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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Chicago Studies



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2014–15

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Preface



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The Chicago Studies Program works to join the College's undergraduate curriculum with the dynamic world of praxis in our city. It encourages students to develop their courses of study in dialogue with our city through facilitating internships, service opportunities, and other kinds of engagement, and through academic offerings like the Chicago Studies Quarter, thesis workshops, and the provision of excursions for courses. We believe that this produces not only richer, more deeply informed academic work, but also more thoughtful, humanistic interaction with the city and its most pressing questions. A complete listing of opportunities through Chicago Studies is available on the website: chicagostudies.uchicago.edu.

What kind of city is the Chicago that we ask our students to engage? How should we think about its flows of power and its trajectories? Especially since the great recession, the city has evolved in some paradoxical ways, inspiring a growing literature that sees Chicago as situated between its industrial past and the kind of high-end, postindustrial economy represented by Boston, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. The reports of fiscal crises, credit downgrades, and slow job growth contrast sharply with the lure of corporations to the Loop,¹ the growing influence of the

local creative economy, and a construction boom that consistently leads the nation in growth.² It is also noteworthy that, even as Chicago continues to lose residents to the suburbs, the population of the central city, comprising areas within three miles of city hall, continues to surge. Within this radius, Chicago has gained the second highest number of inhabitants of any city in the nation in the last decades, while neighborhoods in the far south, west, and north of the city continue to decline.³ All of these changes in demography and the economy are striking, but they do not point in one direction or fit cleanly with large processes based on the experience of other cities.⁴ Chicago, as ever, holds many stories in its present.

A strained dialogue about the city's future is evident in many places, from debates over the lack of affordable housing to clashes over the proposal to site the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art on public parkland. In the last year, Chicago has been much in the national news for its scenes of protest, particularly following the release of video in November 2015, showing the police shooting of teenager Laquan McDonald. Reflecting national debates, Chicago's protests have revolved around police accountability and suspected complicity in city hall, as well as

1. Greg Hinz, "The Conundrum of Chicago's Economy," *Crain's Chicago Business*, March 4, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, chicagobusiness.com/article/2016-03-04/BLOGS02/160309901/the-conundrum-of-chicagos-economy.

2. Jay Koziarz, "Report: Chicago's Construction Boom Leads Nation in Year-over-year Change," *Curbed Chicago*, October 28, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, chicago.curbed.com/2016/10/28/13453878/chicago-real-estate-construction-spending-report-september-2016.

3. Yonah Freemark, "Reorienting Our Discussion of City Growth," *The Transport Politic*, July 6, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, www.thetransportpolitic.com/2016/07/06/reorienting-our-discussion-of-city-growth.

4. Pete Saunders, "Something Strange Is Happening in Chicago," *Business Insider*, April 4, 2016, accessed November 17, 2016, mobile.businessinsider.com/something-strange-happening-chicago-economy-2016-4.

negotiations with public employee unions. But this sustained moment also calls into question how the city is run and who runs it. At issue is the relevance of a civic model based upon a Democratic machine, a strong mayor, and powerful aldermen, which is being challenged at many points by organizing from below. This push and pull between center and periphery, Loop and neighborhoods, city and community groups is a powerful theme in the city's history. These contests tell us much about the evolving shape of Chicago's public life.

When students engage academically and creatively with Chicago, they must grasp a city that defies easy generalizations and is certain, if we allow it to speak, to challenge expectations. This is one of the great opportunities of the Chicago Studies Program. Put the city in a theoretical box, uncultivated by experience, and we are unlikely to read it fruitfully or learn much ourselves. But if we see the city as an evolving landscape, to be approached with elucidating questions, it can enrich our reflections on the world and inspire thought in every field of study and practice. An internship, a social advocacy, or a research project can reveal unexpected things and train us to observe our environments, foreign and familiar, with greater awareness.

This is what it means to use Chicago as an urban, academic laboratory, and that ambition is captured in the *Chicago Studies Annual*. The essays, selected from all the disciplines represented in the College, show the very best academic work about the city produced by undergraduate students in research seminars and BA thesis colloquia. Each one explores with a creative lens a problem, institution, or episode in the life of the region and is informed by interactions with the city beyond the compilation of data sets and interviews or the study of archival records.

One theme of the present volume is alternative visions of public life, that is, efforts to bring about a world of participation quite different from those that historical actors experienced during the twentieth century. William Fernandez, AB '15 (History), mines the Julius Rosenwald Papers at the Special Collections Research Center to understand the

background of Rosenwald's 1913 gift to construct the first all-black YMCA. At one level this is a story of philanthropy, but the focus on motivations leads to a complex story about alliances, the pursuit of influence, and integration. The provision of funds by a capitalist of Jewish faith and ancestry to a Christian charitable organization for the construction of a recreational facility for African American men held risks and rewards for each of these groups. In the case of Rosenwald, the donation spoke to his ambitions and principles: support for African American causes resonated with his religious commitments and his family's reverence for Abraham Lincoln. It also eased his acceptance into the commercial elite of the city and had clear benefits for his business interests. Rather than reduce these motivations to self-interest, however, Fernandez argues that they fit into a cycle of economic, social, and cultural capital of giving and receiving.

Melissa High, AB '14 (History), investigates the civic activities of Chicago clubwomen during World War II and, in doing so, discovers a similar commitment to shift the margins of inclusion in a highly stressed environment. The wartime ideology of womanhood emphasized sacrifice and unity on behalf of the nation, and High is attuned to the ways in which two associations—the Chicago Woman's Aid Society and the Woman's City Club of Chicago—appropriated this ideology to address traditional, local concerns, from public sanitation and nutrition to education. Given that civic welfare had been the mission of women's clubs for a century, one could hardly expect them to rechannel this activity toward national projects. Instead, clubwomen picked up on expanded opportunities for women's leadership and tolerance for sacrifice during the war to advance a more inclusive vision for healthy local communities. In this way, High shows that Chicago's clubwomen forged their own, locally based strategy for participation in the war effort.

The next two essays consider political alliances in the last decades of the twentieth century. Both use deep empirical research and shrewd

analysis to historicize a very contemporary moment when divestment, a weakening of the civic and federal safety net, and rapid changes in the city's demography all converged to destabilize relationships that had governed the city since the 1950s. Michael McCown, AB' 14 (History), guides us through the political dimensions of a gang truce that briefly arrested the city's spiking rates of murder and violent crime in 1992. The truce sought to mobilize the black community to address the underlying causes of communal decline, under resourcing, and manipulation from without, beginning with a cessation of internal violence. McCown shows how a broad spectrum of actors, from gang leaders to community organizers and politicians, attempted to shape and then capitalize on the truce for an equally broad spectrum of admirable and not-so-admirable reasons. McCown embeds these motivations in the larger world of black cultural and communal nationalism of the 1980s and 1990s, with its emphases on economic bootstrapping, spiritual-moral renewal, self-reliance, and patriarchy as means to material and political progress. Ultimately, this context allows him to distinguish between authentic communal stirrings and exogenous grabs for power and influence by many of the truce brokers.

Jaime Sánchez Jr., AB '15 (History, Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies), considers electoral politics in his study of Latino engagement in the 1983 mayoral election and Harold Washington's campaign in particular. From today's vantage point, it is easy to imagine a Black-Latino alliance founded upon racial and ethnic inclusion and opposition to the Democratic machine—to say nothing of aversion to voting for Washington's Republican opponent. The problem with this, Sánchez demonstrates, is that it assumes a unity that did not exist among voters of Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Mexican descent and other groups. The Democratic primary, when Chicago Latinos voted for Daley, Byrne, and Washington in roughly equal numbers, revealed that there was no cohesive "Latino vote" to be courted. Sánchez argues that the general election,

when the Washington campaign deployed a skillful media strategy to Latino voters, was a key moment in the forging of a cohesive Latino constituency. There were admittedly deep historical and structural forces at play that elided the divisions between Latinos. But the campaign gave these groups common cause along with unifying symbols and narratives. This helped to articulate an identity that was already taking shape at a national level.

A final pair of contributions address current policy challenges in Chicago. Erin Simpson, AB '15 (Public Policy), analyzes data from a survey she created to explore the user experience at Chicago's Public Computer Centers (PCC). These PCCs sit at the heart of recent government programs implemented to reduce digital inequality, which is in turn strongly linked to income level and other measures of prosperity. Simpson designed her survey to evaluate the efficacy of Chicago's PCCs, which offer services from digital literacy courses to personal-computing assistance. A striking finding of her analysis is that, while these centers are an effective resource for economic and skill development, they also fill a range of social functions by helping users with job searches, homework, and access to government resources. They merit continued support.

Rachel Whaley, AB '15 (Public Policy), turns to a more material problem in Chicago's low recycling rates, which fall well below the level required to make residential recycling programs sustainable. Her essay considers prospects for reversing these trends through pro-environmental programming in Chicago Public Schools, since schools have shown a remarkable power to shape behavior in ways that resist demographic predictors. To evaluate this hypothesis, Whaley contrasts data on recycling from neighborhood schools with city census-tract data and statistics from the city's "Blue Cart" recycling zones. The picture that emerges is encouraging: schools not only out recycle their surrounding zones, but also recycle at much higher rates than would be indicated by the income and educational levels of their census tracts. Schools, Whaley concludes, can play an important role in cultivating pro-environmental behavior.

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Daniel J. Koehler, AM '02, PhD '10 (History)
Assistant Dean of the College

Acknowledgments



WILLIAM FERNANDEZ | Since graduating with an AB in history in 2015 Will has gone on to work as a youth development volunteer with the Peace Corps, based in Guadalupe de Cartago, Costa Rica, and served as a member of the Youth Working Group to the U.S. Commission for UNESCO. He wishes to thank his thesis advisor, Amy Dru Stanley, and his graduate-student preceptor, Guy Emerson Mount, for their guidance and support throughout the research and writing of this thesis. Without their support and incisive criticism, he would not have been half the student he was and even less of the professional he currently is. He is also thankful to Jeanne Chauffour and Daniel Koehler for their patience and hard work in helping to prepare this submission for print.

MELISSA HIGH | Since graduating in 2014, Melissa High has earned a masters of arts in teaching through the University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program. She now teaches for Chicago Public Schools and loves working with her second-grade students. She would like to thank her history thesis advisor, Jane Dailey, and her preceptor, Sarah Weicksel, for their invaluable support, insight, and mentorship throughout the BA research process.

MICHAEL MCCOWN | I want to acknowledge Trudi Langendorf who encouraged my curiosity, showed me there was as much to learn off campus as on, and taught me the art and power of conversation. My advisor, Adam Green, talked through all my questions exhaustively and always engaged even my half-baked ideas seriously; our discussions were always worth the wait. I owe you both immensely, as well as all my comrades at Southside Together Organizing for Power. Since graduating I've had the great privilege to join the American labor movement as a union organizer on Staten Island, in San Francisco, and in the East Bay. It is my sincere belief that with radical analysis and collective action workers, public-housing residents, the incarcerated, and those surviving on the streets still have the world to inherit. My greatest hope for this work is that it can be useful to organizers who share that belief.

JAIME SÁNCHEZ JR. | My sincere thanks to Daniel Koehler, the editors, and the College for this wonderful honor and opportunity to publish my research. In addition, I must say that this work would not have been possible without the feedback and thoughtful guidance of my faculty mentors, Ramón Gutiérrez, Adam Green, and Susan Gzesh, for whom I am so grateful. After graduating from the College in 2015 with a history major, my passion for research has continued in my role as a research analyst for the Service Employees International Union in Washington, DC. In this capacity, I continue to address critically important research questions with an eye toward improving the lives of working families across the country. Today, I am proud to be a part of a movement that is fighting for the very social change and coalition building that Harold Washington envisioned so many years ago.

ERIN SIMPSON | A proud Wisconsin native, Erin Simpson, AB '15 with honors, is a civic technologist. She was the founding director of programs for the nonprofit Civic Hall Labs and has worked previously at Microsoft, the White House, and the Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago. Erin's career has focused on investigating bias in technology

and exploring technology's civic potential within a public-policy context. She is furthering this work at the University of Oxford as a Truman Scholar and a Marshall Scholar. She is working towards masters' degrees in the social science of the Internet (2017) and comparative social policy (2018). She expresses gratitude to her advisor Chad Broughton, the Smart Chicago Collaborative, Chicago Studies, the Laura Parks and Mildred Francis Center YWCA, and the Chicago Public Library for their support of her research.

RACHEL WHALEY | After graduating from the University of Chicago in 2015 with a major in public-policy studies, Rachel spent an AmeriCorps service year at Year Up, which is a workforce development organization that trains young adults for career paths and provides a talent pipeline for employers. In 2016, Rachel transitioned to a full-time role with Year Up, managing data analysis and staff training for Year Up sales teams across the Northeast. Rachel would like to thank Jaira Harrington for invaluable coaching through the writing process, her friends and family for their support, and her teachers, Chad Broughton, Ray Lodato, and Anne Rogers, whose courses sparked her interests in public policy, environmental justice, and the application of computer science to policy questions—all of which collide in this paper.

To Dissipate Prejudice

Julius Rosenwald,
the Evolution of Philanthropic
Capital, and the
Wabash YMCA

WILLIAM HAMILTON FERNANDEZ, AB '15

At three in the afternoon on June 15, 1913, a crowd stood in front of a newly finished building at the corner of Wabash Avenue and 38th Street in Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood.¹ Hundreds of individuals had assembled at the terminus of a joyous parade, which included the Eighth Infantry of the Illinois National Guard, members of the Knights Templar of Illinois, and numerous black community leaders.² The crowd stood still, listening earnestly, to the man responsible for financing the five-story red-brick building that stood before them. The structure had taken three years to build and was now the home of Chicago's first all-African American chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)—a building that Chicago's elite would come to call “one of

1. Editor's note: Journalist James Gentry coined the term Bronzeville in the late twenties or early thirties. Although William Fernandez's story predates this usage Bronzeville is preferable to the pejorative Black Belt or the various community names, such as Grand Boulevard, that encompass a part but not all of Chicago's historic black community. See, Dempsey J. Travis, “Bronzeville,” in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

2. “Y.M.C.A. for Negroes to Be Opened in Chicago Today,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 15, 1913.



the most potent factors for good in a section of the community abounding in destructive agencies.”³

Chicago’s African American community had bonded together to raise the necessary \$19,000 in additional funds for the building, which was “the most important event in the local history of their race,” according to local “negro leaders.”⁴ Equivalent to roughly \$228,000 in 2015, the sum was “the largest amount ever collected from Negroes for such a purpose.”⁵ The individual who had donated the majority of the funds and gave the keynote address for the building’s inauguration was an unlikely figure. Julius Rosenwald, an up-and-coming Jewish businessman who had recently been appointed president of Sears, Roebuck & Co. had contributed \$25,000 (roughly \$300,000 in 2015) to the YMCA. This gift launched Rosenwald’s career, which was defined as much by philanthropy as his business.⁶

As historian Nina Mjagkij has noted, “the alliance between Rosenwald, the YMCA, and African-Americans seems rather peculiar at first glance. Why would a Jew support the establishment of Christian facilities for African-Americans?”⁷ Was it concern for the plight of the black citizens of Chicago? Was it a statement of religious harmony? Was

3. Junius B. Wood, “The Negro in Chicago,” *Chicago Daily News*, December 11–27, 1916.

4. “Y. M. C. A. for Negroes,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

5. “To Build Up Negro Y. M. C. A.: Millionaire Rosenwald Will Give \$25,000 to Each City that Raises \$75,000,” *New York Times*, January 17, 1913.

6. Rosenwald’s lifetime philanthropy was just under \$2 billion in 2015 dollars. See Peter M. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald: The Man Who Built Sears, Roebuck and Advanced the Cause of Black Education in the American South* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 15.

7. Nina Mjagkij, “A Peculiar Alliance: Julius Rosenwald, the YMCA, and African-Americans, 1910–1933,” *American Jewish Archives* 44, no. 2 (Fall–Win. 1992): 585.

it simply a noble gesture to those less fortunate? These questions have led scholars like Mjagkij, Hasia Diner, and David Levering Lewis to investigate Rosenwald’s racial, religious, and socioeconomic motivations.⁸ Scholarship has examined the specifics of the event itself but has paid less attention to Rosenwald’s motivations. This omission is perhaps understandable, given Rosenwald’s larger gifts later in his life. I argue that this example of his early philanthropy is crucial for situating Rosenwald in the larger contexts of social welfare, progressivism, Reform Judaism, and capitalism at the turn of the century, which allows us to uncover a range of more complex motivations not revealed in earlier scholarship.

This paper offers a detailed, fluid, and conceptual understanding of the motivations behind Rosenwald’s investment. It aims to demonstrate that Rosenwald, a Jewish capitalist at the beginning of the twentieth century, saw philanthropy as a means to an end and an end in itself. Philanthropy was an investment that helped him to rise socially and gain entry into Chicago’s commercial and social elite while maintaining his Jewish cultural ties. It thus distinguished Rosenwald both inside and outside of the traditional elite. I will use capital conversion theory to examine how philanthropy transforms economic capital (currency) into social capital (membership and position within a group) and vice versa.⁹ I also read economic historians who interpret philanthropic capital as a tool for the American bourgeoisie to assert itself economically and

8. Mjagkij, “A Peculiar Alliance,” 585–600; Hasia R. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915–1935* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1977); and David Levering Lewis, “Parallels and Divergences: Assimilationist Strategies of Afro-American and Jewish Elites from 1910 to the Early 1930s,” *The Journal of American History* 71, no. 3 (Dec. 1984): 543–64.

9. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson, 241–58 (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986).

socially in America.¹⁰ Examining the three-way transaction between Rosenwald, the Chicago elite, and the African American community helps us to understand Rosenwald's investment in the Wabash YMCA and the development of philanthropy in the United States in the early twentieth century.

I will explore the early influences upon Rosenwald's worldview in an attempt to comprehend his decisions and correct some misconceptions in current scholarship. I will argue that Julius Rosenwald leveraged his affiliation with Sears, Roebuck & Co. for a variety of ends, all of which are captured in his first engagement with the YMCA—Rosenberg gained acceptance in the American commercial and social elite, perpetuated a system of Western capitalism, shaped the identity of American Jews, and promoted social reform in America. My paper will elucidate religious, racial, and socioeconomic relations within the city of Chicago in the early twentieth century and will underscore the significance of philanthropic investment during the development of American capitalism.

The Foundation of the Wabash YMCA

You must realize that in the evolution of a race time counted by generations is necessary. This is true of any race, white or black... Let me remind you that your cause is just, that the world moves forward and God still is on his throne, and that back of every righteous cause there is an arm strong enough to bring victory to his side... The man who hates a black man because he is black has

10. Thomas Adam, *Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s to 1930s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); and Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850–1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

the same spirit as he who hates a poor man because he is poor. It is the spirit of caste.¹¹

Rosenwald's estimation that the new YMCA branch would be a means for Chicago's African American community to tear down institutionalized prejudice came from his association with L. Wilbur Messer, the first general secretary of the Chicago chapter of the YMCA. In 1908 Rosenwald contributed \$1,000 to the YMCA's Memorial Fund.¹² He had donated small amounts to the Hyde Park YMCA in the past but never interacted with the organization's leadership. His gift to the memorial fund began a relationship with Messer that would last for over a decade.

Messer's first priority during this period was to attract higher annual donations. In response to dramatic shifts in Chicago's demography, population, and social and political climate, the local chapter of the YMCA sought to expand its mission of evangelism to minorities and non-Christians. At the YMCA's 1898 Basel World's Conference, Messer argued that new membership groups "enables the association to reach religiously and develop broadly great numbers of young men who are prejudiced against Christ and his Church. The command of our Master, ringing down through the centuries, is to 'preach the gospel to every creature.' The association seeks to obey this injunction among all young men."¹³ This theological shift would ultimately encourage the inclusion of new members, including African Americans, in the organization.

11. Julius Rosenwald, "Prejudice," speech, 15 July 1913, box 44, folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

12. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 77.

13. L. Wilbur Messer, World's Committee Plenary Meeting (Basel), 1898, speech, box 8, Kautz Family YMCA Archives, Archives and Special Collections Department, University of Minnesota Libraries.

Like other religious organizations of the period, the YMCA had been influenced by the development of modernism.¹⁴ Liberal Protestant leaders at the beginning of the twentieth century found kinship with those outside of their own faith in order to achieve a greater “human cultural development” as well as to move “toward realization... of the Kingdom of God.”¹⁵ Especially in a city like Chicago, whose neighborhoods and communities were divided by ethnic and religious identities, the promise of cross-cultural progress appealed to modernist religious leaders.

Messer felt that an all-black YMCA had the potential to draw philanthropists of all denominations to the YMCA’s goals of putting “Christian principles into practice” to mold the minds of young men. Messer wanted Chicago’s elite to know that he and his colleagues could work “effectively” within African American communities.¹⁶ To achieve this, Messer’s first goal was to persuade black leaders to support the project. His first partner, Reverend Jesse E. Moorland, was a theology graduate of Howard University and a leader in the cause for black-led and black-used YMCAs who had persuaded George Peabody and John D. Rockefeller to donate to this cause.¹⁷ Moorland joined Messer in early 1911 to campaign for an African American YMCA building in Chicago.

The creation of black YMCAs was a new concept. In the early 1900s many YMCAs barred blacks, and northern and southern cities in general provided very little housing or recreational facilities for young black men. The situation in Chicago between 1910 and 1940 was acute. Chicago’s

14. Martti Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity: Continuity and Change in the Mission View of the World’s Alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations, 1855–1955* (Joensuu: University of Joensuu [Eastern Finland] Publications in Theology, no. 7, 2002), 140.

15. William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 2.

16. Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 21.

17. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 80.

African American population was 44,000 in 1910 and 278,000 in 1940.¹⁸ These migrants profoundly changed the city’s culture and social structure, and the city itself effected how they adapted and assimilated. The Wabash YMCA—originally considered marginal in the YMCA’s overall mission—would become an important site for philanthropy and programming, as the city began to envision what roles its new citizens would play.

With Rev. Moorland’s support, Messer proposed to Rosenwald that he consider investing \$25,000 to create the first all-black YMCA in the city of Chicago. Messer was stunned: not only did Rosenwald jump at the chance to fund the project, he also agreed to fund the creation of a black YMCAs in any major city in America where local funds of \$75,000 could be raised in advance. This would prove to be the single largest donation to the cause of black YMCAs in American history.¹⁹

“I have frequently asserted that in my judgment no philanthropy in Chicago is a greater power for good, or accomplishes better results, than the YMCA,” Rosenwald wrote in a prepared statement for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on his initial investment, “It is conducted in the true American spirit, in extending a welcome to all, regardless of creed, without any attempt to interfere to the slightest degree with the religious tendency of its members.”²⁰ Rosenwald’s use of “true American spirit” echoes the traditional American-dream narrative that promised opportunity to all who worked for its privileges. Rosenwald also stressed that the best “results” involved the professionalization of charity within a free and competitive marketplace.

(Rosenwald’s endorsement of the YMCA was not always as strong. In fact, Rosenwald had multiple struggles with the Chicago YMCA’s leadership over its religious and ethnic limitations on who could both

18. Christopher Manning, “African Americans,” in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

19. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 81.

20. *Ibid.*, 77.

participate in and run its institutions, specifically African Americans, Roman Catholics, and Jews. This issue received national attention in May 1911 when former president Theodore Roosevelt claimed that while he believed that the YMCA “has done admirable work,” he also thought that it should “not only appeal to Christians of all denominations, but to men who are not professing Christians.”²¹

Rosenwald received acclaim throughout the country for his gift. President Taft stated that “nothing could be more useful to the race and to the country.”²² Booker T. Washington, a major recipient of Rosenwald’s later philanthropy, called it “one of the wisest and best-paying philanthropic investments.”²³ The *Chicago Defender* compared Rosenwald’s gift to Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation.²⁴ A letter from Leo Sykes, a young black man from San Francisco, is representative of the many hundreds that Rosenwald received: “After work and on holidays, we have nowhere to go, as we are not admitted into most places of amusement. Although I am not where I could enjoy such a good place [as the YMCA], I am glad that there are so many that will be made so happy. If we only had a place like that here.”²⁵

To meet Rosenwald’s challenge, Chicagoan philanthropists raised \$66,932, surpassing their initial goal to raise \$50,000 in ten days.²⁶

21. “Catholics and the Y. M. C. A.,” *The Literary Digest* 42, no. 18 (May 6, 1911): 890.

22. Stephanie Deutsch, *You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 100.

23. Norman H. Finkelstein, *Heeding the Call: Jewish Voices in America’s Civil Rights Struggle* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997), 89.

24. Mjagkij, “A Peculiar Alliance,” 593.

25. Leo Sykes to Rosenwald, c. 1913, letter, box 10, folder 21, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

26. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 83.

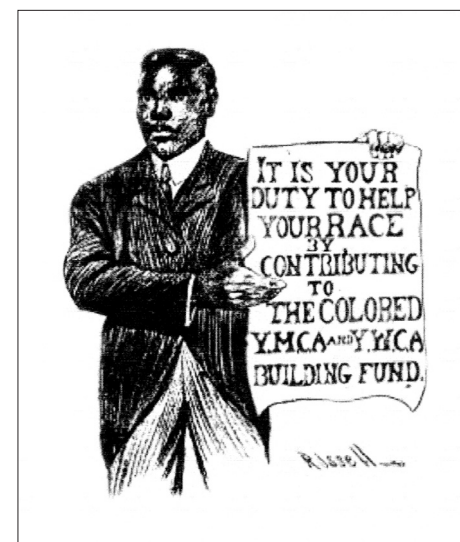


Figure 1. “It Is Your Duty”

Source: Judith Weisenfeld, *African American Women and Christian Activism: New York’s Black YWCA, 1905–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 107.

Rosenwald and Messer continued calling for cities to summon the capital necessary to start their own chapter, and African Americans appealed to a sense of duty to the race in their own fund-raising efforts. Within a few days of announcing the challenge, seven cities had contacted Messer. By January 10, 1912, Rosenwald announced that six cities (Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and Washington, DC) had met the challenge, with three more cities (Baltimore, Kansas City, and Nashville) close to finalizing their commitments.²⁷ By the end of 1920 Rosenwald’s YMCA challenge stimulated the construction of thirteen YMCAs across the country.

27. *Ibid.*, 85.

To encourage donations, black newspapers promoted the work of the YMCA. The *New York Age* printed an advertisement urging black contributions to the YMCA and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) Building Fund (see Fig. 1). The advertisement illustrates themes of respectability politics, racial unity, and progressive tendencies; the individual can be seen as the fully formed product of the YMCA program—a distinguished and well-dressed man promoting the cause of racial progress. The image also offer clues to what Rosenwald likely saw as his duty to his race—the Jewish people. Like the man in the illustration, he too would act as the respectable public leader and work for the progress of his race.

Religious Barriers within the YMCA

In a March 1911 letter, W. J. Parker, the YMCA's secretary, wrote to Rosenwald that he was "trying so to prepare the minds of our Board members... that your offer may have the most powerful and prompt effect." By "preparing the minds," Parker seems to indicate that the Christians on his board were skeptical about accepting a financial offer from a Jewish patron. It was Parker's role to inform the rest of the YMCA board that Rosenwald's attitude was "favorable" and that it was safe to trust him.²⁸ Nevertheless, skeptics continued to question Rosenwald's motivations. The *Christian Advocate* asserted that Rosenwald's "evidence of catholicity of social service work should cause Y. M. C. A. leaders, and indeed denominational authorities, to ponder its implication, particularly in view of the fact that Mr. Rosenwald can hold no office and have no voice in the organization he is supporting."²⁹

28. W. J. Parker to Rosenwald, letter, March 1911, box 45, folder 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

29. *North Carolina Christian Advocate*, May 24, 1911, 3.

The YMCA blocked not only Jews but all non-evangelical Christians from leadership and membership. When the YMCA's first American chapter opened in 1851 in Boston, membership was restricted to evangelical Protestants. Other chapters followed Boston's lead, which was inscribing in the national charter at the 1855 and 1856 conventions.³⁰ The "evangelical test" would stand until 1931.³¹ This despite outside attempts to reform the YMCA and the lack of clear definition of evangelism by the International Committee of North American YMCAs.³² In the majority of cases, it excluded Catholic, Universalist, and Unitarian churches and Jewish synagogues. However, some local associations redefine the term to admit Catholics. By 1922, 10 percent of chapter leaders were Catholics, and in 1931 the International Convention in Cleveland opened membership to all "men and boys united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ."³³

Secretary Parker was quick to respond to Rosenwald's concerns about the association's homogeneous leadership: "management is more liberal than its theory."³⁴ With a substantial donation on the line, Parker was eager to assure Rosenwald that the YMCA was more accommodating to social change than its mission suggested. Thanks in part to his relationship with Parker, Rosenwald supported, both in word and checkbook, the YMCA as the best opportunity for young black men to succeed in the city of Chicago.

30. Muukkonen, *Ecumenism of the Laity*, 168.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., 169.

33. Ibid., 170.

34. W. J. Parker to Rosenwald, letter, March 1911, box 45, folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

JR and His Upbringing

Julius Rosenwald was born of two German Jewish immigrants on August 12, 1862, in Springfield, Illinois, and came of age in the aftermath of and recovery from the American Civil War.³⁵ JR, as he was affectionately called by his family, was exposed to four significant influences during his formative years in Springfield.

First, Rosenwald was immersed in the practices and customs of Reform Judaism. Like many German Jewish immigrants the Rosenwalds aimed to find a place of refuge in the United States while maintaining their Jewish traditions. Julius's father, Samuel Rosenwald, was president of Congregation B'rith Sholem from 1867 until 1873.³⁶ Julius Rosenwald reminisced fondly on the influence of his family's religion during childhood:

Even though not a student of the subject of religion, I may lay claim to being deeply consecrated to the Jewish faith because not only was I Bar Mitzvah at thirteen, but it so happened that a year later, our congregation in Springfield, Illinois, dedicated a new Reform temple with confirmation exercises, and I was also confirmed... I cannot claim that my parents were at all orthodox, as we understand that term. The parents and children attended Friday evening services regularly and kept the greater holidays. Most of the Jews of that city were members of the congregation. And I always believed that the respect in which the Jews of Springfield were held by their Christian fellows was largely the result of the congregational life and the fact that the Rabbi represented the Jews when an occasion arose.³⁷

35. M. R. Werner, *Julius Rosenwald: The Life of a Practical Humanitarian* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), 3.

36. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 4.

37. Julius Rosenwald, autobiographical notes, August–December 1910, box 49, folder 3, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

His admiration for Reform Judaism continued long after his confirmation in Springfield through the guidance of Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch and the Chicago Sinai Congregation.

Second, he observed firsthand the role of American capitalism and technological innovations in raising the living standards of his family. Samuel Rosenwald had immigrated to the United States with little education, no money, and no connections but built a clothing company in Springfield that, at its peak, was valued between \$30,000 and \$40,000.³⁸ Julius sincerely admired his father and uncles, who had built their own clothing business in New York. Following an apprenticeship with his uncles, Julius formed his own clothing company with his brother, Morris, and their cousin, Julius Weil, in Chicago. Rosenwald befriended Richard Sears and eventually purchased a fourth of the company that would become Sears, Roebuck & Co. Rosenwald applied corporate practices to his philanthropic investments, believing that they operated by the same laws:

I believe in the instinct of the majority. In my philanthropic interests I have adopted the principle of supply and demand. Show me that there is a genuine demand and I will endeavor to help you to provide an adequate supply. In relief campaigns, in charitable institutions, even in institutions of learning, I have found this motto to apply: Never would I want to be the sole supporter or sole creator of any institution. It is too autocratic. It would lack a *raison d'être*.³⁹

The belief in an anti-autocratic system to achieve institutional goals is an important aspect of Rosenwald's character. Rosenwald believed that the capitalist system provided guidelines for effective philanthropy, a departure from community charity efforts of the past or the views of contemporary philanthropists, Carnegie and Rockefeller. Rosenwald's

38. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 3.

39. Werner, *Julius Rosenwald: The Life*, 106.

commitment to moderation can also be understood within a larger context of progressivism, where he could effect social change while retaining his acquired status as both elite and minority leader.

Third, Rosenwald had an abiding admiration for Abraham Lincoln.⁴⁰ One of his earliest memories was the dedication of Lincoln's statue in Springfield. Lincoln would be an inspiring figure throughout Rosenwald's life; he thought of Lincoln as heroic and considered him "America's greatest man."⁴¹ Rosenwald told Paul J. Sachs, son of one of the founders of the investment bank, Goldman Sachs, that his "interest in Blacks stemmed from his childhood in Springfield, Illinois, where he was deeply affected by the spirit of the great emancipator."⁴² Patrick Roughen thinks Rosenwald's "deep admiration and even emulation of Lincoln" could have influenced his philanthropy generally and his focus on African Americans specifically.⁴³ Peter Ascoli said Rosenwald collected many of Lincoln's speeches, quotes, and pamphlets and worked to teach his children about the importance of Lincoln's life. Ascoli says that Lincoln "was truly a significant influence on Rosenwald. Rosenwald's house was literally a block away from Lincoln's growing up... and his influence would be a constant reminder throughout JR's life and work."⁴⁴

40. Ibid., 8.

41. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 260.

42. Jack Salzman and Cornel West, eds., *Struggles in the Promised Land: Towards a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 139.

43. Patrick Roughen, "Julius Rosenwald: A Review of the Literature on His Motivations and Impact in Redefining Library Service in the South," *The Southeastern Librarian* 62, no. 2 (July 2014): 5.

44. Peter M. Ascoli (Rosenwald biographer and grandson), interview by author, February 20, 2015.

Fourth, Rosenwald encountered anti-Semitism. A letter from Samuel Rosenwald to an extended family member claimed that anti-Semitism in Illinois was not as strong as in Europe, but still affected his children:

I quite forgot that you wanted to be exactly informed about the Jewish question, although there is not much *Rischus* [malice, anti-Semitism] here, yet we are not on the same level with the Christians, especially since one reads so much in the papers about Russia. In business one hardly ever hears anything like that, but the children often hear about it, and that is unpleasant enough.⁴⁵

In later exchanges with African American leaders regarding agency and prejudice, Rosenwald was quick to compare the experiences of the two minority groups as a shared struggle. In a speech to a predominantly black audience on the YMCA investment, Rosenwald said that he too belonged to "a people who have known centuries of persecution" and that he was "naturally... inclined to sympathize with the oppressed."⁴⁶ This sense of kinship in shared suffering between Jewish American and African Americans reflected the tenants of Rosenwald's Reform Judaism, which encouraged engagement in the issues of the day and compassion for suffering regardless of religion. By improving society Reform Jews felt that they were helping to prepare the way for the Messiah and "a messianic era... when all suffering... would be eradicated."⁴⁷

Reform Judaism, capitalism, Abraham Lincoln, and anti-Semitism all shaped Rosenwald's identity and decisions, and all four influenced his philanthropic investment in the Wabash YMCA.

