 2011). According to the Winnipeg Police Service, the Indian Posse continues to be a primary threat to the public (Mitchell 2015).

Also established in the North End are the Manitoba Warriors, which formed in 1993 out of the need for protection and the desire for an Aboriginal-based gang (Mitchell 2013). Unlike other gangs that began during this era, the Manitoba Warriors had a clear and organized structure, more closely resembling the outlaw biker gang model. In 2009 it adapted its structure to incorporate an Aboriginal style of governance that included a "council" of senior members, a style also used by the Indian Posse (Mitchell 2013). In the early years the Manitoba Warriors operated mainly out of various bars throughout the North End, but has since become more

diffused through the establishment of operations across the city. They remain one of the dominant organized street gangs in Winnipeg, profiting from of the lucrative drug trade of the North End and inner city, and in remote communities (Turner 2013).

Another prominent Aboriginal Winnipeg gang is the Native Syndicate, a gang associated with the North End but formed in prison in 1994 as a response to the incarceration of members of the Indian Posse and Manitoba Warriors. Inmates who were not in either of those gangs felt they needed to protect themselves and banded together (Friesen & O'Neill 2008).

The North End is also home to a large number of other gangs, including Most Organized Brothers (M.O.B.), M.O.B. Squad, and the Bloods. Unlike iconic American gangs, these gangs do not claim distinct territorial regions within the North End, but instead all claim the North End as their home and stake out smaller, contested, and highly fluid portions of this area. A detective in the organized crime unit explains that,

The North End section of the city has just been claimed by so many gangs. The big two are Manitoba Warriors and IP but beside that you have the Native Syndicate, the M.O.B., Team Money, and Blood sets operating there. Squad is also there. That's the enigma of the North End, and that's why it's always been disputed. [Gangs are] not willing to carve up the North End. It's just because that territory is its own. It's a densely packed neighbourhood and you have so many gangs. They've been around so long it's now generational. The Manitoba Warriors will have brothers and cousins, and same with the IP, who all go to jail and they're all housed with each other, the gangs. Then they come back to the North End. Those two gangs are lifelong rivals but they intermingle. It's the nature of the North end. You have to understand the North End. If you've ever had to police it, you know that tracking somebody down in the North End is like a needle in the haystack because it's the most transient neighbourhood you'd ever lived in. It's all rooming houses, it's all low rents. Nobody owns. People are moving so much

it's impossible to carve out a territory. Drug clientele are constantly moving. It doesn't work. It's too transient. If you ever want to find somebody wanted on a warrant in the North End it's like the most impossible mission. If you run an address and it's not within two weeks, especially if a month has passed, no you won't find them. You have to understand the nature of the North End.

The West End/West Side

The West End is an ethnically diverse area of Winnipeg, situated just West of Winnipeg's downtown. Established as a residential area for the working and middle classes between 1890-1912, parts of this area faced neighbourhood decline during the mid-20th century as affluent families moved to suburban areas. Since then, the area has attracted new immigrants and people of Aboriginal ancestry. While the area has undergone various revitalization projects since the 1980s, for decades crime has been a serious problem in portions of the West End and the area is currently experiencing a peak with methamphetamine-related crimes (Coopsammy 2019).

In the West End newcomer or immigrant gangs are most prominent. The largest proportion of immigrant-gangs in Winnipeg is Africa-Canadian—about 35 percent—including the Mad Cowz and the African Mafia. The Mad Cowz became known to police in 2004 for involvement in trafficking illicit drugs, especially crack cocaine, in the West End. They recruit youth from Winnipeg's refugee and immigrant community (MacDonald 2007)—primarily from Somalia and areas south of the Sahara – Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan (Griffiths & Pollard 2013). A splinter group of the Mad Cowz, African Mafia, is their main rival and these two gangs compete for territory in the West Side (Turner 2010a). African Mafia, whose

members are predominantly immigrants from areas North of the Sahara (Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt & Libya) (Griffiths & Pollard 2013), are notoriously violent and their rivalry with the Mad Cowz has been characterized by extreme levels of violence (Griffiths & Pollard 2013).

Violent conflict between new immigrant gangs and Aboriginal gangs has also been increasing (Griffiths & Pollard 2013). The Canadian Police Association (2013) reports that the violence between a growing number of Aboriginal and immigrant-based gangs in Winnipeg is a major concern for police.

West Broadway/B Side

Geographically, West Broadway is also situated west of downtown Winnipeg, separated from the West End by Portage Avenue—a major arterial route in the city. Characterized by lavish Queen Anne, Neo-Georgian, and Modern architecture, the West Broadway neighbourhood was established for middle and upper class families at the turn of the 20th century. From the 1940s to the 1960s, an outmigration of high and medium income residents led to a decline in property conditions and market values as larger homes were converted to rooming houses and apartments. By the late 1980s, the level of unemployment in West Broadway was four times higher than the rest of the city (West Broadway Community Organization [WBCO] 2011). The neighbourhood now has great ethnic diversity, with 23.9% of the population identifying as Aboriginal and another 16.2% identifying as immigrants or refugees (WBCO 2011).

The B Side gang territory is found within the boundaries of the West Broadway neighbourhood, and is home to one gang: the B Side. Formed in

approximately 2002 by members of an Aboriginal family living in the area, they are still referred to at times as the BSCF, or B Side Crime Family. According to the Winnipeg Police Service, the B Side focuses on trafficking crack cocaine, mainly through dial-a-dealing operations (Mitchell 2015). There have been a high number of violent confrontations between the B Side and the West Side's Mad Cowz and African Mafia, whose territory meets B Side at the shared regional boundary of Portage Avenue.

3.2.2 Getting There

My interest in studying gang territories as urban spaces—sparked by the contrast between how young residents navigated gang boundaries in daily ways and my own inability to see, feel, or be affected by these same lines—was tempered by a discomfort in the idea of 'exploring' gang territories. Exploration has not been kind to space or its inhabitants. It has been at times synonymous with conquest and supported colonial atrocities through descriptions of the exotic, the monstrous, the savage, and the Other (Said 2014). I was wary of bringing stories of the (wild) spaces of gang territories to the (civilized) space of the academy. In this chapter I outline the methodological approach I used to mitigate these concerns.

The brief overview of Winnipeg gang territories above describes these spaces largely through geographic regionalism: territories are defined by boundaries that demarcate the peripheries of these spaces. Though rarely marked through conventional spatial practices, their location, for those who know how to find them, exist *there*—flat, mappable spaces to which geographic coordinates could be assigned. Indeed, the idea that territory could be defined otherwise is difficult to

imagine. However, despite its prevalence, this view of space as singularly accessible, crossable, and findable can and should be challenged in methodological pursuits. Ethnographic positivism in the social sciences has taken 'the field' for granted as a "space in which an "Other" culture or society lies waiting to be observed and written" (Gupta & Ferguson 2008: 102), an approach that denies the "Other" "the status of a subject who acts and interacts with the ethnographer" (Bunzl 2014: xix). Akin to narratives of exploration and discovery, this assumption makes two problematic claims: first, that we are, with the right tools or modes of travel, capable of getting *there*, and second, that we are capable of accurately or validly depicting this place once we arrive.

Critical scholars have long challenged the view that research can be value-free and objective (Roberts 2013; Stanley & Wise 1983). Stressing the need for reflexivity and situated knowledges (Haraway 1988), researchers have instead emphasized embodied objectivity based on locatable, partial perspectives. This approach positions the body and biography of the researcher in relation to the research and recognizes that their accounts are always situated and partial, never comprehensive, truths.

However, this reflexive turn did more than encourage a more critical relationship between researcher and research subjects. It also challenged practices of knowledge production, bringing the nature of reality and how we can understand it into question. In contrast to the view that reality lies 'out there,' ready to be found by those who have the right methods, attention turned to the ways the world is made in *practice*, including through research practices (Datson 2000; Law & Urry

2001; Latour & Woolgar 1986). This perspective marks a shift from an epistemological approach that asks how we can find the truth, to an ontological approach that asks how is knowledge—or reality—produced?

I am grateful for the ways this relational and reflexive opposition to methodological detachment—the illusory ability to remain epistemologically distinct from objects of research—has influenced my research design. However, I remained troubled by that first, less critiqued methodological assumption: the ability to immerse, to get *there* in the first place. Through previous interviews with youth serving staff, I knew simply going *there* was not commensurate with access to gang territories. During that research I had traveled to many youth serving agencies across Winnipeg, paying close attention to these unfamiliar areas. I walked through inner-city and suburban areas to community centres, resource centres, church basements, and school gymnasiums. During these trips I did not encounter gang territories; their boundaries, which I surely crossed, went unnoticed. Later, when I knew where gang territories were, at least in a regional sense—for instance, when I knew crossing Portage Avenue took me from one territory into another—these spaces continued to exist beyond my reach. Young people in these areas were accessing gang territories in ways I could not, as spaces they could see, feel, and experience. For me they remained not only invisible but also inaccessible.

Both ‘getting there’ and ‘there’ have tended to be taken for granted aspects of ethnographic research. James Clifford (2003) suggests that anthropologists have been reluctant to elaborate on travel and arrivals in order to differentiate the science of ethnography from the literature of travel writing. “The travel writer,” he

explains, “will tell you about the boat, the missionary airplane, or the Land Rover. The ethnographer classically will not—you are dropped in” (Clifford 2003: 12). Once there, the field as a *location* remains similarly obscured: “This mysterious space—not the “what” of anthropology but the “where”—has been left to common sense, beyond and below the threshold of reflexivity” (Gupta & Ferguson 2008: 102). The assumption that we can simply get to these sites—that we just “wander” into them—leaves unspoken not only how we got there but also how they are chosen and the process of territorialization that goes into these decisions (Gupta & Ferguson 2008: 105). The lack of reflexivity in choosing field sites establishes boundaries not only between here and there but also between us and them, potentially creating the field as “a highly overdetermined setting for the discovery of difference” (Gupta & Ferguson 2008: 105).

3.2.3 Leaving Room For That Which Cannot be Found

Paying closer attention to how and where we locate the field may help decentre the location from which to speak about Others (Gupta & Ferguson 2008). However, this approach still assumes that we are able to get there, to find these spaces, once we have made these systemic and reflexive inquiries. I felt it was equally important to leave room for that which cannot be located; to acknowledge that there would be spaces I would be unable to ‘find.’ This differs from *not knowing* where to find something or being actively *prevented* from entering certain sites, fields, or spaces. Instead, it acknowledges the limits to our ability to discover and depict the realities—including the spaces—of others. What I was looking for was a

way to understand and study a space that was not mine to find, and to recognize this as an aspect of the research, rather than an impediment to it.

My interest in the limits of academic knowledge has been informed through reading feminist scholars Julia Kristeva and Gayatri Spivak. Writing on semiotics, Kristeva (1980) challenges the search for coherence and the desire to identify the meanings that signs carry. In contrast, she focuses on the balance between the symbolic and the semiotic. While the symbolic transmits meaning, Kristeva argues that the semiotic cannot be signified; it is instead the undecidable, the poetic, and the indeterminate articulation of language. Far from being without value or meaning, however, Kristeva describes the semiotic as the *feminine*: the improbable, the never-finished, the crisis, the change, and a necessary aspect of the symbolic. The point in making this distinction is to acknowledge the value in refusing to find and name these elusive qualities—the value in leaving room for that which cannot be spoken.

In *Can the Subaltern Speak* (1988), Gayatri Spivak makes a similar argument in relation to the ability of Western intellectuals to hear, translate, and relay the voices of subordinated groups. Spivak critiques the privileging of Western knowledge and ways of knowing over those of the (non-Western) subaltern. She warns that intellectuals trying to speak or write on behalf of the subaltern filter their voices through dominant knowledge practices, which eradicate their original meaning. It is this space of the unnamable, unspeakable—the unmappable, the unfindable—that I am interested in. Recognizing the inaccessibility of some spaces does not limit our academic knowledge but instead allows for “the never-finished,

undefined production of a new space of significance” (Kristeva 1980: 135).

Interrogating gang territories using Western scientific conceptions of space risks filtering what and *where* we find through a narrow spatial lens: space as pre-existing, flat, traversable; space that contains and space that stays put as we section it off. This tradition positions space as something we can get to or into with the right vehicle or equipment: overcoming obstructions is a practical or tactical matter. To leave room for space that cannot be found, however, is to be open to the existence of other spatial models, spaces we will not know the names of, spaces that will not only be unrecognizable but also, for some, inaccessible. It is a recognition that spaces are made in practice (Law & Mol 2001; Lefebvre 1992; Massey 2005; Thrift 2008a) and thus many of those spaces will exist outside the scope of our own practices. I bridge the gap between research and inaccessibility by incorporating *not finding* as an aspect of my methodology. While these spaces are not ineffable, it takes more than going there and observing to find them—it takes the recognition that these spaces are made through processes that both include and exclude the researcher: my role is to observe the processes through which the social is made, and to acknowledge both my exteriority to these spaces and my participation as an aspect of the findings.

3.3 Relational Ethnography

My theoretical orientation to space underpins the development of my research approach: I understand gang territories as dynamic material spaces made in practice. Using a new materialist lens I argue that ‘knowing space’ is not an epistemological unearthing of the always-already-there or the manifestation of a

natural order-of-things. Neither is it an exploration of what is found there, within its boundaries and upon its landscape. Instead, I approach space as a relational and performative ontology that forms in and through material practices. These spaces come to be as they are practiced, including the practices researchers use to know them.

In this qualitative project, I use an ethnographic research method to study how daily practices enact gang territories in material ways. Ethnography is suited to studying the materiality of space. Its attention to material practices is aligned with a spatial focus: these studies are done in the field, thus already positioned in the *where* of their objects of study. As Tuck and McKenzie (2015: 86) note, ethnography is a methodology “concerned with place, or with the physical settings of the ordinary and their relationships to other material aspects of people’s lives, such as household objects, animals, institutions, and technologies” (Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 86). The ethnographer is already situated physically—materially—in the space of their research.

However, in order to focus deliberately on the ways space is done—the ways it is enacted in multiple ways through daily material practices—I have adapted ethnography to further emphasize the relationality of space. While ethnographies have traditionally been used to study distinct cultural groups through prolonged immersion in their geographic location (Cresswell 2013), relational ethnography “gives ontological primacy, not to groups or places, but to configurations of relations” (Desmond 2014: 554). In this sense, relational ethnography,

takes as its scientific object neither a bounded group defined by members’

shared social attributes nor a location delimited by the boundaries of a particular neighborhood or the walls of an organization but rather processes involving configurations of relations among different actors or institutions. (Desmond 2014: 547)

A *relational* ethnography extends an orientation that is central to ethnography—an emphasis on people’s everyday actions, activities and behaviours—beyond a description of the practices of an already established space or people.

Understanding all entities as produced in relation gives research an ontological imperative to find out how the world comes together in practice (Law 2004; Law & Hassard 1999). Applied to gang territories, this approach eschews asking what or where gang territories are, what is happening *in* them, or what to do about them, and instead explores how they come together through various actors and practices.

3.3.1 Multi-sited, Multi-actor

One of the effects of studying gang territories through material practices is a reconsideration of how we locate the field (Gupta & Ferguson 2008). If we know where gang territories already *are* we may restrict our research sites to those (regional) parameters. In contrast, when we ask how these spaces are made, our research sites are able to move from “bounded fields” to “shifting locations” (Gupta & Ferguson 2008: 138), as we follow the practices that enact them. Looking for the practices of gang territories allowed me to “find” their enactment in unexpected places, such police headquarters or as the mobility of residents as they walk home from school. In this way, this “multi-sited” ethnography becomes also a “multi-actor” ethnography; the focus on how these spaces are performed draws attention to multiple actors. This includes the researcher, since research practices locate the

ethnographer within the terrain being mapped and thus “reconfigure[s] any kind of methodological discussion that presumes a perspective from above or ‘nowhere’” (Marcus 1995: 112).

Another way that a relational ethnography differs from its classical counterpart is through the incorporation of what Callon (1986) calls the ‘principle of generalized symmetry.’ Moving ethnography away from its focus on human experience (Nimmo 2011), this principle sets forth a relational account of agency in which equal attention is paid to “sources and agencies of action other than purely human, conscious, and intentional” (Muniesa 2015: 82). As a result, a relational ethnography expands its focus to include a “parliament of things” (Latour 1991), which are studied for their social and agentic effects. As Mol writes, “The ethnographic study of practices does not search for knowledge in subjects who have it in their minds and may talk about it. Instead, it locates knowledge primarily in activities, events, buildings, instruments, procedures, and so on” (Mol 2002: 32). While my research took form mainly through interviews with people, a relational ethnography eschews humanist intentionality by using these interviews to investigate knowledge incorporated in daily events and activities. Social phenomena are located materially in the things people do (and the people things do).

This relational approach helps work against the grain of positivist criminology that situates gangs as a “problem population” in need of punitive social control (Brotherton 2019). Brotherton (2019: 3) contends that critical ethnographies resist this dynamic through “a more engaged, reflexive, and political orientation to the praxis of gang ethnography.” Working from a processual lens, a

relational ethnographer both accepts themselves as “part of the research act’s instrumentation” (Brotherton 2019: 9) and recognizes that the life-worlds of the gang “are constantly in flux” (Brotherton 2019: 14). This methodological orientation brings complexity, nuance, and contradiction to a literature that has type casted, stereotyped, criminalized, and pathologized street gangs.

3.4 Positionality

Recognizing space as made through material practices both implicates my own research methods in the enactment of the spaces I study and illuminates the constraints that my own materiality poses to securing access to gang territories as a research field site. I have few, if any, of the embodied practices through which gang space is produced in daily ways in the inner city. Described by one of my participants as an “innocent white lady,” my embodied life experiences, race, gender, and age made it obvious to both of us that my presence there was unfamiliar and impermanent. White, educated, and suburban, my access to gang space was unquestionably unlike his.

Yet, while gang spaces are not mine to know, they are and have been, through this project, mine to influence. A commitment to seeing space enacted through material practices, including the world we create through knowledge practices, means accepting my own entanglement in the production of gang spaces. Through these knowledge practices the spaces I have studied are not containers of crime or statically delineated regional boundaries that partition off gangs from the rest of “us” (non-gang, non-criminal, non-racialized?) but as spaces drawn together

through the actions of many, as spaces that implicate us all in enacting the boundaries of crime, as spaces that live and move through us as we live and move (or refuse to live and move) through them.

3.5 Method of Inquiry

Using relational ethnography, answers to “how are gang territories done?” took shape through qualitative interviews, participant observation, and document reviews. In this section I outline the source, number, and demographics of the participants I interviewed, as well as the procedures I used to contact them, obtain cooperation and consent, and administer the interviews. In this section, I describe my time spent in the field and the documents I reviewed. I then discuss my process for analyzing the data.

3.5.1 Polymorphous Engagement

While the anthropological origins of ethnography encouraged participant observation through full immersion over a long period of time in the communities being studied, increasingly, ethnography entails shorter, more specific, and part-time interactions with subjects (Hammersley 2006). In this study the latter approach was necessary. Accessing police and criminal justice operatives requires numerous institutional security measures. For gangs, and youth more generally, ethical and practical obstacles arise. Perhaps more significantly, where and how to immerse in this field is not as obvious as popular conceptions would suggest.

However, increased access would not have provided richer ethnographic material. In the difficult-to-observe context of gang territories, the reliance on

participant observation risks yielding to a dominant visual interpretation of practices visible to outsiders⁹. Instead I have opted for a "polymorphous engagement" (Gusterson 1997), which includes, among other things, interaction with informants across a number of dispersed sites and data collection through an array of sources. I focused mainly on semi-structured interviews with participants in the neighbourhoods within which they lived or worked. These interviews were complemented by my observations of gang areas and a collection of various documents on gangs from media, police, and government sources including statements of opinion on gangs in Winnipeg from the Winnipeg Police Service.

Leaving open who or what make gang spaces, I interviewed residents who live within gang boundaries, administrators who work with youth in gang-affiliated neighbourhoods, and personnel from the criminal justice system who work with gangs and in gang territories. These interviews were designed to explore the various ways these individuals and groups help make, sustain, disrupt, or change gang territories through everyday actions. These three groups are by no means the only actors that help enact gang spaces. Attention to other actors such as the media, social media, political policies, housing practices, or immigration policies have exposed connections between these entities and the ways space is formed and maintained for racialized groups, including gang spaces (see Hagedorn 1988; Hagedorn 2007; Moore 1978; Winton 2014). However, because my interest stemmed from wanting to know more about the daily lives, mobilities, and interactions within and with gang geographies, I chose people with more direct and

⁹ This perhaps explains why graffiti is so commonly considered the primary marker of gang spaces (Ley & Crybriwsky, 1974; Phillips, 1999).

embodied involvement with these spaces.

3.5.2 Residents

The residents of gang territories who I interviewed divided into three groups, roughly. Some were gang-affiliated youth, some were young people from these areas who did not self-identify as gang-affiliated, and some were older, more affluent, most often white, residents who tended to have much less knowledge of gang territories or activities.

Both 'gang membership' and 'gang' are highly ambiguous concepts (Bullock & Tilley 2008). Despite many attempts (Ball & Curry 1995; Decker & Kempf-Leonard 1991; Esbensen, Winfree, He & Taylor 2001; Klein & Maxson 2006), the definition of gangs has been notoriously difficult to establish, a fact reflected in the assertion that "the term 'gang' may have as many definitions as there are researchers interested in the subject matter" (Ezeonu 2014: 7). However, while Thrasher (1927) notably downplayed the criminality of gangs, focusing instead on the risk, play, excitement and fun of gang life (Thrasher 1927, cf Dimitriadis 2006), most definitions now include criminality. For example, according to the recent Eurogang Research Project—a group of American and European scholars wishing to enable comparative international gang research—"a gang is any durable, street-oriented youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of their group identity" (Maxson, Egley, Miller, & Klein 2013: 1). While there are various definitions, many support the assumption that gangs partake in violence and that visible minority youth are involved in gang activities (Moore 1993).

The mileage given to criminality in gang definitions has problematic

repercussions. Presenting the gang phenomenon as “a problem of visible minority youths, despite the fact that classical gang scholarship ties the problem to the structural circumstances of marginalized populations in general, irrespective of race or ethnicity,” filters the concept of the gang through a set of racialized assumptions that fuel the legitimization of social control over these groups (Enzenou 2014: 17). “Critical” gang scholarship may not be doing much better. Katz and Jackson-Jacobs (2004) suggest that theorists who find the origins of gangs in social structures, such as deindustrialization or the development of the underclass, risk inadvertently “staining the group as a whole with an image of deviancy” (Katz and Jackson-Jacobs 2004: 103).

Katz and Jackson-Jacobs further challenge the definition of gangs by asking if gangs, indeed, actually exist. The myth-making of gangs, they suggest, is propagated through social research:

By conferring significance specifically on ‘gang’ activity, social research activity inadvertently promotes the youth interaction that is then described as evidence of gang existence. When the police report that gangs are out there, one should not be too sure they are. And when researchers searching for gangs find that gangs cooperate in making an appearance, there is no less cause for suspicion and a new basis for ethical self-reflection. (2004: 93)

What Katz and Jackson-Jacobs (2004) argue is that rather than describing the varied and nuanced complexities of gang processes and interactions, the “gang” has been imbued with characteristics, causes, and effects that do not reflect empirical evidence: scholars assign to gangs what should be attributed to other social phenomena. “Given the failure to describe the individually lived realities of gang social life, gang research, as it has been developed in the United States, is essentially

an argument over the correct definition of a ghost” (Katz & Jackson-Jacobs 2004: 106).

Some authors understandably choose to use quotation marks around the word gang in their writing. I have chosen not to. Gangs may not exist exactly in the ways and for the reasons we find in the public imagination. However, through a materialist lens, the goal is not to assert whether gangs are real or not but rather to explore the ways they are enacted and the effects of these enactments.

For the purpose of this study I used self-designation to categorize gang membership when needed. Since I interviewed young people through support from two local community centres where active gang membership was discouraged, the majority of my participants self-identified as non-affiliated. Again, this designation was far from homogenous or clear-cut. A number of participants had family members currently or previously in gangs, some noted that their association with particular friends resulted in a passive affiliation with gangs even when membership had not been intended, and others noted that even without either friends or family in gangs they were treated, even designated, as a gang member by police. Others self-identified as gang members or ex-gang members.

I used purposive sampling. To find young people who live in gang occupied areas, I drew on my connections with youth serving agency staff at community centres located within gang boundaries: The Magnus Elias Recreation Centre (MERC) (n=15) and the Broadway Neighbourhood Centre (BNC) (n=6). MERC is located in the West End of Winnipeg/West Side gang territory. BNC is located in the West Broadway area/West Side gang territory. A staff member at each location

referred me to young people who frequented these centres, set up times in which participants would be available, and provide a room for me to use for interviews. The staff at both MERC and BNC expressed enthusiasm for this opportunity for community youth to share their experiences and earn some money. I offered participants at these centres \$20 compensation for their time. Of the 21 young interviewees living in these areas, 14 were male and seven were female. Five were Aboriginal, eleven were Black, and five were White. These participants ranged in age from 12-21, with the average age of 15.

The community centres I worked with helped obtain parental consent from participants who were under 18 years of age. I also received consent from all respondents for their participation in the study, as well as for recording the interviews. Participants were informed that their identity would be kept confidential and that the information they provided would not be shared or presented in such a way that would identify them. I explained that they might decline to answer any question at any time without consequence. To help make sure that neither the perceived and real power difference between myself and the participants, nor the social awkwardness of refusing to answer a question would impede their ability to decline, I role-played a refusal to answer: I used the words "I'll pass" and then demonstrated my acceptance of this refusal through words and demeanor. When participants refused to answer questions, many did so by modeling this example. After I received their consent, I began recording our approximately one-hour interviews. I returned to the MERC three times and visited the BNC once.

My semi-structured interviews prescribed a series of questions but also allowed for follow-up questions based on participants' responses. To understand how these spaces are practiced in material ways, I asked respondents about their spatial habits, their interactions with gang boundaries, and information regarding the events, procedures, and practices of gang boundaries. For instance, I asked young people living in these areas where gang boundaries are, how they learn of them, and if the boundaries affect their ability to travel throughout the area or city.

The young people I spoke with expressed interest in the opportunity to be interviewed. While a few respondents were most interested in the financial compensation, others appreciated the opportunity to talk about themselves and their lives with someone who had asked to listen. An example of this sentiment is expressed in an interview conducted with two 15-year-olds, Hassan, who immigrated to Winnipeg with his family six years ago, and Jordan, whose family immigrated to Winnipeg before he was born. At the end of the interview, which lasted about 90 minutes, I thanked them for their time. Jordan replied,

I don't know, sometimes we enjoy talking to people. And sometimes there are people you just can't trust. You know you can't go to a guidance counselor and talk to them about beefs and shit that's going on in the streets because, well, for one, I bet half these guidance counselors haven't even walked down Langside, so they don't really know what to say to you, you know? They're stuck, they're like, 'Uh, uh, uh, okay I'll bring someone in who knows about gangs' and stuff. But I don't really want to talk to that person, like those officers. You have to be more comfortable with the person. But I don't know, we're comfortable talking to you. It's not like I can talk to [community centre] staff about anything that we just talked about. They don't ask questions, they don't care if we've been on the other side of Portage or not. At the end of the day they're going back to their nice homes, nice neighbourhoods. They don't care about what's going on here. Why would you? It's the hood. At the end of the day, that's how I look at it. No one outside the neighbourhood knows what's going on. They don't talk about it on the news. For us it's all about

eyes, ears and feelings. They don't talk about the bad stuff because nobody cares, that's bad advertising. Like go up Sherbrook and you'll see all the shit that's going on. It's everyday, it's not just that one day that you decided to drive up the street, it's everyday.

Asim, a 15-year-old Sudanese Canadian, similarly expressed:

We don't talk about it. People wouldn't understand it. Some of my teachers wouldn't understand it. None of the teachers who are White in my school would understand it. It's not that it's a racial thing, it's just... I feel that you can understand it when I explain it to you, but do you see how long I've been here? If I was talking to one of my Black friends I could just say a sentence and they would say, 'Ah, I got you.' You have to go into detail and stuff to explain it to someone else. They told me you wanted to learn about stuff and I like talking to people who want to learn more about what's going on in this neighbourhood.

For these young people, these interviews offered a chance for them to tell stories—about their lives, what they see, where they go, what its like for them on a daily basis—to someone who asked to listen. Whereas it seems to them that these stories generally go unnoticed or are intentionally ignored or avoided, they expressed appreciation that I was asking them directly about their lives and experiences.

I enjoyed these interviews. The young people I spoke to were highly attuned to their neighbourhoods, to issues of gangs, racism, and policing. They recognized both how easy it would be to join gangs, and the reasons not to. These are not straightforward decisions and I heard how they struggled with them in meaningful and thoughtful ways. They overwhelmingly spoke with intelligence, insight, maturity, creativity, humour, and incredible emotional maturity—with control and resolve—about their lives. These characteristics were front and centre in the interviews despite the anger, fear, and injustice they experience and carry with them. These kids experience violence, or the threat of violence, from other young

people and from police, on a daily basis. They often do not share their experiences with their families in order to guard them from the stress and anxiety they would provoke. They cope on their own and with friends. These were young people for whom I felt admiration and appreciation, both for those who kept their cards close to their chests, and for those who shared these stories.

