Socioeconomic and Racial Segregation in Chicago

Overview:
Access to transportation affects the population of Chicago and, indeed, the residents of every city. This project looks at the implications that access to public transit has in Chicago. Using data from the 2000 U.S. Census, these maps display the interplay between several socioeconomic and racial factors and proximity to Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) Stations. This project does not determine which factors are statistically significant but does intend to visually present what, if any, connections exist between racial and socioeconomic segregation and transit access. The hypothesis behind this research was that those living close to CTA stations would be more economically privileged, better educated or white if not all three. Indeed, it seemed logical that with increased mobility would come increased access to cultural, economic and social opportunities that are normally uncharacteristic of segregated and isolated areas. However, the findings of this project suggest otherwise: almost every type of segregation in Chicago seems to be based on factors other than proximity to subways or elevated trains.

Educational Attainment:
The measures above show the percent of high school and college graduates in Chicago. Both measures are simple and involve dividing the number of graduates in a census tract by the total population of that tract. High school and college graduation rates correspond with the most densely homogenous Hispanic population and may have something to do with the presence of an immigrant community. College graduates, on the other hand, are concentrated in the northeastern portion of the city near Lake Michigan and in a small area in southeastern Chicago which corresponds to the University of Chicago.

Economic Measures:
The maps displayed above and to the left show Median Household Income (MHI), Median Home Value (MHV) and Percent Individual Poverty (PIP). MHI is the sum of money earned in the previous year by all household members. MHV is an estimate of how much a property would sell for if it were for sale. PIP is a measure of the percentage of people living in a certain census tract who fall below the poverty line. MHI and PIP measure of income and MHV is a measure of wealth. Both wealth and income are included in the calculation of Socioeconomic Status.

The Dissimilarity Index:
Shown above as a measure of racial segregation, it is interpreted as the percentage of a race living within a given area, such as a census tract, that would need to relocate in order for the larger area, all of Chicago, to be perfectly integrated. The index, because it is a relative measure, was calculated in reference to the White population as they are the most populous racial group in Chicago.

Homogeneity:
Unlike dissimilarity, it, represented above, is not a relative measure. It is a simple calculation that shows what percentage of the population of a given census tract is comprised of any one race. It is calculated by dividing the population of a given race in an area by the total population in the same geographic area. Homogeneity also shows how isolated racial populations are. The maps above show how truly isolated the Black and White communities in Chicago remain from one another. In fact, a closer look shows that the Hispanic population serves as a buffer between the two very concentrated zones of White and Black residence.