45. Werner, *Julius Rosenwald: The Life*, 11.

46. Deutsch, *You Need a Schoolhouse*, 96.

47. Dana Evan Kaplan, *American Reform Judaism: An Introduction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 34

Rosenwald's Relationship with Black America

Rosenwald donated over \$63 million to advance the status of African Americans in the United States.⁴⁸ Rosenwald's initial interest in the plight of the black community is a matter of scholarly debate. The dominant view is from the authorized biography of M. R. Werner, which states that Rosenwald's interest came from his close friendship with Paul J. Sachs.⁴⁹ Sachs sent Rosenwald two books, Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* and John Graham Brooks's *An American Citizen: The Life of William H. Baldwin*, which influenced Rosenwald's interest in race relations.⁵⁰ According to some historians, though, this may be a myth that arose due to lack of information on the true reasons for Rosenwald's interest.

Only three scholars have investigated Rosenwald's motivations behind the YMCA investment. David Levering Lewis suggests that Rosenwald and his Jewish peers sponsored philanthropy towards the African American community to spare the American Jewish population from having to "directly [rebut] anti-Semitic stereotypes."⁵¹ Although not entirely genuine in nature, the utility of the relationship, according to Lewis, was social acceptance and was beneficial to both races.

Mjagkij considers Lewis's argument "highly interpretive" and based on little evidence.⁵² According to Mjagkij, despite differences in race and

48. Approximately \$1.1 billion today. See, Mjagkij, "A Peculiar Alliance," 587.

49. Sachs worked at Goldman Sachs (1900–14) before joining the Fogg Art Museum (1914–45) at his alma mater, Harvard, where he became an important museum administrator and early teacher of what is now called museum studies. See, Lee Sorensen, ed., "Sachs, Paul J[oseph]," *Dictionary of Art Historians* (website), www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/sachsp.htm.

50. Werner, *Julius Rosenwald: The Life*.

51. Lewis, "Parallels and Divergences," 543.

52. Mjagkij, "A Peculiar Alliance," 585.

religion, Rosenwald and African Americans had a "shared belief" in personal improvement and self-help, which was rooted in "late nineteenth century ideology and the Horatio Alger myth."⁵³ For Mjagkij this shared "American Dream" produced a communal sense of idealism and camaraderie between Rosenwald and Chicago's black population. This claim's generalizations, similar to Lewis, are not supported by specific evidence.

Finally, Hasia Diner argues that Rosenwald's support of the Wabash YMCA is significant, because it demonstrates one of the earliest moments where the American Jewish community supported African Americans. This relationship increased Jewish political clout in American, increased opportunities of the black working class, and spread wealth across generations. Diner quotes Rosenwald, who believed that "each generation must fund those institutions [i.e., the YMCA] that *it* considered most vital" and then "find opportunities for constructive work" with them.⁵⁴ Diner also underscores Rosenwald's Jewish identity as a dominating influence: he was "intensely conscious of his Jewishness," despite his "economic success and acceptance in mainstream America."⁵⁵ Rosenwald acted out of fervent devotion towards the Jewish tradition of *tzedakah* (charity), which recognizes both the importance of "charity and the centrality of education." Thus, for Diner, his gift had both spiritual and cultural importance.⁵⁶

Diner's analysis, which ascribes both self-interest and selflessness to Rosenwald's character, is more plausible than Lewis's opportunism and Mjagkij's altruism, but it fails to include any black consciousness or participation. African Americans appear as passive recipients of Rosenwald's philanthropy, which limits our understanding of broader Black-Jewish relations in Chicago during the period.

53. *Ibid.*, 599.

54. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*, 167.

55. *Ibid.*, 176.

56. *Ibid.*, 171.

Jewish Social Acceptance and Assimilation

The enlightened view of bourgeois Jews in Germany provided a blueprint towards the acceptance strategies of Jews in America a century later. The place of the German Jewish community in German society improved in the early nineteenth century as they worked with their Christian peers within the new capitalist marketplace. As German Jews gained prominence in business, they began to adopt values similar to their Christian counterparts on ways “to rationalize and centralize poor relief.”⁵⁷ The idea that philanthropy could become a source of Jewish identity was influenced by Enlightenment thought in German-speaking Europe. The commercial bourgeois German Jews and Gentiles demonstrated pride and confidence in the universality of their philanthropic values. This kinship allowed the Jew to gain a foothold in civic participation and prominence, and to be viewed as a “trailblazer of capitalism” and a great civic contributor.⁵⁸

During the period of growth in Chicago’s Jewish population in the early 1900s, philanthropy became central to their collective American identity. Historian Derek Penslar remarks that philanthropic activity did not merely affirm Jewish identity, but actually defined it. It gave American Jews the ability to increase their integration with other religious groups by collaborating on issues of social welfare. This desire to collaborate across religious and social groups derived from the social integration strategies practiced by German Jews in the nineteenth century. While each was markedly different, the Jewish populations in late nineteenth-century Germany and early twentieth-century United States identified with cultural shifts towards progressivism and modernism and connected with and learned from fellow liberal contingencies,

57. Ibid., 92.

58. Derek J. Penslar, *Shylock’s Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 123.

including Protestants of the Third Great Awakening and upper-class Jewish members of the Unitarians. Cross-ethnic and cross-religious partnerships proved helpful for many in the Jewish community, including capitalists like Rosenwald, as they sought prominence and power throughout the country.

European and American Jews who were “consciously or tacitly aware of the antipathy brought on by their success” responded by using philanthropy as a strategy to attain social acceptance and promote the general non-Jewish social welfare.⁵⁹ Philanthropy became a defense against anti-Semitic claims by associating Jews with the major public issues and projects that concerned all Americans. Thus, philanthropy allowed American Jews to assimilate into American society without sacrificing their Jewish culture and practices.

Black-Jewish Alliance in Twentieth-Century Chicago

The relationship between the African American and Jewish communities has been marked by moments of close comradery and support, such as the “shared commitment” under the banner of a “Black-Jewish Alliance,” and by moments of “divergent tensions” and “sharp disagreements” perpetuated by black anti-Semitism and Jewish racism.⁶⁰ Rosenwald labored to maintain a shared commitment:

It does not need a special training nor peculiar political sagacity to discern the fact that a very real problem exists in this great mass of uneducated Negroes... Nothing will so test the sincerity of our

59. Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 130.

60. Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 5.

religion, our moral obligation... as will the exigencies of this [racial oppression], which is among the greatest of all our problems.⁶¹

According to historian Cheryl Greenberg there was “limited contact between the two communities” throughout much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶² The ambivalence of southern and northern Jews towards slavery before the Civil War increased this distance.⁶³ The two groups encountered each other after the end of Reconstruction and the first migrations to northern cities by black rural laborers.

In Chicago, beginning with the 1840s, the earliest Jewish communities and congregations settled near the downtown where the majority of merchant activity was concentrated.⁶⁴ Between 1910 and 1920 the black population increased by 148 percent and settled into the dense neighborhoods just south of downtown.⁶⁵ The close proximity between the communities allowed for exchanges of goods, customs, and ideas. However, skepticism and fear characterized most of these early encounters. Numerous claims were made that Jewish businesses exploited the black community by selling “shoddy goods at high prices.”⁶⁶

By the beginning of the 1900s, however, civic leaders in both communities, such as Ida B. Wells and Judge Julian Mack, worked to find common ground for development. One revered civic leader was Emil G. Hirsch, rabbi of the Chicago Sinai Congregation, one of the most

61. Rosenwald, “Prejudice,” speech, 15 July 1913, box 44, folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

62. Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 15.

63. *Ibid.*, 18.

64. Irving Cutler, “Jews,” in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters*, 62.

influential Reform congregations in the country.⁶⁷ Rabbi Hirsch’s sermons dissected pressing social, cultural, and spiritual issues for his Reform congregation. He especially relished opportunities to speak on race and the role of Chicago’s Jewish community in an on-going dialogue. In a February 1904 sermon Hirsch said,

The fact that here from the very first men of different racial origin, of different religious training, of different national traditions, came together, is the secret of America’s peculiar broadmindedness. For men learned here to supplement and complement each other, and the national soul of America was indeed made of many souls.⁶⁸

Hirsch was a social-reform leader within Chicago and the country as a whole: he was a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), advocated for the largely African American congregation of the Methodist Episcopalian Bethel Church in Chicago, and was a key voice in the development of Hull House.⁶⁹ On the issue of racial prejudice Hirsch told the New York Republican Club during the summer of 1911 that “the American who harbors race prejudice is committing a crime against his Americanism.”⁷⁰

Hirsch’s social engagement influenced Rosenwald, whose own dedication to “serving the stranger” was seen by many to be “the performance of the highest mission of the Jew... to contribute to mankind and...

67. The congregation increased from forty members in 1880 to almost nine hundred by 1923. See, Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 53.

68. Myron A. Hirsch, *The Jewish Preacher: Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch* (Chicago: Collage Books, 2003).

69. Tobias Brinkmann, *Sundays at Sinai: A Jewish Congregation in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 5.

70. *Ibid.*, 230.

serve at the common altar.”⁷¹ Hirsch helped Rosenwald to understand some of the most pressing issues that affected Chicago’s “New Negro” and gave him institutional support to follow his philanthropic passions directly. Numerous Jewish publications, such as *The American Hebrew*, claimed that “by helping the colored people in this country, Mr. Rosenwald doubtless[ly] also serves Judaism, in that he tends therefore to disabuse the anti-Semitic Gentile mind as to the alleged clannishness of the Jew.”⁷²

By 1915 thousands of black workers and their families swelled the city’s cramped neighborhoods known as the “Black Belt,” bounded by south 18th and 39th Streets, State Street on the east, and LaSalle Street on the west.⁷³ Whites maintained racially restrictive covenants on public and private housing, which became “legally binding agreements” between 1910 and 1920 and “usually [were] between white real estate agents and owners, to prevent the renting or sale of housing to nonwhites, with threat of civil action.”⁷⁴ South Side neighborhoods such as Hyde Park, Kenwood, and Woodlawn pushed to “deny jobs to black residents who would dare invade white areas.”⁷⁵

The Wabash YMCA, a large building positioned in the southernmost part of the Black Belt (see Fig. 2), had 114 dormitory rooms for young black men in need of quality housing.⁷⁶ By utilizing established organizations such as the YMCA, Rosenwald and his contemporaries addressed

71. Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*, 191.

72. Ibid., 190.

73. Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 22.

74. Ibid., 23.

75. Ibid.

76. Robert Bone and Richard A. Courage, *The Muse in Bronzeville: African American Creative Expression in Chicago, 1932–1950*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 30.

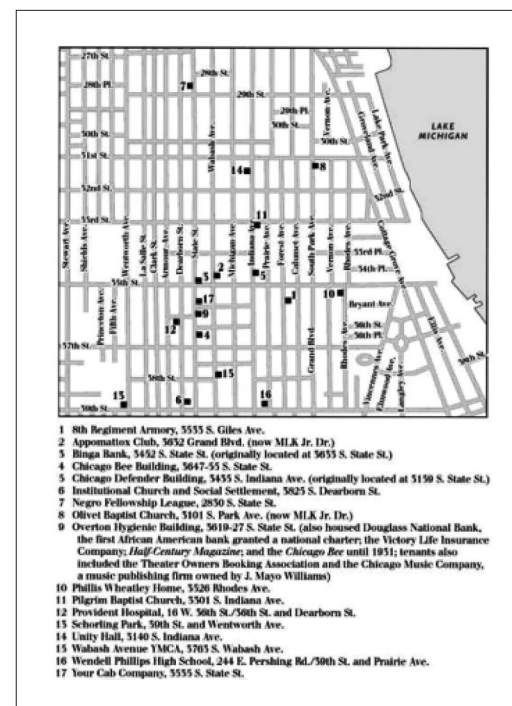


Figure 2. Location of the Wabash YMCA (no. 15) among Other Bronzeville Landmarks

Source: Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Urban Life* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33.

gaps in vocational training, physical well-being, and housing security for many young black men throughout Chicago.

Even though they had missions elsewhere in Chicago, conventional organizations like the YMCA and other religiously affiliated groups provided opportunities for economic development and cultural growth that were critical to the growth of Bronzeville as a burgeoning hub of twentieth-century black America.

Building Citizens and Workers

Every major investor and partner in the city came to hear about Rosenwald's new project at the fifty-third annual YMCA banquet on May 18, 1911. L. Wilbur Messer had invited educator and former slave Booker T. Washington to give the keynote address. Washington fervently supported efforts to create opportunities like the YMCA for blacks across the country that nurtured moral and physical well-being or, in Washington's words, the "saving of the negro's soul and body."⁷⁷ Washington thanked Rosenwald: "Mr. Rosenwald, if you had not done anything else through this movement than to give the white people of the city of Chicago a chance to know the kind of colored people that they have in Chicago, it would have paid for itself."⁷⁸ Washington had written earlier that blacks had much to learn from the Jewish rise from social marginality to influence:

We have a bright and striking example in the history of the Jews in this and other countries. There is, perhaps, no race that has suffered so much... But these people have clung together. They have a certain... unity, pride, and love of race; and, as the years go on, they will be more... influential in this country—a country where they were once despised... It is largely because the Jewish race has had faith in itself. Unless the Negro learns more and more to imitate the Jew in these matters, to have faith in himself, he cannot expect to have any high degree of success.⁷⁹

77. Booker T. Washington, Anniversary Dinner of the Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago, 18 May 1911, scrapbook 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

78. Ibid.

79. Booker T. Washington, *The Future of the American Negro* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1899).

Rosenwald responded to Washington's praises by in turn praising the YMCA for helping perfect model citizens:

We are American citizens, and the degree of recognition and the degree of encouragement which through this magnificent institution you have given my race in Chicago and throughout this country will help us to be stronger, more useful, more helpful citizens throughout this broad land than we have ever been in the past.⁸⁰

In Rosenwald's public speeches, America's racial divisions grew from a lack of trust and discussion between those of different backgrounds, which could only be conquered over generations. Rosenwald's policy of challenging communities to match his philanthropic investments was meant to speed this community dialogue so that all actors, regardless of race or religion, were able to work together for the betterment of the whole.

Rosenwald was comfortable applying moral absolutes to issues of racial prejudice, but did not extend this moral logic to the workspace. In testimony to city hall, Rosenwald claimed that "the question of wages isn't a moral question. It ought to be treated on an entirely different basis. I wouldn't combine the question of prostitution with wages. I say in my opinion there is no connection between the two."⁸¹ Jane Addams was one of many who criticized capitalists, like Rosenwald, for refusing to change their injurious industrial practices except through philanthropy:⁸²

80. Julius Rosenwald, Anniversary Dinner of the Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago, 18 May 1911, scrapbook 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

81. Werner, *Julius Rosenwald: The Life*, 153.

82. Despite this criticism, Rosenwald supported Hull House and was a member of the Board of Directors.

Our philanthropies have cared for the orphans whose fathers have been needlessly injured in industry; have supported the families of the convict whose labor is adding to the profits of a prison contractor; have solaced men and women prematurely aged because they could find no work to do; have rescued girls driven to desperation through overwork and overstrain.⁸³

Addams' criticism is reasonable. Messer and Rosenwald plan for the Wabash YMCA was to provide African American men with a place to relax after work, which would also fortify values that encouraged workplace conformity and efficiency. Rosenwald's "good investment" depended on the YMCA offering work training to prepare young working-age men for jobs in the city's top companies. Historian Davarian Baldwin characterizes the Wabash YMCA as a place where "social programs were developed to secure worker loyalty to Chicago's major manufacturing companies. . . [the YMCA] created an Industrial Department that encouraged a racially stratified program of worker Americanization. Before gymnasium use, old settler leaders, including George Cleveland Hall, chief of surgery at Provident Hospital, gave lectures on young manhood and proper training."⁸⁴

Rosenwald saw the partnership with the YMCA as a way to benefit his business interests as well. Rosenwald and Messer had agreed to build two YMCA facilities on Sears's property as a benefit for his workers, which would acculturate his workers to the norms of both Sears and the YMCA. These buildings would house over three hundred Sears workers, with Rosenwald contributing over \$100,000 of the estimated \$210,000 needed and guaranteeing a net profit of at least 4 percent on the total cost.⁸⁵

83. Jane Addams, "My Experience as a Progressive Delegate," *McClure's Magazine* 40 (Nov. 1913): 13.

84. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes*, 207.

85. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 78.

Sears did not hire black workers in 1911, but by 1913, Rosenwald had convinced the rest of management to change this policy. As a member of the board of the NAACP Rosenwald helped to finance the fiftieth-anniversary celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation in Chicago. Following a reading of the celebrated document, Rosenwald announced that Sears was now hiring black workers, this at a time when most businesses employed blacks only for manual labor and strike breaking.⁸⁶ While Rosenwald assuredly was more progressive than many other civic leaders in Chicago, his company also benefited economically from his investment into black YMCAs. Later, in December 1929, Rosenwald would directly connect these points in a letter to President Hoover; in Rosenwald's opinion, if black employment were to rise in America, then it would provide a boost for white retailers and "promote national welfare and prosperity."⁸⁷

The Rise of the Chicago Donor Class

Rosenwald's ascendance into the American commercial elite came during a time of unprecedented economic growth. American manufacturing grew from an annual valuation of \$1.9 billion in 1860 to \$11 billion by 1900, five years after Rosenwald joined Richard Sears and Alvah C. Roebuck as their vice president and treasurer.⁸⁸ Spurred by an incredible amount of state spending during and immediately following the Civil War, as the country attempted to rebuild itself, this period allowed innovative business models, like Sears's, which combined manufacturing and distribution, to succeed in a marketplace where more and more companies were led and controlled by an ever smaller group of

86. *Ibid.*, 160.

87. *Ibid.*, 356.

88. Kevin Phillips, *Wealth and Democracy: A Political History of the American Rich* (New York: Broadway Books, 2002), 43.

business leaders and investors. The simultaneous stagnation of working-class wages exacerbated the concentration of wealth at the top.

It was during this period of economic growth and widening income inequality that the social elite began to address pressing social issues, such as poverty, public health, and access to education, with the “scientific” practices of the corporate world. Following Andrew Carnegie’s “true Gospel concerning Wealth,” these capitalists stressed “the proper administration of wealth” and the “ties of brotherhood” between the rich and the poor.⁸⁹ Their common distrust in government social programs came from their belief that government lacked managerial sophistication. Through large donations of their personal wealth, elites could fix some of endemic structural problems in their communities, even as some critics blamed such problems on the capitalist system itself. By moving from the one-donor, one-charity model to the more complex organizational structure of the foundation, philanthropy in the United States tested the “effectiveness” of organizations by utilizing many of the same techniques and indicators their financiers used within their companies.

Recent scholarship has focused on changing norms of class and respectability in the American elite during the late nineteenth century. Historian Sven Beckert explores a fascinating moment in which elite class consciousness merged with charitable work and social power to form the New York Charity Organization Society:

Charity... provided “insurance, terrestrial and celestial” for the property of the rich “at easy rates.” Realizing that their pitiful relief was grossly insufficient to quiet the “dangerous classes,” however, the city’s economic elite also called for stronger police forces, national guards, and strict legislation.⁹⁰

89. Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth,” *North American Review* 391 (June 1889): 663–65.

90. Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*, 217.

The society believed that its “good will” philanthropy was necessary for both domestic tranquility and spiritual obligations. However, in moments where the lower classes questioned elite power, elites reacted to protect the shared economic interests of its members. The American bourgeoisie used philanthropy as a tool to moderate class relations towards the poor and among themselves. Beckert argues that the elite’s shared class consciousness overcame religious or ethnic prejudice if enough money and common interest were at stake.

Prior to his emergence in Chicago’s social scene Rosenwald’s sphere of influence was limited to the Jewish community within Chicago Sinai, where he worked with local Jewish charities as an aspiring young businessman and the first vice president of the congregation.⁹¹ In his professional life he hid his Judaism by omitting his name from the company’s catalogue out of fear that a Jewish surname would turn away average customers during a period of heightened anti-Semitism throughout the country.⁹² Once Rosenwald became known for his philanthropic work, his Jewishness became a much less pronounced feature in the published descriptions of him; at the fifty-third annual YMCA banquet chapter president and prominent Chicago lawyer William P. Sidley claimed:

There is something about Mr. Rosenwald, he is so many-sided and so elusive that it is difficult to take hold of him at any point and to define him. For example, I presume that if I should ask this audience who was the leading representative of the Jewish faith in Chicago, you would rise as one man and point to Mr. Rosenwald. And yet if you should ask me who was the leading Catholic in the city of Chicago today, I should be inclined likewise to point to Mr. Rosenwald.⁹³

91. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 115.

92. *Ibid.*, 50.

93. William P. Sidley, Anniversary Dinner of the Young Men’s Christian Association of Chicago, 18 May 1911, scrapbook 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

As Rosenwald gained social prominence and power in the city by participating in shared charitable ventures with other members of Chicago's elite class, his social capital grew nationwide: Rosenwald became the first Jewish American invited to dine at the White House, where he worked with President Taft to finalize the financing of a black YMCA in Washington, DC.⁹⁴ On the announcement of the plans to the public, President Taft went as far as to say that in

his broad philanthropy, in the wide spirit of his love of mankind, Mr. Rosenwald has not been deterred from giving money to that which he believes most useful to mankind, even though there may be a restriction in the management which a smaller or a more narrow-minded man might resent.⁹⁵

The concept of philanthropy as an investment in social prominence in early twentieth-century America also figures crucially in historian Thomas Adam's *Buying Respectability*. Adam deploys Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption to demonstrate how different groups jockeyed for social leadership of important philanthropic projects in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Adam writes that potential donors engaged in "conflicts between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews over recognition from and admission to the leading circles of society... To nineteenth-century philanthropists, philanthropy meant more than just giving to social and cultural public institutions; it was seen as a socio-economic tool that empowered individuals to claim power in the public sphere and to participate in the domination of urban societies."⁹⁶

By all accounts Rosenwald never viewed his philanthropic work in competition with other Chicago philanthropists, but he certainly gained

94. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 83.

95. William Howard Taft, quoted in Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 84.

96. Adam, *Buying Respectability*, 155.

social prominence. Rosenwald solidified his rise within the Chicago elite with his admission to the Chicago Association of Commerce, a precursor to the Chicago Chamber of Commerce. His invitation highlighted not only his economic success with Sears, Roebuck & Co. but also his "civic contributions."⁹⁷ The association also selected Rosenwald as one of the founding directors of the National Citizens' League whose purpose was to "give organized expression to the growing public sentiment in favor of, and to aid in, securing legislation necessary to insure an improved banking system for the United States of America."⁹⁸ League membership was limited to eighteen of Chicago's most powerful businessmen, including John G. Shedd, Cyrus H. McCormick, Charles H. Wacker, Frederic A. Delano, and Marvin Hughitt; Rosenwald was the only Jewish member.⁹⁹

The league upheld the interests of the average American businessman rather than Wall Street financiers. In a 1911 statement to the *New York Times*, the league said it was "not an organization of bankers. On the contrary, it is an organization of the general business and commercial public. It represents the borrowers rather than the lenders of the country. It represents those who have realized the stress and banking constriction during the panic of 1907."¹⁰⁰ From 1911 to 1913 the league lobbied for a centralized banking policy that would later become the Federal Reserve System. These collective actions of Chicago's economic elite created an institution to maintain economic stability within domestic markets and to preserve the status quo that benefited the economic elite. This episode

97. Chicago Association of Commerce, scrapbook 2, p. 22, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

98. Harry A. Wheeler, "The National Citizens' League: A Movement for a Sound Banking System," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 99 (Jan. 1922): 26.

99. Scrapbook 2, p. 68, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

100. "Action Promised on Monetary Board," *New York Times*, July 7 1911; "Currency Reform: Its Popular Side," *New York Times*, July 26 1911.

is evidence that, “when it came to the defense of their common interests, [elites] could transcend religious, ethnic, and other cleavages.”¹⁰¹

Shifting Capital in Chicago Society

The French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu believed that capital falls within three categories—economic, cultural, and social.¹⁰² Economic capital is converted immediately into currency and property rights. Cultural capital is converted, under certain conditions, into economic capital and educational qualifications (i.e., degrees of knowledge and certificates of accomplishment). Social capital made through social connections can be converted into economic capital. These three form a system of symbolic capital, encompassing group memberships and positions throughout society (see Appendix A). According to Bourdieu capitalism for profit and philanthropy for nonprofit are fundamentally related. This relationship provides a useful lens to examine and understand Rosenwald’s support of the Wabash YMCA.

Rosenwald’s investments may have been implemented for an immediate return of economic capital in the form of better skilled workers and a larger consumer class. Rosenwald could also have translated these public investments into a return of social capital. Social return is best understood in two parts. First, the recipients of the gift, the African Americans, gained employment, housing, and respectability from Chicago’s elite through their association with the values of the YMCA. Second, Rosenwald gained the respect of Chicago’s elites and the marginalized blacks of Bronzeville. Finally, Rosenwald’s receipt of social capital was not only a self-interested goal, but reflected well on Chicago’s Jewish community as a whole.

Rosenwald social capital in the black community was strong. He became a leading figure in national advocacy groups, such as the NAACP

101. Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*, 299.

102. Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 241–58.

and the National Urban League, and he sat on the board of the Tuskegee Institute. Later, he won the praise of many critical black leaders of his time, including W. E. B. Du Bois, who stated at Rosenwald’s funeral in 1932 that Rosenwald “was a great man. But he was no mere philanthropist. He was, rather, the subtle stinging critic of our racial democracy.”¹⁰³

The social capital returns from the African American community were not all positive, however. A scathing article in the *Cleveland Gazette*, a black weekly, asserted that Rosenwald and those like him did not fight the evils of racism and classism, but simply perpetuated the segregation of the black community: “race hatred can only be removed by free racial intermingling in religion as well as business.”¹⁰⁴ This tension between segregation and integration in emerging all-black institutions may have been illustrative of a greater rift within black community development during this period, but Rosenwald apparently never commented on the article himself or other urban issues of increasing importance.

Rosenwald’s rising visibility nationwide as a civic leader facilitated invitations to a variety of elite social clubs and associations, such as the Association of Commerce and the World Peace Foundation.¹⁰⁵ The social capital conferred by Chicago’s elite in turn offered additional economic capital returns to Rosenwald. He built a network of donors for his future philanthropic projects from the individuals he first met through the YMCA project, such as McCormick, Shedd, and Sidley.¹⁰⁶ In a private note to Rosenwald, fellow Jewish business leader Julius Stern wrote that

103. Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 385.

104. “Jim Crow Y. M. C. A. Dedicated: Wealthy Jew Gives Money to Aid Establishment of the Color Line,” *Cleveland Gazette*, January 10, 1913, quoted in Ascoli, *Julius Rosenwald*, 163–44.

105. The foundation’s invitation noted Rosenwald’s “great civic duty.” See, World Peace Foundation, letter, March 1911, scrapbook 1, p. 105. Julius Rosenwald Papers.

106. See, Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*, for how elites used their social networks to generate business relationships and capital for investment deals.

“some remarks... made in my hearing yesterday [at Chicago’s City Council] among non-Jews, showed such keen appreciation by them of your actions as an individual and as a representative member of our Jewish community... You have brought credit upon yourself... and the Jewish people.”¹⁰⁷ Evidently, Rosenwald’s philanthropic investments not only moved Chicago’s Christian elite to recognize him as one of their own, but influenced their opinion of Chicago’s Jewish community as a whole.

The interconnections between social and economic investments and returns are cyclical. The more African Americans used the YMCA, the more capital, potentially, could flow into Sears, Roebuck as a company. The more social connections Rosenwald forged among Chicago’s elite, the larger the network of potential donors to fund additional philanthropic investments and business ventures. Through this cycle, Rosenwald’s philanthropic investment had a significant impact in both the profit and nonprofit sectors.

The Full Standard of American Citizenship

The Wabash YMCA building still stands today at the corner of Wabash Avenue and 38th Street, and its importance to the Bronzeville community continues until today. The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, for example, one of the first groups specializing in African American studies, had its first meetings in the Wabash YMCA in 1915. The association was founded by Carter G. Woodson, AB/AM ’08 (History), who proposed a “Negro History Week” in 1926, also at the Wabash YMCA.¹⁰⁸ Although the Wabash YMCA closed in 1981,

107. Quoted in Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land*, 190.

108. Danielle Allen, “Future Intellectuals: Carter G. Woodson,” *Integrating the Life of the Mind: African Americans at the University of Chicago, 1870–1940* (web exhibition catalog) (Chicago: Special Collections Research Collection, 2009). Accessed February 24, 2017, www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/webexhibits/



Figure 3. The Wabash Avenue YMCA, 1913

Source: Scrapbook 1, Julius Rosenwald Papers, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

it was restored and reopened by a consortium of four churches as the Renaissance Apartments and Fitness Center in 2000. Members of the consortium successfully led a petition to name the building to the National Register of Historic Places and a \$9 million capital campaign to refurbished the building.¹⁰⁹

Rosenwald’s investment garnered national attention and provided opportunities for quality recreational services for black youth across the country. Rosenwald’s willingness to work with other progressives of different races and creeds helped solve social ailments in the city of

IntegratingTheLifeOfTheMind/CarterWoodson.html.

109. See, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, “National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form,” *National Park Service* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, April 30, 1986); and “History,” *The Renaissance Collaborative, Inc.* (website), www.trcwabash.org/history.html.

Chicago and improved the image of Jewish people. Rosenwald used his wealth to create a future where Jewish people could be seen as civic leaders. Rosenwald gained entry into the bourgeois elite, maintained his cultural Jewish heritage, and confronted prevailing stereotypes of his age. His story demonstrates the importance of philanthropic investment as a conduit for both social change and financial gain.

In his closing words at the afternoon inauguration of the Wabash YMCA on June 15, 1913, Rosenwald evoked both his influences and his intentions:

To paraphrase Lincoln's Gettysburg Address that we should here dedicate more than this building, we should dedicate ourselves to the unfinished work, to the great task before us of removing prejudice against negroes, of bringing about a universal acceptance that the man and not the race counts... Every single colored man must realize his responsibility for every other colored man... by living up to the full standard of American citizenship.¹¹⁰

American citizenship, the pinnacle of Rosenwald's philosophy of modern success, was not rooted in one's racial or religious background. For Rosenwald citizenship and acceptance were integrally connected with individual charitable giving and community involvement. This belief in civic engagement came to define Julius Rosenwald's life, his philanthropy, and his American experience.

110. Rosenwald, "Prejudice," speech, 15 July 1913, box 44, folder 10, Julius Rosenwald Papers.

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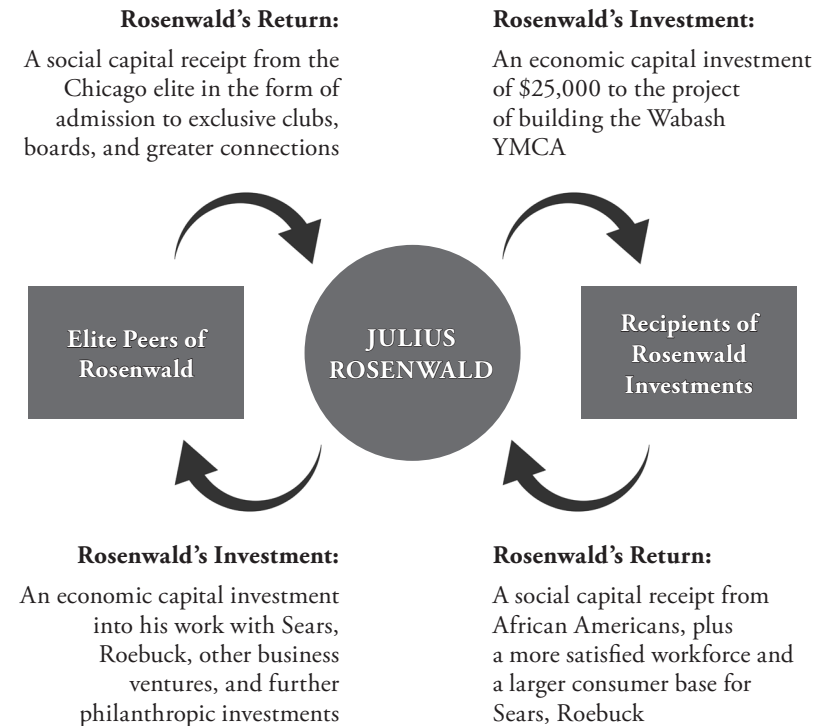
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Appendix A:

The Transactions of Capital for Julius Rosenwald in the Wabash YMCA



Creating Wartime Community



The Work of Chicago Clubwomen during World War II

MELISSA HIGH, AB'14

The Chicago Ratzkrieg

A full proclamation
Reveals to the nation
Chicago has entered the fray:
Last week of October
The city all-over
Will struggle the “varmint” to slay:
We all have the notion
The strong red squill potion
Can strangle a million a day.

Celinda B. Abbot

*Woman's City Club of Chicago Member, October 1941*¹

1. Celinda B. Abbot, “The Chicago Ratzkrieg,” *Woman's City Club of Chicago Bulletin*, October 1941, 22, Woman's City Club of Chicago Records, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois, Chicago [hereafter *WCCC Bulletin*].

I. Chicago Clubwomen Go to War

During World War II the new demands of a home-front society provided women with increased opportunities to engage in social and political activism.² In this context, women's organizations both responded to national needs and capitalized on expanded opportunities for social leadership within their community. For Chicago clubwomen, however, such opportunities were nothing new, for a tradition of activism preceded the war. These clubwomen had long seen themselves as "watchdogs" of the city, who protected its social fabric and elevated its quality of life.

Before mobilizing for the national war effort, the Woman's City Club of Chicago was already engaged in a war of their own—a "War on Rats." Their many and varied efforts included participating in a mayor-designated "Rat Control Week," holding joint-club meetings to address the problem of "Mr. Rat," and poeticizing their desire "to strangle a million a day."³ The club was committed to the issue and its members were persistent. While not a glamorous campaign, the issue of rat infestation was a significant one, for its solution would prevent the spread of disease and improve public health. To meet their goals, the clubwomen were prepared to invest substantial time and resources.

2. Among other changes to women's public and private lives, the American female labor force increased by 32 percent (approximately 6.5 million workers) between 1941 and 1945. Elaine Tyler May, "Rosie the Riveter Gets Married," in *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness during World War II*, ed. Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, 129 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne, 1982), 77; Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War, German and American Propaganda, 1939–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 75–87.

3. *WCCC Bulletin*, October 1941, 22; *ibid.*, November 1941, 30–31.

The language of the "War on Rats" provides important insight into the ways that these clubwomen viewed their work in the years before the American entry into World War II. This is a needed addition to the historiography of women's clubs, which has focused previously on the Progressive Era. Disenfranchised before 1920, women nevertheless found ample opportunities to organize, exert civic pressure, and engage in public life through club work. Yet, in order to defend their involvement in a public sphere where men reserved exclusive civic privileges, women cited traditional family values.⁴ They invoked the rhetoric of "municipal housekeeping," asserting that just as they oversaw the individual members of the home, they were responsible for the safety and morals of each member of their neighborhood community and the greater city.⁵ "The Chicago Ratzkrieg," however, shows that clubwomen also frequently used aggressive and forceful language to describe their work in the prewar years, challenging traditional gender roles and exercising an independent voice in articulating their civic platform. The Woman's City Club upheld and furthered this tradition throughout the war.

Current scholarship on women's participation in the war effort focuses on the national campaigns that sought to mobilize women, particularly in regard to war-industry work and enlistment in the newly formed women's

4. Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 5.