We perhaps fail to adequately appreciate the expertise of young people, or perhaps it is that we fail to recognize their knowledge as expertise. In these interviews the young people I spoke to were authorities on gang spaces. In the quote above, the sentiment, *I feel that you can understand it when I explain it to you, but do you see how long I've been here?* speaks to this. These interviews took care, took time, took patience, but not on my behalf. Respondents laughed at my questions, patiently slowed down to define terms and expressions (Wait, what is sagging? What does fuzzy mean?), refused to answer, and were sometimes, like Sam, blatant and even amused about knowing the answers but choosing not to tell:

Me: *Do you know the gang territory across Portage Avenue?*

Respondent: *(Looking surprised), No, who's over there?*

Me: *That's B Side, have you heard of it?*

Respondent: *B Side? Who's there?*

Me: *(Laughing), B Siders.*

Respondent: *(Eyes wide, laughing), B Siders are over there?*

This respondent later referred in passing to the BSCF, an acronym for the B Side Crime Family, showing his familiarity with the gang and their territory. As the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern (1999: 7) reminds us, “people are more than

respondents answering questions; they are informants in the fullest sense, in control of the information they offer.” Although respondents are not in control of where the information they share goes—how it travels, circulates, or mixes—in our interviews these young people were gatekeepers who I gratefully relied on for information about gang territories.

In addition to the residents I encountered at community centres, I interviewed residents (n=6) who I came into contact with personally over the course of the project. These respondents identified as living in gang areas but were markedly different from the youth I talked to; instead they experienced intersectional privilege. These three women and three men—five of whom were White and one was Filipino—all were homeowners, three were employed professionals, and three owned their own businesses. These interviews were open-ended. I asked questions regarding their general knowledge of, or experience with, gang related incidents, activities, or territories in the neighbourhoods they lived in.

3.5.3 Ex-gang Members

In addition to the interviews at community centres with gang and non-gang-affiliated youth, I interviewed ex-gang members (n=2) who I met through personal contacts. One was male and one was female, both were Aboriginal and in their 30s. Through personal channels I also interviewed a Metis respondent (n=1) in his mid-30s. While this respondent did not identify as an ex-gang member, he grew up in the North End/North Side gang territory and while in prison he lived on the Manitoba Warriors range.

3.5.4 Administrators

I interviewed administrators working in gang-occupied areas (n=3): two community centre staff members who work with youth and the principal of a High School situated in gang territory. I contacted the school principal directly to request an interview. When I requested to speak to other principals of schools in these areas I was told to apply for access through the Winnipeg School Division. I did so; however, my request was denied.

3.5.5 Criminal Justice System Employees

Gaining access to interviews with police officers and other criminal justice system employees (n=12) who work with gangs and in gang territories was a lengthy process. Enlisting the help of a former police officer, I drafted a letter to the Chief of Police requesting to interview police officers working within gang territories. Once my request was approved, I performed a criminal record check and applied for level-two security clearance. This process, from sending the letter to receiving clearance, took seven months.

I was able to set up interviews with officers from general patrol, the organized crime unit, the street crime unit (previously the gang crime unit), the gang expert program, and a school resource officer. During these interviews I inquired about their interactions with gang territories, asking, for instance, if these areas call for specialized approaches from, or present particular challenges to, law enforcement. These questions were designed to encourage conversation about police practices concerning gang territories, including information on patrol, technologies, and various operations. I also received select documents from these

officers, such as expert opinions and reports on gangs in Winnipeg. One of my interviews took place during a ride-along with an officer on general patrol in the North End of Winnipeg. This two-hour participant observation helped bring to life my discussions with police officers about practices of patrol.

Additionally, I spoke to one crime analyst doing intelligence for the organized crime unit, the street crime unit that deals with gangs and drugs, as well as for investigative units. I asked to speak with the clerks who work with crime analysts—those whose job it is to enter and “clean” the data—but I was unsuccessful (“They would have nothing to tell you,” I was told by their supervisor, “they just enter the data.” “Can I speak to them anyway,” I asked? “No.”)

Finally, I spoke with a recently retired prison guard from Headingley, the Manitoba Provincial Correctional Institution, who I approached through personal contacts.

Ten of these justice system employees were White men. One police officer was a White woman and one was an Aboriginal man.

The criminal justice system employees I interviewed were generous, friendly, and accommodating. They answered my questions thoughtfully and thoroughly. I was surprised at the openness and interest with which they responded, and I left these interviews appreciating their candidness and willingness to spend an hour or more of their time with me. I also often left admiring their commitment to their work, and to their expressed understanding of the social issues—for instance, of the intergenerational poverty, racism, and addictions—that many noted underpin the formation of gangs and their criminality.

However, while the goal of the project—to explore how gang territories materialize through the practices of various actors—was not intended to be a critique of the police, I am not immune to research and publicity on the prevalence of police violence and racism¹⁰. My apprehension toward the police in these matters was reinforced through my interviews with young people who described abusive and intrusive interactions with police; interactions that without a doubt worked to increase the violence and criminality in the inner city. Focusing on police practices such as patrol, rather than on individual acts by police officers, helps recognize the dispersed, contextualized, and performative nature of policing, which is never one thing only. This contingent nature of police work provides both reason for continued monitoring and attention, and the space to consider opportunities for improvement and change.

For this dissertation I conducted 45 interviews in total: 12 participants worked in the justice system; three held administrative roles working with youth; 21 were young people of varying degrees of gang affiliation, ranging from un-affiliated to self-identified current or ex-gang members; and six were middle class residents. All names, and at times other characteristics, were changed to protect anonymity.

Relatively few of the participants I interviewed identified as gang members. In part, this reflects the difficulty in accessing this population. University Ethics protocols that regulate and approve research conducted with human subjects take

¹⁰ See, for instance, Owen Toews recent work, *Stolen City: Racial Capitalism and the Making of Winnipeg* (2018), which argues that since the city's inception, the Winnipeg Police Service have been deployed in the interest of the dominant bloc to uphold a settler society premised on the inferiority of Indigenous peoples and people of colour.

seriously the protection of both researcher and interviewees, especially minors. Safeguards are taken to ensure that the physical and emotional safety of both, consent is obtained, anonymity is honoured, and risks are mitigated for respondents. In compliance, my interviews were conducted in community centres where support staff was on hand. Since community centres in Winnipeg disallow gang paraphernalia, access to gang members was limited.

However, for this dissertation, my aim was to study gang territories as a phenomenon enacted through multiple actors and practices. Indeed, my introduction to thinking about gang territories as urban spaces came from talking not to gang members but to non-gang-affiliated residents living in these areas and the youth serving staff who worked with them. It began as a curiosity about the ways these spaces emerge in multiple ways. Too often we attribute gang territories and the violence or crime they are associated with, to gang members. Gangs and their spaces are not self-generating; they are the result of networks of actors and objects. Focusing on gang members obscures these relations.

Although gangs are the group most associated with the formation of gang territories, they do not work alone. First, I wanted to look more closely at the young people who both navigate and participate in their complexities. Second, I felt it was important to challenge the view that police are exterior to these spaces. By including the participation of these two groups I bring attention to the ways these spaces materialize through a myriad of practices, a move that implicates multiple actors and thus provides increased points of intervention and disruption. In a related sense, I found community centres, despite their absence of gang activity, to be

relevant aspects of gang geography. As spaces that have been constituted as non-gang, they lend support to the idea of thinking of spaces as enacted; the practices that defy certain enactments become important sites of consideration.

Throughout my interviews my aim was to remain open to an array of human and non-human actors that produce and reproduce space as material entities. This materialist approach to agency distributes the accomplishment of space, taking seriously the vitality of material entities such as cell phones, cars, clothing, and weapons. Rather than focusing on the intentionality of agency—that is, the thinking, knowing subject who actively assembles their social world—my interviews were designed to elicit descriptions of how spaces are assembled, how space is made through “the manifold of action and interaction” (Thrift 1996: 6). Bringing this approach into my interviews, I attuned to the array of activities and bodies that give and are given form “via embodied and environmental affordances, dispositions and habits” (Anderson & Harrison 2010: 7).

3.6 Data Analysis

The information gathered through my interviews was not scoured for its universal or generalizable truths. These interviews provided information from a range of people who live or work within gang territories and described a rich array of material practices that allowed me to explore the ways gang territories materialize in daily practices. However, this research is conducted from the standpoint that all research is both partial and a process of translation, “where the researcher chooses what/who to enroll for the purpose of presenting research

findings” (Ruming 2009: 452). The aim to show gang spaces as entities assembled by multiple actors and through multiple practices is a necessarily localized and partial achievement; other actors, other places, and other practices will yield other versions of these spaces. When analyzing the information I gathered, I tried to stay open to the multiple ways that my participants practiced gang spaces, without imposing on them an *a priori* definition of their world-building capacities (Latour 1999). The events and activities described by the people I spoke to brought unconventional actions and things together as space; space made material through bodies, mobilities, technologies, and affect.

As a researcher I am part of the environment that I attend to. What we attend to changes what we find: our knowledge practices do not just discover the world, but create it through our experiences, aims, and agencies (Barad 2007; Datson 2000; Law & Urry 2001; Mol 2002). The spaces I describe are co-fabricated, enacted in part through the practices of those I spoke to, and in part through the material, theoretical, and methodological orientations I brought to these practices. These spaces are not less real than those found or described as pre-existing entities. Reality is not formed as a pre-made existence or through monolithic structures, but instead through productive and processual practice. My aim was not to describe gang territory through accurate academic representation, but instead “to experiment with the thinking which occurs on the interstice between thought and practice” (Cadman 2009). This is to recognize analysis “as crafting, allegory, or gathering” (Law 2004: 118), not a representation of the world “out there.”

Chapter 4: Despite Straight Lines

Despite straight lines, “the forms...grow tense, lose their rational and static perfection, and become dynamic. Relative to one another they escape into irrational spatial systems until—held together by larger forms—they are compressed back into an ever-changing stability. Their stability is change.” (Bucher 1980, cf Albers & Bucher 1980: 33)

4.1 Introduction

In the collective popular imagination, gang territories belong to gangs. Gang members make them, defend them, enforce their boundaries, and gang members are whom their boundaries contain or exclude. While these spaces—or maybe more accurately, what the spaces contain—may concern law enforcement agencies and the general non-gang population, they tend to be seen as the result of gang agency, as something imposed upon otherwise legitimate neighbourhood space. In this chapter, I too look at gang territories as they are made by or used by gangs. However, this analysis differs from common accounts because it implicates other actors, a theme developed further in the next two chapters. In this chapter I begin to think of gang territories as made in assemblage, as made through and of material practices. Instead of privileging intentional human agency, I extend my observations to the host of human and non-human practices that bring these spaces into being in multiple, material ways.

Questioning who or what make gang territories challenges the inflexibility and impermeability that underpins assumptions about gang territorial boundaries. Cast within a regional mold, conventional views of gang territories rely on sharp distinctions not only between rival gangs but also between them and us—that is, gang members and the law-abiding public. In contrast, I join scholars who have

begun to release gangs from static regional conceptions of territory by highlighting the borderlessness of gang identity and practice (Cruz 2010; Winton 2012; Fraser 2013). However, while this chapter dislodges territory from a narrow view of regionality, I shift to acknowledging region as a dynamic rather than static form; as one of the many spatial configurations that gang territories take form through.

This chapter uses information I gathered through interviews conducted with gang-affiliated respondents, ranging from ex-members to gang-aware residents; members of the Winnipeg Police Service; and staff working at youth serving agencies in gang populated areas. These interviews were analyzed for the ways practices of gang space were described—how people came to know gang space (which is also a way of enacting gang space), how these spaces change, how they are used, and how they are disrupted.

In this chapter I describe six ways that gang territories are enacted in material ways: through the infrastructure of the urban built environment; through the effect of cell phones, or dial-a-dealing, on territorial lines; through the persistence of crack shacks as mobile satellites of gang territory; as hybrid geographies that enact the body as out of bounds, even while the person remains within in gang boundaries in a regional sense; and the embodied territory that extends from gang colours and tattoos. When we pay attention to the material practices of gang territories—to buildings, technologies, personal possessions, and bodily adornment—we find that gang spaces emerge in multiple ways, sometimes in regional form and sometimes in unconventional ways. These observations show

gang territory as made in assemblage, a shift that broadens our understanding of who or what is responsible for these spaces.

4.2 City Spaces

Gang territories offer an interesting case study of space because they take form in two seemingly opposing ways. On the one hand, we take for granted the obdurate regionality of gang territories: strongly defended boundaries delineated in no uncertain terms by streets or other barriers. On the other hand, these streets and landmarks do little to mark gang territories in recognizably spatial ways. In this section I explore this paradox through the lens of the urban landscape. I suggest that gang territories are made material through city landmarks and infrastructure even while this same infrastructure obscures the materiality and presence of these spaces.

Thrasher's early work on gangs emphasized the role of the urban environment on how territory forms. Describing gangland as "a geographically and socially interstitial area" (1936: 22), he draws on an understanding of the city as a series of progressive concentric rings that organize urban space into social and economic segments. Thrasher's claim that gangs are a product of their environment is often taken up for its social, rather than geographic, references: high levels of immigration, poverty, overcrowding, and breakdown of social institutions form the "environment" for gang formation. However, he paid considerable attention to the physical environment of gangs:

The groups in the Ghetto, in a suburb, along a business street in the

residential district, in a midwestern town, or in a lumber community vary in their interests and activities not only according to the social patterns of their respective milieus but also according to the layout of the buildings, streets, alleys, and public works, and the general topography of their environments. These various conditioning factors within which the gang lives, moves, and has its being, may be regarded as the 'situation complex,' within which the human nature elements interact to produce gang phenomena. (1936: 144)

Thrasher illustrated this relation comparatively, suggesting that “the differing urban environments of Chicago and New York – and in particular the former’s horizontal versus the latter’s vertical sprawl – had contributed to the emergence of contrasting gang dynamics” (Rodgers 2017).

While Thrasher does not directly address the contrast between the invisibility and materiality of gang territories, his writings do allude to issues of spatial representation and visibility.

The favorite haunts and hang-outs of these 1,300 and more gangs have been definitively ascertained. Their distribution as shown on the accompanying map *makes it possible to visualize* the typical areas of gangland and to indicate their place in the life and organization of Chicago...The gangs and type of life described here may not even be apparent to the average citizen of the district, who is chiefly occupied in his [sic] own pursuits. (1936: 5, emphasis added)

Although the physical features of the environment play a key role in the emergence of gangs, these features of the Ghetto, suburb, or residential district fail to adequately represent gangland to the degree that the average citizen would recognize its existence. Thus, in his book, Thrasher needed an additional spatializing practice—mapping—to make them “possible to visualize.”

In Winnipeg, no one produces official, public maps of North Side, West Side and B Side gang territories. There are no gates, no welcome signs, no street signs, no distinctive buildings or architecture to anchor them visibly *as* gang territories. Gang

spaces also lack the bureaucratic materiality of other less visible regions such as catchment areas, school zones, and constituencies, which are made to matter through desks, paperwork, filing, and signatures.

Graffiti is sometimes identified as the means of demarcating the limits of territory (Ley & Crybriwsky 1974; Phillips 1999), however this claim has been challenged. While graffiti can mark territorial boundaries, it is not always used for this purpose (Bloch 2019; Conley 2011) and is additionally used for a range of other activities, such as advertising individual gang members and gangs, indicating gangs' social networks, representing views of gang life, and honoring the dead (Adams & Winter 1997). An overreliance on graffiti—a highly visible territorial sign—can obscure the less representational spatial practices at play. The residents I interviewed acknowledged seeing graffiti, however, it was never the only, nor most important, means through which they identified and navigated gang boundaries.

Gang space is regional and difficult to see, making it hard to discern exactly what *makes* these areas regionally bounded in material, rather than, symbolic, ways. This is an intriguing feature of gang territories, spaces so iconic and known, yet so difficult to see. Gang members and many residents do not rely on representational practices to know, recognize, and navigate gang territories. If spaces are made in practice, what practices have we missed, as scholars, in our attempts to find and study gang space? Have the expectations formed through our own implicit spatial models limited our ability to learn more about the ways these spaces materialize for the residents who use and enact them? The invisibility of gang boundaries may be more to do with not knowing how to look for them than it is about their obscurity.

Indeed, instead of asking what makes them material despite their invisibility—which has been the general aim of this project—it seems, at times, more apt to ask what makes them invisible despite their materiality. In this section I look at how the urban environment contributes to both the materiality and invisibility of gang spaces.

In a description that brings to mind Thrasher's writings, a detective in the organized crime unit describes the location of gang territories in terms of the ways cities are organized spatially and socially. He begins with the physical layout of cities:

When you go to these gang territories you can see two reasons for them. One is geographical. Something physically cut them off. Like the North End for example, you have Logan Avenue. Logan Avenue splits what you call Central downtown and runs along the [Canadian National Railway] yard. And then all the bridges, like the Arlington Street Bridge, go over that. That's a physical land divide. It's always kept the North End in the North End. So the kids identify with that. They call it North Side, like across the bridge. It's across the full rail yards. So it can be a physical, geographical divide. And what has broken West Broadway from the West End is Portage Avenue. So that's another physical divide. It's eight lanes of traffic, it's a major divide. And you'll notice when you go into these territories, where they end on the other sides, West Broadway ends on the other side because of the river. And the West End ends because of Logan. That's the start of the North Side.

Gang territories work in conjunction with the features of the city already in existence; they are embodied in the infrastructure of the urban environment. This infrastructure is undeniably visible and material. Eight lanes of traffic separate the West Side from B Side. Full rail yards separate the West Side from the North Side. The Assiniboine River marks the far side of B Side territory. These are all visible and formidable boundaries. However, as Western notions of space have been

naturalized as singular, it is the dominant function we see; other spaces, and indeed space itself, recedes into the background. As such, these recognizable features of the official municipal landscape obscure spaces that they otherwise help delimit. This highly visible boundary—an eight-lane Avenue between West Side and B Side—does not make gang space visible; it hides it.

In *Paris: Invisible City* (1998), Latour and Hermant similarly contend with the materiality of urban invisibility. They argue that Paris' iconic landmarks and scenic views hide an invisible Paris—or more accurately, multiple Parises—hidden within the architecture and under the streets. This invisible Paris, they suggest, is found in the unseen labour, materials, and practices that render Paris visible: “the problems of thousands of engineers, technicians, civil servants, inhabitants and shopkeepers in making it visible” (Latour & Hermant 1998: 1). Paris' iconography, the things that seem to deeply define the city, hides a truer version found in its traces, trajectories, wanderings, partial illuminations, and phosphorescences. The 'city' obscures its own material sociality.

In Latour and Hermant's account, an iconic Paris is made visible by this invisible Paris that exists in more fluid material practice; an analysis we can use to think through gang territories in Winnipeg. In Winnipeg, what becomes invisible alongside the making and maintenance of its architecture and landscape are other spaces existing through and because of these contours and divisions. These features of the landscape—the rail yards, the rivers, the avenues—exist as part of an assemblage that makes gang space possible: this is gang space made regional by the city, by the urban topography. As lines crossing the city they are more than they

appear; they are gang boundaries hidden in plain sight. While Latour and Hermant (1998) argue that the city of Paris obscures the practices that produced it, here we find Winnipeg's urban infrastructure rendering invisible the gang space that it helps produce. Embodied in urban infrastructure, gang spaces masquerade as symbolic, as immaterial.

The ability of the cityscape to both produce and obscure a spatial reality can be further explored through John Law's concept of the "hinterland" (2004). Law uses the concept of the hinterland in his methodological argument regarding scientific knowledge. According to Law, science, including the social sciences, not only describes realities but also produces them. However, far from an "anything goes" situation in which one can believe and create anything one wants, new ideas need to contend with previously established realities. Law calls these pre-existing social and material realities the 'hinterland': "If new realities 'out-there' and new knowledge of those realities 'in-here' are to be created, then practices that can cope with a hinterland of pre-existing social and material realities also have to be built up and sustained" (Law 2004: 22).

Since Law (2004) is using the term hinterland in reference to methodological practice, he positions it as the body of literature, practices, technologies, and materials that have been previously established and routinized in one's research field. However, this concept can be used more generally to describe established material realities such as those concerning space. Indeed, the 'hinterland' is already a spatial metaphor, which Law elaborates on further:

A further and related implication is that the hinterland produces certain

classes of realities and reality-statements – but not others. Some kinds of standardised inscription devices and practices are current. Some classes of reality are more or less easily producible. Others, however, are not – or were never cobbled together in the first place. So the hinterland also defines an overall geography – a topography of reality-possibilities. Some classes of possibilities are made thinkable and real. Some are made less thinkable and less real. And yet others are rendered completely unthinkable and completely unreal. (2004: 34)

We can use the idea of the hinterland to help explain a situation in which an urban environment, its infrastructure and landscape, is able to obscure gang territories even as it forms their boundaries in visibly material ways. In relation to the formalized urban environment, the hinterland is not only the practices that produced them: maps, zoning, contractors, treaties, trading relations and routes, the clearing of the land, but also its dominant spatial form: its neighbourhoods, streets, catchment areas, etc. All of this is made possible through the previous hinterland of Euclidean space: space that is flat, dividable, and pre-existing, a hinterland that made this form of urban development seem reasonable and obvious. These multiple and diverse practices become reified as one space: the city of Winnipeg. But as Law suggests,

...the commitment to visible singularity directs us away from the possibility that realities might in some measure *be made in other ways*. Or, to put it more generally, the presupposition of singularity not only hides the practice that enacts it, but also conceals the possibility that different constellations of practice and their hinterlands might make it possible to enact realities in different ways. (2004: 66)

While these practices, and the infrastructure that results from them, are also able to produce other spaces, the hinterland—the routinized formality that presents as a singular reality—conceals this possibility. This is the production of “Otherness,” a reality that, because it is not made manifest, disappears. It disappears, Law suggests,

because “what is being brought to presence and manifest absence cannot be sustained unless it is Othered” (2004: 85). Gang territories, as an Othered space, disappear from the landscape. The spatial hinterland, denying the multiplicity of spaces, conceals this other spatial reality.

However, even if the boundaries of gang territories are invisible to most people who live outside them and to many who live within them, neither are they underground nor particularly hard to locate, at least approximately. This is because the way we think of gang territories is not simply in terms of where boundaries are but who or what they contain. The detective in the organized crime unit quoted above speaks to this when he adds that in addition to the physical layout of gang territories, there are also “economic divides”:

But on the other sides, on the West and the East where there are no physical, geographical divides, it ends because of economics. The East End turns into another area that becomes slightly more affluent; the customers aren't there. There's no business there. So look at the East End for example, it doesn't really go past Arlington because Arlington houses start to turn into workaday neighbourhoods, it's mostly younger couples. And B Side ends because [the] Wolseley [neighbourhood] is on the other side of Sherbrook. Their customer base is not in Wolseley. They don't go over there, there's no need to go over there. They stick out over there. And that's because of social economics. The people in those neighbourhoods are workaday people. But you can go right across Sherbrook and now you're in rooming houses again. So the gang stays in there. So you have a physical land divide and a social divide.

Geography is often framed in terms of areas, not volumes (Elden 2013; Graham 2016). As Graham (2016: 33) suggests, cities are “still often abstracted flatly through the diagrams and maps of traditional urban geography in ways which radically flatten imaginations of the politics of urban life.” In the quote from the police officer above, we see the regional boundaries of gang territory fleshed out

beyond where these spaces start and stop, to include who or what they contain. These lines divide workaday people from rooming houses, the poor from the slightly more affluent. This seems obvious enough—some areas are more affluent than others. However, these are not just demographics, but territory: *So the gang stays in there. So you have a physical land divide or a social divide.* When we see these lines take shape as racialized poverty, it becomes more difficult to see gang spaces as the result of gangs—surely it must be obvious that these lines precede the gang? However, even volume obscures. When gang territories materialize as volume, racialized poverty becomes recast as the boundaries of crime.

4.3 Dial-a-dealing

Alongside graffiti and rumbles, the street corner remains one of the most iconic aspects of gang culture. As a form of gang “set space” (Tita et al. 2005)—the smaller areas within gang territories where gang activities localize—the street corner-centered open-air drug market has traditionally been both conspicuous enough for customers to find and inconspicuous enough for dealers and users to blend in with the crowd when law enforcement arrives. These characteristics—highly trafficked and heavily populated—make street corners prime real estate for gangs who sell drugs (Taylor & Brower 1985; Taniguchi, Ratcliffe & Taylor 2011). However, this popular conception of gang space tends to be based largely on representations of famous American gangs, such as those from Los Angeles or Chicago. In Winnipeg, street corners have never been as valuable a form of gang real estate. Perhaps in part because of the climate, which remains nearly half the year in

winter, hotels and other indoor locations, rather than street corners, have long been the 'set space' for gangs and their drug commerce.

Even that has been changing. One of the practices moving gang territories off the street corners of our imaginations and out of hotels and crack shacks in downtown Winnipeg is the development of dial-a-dealing, the use of cell phones for conducting drug deals. This is part of a broader international trend that has seen the illicit drug market move from open-air drug markets into public and private space as relatively inexpensive mobile phones have become increasingly available since the 1990s (Johnson, Golub & Dunlap 2000; May & Hough 2004; Reuter 2009; Valasik & Tita 2018). In Winnipeg, a detective with the organized crime unit explains,

Now there's dial-a-dealer, which is a form of drug trafficking like you order up pizza. So some gangs will have their dial-a-dealer lines and their customers could be throughout the city or in a certain spot of the city. But to sell to the customer they'll enter rival territories and it doesn't have that same stigma it used to where you can't cross into this area.

Instead of relying on customers to travel to established locations, vetted buyers are provided with a number they can call to get drugs delivered to their homes. The phones, which are owned by the gang and lent out to gang members to use for a period of time, come equipped with verified customer contacts.

Modern society is on the move (Lash & Urry 2002) and cell phones are making this true, to some degree, even for gang members, who have traditionally been associated with the confines of territory. For the past 100 years gang studies have documented the difficulties gang members face in crossing territorial lines (Adamson 1998; Ashbury 1928; Gilje 1987; Thrasher 1927). Today, drug sellers

with cell phones visit customers throughout the city, undermining the immobility associated with gang territorial boundaries.

This conclusion resonates with the broad claim that new media, such as cellphones, result in the deterritorialization of the city (Friedman 2005). As Bassett (2005: 40) writes, "Today the city streets are full of virtual doorways, opening into other places. Countless ways through, ways out, and ways in to the city space are constructed and de-constructed by a myriad of mobile phone owners, who transform as they use." As a form of new media, cell phones have been deemed capable of contracting space and time to the point of erasing places in cities increasingly being eroded by the space of flows (Brighenti 2010). It is tempting to see the space of gang territories as increasingly porous in these ways. Through the use of cell phones to conduct drug deals, gang members and drugs do appear to be more mobile, evading boundaries that once held them.

However, when we look more closely at the relationship between mobile technologies, bodies, and gang space, territory and its boundaries are less eroded than reconfigured. James, an ex-member of the Manitoba Warriors, describes processes of both deterritorialization and reterritorialization through the changes brought on through dial-a-dealing.

The culture was changed like when cell phones came out, when dial-a-dealing came out. It changed the whole dynamic of territories and stuff. So it is not about territory, it's about clientele. It's about the clientele you occupy on your phone. So the phone is considered a territory and rival gang members would jack you up just to take your phone. And you've got all this clientele on your phone so now you've got access to all this guy's territory. Because once you lose your numbers and your clientele they're pretty much, they're out there like pretty much like virtual reality. Once you lose your phone, you're screwed. These days dealers have three or four phones. That's why they have so many frigging phones, because once you lose your numbers

your territory is gone.

When this respondent says that because of cell phones, turf is no longer about territory but about clientele, we see the potential of this technology to affect regional boundaries that have been restricting the mobilities of gang members in Winnipeg for 30 years. Gangs are no longer tethered to bars or locations within their territorial claim; instead, members are free to meet the client wherever they are, throughout the city. And yet territory has not been erased. The phone is territory now, James tells us. When the phone is territory, how do we conceptualize the ways this new media affects borders and mobilities?

In the reterritorialization of gang space as the phone, we see the limitations of thinking of mobile technologies in terms of deterritorialization or of territory simply in terms of region or area. Unlike regional territory that one travels through, cell phones allow gang members to carry gang space with them as they move through the city. Whereas buyers once came to gang territory to buy drugs, phones have become mobile street corners that travel to customers. Turf wars used to be fought within and over geographically delineated areas, in part for control of financially lucrative locations, in part for status. Now these same wars—for money and prestige—are fought over phones. Stealing a gang member's phone wrests control over territory, once located geographically, but now stored and accessed virtually, as the descriptions below illustrate. A detective with the organized crime unit tells me,

When the B Side expanded into the North they had the same problem. The IP [Indian Posse] started to identify where they were going back to, wherever those houses were that they were coming and hanging out in and they would

shoot at those houses to tell them get out of the neighbourhood. With dial-a-dealer lines though they do the opposite. Instead of identifying the house they run counterintelligence on each other. They'll have a Mad Cow customer buying off a B Side line and say okay where you at? And the B Sider will say okay meet me at the corner of Spence and West Broadway and Mad Cowz will set up and wait for that delivery to come and then shoot, rob, steal. They'll do whatever they can, they'll 'rip' the guy, as they call it. They use each other's customers as counterintelligence to do it.

An officer from the gang expert program of the Winnipeg Police Service adds,

If you're a reputable drug dealer, you're going to have good product, you're going to be consistent, you're going to answer that phone all the time. So you might move out of your area and travel all the way north on Salter and sell on Burrows or something like that. That's how the territories are very fluid. They're not confined so much. You would never see these people, of course, but what you would do is you put feelers out there. If you are a regular drug dealer you say 'Hey if you ever hear of any other phone line selling in this area give me a call, I'll hook you up with a free piece.' So someone says, "Hey Johnny, I heard a number of people are selling in this area.' So the drug dealer says, 'Okay, call them up and tell them you want to buy some drugs and meet with them, here's two free ones.' So they call them up and all of a sudden they walk up to the car, pull a gun on them, and say, 'Give me all your shit, give me your phone, if I ever see you around here again I'll break your legs.' Then you take that person's phone, go through all their customers, call them each up and say, 'Hey, we're switching our phone number—first one free.' So you get a chance to meet that person, you say, 'Hey, I'm so and so that other line isn't running anymore.' You go through all those customers like that. Those customers are where all the money's at.