5. Maureen A. Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club and the Woman's City Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era," *American Historical Review* 95, no. 4 (October 1990): 1044–48, doi: 10.2307/2163477.

branches of the armed services.⁶ Although important, these two aspects of women's wartime experiences and roles do not offer comprehensive insight into the variety of ways in which women experienced or responded to the creation of a national wartime ideology of womanhood, nor do they fully capture women's diverse experiences of home-front life. Studying the Woman's City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society reveals some of the other avenues through which women contributed to the war effort and attended to the needs of an urban society during wartime. Chicago is an important place to examine these processes because of its well-documented and rich history of social activism and its intensive mobilization for the war effort as a leading urban-industrial center and central site for wartime manufacturing.⁷ The Woman's City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society were just two of many reform and welfare organizations active in Chicago

6. For studies of national propaganda and wartime advertising, see Melissa A. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941–1945* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Donna B. Knaff, *Beyond Rosie the Riveter: Women of World War II in American Popular Graphic Art* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012); and Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985). Studies of women's local experiences often focus on their role in the armed services or as war industry workers. See for example, Jean Hascall Cole, *Women Pilots of World War II* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992) and Mark P. Parillo, ed., *We Were in the Big One: Experiences of the World War II Generation* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2002).

7. During World War II, 320 new factories were built in Chicago and thousands of workers moved to the city. In addition to the industrial boom, Chicagoans had to adapt to rationing, extended working hours, scrap drives, civil-defense exercises, Victory Gardens, and countless other demands. See Perry Duis, "No Time for Privacy: World War II and Chicago's Families," in *The War in American Culture*, 17–45.

during the time. Similar in mission and agenda, they represent a local experience of home-front life.

The Woman's City Club of Chicago (active 1910–1954) sought to address issues of civic welfare, including political reform, public health, housing, and education. Its original board of presidents and directors featured leading members of Chicago's settlement-house movement, including Jane Addams, Mrs. Joseph Bowen, and Julia Lathrop. With this socially active leadership, the club sought to unite women who were already providing services to the city's working-class and immigrant populations. The club also aspired to build a reputation that would attract new members to join the fight for urban reform.

The club was open to all women regardless of race or class, but the majority of its members were white upper-middle-class women from Chicago and the surrounding suburbs, many of whom were the wives of businessmen and professionals.⁸ During the 1940s the club reported approximately 390 members and administered a budget of over \$5,000.⁹ Its offices and tearoom were located at 410 S. Michigan Avenue, across the street from Grant Park in Chicago's downtown district. At this location, they held committee meetings and hosted guest speakers who lectured on civic issues.¹⁰ The clubrooms became a place where clubwomen could consult with university professors, labor organizations, community leaders, and public officials to develop an informed approach to combatting urban challenges and meeting community needs.

Yet club activities were not confined to downtown clubrooms. In their outreach and advocacy work, club members worked with and served on the boards of other city organizations. The club sent representatives to attend meetings of the City Council, the Cook County Board, and the

8. Flanagan, "Gender and Urban Political Reform," 1033.

9. "Report of the Financial Secretary," *WCCC Bulletin*, April 1942; "Membership Chairman Report," *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 5.

10. "Club Calendar," *WCCC Bulletin*, November 1940.

Board of Health and campaigned to have one of its own members appointed to the Chicago School Board.¹¹ By joining outside committees and attending public meetings and hearings throughout the city, the clubwomen gained a position to advance policy recommendations and reform.¹² The club also served Chicago by organizing into six ward branches. These branches met in field houses, YMCA buildings, and hospitals throughout the city to provide services that would address local needs.¹³

The Chicago Woman's Aid Society (active 1882–1988) was an organization for Jewish women, which, like the Woman's City Club, focused on issues of civic and social welfare. Throughout World War II it held a membership base of approximately nine hundred members and ran over seventy committees devoted to various urban issues and social causes.¹⁴ Similar to the Woman's City Club of Chicago, members of the Chicago Woman's Aid Society had the resources to volunteer their time and pay their membership dues. Many of these club members came with personal and family ties to Chicago businesses and universities, as well as to influential leaders within Chicago's Jewish community. Club members often used these connections to raise funds and build support for their civic work.

The Chicago Woman's Aid Society located its clubrooms in the downtown area at 185 N. Wabash Avenue, but it volunteered its services throughout the city. Like the Woman's City Club of Chicago, members worked with a diverse coalition of organizations such as the Association for Family Living, Planned Parenthood, and the Anti-Defamation League

11. *WCCC Bulletin*, April 1941; *ibid.*, May 1941.

12. *Ibid.*, January 1941, 48–49.

13. Ward branches included Gage Park, Irving Park, Northwest Chicago, Lincoln Center, and the 34th Ward. See *WCCC Bulletin*, November 1940.

14. Mrs. Magnus Rosenberg to Mr. Frederick H. Scott, 23 December 1943. Chicago Woman's Aid Society Race Relations Committee Records, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University of Archives. University of Illinois at Chicago.

to organize for reform. By collaborating with other organizations and various community centers, they engaged in advocacy work and helped to provide direct services to local neighborhoods.

Despite differences in membership owing to ethnic and religious identification, these two clubs present us with an opportunity to understand how Chicago clubwomen generally responded to a national wartime ideology of womanhood. This study will focus on the years from 1939 through 1945, from the outbreak of war in Europe to American involvement to the end of the war. Both clubs lend themselves to such investigation because of the extensive ways in which they chronicled their own volunteerism. An analysis of the clubwomen's writing and work—with a focus on the interrelated and pervasive themes of sacrifice, unity, and morale—reveals a shared response to a national, unifying rhetoric that asked women to make personal sacrifices and prioritize the war cause.¹⁵

These clubs printed weekly and monthly bulletins that gave their leadership and members routine opportunities to comment on the war effort and to publicize and frame their own agenda. At the center of this study are the routine columns that were penned by club presidents, Mildred Rosenberg of the Chicago Woman's Aid Society (president from 1939 to 1943) and Myrtle Perrigo Fox of the Woman's City Club of Chicago (president from 1942 to 1944).¹⁶ Their two voices cannot represent every view within their memberships, but they were both nominated

15. Mark H. Leff, "The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (March 1991): 1296–318, doi: 10.2307/2078263.

16. Myrtle Perrigo Fox graduated with an AB in history from the University of Michigan in 1905. Fox worked as an assistant to at the *Ladies Home Journal* and served as president to the Parent Teacher Association. She lived in the Hyde Park neighborhood with her husband John Sharpless Fox, a college professor, and their four children. For a short biographical sketch, see *WCCC Bulletin*, March 1942. Mildred Rosenberg was a member of the Chicago Public Library's board of directors and lived at 5000 East End Avenue with her husband Magnus Rosenberg, an attorney, and their two children.

and elected to club leadership, and they were praised and celebrated within their clubs. Both women served as guiding influences as they attended club meetings, arranged programming, coordinated guest speakers, and reported on club activities. In their roles as presidents they were responsible for creating and upholding club bylaws, running club-room staff, and approving annual club budgets. They each maintained networks of contacts and correspondence with influential politicians and businessmen, oversaw financial and business partnerships, and communicated club positions and activities to the press. These presidential reports are illuminating sources because they give a sense of the scope of club work and shed light upon the inner workings of their clubs.

As the “War on Rats” shows, clubwomen aimed to use their local work to “reveal to the nation” that Chicago was doing its part to address broader, national issues. Even before the war, the clubwomen were conscious of the relationship between the local community and the nation and asserted that the nation’s well-being was ultimately rooted in the health of its local communities. Thus, while both the Woman’s City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman’s Aid Society participated in larger national efforts and pledged their support to the war effort, they did not allow this engagement to detract from their local work. Clubwomen were prepared to make personal sacrifices, but not at the cost of the well-being of local communities. They did not believe this would serve the nation.

As they mobilized for war, Chicago clubwomen modified national messages about women on the home front and forged an independent vision for their participation. Chicago clubwomen responded strategically to the dominant wartime discourse about sacrifice, unity, and morale—both adopting and challenging it as necessary—in order to promote and defend their established political and social causes. In the midst of wartime, Chicago clubwomen seized many of the new and expanded opportunities for women’s social leadership in order to push for the reform and civic change that they had long desired. They labored for the health of their local community, which they believed depended

on the values of inclusiveness, equal access to services and opportunities, and the protection of individual rights, acknowledging the importance of the community’s many and diverse members.

II. Sacrifice

National Discourse

A Call for Sacrifice

During World War II the U.S. government employed an extensive range of media to engage female audiences and win their support for the war. Nationally sponsored messages asked women to reorganize their lives around the war effort and “do their part for victory” by making personal sacrifices for the sake of the nation.¹⁷ Photograph captions and the many posters commissioned by the U.S. Office of War Information (OWI), one of several national bodies in charge of coordinating the war effort, urged women to respond to the call of duty and take on new, nontraditional roles to advance the war effort. Women were instructed to see their U.S. Employment Service War Manpower Commission and find a war job as part of “answering the nation’s need for womanpower” and “doing a good job for Uncle Sam.”¹⁸ In order to free the nation’s manpower for service, women were encouraged to leave their homes and give up their “pleasanter occupations” to take on new jobs in various war

17. Hollem Howard, *Women from All Fields Have Joined the Production Army*, 1942, “Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Black-and-White Negatives,” *Library of Congress* [hereafter FSA], accessed April 5, 2014, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1992000915/PP.

18. George Rapp, *I’ve Found the Job Where I Fit Best*, 1943, FSA, accessed April 5, 2014, www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b45153; John Newton Howitt, *I’m Proud...*, 1944, FSA, accessed May 3, 2013, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95504753; Vernon Grant, *Women, There’s Work To Be Done*, 1944, FSA, accessed April 5, 2014, www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3g05604.



Figure 1. Ann Rosener, “Manpower. Handicapped Workers,” August 1942

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002004336/PP



Figure 2. Bob Barnes, “And then in my spare time...,” circa 1943

Source: Library of Congress, loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b43729

industries, from working for the U.S. railroad or steel plants to enlisting in the Women’s Army Service Corps (WAC).¹⁹

In service to the Allied cause, the OWI frequently featured women who made significant personal sacrifices to the war effort. One OWI photograph captured two women working on airplane-engine parts, and the caption explained that Henriette Furley must stand while she works because she is “badly crippled by arthritis.”²⁰ With Henriette’s story, the image acknowledged the sacrifice of a woman who contributed to the war effort despite personal cost and physical discomfort (fig. 1). By implication, it appealed to others to do the same. From depicting housewives and grandmothers who took up war work while maintaining ongoing duties at home (fig. 2) to photographing Pearl Harbor widows who were motivated to contribute to the war effort by their great loss (fig. 3), the OWI presented and exalted countless examples of female sacrifice.

Women were expected to make sacrifices in many aspects of their lives, including luxuries and comforts (fig. 4), for the duration of the war. In addition to conforming to a stricter system of food rationing, women were asked to wear simplified fashions that featured narrower skirts, shorter hemlines, and fewer extra pockets, zippers, pleats, or frills in order to conserve much-needed fabric for the war. To encourage resourcefulness, the OWI featured innovative clothing designs that met national conservation rules, including home-made dresses fashioned from old sugar sacks (fig. 5). As the national “Consumer Pledge for Total Defense” shows, women were instructed to manage household

19. *Two American Women, Employed as War Workers by a Big American Railroad*, between 1941 and 1944, FSA, accessed April 5, 2014, loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c05158.

20. Ann Rosener, *Manpower. Handicapped Workers*, August 1942, FSA, accessed April 5, 2014, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002004336/PP.



Figure 3. Howard Hollem, “Pearl Harbor Widows Have Gone into War Work,” August 1942

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1992000913/PP



Figure 5. John Collier, “Washington, D.C. Modeling Dress Made from Sugar Sack,” 1943

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/item/fsa1998024218/PP



Figure 4. “Wartime Conservation through Home Sewing,” 1943

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2002050909/PP

consumption and to sacrifice personal comforts in order to protect their community and ensure a strong American democracy.²¹

The Need for Sacrifice

In *Warfare State*, historian James Sparrow argues that the national government considered citizen support and morale to be equally as important to the war effort as the production of airplanes and supplies.²² Propaganda employed the “home-front analogy,” a rhetorical device that linked the efforts of civilians and soldiers to communicate the message that victory strongly depended on both men and women’s contributions.²³ In the OWI photographic series about Mrs. Smuda, a woman war worker, for example, the captions aligned her efforts with those of her enlisted son by stating, “another mother and son combination that means death to the Axis.”²⁴ Such rhetoric served two essential purposes. First, it united women’s contributions on the home front with the efforts of soldiers and loved ones fighting on the frontlines, fostering a collective spirit. Second, and even more importantly, it communicated the crucial need for women to participate in the war effort, for national defense was only as strong as its supply lines.

By comparing women’s contributions to those of soldiers, U.S. propaganda emphasized women’s vital contributions to wartime society. However, this rhetorical strategy often valued women’s sacrifices not as important in their own right, but because they ultimately benefitted

21. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 138–39; See, *Left to right: Mrs. Henrietta Nesbitt, White House Housekeeper*, 1941, FSA, accessed April 5, 2014, www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/item/oem2002010328/PP.

22. James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 48.

23. *Ibid.*, 72.

24. Howard R. Hollem, *Mrs. Smuda’s Son*, FSA, accessed May 3, 2013, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002002437/PP.

and supported men. Women had a duty to servicemen who were bravely risking their lives, as demonstrated by posters that read, “we soldiers of supply pledge that our fighting men will not want,” or those that instructed women to “back your man at the front.”²⁵ Historian Leila Rupp captures some of the most explicit and graphic examples of this rhetorical device, such as war-work posters that threatened, “this soldier may die unless you man this machine,” or articles in the *Ladies Home Journal* that warned that if women failed in their patriotic duties, “her menfolk fighting on distant atolls are likely to get slaughtered in the hot sun for lack of ammunition.”²⁶ Thus, many OWI posters and photographic captions praised women’s contributions by presenting them exclusively in terms of the male lives they would save.

Appeals for Sacrifice

The government urged women to participate in war industries or the women’s branches of the armed services, but with the expectation that women would do so to protect their families. Women were supposed to press on as productive citizens, always keeping the image of their loved ones at the front before them (fig. 6). The captions that accompanied depictions of women war workers proclaimed that women were creating planes for “their men,” replacing a general concept of national victory with a very personal stake in the war.²⁷ Women would participate in the war effort, not only as an expression of patriotic zeal, but because they were concerned about men at the front and their children’s futures. This

25. *Back Your Man at the Front*, 1943, in Barbara Orbach Natanson, “Rosie Pictures: Select Images Relating to American Women Workers during World War II,” *Prints & Photography Reading Room, Library of Congress*, March 2004, www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/126_rosi.html

26. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 156

27. Alfred T. Palmer, *American Mothers and Sisters*, October 1942, FSA, accessed May 28, 2013, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/fsa1992001575/PP; Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 126.



Figure 6. Adolph Treidler, “The Girl He Left Behind,” 1943

Source: Library of Congress,
www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95501843

theme emerged in one of Norman Rockwell’s paintings for the *Saturday Evening Post*, later dispersed by the OWI as a poster (fig. 7). The woman leans over to tuck two children in for the night, and the caption reads, “OURS... to fight for.” Here, the capitalized phrase “OURS” implied that parents would “fight” and contribute to the war effort out of a desire to protect their children. Standing alone, the poster captures a domestic scene of everyday life untouched by war, but for the newspaper held by the man, which announces a bombing. The caption ties children’s futures to victory and casts the war as an unwelcome threat to the comfort and safety of the private, domestic world of the home.



Figure 7. Norman Rockwell, “OURS... to fight for”
 circa 1943–1946

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2002048907/PP

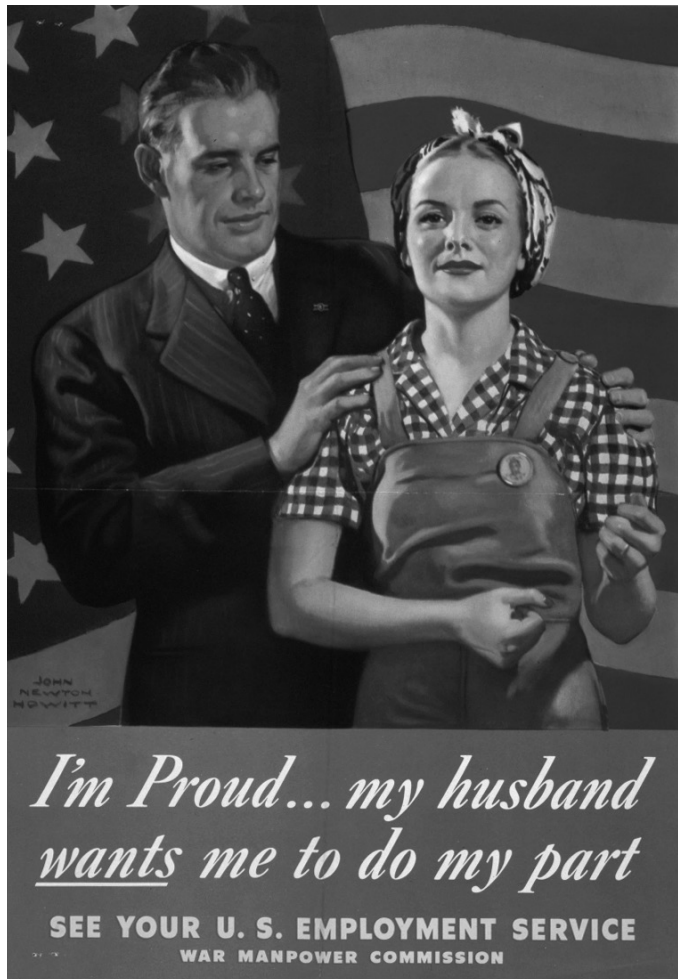


Figure 8. John Newton Howitt, “I’m Proud...,” 1944

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/95504753

U.S. propaganda repeatedly promised women that their contributions to the war effort would earn them recognition, esteem, and male praise. Historians such as Maureen Honey and Leila Rupp have argued that wartime advertisements, recruitment campaigns, and films worked to link wartime jobs to the alluring promise of adventure, glamour, and romance; the popular media attempted to show that women war workers and servicewomen earned more dates and received more male attention.²⁸ Posters showed men praising and admiring women who participated in the war effort, such as the soldier who tells the female riveter, “atta girl,” or the war worker who earns her husband’s support and approval (fig. 8).²⁹ The American woman who contributed to the war effort was presented as beautiful and attractive, the soldiers’ “Real Pin-Up Girl” (fig. 9). Such propaganda reflected the belief that regardless of whether they were assuming new roles or continuing to fulfill their primary duties as wives and mothers in a time of war, women would be, or at least should be, motivated by the promise of male praise, affirmation, and interest.



Figure 9. Cyrus Hungerford, “Their Real Pin-Up Girl,” circa 1944

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/97515660

28. Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 57; Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 55.

29. Packer, *Atta Girl: You’re Doing a Swell Job!* 1944, in Natanson, “Rosie Pictures.”

Wartime propaganda expected women to act out of motherly and wifely devotion and urged women to make decisions only after considering the interests of loved ones fighting the war. Although women were invited into the workforce and encouraged to adopt new kinds of roles, national bodies in charge of coordinating the war effort reinforced traditional expectations about gender roles and women's motivations.³⁰ Surveys showed that most women took on war jobs primarily for financial reasons, but this reality was rarely acknowledged in the national media. War work was presented as glamorous, exciting, and an opportunity to earn good wages, but it was above all patriotic—an opportunity for women to fulfill their duty as citizens to their family and community.³¹

Maureen Honey argues that the OWI linked a woman's wartime employment to support for the men fighting abroad and necessarily presented this employment as temporary—the OWI had no intention to support a permanent change in women's roles.³² In this sense, wartime propaganda was far from progressive in its representation of roles for women. The state promoted female sacrifice for the good of family and country and left the image of woman as homemaker unchanged, given that women were encouraged to experience achievement and fulfillment vicariously through their husbands and children. Melissa McEuen argues that Norman Rockwell's depiction of the "muscular and cheerful" Rosie the Riveter, despite its status as a national icon in American culture and memory, was not a dominant image during the war era.³³ Rather, national propaganda and advertising campaigns emphasized hyper-feminized portrayals of the wartime woman.

30. Knaff, *Beyond Rosie the Riveter*, 20–22; Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 126.

31. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 55–56; Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 55.

32. Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 54.

33. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 1–2.

It is thus unsurprising that, when American soldiers returned from the war, women were expected to return to the domestic sphere and allow men to resume their former jobs.³⁴ During the war women were asked to embody new roles, but U.S. propaganda presented this as a way for women to support their men at the front. Industrial and factory jobs were labeled as "war work" and presented as ways for women to fulfill temporarily a wartime (but not a peacetime) patriotic duty.

The Local Context

A Commitment to Sacrifice and Response to National Appeals

How did Chicago clubwomen respond to the nation's call for sacrifice? The Chicago Woman's Aid Society and the Woman's City Club of Chicago engaged in the national war effort through specific initiatives in their communities. In her February 1942 address to the Woman's City Club, President Fox captured the anticipated effects of World War II on American life: "soon every citizen will be fitted into [the national defense program]."³⁵ Throughout the war, these two clubs devoted great energy to new wartime needs. While there is limited mention of clubwomen enlisting in the WAC or the industrial war work so heavily advertised by the OWI, both the Woman's City Club and the Woman's Aid Society sought to contribute to the war effort through their respective organizations. This may be due in part to the class composition of these groups, given that the majority of members would not have needed to enter the workforce out of financial necessity. But these clubwomen also believed that they could best serve the war effort in other capacities. The vice president of the Woman's City Club of Chicago, Mrs. Bradley Carr, explained, "we reached the decision that we could serve our country best by continuing with the civic work we are doing, and at the same time, by keeping

34. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 55.

35. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, "President's Message," *WCCC Bulletin*, February 1942, 54.

ourselves available for any emergency job which might arise.”³⁶ The clubwomen believed that their groups’ ongoing civic work and ready responsiveness to wartime needs was a vital contribution to the national cause.

Both groups participated in a wide range of activities in the hopes of advancing the war effort. In each monthly address to the Woman’s City Club of Chicago, President Fox called upon members to fill new social roles and meet the needs of the home front, from doing their own housework and thereby releasing their maids for war work, to guarding the polls on election days as “watchers” in place of the men who were now overseas. Throughout the war, the Woman’s City Club was a part of larger national efforts and wartime drives; it planted Victory Gardens, volunteered for the Red Cross and donated blood, and hosted parties and held book drives for servicemen in order to attend to their social well-being.

Similarly, the Chicago Woman’s Aid Society made extensive efforts, including the establishment of a War Bonds Committee that encouraged members to purchase and sell war bonds and war saving stamps to the best of their financial ability. The society’s weekly bulletins repeatedly encouraged readers to “Buy War Bonds,” and the society gave frequent updates on their fund-raising efforts. By April of 1943 they had sold \$400,503.15 of war bonds.³⁷ This successful initiative proved the society’s ability to organize, and it demonstrated its desire to contribute to the national defense in a practical way by making a substantial financial commitment to the cause.

Prioritizing the Local

The U.S. government issued a call to sacrifice, and Chicago clubwomen answered it. Yet for all their engagement with the national war effort through the sacrifice of time, personal comforts, and financial resources,

36. Mrs. Bradley Carr, “Report of the Officers,” *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 4.

37. *Chicago Woman’s Aid Weekly Bulletin*, April 16, 1943, Chicago Woman’s Aid Society Records, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois, Chicago [hereafter *CWAW Bulletin*].

they never shifted their focus away from the pressing local issues of housing, health care, or public education. Clubwomen forged a policy of adding the war effort to their previous local engagements instead of abandoning their former agendas. They rejected the view that American society would be best served by a total, indiscriminate sacrifice of their time and resources to the national war effort. Instead, they believed that the strength and future of the nation depended on the well-being of its local communities.

As early as May 1939 then president of the Woman’s City Club of Chicago, Mrs. Paul Steinbrecher, asserted that women should attend to local affairs before turning to affairs abroad:

When one compares the great throngs that attend weekly and often semi-weekly meetings on foreign affairs to the scattering few who deem it worth their while to acquaint themselves with vital problems pertaining to their *own* communities, one cannot help but wonder why? Is it not perhaps that foreign affairs do not demand any immediate action by the individual while the opposite is true when we are forced to hear about municipal waste, or about bad housing conditions, and underprivileged and delinquent children at our very door.³⁸

Steinbrecher criticized interest in foreign affairs as artificial and fleeting and suggested that individuals should begin meaningful civic work by focusing attention on the most immediate concerns. The club’s model for citizenship meant that women should first become intimately “acquainted” with their own community, educating themselves in order to understand and then meet local needs.

The independent vision of Chicago clubwomen’s participation in the war effort appears in club bulletins and press coverage, which reveal how they used the conditions of war to defend and publicize their

38. Mrs. Paul Steinbrecher, “President’s Message,” *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1939, 3.

longstanding reform projects. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, the subsequent president of the Woman's City Club, emphasized the importance of maintaining democracy at home while fighting the war abroad. In a May 1942 bulletin Fox argued: "The work of our civic committees is more important in war than in peace. Too many people have their eyes set for distant vision, overlooking what is close at hand."³⁹ Mildred Rosenberg, president of the Chicago Woman's Aid Society, expressed a similar sentiment when she asserted the increased importance of local civic issues in time of war:

If we are going to permit people to live in quarters that are not fit for animals, if we are going to provide inadequate education facilities for our coming generation, if recreational needs of our community are not met, if public health measures are overlooked in a time of turmoil and confusion, if there is to be discrimination based on race, color and creed, then it is in vain that we are fighting a global war to see that the Four Freedoms may endure.⁴⁰

In his 1941 State of the Union address, Franklin Delano Roosevelt attacked Nazi policies, provided a defense for his own New Deal programs, and named Four Freedoms "essential to humans everywhere": "freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear."⁴¹ Roosevelt's Four Freedoms quickly became a pervasive part of the national rhetoric that presented the war abroad as a fight for democracy and freedom. The leadership of the Woman's City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society asserted that the home-

39. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, "President's Message," *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 2.

40. Mildred Rosenberg, "Annual Report of the President, *CWAW Bulletin*, April 16, 1943.

41. Elizabeth Borgwardt, "FDR's Freedoms as a Human Rights Instrument," *OAH Journal of History* 22, no. 2 (April 2008): 8–13, doi.org/10.1093/maghis/22.2.8.

front battle for these freedoms was vital for preserving democracy and American society.⁴²

U.S. propaganda encouraged women to support the war effort by appealing to their concerns as wives and mothers, and members of both clubs were clearly motivated by concern for the well-being of their families and others in Chicago. In fact, these clubwomen maintained a sharp focus on the current needs of local children and youth as a way of addressing the national emergency. The Woman's City Club of Chicago worried about the fate of children at a time in which parents were fully occupied with the war effort and mothers were called out of the home and into the workforce for defense industries.⁴³ In response to this problem, the club called for increased supervision of and guidance for youth: it encouraged parents to censor their children's exposure to inappropriate movies and books, asked their members to help staff day-care facilities for working mothers, and drew the public's attention to public education and the need for school reform.⁴⁴

The vice president of the Woman's City Club of Chicago made a similar argument about schooling: "If public education is important in time of peace, it is even more important in time of war... More than ever our children need to be given confidence in their ability to face the future, with training to back the confidence, and to be taught proper democratic attitudes."⁴⁵ Clubwomen believed that the public institutions and conditions of family life required immediate attention in order to foster democratic attitudes and a productive work ethic in future generations.

The club's Child Welfare Committee continually emphasized the importance of providing social workers, health workers, and educators

42. Sparrow, *Warfare State*, 43.

43. *WCCC Bulletin*, October 1942, 24.

44. *Ibid.*, January 1942, 47; *Ibid.*, October 1942, 24–26.

45. *Ibid.*, October 1942, 22.

to address family issues, and it stressed that life after the war depended on how children were taken care of in the here and now.⁴⁶ To this end, club members supported local and state legislation to reform the juvenile justice system and child labor laws, attended school-board meetings and wrote letters to the mayor, Edward Kelley, regarding school-board candidates and policies, testified about child welfare issues at state budget hearings, and volunteered to staff day nurseries.⁴⁷

When possible, the Woman's City Club of Chicago tried to solve two problems at once, keeping local youth safe and occupied by engaging them in home-front activities. The club's Victory Garden campaign served two such purposes. Members were encouraged to plant Victory Gardens in order to support food rationing and conservation efforts, but the campaign was also framed as a solution to the problem of juvenile delinquency. The president of the Chicago Park District, Robert J. Dunham, designated space for children to plant Victory Gardens on park property, allowing approximately thirty thousand children from grades 5–8 to grow their own vegetables under the guidance of volunteer leaders.⁴⁸ The club asked its members to assume these volunteer positions in order to supervise youth and engage them in a productive activity that would foster the values of citizenship.⁴⁹ This Victory Garden

46. *Ibid.*, May 1942, 7.

47. *Ibid.*, May 1943, 7.

48. *Ibid.*, March 1943, 66; Mayor Kelly, as coordinator of civilian defense for the Chicago area, put the Chicago Park District in charge of the Victory Garden. The district designated Douglas, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, and Marquette parks for gardens, oversaw staffing, and worked with block wardens throughout the city to identify vacant lots suitable for gardens. See "Victory Garden Drive Is Opened by Mayor Kelly," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 29, 1942, George T. Donoghue, "12,601 Farmers Boost Food Supplies," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 26, 1942, and George T. Donoghue, "Friend of the People: Victory Garden Plowing," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 4, 1943.

49. *WCCC Bulletin*, March 1943, 66.

campaign is an important example of the club's ability to connect the national war effort with its local community work.

In other cases, the clubs interwove wartime initiatives, like the sale of war bonds, with the themes of previous campaigns, like the immediate needs of the community's children. In the 60th-anniversary bulletin the Chicago Woman's Aid Society highlighted its sale of war bonds alongside its ongoing contributions to a nutrition fund for undernourished children, which featured the donation of 65,500 bottles of milk and 175 pairs of eyeglasses to needy children and many other daily goods to children in schools.⁵⁰ Throughout the war, both clubs continued to raise funds and donate to meet the health needs of local children. Such examples bear witness to their belief that national health was rooted in local communities and dependent on their continued civic work as a club.

In addition to financial giving, club members continued to advocate for legal reforms to benefit children. For instance, the Woman's City Club fought for Juvenile Court reform, a campaign with roots in the Progressive Era, by demanding preventative and rehabilitating measures in place of harsh and unnecessary punishment.⁵¹ In its ongoing advocacy, the club insisted that children and youth merited special legal considerations and should not be tried as adults.⁵² They also believed that children should be encouraged to contribute to the war cause, but warned that children needed to stay in school.⁵³ The clubwomen criticized defense industries and other businesses for hiring young people and risking their safety and worked to enforce child labor laws.⁵⁴ This shows that club-

50. "60 Years of Achievement, 1882–1942," *CWAW Bulletin*, December 1942.

51. *WCCC Bulletin*, October 1942, 22.

52. Mrs. John Gutknecht, "Report of the Child Welfare Committee," *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 7.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *WCCC Bulletin*, December 1943, 40–41; Catharine Mulberry, "President's Message," *WCCC Bulletin*, February 1944, 54–55.

women were willing to divert from nationally sponsored messages about the war effort in order to prioritize their own social cause.

In their attention to the social and moral development of children as citizens, clubwomen deployed traditional ideals of women as family caretakers. In her book, *The Feminist Promise*, Christine Stansell articulates a concept of “Republican motherhood” that dates back to the early years of the nation in the 1790s. As mothers, white women of upper- and middle-class backgrounds were considered a valuable part of the nation’s political life; they were responsible for raising children and promoting civic virtues among the next generation.⁵⁵ This notion continued to inform women’s work during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, the concept of “municipal housekeeping,” which posited that women were uniquely suited for volunteer work, given both their caring nature and keen understanding of the relationship between the public sphere and the private world of home, grew out of a broader understanding of women’s roles as mothers.⁵⁶ In many ways, the clubwomen’s concern for child welfare upheld the status quo by conforming to traditional expectations for motherhood. But clubwomen also exercised an independent voice by challenging and modifying national messages to promote the needs of local children. They were particularly concerned about the ways in which children would bear the brunt of wartime sacrifices, instability, and anxiety.⁵⁷ In their work, clubwomen saw themselves as advocates for this important but “underprivileged” group, and argued explicitly at times that children should not have to sacrifice their right to a childhood, even with the new demands of war.⁵⁸

55. Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present* (New York: Modern Library, 2010), 13.

56. Spain, *How Woman Saved the City*, 7–9.

57. Mrs. John Sharpless Fox, Mrs. H. C. Dormitzer, and Ruth E. Moore, “By Board Action,” *WCCC Bulletin*, January 1943, 49.

58. Helen Dormitzer, “Back to School,” *WCCC Bulletin*, October 1943, 26;

Strategic Reframing of Local Campaigns

Both clubs argued that previous work to promote the health and well-being of their local community became even more important in the context of war because they would ensure a productive and cohesive home front. In the case of the “War on Rats,” the Woman’s City Club of Chicago reframed a local public-health issue as relevant to the national war effort. When the club participated in Rat Control Week in 1941, club members had emphasized that rat control would prevent food waste and the spread of disease. In 1942, President Fox labeled rat control “a real wartime measure,” because “the enemy might very well spread pestilence through the infection of our rodent population.”⁵⁹ Fox’s statement drew new attention to the local issue of rat control and asserted its importance by framing it as an “integral part of civilian defense,” one that would promote a strong and healthy fighting nation.⁶⁰ Fox also stated, “it is an economic as well as a health measure because each rat eats at least two dollars’ worth of food a year, food that we or our allies may need.”⁶¹ Given the nation’s food rationing, Fox’s emphasis on the food supply made the campaign relevant, which the club directly linked to the war effort by proclaiming that rats were ravaging Victory Gardens.⁶² Fox’s own reframing of the issue and the regular updates of the club’s Clean City Committee showed that the war effort was dependent upon local conditions; public-health and civic concerns should not be abandoned. Fox and other club members thus provided justification for their local efforts in a time of crisis by underscoring the relationship between the local and the national.

WCCC Bulletin, November 1943, 31.

59. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, “President’s Message,” *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 3.

60. *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1943, 73.

61. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, “President’s Message,” *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 3.

62. “Winding up the Year,” *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1943, 19.

In a similar effort to justify local community work, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society defended the importance of women's health-care services. Since the early 1930s the society had sponsored a birth-control clinic that provided family planning and health services to women.⁶³ By 1940 the club had expanded its work and opened a new location to accommodate the community's growing needs. It staffed and operated two clinics, which required a substantial investment sufficient to service the more than three thousand patients that visited each year.⁶⁴ During the war the society defended this continued investment by citing the new demands on the clinic, such as the growing number of young war brides who were seeking these health services.⁶⁵ The society also adopted the language and themes of the national war effort in order to promote its clinics, distributing literature from the National Planned Parenthood Organization to this end.

Planned Parenthood literature utilized the wartime discourse of freedom and democracy, framing women's access to health care and family-planning services as a "democratic ideal" and a right of individuals living in a free nation.⁶⁶ One pamphlet stated:

In fascist countries, women are ordered by the state to bear children as raw material for industrial and military machines, without

63. In March of 1941 the Chicago Woman's Aid Society's Birth Control Clinic was renamed as a Planned Parenthood Committee, in an attempt to distinguish their efforts from the eugenics agenda of "controlling" the population. See Lydia Appel to the Chicago Woman's Aid Society, 7 May 1940, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Planned Parenthood Committee Records.

64. Ibid., April 8, 1941.

65. Lydia Appel, "Report of the Birth Control Committee," 8 April 1941, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Planned Parenthood Committee Records.

66. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, "Planned Parenthood and the War" (1943), Chicago Woman's Aid Society Planned Parenthood Committee Records.

regard for individual freedom of choice or the integrity of the family. Our country is at war against the armed forces of the Axis powers. But it is also at war against a way of life in which human freedom is consistently violated. In America, we believe in the right of parents to control their own lives.⁶⁷

Such literature coopted the justifications for the war to promote a woman's right to birth control and family planning.

Throughout the war, as the U.S. government condemned Nazi Germany's neglect of individual rights and freedoms, and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society criticized the dehumanizing ideology of Nazi motherhood. The Nazi state framed motherhood as a public duty and asserted that German women, or at least those who met a mythic Aryan ideal, could best serve the nation by bearing children and raising them to become National Socialists.⁶⁸ In criticizing the many restrictions that the Nazis had imposed on personal choice, the club asserted that its Planned Parenthood clinics embodied the unique American values of personal freedom by allowing women to exercise personal discretion in family planning. In her history of birth-control politics, Linda Gordon shows that supporters of birth control had traditionally made a case for its social value by arguing that family planning would promote the national economy and a healthier, more peaceful society by stabilizing families (particularly those in low-income communities).⁶⁹ In a similar way, the Woman's Aid Society argued that "children by choice and not by chance" would lead to happier, sounder families, yet it went further by presenting family planning as a matter of individual choice and right regardless of

67. Ibid.

68. Lisa Pine, *Nazi Family Policy, 1933–1945* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 3–4.

69. Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 247–48.

its social utility.⁷⁰ The club mobilized wartime discourse to build a new case for women's reproductive rights and the provision of these health services for women in their community. They believed that the protection of these rights and guaranteed access to birth control expressed the principles of American democracy.

Club Perspectives on Gender Relations

Both groups of clubwomen affirmed the value of individual members of their community and related their service to the important sacrifices that soldiers made for American society. In her 1942 message, for example, Myrtle Perrigo Fox told the Woman's City Club that they had a duty to honor young men and women serving their country; and this duty extended to "their children's children, as well as to our fathers and grandfathers who have fought for democracy in the past."⁷¹ Fox emphasized responsibility to the larger community while acknowledging a legacy of male sacrifice. This stance conformed to traditional ideals of femininity that emphasized a woman's appreciation for and duty towards men.

Yet, by contrast to traditions that devalued women's work and elevated the contributions of men, Fox used various strategies to affirm the necessity of her clubmembers' work as women. Employing the home-front analogy, Fox likened club work to battle, "our committees are very much on the firing line in the fight to preserve democracy."⁷² In this case, she compared the club's work to the fight that soldiers faced abroad, acknowledging both kinds of contributions to the maintenance of American democracy.

Fox believed women were not just supporting the war from afar—they were also forging the way, as there were certain domains in which

70. Helen Brody to Mrs. Jesse Gerstley, 18 December 1941, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Planned Parenthood Committee Records.

71. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, "President's Message," *WCCC Bulletin*, April 1942, 70.

72. Ibid.

women would hold the "front lines."⁷³ She extended the home-front analogy to include the many facets of clubwomen's work in their local communities. Such language shows that the Woman's City Club deemed the community work of its members, and the personal choices they made, as a vital contribution to national defense. The club valued women's contributions, proudly affirming that "women have proved that they can do practically everything that men can."⁷⁴

While U.S. propaganda emphasized the unity between men and women to wartime service, it still cast women as unequal, even dangerous, in regards to sex—a notion that clubwomen rejected. Christine Simmons has explored a discourse of female sexuality in the early twentieth century that held women responsible for the sexual behaviors of men, however "proper" or "improper."⁷⁵ During the war, female bodies were presented as dangerous "disease spreaders who could weaken male soldiers and sailors," which were thus in need of strict regulation and supervision.⁷⁶ "Loose" and foreign women especially were perceived as a moral and sexual threat that endangered a soldier's well-being. Melissa McEuen cites one poster that threatened, "She may look clean, but Pick-ups, Good Time Girls, Prostitutes spread syphilis and gonorrhea. You can't beat the Axis if you get VD."⁷⁷ Such a message warned that *any* woman could pose a health threat that could ultimately jeopardize an Allied victory.

Public opinion about women's sexuality closely reflected national policies. The American public regarded the WAC with great suspicion, and it was popular rumor that corps members provided sexual favors to

73. Ibid., February 1942, 54.

74. *WCCC Bulletin*, March 1943, 63.

75. Christina Simmons, *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.

76. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 20 & 50.

77. Ibid., 52.

male soldiers. Concerned about the WAC's reputation and conscious of its public image U.S. military officials decided to disperse contraceptives to servicemen only.⁷⁸ Military discipline also mirrored double standards found in society more broadly: in the few cases where men and women in the marines were found jointly guilty of sexual misconduct, the woman was punished far more severely.⁷⁹

In contrast to the discriminatory policy of the military, the Woman's City Club of Chicago demanded proper reproductive health care for all in need. In this effort, the club attacked the unequal treatment of men and women, particularly as regarded the issue of venereal disease in national propaganda. Like the military and other national bodies in charge of the war, the club acknowledged that venereal disease was particularly dangerous in wartime, stating, "war with its huge camps and industrial projects composed of unattached, restless men merely multiplies the problem." But the club believed the problem could be mitigated with sufficient recreational and social opportunities for soldiers and challenged the view that women alone were responsible and should be held solely accountable.⁸⁰ Club bulletins promoted women's rights and critiqued city policy as unconstitutional:

Women and men are equally guilty in this offense and whatever treatment is meted out to one must be given to the other. The constitutional rights of women demand that we cease punishing the woman and letting the man go his thoughtless way, perhaps to contaminate his own family. But all too often the women are still sent to jail and the men to the clinic for treatment.⁸¹

78. Ibid.

79. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 39.

80. *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 12.

81. Ibid.

The club mobilized the wartime discourse of individual rights to demand equitable treatment for women and to criticize the existing disparate, punitive response. In doing so, they also identified the ways in which society continued to undervalue the contributions of women, despite wartime propaganda that proclaimed their equal dignity and significance.

Clubwomen's Cited Motivations for Involvement in the War Effort

U.S. propaganda encouraged women to contribute to the war effort by implying that their engagement would earn the praise of their community and the attention and admiration of men. Both groups of clubwomen distanced themselves from this implication by articulating a desire to serve the community rather than seek the attention of others. In the case of the Woman's City Club of Chicago, President Fox claimed, "the important thing is to serve where we are needed whether we gain recognition or not."⁸² Such statements of purpose refuted any explicit desire to earn praise and recognition. Similarly, the Woman's Aid Society insisted that the respect and admiration they received was for the work that they accomplished. They stated that the sole purpose of their labors was to extend their sphere of influence and offer leadership to their community.⁸³

Despite rejecting the idea that their club work was carried out to gain male attention, these groups nevertheless upheld many traditional views of gender roles. In claiming that their members should have no selfish or private motivations for civic engagement they reinforced the notion that women are more naturally suited for duty and caring sacrifice.⁸⁴ Even this, however, remains distinct from the idea that women were motivated by the desire to earn the praise and validation of others as

82. *WCCC Bulletin*, January 1942, 46.

83. Mildred Rosenberg, "Incoming President's Address," *CWAW Bulletin*, April 24, 1942.

84. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 57.

implied by U.S. propaganda. In their analysis of gender relations, club-women were critical consumers of propaganda who exposed social inequalities between men and women. This critique did not end there—they continued to challenge national messages as they explored broader efforts at cooperation within the wartime community.

III. Unity: Cooperation Along Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Lines

The National Context: A Myth of Unity and Equality

War propaganda and films often juxtaposed the freedoms of American democracy against the tyranny of the Axis powers. Propaganda often depicted unity and tolerance between races and cultures as a defining value of the Allies, in contrast to the tyrannical and totalitarian Axis powers. In his analysis of the seven-part documentary film, *Why We Fight* (1943), produced for American soldiers and later released to the general public, film historian André Bazin argues that the film presented an appreciation for cultural diversity as a unique value of the Allies, and one that ultimately strengthened America's national identity.⁸⁵

The photographs used to recruit women for war work adopted these themes and explicitly promoted interracial harmony. Melissa McEuen shows how the War Manpower Commission sought to normalize African American women in wartime culture. It disseminated stories of interracial harmony, cooperation at plants, and friendly relations in the workforce with the hope of encouraging other women to seek and fill positions as much-needed war workers.⁸⁶ Likewise, Maureen Honey

85. André Bazin, "On 'Why We Fight': History, Documentation, and the News-reel," in *Bazin at Work: Major Essays and Reviews from the Forties and Fifties*, ed. Bert Cardullo, trans. Alain Piette and Bert Cardullo, 84 (New York: Routledge, 1997).

86. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 32.



Figure 10. Lee Russell, “Negro, Mexican and White Girls Are Employed at This Pacific Parachute Company,” April 1942

Source: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2001003475/PP

writes that national propaganda encouraged home-front solidarity and the employment of minorities by showing examples of black and white Americans working together for victory.⁸⁷ Articles, such as “Negro Women in Skilled Defense Jobs,” promoted acceptance of black women in the wartime economy, while photographs of women war workers often emphasized the interracial diversity of the home-front effort (fig. 10).⁸⁸ National propaganda thus promoted racial harmony, both to promote full participation in a united war effort and to create moral leverage against the Axis powers.

87. Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 51.

88. Ibid.

There were, however, clear contradictions between the stated values of U.S. propaganda and the reality of race relations in communities; the racial unity touted by wartime propaganda was largely a myth. Many historians have explored the race-related conflicts and tensions faced by local communities during the war. An increase in African American migration to northern and western cities during the war resulted in demographic changes that sparked racial conflict, and sometimes even race riots, throughout affected cities and neighborhoods.⁸⁹ Racial tensions surfaced frequently in wartime workplaces, which were often unwelcoming for racial, religious, and ethnic minorities.⁹⁰ Indeed, employers often retained race-based barriers that prevented minorities from entering the workforce, despite the political pressure to be more inclusive. The OWI chose to emphasize interracial solidarity among women war workers to promote its cause, but its representations failed to capture the lived realities of many women who faced widespread discrimination as they pursued opportunities for war work.

The Local Context: An Appreciation for Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity

In contrast to the stretched rhetoric of U.S. wartime propaganda, the Woman's City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society acknowledged racial discrimination and addressed inequalities within their community. In 1942 President Fox informed her club, "One of our most difficult tasks will be learning to work together. We must develop tolerance, tolerance of ideas and of religions, of failures, and

89. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 37; Jane Dailey, "Fighting Hitler and Jim Crow: African Americans and World War II," *The Berlin Journal* 11 (Fall 2005): 30.

90. Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 29.

of successes."⁹¹ Both groups expressed values of tolerance and acceptance for racial, cultural, and religious minorities, and their committees advocated fair and just treatment of all community members.

The membership of the Woman's City Club of Chicago was predominately white, but the club intended and professed to be a "democratic institution" open to members of all races and classes.⁹² Records suggest that the club had approximately ten African American members by 1930, but it is difficult to know the extent to which the club was a welcoming space for all potential members.⁹³ Many working-class women would simply not have been able to afford the \$10 monthly fee—annual membership would have cost approximately 20 percent of the 1939 median annual wage for women. Even after the club lowered membership dues in 1942, many working-class women would have still lacked the financial resources and the time required to engage in club work.⁹⁴ The club had however, expressed an ongoing commitment to issues of intolerance and racial conflict that extended beyond mere lip service. In its efforts to "promote understanding between the races," they frequently collaborated with the Chicago Urban League, an organization that served Chicago's African American community, to plan interracial events that addressed issues of racial prejudice.

The Woman's City Club believed that the well-being of the black community was relevant to the welfare of the city as a whole, recognizing

91. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, "President's Message," *WCCC Bulletin*, January 1942, 46.

92. *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 3.

93. Barbara Spencer Spachman, "The Woman's City Club of Chicago: A Civic Pressure Group" (MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1930), 13.

94. Annual membership would have cost approximately 20 percent of the 1939 median annual wage for women. See *Special Edition: 1940 Records Release*, Bureau of the Census (Washington, DC, February 22, 2012), accessed April 6, 2014, www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ffse01.html.

that African Americans should have an integral part in shaping the city and addressing community problems. The head of the club's Committee on Race Relations, Roberta Burgess, stated, "your chairman has been pleased to note that other committees have called upon Negroes to discuss problems which have shown the close relation between the colored community and the city as a whole."⁹⁵ While historians have criticized the ways that clubwomen and reformers imposed white middle-class values on the working-class and immigrant groups with whom they worked, this statement suggests that the club made serious efforts to learn from its black peers.⁹⁶ The club argued that black Chicagoans deserved to be respected as community members, who could make valuable contributions in solving urban problems and setting future directions for club work.

The Woman's City Club of Chicago's approach to racial discrimination was more than a message of tolerance, as its committees fought for policy changes and fair, equal treatment for all races and ethnic groups. The Committee on Race Relations hosted lectures and forums regarding equal access to cultural, economic, and political opportunities, believing that individuals should earn recognition and opportunity according to their abilities and accomplishments.⁹⁷ They participated in the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations and worked with the Chicago Urban League to seek employment opportunities for African American women.⁹⁸ The committee criticized the presence of racial prejudice and workplace discrimination that limited opportunities for black Chicagoans and worked to expose the ways in which black war workers were treated unfairly. For example, the club supported and shared the findings of the president's Committee on Fair Employment Practices, an interracial advisory board

95. Roberta Burgess, "Mary McDowell Committee on Race Relations," *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1941, 10.

96. Spain, *How Women Saved the City*, 13–14.

97. *WCCC Bulletin*, October 1938, 23.

98. Mrs. Russell W. Ballard, "Mary McDowell Committee on Race Relations," *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1944, 11.

whose research uncovered discriminatory practices in the wartime workplace.⁹⁹

At a time when the theme of sacrifice dominated national discourse, the Committee on Race Relations' chairwoman, Roberta Burgess, equated equal sacrifice to equal access to opportunities:

Their contribution and that of thousands of Negroes, not only working in all fields of American life but fighting and dying for their country in the present terrible conflict, should make us resolve that the racial discrimination which has belied our professed ideals of democracy should be stamped out forever in a free and truly democratic America.¹⁰⁰

Burgess highlighted the wartime sacrifices made by African Americans, including the lives of African American soldiers, to argue for an end to racial discrimination. In her committee reports, she supported publications such as the *Negro Digest* and cited guest lectures to the club by Earl B. Dickerson, an African American lawyer from Chicago who served on Roosevelt's Fair Employment Practices Committee. Burgess acknowledged the vital role that African Americans played in building the country, citing the historical legacy of figures such as Crispus Attucks and George Washington Carver. She supported and adopted the view of African American writers who felt their community should be recognized and valued for its integral part in past and present national life.

Similar to the case made by the Chicago Woman's Aid Society to promote Planned Parenthood clinics and defend women's reproductive rights, the Woman's City Club deployed the stated values of American democracy and the Allied cause to encourage racial equality and protect the rights of African Americans. Chairwoman Burgess reported:

99. Roberta Burgess, "Mary McDowell Committee on Race Relations," *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 10.

100. *Ibid.*, 11.

In conclusion I feel constrained to appeal to all intelligent groups such as ours to do all in their power to check race prejudice and intolerance in our own America. We are horrified by reports of the brutal treatment of racial minorities in some of the European dictatorships and perhaps do not realize that those nations, smarting under our criticisms, are pointing to our lynchings as justification for their behavior.¹⁰¹

The club argued that the democratic process depended on interracial understanding and interreligious cooperation, and that such cooperation had to move beyond empty promises.¹⁰² Such principles would protect American democracy from the exclusionary practices of the Nazi state and its racial ideology, against which the Allies were supposed to be fighting. To this extent, the club's arguments echoed those made by black newspapers at the time, which compared Nazi racism and state policies to those of the United States and the Jim Crow South.¹⁰³ The Woman's City Club of Chicago adopted the rhetoric of its black peers, exposing injustice and racism within American society.

The Chicago Woman's Aid Society was also concerned with issues of racial and cultural tolerance, especially in the workplace.¹⁰⁴ During the war, the club joined the Fair Employment Practices Committee, the Union for Democratic Action, and the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations to advocate for "undiscriminating employment" for African

101. *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1939, 14.

102. Mrs. Walter F. Heineman, "Training Chicago's Future Citizens," *WCCC Bulletin*, April 1939, 70–71.

103. Dailey, "Fighting Hitler and Jim Crow," 48–49.

104. Like the Woman's City Club of Chicago, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society also formed a Race Relations Committee that explored such issues as fair employment for the black community in Chicago. See *CWAW Bulletin*, November 28, 1941.

Americans.¹⁰⁵ The club also ran a letter campaign to address employment practices and asked Chicago businesses such as Marshall Field's and Sears, Roebuck to "give employment to qualified colored women as clerks, stenographers and bookkeepers."¹⁰⁶ The club believed that better employment opportunities would help to alleviate some of the challenges faced by Chicago's African American community, including poor living conditions.

In seeking company support, however, they were careful to emphasize the ways in which fair employment would benefit the national war effort. In a letter to Carson Pirie Scott, for example, President Rosenberg argued that fair employment was essential to the national cause. Rosenberg encouraged the department store to expand employment opportunities for black Chicagoans, "because we believe that the morale of over 7% of our fighting men will be improved in the knowledge that their people are being treated fairly," and "because we believe the friendship of our Allies will be strengthened by every sincere expression of genuine democracy."¹⁰⁷ Rosenberg cited the role of African American soldiers to show that the African American community had a stake in American democracy and should be treated equally.

The Chicago Woman's Aid Society also advocated for fair housing for the African American community. After World War I, thousands of blacks had left the South to pursue job opportunities in northern cities. Between 1916 and 1920 more than fifty thousand African Americans moved to Chicago.¹⁰⁸ This migration pattern continued throughout World War II, as African Americans moved north to pursue jobs in the

105. Chicago Woman's Aid Society, Interracial Committee Report, March 19, 1946, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Race Relations Committee Records.

106. Mrs. Magnus Rosenberg to Mr. Frederick H. Scott, 23 December 1943, Chicago Woman's Aid Society.

107. *Ibid.*

108. Olivia Mahoney, *Chicago: Crossroads of America* (Chicago: Chicago History Museum, 2006).

war industries. In Chicago, however, African Americans faced restrictive housing covenants that forced them to settle in restricted area on the South Side, where they paid high rents for substandard housing. The Chicago Woman's Aid Society distributed material from the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, which stressed that due to discriminatory housing practices "300,000 [blacks] were crowded into dwellings that should normally house about half of [that] number" and where an estimated 30 percent of household income was directed to rent.¹⁰⁹

In addition to working with the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations and organizations like the Chicago Urban League, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society provided direct service to the African American community. To alleviate the issues caused by low-quality housing and overcrowded neighborhoods, the society supported local community work and recreational centers. In 1941 the club formed a women's auxiliary to the Good Shepherd Community Center, which served a predominately African American community on the South Side.¹¹⁰ In 1944 the club became involved with Lower North Centers, helping to host parties and community events and raising funds to enhance facilities and build a playground.¹¹¹

The society's Jewish religious identity informed its definition of community, which extended beyond the local and national to include

109. Mayor's Committee on Race Relations, "Negroes in Chicago," October 1944, Mayor's Committee on Race Relations brochure, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Race Relations Committee Records, Chicago Urban League, "Jean S," 1944, Chicago Urban League material, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Race Relations Committee Records.

110. The Good Shepherd Community Center was located at 51st Street and South Parkway. It was later renamed the Parkway Community House. See "Parkway Community House Records," *Black Metropolis Research Consortium Survey*, accessed July 12, 2016, bmr survey.uchicago.edu/collections/2502-1.

111. Race Relations Committee Chairman to Mr. Eugene Bernstein, 14 December 1944, Chicago Woman's Aid Society Race Relations Committee Records; Chicago Woman's Aid Society, Interracial Committee Report, March 19, 1946.

European Jews with whom they shared a religious identity. Even before the United States involvement in the war, the society's members took an interest in European political affairs and were concerned for fellow members of their religious community. The society's weekly bulletin for January 31, 1941, stated:

Last Year the Jews in Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, and Poland were the ones in need. This year almost the entire continent of Europe west of Russia is under Nazi Domination. Three and one half millions of Jews are in desperate circumstances. Only we of America can help them! We dare not condemn these millions to starvation, exposure, and disease... We must contribute generously to the Jewish Welfare Fund!¹¹²

The society was deeply alarmed by the growing power of the Nazis and supported the fight abroad by raising funds and donating to the British War Relief Fund.¹¹³

Just as these clubs drew attention to racial discrimination, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society worked to expose anti-Semitism in America through organized rallies, letter-writing campaigns, and lectures. The U.S. government criticized the Nazis for their anti-Semitism and anti-democratic values, but the Chicago Woman's Aid Society confronted the offensive presence of anti-Semitism locally and nationally, within American society.¹¹⁴

Although it was an organization of Jewish women, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society collaborated with other clubs and organizations. In running its Birth Control Clinic, it sought to provide services to everyone in the community. Its records show that Catholic, Protestant,

112. *CWAW Bulletin*, January 31, 1941.

113. *Ibid.*

114. *CWAC Bulletin*, November 21, 1941.

and Jewish women alike visited the clinic. In its commitment to inter-religious cooperation, the club also participated in the Chicago Round Table of Christians and Jews. The Woman's Aid Society members did not want their work to be limited to those who shared their religious identity, but rather desired to be an integral part of their larger Chicago community.

IV. Morale

The National Context

The ideal wartime woman was one who made personal sacrifices while keeping up her physical appearance for the sake of the nation.¹¹⁵ In other words, beyond mobilizing for the war effort, women were expected to sustain national morale by meeting physical and social ideals that would mark them as something “worth fighting for.”¹¹⁶ Even as women were drawn into war work, they were expected to meet traditional physical and social ideals of femininity. Melissa McEuen analyzes advertising campaigns from 1941 that encouraged American women to wear lipstick as an “appropriate response” to the Pearl Harbor attack, as women's beauty would help to foster national morale.¹¹⁷ Other historians have emphasized that these images taught that women should not be threatening in their new social roles and would ultimately continue to fulfill traditional social prescriptions regarding femininity.¹¹⁸

115. Melissa McEuen also discusses how popular media and wartime advertising for beauty products narrowly portrayed the ideal wartime woman as white and middle class. See McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 47–56.

116. *Ibid.*, 47.

117. *Ibid.*

118. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women*, 43.

The Local Context: Negotiating Traditional Gender Roles

Both the Woman's City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society believed that aesthetics had an important role in fostering morale. For example, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society instructed women to plant “flowers for morale.”¹¹⁹ The Woman's City Club of Chicago also suggested that fashion could help to raise women's spirits. In October of 1942 the club advertised a hat-decorating workshop called “Topping It Off.” The bulletin promised its members: “This will give the final lift to our morale. A new hat is a flag of courage whether it comes straight from the milliner's, or is last year's model converted into tomorrow's design.”¹²⁰ Likewise, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society held a host of workshops and fashion shows to reinvent old clothing.

Propaganda told women that their beauty would inspire soldiers, and Woman's City Club leadership sometimes suggested this as well. When President Fox encouraged women to do their own housework, she reassured members, “a reduced hip-line is only one of the good results that may come from pushing a vacuum cleaner.”¹²¹ Throughout the war, a new, national emphasis on a thin ideal emerged from the extensive discourse about the ideal female body.¹²² Here, Fox encouraged members' participation in the war effort by suggesting that it would help them reach these standards.

As in other dimensions of their work, clubwomen were not passive consumers of messages about female beauty—they neither accepted nor rejected wartime messages in their entirety. Instead they both adopted and reframed nationally sponsored rhetoric to support their local

119. *CWAW Bulletin*, February 20, 1942.

120. *WCCC Bulletin*, October 1942, 24.

121. Myrtle Perrigo Fox, “President's Message,” *WCCC Bulletin*, April 1943, 70.

122. *Ibid.*

communal goals. Both clubs believed in the importance of nurturing morale wherever possible, but they emphasized its practical purpose rather than its function as a uniquely female duty. They recognized the importance of fostering communal bonds to sustain the war effort and survive the difficult realities of home-front life. As a result, they believed that it was important to devote time to recreation despite the constant demands of the war effort.

Both groups hosted social gatherings for the many servicemen who passed through Chicago. They opened up their club tearooms, hosted Valentine's Day parties for sailors, and stored magazines and books for their use. In offering such opportunities, the clubs provided entertainment for those in service and promoted a healthy and active social life. The Woman's City Club also offered recreational activities for their community members, suggesting neighborhood square dancing parties and community events to honor the veterans who were able to return home.¹²³ Similarly, the Chicago Woman's Aid Society promoted active games and dancing opportunities for youth and free sources of entertainment for working adults.¹²⁴ Both clubs felt that their community would be able to commit more to the war effort if civilians' social needs were also addressed.

V. Conclusion

In evaluating the war's impact on women, historian Susan Hartmann argues that the war had no uniform effect on women's roles.¹²⁵ In themselves national campaigns embodied complex and sometimes contradictory messages about gender, while the diversity of women's experiences based upon factors such as class, race, religion, age, or the

123. *WCCC Bulletin*, January 1943, 51; *ibid.* April 1943, 71.

124. *CWAW Bulletin*, February 27, 1942; "60th Anniversary Celebration," *CWAW Bulletin*, December 1942; *CWAC Bulletin*, April 30, 1942.

125. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond*, 153.

wartime community in which one lived ensured additional differences. Certainly, these two groups of Chicago clubwomen do not represent all American women, nor even all Chicago women, but they do provide a valuable entry point for understanding the ways in which women responded to the national wartime rhetoric about women's roles in private and public life.

It is worth questioning how clubwomen's work was received by members of Chicago's local communities, given the ways in which clubwomen tended to assume the role of a moral authority for others. Clubwomen saw themselves as the "moral guardians" of the city and spoke out against vice, delinquency, and the conditions of the "unfortunate."¹²⁶ Some historians have criticized the ways in which social-welfare reformers of the early twentieth century assimilated immigrants and the working poor, seeking social control and enforcing middle-class values as they attempted to "sanitize" urban spaces.¹²⁷ It is also true that women's groups and feminist movements have at times focused on issues that are primarily relevant to white upper-middle-class women, excluding and alienating women of minority backgrounds.¹²⁸

It is difficult to know how local communities would have experienced club work. Yet we do know that both groups of women made a conscious effort to work with and learn from the individuals that they were trying to serve, a commitment that was particularly evident in the Woman's City Club of Chicago's and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society's work within and alongside the African American community. By hosting joint events, attending lectures with other clubs, and making regular home visits in the communities where they worked, clubwomen strived to

126. *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 7; *ibid.*, January 1943, 48; "60 Years of Achievement," *CWAW Bulletin*, December 1942.

127. Elizabeth J. Clapp, "Welfare and the Role of Women: The Juvenile Court Movement," *Journal of American Studies* 28, no. 3 (December 1994): 360, www.jstor.org/stable/27555835; Spain, *How Women Saved the City*, 9–13.

128. Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, 267–72.

create opportunities where all community members could exercise a voice in directing improvements and enacting reforms.

Historians have debated the extent to which World War II contributed to women's liberation. Some have emphasized the new career roles open to women, while others, including Leila Rupp and Maureen Honey, have emphasized the extent to which propaganda and popular culture encouraged women to maintain and fulfill their traditional domestic roles while assuming new ones.¹²⁹ Such arguments indicate that the war era failed to alter women's status in society significantly.

A study of the Woman's City Club of Chicago and the Chicago Woman's Aid Society, however, shows that important precedents were formed for later activism at the local and national levels. Years before the civil-rights or the women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s, these clubs had begun to analyze critically issues of race and gender politics. When President Rosenberg stated that "in time of war, we must assume much more than our peace-time share of community responsibility ...because of the greater demands that are made on us," she recognized that the war was opening up new opportunities for women to participate in public life. Clubwomen seized wartime opportunities to exercise independent leadership. Furthermore, they coopted new themes in wartime discourse to advocate for fair treatment and the protection of individual rights—on behalf of themselves and members of their community. Within an evolving context of war, they assumed new positions and were able to craft new arguments for reproductive rights, health care, and racial and gender equality. This tradition of advocacy laid important groundwork for the future work of activists who followed.

The clubwomen's activism is an important demonstration of women's engagement and influence in creating a vision for their wartime community. Chicago clubwomen were never passive consumers of a national

129. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 167; Knaff, *Beyond Rosie the Riveter*, 57; Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 1.

ideology of womanhood. Despite new, urgent, national needs and the inevitable intrusion of the war effort upon the lives of individuals, Chicago clubwomen believed that the success of the nation was rooted in the local, specially, the health and well-being of the individual members of their community.

These two women's clubs demonstrated flexibility while maintaining their commitment to local issues. In finding solutions to local problems, both groups consistently favored reforms that addressed the root, structural causes of problems, particularly those that encouraged education to support long-term change. For example, in their efforts to address juvenile delinquency, they demanded reforms that would provide a "more constructive approach," which would involve work "before the commitment of a boy" to the penitentiary or reform schools.¹³⁰ Their approach dismissed short-sighted initiatives suggested by the pressures of war in favor of solutions that would provide longer-term benefit to the rights of the disadvantaged, including women, children, the sick, the poor, and Chicago's cultural, ethnic, and religious minority groups. In many dimensions, they capitalized upon new wartime opportunities to promote a more inclusive vision of the common good.¹³¹

130. *WCCC Bulletin*, May 1942, 7.

131. "60 Years of Achievement," *CWAW Bulletin*, December 1942; *WCCC Bulletin*, January 1942, 46.

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Making Peace, Making Revolution



Black Gangs in Chicago Politics, 1992–1993

MICHAEL FINNIN MCCOWN, AB'14

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.

— Mt 5:9

Father, I ask of you that all those naysayers, all those agent provocateurs, all those who will stand in the way of this peace, I ask that you blind them, snap the limbs in their bodies and wipe them from the face of the Earth. Amen.

— Wallace “Gator” Bradley¹

Introduction: Gangs and the Crisis of Black Politics

“We Will Stop the Killing” proclaimed the front-page headline of the *Chicago Defender* in late October 1992.² Representatives from several Chicago gangs (or “nations” as they called themselves) and community-activist groups announced a coalition to forge a peace between warring

1. George Papajohn and John Kass, “Gang Summit Nets One Goal—Press, TV,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 1993. Accessed on March 5, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-10-22/news/9310220162.

2. Chinta Strausberg, “We Will Stop the Killing,” *Chicago Defender*, October 26, 1992.

gangs in order to end the violence in black neighborhoods, especially in Chicago's public housing. These organizations rallied after the killing of Dantrell Davis, a seven-year-old boy, who was shot by sniper fire while walking to Jenner Elementary School with his mother from the Cabrini-Green Homes, a public-housing complex, two weeks prior. The Chicago truce followed a similar agreement between gangs in Los Angeles earlier in 1992. The day before LA erupted into riots after the Rodney King verdict, the Crips and Bloods gangs signed a high-profile peace agreement brokered by the Nation of Islam, which was based upon the 1949 armistice between Egypt and Israel.³

Black nationalists, the nationalist left, and mainstream community organizations saw the truce as an act of political consequence that gangs were taking responsibility for their violence. The media portrayed the truce as a source of hope or scandal, and the attention the truce received motivated the organizers to expand on their success through a series of gang summits organized in 1993. The summits were sponsored by the NAACP. Jesse Jackson and Louis Farrakhan, each at the height of his influence, participated in the Chicago summit, where, during one controversial ceremony, Chicago's gang leaders received trophies for their positive work toward community betterment.

Although important at the time, the truce has since been largely forgotten. I learned about it while researching the history of antiviolence initiatives. The question motivating my research was: Has urban violence ever been viewed as a political problem, as opposed to one needing technocratic social administration, to be dealt with primarily by non-profit organizations? This question arose from my own political work at the time organizing with black youth in the Woodlawn neighborhood to establish a Level 1 trauma center at the University of Chicago. This campaign began in 2010 when Damien Turner, an eighteen-year-old community leader, wounded in a drive-by shooting, could not receive

3. Rasheed L. Muhammad, *Original Gang Truce of 1992 & the Proper Handling of People* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace, 2009).

trauma care at the University of Chicago, four blocks from the shooting.⁴ University administrators deflected responsibility for providing such care by citing the need to address the "root causes" of urban violence, pointing to the university's contributions to antiviolence nonprofits and research as more cost-effective solutions. While there is a logic to that position, the lack of political power and consequent divestment from essential services like trauma care belong to the "root causes" of the violence in Chicago's highly segregated poor and working-class communities.

One of the great values of historical research is to question contemporary conceptual paradigms. Not only the answers, but the way investigators frame questions about social and scientific problems are historically situated. Our political choices are framed by our basic assumptions, which are historically contingent. The university's denial of responsibility to provide trauma care was based in a narrowly technocratic and market-driven set of assumptions characteristic of the current neoliberal period, increasingly entrenched as a hegemonic worldview since the late 1970s. The democratic principle of fairness and equality of services among neighborhoods bowed instead to market logic—who can pay for those services—which then determines "cost-effective" solutions differently for poor and rich communities. Rather than an evenly distributed network of trauma centers throughout the city, civic leaders have "antiviolence" programs for some people, and trauma centers for others, located in areas with the lowest incidence of violent crime. Far from advocating for a palliative measure, the campaign for a trauma center at the University of Chicago challenged the real root causes of violence on the South Side: inequality and lack of social power.

When I learned about the gang truce of 1992 and the peace summits of 1993, I decided to explore them in-depth as a relatively recent yet distinct approach to antiviolence work from the initiatives the university

4. Don Terry, "A Death Sparks a Demand for Care," *New York Times*, October 2, 2010. Accessed on November 4, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/03/us/03cnchospitals.html>.

touted. I wanted to explore an alternative to the university's historically particular logic by taking a political approach that saw ending urban violence as rooted necessarily in building community power to alter systems of domination, and not as a problem of technocratic social administration that tolerated and reproduced the logic of a fundamentally unfair system. And I also wanted to know why the truce failed, whether through out-right oppression or its own internal contradictions.⁵

Review of the Literature

Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* offers insights into the political dimensions of violence and power. Fanon theorizes that the psychological trauma of racist oppression turns colonial subjects against one another.⁶ I wondered whether this model could be applied to understand the gangs of Chicago, whose violence against each other left unchallenged the power structure that produces joblessness, discrimination, mass incarceration, and poverty in their communities. For Fanon, this schizoid behavior can be overcome through the liberating violence of revolution. Fanon influenced the revolutionary Black Panther Party (BPP) of the 1960s and '70s, which had an active chapter in Chicago. The BPP attempted

5. For how antiviolenence nonprofits such as Chicago's CeaseFire are evaluated based upon political capital produced rather than independently verified evidence of effectiveness, see Andrew V. Papachristos, "Too Big to Fail: The Science and Politics of Violence Prevention," *Criminology and Public Policy* 10, no. 4 (November 2011): 1,053–63; for the role of nonprofits in depoliticizing social problems and turning service provision into a mode of capitalist value extraction, see INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, eds., *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-profit Industrial Complex* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2007). Service work becomes about the maintenance of the social-service industry; ending the problems that necessitate these services implies the end of the organization, a model that violates capitalist accumulation and the imperative to always grow.

6. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 35–95.

to politicize gangs and address the "root causes" of racist oppression and class warfare through a redistribution of social power. Although the Panthers had dissolved before the gang truce of 1992, the black-power politics they helped popularize was a major component of the political vocabulary of gangs in 1980s and '90s. By the early 1990s the black community was divided between politicians who openly supported the gangs in their attempt to better the community through actions such as the peace summits and voting drives and those who denounced them as self-interested hucksters.⁷

The academic study of gangs has been largely confined to sociology, which defined gangs as criminal organizations. Criminologist and sociologist, George Knox, for example, discounted the 1992 Cabrini-Green truce as "little more than a public relations gimmick by the gangs." For Knox, expecting "a large-scale genuine change in deviant behavior" after the 1993 peace summits was "comparable only to someone leaving the porch light on in the hope that Jimmy Hoffa will return."⁸ A more sympathetic sociologist, John Hagedorn, asserts: "the skeptical claim that the political activities of gangs are more 'rhetoric' than action is simply ahistorical and wrong."⁹ Hagedorn believes that Chicago's gangs pursue their political self-interest within society as it is constituted, but do not attempt revolutionary change. He views gangs as a product of the urban immiseration of the postindustrial era and as a maladaptive social defense against poverty that reproduces impoverishment. Knox, on the other hand, views gangs as directly causal of urban divestment

7. Lucille Younger, "Gangs: New Political Litmus Test?" *Chicago Defender*, December 11, 1993.

8. George W. Knox, *An Introduction to Gangs*, new rev. ed. (Bristol, IN: Wyndham Hall Press, 1994), 585, 587.

9. John M. Hagedorn, *A World of Gangs: Armed Young Men and Gangsta Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 45.

whose leaders prey on the inhabitants of the inner city and make regular economic development of ghetto areas impossible.¹⁰

James Sayles, writing under the pseudonym, “Yaki,” argues that the truce and political activities of gangs like the Gangster Disciples constituted the political consciousness and potential organizational apparatus for the development of a black revolutionary movement. Sayles, a Marxist-Leninist black nationalist and a founding member of the New Afrikan Independence Movement, argues that gangs were targeted because they sought to “acquire power in order to develop the community in a revolutionary manner.”¹¹ Like Sayles I wish to examine the gang as a dynamic political actor and to historicize both the gang truce and the violence it sought to end. What were the political possibilities of this gang truce? How did it come together? And why did it fall apart?

I use the term “politics” in the sense that political scientist Adolph Reed Jr. has defined oppositional politics as “an explicit challenge to power relations as they are enforced and mediated through the state apparatus.”¹² I want to investigate the extent to which gangs had a political self-understanding that transcended the limited aims of a criminal operation and flirted with transformation into revolutionary organizations, as Sayles argues was the case. I hope this investigation will deepen

10. Hagedorn’s analysis changed over time. His first work on gangs, *People and Folks*, reflects “culture of poverty” theories of the 1990s that explained black immiseration as a combination of deindustrialization and subsequent cultural traits, like female-headed households. Hagedorn distanced himself from these theories in later works as the racist and classist undertones to these theories became evident, see John M. Hagedorn and Perry Macon, *People and Folks: Gangs, Crime, and the Underclass in a Rustbelt City* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1988).

11. Yaki [James Sayles], “Let’s ‘Gang-Up’ on Oppression: Youth Organizations and the Struggle for Power in Oppressed Communities,” in *New Abolitionists: The (Neo)slave Narratives and Contemporary Prison Writings*, ed. Joy James, 175–94 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).

12. Adolph Reed Jr., *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 117.

our understanding of the politics of gangs and black politics generally in the 1990s. Understanding the reasons that organizations as diverse as the New Afrikan Independence Movement and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) sought to develop and define the political potential of gangs may provide insight into what Reed describes as “the crisis of purpose in Afro-American politics” in the wake of the successes and failures of the civil-rights movement.¹³

Methodology

Through my community-organizing work on the South Side and through some of my professors, I was able to interview several former gang members and community leaders with ties to gangs.¹⁴ These interviews were critical to providing a complete view of the truce, given the antigang bias of journalists, sociologists, and criminologists in the 1990s. Internal gang memos collected by the Illinois Department of Corrections helped me evaluate how gangs saw themselves and wished to be perceived by their membership. Unedited video footage, taken to document Cabrini-Green Homes in their final days before the city replaced them with “mixed-income” housing, provided insight to how the truce played out at Cabrini-Green, where Dantrell Davis was killed and the truce was first announced. The *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Tribune*, which followed gangs closely, helped me piece together a narrative of the truce and the city’s reaction to it.

My informants saw me, a white college student, as an outsider and some were suspicious of the motives behind my research. They also saw this as an opportunity to tell the “truth” about gangs, organizations rarely portrayed sympathetically or complexly by academics and the press. Because of my political engagement, or because I was sent by someone

13. Adolph L. Reed Jr., *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon: The Crisis of Purpose in Afro-American Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).

14. Editor’s note: We replaced the informants’ names with titles (e.g., school administrator) to protect their privacy.

my informants respected, I was able to establish rapport. My knowledge of important figures in the history of the gangs and generally sympathetic attitude toward gang members impressed my informants and allowed for deeper conversations. For some, the truce remains one of their primary claims to relevance, and they wanted to control and protect its legacy.

Gang violence persists in Chicago, and former gang leaders employed by antiviolence organizations, such as CeaseFire (now Cure Violence), attempt to “interrupt” violence among young gang members before it occurs.¹⁵ One of my informants works as an interrupter. An awareness of how the current social position of my informants might effect their portrayal of the past has guided how I consider their claims against each other and against the written record. I have tried to indicate where evidence is contradictory, such as who was responsible for the truce that came together in 1992.

We will probably never know exactly who made what deals and all the motivations for attempting to stop violence among Chicago’s warring gangs in the early 1990s. What makes this episode in gang history interesting is the multivariate factors that brought many diverse political actors in black politics together to attempt to stop the violence by treating gangs as legitimate political institutions that could act to discipline and rechannel urban violence toward higher purposes.

The Political Economy of Gangs in Chicago

The late 1960s and early 1970s, when black communities politicized around the civil-rights and black-power movements, were the precursor to the political activity of gangs in the early 1990s. During this period, Chicago’s black gangs also participated in social programs, protest movements, and electoral politics. For examples, the Blackstone Rangers (one

15. Alex Kotlowitz, *The Interruptors*, directed by Steve James (Chicago: Kartemquin Films, 2011).

of Chicago’s super gangs¹⁶) received foundation grants to provide social services, and the “Lords, Stones, and Disciples” coalition agitated for black jobs in the construction industry. The leader of the Blackstone Rangers, Jeff Fort, was even invited to the inauguration of Richard M. Nixon.¹⁷ In his study of Illinois’s Stateville penitentiary, sociologist James Jacobs outlines the different ways gangs could become politically involved, either through oppositional radicalism or social-service work.¹⁸ Jacobs concludes that gangs became “confluent with the justificatory vocabulary of protest. Leaders regularly maintain that they are ‘political prisoners,’ under the slogans of racial oppression, black nationalism, and revolution.”¹⁹ Knox asserted that gangs mobilized the rhetoric of popular political movements to obscure their commitment to criminal activities in the 1990s. Another factor in Chicago was machine politics, in which any organized group could vie for power through the deft application of *realpolitik*. For instance, black, white, and Latino gangs

16. “Super gangs” were composed of multiple “sets” that cohere under one moniker and power structure such as the Vice Lords, the Blackstone Rangers (also known as El Rukns), and the Gangster Disciples. Founded at midcentury, they reached their historical apex of power by the early 1990s. Hagedorn, *World of Gangs*, 37.

17. Natalie Y. Moore and Lance Williams, *The Almighty Black P Stone Nation: The Rise, Fall, and Resurgence of an American Gang* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2011), 111–14.

18. James B. Jacobs, *Stateville: The Penitentiary in Mass Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 145. “To state that the Chicago street gangs became politicized in the late 1960s thus means one of three things: (1) that the street gangs adopted a radical ideology from the militant civil-rights movement, (2) that the street gangs became committed to social change for their community as a whole, or (3) that the street gangs became politically sophisticated, realizing that the political system could be used to further their own ends—money, power, organizational growth.”

19. *Ibid.*, 153.

have periodically formed relationships with local politicians to get out or suppress the vote in return for patronage or the veneer of legitimacy.²⁰ The gang increased its power through such alliances, but advanced no substantive programmatic goal.

During the 1960s and '70s gangs responded to the broad politicization within black America by aligning gang activities with community goals.²¹ In the late 1960s the Vice Lords, a Chicago super gang on the West Side, provided social services under the tutelage of David Dawley, a young white foundation worker: "Many have been skeptical about the ability of the Vice Lords to move beyond street fighting, but the qualities that make men company presidents and political leaders are also qualities that lead to success on the street. If Horatio Alger had lived in the ghetto, he might have been a Vice Lord."²² Dawley attributed criminality and gang membership to the deprivations of the ghetto; he believed gangs could be transformed into community corporations that provided services and worked within the capitalist system to achieve community betterment. The Vice Lords participated in neighborhood beautification, opened a restaurant for teenagers, "Teen Town," and lead

20. John M. Hagedorn, "Institutionalized Gangs and Violence in Chicago," in *Neither War nor Peace: International Comparisons of Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence*, ed. Luke Dowdney, 312–30 (London: Save the Children, 2005), resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/sites/default/files/documents/5014.pdf; Irving A. Spergel, *The Youth Gang Problem: A Community Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 120–22.

21. For how collective black interest during the civil-rights era trumped economic and sociological explanations of transactional voter behavior within Chicago's political machine, see William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931–1991* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 67–68, 115–40.

22. David Dawley, *A Nation of Lords: The Autobiography of the Vice Lords*, 2nd ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1992), xi.

other community-development programs funded in part with grants from the Rockefeller Foundation.²³

Gangs have also at times been on the periphery of black politics. The Blackstone Rangers marched with Martin Luther King in 1966 through the Chicago neighborhood of Marquette Park to protest segregation.²⁴ The Black Panther Party had limited success recruiting gangs into their coalition of revolutionary youth organizations in the late 1960s.²⁵ Although the aesthetics of black nationalism gained importance in gang culture during this period, the gangs did not embrace the Panthers' revolutionary politics.²⁶ The Panthers' utopian social vision and political program sought to create the conditions necessary for sweeping social reconfigurations. The first two points of the Panthers' ten-point program were black self-determination and full employment for black people. These goals could mobilize a constituency based in its immediate sense of its own self-interest, but could not be fully achieved within the confines of American capitalism, and therefore required an accompanying revolutionary vision.²⁷ Gangs produced no such platform, though they might justify their criminal activities as a response to social and state-sponsored racism.

23. Ibid., 121–33.

24. Moore & Williams, *Almighty Black P Stone Nation*, 41. The Blackstone Rangers also served as King's bodyguards.

25. Jakobi Williams, *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 161. Concerned about the possibility of a Black Panther and Blackstone Ranger alliance, the FBI sent separate letters to the leaders of each organization asserting that each leader wanted the other killed. The Panthers did have some success at building a "Rainbow Coalition" with youth organizations of other races.

26. Jacobs, *Stateville*.

27. For a full list, see Huey P. Newton, "War against the Panthers: A Study of Repression in America" (PhD diss., University of California at Santa Cruz, 1980), appendix A and B.

In the 1970s, as deindustrialization began to reshape the United States economy, drug dealing and gang membership became more permanent vocations for unemployed black men. Previously, gang membership was a phase in the life cycle of working-class young men, before they joined the industrial workforce.²⁸ Not only were men staying longer in gangs, but leaders of supposed youth organizations were now entering middle age.²⁹

Concurrent with the restructuring of the American economy was a shift in state policy. Social programs aimed at rehabilitating gang members were replaced by suppressive “law and order” policies.³⁰ In the early 1970s the state began incarcerating young black men en masse, which facilitated the growth of gangs in prison.³¹ Mayor Richard J. Daley established Chicago’s Gang Intelligence Unit in 1969 after two black gangs were involved in an electoral challenge to the regular Democratic machine.³² Daley had belonged to an Irish gang that had integrated into the political machine; he viewed attempts by gangs, such as the Vice Lords, to institutionalize on the same model as a threat.³³

28. Hagedorn & Macon, *People and Folks*.

29. Useni Eugene Perkins, *Explosion of Chicago’s Black Street Gangs, 1900–Present* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1987), 18.

30. Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh and Steven D. Levitt, “Are We a Family or a Business?” History and Disjuncture in the Urban American Street Gang,” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (August 2000): 458.

31. Jacobs, *Stateville*.

32. Ibid, 143.

33. “It was not primarily economic factors that transformed the CVL [Conservative Vice Lords] into a drug business. The devastation in Lawndale caused by deindustrialization followed a path to perdition paved by racism. The CVL would follow a third-world trajectory of social exclusion, not climb the ethnic succession ladder like the Irish HAA [Hamburg Athletic Association],” Hagedorn, *World of Gangs*, 65–83. For white ethnic gangs in Chicago’s political machine, see Frederic Milton Thrasher, *The Gang: A Study of 1,313 Gangs in Chicago*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927), 452–86.

In the 1980s, blacks increasingly turned to the underground economy, and gangs became distribution networks for narcotics or “taxed” the dealers in their areas of control. Particularly with the onset of the crack cocaine “epidemic,” which arrived in Chicago in 1986, some gangs changed from social-support networks for young men to sophisticated drug distributors with organizational structures similar to a corporate franchise.³⁴ For high-level members, drug dealing could provide entrée into the middle class, and gang leaders assumed prominent roles in middle-class black neighborhoods.³⁵ Chicago’s black gangs in the latter half of the twentieth century were not merely youth cliques, but what John Hagedorn describes as “shapers,” or “institutionalized gangs or other nonstate armed actors with powerful self-interests.”³⁶ For Hagedorn institutionalized gangs desire a laissez-faire relationship with government and involve in politics only to prevent interference with gang interests or realpolitik goals.³⁷ He described the gangs’ attempt to become integrated into the machine as “mundane” Chicago-style politics.³⁸ Yet Hagedorn’s analysis overlooks the complicated community forces at work at the time of the truce, in particular the city’s black-nationalist activists, who were partially responsible for overthrowing the Democratic machine and installing Harold Washington as mayor in 1983. After Washington’s premature death in 1987, the black nationalists, who shared a political lexicon with gangs, wanted to incorporate them and enhance their power vis-à-vis the reconstituted Daley machine

34. Venkatesh & Levitt, “Are We a Family or a Business?” 427–62.

35. Mary E. Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege & Peril among the Black Middle Class*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 68–90.

36. Hagedorn, *World of Gangs*, 37.

37. Ibid, 37.

38. Ibid, 42. Although they took their formative political lessons from the masters of the old Chicago machine, a different set of political imperatives drove the Gangster Disciples.

under Richard M. Daley. Whether gang activism would amount to an oppositional politics or merely increase the personal power of certain black leaders within the city's political order was contested.

The Killing of Dantrell Davis

Gangs were one of the most powerful entities in Chicago's public housing when Dantrell Davis was killed by sniper fire at the Cabrini-Green Homes on October 13, 1992. The high-rise projects were fortress-like and defensible, where gangs could sell narcotics, retreat from the police, and find excellent vantage points from which to shoot at rival gangs.³⁹ In the Robert Taylor Homes, on the South Side, levels of violent crime were twenty times higher than in the rest of Chicago.⁴⁰ However, Cabrini-Green was the best known of the high-rise projects, because of its proximity to the wealthy Gold Coast and because then mayor, Jane Byrne, lived there briefly in 1981 after a severe spate of killings. The police mostly avoided Cabrini-Green after two officers were killed there in 1970.⁴¹

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) had not always held such a hellish reputation. It was founded in 1937 to ameliorate the Depression and postwar housing shortages for the elderly and poor and working-class

39. Hagedorn, "Institutionalized Gangs," 15.

40. "11 percent of the city's murder, 9 percent of its rapes, and 10 percent of its aggravated assaults" occurred in the Robert Taylor Homes, which housed 0.5 percent of Chicago's population. James Garbarino, Nancy Dubrow, Kathleen Kostelny, and Carole Pardo, "Children in War Zones: From Mozambique to Chicago," in *Children in Danger: Coping with the Consequences of Community Violence* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 44.

41. Larry Bennett and Adolf Reed Jr., "The New Face of Urban Renewal: The Near North Redevelopment Initiative and the Cabrini-Green Neighborhood," in *Without Justice for All: The New Liberalism and Our Retreat from Racial Equality*, ed. Adolph Reed Jr., 176–77 (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999).

families.⁴² Early residents described the housing as being like paradise.⁴³ During the 1950s, white working-class residents took advantage of federally backed mortgages denied to blacks to leave public housing. In the late 1960s, black working-class tenants began to leave as well. By the 1970s, the projects were welfare housing of last resort, occupied almost exclusively by blacks. The CHA teetered on insolvency with the loss of rents after the exodus of the working class⁴⁴ and after Reagan-era cutbacks of federal subsidies to local housing authorities.⁴⁵ By the 1990s, Chicago's public housing was more closely associated with the slums it was meant to replace than with a paradisiacal New Deal promised land.⁴⁶

The destruction of the black male was a topic of considerable importance throughout the black communities of Chicago at the time of Davis's death. The *Chicago Defender* attempted to explain the crisis of "black-on-black" violence in Chicago as a product of community degeneration and exhorted blacks (especially youth) to change their ways. This discourse of blame undermined the credibility of poor communities to

42. Harvey M. Choldin, "Chicago Housing Authority," in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2004), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/253.html>.

43. D. Bradford Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 1–14.

44. Ibid, 183–212.

45. Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, *American Project: The Rise and Fall of a Modern Ghetto* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 6.

46. Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster*, 183–212; Larry Bennett, Janet L. Smith, and Patricia A. Wright, eds., *Where Are Poor People To Live? Transforming Public Housing Communities* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 169. In the late 1950s, when mid-rises and high-rises were added to the Cabrini-Green Homes, the complex was 99 percent black.

self-advocate, a particular problem for the residents of public housing.⁴⁷ Davis's killing became a national symbol for violence in Chicago, and city leadership was under immense pressure to respond. However, the extent to which the residents of Cabrini-Green would be consulted in formulating that response was an open question.

Vincent Lane, chairman of the CHA, responded to the killing with dramatic action. The residents wanted consistent patrols as in other "normal" neighborhoods, but Lane asked police to conduct unannounced building sweeps, seizing drugs and weapons and arresting purported gang members.⁴⁸ After Davis's shooting the CHA evicted families from low-occupancy buildings that were used by gangs and left the buildings vacant. Because Cabrini-Green was next to the Gold Coast, advocates, such as Dorothy Tillman, Third Ward alderwoman, and Janette Wilson, national executive director of Operation PUSH, described the policy as a landgrab.⁴⁹

Mayor Daley made several public-relations blunders. Rather than express his sympathies and pledge city support to Cabrini-Green residents, Daley plugged Bill Clinton's campaign, and promised more federal attention to inner-city problems if Clinton were elected president. He left for a golf tournament, skipping Davis's funeral.⁵⁰ Almost a week after the shooting and after significant negative press, Daley announced a plan to address the violence at Cabrini-Green. Framed as a war against gangs, the plan continued the law-and-order suppression policy (at least toward black gangs). Daley proclaimed that "we cannot surrender to

47. For how Cabrini-Green residents were aware of and attempted to change the public's negative image of them, see Bennett & Reed, "The New Face of Urban Renewal."

48. Venkatesh, *American Project*, 129.

49. "CHA Seals 'Sniper Galleries,'" *Chicago Defender*, October 19, 1992.

50. Mary Hill and John Kass, "At Cabrini, Daley Hears Lot of Quiet," *Chicago Tribune*, October 24, 1992. Accessed on January 31, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-10-24/news/9204060241.

gangs," and the mayor, famous for his malapropisms, vowed to "de-humanize" the violence in CHA buildings by more surprise sweeps and by permanently stationing police and armed guards in lobbies.⁵¹ Additionally, four high-rises used as sniper towers would be vacated and permanently sealed.⁵² The *Tribune* called Daley's plan an "old-fashioned Chicago political compromise that included damage control for a beleaguered mayor and something of a coup for the CHA chairman."⁵³ Lane's initiatives had stalled in part because the closing of the high-rises and the institution of "mixed-income" housing was a political risk. Forced to act in the face of the crisis, Daley's plan made a political opening to implement Lane's vision.

At another press conference announcing an interagency taskforce to fight gangs, Daley charged that "for too long you have made the community a target. Now, you're the target." Despite the tough words, Frances Sandoval of the lobbying group Mothers Against Gangs complained that the plan was inadequate because "the sweeps will be gone and it will be open season again. The gangs will not stop or end by sweeping CHA." She pointed out that the gangs were much more widespread than just public housing, and extended into the suburbs.⁵⁴ A few days later another *Defender* article described her group as "hailing" Daley's plan, but desired that he create a special law enforcement unit able to keep guns from arriving into the city.⁵⁵ City business leaders were

51. Hill & Kass, "At Cabrini"; "CHA Seals 'Sniper Galleries'."

52. Chinta Strausberg, "We Cannot Surrender to Gangs," *Chicago Defender*, October 20, 1992.

53. John Kass, "Compromise Cabrini Plan: Mayor, CHA Boss Detail 'War' Effort," *Chicago Tribune*, October 20, 1992. Accessed on January 31, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-10-20/news/9204040975.

54. "Task Force Named to Fight Gangs," *Chicago Defender*, October 24, 1992.

55. Ethan Michaeli, "Mothers against Gangs Hail Daley's Plan," *Chicago Defender*, October 24, 1992.

also concerned about the gang problem and wanted to see get-tough policies, such as abolishing probation and the largely symbolic measure of melting down guns seized from criminals.⁵⁶

At the same time, the closure of public housing units placed Daley at odds with Marion Stamps, a stalwart community activist and resident of Cabrini-Green. For Stamps “the situation that led to the killing [of Dantrell Davis] is nothing new.” She charged that the mayor was “using our grief and our ignorance to reclaim the land... How can [CHA chairman Lane] justify closing down four buildings with such a long waiting list? It’s a set up, and I resent all those officials coming to Davis’ funeral and they have never set foot at Cabrini-Green before.”⁵⁷ Stamps referred to the thousands of families (sixty thousand in 1990) on waiting lists for CHA units despite the deteriorating conditions of the projects.⁵⁸

While Mothers Against Gangs greeted Daley’s announcement with ambivalence, criticizing him for not going far enough with his policies, Stamps denounced Daley’s plan for its lack of community involvement and denied that the Cabrini-Green community needed to be saved from the gangs. “[The gangs] are ours,” she told the *Defender*.⁵⁹ A former Black Panther and a force in the Harold Washington campaign, Stamps had experience battling city authorities and a keen eye for the contradictions and hypocrisies of her opponents.⁶⁰ Claiming the gangs as a part of

56. Chinta Strausberg, “Daley Talks Tough on Guns, Crime,” *Chicago Defender*, December 18, 1993.

57. Strausberg, “We Cannot Surrender.”

58. Patrick T. Reardon, “CHA’s Rent Limits Pose a Dilemma,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 30 1990. Accessed on January 31, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1990-07-30/news/9003030877.

59. “Task Force Named to Fight Gangs.”

60. For Stamps’s involvement in the Washington campaign, see Gary Rivlin, *Fire on the Prairie: Chicago’s Harold Washington and the Politics of Race* (New York: Henry Holt, 1992), 76–77, 93–94.

the community was a realistic assessment of the complex and widespread affiliations of gang members, who were members of Cabrini-Green families and not an abstract social pathogen.⁶¹ In her view, mass arrests of gang members would only further tear, not mend, the fabric of the community.

Stamps held black-nationalist beliefs, but her calls for black unity were rooted in strategic analysis: “the only way black people can win anything in America is that they got to stick together.”⁶² It is not surprising that when gang leaders announced the truce on October 25, 1992, the press conference was held at Stamps’s Tranquility Marksman Memorial Organization. Not everyone in the Cabrini-Green community agreed with Stamps’s approach. One former resident hoped “that the court system will hand out stiffer penalties in respect to gang violence, so that those cells [in Cook County Jail] will be put to good use.”⁶³

Stamps utilized the language of nationalism to build a place for gang members within the Cabrini-Green community. She continued to urge the community to approach gangs as potentially positive community members.⁶⁴ Reflecting in 1997, after her mother’s death, Guana Stamps

61. In Venkatesh’s study of the Robert Taylor Homes “the same individuals could often take on various roles, depending on the context. Just as the gang member was also a nephew, a student, and so on, depending on the circumstances, so too were the men who spent time outside the local liquor store invested in other roles, including that of parent, advocate, and part-time laborer.” Venkatesh, *American Project*, xv.

62. “Raw: Robbins Barber Shop—Marion Stamps,” *Voices of Cabrini*, directed by Ronit Bezalel and Antonio Ferrera (Chicago: Media Burn Archive, July 8, 1996). Accessed on February 1, 2014, mediaburn.org/video/voices-of-cabrini-raw-robbins-barber-shop-marion-stamps.

63. Doreen Ambrose-Van Lee, letter to the editor, *Chicago Defender*, December 18, 1993.

64. “Raw: Town Hall Meeting,” *Voices of Cabrini*. Accessed on February 1, 2014, mediaburn.org/video/voices-of-cabrini-raw-town-hall-meeting.

spoke about the “nations” to a filmmaker documenting Cabrini-Green and its struggle with the city:

Nations and gangs. [long pause while thinking] Gangs are on the South Side where they shooting and killing people. Gangs are on the West Side where they shooting and killing people. Gangs are in the suburbs where they killing and shooting people. Nations—there’s only one nation, under Allah, of many tribes. These brothers are not gang members or gang bangers: They are one nation, under Allah, of many tribes.

Interviewer: Who are the tribes?

The tribes over here, you have the Black P Stone Nation, the Cobra Stone Nation, you have the Conservative Vice Lord Nation, you have the Gangster Disciples Nation, and you have the Travelin’ Vice Lord Nation.

Interviewer: Are different nations in different buildings?

Yes, different nations are in different buildings, but each nation can go to any building they so desire. Whenever they want to. Because we made a concrete decision, five years ago, five years ago, that we’re going to stop the killing, and save the babies, and build the nation.

Interviewer: Who created it?

My mother. My mother said to the brothers: We gotta stop the killing y’all. We gotta save the babies y’all. We got to build the nation you all. And it was her cry as a mother, who has never lost a son cause she didn’t have any, but all of them are her sons and her daughters.⁶⁵

Stamps gave “the brothers” a special role within the Cabrini-Green community to keep the peace:

65. “Raw: Guana Stamps,” *Voices of Cabrini*. Accessed on February 10, 2012, mediaburn.org/video/voices-of-cabrini-raw-guana-stamps.

The sisters are the mothers. It is our responsibility to take care of all the children of the village. It is our responsibility to make sure our houses are clean for the brothers, for the children, for ourselves... The brothers have few responsibilities. Their responsibilities aren’t as big as us, as sisters, but their main responsibility is to maintain the peace on the Near North Side—that’s their first responsibility.⁶⁶

The separate, but complementary, roles that Guana saw for men and women within Cabrini-Green reflects the antifeminism of black nationalist ideology, but peace keeping gave the mostly unemployed young men an essential role to play.⁶⁷ Guana’s conception of the nation strongly resembles the “community nationalism” that Michael Dawson argues was prevalent in the 1990s:

The class divisions [of revolutionary nationalism] are gone; indeed, black business entrepreneurs have pride of place, as they do in the ideology of the Nation of Islam. Business is seen as the key to black economic development, and political development without economic development is considered nonsense. Politics, however, has not totally disappeared. Electoral campaigns are waged to gain political as well as economic control of the institutions and

66. Ibid.

67. For black nationalist feminist activists’ critiques of “complementary” roles, see “The Combahee River Collective Statement,” in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith, 264–74 (New York: Kitchen Table—Women of Color Press, 1983), and E. Frances White, “Africa on My Mind,” in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, 504–24 (New York: New Press, 1995). White argues that the notion of “complementary roles” originates in Eurocentric bourgeois thought concerned with “respectability.” For women’s activism around public housing, see Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women’s Struggles against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

resources of the black community. The concept of self-determination is strongly supported even if, as alluded to earlier, the concept of nation has a very ambiguous status.⁶⁸

The negotiation of the gang truce is not just a story of Stamps's agitation for gang leadership to rise to the occasion and protect their embattled communities from city authorities. Together with representatives from several gangs were community leaders, including the prominent Baptist reverend, Albert Sampson, the national executive director of Operation PUSH, Janette Wilson, the radio host and nationalist activist, Lu Palmer, and the "former" Gangster Disciples (and future aldermanic candidate), Wallace Bradley.⁶⁹ This group resembled the activist milieu that brought Harold Washington to power, gathered now to unite the gangs for the greater good.

Stamps presented a multipoint plan (see appendix A) that opposed the "law-and-order" plans of Lane and Daley.⁷⁰ Presented as the collective work of Cabrini-Green residents, it focused on providing food and clothes for residents, resources for area schools, and job training and called for a congressional hearing on "what led to the destruction of Cabrini-Green and the entire Near-North Black community."⁷¹ It also called for amenities such as a theatre, a bowling alley, and an arcade.⁷² By demanding the

68. Michael C. Dawson, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 120–21.

69. Strausberg, "We Will Stop the Killing."

70. Ibid.; in "Let's 'Gang-Up' on Oppression" Yaki credits the gangs with creating the plan; the *Defender* and the *Tribune* attribute it to Stamps.

71. Strausberg, "We Will Stop the Killing."

72. Entertainment might seem a frivolous demand, but such improvements were identified in a 1981 CHA report as important indirect methods of security enhancement; mirroring nationwide trends of punitive policies towards urban

revitalization rather than the militarization of Cabrini-Green, the plan attributed violence to the conditions of material life, not to the pathological behavior of public-housing residences. Aware of Mayor Daley's need to deliver votes, Stamps threatened to organize the residents of Cabrini-Green to *not* vote in the presidential election if their plan to improve the community was ignored.⁷³

For Stamps and the residents of Cabrini-Green, the truce promised to do more than end the violence. Strategically, it would promote the community's unity and ability to take collective action against outside plans to dissolve the community by decreasing the availability of housing units and by evicting and arresting residents. Stamps's plan presented Cabrini-Green to the rest of the city as a community that possessed positive values, which made it a credible interlocutor in the debate about its own future. The city could not unilaterally decide the fate of Cabrini-Green without taking the wishes of residents into account. In this sense the gangs, in coalition with community groups at the announcement of the truce, were participating in a fledgling political movement to stop the city's still incipient plans to displace public-housing residents, and the gangs were subordinating their own organizational interests to the larger community's desire to achieve peace.

crime since the 1970s, the CHA had refused to provide these amenities. Venkatesh, *American Project*, 124–26.

73. Jerry Crimmins, "Cabrini Activist Proposes 'Peace Plan,'" *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1992. Accessed on January 31, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-10-23/news/9204050828.

The 1992 Truce

City leadership discounted the gang truce. LeRoy Martin, director of public safety at the CHA, said that gangs were feeling a “great deal of pressure and they have to do something to try to make themselves a little better than what they are. Their income up there is selling narcotics, and I don’t see them giving this up when they call a truce.” Mayor Daley brought up the same concerns. Stamps defended the truce from these criticisms: “They should stop trying to set up a situation to make it fail before it gets off the ground... This is a spiritual movement... Maybe they don’t understand what happens when the Lord makes up his mind and he intervenes.” Stamps suggested that Daley and Martin do “the same thing that the brothers did... apologize to us for the disrespect, the pain and the suffering they have caused.” She blamed the US government for allowing drugs into Cabrini-Green and noted that treatment centers would go further toward resolving drug addiction than gang suppression.⁷⁴

Although Stamps became a spokesperson for the truce, particularly as it related to the Cabrini-Green community, other forces were at play that made the truce possible. This section will argue that the truce was in part a product of the self-interest of Chicago’s gang leadership. The Gangster Disciples, the best organized black gang, sought to transcend the streets through a philosophy of “growth and development,” to become a legitimate organization, and to uplift its members.

74. Chinta Strausberg, “Daley, Martin Doubt Peace Treaty,” *Chicago Defender*, October 27, 1992. Stamps’s suspicions were warranted; in a 1996 series in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Gary Webb documented the CIA’s awareness that the Nicaraguan contras and Reagan allies were trafficking cocaine into the United States during the crack epidemic to fund their guerilla war against the Sandinista government. Gary Webb, *Dark Alliance: The CIA, the Contras, and the Crack Cocaine Explosion* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998).

According to a former Gangster Disciples (GD) who held the midlevel post of regent, the truce was the brainchild of GD founder, Larry Hoover. The regent claims that the truce was being negotiated at least a year prior to Davis’s murder. Hoover, serving time for murder in Stateville Correctional Center since 1973, wanted out of prison: “he personally felt like the organization on the street was getting into so much stuff and they were making it difficult for him to make parole, as well as other high-ranking members. Also, he was a little angry about all the unnecessary killings that was going on the streets of Chicago.”⁷⁵

Hoover ran the GD from prison. Since the 1970s, the Illinois prison population had grown and gangs vied openly for control of the chaotic system.⁷⁶ Hoover was believed to be a force behind the 1978 riot at Pontiac prison, and he used his power to negotiate with prison officials. According to one prison guard, Hoover had an “unlocked prison cell, specially prepared food delivered directly to him and an unlimited number of telephone calls.”⁷⁷ In return for maintaining order among prisoners, Hoover was granted a transfer to Vienna Correctional Center, a minimum-security prison from which he could better direct the gang.⁷⁸

75. Former regent (Gangster Disciples), interview with author, January 13, 2014. The regent left the gang in the late 1990s after federal prosecution of GD leaders.

76. Jacobs, *Stateville*, 138–74.

77. Jeff Zeleny, “Guard Tells of Hoover’s Reign in Prison,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 27, 1997. Accessed on April 9, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1997-03-27/news/9703270171.

78. Ron Chepesiuk, *Black Gangsters of Chicago* (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books, 2007), 151–69; Toussaint Losier, “Prison House of Nations: Police Violence and Mass Incarceration in the Long Course of Black Insurgency in Illinois, 1953–1987.” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2014); James “Yaki” Sayles and Larry Hoover may have met at Pontiac through the legal defense of the thirty-one “Pontiac Brothers” who rioted. Sayles was the leader of a Marxist-Leninist black nationalist group based in the prison.