Cell phones do not mark the end of territorial lines; instead a new form of territory is enabled through the use of this mobile technology. Rather than agents of deterritorialization that let users skip distances and transgress boundaries, new media are "territorial devices that increase the complexity of all existing territories" (Brighenti 2010: 400). With cell phones we see this complexity in the ways new gang territory is forged through mobile technologies while also remaining tethered to regional territorial spaces. Drug lines still belong to gangs, and those gangs

continue to reside or operate within regional zones. While dial-a-dealing allows territory to travel with the body, it also remains connected to its regional form. As a community police officer working in the North End recounts, “The phones belong to gangs. Like there will be an IP drug line, where there will be a certain phone number. Like 769-rock is one of them. It's been around forever. The phone just keeps moving around but you call today and buy drugs. But we don't know who has it or where it is.”

Since the cell phone remains attached to particular gangs who identify with regional territories, it is perhaps more accurate to think of dial-a-dealing's effect on the mobility of gang space in terms of a “prolongation” (Brighenti 2012) of territory. The concept of prolongation describes new media as “capable of creating spatially mobile territorialities that carve – or inflate – urban spaces from the inside” (Brighenti 2010: 481). Rather than mobile clouds of territory unanchored to stable ground, cellphones act as prolongations, creating corridors that connect situated territory to portions of elsewhere. As such, mobile technologies do less to transgress, erode, or erase gang boundaries than they do to create flux. As gang members travel with territory, they stretch or prolong these lines.

Thus, rather than a dispersal of boundaries or the declining importance of distance, dial-a-dealing offers a bringing-with of territory. This is to reconfigure the boundaries of territory, defined not in terms of regional demarcations, but as “lines of activity” (Farias 2010: 6). A topological space, gang territory expands to other parts of the city for a period of time and then contracts again. In this sense, cell phones affect not only the mobility but also the temporality of these boundaries,

suggesting a conception of gang territory that incorporates “the fleeting, the ephemeral, the geographically distributed, and the suddenly proximate” (Law & Urry 2001: 403).

Following scholars who study the “portativity” of borders (Amilhat-Szary & Giraut 2014), the mobility afforded through the prolongation of gang territories is less about crossing boundaries than about reconceptualizing the border as mobile (Zell 2018). William Walters’ (2018) work on deportation infrastructure draws similar connections between new media and the prolongation of corridors of deportation. The recommendation to allow deportees one last opportunity to talk with their lawyers after landing in the country of destination, but before setting foot there, stretches territorial boundaries: “there is a prolongation of...territory once the phone call comes to stretch it: the moment of final exit gets opened to postponement” (Walters 2018: 2812).

The stretching of borders to delay or prevent the movement of persons across jurisdictional lines is also explored through Alison Mountz’ “long tunnel thesis,” (2011: 327), which describes the way the state reshapes borders in an effort to control the entry of migrants arriving at the Canadian coast. Government officials can hold migrants in spaces similar to the long tunnel of an international airport where migrants are processed before officially entering national boundaries. Despite having arrived to Canada in a geographic sense, in terms of embodied migratory status, migrants remain inside the boundaries of a territory they have not yet been able to leave.

The stretching rather than eroding of boundaries that Walters (2018) and

Mountz (2011) illuminate serves as an analogy for the territorial topology of dial-a-dealing. Both examples suggest a distinction between *mobility*, as a 'change of conditions,' and *motility*, as exclusively 'geographical movement' (Canzler, Kaufmann & Kesselring 2008, cf Brighenti 2012: 409), a distinction that brings our attention to both borders and bodies. Although the comparison to Mountz suggests that this juxtaposition of movement and stasis is not unique to mobile technologies, Brighenti argues that new media technologies play a particular role in motilising borders by "turning them into a virtuality that is proliferated, scattered and disseminated, only to be instantly actualised whenever and wherever needed" (2012: 409). Indeed for gang territories dial-a-dealing technologies engender region as a continually changing potentiality rather than a fixed outline. While the persistence of regional connections means that gang boundaries lack the untethered nature of borders found in Brighenti's theory of mobile media, motility becomes an especially useful concept when considering the movement of gang bodies. As gang territory stretches with the body, bodies move with territory but not out of it. When borders are mobile, gang members, like deportees awaiting their last call or migrants in the long tunnel, move 'geographically' without a change in territorial 'condition.'

Through dial-a-dealing, gang territories are not *only* simply fixed regions but *also* spaces that travel with you. These territories span, in ebbs and flows, the whole city, yet remain small enough to fit in your hand. When cell phones become territory, the mobility they afford remains contained within boundaries that one carries with the body. If stolen, these territories slip neatly into another's pocket.

However, this bringing-with of territory found through dial-a-dealing still offers more mobility than is available to those who do not use this technology in their drug transactions. Dial-a-dealing is not a technology available to all gang members equally. In the North End, crack shacks remain the prominent mode of selling drugs; it “has retained this model,” a police officer tells me, “because of poverty and they need to be close to their customer. If they move out of there other gangs are going to move in.” The North End’s entrenchment in poverty makes dial-a-dealing a less viable business infrastructure. The huge drug clientele that lives within the North End makes it unnecessary for dealers to travel out of bounds to sell drugs, while their absence would leave this area open for other gangs to wrest market control. Another effect of poverty is that the drug dealers are less likely to own a vehicle or to have a driver’s license. A community police officer from the North End explains, “There are not as many dial-a-dealers out here that I’m aware of. It’s more [crack] shacks. For dial-a-dealers you need a vehicle. That might be one reason why we see less of them out here. Dealers might not even have a license.”

The result for drug dealers is an even greater entrenchment not only in space but also in a cycle of criminalization. With dial-a-dealing, “you’re more protected from the police,” a detective with the organized crime unit tells me. “Now you have gang members, drug dealers that are carrying just enough for just the next deal. In the past [the higher-ups] would have them carrying 30 rocks and a bag and if you get caught by the police you’re in trouble.” In the North End, poverty restricts access to cell phones, vehicles, and licenses, limiting both the mobility and motility of dealers, users, and boundaries.

Attending to the practices of dial-a-dealing challenges both the view of gang territories as fixed and static regional boundaries and the view that technologies increasingly make territory irrelevant. Instead, for those who can access them, cell phones produce gang boundaries that move with the body, so that while the body moves geographically it does not cross territorial lines.

4.4 Crack Shacks

Crack shacks have been a staple of drug dealing operations since the Main Street gangs emerged in Winnipeg the 1980s. Often set up in proximity to prostitution, crack shacks are houses that operate as key hubs for the distribution of drugs, mainly crack and cocaine, to the public. While they can be found throughout all gang territories, they are most common in the North End where low-income housing is a target for crack shack locations, and the sex trade offers a steady supply of customers. As a 25 year veteran of the Winnipeg Police Service, currently a detective in the organized crime unit, remarks,

...it's where they're trafficking. A lot of times they set up crack shacks near where the sex trade workers work. It's just pure geography because a lot of the girls aren't driving or anything like that. So try to get a crack shack as close as possible to where the girls are working and the girls just go back and forth like that. So it becomes a geographical issue, they want to be close to that.

While dial-a-dealing has supplanted some of the crack shacks in the B Side and West Side gang territories, they remain the most common form of drug infrastructure in the North End. This is because they are easy to set up again and again and because they offer more secure locations for drug distribution than street corners do.

Customers visiting crack shacks must buy and consume their drugs within the house, obscuring evidence of the drug transaction and protecting customers and dealers. This section looks at the ways that this drug operation infrastructure contributes to the spatiality of gang territorial boundaries.

Crack shacks are operated by gangs and exist within the regional lines of gang territories. In this sense they appear to support a conventional view of gang spaces as regionally bounded and defended: when a crack shack imposes upon a rival gang's territory, the crack shack is removed in order to maintain economic control over the area. However, crack shacks also operate at a different scale. Rather than being an economic location within a territory, crack shacks can themselves be a territory that multiple gangs seek control of. As a police officer explains,

People will be constantly fighting over one house. There might be multiple places on the block but there will be one place that they'll fight over, all these gangs want it. And they'll fight for it...the location of the house in relation to where prostitution was, and where it was set up... So I think that's relevant when you're looking at territories. Territory is a specific location.

In this example, turf wars are fought over individual houses, regardless of the regional gang territory within which it is located, as territory shifts to the boundaries of walls and doors, not streets, rivers, or rail yards. A rival gang will destroy or take over a crack shack in a rival territory, without disturbing the otherwise regional divide between gang territories. This is similarly shown in the way that crack shacks can co-exist within an area even when operated by rival gangs, as an officer explains,

...here in the North End, I was talking to some other guys today, we were talking about the gang stuff and we were saying it didn't seem to be out here like it is in L.A. where a M.O.B. Squad guy crosses Aberdeen and he gets shot

because M.O.B. is mad at him. It doesn't happen here. It seems like they're much more low-profile. Like when they have these crack shacks they don't seem to, they don't tag them with graffiti or anything because they want to be more low profile and blend in. They just want to sell drugs. You can have a M.O.B. Squad crack shack and you can have an IP crack shack a block away from each other. As long as they are not interfering with each other, they don't care.

The result is that crack shacks operated by two different gangs can exist on one street. They may both be in the territory of one gang, but one house operates as the satellite territory of a rival gang. If we think of crack shacks as a form of territory rather than an inert structure housed within gang territory, we can begin to explore how they contribute to the complexity of these spaces.

Crack shacks, which have endured as a mainstay of Winnipeg gang operations, are notable for their flexibility and impermanence. They are both set up, and dismantled, easily. Established by taking over a residence that is currently occupied by an addict, there is very little work involved in their formation. Most frequently found in areas with high poverty and transience, such as in the North End, a police officer explains, "Rooming houses are everywhere. It's an easy way to set up shop. You have an addicted person who lives in the house, you supply them with a minimal amount of crack each day and they take the place over. That's how they operate. They'll run it until it catches our attention." Since there is no investment in the real estate of the building and nothing to move except the dealer and their drugs, they can be dismantled and relocated very quickly. New locations are easy to find since crack shacks offer access to a network of addicts that can be approached as potential hosts.

The ability to re-establish crack shacks quickly is necessary because crack shacks are frequently being shut down, destroyed, or overtaken. One of the ways these spots are forcibly dismantled is through police intervention. At times alerted to the location of crack shacks by residents in the area, law enforcement officers in the street crime unit use surveillance technologies, undercover agents, and informants to help shut these operations down. At times, police officers even use diplomacy, knocking on the door and asking the people operating it to shut it down. A detective in the organized crime unit tells me, “me and my partner did this a couple times, we knocked on the door and said, ‘hey, we know you're selling crack here. Stop or we'll come back with a tactical team and a search warrant because the neighbours are pissed.’” However, as his colleague explains, the police are infrequently the ones who get there first. Instead, rival gangs are the main cause of crack shack demise:

Most of them don't get shut down by us. Most of them get shut down by the rival gang. It depends on how busy it is. There was a Manitoba Warrior crack shack operating in the West End, which is Mad Cow territory. The Warriors don't recognize anybody's territory, they don't care, they are Manitoba—that's part of their name. They don't care. They'll set up crack shacks anywhere. So they had [one on] Maryland going and we never touched it. By the time we got around to looking at it, it was so busy that the Mad Cowz had already firebombed it. They know before we do.

The more lucrative the crack shack, the more impermanent: profitability is likely to catch the attention of neighbours, police, gangs, and even landlords.

There are examples of crack shacks that outlast their average life expectancy. A detective describes the way the architecture of some crack shacks fortify these buildings against both police and rival gang raids:

A lot of these guys are looking at counter surveillance techniques when it comes to us, and what makes it most difficult for us to execute a search warrant on a house. One house in particular there was one entrance to the house and it's on the second story and they conducted all their sales out the back window. So they would actually drop a bowl down on a string and the money would go in the bowl and the drugs would come down. So they're able to watch for us and blockade the doors. So for the police to come and get them with any drugs you have to break through that door first get to the second story so by the time you get into that place the drugs are gone. Plus it was a great place when it comes to other gang members trying to raid them. Because a lot of these guys will try to rip each other off. But it's just those locations. If you can get a good second-story spot, like I can think of three or four—but that one in particular.

Despite these occasionally longer-lasting structures, crack shacks are temporary fly-by-night structures that have the capacity to be very quickly set up or dismantled—a necessary feature for structures that are under constant threat of dissolution.

Crack shacks break from the conventional view of territory as a bounded area of land within which gang activities occur. Rather than buildings located in territory, these houses can become territory, defying a view of territory as space divided up into mutually exclusive regional zones. In addition, rather than offering a stable and bounded spatial backdrop for gang activity, crack shacks become mobile satellites of territory that not only move and shift, but also fade away and remerge with a high degree of frequency. How do we account for territory with these features? A space that shifts and moves, a space whose fleetingness is also its source of endurance?

4.4.1 Network Spaces

One of the ways Actor Network Theory (ANT) conceptualizes space is as a *network*. In actor-network terms, a network involves complex and enduring

connections between peoples and things (Murdoch 1998). The ability to exist—entities, ideas, facts, people, spaces—depends on others around them. This is not a refutation of agency, but rather a view of agency as made in assemblage. When a network in which an entity is embedded falters, explains Mol (2010), the actor also falters. In ANT, networks are often discussed in terms of the objects they enact, but the making of objects also has spatial implications: “when a (network) object is enacted, so, too, a (network) world is being created with its own spatiality” (Law 2002: 97). As a network enacts an object, its spatiality is similarly produced.

It is possible to think of crack shacks as enacting network spaces, different from, although existing in relation to, regional spaces. This would be a gang space made not as or through region, but held together by its constituent parts: rooming houses, prostitution, addiction, poverty. These and other actors mark the limits of territory, not regional lines. However, as networks, they appear frequently to fail. Crack shacks rely on precarious entities for their existence. Indeed, the things that constitute its assemblage are the very things that make these networks falter: rooming houses, tenants with drug addictions, and proximity to prostitution. They operate predominantly in areas of high poverty where residency is unstable and changes frequently. The length of time in operation needs to strike a difficult balance between being busy enough to be lucrative but not so busy that it gets shut down by police or rival gangs. In this precarious balance the actors, the network, frequently fails, and when the network falters, so too does network space. Yet, if crack shacks have endured for over 40 years of gang history, it seems inadequate to theorize these objects and their spaces as in constant states of failure. In this sense,

network space seems ill equipped to address the complexities of crack shacks, whose fleetingness and flexibility are defining features.

4.4.2 Fluid Spaces

Thinking of assemblages in terms of networks tends to focus on stabilities. ANT theorists reject the idea that realities are found in nature and demonstrate, often painstakingly, that these realities are produced through material practices. However, while alternative enactments of reality may have been possible, ANT tends to focus on how a certain reality stabilized as the one we know. As Mol puts it: “There have been might-have-beens, but now they have gone. The losers have lost” (1999: 77). In contrast, the logic of ANT has been pushed a step further by refuting the assumption that “successful translation generates a single coordinated network and a single coherent reality” (Law 2009: 152). Instead of ‘winning out’ over other realities, ‘Othered’ realities can continue to exist through and within dominant realities.

Retaining the ‘Other’ in ANT analyses allows for more complex spatial models. One of these models is fluid space, found in Marianne de Laet and Annemarie Mol’s (2000) study of the Zimbabwe bush pump. These authors note that the pump changes shape: pieces break off, parts are altered or go missing, and other components not in the original design—both mechanical and social—are added. However, rather than seeing this pump as a failed network because it does not have configurational invariance, it was theorized “as an Other to the network and its spatialities, something outside a network” (Law & Mol 2001: 613). De Laet and Mol

(2001) present the pump as a fluid object that flows, yet retains its shape as it flows through different network configurations, and into different Euclidean locations.

4.4.3 Fire Spaces

As they dismantle and move, crack shacks, too, change shape: new house, new host, new features, new street, and new customers. They do not, however, embody a crucial feature: fluid spaces change shape gradually and incrementally, without great breaks or disruptions (Law & Mol 2001). Crack shacks are moved suddenly, with little warning, in the night to avoid detection; they are dismantled and abandoned as police attempt to present search warrants at the door; they are raided and they are fire bombed. They do not move gradually or incrementally.

Crack shacks form gang space for which precariousness is a feature of its endurance: they are an object for which sudden absences remain part of its spatial structure, rather than being defeated by them. These features are found in Law and Mol's (2001) notion of 'fire space.' In a topology of fire, the continuity of shape is an effect of discontinuity; movement rather than stasis is crucial. Unlike fluid space, which depends on gradual change, the constancy of fire space is produced through abrupt and discontinuous movements. They embody discontinuous transformation as a "flickering relation between presence and absence" (Law & Mol 2001: 615). Fire better describes the space of crack shacks, for which abrupt change and movement are constant features. Crack shacks do not simply move but are destroyed and remade, over and over, achieving constancy in a "relation between presence and absence: the constancy of object presence depends on simultaneous absence or alterity" (Law & Mol 2001: 616). For these spaces to continue to exist, their absence

is an incorporated feature of their presence, and thus the destruction or dismantling of crack shacks is far from being a failure. In this way, crack shacks are both satellite territories—house by house—and also form a larger interconnected gang space for which the ability to disappear and be rebuilt is an essential feature: “the flickering between present-presence and absent-presence” (Law & Mol 2001: 618) gives crack shacks their relatively stable and enduring shape.

Thinking of crack shacks as fire spaces changes the geography of gangs from a bounded flat expanse to one of assemblage. While each crack shack may be situated locally, these individual satellite territories and their absences also produce a processual space—a space that resides as crack shacks but also beyond and across them as they move through and over time: situated, localized and temporary and also vast, dispersed, and durable. Crack shacks assemble as combinations of “ineffability and presence” (Tsing 2015: 43), as mobile sites of territory.

4.5 Slipping the Line

Boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky. What boundaries provisionally contain remains generative, productive of meaning and bodies (Haraway 1988: 595).

Despite my insistence that we look beyond the conventional territorial form of gang spaces, examples of gang territories as starkly bounded regions that limit or intercept mobility are readily found when talking to gang-affiliated youth. Respondents accessed schools, doctors, and leisure activities based on their location relative to gang boundaries. Some residents, like Jordan, had never been past

Portage Avenue—the line that divided his home in the West End/West Side from rival gang territory in West Broadway/B Side—in the six years that he had lived in the area. “Like Portage,” he tells me, “I wouldn’t know what the other side of that line looked like. I don’t do no Dora Exploring, you know? I don’t do no shopping around to see who is outside. I mind my own.” His friend Hassan adds,

Yeah like if I’m walking, I’ve never been on Balmoral past Sherbrook, and never been on the other side of Portage. Because I know, you know, it’s just simple things like crossing can get you touched. Yeah like touched quick. Beaten up, stabbed, or maced. What people do not know, they spray you or they brick you, grab a brick to the back your head.

As a boundary, the eight lanes of Portage Avenue, static and formidable, fulfill our expectations of territorial borders: a line that divides here from there, us from them, ours from theirs. We expect space to accommodate divisions in this way, to accept these fragmentations, and to abide by them. Gang-aware residents confirm this expectation: they describe gang territories as organized by regional divisions: clear, consistently locatable boundaries that separate home territory from rival space.

This organization of territorial boundaries is reflected in the term “slipping,” an expression of boundary transgression found in the daily movements of gang members as they navigate rivalry. Hassan tells me,

In the West End we stay away from B Side graffiti... and Manitoba Warriors [laughs]. And that’s pretty much it. If I see Mad Cow graffiti, that’s like my family, my blood. My cousin was a high-ranking member of the Mad Cowz. I’m not in the gang. If I ran into [B Side] guys it would go bad for either me or them. It just depends on who’s going to do what first. They know me. My cousin was shot. You know I’d rather be ready than *slip*, end up on some banana peels.

Slipping is a variation of *slipping the line* or *caught slipping*, gang colloquialisms that refer generally to being caught crossing out of bounds of one’s own home territory.

When gang territories are taken for granted as regional spaces with defined and defended boundaries, the meaning of *slipping* appears obvious: it refers to gang-affiliated youth crossing regional home territorial boundaries—across Portage Avenue, for instance—into either non-gang-affiliated regions or into rival gang territory. This is indeed the case in many examples, as Jordan’s quote suggests. Crossing out of your own regional home territory, especially if that crossing places you in rival regional territory, is a serious and at times deadly offence.

However, when we listen more carefully to the practices described in interviews with gang members, their families and friends, and the police, *slipping the line* describes two other spatial configurations of being *out of bounds*. In the first of these alternative spatial versions, *slipping the line* refers to various hybrid geographies that enact the body as out of bounds, even while the person remains within in gang boundaries in a regional sense. Rather than travelling “through” or “out of” regional space, this bodily re-bordering process depends on material practices of the body in assemblage with other objects. The second alternative spatial configuration describes a transgression that finds youth out of bounds by crossing a line not between regions but between invisibility and visibility, enacted respectively through gang members’ lines of travel and police practices of surveillance and patrol. Below, I review these three ways of slipping the line, and the spatiality inferred by each.

4.5.1 Regional Boundaries

For gang-affiliated youth, crossing regional lines can cost them their lives. An officer from the gang expert program of the Winnipeg Police Service describes a

case in which a gang-affiliated youth from West Side was killed by a rival gang member after getting caught crossing Portage Avenue, the regional line between West Side and B Side gang territories. He recounts the way being *caught slipping* was framed by the defendant as motive in this case.

One of the witnesses said in his witness statement that the accused had made some reference to the victim, he was like, 'I caught him slipping.' So the Crown wanted me to explain what that meant. It usually means when you're caught out of your own home territory but he never said those exact words when he testified so the Crown said, 'You know what, I don't need you to testify on that. It's not clear and we have a strong enough case not to push this issue; doesn't really matter. The motive was just gang rivalry.' That was enough as a motive.

A youth worker I interviewed further elaborated on this case, returning again to this motive that had been left underemphasized in the Crown's case.

I know that when [he] was shot the vibe of everyone afterwards was like, 'Why was he where he was shot? It doesn't make any sense.' Everyone knows he shouldn't have been south of Portage so why was he there. Still no one can figure out why he was there. He put himself in a great deal of danger by going south of Portage. He was with a friend, I believe, and he was essentially shot for just being in the wrong neighbourhood. Which is gang territory 101, right? [People say] 'I don't know why he was there. You would be fine if you just stayed over here.' Gang boundaries seemed front and centre in this case.

Downplayed by the Crown but placed front and centre by the defendant and those who knew the victim, the act of *slipping the line* draws our attention to one of the ways gang spaces come to matter: as a regional space. In the quotes above, gang space is organized and accessed regionally, as a space delineated by invisible but well-known boundaries that can stop or impede travel in or out of the area.

However, *slipping the line* is not simply an act of crossing but also of enacting: both crossing and killing forcibly enact gang space in terms of boundary and region.

Through these spatial practices of gang members, gang territory is made and enforced as region. Just as a fence becomes a way to regionalize space in a material way, in gang territories regional boundaries are enacted through the iterative movement of bodies stopping at regional lines. Instead of a regional line that pre-exists its impassability, there is reciprocity of space and bodies: bodies stop or are stopped as spaces are regionalized. These on-going practices of crossing or not crossing perform gang spaces as a regional circumference not with walls but with bodies that move iteratively away from these lines. The phrase *slipping the line* draws attention to the ways gang space is made and maintained as regional space, as a regional line that one can *slip*.

4.5.2 Hybrid Boundaries

In the examples above, *slipping the line* refers to crossing a regional line between two gang territories, but this is just one type of boundary to which this colloquialism can refer. Broadly defined, *slipping the line* is being caught outside your own home territory. But what kinds of spaces constitute home territory? A synonymy between gang territories and regionality was not supported by interviews with gang members. In a conversation with Michelle, an ex-B Side member, *slipping the line* is used in a way that suggests an extra-regional organization of bounded space. In the quote below, *slipping the line* describes something that can happen in certain circumstances within the regional gang boundaries of one's territory, not by transgressing regional lines.

Even on West Broadway, West Broadway was our hood right? I was parked at Pal's and these guys wanted to catch people slipping so they were hiding

and stuff like that and happened to catch me slipping at the store, even though it's in B Side. But they had 20, 30 guys with them and I was by myself. So they caught me slipping because I was by myself. That's not even okay when you're in your own territory. So after that we just don't ride alone by ourselves anymore. You're always with somebody or you have straps on you or something: bars, bats, bear mace, knives, whatever you can to protect yourself. You do not want to walk around here strapless.

Here crossing a gang boundary does not happen in a regional way. In her account she remained *within* B Side territory, as it is conventionally understood. Instead, *slipping the line* happened by conducting the body differently, for instance by travelling alone or being unarmed.

In *Home: Territory and Identity* (2000), J. Macgregor Wise draws attention to the ways space is marked—through objects and our senses of them in repetition—and the milieus that these interactions form. It is through an accretion of these milieu effects, Wise argues, that territory forms, and it is through the living of this territory and its process of identification that make home-territories. While Wise is referring to home in a more conventional sense, there are similarities with home territory as it pertains to gangs: as inanimate objects act in collaboration with the presence, habits, and effects of people (spouses, children, parents, and companions), territory is formed.

However, while Wise draws our attention to the assemblages of territory, he continues to emphasize the cultural aspects of space—the ways meaning-making territorializes, the ways identity is territory. In contrast to the subject-effects of territory, I shift from the subjectivity or identity of space to its embodied materiality. As hybrid geographies (Whatmore 2002), gang spaces do not pre-exist the collaboration of bodies, human or otherwise. In Michelle's example above, home

territory is enacted through human and non-human assemblages: bodies in cars or carrying bats, bear mace, knives. These objects and bodies make home territory as an assemblage that exists in addition to regional territory. By travelling with other people, or being armed, the embodied boundary of home territory remains intact.

When this assemblage falters—when straps or cars or other people are missing—the hybrid geography of home territory shifts and one finds themselves out of bounds, they find they have *slipped*. In this way, *slipping the line* does not rely on a body crossing a boundary in a conventionally physically mobile sense. When someone slips the line, they move from one territory to another without crossing regional lines; mobility is achieved without a change of coordinates. By being alone or unarmed the body finds it is no longer in home territory; it has *slipped the line*, regardless of regional location. These material practices change the assemblage of gang space, and thus set into motion a bodily rebordering process. These are not bodies and things crossing in and out of spaces, rather these things, or absence of things (mace, bats) and practices (walking alone) change the space of the body, producing a space that is unbounded and a body that is out of bounds. The body *slips the line* because space has been made in a new way: the assemblage that once held together as home territory falls away. This is territory as the effects of milieu (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Wise 2000); as milieu markers—bodies, weapons, speed—are newly arranged, home territory shifts to rival territory, expressed, however, without a change in coordinates.

4.5.3 Boundaries Between Visible and Invisible Space

A third example of *slipping the line* offers still another spatial model of ‘home

territory.’ An officer in the Street Crime Unit recounts how this phrase is used by gang-affiliated youth caught by police while walking down main streets in their own neighbourhoods. In the officer’s words:

‘Caught slipping’ too, is something they say. If we’re in the West End we can just keep driving around and around, if we know where a crack shack is. We just keep driving around and eventually we’ll find somebody with their guard slipping and we’ll see them. It just means you don’t have your head up. They’ll say to you, ‘Oh you caught me slipping.’ Normally these guys won’t walk down the front sidewalk of the street; they’ll only cut through yards.

This description suggests another way that youth cross the boundary of home territory into a rival zone: they cross from a space hidden from view into one that is visible and observable. When this police officer says that these youth “only cut through yards,” he describes a particular embodied gang practice. Gang members take short cuts, weaving between houses, through back lanes, and in and out of unlocked doors, a practice of evading police detection or rivals (Valasik & Tita 2018).

These short cuts are also a practice of *things*. These obscured routes undergo continuous modification as residents move, houses and lots are bought and sold, doors are locked or unlocked, buildings are constructed or torn down, fences are repaired, modified or dismantled, paths, exits and entry points are blocked or opened. This tangle of shortcuts—made in flux by mobile and shifting bodies and things—refuses to stay in place. Together these bodies, buildings, fences, doors and other material objects form what we can think of in terms of as a *rhizomatic* practice. This is a term that Deleuze & Guattari (1987) have used to describe thought or theory that is heterogeneous, multiplicitous, and nomadic. Rhizomatic

thought does not follow a linear path but extends outwards in many directions and connects to many other points.

The shorthand “cutting through yards” similarly describes such a rhizome: there is no formal shape or overarching organizational form, no one pathway is forged or followed, just an ebb and flow in which “things-flows are distributed” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 361). Yet, in contrast to being forged through new modes of thought, these short cuts are made through material practices of bodies and objects. Like rhizomatic thinking, the iterative circuits of movement of multiple bodies carve out multiple lines with multiple exit and entry points. Trajectories of many bodies extend in all directions. Over time these routes shift and change as structures and people create new entry-points, pathways and blockages.

If a rhizome represents a set of embodied practices with no formal shape or overarching organizational form, how is it that boundaries are crossed? What line is slipped? What type of gang space is a rhizomatic ‘home territory’? Deleuze & Guattari (1987) suggest that rhizomatic thinking performs “smooth space,” a space of multiplicity that is occupied but cannot be counted. It is a space of contact rather than a visual space because it fails to meet “the visual condition of being observable from a point in space external to them,” and as such can be “explored only by legwork” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 371). For gangs, rhizomatic practices of the body, in concert with the actors of short-cut assemblages, creates a version of ‘home territory’ that resembles smooth space. As gang bodies take short cuts these diversions fail to culminate as a contoured regional border. Instead, the paths forged are “lines of flight,” acts of “fleeing or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and

disappearing into the distance” (Massumi 1987: xvi). The rhizomatic practice of “cutting through yards” results in space that exists as movement and is characterized by invisibility and evasion. No one space is made, no one space is seen.