By 1991 the GD had a membership of between eighteen and twenty-five thousand.⁷⁹ GD organization followed a corporate model. Hoover was the chairman, followed by a board of directors, governors, regents, and soldiers.⁸⁰ Hoover envisioned the GD becoming a political organization along the lines of Richard J. Daley's Hamburg Athletic Association and required that all incarcerated GD read Mike Royko's *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*.⁸¹ The GD "New Concept" held that gangs were degenerate institutions and gang members had to achieve personal uplift and adhere to certain moral principles in order to become a more powerful, more effective organization.⁸²

The New Concept echoed bootstrapping ideas within black political discourse of the 1980s and '90s, which emphasized the complicity of black people in creating their own degraded situation. Moral uplift, education, and political participation were viewed as essential to group advancement. A September 27, 1982, prison memo from Hoover and the board of directors to the rank and file read: "We are NOT a GANG. Our Youth is our future. Through communicating with them, you will help us in many ways on the streets. Many of you incarcerated here, are looked up upon by the Youth on the streets. Begin to feed them our New Concept."⁸³ Hoover instructed GD outside of prison to vote against

79. Chepesiuk, *Black Gangsters*.

80. Ibid., 204.

81. Former Gangster Disciples regent, interview with author; Neal Pollack, "The Gang that Could Go Straight," *Chicago Reader*, January 26, 1995. Accessed on February 17, 2014, www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/the-gang-that-could-go-straight/Content?oid=886552.

82. Rod L. Emery, *The Blueprint: From Gangster Disciple to Growth and Development* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing, 1996).

83. George W. Knox, *The Impact of the Federal Prosecution of the Gangster Disciples* (Chicago: National Gang Crime Research Center, 2008). Accessed on December 10, 2014, www.ngcrc.com/ngcrc/page14.htm.

the Republican gubernatorial candidate, who wanted to lower the age at which youth could be tried as adults.⁸⁴ George Knox dismissed the memo: "it uses the cunning and guile and cult-like language of how to cultivate youths on the streets by 'feeding them' the 'New Concept' (i.e., they are not a gang)."⁸⁵ Others read the memo as a sincere attempt to transcend criminal aims and advocate for broader community interests.⁸⁶

The New Concept was applied as part of the Englewood Technical Preparatory Academy's "gang deactivation program." Between 1992 and 1995 school administrators did not discipline students who were members of the Gangster Disciples and Black Disciples, and older gang members served as hall monitors and disciplinarians.⁸⁷ According to an Englewood school administrator, school reform laws gave the local school council authority to implement the gang deactivation program without approval from the district; at one point in the 1990s Englewood Tech's council president was a top-ranking GD.⁸⁸ The program was not

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid. An October 28, 1982, memo asserts that gangs were created by the government to "keep us way [sic] from the concept of organization. Because as we consolidated, unified, and being a power to reckon with. Their main goal was to bring disorganization among the ranks of our people."

86. Hagedorn, *World of Gangs*, 42; Greg Donaldson, "Twenty-First Century V.O.T.E.," *Gangresearch*, c. 1994. Accessed on February 20, 2014, gangresearch.net/ChicagoGangs/BGD/vote21.html.

87. Grant Pick, "Once a Gangbanger," *Chicago Reader*, June 9, 1994. Accessed on February 17, 2014, www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/once-a-gangbanger/Content?oid=884710.

88. School administrator (Englewood Technical Preparatory Academy), interview with author, November 20, 2014.

questioned until a 1995 *Tribune* article prompted a denunciation from the local NAACP president and the mayor.⁸⁹

Hoover believed that the Gangster Disciples had potential power as an organized voting block, which could help him obtain release from prison by politically pressuring the parole board. Hoover was a C-number prisoner, with an extremely long sentence; it was understood that these prisoners would probably be paroled before the completion of their sentence. If Hoover could demonstrate that he could end gang violence, he could present himself to the parole board as a responsible community figure.⁹⁰ Former mayor Eugene Sawyer, the local branch of the NAACP, and Operation PUSH supported Hoover parole in the summer of 1993.⁹¹ That summer the gang also launched a political action committee called 21st Century V.O.T.E., which brought as many as five thousand GD to

89. George Papajohn and Jerry Thomas, "School's Monitors Are Gang Members," *Chicago Tribune*, June 15, 1995. Accessed on February 18, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1995-06-15/news/9506150157. The article quotes Hal Baskin, a former gang member, credited with starting the program: "Remember that gangs are like fraternal organizations. They want intelligent people to be part of the process. This is part of a transitional process, transcending from the street level to the corporate level aspect of it." See also Jerry Thomas and George Papajohn, "School's Use of Gangs Hit," *Chicago Tribune*, June 16, 1995. Accessed on February 18, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1995-06-16/news/9506200076; George Papajohn and Jerry Thomas, "School Using 2 Gangs Gets Show of Support," *Chicago Tribune*, June 17, 1995. Accessed on February 18, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1995-06-17/news/9506170162.

90. Former Gangster Disciples regent, interview with author.

91. Hoover was denied parole; the *Tribune* report focused on skepticism within the black community over the NAACP and Operation PUSH's support for Hoover. John Kass, "Hoover Case is the Tip of Gangs' Political Iceberg," *Chicago Tribune*, August 15, 1993. Accessed line February 17, 2014 <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-08-15/news/9308150190>.

a rally downtown to protest underfunded schools. Critics claimed this was merely to demonstrate political muscle.⁹²

The gang truce was an early move in developing Hoover's credibility as a community figure. Nevertheless, the killing of Dantrell Davis created the conditions to make the truce happen. The gang war between the GD, Vice Lords, and War Lords in Cabrini-Green was over two decades old. The GD at Cabrini-Green were "known for being just killers—the worst of the worst."⁹³ After the death of Dantrell, Hoover made a decision to put a stop to the violence. The involvement of community figures like Marion Stamps was not essential to the Gangster Disciples regent's understanding of the importance of the truce. The former regent and the rank and file saw the truce primarily as an initiative of gang leaders, not as a broader community fight: "[Hoover] was the orchestrator of the treaty. It was his baby, you know he wanted the treaty to work. And it worked for awhile. Most of Chicago went along with it."⁹⁴

Renegades within the gang threatened the truce and the tenuous credibility of gang leadership. Wallace "Gator" Bradley, who was present at the announcement of the truce, was one of Hoover's designated peace enforcers. He did so in the same manner that the GDs enforced their other strictures:

The full manifestation of the Growth and Development piece did not really gel together until around I will say probably about 1985 or 1991. We he had about four or five chief enforcers. Larry had them working the streets. I will put it this way; I was one of his

92. George Papajohn and John Kass, "City Hall Protest Sends a Message," *Chicago Tribune*, October 13, 1993. Accessed on February 17, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-10-13/news/9310130097.

93. Former Gangster Disciples regent, interview with author.

94. Ibid.

chief enforcers to help enforce the peace initiative... I was not the enforcer going to tell individuals, “Uh, hey I’m going to break your legs if you don’t give me uh street tax,” or whatever that shit is. However, I would have that same intensity. If I came and said, “hey man you ain’t supposed to have that pistol at this event,” an individual would have to comply or get dealt with. There are repercussions for individuals violating what was agreed to for all street organizations.⁹⁵

Bradley’s statement is heavy with violent innuendo, similar to how the “gang deactivation program” at Englewood Tech “deactivated” youth from gang involvement by reinforcing their obligation to the codes and hierarchy of the Gangster Disciples. Bradley’s own admission appears to support Knox’s contention that the truce and summits were a public-relations sham. Manning Marable uses the word “Hobbesian” to describe the state of inner-city black ghettos; the term implies that there was a need for strong figures of authority to control and stabilize poor black communities, suspending liberal rights in order to restore order.⁹⁶ The Englewood school administrator presents the gang as just such an authority:

[The goal of the deactivation program was] to channel the gang in another direction. Because you can’t change social being. In the words of Aristotle and Plato, people love to be in a social group. So I was thinking it was changing the negative behavior of the gang structure, it’s good [that] people organized, but change it,

95. Wallace “Gator” Bradley and SaFiya D. Hoskins, *Murder to Excellence: Growth & Development for the Millennial Generation* (Washington, DC: Ubiquitous Press, 2014), 49–50.

96. Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945–2006*, 3rd ed. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 207.

change it like Daley done. They became Democrats... You can’t change the leopard spots, but you can change the behavior.⁹⁷

The administrator understood gangs as essentially social units whose organizational structure could be channeled toward positive aims and political power, even the mayoralty. By demonstrating that their organizations could produce peace under the command of strong leadership, gang leaders attempted to bring this ideal into reality. The gang used the language of a nation to justify authorities using coercion to ensure order.

Both gang leadership and community activists with nationalist beliefs imagined the institutionalized gangs of the 1990s taking a key role in achieving community self-determination. Among these groups, the Black Hebrew Israelites (BHI) took a central role in organizing the gang truce. The BHI were founded in mid-twentieth century Chicago under the leadership of Ben Ammi and claimed to be God’s true chosen people. After a sojourn in Liberia, they arrive in Israel in 1969; Israel denied their claim of citizenship under the Law of Return, which the BHI charged was discriminatory. With support of prominent black figures, the BHI brokered a 1990 agreement with Israel, and they eventually gained Israeli citizenship.⁹⁸ In a 1993 lecture in Chicago, Ben Ammi presented the BHI community as free of the social problems that plagued inner-city America and encouraged black people to join the BHI in the Middle East.

97. Englewood school administrator, interview with author.

98. John L. Jackson Jr., *Thin Description: Ethnography and the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

Marion Stamps and Louis Farrakhan invited the BHI to help achieve a truce.⁹⁹ A BHI leader asked imprisoned gang leaders to “send the message out that women and children are off limits.” He also called together the “community men” with whom he was working already, including Bradley. The religious leader was drawn to the movement because he “wanted to be part of an organizing effort to empower, intellectual (get them in schools), economical (get skills), [and] politically (organize and vote so that we can take the protest from shouting to doing).”¹⁰⁰ The religious leader aimed to uplift the gang members, and he validated the gang itself as a legitimate organization with political aims. In the early 1990s he brought gang leaders, including Bradley, to Israel for a spiritual journey.¹⁰¹

The BHI’s relationship to the Gangster Disciples was possibly a conscious mimicry of the Nation of Islam’s connection to El Rukns (“the foundation” in Arabic). Formerly the Almighty Black P Stone Nation, the gang converted to Islam in 1976, adopted a new name, and served as Farrakhan’s bodyguards.¹⁰² Like the Nation of Islam, the Black Hebrew Israelites preached both cultural nationalism and bootstrap capitalism. The BHI religious leader compared the evolution of gangs in 1990s to the history of gangsters in the 1930s, particularly in Chicago:

But at some point they put down the guns and picked up the pens:
That’s why the godfather movie was so popular. I’m telling [the

99. Religious leader (Black Hebrew Israelites), interview with the author, November 15, 2014.

100. Ibid.; Bradley, *Murder to Excellence*.

101. Religious leader, interview with the author.

102. Moore & Williams, *Almighty Black P Stone Nation*, 155–62. The People and Folks were two prison gang alliances. Perhaps coincidentally, El Rukns belonged to the People alliance, whose symbol was a five-pointed star, and the GD to the Folks, whose symbol was the six-pointed Star of David.

gang leaders]—they moved into the corporations. I said you gotta do that, now what’s the benefit of you killing some kid, what does that prove, what does that achieve? That’s not the enemy.¹⁰³

He shares Hoover’s rhetorical stance in *The Blueprint*, and GD memos: gangs could be a vehicle for moral uplift and economic power under the tutelage of enlightened leaders, empowered to direct their youthful members in a positive direction.

On the surface, all the actors that brought the truce together spoke the language of black nationalism, but there were also significant differences. Stamps knew the gangs were destructive but ultimately part of the community; Daley and the CHA chairman held real power and were culpable for the degraded conditions of the people of Cabrini-Green. While Stamps might have agreed with the BHI religious leader that mass incarceration “is modern-day slavery” it is unlikely that she would have admonished gang members, as he claims to have done, that “it wasn’t no white man that’s got you in [prison], it’s your thinking, your behavior; wasn’t no white, young white man that you killed or shot or robbed it’s your little brother on the neighborhood that you killed, shot, that got you in here.”¹⁰⁴ He prioritized uplifting individuals and changing behaviors as a mode of collective racial advancement, rather than direct confrontation with those in power. In contrast, Stamps believed in collective struggle to provide tangible benefits to all residents of Cabrini-Green, including gang members.

The BHI leader limited collective action to getting out the black vote. Black power nationalism since the 1970s had taken ethnic-pluralist politics as its model, exhorting black people to follow the way of the

103. Religious leader, interview with the author.

104. Ibid.

Irish.¹⁰⁵ The importance of the Richard J. Daley's legacy to GD leadership indicates this continued to be the case in the 1990s. Machine politics depended on ward bosses to get out the vote and to dispense government pork barrel, which in turn led to more votes. Rather than promote real community self-determination, the ethnic-pluralist model promoted authoritarian leadership.

According to James "Yaki" Sayles, the gang truce granted a degree of political legitimacy to the gangs: "it is this transfer of LEGITIMACY by the community—from the police and their bosses, to itself and the youth organizations—that so alarmed the U.S. when the peace process was announced [and ultimately led to their prosecution by federal law enforcement]."¹⁰⁶ But Stamps, the organizer with the closest connection to the Cabrini-Green community, was sidelined as the truce's focus shifted from the living conditions inside public housing to a drive for the public legitimacy of the gangs.

After six months of truce, LeRoy Martin, director of CHA security, said "I have to give the devil his due, I think the truce has been somewhat

105. Dean E. Robinson, "Black Power Nationalism as Ethnic Pluralism," in *Renewing Black Intellectual History: The Ideological and Material Foundations of African American Thought*, eds. Adolph Reed Jr. and Kenneth W. Warren, 196 (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010).

106. Yaki, "Let's 'Gang-Up' On Oppression." This enthusiasm for the potential of gangs as revolutionary organizations contradicts his other assertions, see Yaki [James Sayles], *Meditations on Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth* (Chicago: Spear and Shields Publications, 2010), 73. "If we were to leave the objective analysis/understanding of the economic basis of 'crime' and proceed no further, we end up legitimizing the dope pushers in our communities, the pimps and other backward, reactionary elements who engage in such activity because of the circumstances caused by the present economic order. We can't continue to say 'the devil made me do it'."

effective [in Cabrini-Green]."¹⁰⁷ The truce brought peace but also an oppressive police presence.¹⁰⁸ Some residents, such as Carol Steele (who would later become Cabrini-Green's Local Advisory Council president), wondered how long the truce would last: "believe me, if the boys wanted to get the guns back in the neighborhood, it would be no problem... I think even the gangs were tired of the shooting."¹⁰⁹ But the truce did last at Cabrini-Green until 1996, long after the sweeps were over and the heavy police presence had subsided.¹¹⁰ Citywide, the truce's impact varied:

In seven police districts with large black populations, the November decline in violent crime is pronounced. In Wentworth, which includes the Robert Taylor and the Stateway Gardens CHA projects, shootings fell by 62 percent, compared with November 1991. Other South Side districts with heavy gang activity—including Englewood, Grand Crossing, South Chicago and Gresham—saw shootings plunge by about a third. In the East Chicago district on

107. George Papajohn and Colin McMahon, "Gang Truce Opens Window of Peace," *Chicago Tribune*, April 28, 1993. Accessed February 19, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-04-28/news/9304280053.

108. Don Terry, "Chicago Housing Project Basks in a Tense Peace," *New York Times*, November 2, 1992. Accessed on March 6, 2014, www.nytimes.com/1992/11/02/us/chicago-housing-project-basks-in-a-tense-peace.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm.

109. Louise Kiernan and William Recktenwald, "Gang Truce Brings Hope, Lingering Distrust," *Chicago Tribune*, December 13, 1992. Accessed on February 19, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-12-13/news/9204230601.

110. Flynn McRoberts and William Recktenwald, "Violence Shatters Hopes in Cabrini," *Chicago Tribune*, April 9, 1996. Accessed on February 19, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-08-09/news/9608090062.

the North Side shooting dropped by 50 percent. In the South Side Pullman district the decrease was 44 percent.¹¹¹

While not a complete cease-fire, the decreases in violence remain impressive. Skeptics of the truce—law enforcement, some public housing residents, and some community activists—claimed that the truce was merely a business decision of corporate-minded gang leaders, because the gangs continued to sell narcotics.¹¹² This truce was not the first: gangs often reached temporary truces in CHA projects to avoid scaring off drug customers.¹¹³ However, the geographic reach of the Cabrini-Green truce, its level of publicity, and the subsequent 1993 “United in Peace” movement all distinguished it. Throughout the city “United in Peace” buttons began to appear (see appendix B) and sworn enemies were able to travel to each other’s territories without fear of reprisal.¹¹⁴

Building a Black Army: The 1993 Chicago Summit

The leaders of the truce in Chicago looked to extend the truce and amplify its message by joining a movement of peace summits that were held across the country in 1993. The first gang summit (called the

111. Kiernan and Recktenwald, “Gang Truce Brings Hope.” According to the Englewood school administrator, Bradley was responsible for enforcing the truce in the Robert Taylor Homes (and maybe Stateway Gardens), which had the greatest drop in violence outside of Cabrini-Green.

112. Papajohn & McMahon, “Gang Truce Opens Window.”

113. Susan J. Popkin et al. *The Hidden War: Crime and the Tragedy of Public Housing in Chicago* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 75–76.

114. Former Gangster Disciples regent, interview with author; Papajohn & McMahon, “Gang Truce Opens Window”; Kiernan & Recktenwald, “Gang Truce Brings Hope.”

“National Urban Peace and Justice Summit”) was organized by Carl Upchurch, head of the Council for Urban Peace and Justice in Granville, Ohio. Upchurch was inspired by the peace made in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1992 in which the Nation of Islam was an important mediator.¹¹⁵ The first summit was held in Kansas City in April and was cosponsored by the NAACP, under the leadership of Ben Chavis, and United in Peace, the organization founded by Bradley.¹¹⁶ Other summits were subsequently held in Cleveland, Saint Paul, and Chicago in October 1993, exactly a year after Dantrell Davis was slain.

The organizers presented the gang summits as relevant not only to gang members, but as important events for black people in general. All strata of black political leadership were involved in the summits: elected officials, civil-rights organizations (the NAACP and Operation PUSH), and black nationalist organizations (the Black Hebrew Israelites and the Nation of Islam). The organizers and featured speakers were all men. Marion Stamps criticized the summit from the left; other leaders questioned the focus on violence but not drug crimes and stressed the risk of legitimizing gangs as role models.

The Chicago summit lasted for about a week and attracted about two hundred gang members.¹¹⁷ Mayor Daley’s hostility to the summit

115. Paul Shepard, “Gang Summit Longtime Project,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 2, 1993. Accessed on March 1, 2014, www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2009/03/gang_summit_longtime_project.html; Muhammad, *Original Gang Truce*.

116. Paul Shepard, “Former Rivals Embrace Summit: Gang Members Meeting in Peace,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 2, 1993. Accessed on March 1, 2014, www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2009/03/former_rivals_embrace_summit_g.html; Richard B. Muhammad and Charlene Muhammad, “What Happened to Gang Peace,” *Chicago Final Call*, May 17, 2012. Accessed on March 1, 2014, www.finalcall.com/artman/publish/national_news_2/article_8843.shtml.

117. Lucille Younger, “We’re Building a Black Army,” *Chicago Defender*, October 29, 1993.

contrasted to black mayors who welcomed the summits held in their cities as a possible solution to urban violence. Daley denounced the summits for failing to address gang involvement in drug trafficking and other criminal activity. Some summit organizers insinuated that Daley's opposition was racist, but others said he was threatened by the growing political power of gangs to get out the black vote.¹¹⁸

Daley's opposition to the summit presented an opportunity to consolidate his 1989 supporters—upwardly mobile whites, the black middle class, and Hispanic voters—by emphasizing his tough attitude against gangs.¹¹⁹ One of Daley's winning strategies was to appoint black professionals to posts in his administration and to support certain black issues, shielding himself from a race-based electoral assault.¹²⁰ The black middle class supported Daley's plans to demolish the high-rise projects that had concentrated poverty and violence in black neighborhoods. Demolishing the high-rises would also scatter the collective force of poor blacks who opposed Daley.¹²¹ In 1989 Daley had received 7 percent of

118. Paul Shepard, "Gang Summit Snubbed, Organizers Hint at Racism; Chicago Mayor Points to Crime," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 23, 1993. Accessed on March 1, 2014, www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2009/03/gang_summit_snubbed_organizers.html.

119. Paul M. Green, "Richard M. Daley and the Politics of Addition," in *The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition*, 3rd ed., eds. Paul M. Green and Melvin G. Holli, 264 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005).

120. Jim Kirk, Dan Mihalopoulos, Sarah Karp, Mick Dumke, and Don Terry, "The Daley Legacy, Inescapable," *New York Times*, September 12, 2010. Accessed online on November 5, 2016, www.nytimes.com/2010/09/12/us/12cncweb_legacy.html.

121. Green, "Richard M. Daley," 266; Kirk et al, "Daley Legacy."

the black vote, but this percentage grew to a solid majority by the end of the 1990s and to 70 percent in 2007.¹²²

Black nationalist activists, on the other hand, became politically isolated during and after the 1989 election.¹²³ They had comprised the unofficial wing of the Washington campaign and wanted to elect another black mayor. But they did not learn from Washington's strategy, who won by forming a coalition of black, Latino, and liberal-white voters. The absence of Latino gangs at the Chicago summit demonstrated their political isolation; summits in other cities bridged the divide between the two groups and stressed their common struggles.¹²⁴

The summit in Chicago was characterized by some organizers as the "reunification of the African American family," and a local radio station found that 85 percent of listeners were in favor of the summit; it nonetheless generated controversy within black Chicago.¹²⁵ Sandoval, founder of Mothers Against Gangs, described NAACP participation as "unconscionable" for not requiring that gangs give up their guns and cease

122. Laura S. Washington, "Putting Harold to Rest," in *The Mayors*, 198–202.

123. Green, "Richard M. Daley," 264.

124. George Papajohn, "Traveling Gang Summit Losing Steam," *Chicago Tribune* May 29, 1994. Accessed on March 27, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1994-05-29/news/9405290382; Paul Sheppard, "Former Rivals Embrace Gang Summit Meeting in Peace," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 2, 1993. Accessed on March 27, 2014, www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2009/03/former_rivals_embrace_summit_g.html; Jim Wallis, "A Time to Heal, a Time to Build," in *Putting Down Stones: A Faithful Response to Urban Violence, a Study Guide*, ed. Aaron Gallegos and Kelly M. Green, 27 (Washington, DC, Sojourners, 1996), sojo.net/sites/default/files/puttingdownstones.pdf.

125. "Poll Shows 4 Out of 5 Favor Gang Summit," *Chicago Defender*, October 27, 1993; "Cox Praises Gang Summit," *Chicago Defender*, October 26, 1993; Chinta Strausberg, "Summit Seeks Economic Parity," *Chicago Defender*, October 25, 1993.

criminal activity in order to participate.¹²⁶ Within a week of the summit, Mothers Against Gangs supported legislation that would make it illegal for citizens with a gang affiliation to run for public office. The Guardian Angels, a quasi-vigilante black crime-fighting group, went so far as to picket the gang summit and nearly sparked a fight.¹²⁷ To the left of Sandoval, Stamps criticized summit organizers for taking credit for the peace and deflecting attention from the truce's original goals: "we want some justice, economic justice, criminal justice, educational justice, job justice."¹²⁸

Summit leaders did not mobilize gangs toward Stamps's call for collective direct action, and the plan for Cabrini-Green that Stamps presented at the announcement of the original truce was all but forgotten. They focused instead on the enterprising bootstrapping of the individual. Unlike Booker T. Washington's brand of racial uplift, which demurred from antagonizing white society, black nationalism understood uplift as a prerequisite to confrontation or competition with whites. For gangs, this heralded a return to the kind of community service the Vice Lords had practiced during the genesis of black power nationalism in the late 1960s under white foundation worker David Dawley, but now under black leadership.¹²⁹ Black nationalist bootstrapping affirms the

126. Ann LoLordo, "Chavis Puts Himself and NAACP on the Line to Combat Black-on-Black Violence," *Baltimore Sun*, October 31, 1993. Accessed on March 2, 2014, articles.baltimoresun.com/1993-10-31/news/1993304022_1_chavis-gang-naacp.

127. Paul Shepard, "Gang Peace Leaders Need Jackson's Pull," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 25, 1993. Accessed on March 3, 2014, www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2009/03/gang_peace_leaders_need_jackso.html.

128. John W. Fountain, "Cabrini's Brand of Peace Withstands the Glare," *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 1993. Accessed on March 3, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-10-23/news/9310260335.

129. Dawley's race provides fodder for Robert Allen's thesis that liberal-white foundations supported black power as a way to suppress black communities,

American dream of social advancement through individual merit while recognizing white racism as an obstacle to that advance. Through personal uplift each individual within the racial collectivity is promised a mode to discount and confront that racism.¹³⁰

Take the case of Ice T, gangsta rapper and bootstrap evangelist: "What I try to do as a brother coming up is never apologize for my success. I can't do anything for people in the hood by acting like I'm broke. By me showing them that I can get on the hill, that means they can get on the hill too."¹³¹ Ice T believes a gang truce in Los Angeles let him and other give up hood life and uplift themselves, however, his success does not mean that other blacks simply lack his work ethic. His account ignores the systemic problems of economic dislocation, retrenchment of government services, and the Rodney King verdict as fundamental causes of the Los Angeles riot. The irony is that Ice T's success depended on the social and political disfranchisement of the inner city that he represented in his music.

Such patriarchal leaders, whether rappers or protest politicians, act as the representative voice of the black dispossessed by bringing the grievances of the inner city to the white power structure. Ice T's house

which rioted in collective outrage in the late 1960s; see Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytical History* (New York: Doubleday, 1969).

130. Lawrence W. Levine, "Marcus Garvey and the Politics of Revitalization," in *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, ed. John Hope Franklin and August Meier, 105–38 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982). Levine describes (p. 118) the appeal of Garveyism: "[Garvey] was able to take Washington's philosophy and transform it from a doctrine geared to help one up the ladder of American mobility into a mechanism designed to increase the worldwide consciousness, unity, power, and autonomy of the race. He took a philosophy suffused with overtones of individualism and bent it to serve the purposes of the group."

131. Ice T [Tracy Lauren Marrow], forward to *Uprising: Crips and Bloods Tell the Story of America's Youth in the Crossfire*, ed. Yusuf Jah and Sister Shah'Keyah, 14 (New York: Touchstone, 1995).

on the hill creates the illusion of vicarious group incorporation through the leader. His success can be understood as an oppositional act, because it refutes stereotypes of black inferiority and serves as a model for the racial collective.¹³² The Chicago gang organizers and speakers also preaching uplift, opposition, and individual advancement. As the *Tribune* observed: “surely the summit has helped the careers of Bradley, Upchurch and the other organizers who suddenly became national spokesmen for urban America.”¹³³

The matriarchal leadership of Stamps was not the kind of leader the summit’s male organizers wanted to produce.¹³⁴ Stamps had attended the Kansas City summit and helped write a Sisters’ Statement (see appendix C) about the role of women in the gang peace movement. At first “all but ignored,” the fifty women attendees won the respect of the organizers “and took an active role in the rest of the summit.”¹³⁵ In contrast, the Chicago summit’s “reunification of the African American family” positioned male-protest and gang leaders as the head of a patriarchal family, with the youthful members as prodigal sons.¹³⁶ The Black

132. For how representational politics disadvantaged poor blacks during the black gentrification of Chicago’s Douglas and Grand Boulevard neighborhoods in the 1990s, see Michelle R. Boyd, *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 147.

133. Papajohn, “Traveling Gang Summit Losing Steam.”

134. For the sexual politics of Garveyism, see Michelle Mitchell, “What a Pure, Healthy, Unified Race Can Accomplish,” in *Renewing Black Intellectual History*, 158–83.

135. Wallis, “A Time to Heal, a Time to Build,” 27.

136. At the press conference announcing the truce, Al-Jami Mustafa, king of the Cobra Nation, read an apology on behalf of street organizations: “we have all made mistakes being men, but today we are asking you to have the will to forgive as men and to give us this opportunity to correct our mistakes as men for the benefit of future as a nation of people.” Strausberg, “We Will Stop the Killing.”

Hebrew Israelites, for example, proposed strengthening the black family. Successful black couples should become adoptive parents, and the community should buy abandoned buildings and teach business skills to the youth—goals that would essentially reproduce middle-class white society through patriarchal hierarchy and capitalist pursuits.¹³⁷

Despite some jockeying over who would emerge as the preeminent leader of the summit, the leaders agreed on the overarching aim to preach black capitalism.¹³⁸ The CEO of an Atlanta beverage company spoke of the need to generate modes of economic advancement within the black community; he wanted to give “our people an opportunity to enter corporate America and to be a contributor to society because they will increase the tax base, create their own jobs and create self-dignity, all in one fell swoop.”¹³⁹ Additionally, the Black Hebrew Israelites advocated that blacks take control of small neighborhood businesses away from Indian and Arab immigrants; the BHI planned to work with black bankers to bring economic development to the community.¹⁴⁰ Small business enterprises dovetailed neatly with the business imperatives of the corporate super gangs. Venkatesh and Levitt note that young Chicago gang members risked injury and death to sell drugs for poverty wages were not deviating from but conforming to the consumerist culture of the

137. “‘Stop the Killings’ Campaign Launched in Harold’s Memory Announced on Thursday,” *Chicago Defender*, November 6, 1993.

138. Organizers were concerned about Jackson’s participation; Earl King said “we feel it is important that a person of Jesse’s stature join us... But we must not let it become Jesse’s thing solely.” Shepard, “Gang Peace Leaders Need Jackson.”

139. Strausberg, “Summit Seeks Economic Parity.”

140. Ibid.

United States in the era of Reagan. The possibility of attaining the glamorous status held by older gang leaders led them on.¹⁴¹ In that light, the exhortations toward Growth and Development and uplift through hard work could even be seen as psychological Taylorism.

Sharif Willis, the highest-ranking Vice Lord in Minneapolis, spoke on the problem of mass incarceration: “we’re looking at governments building more jails—super-jails—to warehouse blacks as an employment base for whites, we must say there is a better way.”¹⁴² However, he did not critique the political economy that led to the unprecedented building boom of prisons in the United States in the 1970s and ’80s.¹⁴³ Willis continued: “they say we’re building a Black army. If trying to touch them through love and teaching them the values of life which we ignored, then I’m guilty. I’m building a Black army.”¹⁴⁴ An antistate, revolutionary call to action was missing, yet the image of a morally uplifted “Black army” retained a veneer of militant opposition.

Even leaders known more explicitly for their history as protest leaders, such as Jesse Jackson, continued in this theme. He proclaimed that the movement to end violence was the “new frontier of our civil rights struggle.” Jackson’s remarks were not based in political mobilization of the civil-rights movement to achieve policy reforms. Instead, he blamed the

141. Venkatesh & Levitt, “Are We a Family or a Business?” 449–58.

142. Younger, “We’re Building a Black Army”; Rogers Worthington, “Plan to Rehab Vice Lords Remake of 1970s Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 28, 1993. Accessed on March 2, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-08-28/news/9308280100.

143. For the economics of prisons growth, see Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); for an abbreviated and conservative account, see Paul Street, *The Vicious Circle: Race, Prison, Jobs, and Community in Chicago, Illinois, and the Nation* (Chicago: Chicago Urban League, 2002), www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/theviciouscircle.pdf.

144. Younger, “We’re Building a Black Army.”

“guns aimed at each other, drugs, greed, undisciplined and unloving sex (that) leads to AIDS,” which, combined with self-hatred, create “a neutron bomb to destroy our people.” For Jackson, the answer was in “the renewal of our minds.”¹⁴⁵ Despite identifying the problem as a civil-rights issue, Jackson’s solution was not the expansion or redefinition of political or civil rights. His spiritual, or evangelical, solution entailed the transformation of individual attitudes and behaviors before collective action could be taken.

Louis Farrakhan said that inner-city violence “is no longer the fault of white people, it is our own fault. It is up to us to get our house together,” and, gesturing toward gang members, he concluded, “whatever they are... you can say they were made in America.”¹⁴⁶

Chicago newspapers covered the summit extensively. The *Tribune* was quick to observe the summit’s contradictions: “the news conference itself was dominated by two themes: black men announcing that they were taking a stand for peace in their communities and the same men blaming outsiders and ‘agent provocateurs’ for community problems such as guns and drugs.”¹⁴⁷ The *Defender*’s coverage was more agnostic, but still ran a headline the week the summit ended, “Body Count Continues,” suggesting the summit’s failure to achieve immediately tangible results.¹⁴⁸ As a black newspaper, the *Defender* had more to lose by editorializing against a summit that exemplified a new political reality of

145. Chinta Strausberg, “Jesse Assesses Gang Summit,” *Chicago Defender*, October 25, 1993.

146. Lucille W. Younger, “Farrakhan to Gang Leaders: The Community Is Watching You,” *Chicago Defender*, October 25, 1993.

147. Given its deep suspicion of gangs, the *Tribune*’s coverage was more complex than the *Defender*’s. Papajohn & Kass, “Gang Summit Nets One Goal”; the Englewood school administrator said he hated George Papajohn of the *Tribune*, interview with the author.

148. “Body Count Continues,” *Chicago Defender*, October 27, 1993.

assertive street gangs, which may or may not be viewed favorably by the whole black community.

The response by Chicago politicians to the summit varied. According to the *Tribune*, politicians “questioned whether the middle-class voters who decide most elections would take a dim view of aldermanic colleagues who have sought a political alliance with the gangs that threaten that same middle class.”¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, former mayor Eugene Sawyer supported the summit, Alderwoman Anna Langford noted that when she campaigned in 1967 she had the support of four gangs that “had never been on the same route together unless they were killing each other.”¹⁵⁰ Alderman Virgil Jones invoked gang involvement with the civil-rights movement to justify his support of the summit.¹⁵¹ The support of politicians who represented and lived in neighborhoods with gang activity may reflect the Chicago political reality that “clout” brings access. Alderwomen Langford noted that gangs were organized community groups, who could get out the vote or keep people from voting.¹⁵²

Not all politicians were as supportive. Alderwoman Toni Preckwinkle, who represented the affluent, liberal, and racially mixed communities of east Grand Boulevard, Kenwood, and north Hyde Park, claimed that her constituents were “disturbed not only about the rising political influence of the gangs, and the efforts by some politicians and groups to use them, but also by the process that seeks to legitimize them, to create role models. That cuts across all groups in the black community.”¹⁵³

149. Papajohn & Kass, “Gang Summit Nets One Goal.”

150. Strausberg, “Summit Seeks Economic Parity.”

151. Papajohn & Kass, “Gang Summit Nets One Goal.”

152. David Bernstein and Noah Isackson, “Gangs and Politicians in Chicago: An Unholy Alliance,” *Chicago Magazine*, December 13, 2011. Accessed on July 28, 2016, www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/January-2012/Gangs-and-Politicians-An-Unholy-Alliance.