In this rhizomatic ‘home territory’ of gang space, what line is *slipped*? In a space of flows and trajectory, where do the boundaries lie? In the police officer’s example above, being caught slipping describes being caught walking down sidewalks within one’s own gang territory. The line they cross is not a regional boundary between gang territories but a border between a rhizomatic ‘smooth’ space of invisibility and evasion to a space of observation and visibility. This space of visibility is made through practices of surveillance that again incorporates both people and objects. Practices of urban planning and development enact neighbourhoods as formal grids, neighbourhoods designed to be seen: front streets and sidewalks offer a view of houses, house numbers, and street names; streetlights light them; parks are situated on them; storefronts face them. This urban design, and the objects and structures it incorporates, produces a space to see and from which to see and be seen.

Yet, *slipping the line* does not refer simply to coming into these formal grids of neighbourhood design. It refers to *slipping* into another gang territory, a space enacted in part through police practices of surveillance and patrol—practices that do not simply watch gang territory but make it. As police officers drive around a neighbourhood gang space is made as a region, as a territory that exists within a particular regional boundary and not beyond it. They produce this gang space as a

“tracing”—an act that replicates existing structures (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 12). While the practices of gang members “map” home territory as lines of flight with no starting or finishing points, the police “just keep driving around and around,” tracing a pre-existing regional urban grid. In this sense, “policing is not simply about removing ‘transgressive [behaviours] ... from the public gaze’ (Catungal & McCann 2010: 76), there are additionally a growing number of strategies, particularly in the urban West, which seek publicly to reveal and uncover illicit places, behaviours and groups” (Cook & Whowell 2011: 615). In contrast to the invisibility of home territory, police practices of surveillance that reproduce region also produce gang space as visible, locatable, and knowable: an already existing space, within which subjects wait to be found. It is again a hybrid geography, made of streets, lights, buildings, police cars and practices of patrol and observation. *Slipping the line* from rhizomatic spaces to this “arboreal” space of police practices is to emerge from an invisible gang space of movement and trajectory into a space of formal dimensions and coordinates: it is to cross the boundary from the unseen to the seen.

The general consensus that slipping the line means to cross out of one’s own home territory belies the complexity of both what it means to be a boundary and what it means to be ‘in’ home territory in the first place. The prevailing assumption is that gang territory refers to a regional space with boundaries that the body crosses over and out of to exit. Indeed, as the first example demonstrates, *slipping the line* describes the act of crossing Portage Avenue, the regional line between a boy’s home territory of the West Side and the rival gang territory of B Side. Through these acts, gang territory is made as regional—but it is made in other ways, as well.

As the second example shows, practices such as walking in groups, or through assemblages of gang members and weapons or cars, home territory is enacted as a hybrid geography held together through the association of bodies and things. When this assemblage falters—when they are alone or without weapons—home territory is no longer enacted as the space of the body, which finds itself out of bounds. In the third example, home territory is yet another space, one brought into being through *lines of flight*. Gang bodies weaving in and out of back lanes, buildings, pathways, and shortcuts enact a space of multiple exits and entry points, but without definable or traceable form—a territory made of evasion and invisibility. In this case, *slipping this line* is to move from this space to a visible and knowable Euclidean grid, enacted as gang space through the surveillance and iterative circulation of police embodied practices.

These are not three different gang spaces, but neither is there a singular boundary that *slipping* transgresses. As Thrift writes, “It might be that sometimes a bounded space exactly corresponds to a world. More likely, though, a world will be a series of lines of association crisscrossing those of other worlds but occupying some of the same spaces, even if fleetingly” (Thrift 2010: 295). This world—home territory, exists at times as region, as assemblage, and as evasion, simultaneously. At times these spaces cross the body even as the body is crossing through them. The regional, hybrid and smooth spaces of home territory collapse the difference between inside and outside or here and elsewhere. No longer are these dichotomies a requisite of space: gang members can be both inside and outside home territory, in both home and rival territory.

4.6 Gang Colours

When we think of gang territories in conventional terms, we draw on a spatial legacy in which space is understood to be flat, pre-existing and one-dimensional. This vast expanse can be sectioned and parceled into many adjacent regional spaces and accessed by crossing the boundaries that divide them. However, when I first started researching gang spaces it was readily apparent that this spatial model only accounted for partial access. In addition to the regional boundaries of the North Side, West Side, and B Side, other gang spaces exist. Rather than accessed simply through crossing a regional boundary, in some cases, these spaces were brought into being through embodied practices—through the stylizations of the body, although these two types of spaces work in concert.

The importance of gang clothes and colours for the establishment of gang territory has long been recognized. “As gang members move in and around their community,” Robert Henry notes, “their colours and bandanas that they prominently put on show are used to pronounce one’s territory. By displaying their colours and moving around their neighbourhoods, street gang members begin to lay claim to a territory” (2019: 236). While gang colours certainly pronounce and lay claim to territory, I suggest also that they produce it. In the North End, one of the ways gang territory is enacted is through the use of the colour red, the gang colour representing the Indian Posse. For Indian Posse gang members, wearing red brings a bounded gang space into being but the boundaries are enacted as the body: the ways of dressing and acting allow them access to this space while preventing access

to others who do not embody these material stylizations. These are fluid boundaries, moving with and as the body. So while people can enter regional gang space, until they practice embodied stylizations, *embodied* gang space remains inaccessible. The entry point to this type of space is through embodied practices.

Since these boundaries of territory are also boundaries of the body, they are more difficult to recognize as spaces. As is often the case with boundaries, they become more apparent through their transgressions. A story told by a police officer in the Organized Crime Unit helps illustrate the power of these boundaries as material spaces.

I had a file where a guy was beaten at Salter and Mountain, he was at a bus stop, he was wearing a red shirt. Young kid, I think he was from the West End. He had taken a bus to visit his family and was taking it back so he was waiting at the bus stop. A group of male and females pass him and say, 'Who are you down with?' He says, 'I don't know what you're talking about.' And they ask him again, because he's wearing red, 'Who you down with?' He said, 'I don't know what you're talking about.' And they kicked the living crap out of him.

Multiple boundaries come into play in this quote. Firstly, this boy entered the regional jurisdiction of Winnipeg's North End. The North End's boundary—albeit in many ways as a no-go zone for much of mainstream Winnipeg—is a boundary that people can cross freely. Secondly, co-located in regional space is another territorial line that this boy crossed: the North Side. This is a boundary of gang space, with mappable coordinates that align more or less with the North End. However, this regional line was not the gang boundary that resulted in the transgression described above. This boy inadvertently crossed a *third* boundary, and he did so by wearing red. This was the boundary of embodied space. This breach of embodied space, the

space that is enacted through stylized performances of the material body, does not happen by simply crossing this regional line that demarcates both the North End and North Side. This transgression of gang space, while it corresponds with being in the regional bounds of gang space (wearing red in other areas would not have similar consequences), happens at the body.

Crossing boundaries might be an accurate description of the act of travelling across regional lines but it is less accurate when discussing embodied spaces. Embodied boundaries exist, as the above example demonstrates, but these boundaries are enacted, not crossed. For Indian Posse gang members, wearing red enacts an embodied gang space. As a researcher looking for gang spaces, my own embodied practices produce a different gang space. My clothes, my hair, body language, race, age, gender, and class—these are all stylizations and that enact gang space as absent, a space I cannot bring into being in ways other than regionally. Wearing red would not even be enough to bring gang space into being for me. Wearing red in the example above corresponded with other embodied practices—combinations of race, age and gender—so that the boundaries of gang space were enacted.

4.7 Gang Tattoos as Embodied Maps

Reconfigurings don't erase marks on bodies—the sedimenting material effects of these very reconfigurings – memories/re-memberings – are written into the flesh of the world. (Barad 2010: 266)

In their discussion of gang violence, Papachristos et al. (2013) note the

importance of recognizing the symbolic value of a neighborhood and its connection to gang identity:

In many ways, gangs more strongly identify with their neighborhoods than does the typical neighborhood resident. Whereas the average resident may take pride in her neighborhood and participate in community life, gangs often view themselves as a symbolic manifestation of the neighborhood itself...Gang members venerate their neighborhood—they tattoo its name on their skin and engage in violence to protect the neighborhood and its symbolic value. (2013: 419)

This symbolic link between gangs, bodies, and space is apparent in Winnipeg gangs, shown, for example in the territorial-themed tattoos of the B Side. Often found on hands, faces, and necks, these tattoos are also highly visible. Justin, a resident of the North End and a Manitoba Warriors affiliate tells me that face tattoos have been used to mark gang members who are “deep-in,” and thus represent their status within, and commitment to, the gang. Brittany, an ex-semi-affiliated B-Side gang member describes B Side tattoos in similar ways.

The most recognizable [gang members] are the ones with the tattoos. You can tell by certain tattoos. Some people have them on their face, their hands, their necks. A whole lot of the B Side have the face tattoos. Most of them are a big ‘B.’ Some of them have ‘WB,’ it looks like the Warner Bros. logo. Some of them have them on their necks or their arms. But a lot of the really deep-in B Siders have ‘B’s on their faces and their necks.

Justin explains the purpose of highly visible tattoos.

For the first wave of gangs, face tattoos showed everyone how serious you were about being in a gang and they were instantly about respect and fear. They said to the younger kids, ‘Yo, are you willing to go this far?’ And for everyone else they told you to cross the street. It didn’t matter if you knew gang colours—when you see someone with their face all tattooed with letters and numbers and tear drops, or whatever, you know, okay, I’ll steer clear. They may be more common now, more about fashion, copying what they see in gangs like MS-13, but it still says the same things: ‘I’m in this for life and fuck ever getting a real job’ [laughs].

For the B Side, in addition to being a defiant statement of loyalty to gang and gang life, these tattoos are also, as Papachristos et al. (2013) note above, deeply spatial. The B Side has strong roots in the area they represent, the West Broadway area of Winnipeg. Their name is taken from the area: the B stands for Broadway, which represents the West Broadway area more generally. Their tattoos are similarly spatial in nature: The 'B' and 'WB' both references to the name of the area and gang. Being displayed in prominent locations such as on hands, necks, and faces, adds to their spatial nature.

The B Side territory is also represented pictorially through tattoos of the community centre or whole maps of the area. A police officer from the Street Crime Unit tells me,

It all started with the Broadway Community Centre. The B Side just hung out there all the time and that's how they started their gang, that's how they started their territory. There's a couple gang members with the whole Broadway area tattooed on their backs including that community centre. It's more the leaders of the B Side that have them. There is one particular family with B Side, I guess, that started that gang and they grew up in that area.

This connection between the B Side gang and the space of West Broadway is represented through the spatial images and logos of their tattoos. Emphasizing the connection between space, identity, and bodies, as Papachristos et al. (2013) do, is an important corrective to gang scholarship that uncritically positions space as a container of bodies and crime by focusing “on the spatial distribution of gang violence...or the concentration of gangs, gang members, or gang hangouts in gang territories” (Papachristos et al. 2013: 420). Those studies, Papachristos et al. (2013) note, insufficiently understand the dynamics of gang violence because they miss

important connections between the gang bodies and space. However, as an embodied practice, it is possible to also consider the ways tattoos are not merely symbolic representation of territory, but also a material enactments of gang spaces and bodies.

4.7.1 Embodied Maps

Both tattoos and maps tend to be thought of in terms of *representation*: images and texts that tell us something about the real world. Tattoos have historically been interpreted for the meanings and information they contain (Barron 2012). Gang tattoos are seen as both indelible representations of the commitment to gang life and studied for individual symbolic meaning. Maps are similarly interpreted for the symbolic information they communicate about space: “For Western society, the map mostly now stands as a mirror-like representation of the real, a factual tool to help us to navigate, plan, and control the world out there” (Perkins 2009: 126).

More recently, however, academic emphasis on uncovering the meaning embedded in texts and representations has been criticized for missing the “nonintentional, nondiscursive, and elusory nature of the everyday world” (Cadman 2009: 1). Cartographic studies have addressed this gap by looking at both maps and map-making processes as performative, an approach that sees mapping as “not only taking place in time and space, but also capable of constituting both” (Perkins 2009: 127). “New worlds,” Perkins asserts, “are made every time a map is deployed” (2009: 127).

A focus on performance and practice has meant that the body is increasingly considered a site of mapping and space making. This approach has been demonstrated through the cartographic tradition of embodied mapping, which “draw[s] analogies between corporeal form and cartographic depiction of geographic shapes” (Perkins 2009: 130). While this is a genre as old as cartography itself—embodied maps have long been found in maps drawn as a human form¹¹, or through mapping deployed on the body in the form of tattoos or clothing—extending these examples through a performative lens suggests that these maps not only depend on local contexts, but also make them (Perkins 2009). Unlike Western maps, which tend to produce space as static lines and routes, embodied maps can move with their hosts and thus their spatial representation is also flexible and mobile. These maps are “of-the-moment, beckoned into being through practices; they are always mapping (Kitchin & Dodge 2007: 13). As bodies move and change, these maps are rewritten.

Understanding B Side tattoos as embodied maps is to understand the spatial symbolism of the B Side tattoos not simply as representations of space but also as an ongoing and unfolding spatial practice. It allows us to ask, what form of gang spaces do embodied maps enact? In this section I propose two interrelated possibilities: the enactment of gang space that is mobile and gang space that is an embodied process—both of which resist “existing cartographic rules, borders, and lines”

¹¹ See the frontispiece to Hobbes *Leviathan* (1651)—an analogy between body and territory (Cameron 2016), or the satirical *Foolscap World Map* of the late 16th century, which depicts the face of a court jester as a world map (Perkins 2009).

(McKittrick 2006: ix).

4.7.2 Mapping Mobile Space

Inscribed on the body, the spatial representations of B Side tattoos do not map space as static and flat but instead perform a mobile space as bodies carry these maps throughout the territory. This performance of space provides a counterpoint to the authorized signage and imagery of West Broadway. As gang members move within the confines of West Side regional territory, their tattoos provide a visual spatial materialization of this otherwise difficult to see space. Through repeated sightings, the repetitive presence of gang tattoos traces this space and its boundaries as a physical form. As the flow of gang bodies outlines and fills in these areas, their repetitive movements create an inscription, an embodied map that throws into relief a regional area differentiated from surrounding areas. As a “process of constant reterritorialization” (Kitchin & Dodge 2007: 1), these embodied maps—found on faces, necks, and hands—slowly, through movement and over time, rematerialize municipally established boundaries of West Broadway as B Side.

In addition to re-territorializing gang space through iterative movement, embodied maps also bring depth to its interior. Bodies carrying these maps move throughout territory, coming together or moving away from other embodied maps in a way that fleshes out embodied territory. If certain “set spaces” within these broader regional boundaries are in use more often or in more concentrated ways, these maps show this density as gang bodies congregate or disperse. Rather than capturing measured and still periphery, gang tattoos as embodied maps add three-dimensional movement to territory by being made in real time.

These embodied maps also show when territory spreads beyond the regional boundaries of West Broadway. As we look at photos of the B Side gang, an officer of the Organized Crime Unit and Gang Expert Program explains,

This is [the B Side gang] back at the Community Centre, they're all posing here. They're a little older here. So they do stuff like this, they return back here to show where they're from, and their territory being West Broadway, this is the area they carved out. And the tattooing has become really big within this group. This particular group has managed to use symbolism associated with West Broadway and they have basically spread it throughout the city.

As embodied maps, these tattoos not only map space but also produce it: as these embodied map extend outward, gang territory follows.

The B Side tattoos perform space through the body in ways that make territory mobile and inhabited. Both individually and in tandem they perform the landscape of embodied territory in real time as they chart and produce its movements and swells. This is gang territory that maps territory as differentially populated and active within boundaries that exist both regionally and as the body.

4.7.3 Mapping Embodied Space

While the embodied maps of B Side tattoos make space as bodies move through time, these tattoos also map a body's spatial history. For gang members, prison is a not an uncommon residence. These tattoos can mark a defiance of this displacement from the place they grew up, not only symbolically but also materially through the ability to carry one's territory with and as the body, and through which to track the route back. These tattoos map a space where the body is from, a space that stretches into the past as "localized time" or "temporalized place" (Lefebvre

1996: 227), rather than just a region of land. These themes have been identified in other examples of embodied maps, for instance in the psychogeographical mapping of Situationist cartography (Pinder 1996); in the time-signature of maps created through locative new media such as Global Positioning System (GPS) or Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technologies (Morris & Voyce 2015); or the “song lines,” perpetuated in art, dance, and storytelling, which track the movement of ancestors (Perkins 2009: 129). Whereas conventional cartography pre-supposes the separation of bodies from space, these maps, like the B Side tattoos, mark and perform a space of the body, a space that travels as the body.

Understanding B Side tattoos as mapping practices draws on and supports critical cartographic work that has redefined mapping as productive, rather than revealing, of space (Crampton 2003; Harley 1989; Pickles 2004; Wood 1993). However, it aligns more closely with, and contributes to, scholarship that has gone beyond bringing an increased sense of performance to (what we recognize as) maps, and instead broadens the range of what is recognized as mapping (Kim 2015; Kitchin & Dodge 2007). This latter approach is to see maps, as Kitchin and Dodge do, as ontogenetic: “*Maps are practices – they are always mappings*” (2007: 335), a move that recasts “cartography as a broad set of spatial practices, including gestural and performative mappings” (2007: 337). Presenting B Side tattoos as maps is to recognize practices of mapping in extra-regional ways: B Side tattoos are not just part of a process of making space, but are maps of *space as a process*.

The ‘desktop’ crime mapping trend, which, in the 1970s, used computerized mapping software and the digitization of police records (Chainey 2009), now

includes developments in acoustic gunshot detection systems, predictive crime mapping software (Bowers, Johnson & Pease 2004), and the publication of interactive crime maps on the Internet (Ratcliffe 2002). These advances have led Kindynis (2014: 225) to argue that crime mapping has become “*the growth industry in criminology.*” However, despite this increased interest, criminology’s use and understanding of maps remains superficial and largely uncritical (Kindynis 2014). In contrast, Kindynis suggests that criminologists challenge the use of mapping as a tool for crime analysis and law enforcement by investigating its bias, inaccuracy, and inefficacy, as well as through an interrogation of “crime mapping’s epistemological presuppositions” (2014: 229). These presuppositions, based on the Cartesian conception of space as an empty grid, inevitably fail “to capture the spatial dynamics of crime, as they reduce complex social phenomena to dots or shadings on a two-dimensional surface” (Kindynis 2014: 230).

The embodied mapping of B Side, along with the other various embodied and material enactments of space explored in this chapter, emerge in sharp relief from traditional criminological understandings of gang space. Conventional crime mapping reduces gang spaces to a ‘threatscape’ (Wallace 2009), depicted solely in terms of criminality. This approach legitimates the existing criminal justice apparatus (Kindynis 2014), and continues to disenfranchise racialized peoples from land and space. Understanding B Side tattoos as embodied maps instead recognizes the complex and multiple material practices of reterritorialization through which gang spaces emerge. Owen Toews writes that, “More than simply a location or a container of Indigenous life...Winnipeg is a place that Indigenous peoples have

collectively and strategically decided to remake in order for their families, communities, and nations to survive and thrive in resistance to colonial occupation” (2018: 16). This section helps illustrate the often-overlooked role of material practices of the body, such as tattooing, in the remapping, and thus remaking of, this space.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter gang territories materialize through various actants and in multiple ways: as regions formed through the urban landscape and infrastructure; as prolongations that move with the embodied technologies; as assemblages that cross sites and times; as boundaries that are navigated as hybrid geographies or the line between invisibility and visibility; as embodied through clothes; as mapped through tattoos.

While these examples have focused on material and embodied practices of gang members and territory, they eschew a direct and exclusive line of actionable ownership of gang territories by gangs. This analysis circumvents conventional discussions of gang territories as *claimed* space in favour of exploring these spaces as made in material, embodied ways. The focus on enactment casts a wide net when assigning agency. While a number of these practices include choices by gang members—what they wear, what tattoos to get, whether to carry weapons, how to sell drugs—these practices have spatial repercussions that supersede intent. As Thrift cautions,

Too often, the recent turn to corporeality has also allowed a series of

assumptions to be smuggled in about the active, synthetic and purposive role of embodiment which need closer examination. In particular, it is assumed that bodies are bodies-in-action, able to exhibit a kind of continuous intentionality, able to be constantly enrolled into activity. Every occasion seems to be willed, cultivated or at least honed... But the experience of embodiment is not like that at all; not everything is focused intensity. (2008: 10)

This is not the disavowal of agency, but its redistribution. An ontology of space denies its status as inertly preexisting the objects it 'contains' or the divisions it endures. Instead a commitment to materiality suggests that there is not so much a doer behind the deed "as a doing and an effecting by a human-nonhuman assemblage" (Bennett 2010: 28); "it leaves open *who* or *what* the actor is" (Mol 2002: 143). While gangs make these spaces, their production relies on the materiality of other agents: bodies, stylizations, technologies, infrastructures, objects, and companionships. In assemblage these practices make and remake spaces that both assert and deny gang territory's regional infamy: their boundaries contain and exclude, but also move, expand, bend, and multiply.

Chapter 5: Residents - *For us, it's all about eyes, ears and feelings.*

5. 1 Introduction

Scholarly research on gangs tends to focus on the motivations, actions, and consequences of gang membership. Gang territories are seen as a result of gang behaviours, and as geographies of their criminal enterprise. Understanding these spaces as extensions of gangs and criminality, rather than as urban spaces in which a variety of people live and work—let alone as hybrid assemblages of people and things—has meant that much less attention is paid to the ways other actors are implicated in, or affected by, gang territories. My introduction to thinking about gang territories as urban spaces came from talking not to gang members but to young non-gang-affiliated residents living in these areas. Their stories challenge the view of gang members as the sole proprietors of gang territories. Instead, residents—and as discussed in Chapter 6, law enforcement personnel—bring other versions of these spaces into being, in multiple ways.

In this chapter I return to the stories of residents who are not gang-affiliated—young people who self-identified as not belonging to gangs¹²—and the relationships they forge with gang territorial boundaries. Their stories were gathered over multiple visits to two community centres located in gang territories in Winnipeg's inner city. My intention was to identify the ways gang territories were

¹² It is important to restate that drawing a solid line between gang and non-gang-affiliated youth can give a false portrayal of the distinctions between these groups, or the similarities within them. Some of the respondents interviewed had family members who were current or former gang members, and some had more information about gangs than one might expect from those without ties to these groups; others only vaguely knew the gangs operating in these areas or the where the boundaries of their territories lay.

being not only navigated, but enacted by this group of residents. How were they participating in the production of gang territories, and what form did these spaces take? Drawing also on interviews with members of the Winnipeg Police Service and more affluent, older residents of the community, the shape of gang territories, as they are practiced by young, and often racialized, residents comes into view.

Since the early days of the Chicago School, research on how neighbourhood conditions affect the emergence of gangs has overshadowed the question of how gangs affect neighbourhoods. When the latter is studied, research tends to focus on neighbourhood or citywide crime and violence. Less well documented is the impact of gang territories on residents, such as non-gang-affiliated young people who live in these areas (Bannister & Fraser 2008). However, gang territoriality is never in doubt for either gang or non-gang youth, for whom navigating gang territory is a daily concern (Ley & Cybriwsky 1974). As Bannister and Fraser note, “Gangs are not from a neighbourhood: they are a defining quality of that neighbourhood” (2008: 102). This ‘quality’ presents in a number of ways for non-gang-affiliated residents. Young people experience increased levels of anxiety and concern (Wood 2004), particularly as a result of increased risk, or in anticipation, of physical harm (Bannister & Fraser 2008; Kintrea, Pickering, Reid & Suzuki 2008). They also experience reduced mobility, both in terms of not being able to travel to certain areas (Bannister & Fraser 2008; Kintrea et al. 2008), and in modifying the paths they follow and the areas they use within territorial lines (Ley & Cybriwsky 1974).

This chapter contributes to this conversation by paying closer attention to the complex and nuanced ways bodies and gang spaces intersect for non-gang-

affiliated youth and by showing that the ways gang territories emerge for residents differs from the ways these spaces materialize for gang members. Even though they live in the same regional spaces, their daily practices bring these spaces into being in unique, albeit related, ways. These practices and their effects are not always easy to see. However, as residents go to school, come home, visit community centres, spend time with friends, and go to lessons, these actions, which are otherwise unconcerned with the matter of making space, embody practices that enact gang spaces in particular ways.

To explore this theme, I look first at the example of “witnessing space” (Dewsbury 2003). Through the slow practice of observation the invisible lines of gang territories begin to emerge in regional form for young people in gang territories. While these boundaries usually do not restrict their passage, these spaces—witnessed as relations of interiority and exteriority for gang members—become regionally defined for residents in ways with which they nevertheless contend.

In the second section I look at how material practices of race enact an affective space in relation to these boundaries, but which materializes as very different spatial forms for residents. While race tends to be something assumed to be associated with the individual—where it situates most recognizably—in this discussion race is understood as practiced in material ways throughout multiple levels of society. In gang territories, practices of race interact with space in *affective* ways. This force of encounter is productive of an embodied space, a gang space enacted as new conditions and mobilities of the body. For young racialized

residents, gang territory locates as new forms of embodied mobilities.

5.2 Witnessing: Mapping Region

For young residents living in many inner-city areas, the regional boundaries of gang territories present an interesting juxtaposition. They are at once both nearly impenetrable for gang members—some of whom never cross these lines—and yet they exist unmarked, ungated, and unguarded: for many people living in this city, they go completely unnoticed. For non-gang-affiliated young people living in gang occupied areas, regional gang boundaries fall somewhere in between these extremes of impenetrable and invisible. While these boundaries do not often prevent mobility across territorial lines, young people are both aware of their locations and affected by them. Although rarely put to paper, many residents of the inner city carry with them maps of gang territories. When I asked young people in these areas where gang territories were, most could easily name their parameters. Here are some of their responses:

“Point Douglas is gang territory and basically anything south of Aberdeen and West, maybe to Arlington. You won’t see a lot of gangs in north of Inkster.”

“Basically from Logan to Notre Dame and then from Adelaide Street to Arlington.”

“Anything south of Portage all the way to the Maryland Bridge and then Arlington all the way to Memorial.”

These coordinates tell us where the regional boundaries of the North Side, the West Side and The B Side are, respectively. Not all respondents use the same streets to mark gang boundaries—there are, after all, no officially drawn lines—but over and

over again residents were able to describe the approximate regional limits of the territories in their areas.

How do non-gang-affiliated residents obtain the maps of gang territories? In interviews, I asked residents how they came to learn about the gang territories in their areas. Sometimes friends or family had told them where to go or avoid going, or they took note of gang graffiti. Most commonly, though, the way the young people I interviewed, like Sam, identified gang territory was through an embodied practice of their own: by witnessing the actions, movements, and bodily conditions of gang members.

I know three gangs in this area. I know Crips, Mad Cowz, and Bloods. I know I saw a lot of them come around here like Mad Cowz and Bloods. I know by how they dress and how they act and how they talk. They're walking around this place, sagging, you know when they pull their pants way down, saying stuff. Crips wear blue. And they do the gangster walk. And they slur when they talk, they are talking weird. Like they're drunk or high.

Young people recognize gang spaces through the movements, sounds, and practices of gang members. Indeed, as we saw in the last chapter, these spaces materialize through the iterative stylized presence of gang members: through the way gang members dress, walk, and talk, the boundaries of gang territories are traced and retraced. However, it is worth considering the ways “witnessing” these bodies—their stylizations and mobilities—is its own material practice of the body and produces its own kind of space for non-gang members.

In “Witnessing Space: ‘knowledge without contemplation’” (2003), Dewsbury argues that theorizing the making of space or place “needs to attend to the less visible spacings that go to make place up” (2003: 1930). He makes a case for

witnessing space beyond mainstream representational accounts, which fail to grasp many of the ineffable qualities of the world: the “emotions, passions, and desires, the immaterial matters of spirit, belief, and faith—all forces that move beyond our familiar, (because) denoted, world” (2003: 1907). Dewsbury calls on social scientists to adopt witnessing as an empirical and theoretical style better able to perceive and express the underrepresented world of emotional and intuitive bodies. Witnessing, as a method, helps access “the affects, energies, and ghosted presences of things and spaces” that the represented world obscures (Dewsbury 2003: 1908).

This dissertation answers such a call to witness in that it has been about attending to parts of gang territories “that have little tangible presence in that they are not immediately shared and therefore have to be re-presented to be communicated” (Dewsbury 2003: 1907). When I heard from youth serving agency staff that young people in gang areas were reluctant or unable to access services and resources because of territorial boundaries—boundaries that I failed to perceive or access as I crossed them—the contrast between the intangibility of these lines and the force with which they rerouted others’ mobility was a striking paradox. My aim was to attend to these occurrences, to witness that which exists beyond, or before, our representations of gang territory.

The act of bearing witness takes on a different but related character for Fuyuki Kurasawa, who describes it as “a transnational mode of ethico-political labour” (2009: 92). For Kurasawa, the transnationalization of bearing witness “involves and draws upon institutions and political networks that exist beyond the borders of the territory where mass suffering is taking place” (2009: 93) and works

to acknowledge and publicize—to represent, reconstitute, and transmit—atrocities. While this project takes a local, rather than global, approach, it nonetheless operates from beyond the boundaries of these spaces and brings certain experiences forward. However, unlike the aspirations for representational exposure that Kurasawa (2009) hopes will result in demands for a new world order, the politics of witnessing for this dissertation lie less in the exposure of what goes unseen and more in the ability of witnessing to think differently about practices and thus produce different worlds to witness (Dewsbury 2003). Aligned with the nonrepresentational ethics described by Dewsbury, its politics formulate through “the space of bodily connection, in the eventhood of the moment where the experiential and the referential is folded,” where the potential for alternative worlds exists (Dewsbury 2003: 1930).

While Dewsbury recommended witnessing as a method for social scientists, what I found was that residents were themselves using witnessing as a tool: through a keen sense of their surroundings, young residents were witnessing a space that was otherwise imperceptible. What does it mean to witness space? Gang territories are environments that pose an increased risk of danger and violence for young people. While those I interviewed rarely admitted to being afraid, they commonly described a heightened sensory awareness of their environment. Listening closely for sounds behind them, watching carefully for people or places to avoid, and paying attention to affective cues underpinned their spatial orientation. Jordan, 15, captures this response when he tells me, “Growing up, you know from a young age, we get things fast. We just see stuff with our eyes. You just catch on with it right

away.” This heightened sense of observation emerges as an embodied response that lets young people act quickly and keep out of harm’s way. Like Jordan, they are watching and learning in ways that reflect emotional responses to their environment: they are carefully witnessing that which is difficult to see, in the world around them.

I asked Andre, a Black 15-year-old living in the West End / West Side gang territory, “Would you be able to identify gang territories on a map?”

Only one: TFN. This is Langside Street right here, from there probably all the way to Sherbrook and I would say from Sherbrook to Kennedy. It's hard to say for sure. I live in the area and I do see those people almost every morning, like when I go to school or when I'm walking around the area. I'll always see those guys just walking in the area, doing their things. I don't see them outside those streets; I don't really see them out of there.

Alie, a 12-year-old boy whose family emigrated from Sudan, similarly answers, “I would think from Sargent to Portage Place to Agnes and Spence. I don't really see them when I go past those streets and stuff, people who look like they are in gangs.” Residents are watching for signs of gang members through the way they dress, walk, talk, and gesture. Over time, this witnessing reveals lines at which their presence begins or ceases. These boundaries emerge in an ongoing process, their outline slowly forming as series of contrasts between seeing gang members within, and not outside, those lines. These boundaries remain as traces after the bodies—both residents and gang members—have left. As Dewsbury describes, witnessing “is about attending to differences—those imperceptible, sometimes minor, and yet gathering, differences that script the world in academically less familiar but in no less real ways” (2003: 1907). The differences in where gang members are seen or

not seen “gather” as territorial lines through the “traces of presence that map out a world that we come to know without thinking” (Dewsbury 2003: 1907); they can be identified and located even while “*it’s hard to say for sure*” where they are. Young people in the area are learning where boundaries are through non-representational markers: through the senses, through movement, through affect, through time.

For Dewsbury the act of witnessing is a way of *perceiving* the world differently; it “moves thought by permanently unfixing and altering the perspective, denying any one figuration or representation of the way the world is” (2003: 1920). This is how we are accustomed to thinking of witnessing, as an act of perception, a way of experiencing or perceiving the world around us. However, witnessing is an embodied—thus material and productive—act, bringing into reality that which it practices to ‘know.’ In this way, witnessing is also way of enacting space. As young people learn about gang territories through witnessing the limits of gang mobility and bodily conditions of gang members, the slow emergence of territorial lines establishes the boundaries of gang territories as regional forms.

While the boundaries of gang space learned of through witnessing remain invisible, they are made material over time: they materialize through the traces of bodies that, through sightings, preserve as space. Witnessing provides the material conditions for boundaries to emerge for young residents through the slow observations of relations of interiority and exteriority. This is not unlike spaces that are more easily recognized as material: walls both allow people to identify where boundaries are and they become a material boundary that can act to change, restrict, or permit mobility. This is a true *sense* of territory, not in an immaterial

way, but as through the senses: materially embodied acts of witnessing strung together to form a regional boundary.

In the production of gang territories by residents, witnessing is met with another spatial practice: story telling. Individual accounts of gang boundaries are brought together with other people's accounts over time to present a more established but still diffused sense of territory. As Asim describes,

Indian Posse is more generally toward Sargent, like North of Sargent. That's where it starts off. It's like Indian Posse and then Mad Cowz is a little bit before. Confrontation happens there a lot. I've met people on Victor, my friend MJ, when I was in grade 3 she was in grade 5, and she was walking home and they thought she was someone else and she got shot in the leg. She was on crutches for I don't know how long. I think that was Mad Cowz or Indian Posse. So it is in that general area and it is like confrontation, always. Sargent, Cumberland, around there.

Through witnessing, gang boundaries emerge, but through storytelling they *merge*. Stories about gang territories told by friends and family help fill in the gaps of witnessed spatial forms. As de Certeau (1984: 107) writes, "Stories about places are make-shift things... The verbal relics of which the story is composed, being tied to lost stories and opaque acts, are juxtaposed in a collage where their relations are not thought, and for this reason they form a symbolic whole." As "practices that invent spaces" (de Certeau 1984: 107), legends diversify, but in doing so, de Certeau tells us, also act to impose order. This order, however, is far from structured or complete. Instead, "The surface of this order is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve order" (de Certeau 1984: 107). So it is with the spatial ordering of gang territories. Due to the loose coordination of witnessed spaces, these spaces are multiple, holding within them multiple acts of

witnessing, which contribute to their “ghosted presence” (Dewsbury 2003: 1908).

Collaboratively produced through witnessing, the boundaries of these gang spaces come in and out of sight more as a haunting than a wall. Yet, those who live in these areas can map out these spaces through street names, an imposed order on this space that took shape affectively, through the senses. Space thus emerges as regional territorial lines that mark the periphery of territory, and young people contend with this mapped territory in physical ways. Witnessing works in tandem with the practices of gang members—their embodied movements and stylizations—but the spaces produced differ in their effects. These are not the same boundaries that gang members enact, and they work differently for those who witness and tell of them: residents may pass freely through but, as discussed in the next section, rarely without consequence.

5.3 The Body, Affect, Mobility

Staff at youth serving agencies in Winnipeg’s inner city discussed gang territorial boundaries as a barrier to reaching both gang- and non-gang-affiliated youth. In part this is because gang membership is a highly fluid designation complicated by associations with friends or family members in, or associated with, gangs. Some young people who do not self-identify with a gang still find themselves unable to cross territorial boundaries. However, the impermeability of gang boundaries exists alongside less visible and more subtle changes to mobility for non-gang-affiliated youth.

The young people I spoke with were all growing up in inner-city

neighbourhoods, areas characterized by lower median incomes, higher rates of unemployment, and more ethnic minorities (Statistics Canada 2017). Respondents were aware of the presence of gang territories in the areas they lived and most had experienced or witnessed gang violence. However, this direct experience of fear and violence is not a universal feature of living in areas with gang territories. Other residents, those who were older, more affluent, often White, and often homeowners, did not experience this daily sense of menace. Differences in how these neighbourhoods are experienced are not simply expressions of perspective but are also a result of the way spaces are *done*.

In this section, I suggest that characteristics of the body such as race, class, gender, and age are better understood as material practices, practices that bring space into being in contingent ways. Within the boundaries of gang territories, practices of race change the affective properties of space and the body. For racialized and low income youth, race and class enact, or allow access to, affective spaces, spaces characterized by emotional and sensory resonances. These affective spaces, I argue, *materialize as new conditions and mobilities of the body*: although most residents were able to travel freely across gang boundaries, the boundaries were not inconsequential. “I can go anywhere,” I was told over and over, “as long as I run;” “travel in groups;” “go out only during the day;” “avoid certain streets;” “don’t take short cuts;” and so on. I present these changes to the way the body travels as examples of affect in motion, an affective space *that takes its shape as new forms of embodied mobility*. Drawing on the daily experiences of racialized young people within gang territories, I illustrate the ways practices of race and space combine to

produce affective corporeal geographies.

5.3.1 Race as a Material Practice

The residents I spoke with knew that where they lived or worked overlapped with gang territories, but not all residents were as intimately aware of them. The older, more affluent residents I interviewed tended to describe the gang territories in their neighbourhoods as something they had heard about on the news, rather than as something they experienced daily or directly. The answer below typifies the kind of response I got when I asked this demographic if they lived within gang territory. A 45-year-old white male who owns both a home and a business in the West End (West Side) answers my question, “Do you live in gang territory?”

I hadn't really considered it, but I guess I do. When I read articles about gang-related happenings I notice that they are happening within a couple blocks of me. A couple years ago there was a shooting on Burnell, which is a block over and one on Home Street, which is three blocks over. So yeah, as much as it's not in the front of my mind, I guess when I am asked that question I'd have to say 'yes.'

Another business owner I spoke to, a middle-aged Filipino woman who had lived in West Broadway (B Side) the year earlier, experienced negative interactions in the area. However, the stories retain an impersonal feel, as someone watching from a distance the events unfolding around them:

When I agreed to rent a house on Furby, I was like oh it's a nice house, the price is right. I definitely didn't know about gang activity until I moved in and found the side of my house getting tagged.... where a lot of the kids would meet was only three or four houses away. It was this weird little house that was labeled as some sort of church but I don't think it was a working place of worship. I don't think anyone actually maintained it or lived there. So there was kind of a monkey trail path beside that house and that is where I would see large groups of kids. And there was a streetlight above that church that was constantly out and anytime somebody would replace the light it

wouldn't even last a day. I used to see people knocking the light out but I also used to think, those kids are just playing, they're playing smash the light again [laughs]. Like pretty naïve. At church! And this is also the house, there was this little boy he must have been 3 years old, he was on a tricycle, and I thought as he was riding by, oh what a cute little kid. And then he said to me, 'Watch your back, bitch!' And I was like, 'Oh my god!' And I was scared, like genuinely scared. But I didn't really think I was ever a target for anything because I was just old enough.

This woman, whose income was still low enough to necessitate renting in this area, felt her age protected her from experiencing violence in more than an observational capacity.

The privilege of not having gang territories 'front of mind' or of not 'feeling like a target' does not extend to all people in these areas. For young, racialized, and/or low-income residents, gang affiliation was not required to know where gang boundaries were located, which groups occupied these spaces, or to have had interactions with gangs. In interviews, young people told me stories that were shocking and upsetting to hear. Many that I spoke to had been in violent encounters, including being stabbed, shot, beaten up, mugged, and maced. Asim, who moved to Canada six years earlier, recounts an experience from the West End (West Side) the previous year, when he was 14.

Around here, it was nine o'clock, and I was coming from the Rec Plex and these guys, I pretty much got jumped. It was a girl and four guys and they were all around me and the girl was talking. She told me, 'Give me your cell phone.' I said, 'I don't have a cell phone.' But I had my cell phone. I said, 'I'm a little kid what do you expect me to have?' She said, 'Okay give me your backpack.' So I gave her my backpack. She said, 'I like your sweater, give me your sweater.' So I just gave her my sweater. And one of the guys had a gun and he was behind me and I didn't see it at first and he shot it beside my ear. I passed out and I woke up, I don't even know how long later. It was so loud; he put it right beside my ear. They were a gang-affiliated. I'm pretty sure it was Mad Cowz. I guess they just ran off after that. I woke up on the street. I never told my parents because they would've freaked out and called the cops.

The anguish of this experience is compounded by the fact that this boy has very few places to go for support. Residents who heard the gunshot and saw this “little kid” lying on the sidewalk did not come out to help. He was unable to tell his parents. He feared the involvement of the police. “When I first came [to Canada] I thought it was going to be so nice,” he tells me, and I feel embarrassed and angry that these are the conditions we offer immigrant families. I tell him how sorry I am, an inadequate apology that I find myself offering many times throughout my interviews.

Asim’s stories are similar to other racialized youths’ experiences. In a tone incredulous of the injustices he tells me about, Dom, another Black 15-year-old, describes his experience of moving to the West End (West Side) from a Winnipeg suburb.

It's a non-respectful area. Not a lot of people around here have respect for other people. I don't get why they don't. They should have respect everywhere they go but they don't. Like my house got home-invaded while we were sleeping. People we don't even know were kicking down our door. It was scary. My mom jumped out the window. That's how scared she was. Her foot is broken now. So she has bolts and screws in it. I lived in Transcona¹³ for 10 years. I never experienced something like this. Everybody knew each other. I knew people on the next street, mostly all the people. And they all showed respect. I didn't know how the 'hood works because I only lived here for five years. I never experienced anything like this. My mother moved here because my brother was involved with gangs. And she wanted to be closer to him...She wanted him to come home every night so she knows where he is, instead of him being where she knows he's not safe.

The risks involved in moving to the West End illuminate the impossible choices available to Dom’s mother—protecting her gang-entrenched son is weighed against subjecting her other children to the violence of the inner city. In my interview with

¹³ Transcona is a suburb of Winnipeg, located about 10 kilometres east of the downtown area.

two other youth from the West End (West Side), Jordan and Hassan, incidences of incredible violence appear so commonplace as to be unmemorable. When I asked about their experiences in the area, Jordan answered that no one had tried anything with him. Hassan offered, “For me, I would say a couple times. I had a knife pulled on me, had a gun pulled on me once, actually. I just ran. I wasn't gonna stick around to see if he was gonna use it.” Then, remembering, Jordan added, “Yeah for me too, yeah mine was at a basketball game and like he just rolled up on me and I, like, sliced him and he came back and caught me and I just had to run. Hopping fences, doing what I gotta do to survive.” I asked Jordan, “What was the reason for the confrontation?”

Because we're enemies. Because he shot at me in grade 8. And I didn't like the guy. I didn't do nothing to tick him off. It just was, the guy was older than me. And one thing that pissed me off was that he wanted to pick on a younger guy to prove something as he was new to the gang, like their gang. He was like, 'Yeah I'm going to pick on this little guy.' And I don't stand it. I fight anybody, I don't care if I lose.

For many young people, rather than something they had heard about, gang territories were regularly encountered in heartbreakingly physical, emotional, and sensory ways, regardless of gang affiliation. I am so sorry, I tell them all.

Different experiences of the same neighbourhood are often explained in terms of multiple perspectives: various people will perceive one space, such as the West End, in different ways. These perspectives vary, it is assumed, because the people are different. This move—that multiplies perspectives but leaves the singularity of space intact (Mol 2002)—is a powerful way of othering people. When space is assumed to be a static pre-formed entity, differences in the way space is

experienced are absorbed by the Other: that person got involved in gangs because they are a different kind of person. In this explanation, both space and race are assumed to be static, already-there categories, and the connection between the two appear innate rather than contingent and achieved. This does important work: it means there is no need to be accountable for our own spatial practices and it suggests that the solution is found in policing this certain *other* kind of person and the spaces they appear to naturally inhabit.

In contrast, when you start with the supposition that space is a material entity, a hybrid geography made through, and productive of, things and bodies, it becomes possible to think of space as enacted in multiple ways by various actors, and to see the connections between space and race as located in daily practices rather than in the natural order of things. Some of these practices, such as skin colour, hairstyle, clothing, or ways of walking and talking, may be visibly identified with race or class, while other practices are more difficult to identify as ways ‘we practice the body.’ This is what Mol argues when, in discussing sex differences, she writes, “Medicine enacts bodies as having either one sex or the other... working styles, professional roles, storage techniques, color schemes, bench heights, epidemiological tables, research questions, appointment hours, and so on: they all interfere with what is means to be a *man* or a *woman*” (Mol 2002: 144-5). These “things”—in part because they appear disassociated with sex and gender—are powerful everyday practices that institutionalize, regulate, normalize, and embody sex differences. This materialist approach to the body defies a unified and natural state of being.

A discussion of how the body is practiced in material ways has also been applied to discussions of race (Saldanha 2007; Saldanha 2011; M'Charek 2013; Moffette & Walters 2018). To think of "the materiality of biological race beyond the somatic body," M'Charek (2013: 421) argues that race achieves its significance in relation to other entities, including bodies, but is not synonymous with the body. This "distributed nature of race" (M'Charek, Schramm & Skinner 2014: 471) is also found in Saldanha's (2006; 2007) materialist ontology, which posits that race is "a shifting amalgamation of human bodies and their appearance, genetic material, artifacts, landscapes, music, money, language, and states of mind" (Saldanha 2007: 9), that brings certain bodies and spaces together in constellation. Saldanha describes this constellation in terms of *viscosity*, of "bodies gradually becoming sticky and clustering into aggregates" (Saldanha 2007: 10). "Racial difference," writes Saldanha, "emerges when bodies with certain characteristics become viscous through the ways they connect to their physical and social environment" (2007: 9). For these authors, the connections between the constituent components of race—and space—are not given, but come to be, and come together, as assemblages. This is a recognition of "the ways in which different material bodies are expected to do gender, class, race, and ethnicity differently" (Nash 2000: 657), with the term "bodies" extended to human and non-human actors.

I also approach the body in this way, as a *corpus*, a collection or assemblage of parts and practices that *make up* the body. Race, gender, the body—these are not singular given entities but are instead "fleshed out" (Mol 2002) in practice. As a material practice, race—along with co-constitutive and intersectional elements of

gender, age, and class—also enacts space in different ways for young racialized residents. In the inner city, as elsewhere, the making of bodies has spatial implications. Gang territories show the “viscosity” (Saldanha 2007) between race and space; they are the result of the way racial difference becomes spatialized. Drawing on Michel Serres (1982), Saldanha suggests that race be “conceived as a chain of contingency, in which the connections between its constituent components are not given, but are made viscous through local attractions” (2006: 18). This viscosity is evident in the ‘local pulls’ between racialized bodies and gang space. For white, more affluent bodies viscosity takes a different form, for instance in the “sticky connections between property, privilege, and a paler skin” (Saldanha 2006: 19) that prevent a coming-together of whiteness and gang spaces, even as white people reside within the contours of gang territories. The way race is practiced for racialized minorities, which could include “[p]otentially everything, but certainly strands of DNA, phenotypical variation, discursive practices (law, media, science), artefacts such as clothes and food, and the distribution of wealth” (Saldanha 2006: 19), tends also to enact an *embodied gang space*.

This is something police, in their desire to infiltrate gang spaces more intimately, contend with and address. An Aboriginal police officer, a street supervisor for the general patrol shift in the North End (North Side), tells me,

We've done a project where we had a native undercover officer. We set up in a house and called the dial-a-dope line. They would show up, she would go out, she's clearly an Aboriginal woman and not too suspicious because she fit the area. She was able to buy flaps of coke or crack without any problem. So we did three or four buys off of each group and then we would arrest them. Their clients are going to be people that they know and are working girls.

In this quote we hear that access to gang space requires an effort of the body. While police can get to gang territories by crossing the streets that define their boundaries, there is recognition that other, embodied, entry points exist. Access to this space emerges through particular combinations of race, age, gender, and class. Through skin colour, dress, perhaps language, posture, and make-up, the body of a woman, of a sex worker, of Aboriginal descent, materializes. Aligned, they form an embodied geography of race: as an Aboriginal woman, she “fit the area.” Of course race is never an isolated practice but is formed in and through multiple constituent parts and practices. Being a sex trade worker, also key to this embodied spatiality, is a practice of race inextricable from a gendered and classed body. A white detective in the organized crime unit recounts, “[One of our] undercover officers, she said straight up, ‘Sometimes they’ll look at your nails and they can tell 100% if you’ve lived that life. They’ll just go, I don’t need the 40 bucks that bad; I’m not selling to you.’” Betraying a unified body, here an undercover agent’s nails failed to produce an embodied gang space in which practices of class, gender and race intersect to produce necessary material conditions of assemblage.

This embodied gang space that police officers recognize in practice remains obscured in discussion. “Put it this way”, a White, male police officer responded when I asked if I would be safe, as a White woman, walking around these areas, “I would never want my wife to walk around the North End. Day or night, it wouldn’t matter.” But residents of the inner city were quick to acknowledge the spatial differences enacted through race and class. I asked Asim, ‘Would I be safe walking in this area?’ Laughing, he answered,

Yeah, you would be safe. Yeah, like you walk down the street you don't need to be wearing gang colours, they see the colour of your skin and automatically you're Mad Cow or AM [African Mafia], yeah. Say you're walking from here, you're walking to Broadway Community Centre—I can't do it. Can't walk to Broadway Community Centre. But a staff member here can, you know. It's just the way you dress too... an innocent white lady walking down the streets minding her own business, they don't look as threatening as the black kid walking on the street just listening to music.

The view that this is a different space for innocent white ladies than it is for the black kid walking on the street just listening to music, underpins the argument of this section: that material practices of the body, especially practices of race, enact different spaces. While I can stand in the *location* of gang territories, their boundaries, their violence, do not affect me; more than that, I cannot see or feel them. Their access points do not appear to me, their rules do not apply. The space of whiteness—also a racialized space—materializes differently, having been differently assembled and for which different components of race and space have been made *viscous* (Saldanha 2006). For racialized youth or youth marginalized in other ways, gang territories are both regional and embodied spaces. Boundaries are not just known but felt and sensed; they mark a visceral change in the body: their fear, their unease, their threat of violence is a palpable and physical force.

The access to gang space that emerges as a curated achievement for undercover agents comes more effortlessly, even unavoidably, for many residents within regional gang territories, although it is no less contingent. For Black or Aboriginal young people living in the inner city, the assemblage of things and bodies that produce race, class, age, and gender also tend to materialize as an embodied gang space. In contrast to the intentionality that underlies the undercover police

agent's attempt at infiltrating embodied gang space, young Black or Aboriginal residents find themselves 'there' by virtue of having a racialized body within a particular (regional) space; the viscosity between body and space is achieved through the practices that make up a racialized body. This is an embodied gang space in the sense that it exists in addition to regional lines, a space accessed through sensory immersion. These are not simply territorial lines that co-map on their neighbourhoods. They are additionally sensed spaces, accessed and subsequently experienced through the body.

Since both space and race are complex assemblages of practices, there is nothing natural or inevitable about racialized bodies accessing embodied gang space. Indeed, at times, bodies have the potential to disrupt spatial networks that rely on certain assemblages. A respondent tells me, "I know a couple guys they go to Broadway [Neighbourhood Centre], they're Black. Who wants to pick on a kid carrying a bag of basketball shoes and a basketball on a Saturday? They'll say, that kid plays sports man, don't even touch that kid." Here skin colour is only one practice of race amongst many others, some of which interrupt the extent to which race facilitates access to embodied gang space. Frequently though, the possibilities of space and race are constrained, making it difficult for racialized bodies *not* to find themselves within an embodied space from which White residents are more easily excluded. While many White, middle class residents recognize that gang territories overlap with their neighbourhoods in a regional sense, they do not access them to the embodied extent that young racialized residents do. This is not to suggest that

whiteness is not a component of embodied gang space. Indeed, its absence is a conspicuous feature of its geography.

5.3.2 Affective Space

Embodied gang space may be enacted through conditions of the body but the result is not a symbiotic ease between body and environment. These young, non-gang-affiliated residents find an uncomfortable fit between body and space. They remain outsiders, inside. They are 'inside' both because they live within these regional boundaries and because conditions of the body grant access to an embodied space. Yet, because they are not gang-affiliated they find themselves occupying a space in which they do not belong. They are, in this sense, the "stranger," a figure that early urban theorist Georg Simmel describes as being both "near and far at the same time" (1950: 407). The stranger is distinct from the "outsider" who has no specific relation to a group and from the "wanderer" who comes today and leaves tomorrow. The stranger, instead, comes today and stays tomorrow, "he [sic] is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries" (Simmel 1950: 402). So it is for residents who are suddenly very near to gangs through embodied spatial proximity yet remain at a distance from the boundaries that classify gang membership.

Yet, unlike Simmel's account of the "stranger," which he describes as "naturally a very positive relation," (1950: 402), young residents do not feel welcome in embodied gang space. Instead, this is a space characterized by fear. "I'm not gang-affiliated but if you don't know how to live in this area you're going to die,"

Asim tells me. 'Knowing how to live' requires that the body and mind adapt to these conditions, but these coping mechanisms take an emotional toll on the children of these neighbourhoods. He confesses to the emotional impact of living with violence:

We adapt. After maybe like four or five months, after that you've adapted and you, you've adjusted your mind to this is an area where you have to be cautious about all things. If you hear something, you have to be aware of your surroundings. If I walk through a back alley and I hear a lid or something, I stop where I am, I turn around and then I run. It's just adrenaline. Adrenaline kicks in and you don't think about it. Afterwards you feel relaxed and it's a story to tell people, your experiences. When it's happening you're just, 'I want to survive, I want to get out of here. Like, when is this over?' But even just walking down the street you feel tense, a little bit. I just don't think about it. Until at night. I think about so much messed up stuff at night. Because what happens to me all the time, I think about somebody coming out of nowhere and shooting me and stuff like that. You think about it at night. I think about it so much that you don't realize that you're doing it. Every night. I'm in a bunk bed and I'm on the top and the window is right where I sleep and I always think about somebody shooting right through.

Residents' bodies are attuned to the sense of threat and danger that pervades this space. However, instead of understanding these quotes as describing an acute sense of the space they are *in*, I argue that gang space *locates as the senses*; it becomes an affective, embodied space. Hassan captures this orientation with his succinct pronouncement: "this area, for us it's all about eyes, ears and feelings." While literature on both fear of crime and emotional geographies have tended to focus on personal narratives of human emotions, nonrepresentational geographies position *affect* as prior to a nameable emotional state (Cadman 2009). This approach is helpful for studying young people in gang areas who do not regularly express their experiences using the language of fear. As a technology of bodily 'becoming,' we can think through the ways affect becomes an embodied practice of space.

Affect is a difficult concept to define, but two main characteristics influence my interpretation of it. The first is its “in-between-ness” (Gregg & Seigworth 2010; Thrift 2008). In contrast to emotion, which we tend to think of as belonging to or originating in the individual, affect is a force or intensity found in relation. Although it is strongly associated with the experience and sensorium of the body, it does not originate in the body but through forces of encounter. The second is its capacity for action: its relationality provides it a sense of mobility, a non-human force of movement and sensation (Massumi 2002). We see these qualities in Gregg & Seigworth’s (2010: 1) description: “Affect, at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension....” These features of relation and force come to us via Spinoza, for whom *affectus* was a relational concept defined by the ability to affect or be affected—both in mind and body—that arises out of interaction. We see the trajectory of Spinoza’s post-subjective *affectus* in Deleuze’s writings, where affect refers “to sensual intensities that may move through human bodies, but that do not necessarily emerge from them” (cf Navaro-Yashin 2009: 12).

Shifting emotions from being located in the psyche of the individual to an entity that emerges through encounter allows other things, such as space or the environment, to be thought of as affective (Massumi 2002; Navaro-Yashin 2009). But what does it mean for *space* to be affective? Released from the subjective experience of self, there is a sense, perhaps, that affect surrounds us. This is the impression we get from Guattari’s (1996, cf Navaro-Yashin 2009: 12) descriptions of

affect as “scenic” and “hazy and atmospheric.” Gregg and Seigworth similarly write that affect is found “in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds...” (2010: 1). However, these descriptions rely implicitly, perhaps, on an understanding of space as an emptiness that surrounds bodies and things, in which case it is tempting to think of space as a conduit for affect as it passes body to body. Thrift, too, has promoted this usage by calling for space, as an important aspect of affect, to be “understood as a series of conditioning environments that both prime and ‘cook’ affect” (2008: 236). If, instead, we think of space as an active entity, we can imagine space not as the thing that exists between these bodies, but as *one of those bodies* compelled to action by affect. We can think of space, as others have thought of the body, as affect in action (Thrift 2008).

Thrift has been influential in developing a conceptual link between affect and space. In his chapter, “Spatialities of Feeling” (2008: 171), Thrift draws on Spinoza via Deleuze to emphasize two overarching aspects of affective spaces. He proposes that spaces generated through affect be understood as a *means of thinking*. Both affect and affective space are described as a kind of indirect, prediscursive emotional intelligence about the world, emotions that “form a rich moral array through which and with which the world is thought and which can sense different things even though they cannot always be named” (Thrift 2008: 176). This is to understand that “geography, the material world, is infused with sensations and distinct ways of knowing” (McKittrick 2006: ix). Affective space exists as the pre-cognitive intelligence of embodied sensation and feeling.

Next, Thrift puts emotional intelligence into action by suggesting that affective space is not simply a way of knowing but is also a *process of doing*. Affective space is a set of embodied practices expressing *thought in action*. “In the attribute of the body,” writes Thrift, “affect structures encounters so that bodies are disposed for action in a particular way” (2008: 179). Affect becomes an embodied way of knowing and doing space. Thus, gang space materializes as ways of knowing how to be: “intelligence always finds expansions and new territories” (Simmel 1950: 403). Affective intelligence provides a geographical project based on “different ways of knowing the world which are, at the same time, ways of living the world” (Thrift 2008: 162).

These two related aspects of affective space—as a *means of thinking* and as *thought in action*—inform my analysis of embodied gang space. When the respondent above describes the West End as “all about eyes, ears and feelings,” he describes an emotional or sensory intelligence. This knowledge materializes as the potential for action: affect as “a body’s *capacity* to affect and to be affected” (Gregg & Seigworth 2010: 2). This capacity to act and be acted upon is the subject of the next section, an exploration of the ways that affect changes the way the body moves, and in doing so remakes gang territorial boundaries in embodied, affective form. Both space and the body are transformed through the emotional resonances of gang spaces. Through affect, ways of knowing and behaving materialize as space.

5.3.3 Emotion as Motion

For racialized youth the embodied gang space enacted through material practices of race is an affective space. This amounts to more than just a heightened

sense of fear in these areas. When affect is understood as a *force of encounter*, we can begin to look for the ways that body, as well as space, change in relation to affective encounters; how they become marked, altered, or transformed through affect. This is to note, as Thrift does, how “[t]he affective palette that co-operative living demands means that basic emotions like anger or fear have been progressively extended into all manner of behavioural byways” (2008: 158). We can hear the way fear changes the behaviour of residents, for instance, in this quote from Jordan: “If you hear something—you have to be aware of your surroundings—I stop where I am, I turn around and then I run.” This sentiment is echoed by Brittany, who explains, “I had to be aware of my surroundings all the time... You might have to take a different way or return back.” In these quotes fear locates as a visceral sense of their surroundings, an awareness that primes the body for changes in mobility. In what follows, I document some of these ‘behavioural byways’ that act out the affective palette of gang territories. These changes to body and mobility include the speed at which one travels, the ability to travel alone, where and when one goes, and conditions of the body.