153. Papajohn & Kass, “Gang Summit Nets One Goal.”

US Representative Mel Reynolds hosted his own “anti-gang summit” concurrently with the gang summit.¹⁵⁴ While gang involvement was present among middle-class blacks, gang activity tended to be seen by them as a problem of someone else’s children.¹⁵⁵

When questioned about the fraught relationship between some black politicians and the gangs’ movement into politics, Bradley said, “I don’t know no one who would turn down a vote because of religious affiliation, sexual preference or gang affiliation,”¹⁵⁶ a nod both to the fundamental equality of votes and a deft mobilization of social-movement political discourse as a form of legitimization. Following the Voting Rights Act of 1965 Adolph Reed Jr. argues that a split occurred between the traditional black protest elite, which could no longer claim to represent black interests after the demise of Jim Crow, and the rise of black elected officials. Absent a more far-reaching social critique and political program, civil-rights protest leaders and the newly elected black officials competed in an arena of ethnic-pluralist politics to ensure the equal racial distribution of government pork barrel.¹⁵⁷ Elected officials had more immediate access to government resources, creating a situation of elite competition over who could most authentically represent black interests.¹⁵⁸

154. James L. Tyson, “Black Leaders Call on Urban Gangs to Be ‘New Frontier of Civil Rights,’” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 26, 1993. Accessed on March 6, 2014, www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/r14/1993/1026/26031.html.

155. Mary Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences*, 68–90; Gangster Disciples did recruit students from black middle-class families, as part of their goal to develop a business portfolio beyond drug pushing; a trend that Preckwinkle’s constituents would probably have found threatening. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Black Gangster Disciples; Racketeering Enterprise Investigations—Gangs; Memphis Division* (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, March 30, 1993).

156. Chinta Strausberg, “Pols Fear ‘New Breed’ of Gangs,” *Chicago Defender*, October 4, 1993.

157. Reed, *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon*.

158. *Ibid.*, 2–10.

Criticized for his involvement in the summit, Jackson denounced his detractors as race betrayers, calling them, through a spokesperson, “Black anti-gang foes who allegedly took that posture to gain stronger support in white areas.”¹⁵⁹ While aldermen and other elected officials may have weighed the value of the summit in terms of votes, the political relationships of leaders like Jackson, Chavis, and Farrakhan to gang youth was predicated on their supposed connection to the black masses, who they claimed to represent to whites. Appearing at events with gang leaders provided the appearance of a connection to the masses of alienated young gang members. When confronted by reporters about the summit’s critics, a religious leader retorted: “I do not expect a white male who has never grown up in the inner city to understand anything that we are talking about.”¹⁶⁰

The summit held a rally at Englewood Tech, which can be understood as a rite of leadership legitimization. Here Ben Chavis of the NAACP spoke to twenty-five hundred gang members,¹⁶¹ and summit organizers gave awards to Chicago’s gang leaders for their work to achieve peace.¹⁶² None were there to accept the awards in person, most were incarcerated. But Bradley accepted on Hoover’s behalf, who received “thunderous”

159. Chinta Strausberg, “PUSH Blasts Foes of Gang Summit,” *Chicago Defender*, October 28, 1993.

160. Strausberg, “Summit Seeks Economic Parity.”

161. Responding to inquiries from the Illinois state’s attorney, Chavis also announced the NAACP’s role in financing the summits. Lucille Younger, “Chicago: Eyes of the World Are Upon You,” *Chicago Defender*, October 26, 1993.

162. John Kass and George Papajohn, “High School Role on Gang Summit Hit,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 27, 1993. Accessed on March 6, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-10-27/news/9310270232.

applause from an audience.¹⁶³ The awards ceremony connected the Gangster Disciples’ top leader in absentia with the rank and file and broadcast Hoover as a positive figure to the larger community.

Similar to the more mainstream politicians and community leaders, Hoover saw the summit as a means to affirm his position as chairman of the corporate GD. He was not democratically elected by members and few younger members knew who he was. Several of my informants emphasized Hoover’s lack of control over the GD on the street to vindicate Hoover from the bad faith of lieutenants on the outside whom he could not control.¹⁶⁴ In Hoover’s own estimation, his power came primarily from his control of the prison environment: “Sooner or later the guys on the street know they will probably come inside. Then they know they will have to deal with me.”¹⁶⁵ Hoover’s influence on the streets relied on the revolving door of incarceration; however, exerting discipline on the streets through such an indirect mechanism was a challenge. Locked away in prison, Hoover’s position at the top of GD hierarchy had to be reaffirmed on the outside through the production of a charismatic persona and public recognition that the Englewood honor provided.

Summit leaders, Hoover and Chavis, tightly orchestrated the images of the summit, and the message reaching the wider public was of legitimate black leaders, all men, taking responsibility for and uplifting the youth, a mute, corporate body, politically unformed and reliant on a responsible leadership to guide its actions. The white press often portrayed the summit in a negative light, which made controlling the message at media events

163. George Papajohn, “Gang Peace Summit: A Plague on All Their Houses,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 26, 1993. Accessed on March 5, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-10-26/news/9310260179.

164. CeaseFire interruptor interview with author, October 28, 2013; and author interviews with a Gangster Disciples regent and an Englewood school administrator.

165. Donaldson, “Twenty-First Century V.O.T.E.” Accessed on February 20, 2014, gangresearch.net/ChicagoGangs/BGD/vote21.html.

all the more important. However, that defense only begs the question of why the summit *needed* heavy attention from the white media if the goal was truly to organize and unify black people. In contrast, at the Kansas City summit many events were closed to the press, presumably to allow for candid conversations.¹⁶⁶

The gangs' younger rank-and-file members were infrequently quoted in news articles about the summit, and summit organizers sheltered them from the press intentionally, which was duly noted by the *Tribune*. Stray members of the rank and file who did speak to the press tended to be more pessimistic than the leaders: "A lot of people lost a lot of friends out here behind this gangbanging... Some people want the fighting to stop, but it's going to be hard. It's like a habit."¹⁶⁷ Another attendee said truces were frequent but fleeting: "It lasts for a couple of months and then they'll be back shooting."¹⁶⁸

Conclusion: The Fall of the Nations

The potential that Sayles saw in the 1992 gang truce to channel gang violence into a revolutionary force for black liberation did not happen during the 1993 Chicago summit. Instead, the summit reflected and reproduced the crisis of black politics in the post-segregation era. Reed argues that the civil-rights movement propped up a black leadership of middle-class technocrats, concerned more with reproducing their role as a racial-administrative apparatus than with formulating an egalitarian

166. Papajohn, "Traveling Gang Summit Losing Steam."

167. Paul Shepard, "Gang Members Seek Unity [and] Time to Stop the Killing, Speaker Tells Chicago Summit," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, October 24, 1993. Accessed on March 6, 2014, www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2009/03/gang_memeber_seek_unity_time_t.html.

168. Papajohn, "Gang Peace Summit."

politics that would substantially benefit poor blacks.¹⁶⁹ The Reagan era accelerated neoliberal economic restructuring of a postindustrial economy that tolerated high unemployment. Material conditions were worse for many poor and working-class blacks than during the civil-rights movement: blacks were often the last hired and the first fired as jobs were automated and plants moved elsewhere.¹⁷⁰ The black middle class narrowly defined the racial agenda to preserve antidiscrimination and affirmative-action laws that primarily benefited the middle class and did not account for the political-economic shifts effecting the working class.¹⁷¹

Elite advancement was viewed as beneficial for the entire race. Individual excellence would break social barriers and demonstrate black equality to whites, and black elites would model the social mores necessary to uplift the rest of the race. Echoing Reagan conservatism, black leadership focused on equipping poor black people with the "human capital" to compete in the labor market. They abandoned the Left's critique of political economy and a broad class-based assault on capitalism itself, which Martin Luther King Jr. had also embraced in his later years.¹⁷² A resurgence of black autarky offered an ideological solution for

169. Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*, 55–78.

170. In 1970, 72 percent of black men born between 1950 and 1955 were in manufacturing and construction jobs. The percentage was 31 percent in 1987, and even lower for younger men. In twelve out of the seventeen predominantly black community areas in Chicago poverty rates exceeded 40 percent in 1990, and only one out of three black adults worked any job in a typical week. For the rest of the city, 57 percent of adults had work. William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Knopf, 1996) 12–19, 249.

171. Reed, *Stirrings in the Jug*, 55–78.

172. For King's hopes to confront economic injustice with an alliance between the civil-rights movement and labor during the Memphis sanitation-workers strike, see David Appleby, Allison Graham, and Steven John Ross, *At The River I Stand* (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1993).

black elites that normalized the growing intra-racial class stratification. In the absence of organic political connections to their black constituency, those aspiring for recognized positions of racial leadership relied on showmanship and spectacle (and ultimately to be authenticated as black racial spokespersons by white elites), a strategy pursued to the greatest effect by Jesse Jackson through his failed presidential bids in the 1980s.¹⁷³ Jackson's association with gang leaders created the appearance of connection to the black masses.

It helped that gang leaders had a sense of their own potential as political figures or as political brokers. These political ambitions could reach as far as the White House. A year after the gang summit Jackson invited Wallace "Gator" Bradley (still calling himself an "enforcer" for Larry Hoover's peace) to brief President Clinton on inner-city issues. Bradley then ran for alderman, losing in a runoff, the year after that.¹⁷⁴ As late as 2014, the academic Cornel West compared Larry Hoover with Malcolm X, lauding his "visionary leadership" in the introduction to Bradley's autobiography.¹⁷⁵

In 1995, the government suppressed the Gangster Disciples and ended the "Growth and Development" movement by indicting thirty-nine of the gang's top leaders, including Larry Hoover.¹⁷⁶ While the killing of Dantrell Davis opened certain political opportunities for gang leaders through the peace treaty and gang summit, it also provided a political opening for the City of Chicago to destroy the gangs' most

173. Reed, *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon*.

174. Papajohn and John Kass, "'Gator' Bradley Polishes Image of Gangbanger Gone Straight," *Chicago Tribune*, February 18, 1994. Accessed on March 16, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1994-02-18/news/9402180034.

175. Cornel West, foreword to *Murder to Excellence*, 2.

176. John O'Brien, "39 Gangster Disciples Indicted," *Chicago Tribune*, August 31, 1995. Accessed on March 16, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1995-08-31/news/9509010218.

valued territory—public housing high-rises. A federal Hope VI grant and the CHA's Plan for Transformation relocated thousands of residents out of the city or into Chicago's declining neighborhoods, depriving gangs of their strongholds.¹⁷⁷

Public housing residents not only lost their homes, but gang violence intensified in Chicago's poorer wards, despite dropping significantly in the city overall (940 homicides in 1992; 500 in 2012).¹⁷⁸ Evidence suggests that displaced CHA residents did not cause the decline in their new neighborhoods; rather, they could only find landlords willing to accept their housing vouchers in neighborhoods that were already in decline.¹⁷⁹ Some observers attribute increased violence in poor neighborhoods to the dismantlement of the gang hierarchy that enforced discipline; more research needs to be done to determine if increased

177. For a comprehensive table of the Plan for Transformation's overhaul of public housing, see Bennett et al., *Where Are Poor People To Live?* 105–106. The CHA began leaving units vacant in the 1970s; by 1999 many projects were only 25–50 percent occupied.

178. Reid Wilson, "FBI: Chicago Passes New York as Murder Capital of U.S." *Washington Post*, September 18, 2013. Accessed on January 20, 2014, www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2013/09/18/fbi-chicago-passes-new-york-as-murder-capital-of-u-s/; Matt L. Rodriguez, *Annual Report 1992* (Chicago: Chicago Police Department, 1992).

179. "We find little evidence that an increase in the number of voucher holders in a tract leads to more crime... Voucher holders are more likely to move into neighborhoods where crime rates are increasing." Ingrid Gould Ellen, Michael C. Lens, and Katherine O'Regan, "American Murder Mystery Revisited: Do Housing-Voucher Households Cause Crime?" *Housing Policy Debate* 22, no. 4 (September 2011): 551–57, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2016444; for the attribution of poverty to urban ecology and high-rise architecture rather than the economic losses of deindustrialization, see Bennett & Reed, "The New Face of Urban Renewal."

violence and increases in inequality during the neoliberal era share a causal relationship.¹⁸⁰

Stamps, too, had to contend with the contradictions of black politics in the post-segregation era. At one point Stamps, who died of a heart attack at fifty-one while still fighting to save Cabrini-Green, called the redevelopment plans for the project an example of “ethnic cleansing,” suggesting the need for racial unity around the imperative to preserve public housing.¹⁸¹ But this was a time when middle-class blacks, who were gentrifying certain black neighborhoods, were ambivalent toward preserving public housing. They favored mixed-income developments that would encourage the poor to emulate the behavior of the middle classes. The idea fit neatly within the nationalist ideology of community development through elite-directed bootstrapping.¹⁸² Unable to make preservation of public housing an elite issue, Stamps could not build a coalition across class divisions in the black community or with other racial groups to halt the destruction of Cabrini-Green.

Stamps attempted to organize through these contradictions. She advocated refusing Jesse Jackson’s offer to mediate between the residents of Cabrini-Green and the CHA and believed Jackson would not represent the interests of the residents. She predicted correctly that residents would not return to the new developments despite the city’s promises.

180. Daniel Hertz, “The Growing Public Safety Inequality Gap in Chicago,” *Newgeography*, October 2, 2013. Accessed on November 23, 2013, www.newgeography.com/content/003965-the-growing-public-safety-inequality-gap-chicago. For the link between underreporting and the decrease in the homicides rate since 2012, see David Bernstein and Noah Isackson, “The Truth About Chicago’s Crime Rates,” *Chicago Magazine*, May 2014. Accessed on April 10, 2014, www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/May-2014/Chicago-crime-rates.

181. Flynn McRoberts, “Stamps Leaves Imprint on Cabrini,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 5, 1996. Accessed on March 16, 2014, articles.chicagotribune.com/1996-09-05/news/9609050073.

182. Green, “Richard M. Daley,” 266; Boyd, *Jim Crow Nostalgia*, 138–43.

Stamps understood that black leaders did not necessarily speak for Cabrini-Green residents, but pursued their own political preferences within the Democratic Party, dominated by the white-power structure: “with Daley’s help on this side, and Jesse’s help on that side... they all can deliver us like lambs to vote for Clinton in November.”¹⁸³ In Stamps’s estimation voting got the residents nothing; “If we decide we don’t wanna vote in November that some brothers might get caught up. But in the war they are casualties, and you have to sacrifice the few in order to save the many. It ain’t nothing personal, it’s just a question of survival.”¹⁸⁴ For Stamps it was of little consequence if some black elected officials might lose their office. Stamps believed collective action would save Cabrini-Green. She advocated that the residents take the next four years to decide which party really worked in their best interest or whether they ought to build their own political party.

Stamps’s activism may appear like a far cry from the Fanon-inspired revolution of the Black Panther Party. Some might even regard her as a “protest elite” pursuing government pork barrel, but this requires a narrow vision of the fight for the human right to housing. Stamps never lost her revolutionary principles: “We don’t have the guns to go out here and shoot these people. We don’t have the resources to bring in the kind of think tanks that we need. So we need to work with what we’ve got. What do we have? We’ve got the people, and we’ve got our vote. We oughta hold it.”¹⁸⁵ Stamps recognized she was fighting a rearguard action and attempted to remain principled by centering the struggle on the most oppressed black people—public housing residents and gang-affiliated youth. She encouraged people to see themselves as political agents, capable of making change through collective action without the need of an elite mediator.

183. “Raw: Town Hall Meeting,” *Voices of Cabrini*.

184. “Raw: Robbins Barber Shop—Marion Stamps,” *Voices of Cabrini*.

185. Ibid.

In contrast, Larry Hoover attempted to use the gang truce to become an elite mediator with the white elite. However, he was unable to repeat his success outside the prison system. Similar to the first Daley, who used the war on gangs in the late 1960s to eliminate black gangs as political rivals, the federal government dismantled the gang's leadership and ended a nascent gang-based political machine. What James "Yaki" Sayles hoped would be an incipient revolution among the Gangster Disciples became a black-elite competition in the post-segregation era.

The gang truce did not live up to the potential of Stamps's multipoint plan despite her own continued activism. Instead, through the Chicago gang summit, various political figures and gang leaders vied for the role of race leader and produced a political vision of bootstrap capitalism and moral uplift that functioned to contain the potentially explosive inner-city disaffection with the status quo. Stamps was right to denounce these leaders' use of Cabrini-Green as a stage upon which to conjure up, in the words of an earlier revolutionary, "the spirits of the past to their service, borrowing from them names, battle slogans, and costumes in order to present this new scene in world history in time-honored disguise and borrowed language."¹⁸⁶

Dedicated to Damien Turner (1991–2010)

186. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852. Accessed on March 16, 2014, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch01.htm.

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Appendix A

Marion Stamps, “The Cabrini-Green Revitalization Plan”¹⁸⁷

1. The provision of educational, job training, and recreational activities to all youth and adults.
2. U.S. Representative Cardiss Collins to convene a congressional hearing on “what led to the destruction of Cabrini-Green and the entire Near-North Black community.”
3. U.S. Housing and Urban Development regional administrator Gertrude Jordan to “cite Metroplex, the owners of Town and Garden Apartments, for gross violation of their contract with HUD, and to reclaim the property and turn them into scattered site housing” for Cabrini-Green residents.
4. The repair of all vacant Chicago Housing Authority units, and their occupation by homeless families.
5. The turning of the 1117–1119 Cleveland Ave. building into a multi-purpose service center including an alternative high school, drug program, library, and a shelter for youth and adults.
6. The construction of a theatre, bowling alley, and a recreational arcade.
7. The support of existing agencies, churches, and community organizations that already provide services to the area residents.
8. The provision of additional resources and support to all area schools.
9. The establishment of food and clothing cooperatives for the area. The establishment of a 24-hour trouble-shooter hotline.
10. The holding of elections for Local Advisory Councils. The establishment of community-wide Governing Councils that represent all groups in the community. And, the holding of monthly community accountability sessions and status reports.

187. As printed in Yaki, “Let’s ‘Gang-Up’ On Oppression.”

Appendix B

The “United in Peace” button

Film still of Wallace “Gator” Bradley presenting the button on Peoria public television.



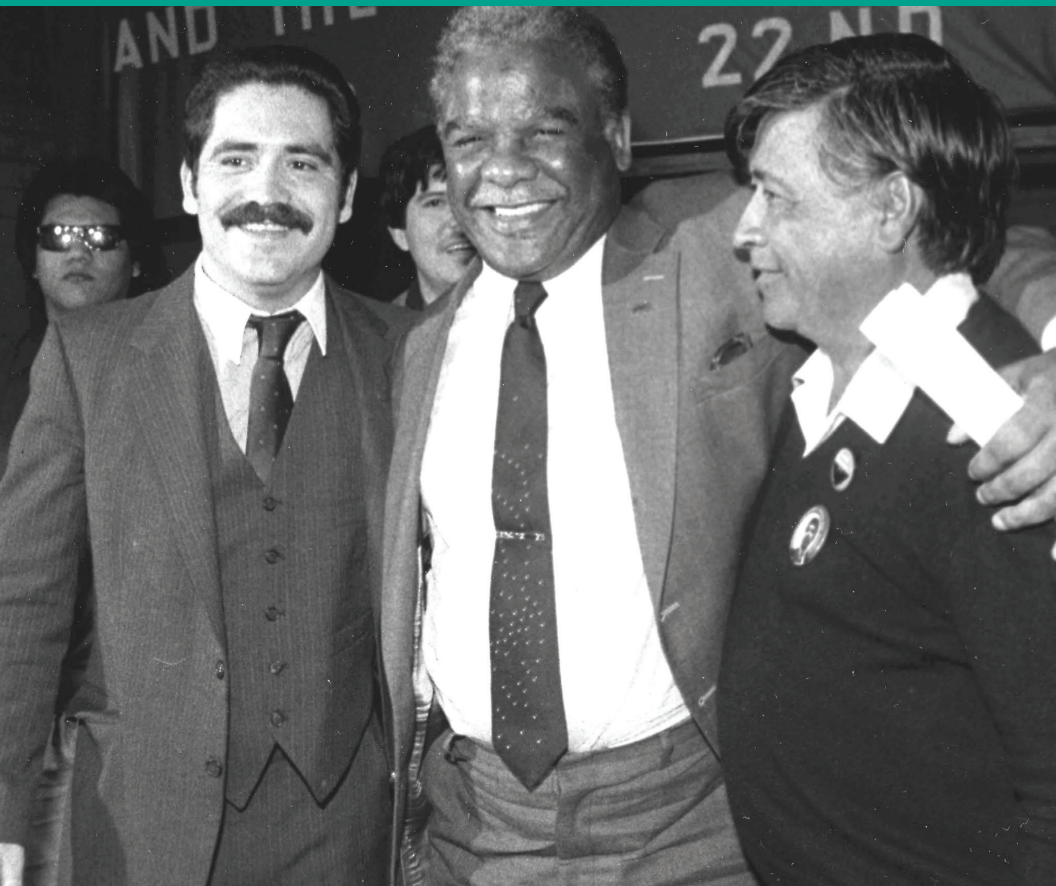
Appendix C

“The Sisters’ Statement,” National Urban Peace and Justice Summit, Kansas City, MO, April 29–May 2, 1993.¹⁸⁸

- We are the mothers, the sisters, the girlfriends, and the gang bangers. We have to grow together.
- We must all be equal participants. We must be able to speak up without being condemned or silenced. Our agenda is the same as yours.
- As women we have always known violence. It is gang banging and police brutality, but it is also domestic violence, rape, child abuse, and poverty.
- We insist that women are appropriately represented on any advisory group or board of directors developed out of this summit. We are our best resources. No amount of money in the world can accomplish what the strength, intelligence, and love in this room can. We have to pool our skills.
- The most important issue is that we work together. We love you and support you. Our effort is one.

188. Wallis, “A Time to Heal,” *Putting Down Stones*, 27.

Contested Constituency



Latino Politics and Pan-ethnic Identity Formation in the 1983 Chicago Mayoral Election of Harold Washington

JAIME SÁNCHEZ JR., AB'15

Preface

What was predicted to be a runaway primary election for incumbent Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2015 quickly turned into the first mayoral runoff election in Chicago's history. Cook County Commissioner Jesús "Chuy" García, who won 33.8 percent of the vote to Emanuel's 45.4 percent on February 24, 2015, forced the runoff. To many, this electoral challenge was surprising given the incumbent's credentials as a former chief of staff to both Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. For others, the primary election provided a way to demonstrate their frustration with the city's political status quo and Emanuel's administration. In the month-long campaign preceding the April 7 runoff, the leading issues were school funding, municipal finances, and crime. Though both candidates articulated agendas, the election became so much more than a choice in policy platforms. The possible election of Chicago's first Mexican American mayor sparked a national discussion on Latino politics, in which García's candidacy became a symbol of increasing Latino representation in Chicago politics. Larry Gonzalez, a Democratic strategist in DC and a Chicago native, reflected this

sentiment: “Everything is indicating that it’s time. Time for the Latino community to step up and allow its voice to be heard.”¹

The runoff election gained national attention, with Latino leaders from across the United States working to get García elected. Most notable was the endorsement of the Latino Victory Fund, a national political action committee created in 2013 to support Latinos running for elected office across the country. In its endorsement statement, the president of the fund said “we are proud to endorse Jesús ‘Chuy’ García, whose trailblazing candidacy for mayor of Chicago energized the Latino community, not only in Chicago, but across the country.”² However, there were obstacles to any effort to build a cohesive Latino political agenda around his candidacy. Oscar Chacón, executive director of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities, observed that Latino voters, a potential swing vote that was not quite mobilized in the month leading up to the runoff election, were “an untapped great opportunity for both campaigns.”³ Ultimately, Emanuel won, but the resonance of García as a symbol of Latino leadership and political efficacy remained. While some observers saw in García’s candidacy the political awakening of Latinos, seasoned followers of mayoral elections noticed parallels to an equally symbolic election thirty-five years before.

In 1983, Chicago elected its first African American mayor, Harold Washington. With the support of a broad though fragile coalition of voters, Washington’s election symbolized the aspirations of Black and Latino representation and, in the eyes of many voters, a rejection of corrupt, machine-patronage politics. I believe this moment captures a transformational shift in Latino political engagement within electoral

1. Suzanne Gamboa, “‘Chuy’ Garcia’s Chicago Mayoral Bid Sparks Latino Excitement,” *NBC News*, March 14, 2015.

2. Suzanne Gamboa, “Chuy Garcia Picks Up Latino Victory Fund Mayoral Endorsement,” *NBC News*, March 23, 2015.

3. Stefano Esposito, “Poll Shows Garcia with Huge Lead among Latinos,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 23, 2015.

politics. It was in the early 1980s that many Latino neighborhoods came to understand their political potential, with leaders like José “Cha Cha” Jiménez and Rudy Lozano working for Washington to create a Black-Latino coalition and build the racial-political consciousness of Latinos. Lupe Lozano, surviving widow of the deceased Latino organizer, has pointed to the historical significance of García’s candidacy: “with Chuy running, it’s like a spirit of Rudy that keeps living on.”⁴ As a close friend of Rudy Lozano, Chuy García got his political start in the progressive, independent political movement of the 1980s. Three decades later, García went on to rekindle the energy, ethos, and rhetoric of the Washington campaign that fostered the birth of Latino electoral engagement in the first place.

America has experienced a dramatic demographic transformation in the past four decades, especially when we consider the expansion and growth of the Latino population in Chicago and around the country. Latinos are frequently described as the next deciding and dominant force in American politics. Yet there is still much to be determined about what constitutes “Latino politics” and Latino identity more generally. Does such a thing as the Latino community exist as a cohesive whole, and if so, how did it come about? Today, political scientists take seriously the idea of a definable, Latino electoral behavior. Ricardo Ramírez and Gary Segura, for example, both argue that pan-ethnic Latino identity is increasingly constitutive and emblematic of cohesive group political behavior among Latinos in the twenty-first century.⁵ Yet this was not the case just thirty years ago. The following research project seeks to clarify these contemporary issues by placing them in a larger historical context.

4. Hal Dardick and Bob Sector, “Jesus ‘Chuy’ Garcia Hopes to Rekindle Harold Washington Torch at City Hall,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 11, 2015.

5. See Ricardo Ramírez, *Mobilizing Opportunities: The Evolving Latino Electorate and the Future of American Politics* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013); and Gary M Segura, “Latino Public Opinion & Realigning the American Electorate,” *Daedalus* 141, no. 4 (October 2012): 98–113.

Through the story of Harold Washington's 1983 campaign for mayor we can draw several practical lessons. First, we can contextualize and better understand the development of Latino electoral politics in Chicago that made the mayoral candidacy of a Mexican American plausible in 2015. Second, we can explore how campaigns reinforce the use of pan-ethnic labels through the notion of a constituency. Third, we can contribute to the complex and multifaceted debate concerning Latino heterogeneity and the process of Black-Latino coalition building. These three modern-day applications of my narrative demonstrate the value of local history for conceptualizing our contemporary political process. Chicago ultimately serves as the nexus of *Latinidad*⁶ and offers a prime case study for understanding Latino politics nationally. This is why the story of the Washington campaign continues to live in our present. Because in Chicago, history is made every day.

Introduction

Chicago was swept up in a wave of excitement, frustration, anger, and hope as the results of the 1983 mayoral election were revealed. Newspaper presses printed at maximum capacity that day, with front pages boldly announcing Chicago's new mayor after a campaign season like none before. In one of the most racially charged elections in American history, the city appeared to have been split between Black and White, machine and independent, status quo and reform. Despite racial fear mongering and a strong opposition from the Democratic machine, Harold Washington, the Democratic nominee, became the city's first Black mayor. His expressions of commitment were not just for the advancement of African Americans, but all minority groups in the city, making up the famous "rainbow coalition" frequently heralded as the driving force that brought Washington to the mayoralty. His campaign

6. *Latinidad*, Spanish for "Latino group identity," is used in common and academic parlance.

platform was one of racial-ethnic fairness, gender inclusion, and equal opportunity for all. As the champion of the independent reform movement, Washington represented the dreams and aspirations of countless Chicagoans who hoped their voice could be heard in city hall. Given how his election catalyzed the political engagement of several under-represented groups in the city, including the growing Latino community, it stood as one of the most important elections in the city's history.

Historians and popular memory alike generally understand the 1983 Chicago mayoral election to be the historically significant turning point for Latino political participation in the city. This consensus points to the Black-Latino coalition that formed around Washington as indicative of a cohesive Latino voting bloc that emerged during that moment and stood in racial solidarity with Blacks.⁷ This conception of Latinos during the 1983 election is rooted in the assumption that linguistic and cultural similarities between different Latino groups inevitably united them around a common political agenda. Granted, distinct Latino groups had formed successful coalitions in matters such as cultural exchange and nonelectoral community organizing well before the 1980s, but, the pan-ethnic unity expressed in community festivals and worker strikes did not transfer into electoral political action. The actual political behavior of Latinos during the 1983 election does not support the idea that the majority of Latinos belonged to a cohesive, ethnic voting bloc. By analyzing the electoral results from the 1983 primary, I will demonstrate that there was very limited Latino political cohesion and no unanimous Latino support for Washington.

7. By "popular memory," I am referring to the mainstream public's conception or understanding that quickly romanticized the election into some sort of ideal coalition, for example, Ben Joravsky and Tom Brune, "Can Washington's Victory Point the Way Forward for the Next Chicago Mayor?" *Chicago Reporter*, May 10, 1983; reinforcing the image of a Latino coalition were Washington's comments about the Black-Latino coalition and the accounts of the press: David Axelrod, "Washington Elected," *Chicago Tribune*, March 13, 1983.

In order to galvanize support among the contested Latino constituency, Washington's campaign had to confront the challenges of racial-national heterogeneity and subsequent differences in political allegiances among Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and others. This had been expressed in a lack of Latino support for Washington in the Democratic primary, which the campaign sought to overcome by working with college-educated, Latino political elites in the general election. Political divisions among Latinos were especially clear to the political organizers and campaign strategists who needed to mobilize the vote for a Black candidate and saw Latinos as a crucial voter base and a potential swing vote. Seeing the strategic advantage, I argue, Washington's campaign promoted Latino unity as way to fashion a cohesive political unit out of the various Latino neighborhoods in Chicago. Though he was only marginally successful in gaining a majority of Latino voters in the general election against Republican candidate Bernard Epton, the strategies and rhetoric employed by Washington had far greater consequences for Latino identity. This was the case because Washington's campaign strategy intersected with other sociopolitical forces in Chicago, including the legacies of a Black-White racial binary, decreases in public services, and a change in the political establishment that in many ways forced Latino voters to reimagine their engagement in civic life.

In a convergence of local *and* national processes of identity formation, the Washington campaign strategy contributed to the institutionalization of pan-ethnic *Latinidad* that was taking place at the national level. Along with national organizations, like the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the League of United Latin American Citizens, the campaign to elect Harold Washington worked parallel to and simultaneously with the larger national project of constructing Latino unity and group identity in electoral politics. Thus, Washington at once appealed to a contested constituency and argued for the legitimate existence of Latino pan-ethnicity in the first place. The campaign helped to define a constituency that was just beginning to take shape at a national level. By purposefully appealing to a pan-ethnic "Latino" constituency, bringing

in spokespeople for national pan-ethnic unity, and pushing out a message of Latino unity through the press and literature, Harold Washington's candidacy reinforced the concept of the "Latino vote" in ways that no political campaign had done before. These strategies at the local level were revealing, as they would test the potential of a pan-ethnic Latino constituency in a city with over 420,000 Latinos of diverse national heritages, who were just beginning to engage in elections.

The 1983 campaign period was the beginning of a long process that would discursively form Latinos into a theoretically united political front, regardless of whether they actually were or not. Thus, in the following I argue that the Washington electoral campaign and Latino political elites actually introduced and helped create the *concept* of a legitimate and pan-ethnic Latino electorate for the first time in Chicago. Using organizational records from the Latino Operations Department of the Washington campaign and newspaper accounts of the election period, I will demonstrate that this rhetoric of Latino cohesion was reinforced through an aggressive promotion of pan-ethnic symbolism by the 1983 Washington campaign, Latino political elites, and Latino organizations. In sum, my case study challenges historical assumptions of Latino political homogeneity, analyzes the generation of an externally constructed pan-ethnic constituency, and informs our general understanding of the broader emergence of Latino identity in national politics. But more broadly, this project challenges the focus of American history on a Black-White racial binary that often assigns Latinos to one side of the binary or the other. By reconstructing the story of Latino political engagement outside of a triumphal rainbow-coalition narrative that strips it of its nuance and causation, I urge for a more deliberate approach to Latino political history that is mindful of its difference and integrity, in which Latinos can create and occupy their own political space.

Literature Review and Archival Sources

The scholarship on Harold Washington focuses mostly on his time as mayor of Chicago and not on the 1983 election leading up to his mayoralty. The narratives that do touch upon the election consistently neglect the role Latinos played. Dempsey Travis's *"Harold," The People's Mayor*, Florence Levinsohn's *Harold Washington: A Political Biography*, and other popular histories make passing mention that Latinos were part of a Black-Latino coalition and acted as a swing vote, but do so anecdotally and without any evidence.⁸ Generally reaffirming the image of Latinos as "a small but loyal and decisive group," this historical generalization perpetuates a romanticized vision of overwhelming Latino support for Washington, which did not exist.⁹

Some scholars do discuss Latino political participation in greater depth, such as María de los Angeles Torres in *Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods* and Gary Rivlin in *Fire on the Prairie*.¹⁰ Both Rivlin's and Torres's contributions to our understanding of the 1983 election illustrate the mobilization and excitement of those Latinos who supported

8. Florence Hamlish Levinsohn, *Harold Washington: A Political Biography* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1983); and Dempsey J. Travis, *"Harold," The People's Mayor: An Authorized Biography of Mayor Harold Washington* (Chicago: Urban Research Press, 1989).

9. Dianne M. Pinderhughes, "An Examination of Chicago Politics for Evidence of Political Incorporation and Representation," in *Racial Politics in American Cities*, ed. Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb (London: Longman, 1997), 126.

10. Gary Rivlin, *Fire on the Prairie: Chicago's Harold Washington and the Politics of Race* (New York: Henry Holt, 1992); and María de los Angeles Torres, "The Commission on Latino Affairs: A Case Study of Community Empowerment," in *Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods: Progressive City Government in Chicago, 1983–1987*, eds. Pierre Clavel and Wim Wiewel (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

Harold Washington and a progressive Black-Latino coalition. Where I part company from these scholars is in their depiction of a cohesive and monolithic Latino voting constituency—one that I argue is not representative of the actual state of "Latino politics" in the early 1980s. These historical works do not address the initial distrust and lack of Latino support for Harold Washington during the Democratic primary in February of 1983, where he earned only about 15 percent of support from all the precincts that were predominantly Latino.¹¹ The existence of a tangible, organized, cohesive, and monolithic Latino voting bloc in 1983 is never questioned in any of these accounts of the election. Once we understand that the Latino population was politically heterogeneous, with differing political priorities and allegiances, we can qualify the success of the Black-Latino coalition and better understand how the Washington campaign contributed to the development of pan-ethnic Latino politics in Chicago. Yet to move beyond the image of an organic and grassroots Latino unity, we need a more theoretical and historical approach to Latino politics. To this end, we must look toward a social construction of Latino identity.

Scholars have generally accepted the social construction of race and ethnicity for several decades. Omi and Winant famously discusses the "formation" of racial categories.¹² Similarly, in *Making Hispanics* G. Cristina Mora argues that Latino identity should not be considered a primordial affinity, but as something created and legitimized by several actors and organizations for strategic reasons.¹³ Contrary to ideas of a natural or assumed Latino identity based on religion, language, and other sorts of cultural characteristics, Mora demonstrates how *Latinidad* is an

11. David K. Fremon, *Chicago Politics, Ward by Ward* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

12. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 1986).