Speed

In gang territories, affect changes the speed at which young people move. This change in the speed at which the body travels, or the necessity to be on guard to change one’s speed at any time, was a common theme amongst respondents. For Asim, running was a default action for him and his friend when dealing with threatening encounters within the North End/North Side territorial boundaries:

One time I went to the North End with just a couple of my friends and we

heard gunshots and stuff and we were just running mad. It was messed up. Even with our friends we were running, it was just messed up. The North End is just crazy. One of my friends lives in the North End and he told me he brought one of his really, really White friends with him and they were walking and then a bunch of gang members walked up to them and were screaming at them and they ran, right? And they caught his friend and he kept running! I don't know why he kept running! He kept running!

He responds similarly to violence in his own area, the West End/West Side:

One time me and my older brother, we were walking because one of the staff that used to work here at the pool they used to ask us to go to Timmy's for them. This was during daylight. And they would buy us stuff too. So we went and there was this crack house down there, right? Just past right here on Langside. And there is a really big guy and this really skinny guy at the crack house and they were walking across the street back into the house and they saw me and my brother and the really big guy he looked at me saying the N word. And me and my brother, we kept running and then there was a back lane and we ran straight and he pulled out a knife and said, 'We're going to get you,' and he's laughing. So we go and we jumped this fence and there used to be no fence there and then we saw the fence my brother was going to keep running straight and I thought I'm not gonna run straight and we jumped, went all the way around back to MERC. They just kept chasing us.

Twelve-year-old Alie tells a similar story about an encounter on Halloween:

On Halloween we wanted to go trick or treating and there was a kid with a bunch of older guys and they all went to Daniel Mac high school and they all looked at us. We had huge bags of candy, right? So they said, 'Give us some of your candy.' Then two of my friends ran that way and one of the guys looked at me and said, 'What you looking at?' And I said, 'What the hell!' And that's when I started running, all of us run the same way. And they chased us, they chased us, they chased us. They were actually going to hurt us because they had a knife and my friend told me they were actually going to stab us. And take our candy. They were gang members. We knew as soon as we saw them they were from a gang. I'm not giving them I candy! My candy bag was so big and I was just running. I'm like the second fastest of all of us and I was first because I didn't want to give them my candy, I was just running.

These encounters warrant running to address immediate safety concerns. However, running is so common an experience in gang territory that the incorporation of

speed as an embodied feature of mobility extends beyond the presence of immanent danger. As Andre describes below, running is an automatic response to crossing Portage Avenue—a line that marks the beginning of West Side gang territory in both regional and embodied ways for him:

Sometimes we go to River Heights. There is a Community Centre right by River Heights School and it's really fun, sometimes I go there. I walked there for my school with a bunch of my friends. Like I can walk home from school and then when I pass Portage over here that's when I start running. If I was walking with somebody we would split up and I would just run. Like we cross Portage because my friend used to live right beside Gordon Bell [High School] now he lives by General Wolfe [Junior High School], so then we always cross over and we would run.

For residents who are not gang-affiliated, the boundaries of gang territory do not prevent mobility in the way that they do for many gang members who have never crossed this territorial line. However, as these quotes above show, neither are they inconsequential. For Andre, Portage Avenue marks the point at which mobility changes, where the encounter with gang space shifts fear into a new affective form: a body that runs. So although this boundary does not prevent access to this area, it does demand particular conditions of entry, conditions that arise through affective encounters with this space. In River Heights, an area of the city free of gang territories, he is able to walk. In the West End, Portage Avenue marks the start of West Side gang territory, not only regionally, but also by being the point at which his speed of travel changes.

A discussion of running also dominates the story Darryl, a Black 14-year-old in the West End/West Side, tells me about entering the nearby B Side gang territory:

For me I'm not really scared so if somebody were to run up on me I would run. I try to get away as fast as I can. I'd run into a convenience store. I'd run

to the closest place that somebody is able to help me and be able to protect me as long as they can. That's my best option. For me crossing to B Side there is danger but I know how to handle it.

Affect, this sense of danger, translates as a way of knowing—he *knows how to handle it*—and as a capacity to act—he *would run*. This is a knowledge that comes from the body through the sense of danger: as a directive of fear, the power of affect is shown in the body's capacity to be affected—in this case, to run.

The ability of affect to compel the body to action is also illustrated through a story Sam recounts about the North End: "I went to the North End one day and I was scared. My friend lived there. We went in a car. It was nighttime so we just drove him home. Even in a car we felt scared. And the funniest part was my friend got out of the car and he started running to his house. He's not even in a gang!" The compulsion to run from the car to the house is expressed as 'funny' because this situation does not appear to warrant this response—until we see it in the context of affect materializing through the actions of the body. Encounters with embodied gang space show the body acting outside conscious thought, the body's participation in the swells of affect—a pre-cognitive propulsion to act.

In their discussions of gang space, both girls and boys mentioned speed. Emma, a White, 12-year-old girl, describes her friend's reaction to an encounter in gang territory:

I have a friend, she's [in the West End] and whenever she walked with me, to have a sleepover or something, she was always really jumpy and stuff. She was just jumpy about people and because she said that some people look scary. They look like they could hurt you. I remember she was fine after Teen Swim and we were walking down the street but then in a back alley, we were walking in a back alley, we walked past and there was a huge group of people

and she started running. She is more worried about gangs.

For those who access gang spaces in embodied ways, affective resonances accelerate the body. However, this is not a matter of running through gang space as much as it is gang space taking shape through velocity: the speed of the body forms the space of affective encounter. In these situations, gang space is more than a regional boundary; alongside its regional spatial form gang space takes its shape—materializes—as a body running.

Groups

Affect spatializes the body—produces gang space as the form of the body—in other ways too. Alongside acceleration, affect draws bodies together and exiles the solitary traveller. Fear takes its residence in the tendency to walk with another or in groups: through affect bodies are pulled together in motion. Asim tells me, “If I’m alone I’m scared to walk around anywhere here. But if I’m with at least one person I’m not scared. Even if it’s my little sister. I don’t know why. Even if something happens I’ll tell her to run away but its... but I don’t know why, it just changes when you have even one person.” Kami, a Black, 18-year-old man living in the West End/West Side tells me,

Some people don't walk across Broadway because of the community centre over there. People get drugs there, get hurt there. It's not safe. People who live over there tell me that. They say the community centre isn't safe at night. Sometimes I go to the West Broadway Outreach. I volunteer there. If I do go over there, I walk with someone else.

The flâneur—the aimless and lone wanderer of urban modernity (Benjamin 2006)—is missing from the streets of embodied gang space. Yet, residents do share commonalities with this figure: both are keenly aware of their surroundings and both experience a sense of alienation from the space they inhabit. However, their respective affective registers mark a key difference between them. For the flâneur, the joys and passions of the city crowds and spectacles buoy their travels, encouraging a leisurely immersion in its pleasures (Baudelaire 1964). For the residents of gang space, fear brings speed, purpose, and companionship to the fore; it diminishes the body's ability to walk unencumbered by partner or destination.

Where residents travel

Running and walking in groups expresses affect through changes in *how* people move: as bodies that move more quickly and more often together. Another way affect manifests through the body is through changes in *where* and *when* people can travel. 14-year-old Darryl explains,

If I wanted to go somewhere, like it wouldn't affect me, I would go there. I would usually stay in this area, not because I was scared but because I didn't feel like going anywhere else. It's not like I'm scared to go into Central Park or Broadway or the North End. It's just that, what am I going to do there, right? I have nothing to do. I don't know people there. So I might as well stay somewhere where I feel safer and I feel like I know the people and where I can hang out with my friends. We come to this community centre and feel safe here.

In this example whole areas of the city and part of his own neighbourhood are avoided. This is not a geography that he consciously expresses as a reaction to fear; however, its borders emerge at the periphery of safety. Affect manifests as

knowledge about the landscape—he has nothing to do there, knows no one there—and materializes in action: as a body contained within certain bounds.

For others and at other times, affect structures space in varied and spontaneous ways, making the geography of daily travel unreliable and the need for sudden changes to routes necessary. Jordan tells me,

I've seen people just walking around. You see someone fuzzy walking around, you know? 12-years-old and I'm not going to just keep walking, I'm crossing the road and walking on the other side. Yeah, you can tell, especially with B Siders, B Siders wear Brooklyn Nets and they have tattoos all over their necks. So I just caught on within myself, I'm good, I'll stay away from that side.

Gang territories similarly alter where Darryl travels,

Me, I'm not necessarily frightened but if I was to see something up ahead I return back because I don't want to get myself tangled into something that shouldn't affect me at all. So I would take another route. If I were to see something, I would take another route. But otherwise [gang territories] don't necessarily affect me. I can cross whatever streets I want to.

In the former quote we see again how the emotional intelligence of affect—*I just caught on within myself*—emerges as a modification of the body's ability to travel—*I'm good I'll stay away from that side*. In the latter quote, the words *I'm not necessarily frightened*, seem to express this sense of being caught up in an emotional resonance that is found circulating around and through, rather than originating within, the body. These resonances emerge as thought and movement: *They are good, they will stay away from that side, they will take another route*.

When residents travel

The limits of affective geographies materialize not only in terms of *where*

young people travel, but also *when*. For most, gang territory becomes an increasingly restrictive geography at night. Only certain routes, if any, remain accessible. Darryl tells me, "Like we know, me and my friends, we know which routes are safer. But during the day it doesn't matter at all, we can go anywhere. Me and my friends grew up in this area so we know how to handle different situations." Alie explains, "Sometimes I'm walking back home from practice or something like that, we used to have it at the Rec Plex over there, instead of cutting down the back lane and stuff I usually go around on Ellice to get to Langside. But I know shorter routes home that I would take during the day. But not at nighttime."

For these residents, gang spaces remain open and unrestrictive during the day but the geographies redistribute at night: as a territory, certain throughways are closed off, access is redirected, and routes elongate. For others, these temporal restrictions make embodied gang space almost inaccessible at night. As Kami tells me, "Around here I'm not allowed to leave the house at night, only to come here [to the community centre]. I wouldn't go anywhere around here during the night. But the day is okay." Asim has a similar reaction, "at night I don't walk around here. During the day I can go anywhere." The restrictions on movement that emerge as affective space draw temporal boundaries on gang space. Dusk and dawn, rather than certain streets, form these borders, determining not only where young people can travel, but also when.

Conditions of the Body

More subtle changes to mobility are affected as well. In addition to changes in how, where, or when one moves, conditions of the body are affected when traveling

in embodied gang space, including demeanor, countenance, and the way one dresses. When I asked David, a White, 21-year-old resident of West Broadway/B Side gang territory if he feels safe in the area, he answered through a discussion of the body: "It's just the way you hold yourself. I think they'll pick on you more if you're slinking down, or skeeving away. If you just look somewhat confident in yourself but not boasterous [sic], like acting like this is your territory or something, they won't bother you. You want to find a middle ground."

Various postures are connected with degree of rank and power, postures from which we can deduce the amount of authority someone holds (Canetti 1960). As the respondent above describes, those who travel through gang territory are well advised to show deference as visitors in these traditionally embodied ways. However, this *middle ground*, achieved through being neither too *boasterous* nor *skeeving away* also describes another way the body co-participates in the passages of affect. Here affect marks both the body's belonging and non-belonging to a world of encounters (Gregg & Seigworth 2010: 2): through changes in posture, gait, and countenance the body is now an emotional and material part of this encounter, even while these changes exist as a function of the body's outsider status. These youth are required to act in ways that demonstrate their deference, their respect, and that acknowledge their *non-belonging*.

In embodied gang space, no change in bodily conduct demonstrates affect's force of encounter more than the avoidance of eye contact. As something that "produces extraordinary moments of intimacy" (Simmel 1950, cf Urry 2000: 81), Simmel notes the power of eye contact lies in its ability to make people feel

emotionally closer. In this sense eye contact is an affective encounter. If affect is a force generated through interaction that drives us toward action, we see the affective impact of eye contact in the feelings of increased intimacy, and in the way people adjust their behaviour in lieu of it: because eye contact in Western societies makes people feel closer, the physical proximity between people tends to be adjusted to maintain a comfortable distance (Argyle & Dean 1965). For instance, while eye contact is common when approaching someone walking down the street, “civil inattention” is given when the distance between them closes in on 8 feet (Goffman, cf Argyle & Dean 1965: 296).

As ‘strangers’ in embodied gang space, the feeling of closeness that eye contact generates presents more as intrusion than connection. For gang members, eye contact is a powerful conduit of affect. Through it, this heightened sense of intrusion compels the body towards physical aggression. For non-gang-affiliated residents, avoiding eye contact helps interrupt these affective intensities. Of course affect is not so easily circumvented—it still compels them to look away. 15-year-old Asim recounts,

You can tell just when somebody starts looking at you. Like when somebody looks at you, they look at you and you can't look at them for too long. It's legit. You can't look at somebody for too long or they're like, 'What you looking at?' You'll get stabbed so quick. My friend has a stab wound because he was walking in the North End and this kid—they are the same age—and he looked at him as they were walking by. And they pass each other and the guy said, 'What the hell are you looking at?' And he turned around and just stabbed him. Then he ran off. If he had been looking down at the street it wouldn't have happened. It was just eye contact.

These rules apply equally to girls and boys. Asim describes warning his sister about her use of eye contact.

Like, I've given my sister so much flak because she's looking at people too much. You can look at them but you can't make eye contact. Let's say you're walking down the street and you're just looking around, they don't care. But as soon as you make eye contact with them, even for a second, they have no chill. If you look at them for a long time, it's straight violence. If you just look at them for a second, it's like, 'What you looking at?' Like, 'What the hell do you want?' And then they walk away and it's done. But if you look at them for too long they always just want to prove their manhood or whatever. They have to prove they're going to do something when they're gonna do something. It's just down.

The girls I spoke to directly needed no such warnings. Nia, a Black 12-year-old, and Stacey, an Aboriginal 11-year-old, both residents of the West End/West Side, discuss eye contact in gang territories:

Nia: "I know if you say something to them they'll do something to you, but just don't look at them. But if we sit over there and they're playing basketball we would just sit down and start talking, don't look at them or anything. Don't ever make eye contact. You just learn that."

Stacey: "My mom tells me not to look at people. They look bad, don't be rude and look at them because..."

Nia: "... They may get mad, I don't know, I don't like people looking at me either. Because if somebody is staring at me I would go up to them and say, 'Why are you looking at me?'"

Stacey describes a painful lesson in breaching this rule.

This one time, or a couple times, I seen a street fight and there's lots of people who are around there but they won't do or say anything. They go by or they walk past a different way. This one time I was walking and it was like in the Central Park area, I was looking because I was so close and I was afraid that they were going to come. This one girl she came up to me and my mom. She's like, 'What you guys looking at?' She started yelling and going off on my mom. She pulled my mom's hair.

Eye contact shows again the need to strike a balance between confidence and humility: one can look, but not for too long. Long acknowledged as a way to communicate deference and respect (Canetti 1960), these examples show how implicit rules around eye contact are also spatial in nature. The zone of civil inattention maintains a space around the gang member, a space that is reserved and guarded. An act of territorialization, to look away is to recognize and accept these boundaries, to respect the space of those they encounter. To look too long is to risk transgressing these embodied boundaries; as an act that provokes the defense of this territory, it is a punishable act. However, for young residents, it is a spatial act in another embodied way: Avoiding eye contact interrupts affect from taking the form of physical aggression; instead fear takes its new form in the act of looking away. This is gang space materialized as the body in the inability to stare.

Dress

Alongside physical demeanor and eye contact, affect materializes through the clothes non-gang-affiliated young people wear. Asim tells me,

I think B Sides wear grey and I was wearing this grey tracksuit once and everybody's like, 'Why are you wearing that?!' And I was like, 'Why not?' And the staff told me it was gang colours. I said, 'I can wear whatever I want,' and stuff. But I stopped wearing it because people just, you just start feeling uncomfortable in it, so I just never wore that tracksuit again. At least not by itself, now I might wear a different shirt or different pants.

This decision to dress differently does not reflect personal style but rather the "artful use of a vast sensorium of bodily resources which depends heavily on the actions of others" (Thrift 2008: 176). This respondent did not heed warnings not to

wear these clothes, his decision hinged on a sense of unease that accompanied them. This is unease experienced affectively, as an emergent sense of the world that changed this respondent's actions. Individualized agency is decentralized in this way, moving from an expression of individual choice to an inter-relational force. Taylor, a White, male resident of West Broadway/B Side, tells me, "In this area I always see people walk by who are gang-affiliated. You see tattoos on their face, the clothes they wear. You can tell people by their colours, right. Black and grey are mostly the colours here. It was a pretty basic colours, but not around here."

"Not around here" describes how bodies and mobilities are recast as outcomes of the relational forces of affective interactions. This does not diminish human agency but instead acknowledges a 'transhuman' framework "in which individuals are generally understood as effects of the events to which their body parts (broadly understood) respond and in which they participate" (Thrift 2008: 175). Choosing not to wear grey or black shows the body's capacity to participate in affect, to be *affected*. It shows the way that a capacity to act is mediated, indeed made possible, by other bodies.

5.4 Gang Territories as Affective Spaces

A common way of thinking through the performative nature of space and the body is to recognize their co-constitutive participation. In *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot*, Vergunst and Ingold (2016) consider the ways acts of walking intercept ideas about the body and movement, perception and the work of the senses, and the constitution of space and place. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus, Vergunst and Ingold (2016) note the way a body's active

engagement with its surroundings becomes ingrained in bodily dispositions: ways of walking express culturally imparted thoughts and feelings: walking is a way of thinking and of feeling. However, they add that *thinking and feeling are also ways of walking*, a reversal that brings to mind an affective reading: walking as an example of 'thinking in movement' that remakes the world. This is to acknowledge the ways in which "our embodied and emplaced practices of movement, and stillness, are among the ways that place shapes us individually and collectively, and in turn, through which we shape and reshape place" (Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 32). These themes again emerge through interviews with young racialized residents: race, affect, mobilities, and space come together through living and moving within gang territories.

However, my analysis extends beyond the recognition of the ways bodies make space and space makes bodies, to bring attention to the ways *gang space takes form as the body*. Residents' fear is affective, "a kind of metamorphosis...in which the self goes into a new container or takes on a temporary flesh for the passage to an altered state of social being" (Thrift 2008: 176). This new container may be the speed at which one walks, an altered posture, the avoidance of eye contact, or a body that only walks in daylight or in groups. Defying mappable coordinates, embodied gang space is this *new form of the body*—its shapes, contours, speed, limitations, partnerships, and mobilities. To enter affective gang space is not simply to enter a world of fear, already in existence, nor to feel fear in a space that was already there. Instead, through affect space emerges. It emerges *as* these modifications of the body. Its boundaries are stationed at dusk and dawn, at the

range of eye contact, at certain speeds, at the company of others; its boundaries are stationed at the body.

Alongside gang space formed as mobilities and embodied conditions, embodied practices of mobility also reinforce regional territorial coordinates. When the actions of residents, such as running, avoiding eye contact or walking in groups, only happen when they cross gang boundaries such as Portage Avenue or Broadway, these regional boundaries materialize as that line where the body changes the speed at which it travels, the line that divides how strangers on the sidewalk can be greeted when passed, the line at which one can walk alone or needs to walk with others. Even though these residents are not in gangs and gang boundaries were not made to restrict their mobility, they nevertheless become the lines within which their mobilities *change*. Outside these regional lines residents are no longer driven to hold or carry or move their bodies in ways that affective immersion invokes, quietly and viscerally, in them. So while in one way embodied gang space emerges as a new form of the body and its mobilities, it also forms regional boundaries at the point where these behaviours start or stop.

The Blue House

At least, this is the case for many marginalized residents. While girls told similar stories about changing the way they travel, these mobilities did not territorialize gang boundaries in the same way *regionally*. Girls told a different story of the boundaries of affect. The regional line that traditionally separates being in gang territory and outside it does not clearly mark where affective climates of fear begin and end for girls. For them, fewer of the active embodied outcomes of fear—

such as walking in groups, avoiding eye contact, taking alternative routes, the need to run—ceased beyond the perimeter of gang territories. Instead these conditions of mobility, while perhaps heightened in gang territories, were not unique to them. This is true for women and girls more generally, for whom encounters in public or outdoor spaces generate fear that similarly alters ways of walking, moving, and comporting their bodies (Green & Singleton 2006; Valentine 1989; Wesely & Gaarder 2004). The refuge provided by other areas that male respondents noted—*I can walk over there, I don't need to look over my shoulder there, I can take any routes there*—was never mentioned in my interviews with girls.

This lessened distinction between gang space and surrounding areas is exemplified through a once-blue house that sits across the street from a community centre I visited. Young people in the area frequently mentioned this house, *the blue house*—even the few who knew very little about gangs in the area—as a place they avoid. 14-year-old Sam tells me,

This area? I like it. Nothing really happens here. Just a normal street. Except the one blue house, like a lot of people come in and come out. One person in the house got shot and he was a gang member. I cross the street and walk through the basketball court to avoid it. Or if I'm going somewhere over there I go that way. I take a different way. I don't cross that house. Even getting home from here I go that way, even I just lived down the street, because of that house. I'm a very safe person.

The blue house again shows affect materializing as new ways of moving. For this youth it is not a regional territorial line that partitions gang territory. For him the blue house provides an affective encounter that changes the way gang space is done.

Here gang territory locates as a change in mobility, as a way of moving the body: it locates in the way he walks down the street, as a detour instead of a direct route.

That the blue house changes the way residents move was true for both male and female respondents, but practices of gender alter this space. 11-year-old Stacey, a resident of the West End/West Side, answers the question, “Are there places in the area you won't go?” “Well,” she says, “at night, that blue house over there, or well it used to be blue, all of us stay away from there. People say it's the rape house. This girl, she got raped there. She used to come here but she doesn't anymore. It's right on my street so I have to go past it, but I walk really fast.”

Just as the boys described, this house changes the way this young girl travels. However, referring to this house as the rape house rather than a gang house brings our attention to the way this space of altered mobility exists within a broader affective space than found in just gang territories. *She used to come here but she doesn't anymore.* What the blue house demonstrates is gang space is enacted through what is missing: the female body. Affect does not only materialize as a change in mobility, but in the absence of these bodies, drawing attention to the wider Canadian colonial context in which Aboriginal girls and women are disproportionately silenced, missing, and murdered (Jacobs & Williams 2008; Native Women's Association of Canada 2010; RCMP 2015).

5.5 Conclusion

Katz (2000) has written that the “doing of emotions is a process of breaking bodily boundaries, of tears spilling out, rage burning up, and as laughter bursts out,

the emphatic involvement of guts as a designated source of the involvement” (cf Thrift 2008: 176). However, my research has shown that affect is also a process of *establishing* bodily boundaries, of drawing lines between those who can walk in leisurely solitude, or greet strangers as they pass, and those who cannot. Affect forms this line sometimes between gang members and non-gang-affiliated residents, but it is drawn more starkly between marginalization and privilege.

This chapter contributes to what Nayak has called the “geography of racism,” a geography “that engages with emotion, bodily encounters, and events as they become charged with feeling and affect” (2010: 2370). In gang territories privilege locates as the capacity to walk freely through these areas unaffected, barely registering its boundaries. In contrast, marginalized youth not only feel these boundaries, their bodies form to accommodate them. For racialized youth—young people for whom the material practices of race offer embodied access to gang spaces—emotion becomes motion: gang spaces take shape through ways of moving the body that those who reside ‘only’ in regional gang space do not experience. For girls, gang spaces magnify fear of urban spaces from which one is rarely free, and as such its boundaries mark less a change in affect than a change in its intensity: women and girls have long modified their movements in urban space to minimize the risk of physical or sexual assault (Pain 1991).

Thinking of gang territories as spaces that are made and controlled by gang members, risks missing the ways other actors add to their multiplicity and complexity. This chapter emphasizes the co-production of gang spaces, showing these territories as something made in multiple ways by multiple actors, rather than

as spaces exclusively belonging to, or solely a consequence of, gang actions and claims. The previous chapter highlighted the ways gang territory is heterogeneously comprised—through technologies, infrastructure, and other variously embodied practices. In this chapter this multiplicity extends also to other human actors, emphasizing a wider assemblage of practices and actors: witnessing, eye contact, and speed exist as modes of spatiality alongside those which emerge through the ephemerality of crack shacks, under the cover of the cityscape, and the ongoing reconfiguration of embodied boundaries.

While the focus shifts off gang members, we find young residents using similar practices of space. This chapter revisited the iterative movement of bodies stylized as gang members, which map out boundaries over time. Here these territorial tracings are explored again through the practices of non-gang-affiliated young people: witnessing these bodies slowly gathers space into the absence and presence of gang bodies. While gang territories lack traditional markers and enactments of space, witnessing maps out, albeit hazily, where these spaces begin and end.

However, these territories exist in ways beyond regional territorial lines that can be entered or exited. Returning to the concept of embodied space—a theme of explored in the last chapter through, for instance, cell phones emerging as territory and boundaries ‘slipped’ in embodied, rather than regional, ways—in this chapter we see new ways gang territories enact as the body. For young racialized residents, the force of encounter between practices of race and gang territories enacts a version of gang space that takes shape as new mobilities and conditions of the body.

Young people in these areas contend with, and respond to, gang territories in embodied, affective ways that bring forth new versions of these spaces.

Chapter 6 – Police: Patrol and the Production of Gang Territories

6.1 Introduction

The conventional view of gang territories is that they exist before police get there, that police are responding to these already-there areas. Other than making efforts towards their dismantling, police are considered to be more or less external to their existence. However, having committed to thinking of gang territories as enacted through material practices, my interviews with police officers and residents demonstrate how practices of patrol are implicated in the enactment of gang territories. Walking or driving around these areas on daily patrol is not simply a matter of entering and exiting gang territory, but of producing gang spatialities. Daily police presence brings gang territories into being in particular ways.

This chapter draws on interviews with, and observations of, members of the Winnipeg Police Service. These interviews took place in police stations in neighbourhoods across the city; at police headquarters in the 1960s Brutalist architecture of the Public Safety Building (now scheduled for demolition); in an unmarked early twentieth century building in Winnipeg's Exchange District; as well as during a ride-along in the North End (North Side gang territory) for which I was required to wear a bullet-proof vest. However, the analysis of how police enact gang territories was also gathered through interviews with young people living in, or having previously lived in, these areas. Although both groups describe police practices similarly, the *effects* of these practices were animated through my conversations with the young people who police meet on their shifts.

This chapter begins with an exploration of how meanings associated with gangs and gang spaces are materialized through spatial practices. The first section, *How Gang Territories Come to Matter*, looks at police practices that establish gang boundaries as lines of racial—especially Aboriginal—exclusion and containment. This is demonstrated through the origin stories of the B Side street gang and further illustrated through the changes to police gang operations in B Side territory after the shooting of a civilian in 2005. The second section of this chapter looks at how gang boundaries are upheld and maintained—rather than dismantled or undermined—through police patrol, which produces embodied maps of regional spaces. The third section moves beyond region as a territorial form to explore how police patrol spatializes the racialized body, or in other words, how the bodies of racialized youth become gang territory through police practices.

6.2 How Gang Territories Come to Matter

A detective in the organized crime unit shows me photographs of B.S.C.F. tattoos—initials that stand for the B Side Crime Family—on arms, necks, torsos, backs, and faces from Winnipeg Police Service identification files. He is sharing with me his knowledge of the B Side street gang, which originated in the West Broadway area 15 years earlier.

In the West Broadway area—one of the smallest neighbourhoods in Winnipeg, it's a little microcosm in itself. But within that neighbourhood there was the West Broadway Resource Centre and that's where the youth happened to hang out and amongst that youth there was a family...there were about 17 of them over different generations and they banded together at that resource centre, that was the only place they had to go. And they formed B Side.

This description of the B Side gang tells a spatial story: a First Nation family claiming the West Broadway area as their turf. This account, like many official accounts of gangs, puts the onus of gang development in the hands of young racialized people living in the neighbourhood and leaves little room to consider other factors in the development of gangs and gang territories.

I had already encountered a version of the origin story of the B.S.C.F. in an earlier interview. Compared to the police account above, these events were characterized differently when an ex-member of the BSCF recounted them.

So when the cops first started coming around and harassing everybody they started accusing everybody of being gang members and everybody was like, no we're not a gang. We're just a bunch of kids hanging out at the community centre. The community centre tried to explain to them that no this is a community centre, they're supposed to be hanging around. But there was a large group of them and they'd be sitting on the front steps of the community centre and the cops just eventually started saying they were a gang and gang members. And when as they started getting older they started labelling them more and then as soon as they started getting into trouble that's when it really hit the fan because you have a couple kids that are ending up in jail for whatever reason, but the cops just started saying it was gang-related, they were a gang. The B Side name came from, because of the Broadway area, right? That's where it came from. The name B Side always was there as we were always from this side. It was always there but it didn't refer to a gang, it just referred to where we were from. We were on the main strip of Broadway, that's it. But the cops started charging kids as gang members. The cops created these lists of gangs, they wanted to identify who was who. So they decided that anyone on this side is B Side. If you're caught with any of us you'll be labeled as B Side... It makes it very complicated for people who aren't actually gang members.

This quote also tells a story of place: a sense of connection to, and belonging within, West Broadway where many members of this family lived. While the identity of these young people seems to have emerged out of a connection to place, the police viewed this family, these children, as threatening and suspicious. There was

something about this family that seemed *out of place*, even as they used the municipal infrastructure meant to attract and occupy them. As a result, police practices were introduced to manage what they saw as an illegitimate connection between this area and this family.

The way police practices affect new versions of gang territories can be illustrated through contrasting the origin story of this West Broadway street gang, the B Side, as told by the police, against the story as told by an ex-B.S.C.F. member. These accounts highlight the ways spaces are reconfigured in material ways as new meanings are employed to make sense of them. A family's sense of belonging and ownership over the West Broadway area is rewritten through police reports as illicit control over a criminal space, shifting its boundaries from reflecting inclusion and belonging to infraction and eventually, exclusion and containment.

Whether or not the police played a role in establishing the B Side as a gang, police practices have influenced and continue to influence the ways gang spaces materialize. This becomes more visible when gang spaces are situated within a historical context. The way that the presence and visibility of a large group of First Nation children, and their sense of connection with the West Broadway area, caused alarm and led to their subsequent displacement from this area through criminalization and imprisonment resonates within a larger spatial history of Aboriginal bodies in Canada. It is important to recognize that the materialism of space is also inherently temporal and the materiality of present spaces links in real ways to past material realities, events, and assemblages. In Canada these spatial assemblages include the historical and continuing practices of settler colonialism.

The struggle for territory that underpins settler colonialism makes it “a deeply spatial project” (Tomiak 2016: 11). However, the spatiality of colonialism did not begin with conquest but with conceptualizations of space that facilitated colonial exploration. Doreen Massey (2005) argues that conceptualizing space as a continuous and given surface positions those who cross and conquer space as the active makers of history and relegates Indigenous populations as passive inhabitants lacking active spatial histories. In Canadian settler colonialism this spatial model underpins the “foundational fictions of discovery and *terra nullius*” (Tomiak 2016: 11), the narrative of discovery that reimagines Indigenous occupied space as “virgin lands” awaiting discovery (Loomba 1998: 73). Once European explorers arrived, the global doctrine of *terra nullius*, which translates as “nobody’s land,” formed the legal basis for asserting sovereignty over Indigenous territories and justified emptying the land of its inhabitants (Thobani 2007; Tomiak 2016).

Canada’s settler colonial project, when acknowledged, tends to be relegated to the past. In contrast, Wolfe argues that settler colonialism should be understood as a structure, not an event (2006), a form that continues to be present through ongoing settler state practices (Tomiak 2016; Tuck & McKenzie 2015). As Historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot observes,

practices of power and domination must be renewed in order for such things as ‘legacies’ to exist: “It is that renewal that should concern us most, even if in the name of our pasts. The so-called legacies of past horrors—slavery, colonialism, or the Holocaust—are possible only because of that renewal. And that renewal occurs only in the present. (1995: 151)

In Canada, the spatial legacy of settler colonialism, evident in the forcible removal of bodies to reserves, and later to residential schools and prisons, has continued

through the ongoing policing and imprisonment—some argue the genocidal carcerality (Woolford & Gacek 2016)—of Aboriginal bodies. Beginning with the North-West Mounted Police (Comack et al. 2013) and continuing today through law enforcement (Nichols 2014), the history of racialized surveillance, policing, and incarceration in Canada has been “profoundly shaped by, and geared toward, the aims of settler colonialism” (Maynard 2017: 231).

One of the most egregious modern examples of law enforcement’s participation in the ongoing the removal and erasure of Indigenous bodies in Canada are “starlight tours,” incidences of police officers taking First Nations men to the outskirts of a city during the winter and leaving them outside the city to walk back on their own without shoes or missing other items of clothing (Comack 2012). However, it is also demonstrated less sensationally, although no less insidiously, through statistics documenting that Aboriginal peoples comprise almost 25 percent of the Canadian inmate population, while only five percent of Canadian society (Sapers 2015, cf Maynard 2017: 231). These numbers reflect a variety of spatial tactics of the criminal justice system in Canada, including, for example, the court-imposed “red zones, no contact conditions, curfews and prohibitions” found in bail and sentencing conditions (Sylvestre, Damon, Blomley, & Bellot 2015: 1), and the policing of these breaches.

The alarm caused by the children of a large First Nation family spending time at their local recreational facility situates within the context of the “settler city,” the “specific, yet unstable and varied, socio-spatial formations that are at once the products and vehicles of settler colonialism and its logic of displacing Indigenous

bodies, peoples, ontologies, and rights” (Tomiak 2016: 10). However, while settler colonialism is premised on the logic of elimination, Indigenous resistance continues to imprint upon its structure (Wolfe 2006). One site of “persistent anti-colonial Indigenous struggles” is the city, where settler colonial spatial models are disrupted (Tomiak 2016: 9). As an inner-city neighbourhood, The B Side offers an example of ongoing competing spatial narratives between Aboriginal people and the state, and draws attention to the “contestation, multiplicities, and competing narratives” found in urban spaces. Both the high visibility of this family and the spatial act of renaming this area B Side, challenges the logic of Indigenous erasure and displacement. The act of place-naming transforms space “into a place, that is, a space with a history” (Carter 1987: 377), thus circumventing the history of West Broadway as an area established to accommodate middle and upper class settler families in the city¹⁴. As B Side, this neighbourhood is reterritorialized as Aboriginal space.

As a form of resistance to settler space, the renaming and thus reterritorialization of West Broadway as B Side attracted state intervention and control through practices, as Tomiak notes have elsewhere been used, “to evict, displace, and invisibilize Indigenous peoples and place-making in urban areas (2016: 9). Assigning this family gang status re-territorialized their connection to West Broadway from one of legitimate residence to illicit trespassing. The assignation of gang status justified the surveillance, control, and ultimately, the eviction of this family from West Broadway. Carrying heavier sentences than

¹⁴ Broadway was formerly a trade route of the Hudson’s Bay Company used by the Métis of the Red River Settlement, who were the backbone of the company’s transportation network. The area where Winnipeg is now located was previously populated for thousands of years by First Nations, including the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene Peoples (Government of Manitoba).

equivalent offenses committed by non-gang-affiliated people, the gang designation enabled re-containment through detainment. As a police constable tells me, in 2003 the Winnipeg Police Service conducted a drug investigation that targeted the B Side's drug activities, called 'B-Sting.' During this sting, several B Side affiliates were arrested. In the words of my B.S.C.F. respondent, "kids started ending up in jail... they finally locked up all my brothers, they locked us all up."

The theme of containment is further illustrated by the intensification of police responses when these boundaries were breached. The formal recognition of the B Side as gang territory demarcated the line between crime and safety, and order and disorder, and by doing so it manifested a broader geographical divide: the line between us and the racialized Other—lines that acted to contain, and constrain, the Other. A detective in the organized crime unit tells me about the police response to the murders that happen between gang members.

The violence between the two gangs, the B Side and the Mad Cowz, the two of them have probably murdered 10 of each other's members. But when the murder is within the gang, there is not necessarily that much of a response from police. When there is a murder of a gang member it's handled by homicide, and that's rightfully so. Homicide needs to handle that murder, they're murder police. They're trained how to do it. But the other aspects of that murder need to be considered as well. You should have resources working to identify where the B Side members are, you should have active surveillance on them. But that doesn't happen. It could prevent another murder or best-case scenario it drives them out of the gang.

As racialized minorities, the murders of gang members were met with minimum response—they are investigated but little is done to prevent retaliation. The officer above adds, "of course the murders had been investigated but the [B Side] itself had never been targeted by police because they had stayed within this little area." When

the point is containment, no further work is needed if gang crime stays contained within the boundaries that separate 'us' and 'them.' The implication is that when gangs and gang crime stay within the boundaries of their territories, order is maintained, even as crime ensues.

In contrast, when these lines are crossed, considerable effort is spent in reestablishing order. In 2005, a bystander, the son of a wealthy and prominent doctor in the city, was accidentally killed in a gang shooting. His death "prompted outrage in the city" (Turner 2010b). This event made gangs a concern for the general public. While gangs and gang killings had been happening in Winnipeg for 20 years, it was in 2005 that, according to Justice Shawn Greenberg, "Violence spilled onto the streets of the community, shattering the safety of the community" (Turner 2010b). Gangs had crossed into a space where crimes and lives matter more.

The police response to this crime materialized gang spaces in new ways. A detective, previously from the street crime unit, explains how this event changed policing procedures.

I was part of the street crime unit. The only reason [the] street crime [unit] existed was because of the murder of a kid.... He was in West Broadway, he was walking through West Broadway when a Mad Cow member came across Portage in an attempt to shoot a B Sider. [He] got in the way of that shooting and was killed. So that sparked the formation of our entire street gang unit that I was a part of. It started with a thing called operation Clean Sweep, which is probably a name we couldn't use nowadays, but Clean Sweep was a project designed to target all gang members in the West End and that expanded into the creation of the street crime unit. But our unit that directly policed these gangs was born out of a reaction of a murder of a civilian youth. The son of a prominent person in Winnipeg.

As gangs began to matter to the public, the police were instrumental in boundary making through the development of new police practices and operations. Operation Clean Sweep, with its mandate to target all gang members in the West End, was ultimately a project of re-territorialization. It involved establishing firmer boundaries between gangs and the public.

6.3 Policing the Box

Police in Winnipeg continue to respond to gang crime in highly spatialized ways. The ‘where’ of crime is front and centre for the street crime unit (previously the street gang unit). As a detective in the organized crime unit explains, “the street crime unit does a lot of street-level enforcement on street gangs because they're out there every day in uniform dealing with them.” Being “out there” in these spaces is central to policing these crimes—crimes seen as inseparable from where they occur. An officer who has worked in the street crime and organized crime units describes one of the daily practices of policing gang crime.

In the street crime unit basically what we would do is flood an area. Even though we were in were plainclothes we be wearing our jackets and in unmarked police cars and you'd be out there waving your flag letting the good people know you are there and let the bad guys know you're around as well. When there are issues in a certain geographical area—we always call it the box—it's like, ‘Okay, you're coming in today and you're driving around the box.’

For this officer gang crime is a spatial issue. To police gang crime is to police gang geography. Gangs and their ‘issues’ are seen as spatial concerns, located in the inner city. This seems obvious enough, but consider how, for instance, they are not understood as ‘located’ elsewhere, such as ‘in’ political institutions that allocate or

fail to allocate resources such as housing, education, and medical care to Indigenous and Immigrant communities. Nor is gang crime addressed as temporal issue, for instance, located historically through colonial enterprise. For police, gang crimes become both volumetrically and regionally spatialized: associated and contained within a “box.”

However, if a variety of material practices make gang space, walking or driving around these areas on daily patrol is not a matter of simply entering and exiting gang territory, but of enacting it. I ask the detective, is “the box” what you call gang territory?

Yeah there would be like a certain area in the North End and it would initially be a gang territory, but it would be a high crime territory. One or two gangs would operate out of there and you're just all over there. You're enforcing Traffic Highway Act offenses on people you know were possibly gang members, so it would give you a chance to pull them over with a Highway Traffic Act offence, like driving without a license. You can get them out of the car and then you can see if there's anything that looks like it could lead to a drug investigation. You can pull them in that way. Or a firearms investigation. And just stopping and talking to people too, but just being there, the good people will come out to talk to you. To a certain degree anyway. Like they might come out and say, 'Hey, that's a problem house over there. Here's my phone number. Can you call me when you're not here and I'll tell you stuff?' If you get more police eyes out there, you're gonna see more things.

In this quote we see support for research that shows urban youth of color surveilled and policed more aggressively than those in other communities (Bass 2001; Patton et al. 2016; Wortley & Owusu-Bempah 2011), including through anti-gang initiatives (Muniz 2012; Zatz & Kreckler 2003). While this detective does not mention race, targeting the North End as a high crime area is not a racially neutral move. Targeting the North End means that Aboriginal people will be disproportionately subjected to frequent and arbitrary stops in the effort to stop and charge gang members. As a

result, Aboriginal residents become a larger proportion of the carceral population in relation to their representation among actual offenders (Harcourt 2008).

Alongside criminological attention to the ways space affects policing, there is also value in attending more closely to the material spatial effects of police practices of patrol. Police patrol is a material practice of the body. In uniform—dark blue shirt and pants, red stripe down the legs, belt with flashlight, gun, and handcuffs—they walk or drive police vehicles around these areas in a fairly continuous flow, shift after shift. As Cook and Whowell (2011: 611) note, “Being visible, or rather being seen, is an important part of doing policing. Public and private policing personnel, their uniforms, vehicles, badges, signs, cameras and other paraphernalia are used, in part, as symbols to communicate particular messages and evoke particular emotions in onlookers.” “High visibility” policing has been associated with the prevention and deterrence of crime: “They are perceived to communicate messages about the lack of opportunities to misbehave and/or the harsh repercussions of committing crime” (Cook & Whowell 2011: 611).

The visibility of the materiality of policing works also as a spatializing practice: this repetitive presence of police bodies and their paraphernalia moving throughout and around an area over hours, days, and years traces these spaces and their boundaries as a physical form. As the flow of police bodies outlines and fills in these areas, their repetitive movements create an inscription, an embodied map, throwing into relief a region whose boundaries differentiate it from surrounding areas. Their presence in tracing and retracing certain areas performs gang space as mappable and walkable coordinates, as a region, or in other words, as a box. The

density of police bodies and technologies in these regions contributes to this inscription. I asked a police officer: If you get a 911 call from a gang territory do you respond to it differently?

Definitely. We are actually tasked with training our in-service unit, so we train all the recruits, all the in-service members, as well as all the people who work in our communication centre who take the 911 calls. So 100%. They would send multiple units. They would send, probably, a tactical response to that sort of thing, or even the helicopter.

While they do not leave a trace like ink on paper, police bodies and objects map in motion and are no less visible within these defined lines.

Police, as they patrol and respond to calls, also do other cartographic work. As police walk and drive these areas they gather information about gangs from people, events, and their own observations. An officer working in the North End describes this process.

I am a street supervisor for the general patrol shift, and we take calls. Domestic calls, neighbour disputes, we go to everything, we run the full gamut. Do we deal with gang members? Yes we do. Do we deal with drugs? Yes we do. Do we deal with shootings? Yes. Everything starts with us. The intel that we gather for the street crime unit and organized crime units, a lot of it comes right from here.

This officer gathers both criminal occurrences such as stabbings or break-ins and non-criminal information from spot-checks and traffic stops, including, among many other things, the names of people travelling with gang members, where known gang members are seen walking or driving, a change of address, or the colours people are wearing. All of this information is entered into police databases that can be used to

generate intelligence, for instance through the development of crime maps. A police crime analyst explains:

So if intelligence is telling us that West End gangs are going to the North End to push product, we can quantify that from an evidence-based perspective and say, 'Okay, is that really happening? Are B Side members now being arrested in the North End?' We now have the ability to map all of our spot checks like traffic stops and noncriminal events and we can map those now, which is awesome.... So I can look at criminal events and noncriminal events and where these people's pattern of life is taking them. If you traffic stop individuals and run them on the computer and they have no gang affiliations it might just get submitted as a spot check like, FYI these two people were in a car together at this time—even if no one was arrested or charged at this time. It tracks all spot checks, like any police contact. So in terms of gang membership that allows us to get insight into their life pattern, right? Like if you live in West Broadway and all of a sudden you're being apprehended or traffic stopped in the North End, well if intelligence is telling us that your group is trying to get into the North End then that all meshes together.

'Dataveillance' policing (Amoore & De Goede 2005)—a form of 'targeted governance' (Valverde & Mopas 2004), or pre-crime policing (McCulloch & Wilson 2016)—is an example of the increased use of risk assessment and prediction instruments in policing and punishment practices (Harcourt 2008). These predictive analytics rely "on the identification of patterns that indicate spatial and temporal distributions of crime" (Kaufmann, Egbert & Leese 2019: 674). As police patrol and respond to calls, they gather cartographic information—information used to generate intelligence in the form of maps of gang geographies. Examples of pre-crime policing that aim to pre-empt 'would-be-criminals' and predict future crime (McCulloch & Wilson 2016), these maps direct police where to find and intercept gang activities. In turn, police patrols reinforce these maps as their stylized bodies and vehicles outline these areas in motion. Thus, as they patrol, police both provide an embodied inscription of these boundaries, and while doing so, gather

information that alters these maps, shifting their coordinates, and bringing certain landscapes of crime into view. Here maps and using maps becomes one process, a “map-space” (Del Casino & Hanna 2006)—a co-constitutive process of embodied mapping. This process does not only lead to and helps navigate these spaces, it also brings gang spaces into being as regional formations.

As regional spaces, gang territories produced through police practices mirror the conventional expectation of gang territories as blocks or other mappable, findable areas. Instead of assuming region to be a natural state of gang space, watching for these practices helps acknowledge region as produced or performed. However, it is not enough to acknowledge that space is made or even to further explore what kinds of spaces are made. It is important also to ask what work certain spatial forms do. What is the effect of reproducing gang territories as regional?

Cartography has long produced space as regional¹⁵ (Rose 1999). Distinguishing those inside from those outside, region is a space of visibility and documentation that makes it amenable to control. Modern cartography has helped legitimize the colonial division of the world: maps and other inscription devices such as charts and diagrams have been crucial in the process of rendering space, which is an otherwise ephemeral phenomenon, as durable, visible, and manageable (Dyce 2013; Turnbull 1989; Wood 1993b). As police patrol and respond to calls in ways that regionally map gang territories, a space of interiority and exteriority

¹⁵ Alternative mapping processes have existed alongside the static regionality of Western mapping processes, for instance as embodied or fluid mapping forms found in Indigenous mythology (Bender 1999), reflexive participatory mapping (Kim 2015), or poverty mapping that draws attention to the heterogeneity of inequity that broad regional maps generally miss (Henninger & Snel 2002); maps that resist, reconstruct, or enact alternative spatial realities and identities.

emerges. It is a space of visibility; a space able to be located, entered and for those within it to be managed. It is a space that renders policing possible. As we watch the regional boundaries emerge through police embodied and electronic mapping practices, it becomes apparent that gang members are not alone in establishing these lines.

6.4 Spatialization of the Racialized Body

The production of gang space as a regional form suits the law and order purpose of containing and managing certain populations. However, while police patrol may regionalize whole areas as gang territory, another less-recognized form of space is also being produced. In this third example of police practices, I explore how patrol spatializes the racialized body, or in other words, how the bodies of racialized youth become gang territory. This is gang space made as the bodies of young people, a space that moves as the body of some, often racialized, residents.

While police use both data from traffic stops and patrol stops as well as their own iterative physical presence to map gang territories as regional spaces, not everyone in the 'box' is policed the same way. Gang territories house residents who range in age, ethnicity, income, and occupation. However, when officers patrol these areas, young people, and most often Black or Aboriginal youth, are more frequently targeted by gang control initiatives (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah 2011). Many of the young people I spoke to talked about being repeatedly stopped and searched by police. A 19-year-old First Nations man from the North End (North Side gang territory) provides one example. He describes both his street and body as being

under nearly constant police surveillance, despite having explained to me that he wanted to leave gang life but feared for his life. What are your interactions with police, I asked? "Police? Every day. I walk out my door and they'll be parked out on the front street. They'll be parked on my street that I live on. Will be two cruisers or maybe three. They're watching the whole street. Whoever walks by the street gets maybe body-searched. Mountain Street. They stop you and they search you."

However, it is not quite that *whoever* walks by that street gets searched. While police go to certain geographical areas to address gang crime, within these areas only certain bodies are stopped, searched, questioned, documented, labeled, and arrested. While a broad regional area becomes mapped as high-crime, policing gang crime becomes centered on certain—and most often, racialized—bodies. Jordan from the West End/West Side describes his experience with police as racial profiling.

12 years old I was labeled as a Mad Cow. So that just goes to show it's all racial profiling. These gang affiliations that kids have are all because some asshole cop pulled you in and labeled you as a Mad Cow. And now every time you get pulled over you're getting fucked over because what's next to your name on their monitor? Mad Cow. Sometimes it's just racist, it's just pure racist. They pull a black guy over and automatically he's a Mad Cow. You're walking with a group of native guys—you're IP or something. You can't just be you to them.

His friend Hassan responds similarly when I ask what his interaction with police has been like.

In the West End they treat us like shit. The cops down here are more racist. They approach us just because of our skin colour. Sometimes it's the way you react to them. The way you're dressed, sometimes. Maybe they think we're wearing gang colours. I don't know. They see a black guy wearing a nice pair of pants, or Jordans. Sometimes it just depends, I don't know, it's just your

skin colour. Or if you're just good, they just stop you! They think, 'What's this guy doing with nice clothes? He must be selling drugs,' pretty much. I've had cops call me worst names. I've had them say some bad shit, like tell me they'll punch me out the next time they see me. I've had cops say oh yeah we're going to deport you back. I wasn't even doing anything, I was just walking to my bus stop and they stopped me! They said, 'We gotta take you in.' They took me in and searched me. They didn't find anything and they felt stupid. They told my parents that I was smoking drugs. The cops just don't like us. I've had their hands shoved down my pants, wedgies. A lot of messed up stuff happens with the police, since I was like 12.

While the racial injustice described in these events is undeniable, these experiences persist for young people without recourse or refuge. While the 'racial profiling' in the quotes above could be used as evidence of racist discrimination, Moffette and Walters (2018: 106) convincingly suggest that rather than accept this as a matter of fact it is better understood as a contested phenomenon, an "event, a peculiar object whose emergence we need to trace quite empirically across various sites and incidents." In the examples above we can look at the event of racial profiling as a practice of race—a practice that consists of a "heterogeneous ensemble of relationships, technologies, persons and things, which include traffic stops, police databases, criminologists, race data, high-crime neighbourhoods, civil society groups, human rights agencies, and driving" (Moffette & Walters 2018: 105)—as well as a practice of space. While regional space remains in play—racialized youth found *within* regional gang territories are more likely to be stopped than other youth—there is further localization of gang space onto, or as, the bodies of young people within these regions. These young people are not only located in gang space—practices of patrol spatialize the racialized body as the site of gang crime. Through material practices such as stops and searches that target racialized youth,

gang space is made as the bodies of young people, producing the boundaries of gang space as the body. This space, although often unrecognized, exists alongside regional space, creating two sets of boundaries, one at mappable coordinates and another that moves as the bodies of racialized residents.

When the boundaries of gang territory exist at the body, leaving gang territory becomes difficult for young people. This is not only because it is sometimes difficult to cross regional boundaries but because gang territory now travels with them, *as them*, within or outside regional confines. This becomes evident in the way that police follow the bodies of racialized youth as the site of gang crime. 15-year-old Asim tells me about the community centre he goes to in West End/West Side,

Like a lot of people used to be in gangs, like a lot of people who come here used to be in gangs. But they come here to look for jobs because they offer jobs here and they're trying to restart their life and have a good life and career and do something with their life. And they just feel like the cops always question them. They always get stopped. The cops make it harder to move on with your life.

However, the spatialization of bodies as gang territory becomes even more apparent when people try to leave the confines of regional boundaries. The following quote describes one man's difficulty leaving gang territory. A First Nation man who grew up in West Broadway/B Side, he describes the continuation of frequent police interaction after becoming employed full time and moving to a suburb of the city.

A lot of the interactions with police are based on racism. Right up to this day. I could be 50 years old and they are going to harass me. They don't care that I have a full-time job. They're just like, 'Yeah your bullshit job, it's just a front.' They stop me on the street. As soon as they run my plates they pull me over. I get pulled over three or four times a week.

Do they just pull you over when you are back in West Broadway, I asked? “No,” he answered,

The police pull me over wherever I am. As soon as my name comes up when they run my plates they pull me over no matter where I am. I lived in St Vital for three years and they would say, ‘Oh, far away from home?’ I would say, ‘Uh, no I just live down the street.’ And they would say, ‘You know what we mean.’

When racialized bodies are spatialized, the boundaries of gang space move as the body. This is not what conventional spatial theory teaches us. From a conventional view of space, this quote has a less complex explanation. When space is presumed to fall within regional and volumetric parameters, this respondent appears to be describing the policing of gang crime *inside* or *outside* gang territories, which seems reasonable. This latter explanation illuminates the work that thinking of space as ‘naturally regional’ does: when space and race are both presumed to be static, already-there conditions, policing crime becomes unhinged from the production of either space or race. However, the risk-based policing that underscores pulling over someone with a full time job three or four times a week, polices both race and space. Indeed, since these categories are co-constitutive, it is policing of—and through its material practices, the enactment of—racialized space.

The experience of being an Aboriginal body out of place in suburban Winnipeg aligns with research linking practices of policy and law that create and maintain and racialized spaces (Capers 2009; Lipsitz 2011; Razack 2002); work that invaluablely denaturalizes associations between space and race by highlighting the ways racial segregation is shaped through policy and institutional practice. When police stop the man quoted above, we see the way space and race have become

mutually constituted through risk-based practices of patrol that rely on and reinforce racialized space. The historically established association between Aboriginal peoples and areas of high crime is actively maintained and reproduced through criminal approaches to the incongruence of a First Nation man in a predominantly White space. To maintain racial hierarchies effectively, race is spatialized through the alignment of his 'home' as the inner city.

Indebted to scholars researching the often overlooked ways that racialized space is practiced in material and practical ways, this project additionally draws attention to the less frequently critiqued *spatial logic* that underpins practices of racialized space: a model of space as singular, flat, and pre-existing. Although police practices enact gang space in multiple ways—for instance as both regional and as embodied, racialized space—there is motivation to treat space as singular. A number of officers expressed that they do not pay attention to who or where people are but instead just follow the crime—an example of the “absent presence of race” (Moffette & Walters 2018: 95). However, in order to present police work as a neutral enterprise that simply “follows the crime,” both race and space need to be taken for granted categories assumed to preexist the arrival of police. As previously noted, this implicit assumption does important conceptual work by depriving residents of lived spatial histories (Massey 2009). The separation between space and lived Indigenous history, for instance, is audible, argues Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999/2012, cf Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 10-11), through,

a very specific spatial vocabulary of colonialism which can be assembled around three concepts: (1) the line, (2) the center, and (3) the outside. The 'line' is important because it was used to map territory, to survey land, to

establish boundaries, and to mark the limits of colonial power. The 'center' is important because orientation to the center was an orientation to the system of power. The 'outside' is important because it positioned territory and people in an oppositional relation to the colonial center.

These concepts which both define and produce space as a regional entity, make practices of colonialism possible: "The establishment of military, missionary or trading stations, the building of roads, ports, and bridges, the clearing and the mining of minerals all involved processes of marking, defining, and controlling space" (Tuhiwai Smith 1999/2012, cf Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 10-11).

These authors underscore the importance not only of looking at the effect of space on race but also of the *forms of space* being mobilized and materialized through various practices. While it is essential to recognize the ways Aboriginal bodies were evicted, confined, destroyed, and dispossessed of their lands, there is also import in recognizing the concurrent devaluation and erasure of Aboriginal and other alternative spatial models and forms achieved alongside these practices. In the development of Canada's North West, Craft (2016, cf Toews 2018: 47-8) describes the Anishinabe's objection to the principle of property law in the negotiations of Treaty 1: "The Anishinabe did not surrender their land in the Treaty One negotiations...It was not in their power to do so, as they did not own it." Incompatible with the view that land cannot be owned, the violent conquest and settlement of Red River—later the site of Winnipeg—through armed occupation thus displaced both Aboriginal peoples and their spatial ontologies.

Alongside strategies of elimination and containment that underscored the forcible removal of Aboriginal peoples from their lands onto reserves in order to accommodate new settlements, Winnipeg municipal police were instrumental in

enforcing Winnipeg's apartheid geography. Indigenous peoples—cast as dangers to be controlled and eliminated by the city's dominant bloc—were driven out of the city at the turn of the twentieth century (Toews 2018), facilitating “a significant geographical separation of the colonizer and the colonized that lasted until the mid-twentieth century” (Clifford 2000, cf Coulthard 2014: 174). However, strategies of confinement and dispossession continue today despite the mid-century migration of Aboriginal peoples from reserves to urban areas such as Winnipeg (Coulthard 2014). Within this new spatial configuration,

The city belongs to the settlers and the sully of civilized society through the presence of the racialized Other in white spaces gives rise to a careful management of boundaries within urban space... [S]patial practices, often achieved through law (nuisance laws, zoning laws, and so on), mark off the spaces of the settler and the native both conceptually and materially. The inner city is racialized space, the zone in which all that is not respectable is contained. Canada's colonial geographies exhibit this same pattern of violent expulsions and the spatial containment of Aboriginal peoples to marginalized areas of the city, processes consolidated over three hundred years of colonization. (Barry 2001, cf Coulthard 2014: 174-5)

This colonial history coincides with the connected histories of Black people in Canada for whom containment took shape through slavery (Maynard, 2017) and through practices of exclusion in the North West development that stifled and discouraged African-American immigration (Toews 2018). More recently, through processes of globalization, “newcomers, especially refugees, have joined the historical minority-Aboriginal people who struggle with poverty and exclusion” (Ghorayshi 2010: 89). For both Aboriginal and Black residents, strategies of expulsion, containment, and control are not relegated to the past but also continue through various practices. As Gyepi-Garbrah, Walker, and Garcea write,

Aboriginal peoples and many newcomers (for example, from African countries) have a common history of repressive colonial rule which for a long time denied them a holistic entitlement to the natural resources on their own land as well as their fundamental human rights as distinct peoples. Even though they have different experiences in different colonised places (of origin), they have shared similar struggles that structure their now intermingled spatial practices of urban life. Aboriginal peoples and newcomers face racial discrimination which makes it difficult for them to access adequate social and economic resources like housing, employment, education and health. (2013: 1805)

In Winnipeg, “Indigenous peoples and newcomers are living side-by-side in many neighbourhoods, with common histories of colonialism, racism and socioeconomic challenges” (Gyepi-Garbrah et al. 2013: 1795).

Police practices contribute to these experiences. Winnipeg police inherit this spatial logic of regional division—with its lines, centres, and exteriors—(Tuhiwai Smith 1999/2012, cf Tuck & McKenzie 2015) and continue to work within and through its geographic contours. While police are, in practice, enacting various embodied spaces, this multiplicity becomes coordinated in an achieved singular, regional form. However, when Black or Aboriginal residents leave the conventionally bounded gang territories, a tension arises between gang space as a bounded, mappable geographic region, and gang space as the mobile bodies of residents. Existing both outside regional lines while remaining inside embodied gang boundaries, the achieved coherence of singular space falters. Police must resolve this tension since being both inside and outside gang territory at the same time challenges colonial spatial logic. Spatialized bodies thus need to be realigned with the regional forms that are expected—designed, even—to contain them. As racialized bodies are returned to the regional boundaries of gang territories the

multiplicity of gang space—as both a region and a body—is obscured. The spatialization of racialized bodies as gang territory becomes collapsed into region: regional gang territories *contain* gang members and embodied spaces fail to be recognized. In other words, the expectation of space as singular allows ‘being space’ to be obscured by ‘being in space.’ In this way the tension between multiple gang spaces is averted and the presumption of singular space and the strategies of segregation it permits are left unchallenged.

When police stop the respondent in the quote above, a full-time working father living outside the inner city for three years, his criminal risk is couched in the incongruence of his racialized spatiality. When bodies are spatialized as gang territory, they must continue to be policed as they move past regional boundaries. Yet, because space is racialized, seeing an Aboriginal person out of the confines of the inner city creates an incompatibility for the regional, racial spatial logic of settler colonialism. We see this tension, which would be eased by bringing him back to a regional space, expressed in the quote above: *oh, far away from home*”? Using highly spatialized language we hear the attempt to bring two forms of boundaries back in line through a reminder of where he *belongs*. His embodied racialized boundaries must realign with the regional racialized boundaries to preserve a model of singular—thus dividable, claimable, and controllable—space.

The production of space as the racialized body, a form of space produced through the embodied practices of police, exists alongside regional gang spaces, sometimes overlapping, sometimes distinct, but always related. Through police practices we see gang territory as doubly embodied. The bodily acts of police patrol

both produces space as regionally bounded and spatializes race through embodied boundaries: Black and Aboriginal bodies policed not only in space but as space.

6.5 Conclusion

When we approach space as made, rather than already-there, gang territories present as complex and multiple spaces made by a wide array of actors, including the police. The conventional view of gang territories as spaces containing crime and violence does a disservice to understanding this complexity, and reflects a desire to control and contain space and its inhabitants—a continuation of the Canadian settler colonial project. However, all iterative performances and practices allow for ambivalence and contestation. If police are complicit in making these spaces—as all of us are—practices that encourage inclusion, respect diversity, and recognize multiplicity would be better ways to dismantle gang territories than practices of surveillance and control, which seem to bolster the territorial boundaries between inside and out, us and them. Indeed, practices of exclusion have long been identified as factors leading to the development of gangs, including practices of space (Thrasher 1927).

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

As the federal government announces their \$54 million contribution to combatting illegal gun and gang activity through specialized prosecutors, policing projects, and intelligence-gathering efforts in jails (Jeffords, 2019), we see the way nuanced discussions of youth, poverty, race, space, and mobility are eclipsed by a focus on crime and punitive crime control. Gang territory is not discussed in this government announcement. However, the prosecution, policing, and jailing of gang members are all spatial practices—practices lost from view within conventional understandings of space that deny its ontological production. Rendering space invisible risks losing sight of the ways space and bodies—of all sorts—are co-produced and co-exist; we lose sight of the daily material practices that criminalize, racialize, and spatialize gang territories.

At the outset of this project I knew that gang spaces, in the ways they were commonly understood, could not account for the contrast between how youth workers described gang territories and my own experiences of them: spaces that stopped young people in the area from accessing resources, attending certain schools, or, at times, travelling at all, were inaccessible for me, totally inconsequential and undetectable. This was a deficiency not only in what we knew about gang territories, but also in the spatial models we used to understand them. Thinking about gang territories through conventional spatial models that presume space to be a passive and inert entity results in equating territory singularly with region, a flat space divided into distinct principalities and whose ontological status

tends to go unnoticed. If I am ‘there’ where gang territories are located, a reliance on regionalism predicts access: to get there is simply to cross those lines, to be ‘in’ that region. It was this assumption, this limitation that I set out to address in this dissertation.

7.2 Research Objectives

To account for the fact that I was unable to get ‘there’ to gang territories in the ways that young people in the area appeared to be able, a new conceptualization of space was needed—one that could account for two spaces to exist, and that could explain why I only had access to one. In this dissertation I analyzed my interviews with people about, and observations of, gang territories through a materialist theory of space. This entailed shifting from thinking of space as a preexisting surface to thinking of space as ontologically enacted through material practices. Applied to gang territories, this meant countering their image as claimed by or containing gangs, with a view of these spaces as dynamic and vital assemblages that materialize in multiple ways and in various forms. A materialist argument denies that the world pre-exists our interactions with it and thus denies the inevitability of its forms and realities. Using this theoretical orientation I asked, what are the practices involved in the production of these territories whose invisibility, at first glance, appears as immateriality? What kind of spaces are gang territories? How are they made? And, what are their effects?

Using an ethnographic approach common to Actor Network Theory (ANT), I paid attention to the practices of gang territories, trying to follow the ways these

spaces are *done*. Rather than as self-contained phenomena or naturally occurring categories, this wider methodological lens encouraged the study of a range of actors beyond ‘gang members’—the most well-known actors in the production of gang territories, but certainly not the sole participants. A multi-site and multi-actor examination included interviews with and observations of gang members, residents, administrators, and criminal justice personnel who work and live in relation to gang territories. If practices enact gang space, I wanted to ask, what kinds of spaces do various actors enact? How do the territories of gang members differ from, or relate to, the spaces made by police or other residents?

7.3 Summary of Findings

While my methodological approach presumed a materiality of space, how gang territories form materially is easily eclipsed by their invisibility. Material practices were initially difficult to recognize because they tended to lack the representational markers of space that conventional space accommodates: sign posts, street signs, maps, zoning, etc. However, through observations and interviews, their various material contours came slowly into view and a key finding was illuminated: the importance of embodiment in the enactment of space became apparent. Bodies, in a broad sense of the term, establish the peripheries, distances, areas, and volumes of gang spaces.

The ability to recognize non-representational practices—such as those that are embodied—as material, illuminated two key features of space. A focus on embodiment helped show *invisibility* as the result of understanding space as an

entity that houses bodies, rather than as existing through the movements, conditions, and behaviours of bodies. Secondly, it showed that space is not only made rather than pre-existing, it is also mobile and processual rather than a static scrim. Space was not just being made *there*. It was being made *through*—through time, through motion, through behaviour, through the forces of affect. And it was being made *as*—as the body, as assemblage, as region, as multiple.

Materialist literature on space has made the case for the co-constituency of bodies and space: space makes bodies and bodies make space and the two are made together (Law 2002). The theme of embodied space is furthered in this dissertation by demonstrating how bodies and space are not only made together but additionally how bodies are made *as* space and space is made *as* the body. Stressing not only the co-constitutiveness, but also the coexistence of bodies and space, accentuates the importance of thinking through spatial practices. If space is not just being made by bodies but *as bodies* we are no longer (were we ever?) just talking about space or bodies. Through this lens, space not only affects bodies and groups but also materializes as embodied practices such as race and gender.

The embodiment of gang space is demonstrated across my analyses. Gang space is not only affected by mobile technologies, cell phones have become territory—territory that continues to house both clientele and gang members. Gang colours and tattoos do not simply mark territory but enact embodied gang space that enrolls and subsumes racialized residents while it precludes others. The materialization of space as the body is apparent both in police practices that spatialize racialized bodies so that boundaries of gang space move as the body, as

well as in the ways affective gang space materializes as new mobilities and behaviours for young residents.

7.4 Implications

Attending to the ways gang territories are done challenges the obviousness of measuring gang spaces in terms of territory, and territory in terms of regional boundaries. One of the consequences of conceptualizing space in terms of closed, contained, and bounded regions is that they have an inside and outside—a feature that lends itself to an us/them dichotomy: some bodies belong within these boundaries and others do not. In gang territories this dichotomy takes on racialized and criminalized characterizations. In turn, these regional lines and the othering they perform promote particular forms of management: as bounded areas they are surveilled and policed, their boundaries tightened in order to contain the disorder that dwells within.

Yet, if dismantling gangs is the goal, reinforcing the regional boundaries of these spaces will only encourage identification with, and defense of, neighbourhood space for young people who feel excluded from ‘elsewhere.’ Additionally, as I argue in Chapter 6, police practices that encourage inclusion, respect diversity, and recognize multiplicity would be better ways to dismantle gang territories than current practices of patrol, which seem to bolster the regional lines between inside and out, us and them.

Failing to recognize the multitude of spatialities that comprise gang territories is one way of denying “the potentialities of that form-of-life that the

settler colonial apparatuses aim to erase” (Joronen 2017, cf Hughes 2019:11). In this sense, the problem is not only with ‘region’—a divisive spatial form—but also with the recognition and use of region at the expense of other spatial forms.

Conceptualizing and enacting gang territories as regional spaces maintains a spatial model ushered in through settler colonial practices that benefited from the partitioning of land into singularly claimable portions. Failing to recognize or conceptualize other spatial models, especially as they relate to racialized spaces, buoys the logic of elimination and containment that dominant Western spatial models naturalize.

Witnessing gang territories function in assemblage presents a powerful challenge to the seemingly naturalized connections between race, space, and crime. The body is a powerful symbol of the innate: its biology, its anatomy, its birth so easily mistaken as natural, its behaviours so easily naturalized. When the materiality of the world is forged largely through embodied practices diligence is needed to recognize its enacted and achieved status. In gang territories a focus on embodiment brings the work of space to the fore. It lends insight into the ways practices of space are formed through assemblage and form other assemblages such as race, class, youth, and gender.

Approaching space as made in practice implicates a wider assemblage of actors in the production of gang and inner-city spaces. Highlighting the role of multiple actors reconfigures how and where we address gang issues. In this project the role of gangs, residents, and police, alongside various objects was studied. However, foregrounding the relationality of gang territories implicates a wider

range of actors, from media coverage, scholarly research, or avoidance of these areas, since the way we know gang territories is revealed also as a practice of making these spaces. Attention is directed away from gangs as the source or cause of these territories and their 'contents,' toward a focus on the ways these spaces require a network or assemblage of actors to operate and to maintain their form. As such, it refutes assignation of ownership to gangs by acknowledging both the variety of objects, things, and other people implicated in their making. Understanding space as embodied provides a way to think through the associations between space and bodies, motivating us to trace and disrupt the ontology of these connections as singularly attributable, or natural.

Focusing on the materiality of space strengthens a relational ethics of accountability between people and place. When we assume space is made in practice, new accountabilities for spaces arises. For instance, singling out racialized residents during police patrol, gathering data from these stops, and producing intelligence on gangs contributes to daily re-spatializations that make gang boundaries formidable obstacles for some young people. The recognition that police not only control, but contribute to the making of these spaces, allows us to question whether police practices affect gang spaces the way they intend to, and helps us imagine how police practices can change in order to better protect and serve these communities. These observations are relevant to both critical criminologists and those who are concerned with crime control interventions, since it encourages a renewed look at the purpose, forms, and practicalities of gang intervention strategies.

While it was beyond the scope of this project, discussions with youth and with administrators at schools and community centres, point to other ways gang territories can be disrupted or diffused beyond criminal justice initiatives. A local high school that straddles two gang territories; a soccer field; community centres in the area; and the nearby University RecPlex were all noted for their ability to intercept, to varying degrees, gang space, despite their location in gang territories.

The principal of the high school explains,

When I came here it wasn't good. Teachers would actually walk up the mezzanine and through the mezzanine down the other side to get to the cafeteria rather than walk through the kids in the 'rad' area. It was a combination of culture and gangs and there had been a couple grumbles. But it hadn't been dealt with, I guess, so my new vice principal and I decided to have them sit down and talk. No teachers would join us. So we had the kids sit down and have lunch. It took two lunches and they kind of hammered out that they would be respectful. It was amazing.

Jordan, who attends school there, agreed that it operates, in a sense, outside of the conventional space of gang territory. While he has some affiliation to Mad Cowz because of his residence in the West End, gang rivalries are put aside during the school day:

There's B Side people who go to there but they don't say shit to me. Nobody ever tries to mess with me. When you see them in the hallway you stay in your own lane. I just think about it like, I'm not at school for this bullshit. You know, like, see me on the street and not something else, you know. Just going to school trying to get my credits. Not causing a beef with anyone. I don't need more drama in my life. Got enough going on already.

In future research more attention could be paid to how and why some spaces are able to, at least to some degree and for some time, change the practice of gang territories in ways that allow these interruptions.

Rethinking the space of gang territories is especially important in Winnipeg where a number of Aboriginal and Newcomer gangs reside. The role of space- and place-based practices in settler colonialism cannot be overstated. Paying closer attention to space can help uncover the traces and effects of settler colonialism, which have devalued Indigenous land-based and spatial practices, helped “establish and reify hierarchies of settler over Indigenous” (Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 2), and continue to negatively affect immigrants. While the spatial forms I describe in this project result from my own interpretation of the practices I observed and heard recounted, and not from my own participation in traditional Indigenous practices or understandings of space, I draw attention to the multitude of spatial forms that are regularly left unrecognized, obscured, and delegitimized through dominant spatial practices and expectations. This encourages the recognition of “alternative, long-held, comprehensive and theoretically sophisticated understandings of place [that have] exist[ed] outside, alongside, against, and within the domain of the Western philosophical tradition” (Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 11). Normalizing alternative spatialities in social scientific research works against the continued erasure or neutralization of obscured and discredited spatial forms.

7.5 Contributions

In the article, *What Do We Know About Gangs and Gang Members and Where Do We Go From Here?* (2013), Decker et al. write that most gang research has generated either macro-level sociological or individual-level explanations. More gang research is needed, they argue, at the micro-level, which would provide

accounts that “move past static macro level factors and examine the dynamic processes in social interaction” (Decker et al. 2013: 370). This is especially true, they suggest, in regards to non-criminal behaviours of gangs, since most attention to group process has focused on the gang’s role in generating crime and violence. This tendency to focus on the criminality of gangs has also been criticized by Brotherton (2008: 58), who asks, “How have we moved from the benign conceptions of an ‘interstitial group originally formed spontaneously’ (Thrasher 1927) to today’s urban primitives (Conquergood 1992) whose existence federal legislation would virtually render illegal?”

The skewed focus on the negative aspects of gang life has been identified as problematic for two interrelated reasons. The first is that it misrepresents the amount of time gangs spend on criminal behaviours, obscuring “a fuller portrait of the range of activities of a street gang – delinquent, normative, and mundane – and the complex ways it participates in the life of a community” (Venkatesh 1997: 82). The second problem is that the representation of gangs as predominantly criminal and violent can implicitly or explicitly legitimize surveillance and social control over racialized populations, especially when a focus on race is not situated within its historical context (Ezeonu 2014).

This project contributes to gang literature that calls for a focus on process beyond the study of gang criminality and violence, albeit possibly not in the way Decker et al. (2013) envisioned. While a focus on the group processes of gangs tends to refer to the actions and behaviours of gang members, this project widens the net of social interaction to include other actors such as residents and police, the role of

non-human actors, and a place for the less tangible role of emotions, movement, and embodiment. This mirrors the move some have called for in migration studies where the traditional focus on “migrants” has overshadowed the role of infrastructures and other actors who populate the field, including police, brokers, bureaucrats, humanitarians (Xiang & Lindquist 2014) and recruiters (Zell 2018). A focus on the material enactments of gang space draws attention to gang member activities outside of scope of criminal enterprise, and shows gang processes as occurring in assemblage—not solely as the result of those most visibly and discursively identified as members of this collective.

By contesting its pre-existing status, a materialist approach to space sheds light on how particular spatial models contribute to taken-for-granted associations between space and crime. To think of space, and especially territory, as regional is to understand it as singular—one space divided up into distinct regions. Within this model, gang territories become *contested* spaces in which various parties seek to maintain or reclaim their space. This is both in terms of competing gangs dividing one space into various territories or in terms of gang territories competing with the established municipal space. Space becomes filtered through a singular lens: multiple groups contesting *one* space. This may seem innocent enough—and regionality is undoubtedly an aspect of both urban and gang spatiality—but the trouble lies in considering it as the only spatial possibility. Exclusively understanding space as singular and regional influences our expectations and responses to these spaces: one is primed to think of these as spaces of conflict and prone to violence. In turn, punitive, tough on crime approaches seem both obvious

and justified. Instead, as we begin to see the many ways gang territories are made through daily material practices, it is no longer viable to see gang territory as a singular regional space with one defined and defended border. A consequence of acknowledging gang spaces as multiple, is that their existence no longer implies an inherent spatial illicitness.

This research also contributes to emerging criminological literature on fear of crime by following the ways affect shapes space as new embodied mobilities and behaviours. Research has shown that fear of crime does not neatly correlate with victimization or risk (Farrall, Jackson & Gray 2009). Using intensity of fear and frequency of criminal incidents as measures, Gray, Jackson, and Farrall (2011) distinguish between the 'unworried,' who are neither worried nor report criminal episodes; the 'worried,' who both experience crime and fear it; and the 'anxious,' who report fear of crime but could not recall a recent event of victimization. While these distinctions are useful in furthering a nuanced understanding of fear of crime, the young people I interviewed comprise a missing classification: the 'affected,' those who routinely experience victimization but who are reluctant to describe themselves as fearful. Shifting from identifying fear as *emotion* to fear as *affect* helps bring this group to our attention. As a way of expressing the force and capacities of bodies, 'affect' helps identify fear in behavioural ways, for instance as modes of speeds (Cadman 2009). As such, this dissertation aligns more closely with studies that link fear of crime to individual and community behaviours (Gray et al. 2011; Pain 1997; Stanko 1990; Warr 2000).

Criminologists have acknowledged that young people living in gang

territories manage their fear by learning to avoid encounters with local gang members or their rivals (Garot 2010; Tita et al. 2005; Valasik & Tita 2018). My research demonstrates that navigation of these spaces goes beyond avoidance. My findings connect with the work of feminist geographers and criminologists (Pain 1991; Stanko 1990; Valentine 1989) who have investigated “the many ways in which women routinely adapt their use of urban space in order to guard against possible physical or sexually motivated attack – taking certain routes, avoiding certain places at night, telling others where they are going, and so on,” (Carrabine, Fox & Fussey 2014: 145). Research on ways people react to fear of crime through behavioural adaptations to their environments has also been applied to groups such as children, teenagers, and elderly people (Pain 1991; Pain & Smith 2016).

This dissertation also contributes to fear of crime research that attends to “the specific materialities, spatialities, experiences and practices of emotions in particular contexts,” rather than relying on “vague, utilitarian or hierarchically scaled conceptions of fear” (Pain & Smith 2016: 3). Rather than “plotting an emotion like fear on a map,” my aim has been to show “how emotions actually influence or shape space more than they arise in space” (Hayward 2012: 451). Joining cultural criminologists embracing a materialist lens, this dissertation has explored “the territorialization of affect...a geography of sensation that can be materially represented” (Hayward 2012: 451).

In addition to criminological literature, this dissertation joins sociological conversations on space and boundaries. Further challenging the flawed notion “that because borders are crossable, they are less significant” (Tuck & McKenzie 2015:

41), my work sees boundary transgressions in terms of ongoing boundary reconfiguration (Barad 2007, Tuck & McKenzie 2015). If we want to change the space of gang territories, rethinking the nature of territorial boundaries is an area we could consider intervening. Implementing spatial practices that offer alternative affective experiences for young people in community centres, green spaces, and schools, offers more than leisure and educational opportunities. These are also ways of reducing the negative affects of gang territories for young residents. Additionally, we do a disservice to marginalized young people when community centres, resource centres, and school catchment areas are designed without taking into consideration the location of gang boundaries. Recognizing gang territories as material, rather than symbolic, spaces encourages their existence to be taken seriously.

A broader intervention of gang spaces would address “the ways in which different material bodies are expected to do gender, class, race and ethnicity differently” (Nash 2000: 657). When access to embodied gang space is enabled through practices of racialization, we need to rethink how we practice race in ways that form ‘sticky connections’ (Saldanha 2007) between poverty, crime, race, and space—especially through practices of police and law enforcement. Currently, our prevailing designation of gang territories as spaces of crime made and maintained by gang members justifies increased police response and presence. This focus on criminality does not address the ways these affective and embodied spaces take a physical and emotional toll on young people. Young residents interviewed for this dissertation did not find comfort or security in the presence of police. Instead, their presence and practices tend to further enact these communities as racialized,

entrenching, rather than relieving, restrictive embodied spatializations.

This research also offers methodological contributions to the sociology of space. During this research, the invisibility of gang spaces necessitated a move beyond representation—beyond the street signs, walls, maps, and other formal and recognizably material markers of spatial characteristics and limits. This work makes visible that which has not necessarily been invisible, but was unrecognizable as space, as practices of space, and as material. Yet, the aim of this dissertation was not to ‘know’ gang territories as much as it was to know something *else* about them, some part of them that has eluded gang research: their making and unmaking more than their content, although these are obviously related. As such, I do not uncover hereto-unknown truths about gang territories, truths that would add to our absolute knowledge of these spaces. Instead, my findings offer a situated and partial knowledge of gang territories.

However, the point of this methodological approach is not simply to accept that we can never know the complete truth, but also to preserve a commitment to the vagueness of the social, material, and affective world (McCormack 2003). Emphasizing the heterogeneity of spaces, their localized contexts, and situated practices brings the intricacies of space and other areas of the world to light. The ethics of this research are found less in the effort to “give voice to the experience of others and more through the effort to find a way of expressing the potential of the event of encounter” (McCormack 2003: 502).

This methodology does not supplant more direct, structurally targeted activism. However, neither is it a-political. Openness to the complexity and

relationality of the social world aligns with the belief that knowing the social world is to create it (Barad 2007; Datson 2000; Law & Urry 2001; Mol 2002). As Law and Urry argue, “social inquiry and its methods are productive: they (help to) make social realities and social worlds. They do not simply describe the world as it is, but also enact it” (2004: 390). My findings are less about what is out there and more about the spaces that have emerged through my encounter with gang territories.

Knowing the world in elusive ways is to recognize the political in the city in a way that is often overlooked in urban studies (Jaffe 2018). Jaffe (2018) argues that recognizing the political imagination as socially and materially embedded in urban landscapes would invigorate urban politics. This makes sense when we consider the ways spatial models are often subjugated through processes of othering, found for instance in the processes of settler colonialism which “undermined the diversity of understandings of space, place, and time in Indigenous knowledge systems” (Tuck & McKenzie 2015: 10). Bringing visibility to the heterogeneity of gang spaces and the inner city more generally by demonstrating their overlooked multiplicity and discounted materiality, is to assert the presence of alternative spatial models. As Sarah Hunt asserts, non-Indigenous scholars would do well to grapple “with the unsettling nature of engaging Indigenous knowledge in processes that are rarely clear, neat, linear or straight-forward, but are instead productively confusing,” in order to know “that which is rendered outside the knowable world” (Hunt 2014: 31). Hunt (2014) argues that it is in the gaps of knowledge regimes where ontological shifts are possible. To overlook the complexities of gang geographies is to miss the practices that make, dismantle, and transform the bodies, spaces, and

realities of racialized youth.

My motivation has also been less about solving a problem than about, as Thrift puts it, “partly the result of a desire to inject a sense of wonder and astonishment back into [the] world...” (2004: 123). By describing spaces that seem so unlike our expectations of gang territories my hope is that this account contains a “startle of surprise,” that, as Tsing explains, “interrupts common sense, allowing us to notice different world-making projects within the assemblage” (2003: 293). By attending to these practices I encourage a closer look at the spaces being made around, and as, us and others, and to acknowledge and value spaces and worlds that are unfamiliar and perhaps not ours to inhabit.

This perspective encourages a second glance at other spaces too—those that are plainly visible and plainly identified as spaces. What we see as obvious: regions, boundaries, spaces marked and claimed legitimately through official means—maps, municipalities, roads, and neighbourhoods—are also practiced. In regard to these spaces as well we can ask, who is making these spaces? What work goes into making spaces legitimate or illegitimate? What effect do these practices of space—now more visible to us—have on its inhabitants, its visitors, its businesses, and schools, and on how we understand their relationship to space? What changes the way these spaces are treated, the resources they receive, the way they are policed, and the way they inform and forge gender, race, and class? In studying gang space, “The point is not to purify the repertoire, but to enrich it. To add layers and possibilities” (Mol 2010: 257).

7.6 Future Considerations

Despite the importance of extending the discussion of gang territories beyond a focus on gang members, further research would nonetheless be enriched by the addition of more gang-affiliated perspectives and knowledges. In this dissertation, police provided a portion of the information on the way gang members practice space. As an assemblage, no one actor is ever solely responsible for spatial enactments, and so these accounts are helpful in understanding gang space as the interplay between police and gangs. However, I recognize the limitations of not weighing these stories against a larger number of interviews with gang-affiliated participants.

The study of gang territories would be similarly fortified through the addition of more Indigenous participants. The Winnipeg Police Service estimates that there are 1,400-1,500 active gang members involved in as many as 35 gangs (Griffiths & Pollard 2013); 75% of these gangs are comprised of individuals of Aboriginal descent. This project focused more on gang territories in the West End (predominantly immigrant-based gangs) and West Broadway (Aboriginal-based gangs). Fostering connections with the Aboriginal community in the North End would enable further research in this area.

In addition to geographic neighbourhoods, extending the research field to prisons would enrich the subject of gang territories in Winnipeg. In the 2000s, Manitoba's incarceration of gang members increased as anti-gang initiatives were implemented. Convicted gang members were sent to federal correctional institutions in Alberta, Saskatchewan, North West Ontario, and Manitoba, allowing

members of Winnipeg street gangs to develop relationships and recruit within those institutions and across those provinces (Mederski 2013). Since then, Aboriginal gangs, as they are classified by the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, have surpassed outlaw motorcycle gangs and Italian organized crime syndicates as the largest group held in federal prisons (Friesen & O'Neill 2008). Ninety percent are doing time on the Prairies (Friesen & O'Neill 2008). Within these Prairie prisons, it is common practice to segregate gangs into separate 'blocks,' which promotes the production of both gangs and—since these blocks also tend to reflect racial divisions—race (Goodman 2008). Studying the ways these displacements—these deterritorializations and reterritorializations—affect the formation, maintenance, and disruption of gang territories would bring further insights into the disposition of force and regularities of racialization in the making of gang spaces.

Another area of interest generated by the research for this dissertation is the effect of spatially oriented bail and parole conditions on gang-designated youth. Sylvestre et al. (2015) argue that court-imposed bail and sentencing conditions with spatial dimensions—for instance those with requirements to comply with a curfew or to abstain from communicating with certain people—frequently act to further criminalize marginalized groups for “perfectly legal activities, such as walking or being in a park” (Sylvestre et al. 2015: 16). These restrictive court-induced geographies may be particularly harmful for gang-designated individuals. In Winnipeg, being designated a gang member justifies increased police surveillance, for instance through the Gang Response and Suppression Plan (G.R.A.S.P.), a joint initiative of the provincial Probation Service, Manitoba Prosecution Services and the

Winnipeg Police Service (WPS), which “targets high-risk adult gang members and enforces compliance with conditions ordered by courts as part of their bail or probation orders” (Government of Manitoba 2011).

These kinds of legal spatial restrictions, which are difficult for most marginalized people with limited options for housing and supports to abide by, are additionally problematic when they order people to stay away from other gang members. Although gang membership can be fluid and variably defined and qualified, according to police and residents I spoke to, it was often assigned through association with previously documented gang members. The effect is that a condition to stay away from gang members may act to isolate people from all friends and family members, making reintegration into the community extremely difficult. In adherence to the G.R.A.S.P. program, an officer I spoke to reported doing nightly rounds to all the addresses of gang members out living in the community on conditions:

I would go to their house on Christmas day and knock on the door and say, ‘Is Johnny home?’ And Johnny would come to the door and say, ‘I’m home there’s nothing you can do.’ And I would say, ‘But there is because you’re not allowed to be with any gang members and that’s a gang member and that’s a gang member and you’re under arrest.’

This quote provides ample—and visceral—motivation to pursue the injustices that arise through the imposition and enforcement of conditional orders for gang-designated individuals.

7.7 Conclusion

While some critical gang scholars have recognized the importance of gang

territories on those who live and interact with them (Bannister & Fraser 2008; Fraser 2013; Ralphs, Medina & Aldridge 2009; Winton 2012), the space of gang territories remains viewed largely through a lens of policing and criminality (Block 2000; Brantingham et al. 2012; McLean et al. 2019). Through this dissertation I contribute to gang research by untethering gangs from narrow territorial terrain both conceptually and geographically.

Providing a materialist, or performative, analysis of gang spaces allows not only for a focus on the ways these spaces are made in unexpected and collaborative ways, but “also on how particular instances of bordering produce the world in some ways and not others” (Zell 2018: 314). Although geographers have been expanding and contesting traditional notions of borders as “frozen lines on a map” by conceiving of them as “institutions, symbols and discourses that are ‘spread’ everywhere in society” (Paasi 1996, cf Zell 2018: 314-5), understandings of gang territorial boundaries remain stubbornly static. Emphasizing the materiality of space is to acknowledge the ways gang spaces—and the embodied materiality they contribute to—can be both perceived, researched, and made differently.

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