13. G. Cristina Mora, *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 3.

institutionally constructed identifier. According to Mora, three groups of stakeholders created and normalized the pan-ethnic categorization of “Hispanics” and “Latinos” in the public sphere beginning in the late 1970s: government agencies, social activists, and media outlets. Motivated to pass federal legislation that would recognize Latinos as a minority group positioned to benefit through the Voting Rights Act and affirmative-action policies, stakeholders ushered in a “historical shift toward pan-ethnicity” and the concept of a cohesive Latino interest group.¹⁴

In the early 1980s, more than ever before, the idea of “Latino politics” was growing alongside an increasing representation of Latinos in government. A *national* project of legitimizing pan-ethnic Latino unity in the public sphere, despite obstacles of regional and ethnic difference, was spearheaded by entities like the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Spanish-language television network, Univision, during the 1980s.¹⁵ It was at this moment that the Washington campaign converged with and complemented the external legitimization of a Latino label that Mora discusses. Most political campaigns were still regionally based and specifically targeted Mexican or Puerto Rican voters—not “Latino” voters as a whole. But the Washington campaign was one of the earliest to appeal to a *pan-ethnic* Latino voting bloc. Here, the emerging rhetoric of the “Latino vote” reflected the development of “Hispanic” more generally and the “Hispanic market”¹⁶ more specifically, with Latinos characterized as

14. Felix Padilla’s work outlines the ways in which pan-ethnic Latino activism started taking form in the 1960s and 1970s specifically in Chicago with similar Latino coalitions being created in favor of affirmative-action policies and benefits. See, Felix M. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

15. Maurilio E. Vigil, *Hispanics in Congress: A Historical and Political Survey* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996).

16. The work of Arlene Dávila is similar to the argument put forward by Mora and important for my framework, but it is more focused on the Hispanic market

a convenient category of consumers *and* voters. In this way, Washington’s campaign had national significance by reifying the idea of a “Latino vote,” legitimizing the authority of national Latino leaders, and pioneering strategies for the mobilization of a pan-ethnic Latino constituency.¹⁷

These concerns directed my attention to two main archival source pools. First are the Washington Campaign Records at the Harold Washington Library Special Collections in Chicago. Documenting the entirety of Washington’s campaign activities from late 1982 to his ultimate victory in April 1983, this collection provides an enormous amount of detail on both the big-picture and everyday operations of the campaign. Of particular importance for my argument are documents from the campaign’s Latino citizens committees, the Latino Literature Review Committee and the Latino Operations Department. These records not only feature drafts and copies of flyers targeted towards a broad Latino constituency, but also contain memoranda and minutes from meetings concerning Latino electoral strategy.

Second are the Rudy Lozano Papers at the University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections. Rudy Lozano was one of the most influential Mexican American political leaders in Chicago during the late 1970s and early 1980s. His papers consist of professional correspondence, institutional records from the Independent Political Organization (IPO) of Little Village, Washington campaign materials, and a wide assortment of newspaper clippings. Of particular value are the Spanish-language news clips within this collection, which are rare and disaggregated when compared to digitized and readily available English-language newspaper sources. Figures like Lozano and his organization were in constant communication with the campaign’s leadership and vigorously emphasized

rather than on the political construction and implications; see Arlene Dávila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

17. Similar strategies would be pursued in presidential elections in the decades following the 1980s.

pan-ethnic appeals to voters, breaking away from established nationality-based strategies. Additionally, a wide variety of Chicago newspapers demonstrate the spread of pan-ethnic Latino rhetoric. Many articles were skeptical if such a thing even existed, which demonstrates the fragility of a pan-ethnic Latino voting bloc in the early 1980s.

Terminology

One of the ongoing debates in the academic social sciences asks: what should we call people in the United States with Latin American ancestry? While the 1980 Census categorized these individuals as *Hispanics*, both historical and contemporary norms have pushed me to describe the communities as *Latinos*. Drawing upon the work of Brubaker and Cooper, I will now elaborate on my selection of identity terms in relation to “categories of practice” vs. “categories of analysis.”¹⁸ Categories of practice refer to terms used in everyday language, interaction, and self-identification by individuals. In the case of 1980s Chicago, the terminology used to describe Latino Chicagoans included pan-ethnic labels, like “Spanish speaking,” “Latin American,” “Hispanic,” “Latino,” “Latin,” and “Spanish,” in addition to terms specific to national origin, like “Puerto Rican,” “Mexican American” or “Chicano,” “Cuban American,” and so on. In my analysis of newspapers and government records both the media and Latin American–descendent communities themselves used these pan-ethnic labels quite interchangeably.

In contrast, a category of analysis is a term that describes and analyzes a group within the context of academic discourse. While I could alternate throughout the paper between all of the categories of practice mentioned above, I find that a singular and consistent categorization offers clarity. I have chosen *Latino* as my category of analysis for two main reasons. First, the Washington campaign mainly used “Latino” to

18. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. “Beyond ‘identity,’” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000): 1–47.

encompass the Latin American–descendent communities of Chicago during the 1983 election period. Second, contemporary rhetoric has moved away from “Hispanic” to “Latino” as the primary pan-ethnic category for the Latin American diaspora in the United States. A common critique of “Hispanic” is its negative association with assimilation and whiteness, positioning “Latino” as the more progressive term. “Hispanic” still serves purposes at the national level in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, in our daily speech, and even within current academic scholarship concerning Latinos in the United States. Yet I hope that by choosing Latino as my category of analysis, this study can show the inextricable link between pan-ethnicity and political identity.

Though there are effective uses for the term, “Latino” can also work to essentialize a heterogeneous group of individuals. Suzanne Oboler raises a very important question regarding the “gap between the self-identification of people of Latin American descent and their definition through a label created and used by others.”¹⁹ In discussions of partisanship and group identity through the traditional lens of politics, scholarship concerning Latinos takes into account the impact of *assigned* social categories. Part of the problem with Latino identity is its use as an “ideological construct”²⁰ in the process of creating imagined communities. For the purposes of this essay, it is imperative to understand the multifaceted and contested nature of *Latinidad* in order to effectively evaluate the state of Latino cohesion in the political landscape of 1980s Chicago.

Defining “politics” can artificially limit how we think of individual actors and entire communities engaging in civic life. For the purposes of this paper, however, we must distinguish between formal and informal politics, given the political shifts of the 1980s. *Formal politics*, as understood in political science, refers to the sphere of electoral politics and the

19. Suzanne Oboler, *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of Representation in the United States* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 2.

20. *Ibid.*, 18.

politics of representation. But electoral activity is not the only form of political participation, especially for communities of color traditionally distanced from electoral politics. In the case of Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, Lisa García Bedolla shows how community engagement and nonelectoral activity seem to be more inviting avenues for achieving sociopolitical change in their neighborhoods. Thus *informal politics* refers to forms of community engagement such as neighborhood cleanups and volunteerism, as well as nonelectoral activity that involves protests, marches, and rallies. Though most Latino residents of East Los Angeles “did not see this activity as political,”²¹ the political meaning of these kinds of activities is clear. Similarly, Latinos in Chicago were politically engaged well before the election of Harold Washington, but mostly in the domain of informal protest politics.

One of the more controversial terms employed in this paper is the concept of the *Latino political elite*. I do not mean to say that these individuals were separated from their communities and neighborhoods, but rather that they were well out in front of whatever political and pan-ethnic sentiments their communities may have held in the early 1980s. These political elites were raised in the Latino neighborhoods of Chicago and were thoroughly committed to the improvement of the Latino population. However, most of the Latino elites were well established, middle class, and college educated, with broad networks and a progressive envisioning of their own racial-ethnic identity. Leaders like Rudy Lozano, Linda Coronado, and “Cha Cha” Jiménez emphasized pan-ethnic identity and interracial coalition building in working-class communities that were arguably not as receptive to these ideas during times of perceived economic competition. With a strategic framing of identity, the Latino political elites sought to educate their communities and increase representation for their neighborhoods. These individuals framed a broader image of Latino unity and viewed themselves as the well-connected Latino political vanguard.

21. Lisa García Bedolla, *Fluid Borders: Latino Power, Identity, and Politics in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 171.

Racial and Political Climate

Though American liberal ideology of the 1930s sought to provide equal opportunity and secure the livelihood of middle-class workers, growing inequality between Whites and Blacks demonstrated to progressives the racial divisions in the country. In reaction to the shortcomings of the class-based, New Deal rhetoric of the early twentieth century, the civil-rights movement and other identity-based rights movements emerged in the 1950s and sixties.²² Latino, Asian, and African Americans organized well into the 1970s and protested the lack of representation and resources allocated to their respective communities. But with the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan, the fortieth president of the United States, a noticeable shift in the racial climate accompanied a new wave of conservatism in American politics. Nationally, the 1980s contrasted sharply in many ways to the radical, racial-protest politics of the 1960s and 1970s. While the rhetoric of parity, economic fairness, and equal opportunity on racial lines continued to emanate from communities of color, the reception and reaction to these claims changed dramatically. As historian Daniel Rodgers notes, in the 1980s “justice was not achieved by attention to history; justice was achieved by transcending the past.”²³ Rather than address the systematic and structural manifestations of racial inequality, the dominant conservative rhetoric of the decade de-emphasized economic and race-based systems of oppression, and instead embraced an ideology of “colorblindness.”

The political right’s fierce debates over affirmative action and other kinds of government assistance programs sparked reaction and a growing sense of unrest in marginalized communities within Chicago. As Chicago scholar William J. Grimshaw notes of the period immediately prior

22. Jefferson Cowie, *Stayin’ Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010).

23. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

to the 1983 election under Mayor Jane Byrne, “Reagan’s rolling back of the welfare state and Byrne’s numerous open assaults on black interests enabled Washington to capitalize on a profoundly bitter sense of loss and disempowerment.”²⁴ However, this sense of disempowerment also stemmed from the exclusion of racial minorities in the governance of their communities at the local ward level. Chicago was truly a city of wards, with each of the fifty wards functioning as a legislative district that elects a representative alderman to the City Council. For the greater part of the twentieth century, the Democratic machine vetted and selected candidates who essentially ran unopposed.²⁵ By engaging in patron-client style politics, the aldermen and the party maintained control of the wards and elections well into the 1980s. Originally created by Irish political leaders in the nineteenth century, the system came to depend on ethnic White communities for political loyalty in exchange for political resources and city services. In the twentieth century, Italians, Bohemians, Poles, and other ethnic Whites were the base of the system along with some African Americans.²⁶

The links between Latino neighborhoods and the Democratic machine were few for most of the twentieth century. Sociologist Felix Padilla notes of the period leading into the late 1970s as a time when, “Mexican

24. William J. Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931–1991* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 195.

25. Dominic A. Pacyga, *Chicago: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 405.

26. African Americans were a strong component of the machine’s political power, but never full beneficiaries of the city services, infrastructural development, government contracts, and job allocations that Whites enjoyed. By the 1950s and ’60s, Black support of the Regular Democratic Organization faded and spurred the independent political movement that brought Washington to the mayoralty. For more on ethnic White voters, see Tomasz Inglot and John P. Pelissero, “Ethnic Political Power in a Machine City: Chicago’s Poles at Rainbow’s End,” *Urban Affairs Review* 28, no. 4 (June 1993): 526–43.

American and Puerto Rican city residents were either outside or only partially linked to the politicization of ethnicity through the political machine.”²⁷ City hall and the City Council at the start of the decade were almost solely comprised of White males affiliated with the Democratic machine. There were no Latino alderman in the City Council before 1983. Thus, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, the two largest Latino subgroups in the city, had to make alliances with the established powers through patronage politics to gain access to city jobs, municipal industrial contracts, and other kinds of city services. As Padilla mentions about Puerto Ricans in the city, “the working class poor [were] granted symbolic participation”²⁸ through departmental appointments of wealthy business leaders, but their efficacy in representing the interests of the community was questionable, as these leaders were unlikely to go against the interests of the machine leadership that had appointed them. Given the lack of diversity among elected officials in communities of color, the Democratic machine came to be seen by many African Americans and Latinos as an obstacle to the community’s self-determination.

Latino Chicago

Today, Chicago has the third-highest concentration of Latinos in the United States after Los Angeles and New York, with 790,649 people making up roughly 30 percent of the population.²⁹ In a city historically

27. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*.

28. Felix M. Padilla, *Puerto Rican Chicago* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 202.

29. “2010 Census,” *US Census Bureau*. Accessed January 23, 2017, factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml?src=bkml.

segregated by race and socioeconomic status, Latino ethnic neighborhoods have been based in the Northwest and Southwest sides of Chicago, most notable among them being Little Village, Back of the Yards, South Chicago, Pilsen, and Humboldt Park. Latinos have also been expanding into the suburbs of greater Chicago. Historically, Chicago has experienced several different phases of Latino migration before reaching the numbers and geographic distribution that we see today. One of the earliest periods of growth stretched from the time of the Mexican Revolution in 1921 until the early 1930s, when a small community of Mexican immigrants settled in the South Chicago area. Though small in numbers compared to the hundreds of thousands of African American migrants who came into the city during the Great Migration, these Mexican steel and rail workers established the first Mexican cultural and community organizations. As Michael Innis-Jiménez describes in *Steel Barrio*, these early settlers served as a racial buffer separating Black and White workers. This in-between status occupied by Mexican laborers in the early twentieth century set the precedent for the longer history in which Latinos would be racialized, discriminated against, and never fully accepted by either Whites or Blacks.³⁰

With the mass deportations of Mexicans during the Great Depression, many of whom were US citizens being unlawfully deported, the number of Latinos in Chicago remained relatively small until after World War II. By the late 1950s and early sixties, large concentrations of Latinos began to settle in the areas which remain to this day. For instance, Mexican immigrants settled en masse in Pilsen, formerly a Bohemian immigrant community. Other immigrants flocked to Chicago due to economic crises in Latin America, so that by the 1970s and 1980s there was a substantial Latino population comprised of both long-established and burgeoning neighborhoods with a mix of US citizens,

30. Michael Innis-Jiménez, *Steel Barrio: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915–1940* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 83.

legal permanent residents, and ever-increasing undocumented populations. Between 1960 and 1990, the Mexican population (by far the largest Latino subgroup in Chicago) “increased by more than six times—from 55,600 to 352,560.”³¹ Mainly working class in character, Mexican neighborhoods were in their highest period of growth by the 1970s and 1980s. After Mexicans, Puerto Ricans formed the second largest contingent of Latinos. Many of them came from New York in the 1930s, and they experienced their largest rates of growth during the 1960s and 1970s.

Although the numbers of other Latino subgroups were small compared to Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Central and South Americans maintained strong cultural traditions, with hundreds of community organizations created to meet the needs of each group. Indeed, Chicago was one of the few cities with a significant presence of more than one Latino group. Whereas cities like Los Angeles and New York had large majorities of either Mexican Americans or Puerto Ricans, Chicago was uniquely positioned as a place that could put notions of Latino identity, consciousness, and cohesion to the test. As the *Chicago Tribune* noted, the “internal heterogeneity”³² of the Latino community often stood in the way of effective political mobilization and cohesion. This heterogeneity would shape the ways in which the Latino population sought access to resources. Figure one demonstrates that Latinos doubled in size by 1980, but in a city that was over 80 percent White and Black, the question of how Latinos would fit into the racial landscape of the city remained unresolved.

31. Nicholas De Genova and Ana Y. Ramos-Zayas, *Latino Crossings: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and the Politics of Race and Citizenship* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

32. “City Latinos Have Almost No Political Power: Study,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 21, 1980, 2.

Figure 1: Racial Composition of Chicago in 1970, 1980, and 1990

Groups	1970 / %	1980 / %	1990 / %
Black	1,102,620 / 30.5	1,187,168 / 39.5	1,086,389 / 32.8
Asian	70,970 / 2.4	104,141 / 3.1	
Latino	247,343 / 6.8	423,357 / 14.1	535,315 / 16.2
White	2,207,767 / 61.1	1,311,808 / 43.6	1,265,953 / 38.2
Other	56,570 / 1.6	11,775 / 0.4	320,482 / 9.7
Total	3,614,300 / 100.0	3,005,078 / 100.0	3,312,280 / 100.0

Source: "Illinois," *1970 United States Census*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1970), 15–105 (part 15, sec. 1, ch. B, table 23); "Illinois," *1980 United States Census*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1980), 15–52 (part 15, ch. 1, table 59); "Population and Housing Summary Tape File 3A," *1990 United States Census* (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, 1990).

Despite the rapid growth of the Latino population since the 1960s, Chicago's deep-rooted history of racial politics ensured that most issues were framed in a Black-White binary. Latinos who did not identify as Black or White existed in an ambiguous ethno-racial "third space."³³ Culture, language, national origin, and other markers of ethnicity were defining features of Latino-ness as an abstract classification. Defining oneself in terms of race, however, proved a challenging and divisive exercise, which was voiced by a Latino individual interviewed by the *Chicago Tribune* in 1974: "Blacks call us white, whites call us brown, and we have a helluva time deciding what we're going to call ourselves!"³⁴

33. David G. Gutiérrez, "Migration, Emergent Ethnicity, and the 'Third Space': The Shifting Politics of Nationalism in Greater Mexico," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (September 1999): 494.

34. "Latino Efforts to Pull Together," *Chicago Tribune*, August 1, 1974.

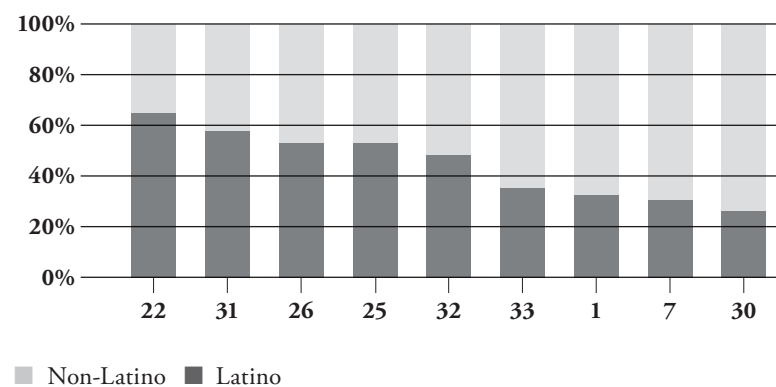
A 1982 cover story in the *Tribune* discussed the complicated nature of Latino political organizing. Emphasizing the nature of the city as the meeting place of all Latino groups, the author described Chicago as "the one heavily Hispanic city that mirrors the special problem of Hispanics nationally—it does not have a Hispanic spokesman for its entire population. Instead, the various communities have their movers and shakers, who sometimes work together and sometimes fight."³⁵ Latino Chicagoans did not fit neatly into the city's political and social landscape, which revealed tensions at the national level. These realities left the issues of Latino cohesion, political strategy, and Black-Latino coalitions open for significant exploration in the 1980s.

Rise of Latino Political Organizing

An ambiguous social and political status made it difficult for Latinos to advocate in their local wards. The splitting of Latino neighborhoods between different wards and national origins reinforced this lack of power and limited Latinos' collective political power when dealing with any particular alderman. These institutionalized disadvantages and crippling prejudice for those who challenged the Democratic machine worked to stifle political activism. While many Latinos simply avoided involvement in formal politics, this distance from the electoral process could also be understood as a form of "self-protection" from making powerful enemies in the establishment.³⁶ Even in wards where Latinos constituted the majority of the population, as seen in figure two, there was still little engagement in formal politics by these communities. By staying secluded from political life, Puerto Rican voters, and Latino voters more generally, were seen as innocuous and were ultimately taken for granted over the course of decades. This gave the machine the security

35. Miguel Galvan, "Who Speaks for Hispanic Americans?" *Chicago Tribune*, June 20, 1982.

36. Padilla, *Puerto Rican Chicago*, 72.

Figure 2: Latino Wards by Population Percentage

Source: Juan Andrade and Connie Ortega, *Hispanics in Chicago: A Political Analysis* (Chicago: Midwest Voter Registration Education Project, Office of Special and International Projects, National Council of La Raza, 1982).

to focus on building support from the Black electorate in the years leading up to 1983. As Torres notes, “while electoral mobilization characterized Latino politics outside of Chicago, the lack of meaningful possibilities for community political empowerment in the electoral arena had caused young Latino political activists in Chicago to adopt other strategies.”³⁷ These strategies included several forms of nonelectoral political organizing, which were some of the earliest manifestations of pan-ethnic Latino solidarity on common issues.

Affirmative action was one of the most important policy issues for Latinos, especially during the civil-rights movement, which catalyzed the formation of many community organizations. Organizations such as the Mexican Community Committee of South Chicago, the Puerto Rican Organization for Political Action, and several others formed during the 1960s, but they were addressed to specific nationalities and not

actively pan-ethnic in scope. Given the ethnic and cultural heterogeneity of the Latino population in Chicago, forging a pan-ethnic community would become a strategic necessity to organize on key issues that required larger numbers than the subgroups could mobilize on their own. In response to this reality new organizations aimed to rally the entire Latino diaspora in the city around issues of common concern, and built up confidence in terms of political efficacy. With the creation of the Spanish Coalition for Jobs in June of 1971, the strategy of organizing among different Latino groups in Chicago gained traction. Padilla notes the coalition’s significance, which was “considered Chicago’s first Latino protest organization, that is, an organization comprised of more than one Spanish-speaking group which employed protest tactics.”³⁸

The Spanish Coalition for Jobs convened around twenty community organizations from distinct Latino neighborhood organizations to formulate a common agenda for development and to advocate for policy changes in city hall relating to employment. The experience of structural inequality across Latino ethnic subgroups stimulated this politicized behavior during the 1970s and created a front of solidarity for increased job opportunities. Collectively protesting discrimination in hiring practices and working conditions, the coalition focused its campaigns against the Illinois Bell and Jewel Tea companies. While the organization mobilized almost equally among Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, the kind of ethnic mobilization exhibited by the coalition was almost exclusively outside of formal electoral politics. Following on the success of the Spanish Coalition for Jobs, the Latino Institute was established in 1974 as a central advocacy organization that sought to address the development of Latino communities and interests across several issue areas. The institute was a citywide organization with a downtown office that was run by college-educated Latino political elites, “middle-class reformers, more prominent and less alienated from mainstream America than the

37. Torres, “The Commission on Latino Affairs,” 166.

38. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness*, 90.

members of the Spanish Coalition for Jobs.”³⁹ Financial mismanagement led to the institute’s early demise, which by then was only focused on bread-and-butter issues like employment.

In the 1980s, local community organizations in Latino neighborhoods began to engage in an unprecedented level of electoral activity. Spurring this political involvement was the rise of the independent political movement determined to challenge the hegemony of the Democratic machine and create a more racially representative leadership in city hall and in the Illinois legislature. At the fore of this movement was the Independent Political Organization (IPO) of Little Village, founded in 1981, and other IPOs in Chicago, comprised of both Black and Latino members. The IPO was an exclusively political organization with the ultimate goal of counteracting the Regular Democratic Organization. Rising out of the machine’s neglect towards communities of color, the independent political movement had great appeal within Black and Latino neighborhoods. In the case of Pilsen, entrenched Alderman Vito Marzullo, an Italian American, symbolized how in the 25th Ward “Mexicans live but do not rule.”⁴⁰ Similarly in Little Village, the 22nd Ward, the White alderman, Frank Stemberk, didn’t even live in the area that he represented.⁴¹ The independent movement’s counteractive strategy was to find candidates that would represent the people, not the interests of the party officials, and then campaign on an independent platform in opposition to the machine candidate of that ward.

Around the time of the founding of the IPO in Little Village, a group of Latino and Black community organizers began meeting to build a coalition that would position people of color as viable candidates in the 1982 Illinois legislature race. Candidates endorsed by the Black-Latino

39. Ibid., 130.

40. Hank De Zutter, “Neighborhood News,” *Chicago Reader*, March 12, 1982.

41. Robert Davis and James Strong, “Alderman’s Residency Investigated, Stemberk,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 10, 1985.

Alliance included Jose Salgado, Arthur Turner, Juan Soliz, Arthur McBride, Jane Flagg, Carmelo Vargas, and Danny Davis. Spokesman Peter Earle stated that alliance’s mission was to find “people-oriented candidates who understand our needs, abhor plantation politics and have pledged themselves to work and vote in the best interest of our people.”⁴² Spanish-language periodicals also took notice of the political partnership. *El Heraldo de Chicago*, a major Spanish-language newspaper, provided a similar depiction of the coalition. Officially forming in January of 1982, the Black-Latino Alliance blasted the party establishment for “giving its support to other ethnic groups at the expense of Blacks and Latinos.”⁴³ Stressing the linked fates of both groups, the article identified Latinos clearly as a non-White group. Ultimately, however, the Black-Latino Alliance was limited in its success. Juan Soliz, the first Latino candidate for the State legislature, lost to the machine-backed candidate in a district that was 70 percent Latino.

What some politically active Latinos considered “an important test of political strength for Latinos in Chicago” turned out to be a disappointment that proved the strength of the machine.⁴⁴ Yet this was only the beginning of the independent movement in Chicago. In December of 1982, US District Judge Thomas R. McMillen ruled against the discriminatory ward mapping approved by the City Council in 1981. The decision meant that the boundaries of wards 37, 15, 26, and 32 would be redrawn in order to create two majority Black wards and two

42. Slim Coleman, “Black-Latino Alliance Formed,” *All Chicago City News*, February 4–18, 1982.

43. “El cual tradicionalmente ha dado su apoyo a otros grupos étnicos a expensas de los negros y los latinos.” Alicia C. Santelices, “Latinos Y Negros: Contra La Maquinaria Democrata,” *El Heraldo de Chicago*, February 4, 1982. [All translations from the Spanish are my own.]

44. Bill Campillo, “Soliz Challenges ‘the Machine’,” *La Opinion Latina*, Winter 1982. The perception of Latino political mobilization during the early 1980s mirrors the rhetoric of the 2015 Chicago election for mayor.

Figure 3: Registered Voters in Chicago, 1980

1980	White	Black	Latino	Other
Voting Population	53.5%	37.5%	7.5%	1.5%

Source: Chicago Urban League, *Metro Chicago Political Atlas—1994*, ed. James H. Lewis, D. Garth Taylor, and Paul Kleppner (Springfield, IL: Institute for Public Affairs, 1994).

majority Latino wards. In his ruling, McMillen stated that Latinos were “entitled to better representation in the City Council and have been deprived of that opportunity.”⁴⁵ This legal victory kept hopes of political change and increased representation alive going into 1983. The court’s ruling coincided with the candidacy of Harold Washington in late 1982. Though only a small proportion of the electorate, as seen in figure three, Latino political support would gain unprecedented importance in the 1983 election.

Primary Campaign and Election: December 1982–February 1983

There were three candidates in the 1983 Democratic primary for mayor of Chicago: the incumbent, Mayor Jane Byrne; Cook County State’s Attorney Richard M. Daley; and US Representative for the First Congressional District of Illinois Harold Washington. Byrne was the first woman elected as mayor of Chicago in 1979. Byrne was strong in White working-class neighborhoods but, criticized for her responses to job decline and dilapidated public housing, she struggled in her relationship to impoverished African American neighborhoods on the South Side. As son of the famed Mayor Richard J. Daley, who was in office for twenty-one years, Richard M. Daley posed a significant challenge to the incumbent. Both candidates appealed and held close ties to the Democratic machine,

45. Maurice Possley, “Minorities Get 4 Wards: Judge Boosts Blacks, Hispanics,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 22, 1982.

posing a problem for the independent voter movement. When movement leaders asked Washington to run on an independent, anti-machine, reform platform, Washington would only consider if Black voter registration went up. This stipulation was made with an astute understanding of the historically low mobilization of Black voters, especially in the election cycles of the 1970s. To Washington’s surprise, however, Black community organizers registered voters in the tens of thousands.⁴⁶ Black Chicagoans were inspired by the prospect of Chicago’s first Black mayor, and at 39.5 percent of the population, their rally ultimately convincing Washington to run.⁴⁷

With the machine’s White voters split between Byrne and Daley, as well as Washington’s near complete hold of Black voters and appeal to lakefront-liberal White voters, the primary was very close. This split represented the clear-cut voting allegiances within the city. The voting allegiances of the racially, ethnically, and *politically* diverse Latino population were not as clear cut. Contemporaneous newspaper accounts and political analysis speculated broadly on where Latinos positioned themselves during the 1983 primary. The most common distinction was between Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. Underlying these ethnic divisions were distinct historical patterns of citizenship and migration, wherein Puerto Ricans were citizens as opposed to the citizen-resident-undocumented pattern in Mexican neighborhoods. Rivlin suggests that, unlike Puerto Rican self-identification as non-Whites, “Mexican Americans sought to identify themselves as just another ethnic group like the Italians, the Irish, and the Poles.”⁴⁸ This idea of assimilation reflected the historical pattern of immigrants distancing and distinguishing themselves from African Americans as a means to assimilate into whiteness. Jaime Dominguez adds further complexity to this

46. Travis, “*Harold*,” *The People’s Mayor*, 140

47. “Voter Registration Catches On,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 15, 1982.

48. Rivlin, *Fire on the Prairie*, 351.

picture with the observation of citizenship and class-based distinctions between established middle-class Mexicans in South Chicago and more recent descendants of Mexican immigrants in communities like Little Village, who were more prone to vote progressive and to align with the Black-Latino coalition.⁴⁹

Other writers have helped to fill out our understanding of inter-Latino political divisions. Writer Florence Levinsohn states, “interestingly, it is speculated that Latinos are split in their attitudes, with Puerto Ricans more friendly and open to Blacks while Mexicans are more strongly anti-Black.”⁵⁰ Within the Mexican American community itself, political commentator David K. Fremon observed generational distinctions in the 22nd Ward between “older more established Mexicans, who view themselves as merely another ethnic group” and “younger, more liberal Mexicans, who see themselves as a disadvantaged minority.”⁵¹ This divide was representative of a broader shift in the Latino population as older Mexican political leaders slowly gave way to younger politicians from the Chicano movement.⁵² In the complex neighborhood-based geography of Chicago politics, Latinos were divided in the ways they identified with the ethnic and racial politics of the primary election.

The *Chicago Tribune* and other news outlets speculated about the difficulty Washington would have with Latino voters, given the historical and racial tensions between Blacks and Latinos and the power of the

49. Jaime Dominguez, “Latinos in Chicago: A Strategy Towards Political Empowerment (1975–2003)” (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2007), ProQuest (3294309).

50. Levinsohn, *Harold Washington: A Political Biography*, 271.

51. Fremon, *Chicago Politics, Ward by Ward*, 147.

52. Gregory Rodriguez, *Mongrels, Bastards, Orphans, and Vagabonds: Mexican Immigration and the Future of Race in America* (New York: Vintage, 2008).

Democratic machine. Journalist David Axelrod wrote: “despite a budding independent Hispanic movement, that vote is still largely a Democratic organization reserve.”⁵³ Journalist Phillip Lentz pointed toward an opinion poll according to which approximately 60 percent of Latinos approved of Mayor Byrne before the primary. How the poll was designed and if it was representative was not mentioned, but the article stated that “as with previous waves of immigrants, this optimism [about the mayor’s performance] is reflected in support of authority and the political establishment.”⁵⁴ Yet this approval of Byrne did not come without its challenges. A 250-member coalition of six Latino organizations across the city endorsed Richard M. Daley for mayor in December of 1982, denouncing Byrne on the basis of her ineffective allocation of resources to Latino communities. Furthermore, the spokesperson for the group, Lupe Perez, labeled Washington “a civil rights candidate of the black community and not a political candidate to represent all the citizens of Chicago.”⁵⁵ This sentiment against Washington reflected the fear of racial preference in resource allocation, a fear of economic and job competition that was considered to be a legitimate logic to vote against Washington.⁵⁶

Racial fear mongering came to the fore during a televised mayoral candidate debate on February 7, 1983, on WBBS-TV Channel 60’s *Opinion Publica*. The debate brought in Latino representatives from each of the campaigns to speak on the issues followed by a panel “composed of

53. David Axelrod, “Washington Key Black in Mayor Race,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 26, 1982.

54. Phillip Lentz, “Hispanics Hunger for Clout in City Hall,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 31, 1983.

55. “Latino Coalition Endorses Daley,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 6, 1982.

56. The candidacy of Barack Obama in 2008 spurred an analogous discourse of racial resource competition.

academic and media persons from the Spanish-speaking community.”⁵⁷ Representing Mayor Byrne was her assistant press secretary for Spanish communication, Fernando Prieto. The sensitive issue of affirmative action in city hiring came up during the question-and-answer period. Prieto, born in Colombia, spoke on the allocation of jobs in the mayor’s office: “we can go to the Department of Human Services and we will see how that department is very dark. Can you imagine how it would be with a Black mayor?”⁵⁸ The Reverend Jorge Morales of Saint Luke Unity Church of Christ and founder of the Westtown Concerned Citizens Coalition pointed to this incident as representative of the Byrne administration’s efforts to divide an independent Black-Latino coalition. Morales demanded that Byrne “apologize to Chicago’s Spanish-speaking community for the use of these racist tactics,” which in his opinion sought to pit Blacks and Latinos against each other and cast Latinos as a White-ethnic group fearful of Black people.⁵⁹

Washington aimed to leverage a coalition of Blacks and Puerto Ricans in the primary. Though representing more than just the interests of his own community, Morales was also part of the Puerto Rican political elite along with leaders like María Cerda and José “Cha-Cha” Jiménez. Puerto Ricans came out early in support of Washington. Jiménez led this support as founder of the Young Lords Organization, which was modeled after the Black Panthers in the 1970s and saw itself as representative of a radical non-White Puerto Rican population. In his autobiography, Jiménez mentioned that he organized the first Latino rally for Washington with the Puerto Rican Diaspora Coalition in January

57. Marcelino Miyares Sotolongo, president of WBBS-TV, to Washington campaign, 13 January 1983, box 26, folder 10, Harold Washington Archives and Collection: Mayoral Campaign Records, Special Collections and Preservation Division, Chicago Public Library [hereafter HWAC].

58. Jorge Morales, press release statement, 17 February 1983, box 26, folder 12, HWAC.

59. Ibid.

of 1983 at North West Hall where “more than one thousand persons (1000) attended.”⁶⁰ Although only comprising a sixth of the Latinos in Chicago, Puerto Ricans would support Washington at a proportionally higher rate than any other Latino subgroup by the time of the primary election.

Serving as a crucial link between Washington and Mexican Americans was community activist and labor organizer Rudy Lozano, a Mexican American born in Texas and raised in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. It was Lozano who, with other Little Village activists, founded the Independent Political Organization of the 22nd Ward. Early in his career, Lozano focused many of his efforts on the very same coalition politics that Harold Washington emphasized. Lozano’s work went beyond Little Village and took hold in various alliances throughout the city like the West Side Coalition for Unity and Political Action. A shared appreciation of Black-Latino coalition building shows why Lozano was thought of by many during the 1983 campaign as “Harold Washington’s main liaison to the Latino community.”⁶¹ With hopes to increase his traction among Latinos, Washington officially endorsed Rudy Lozano for 22nd Ward alderman in the primary. Running as a reform candidate was difficult in a ward with an entrenched machine incumbent, and proved ultimately unsuccessful, but the endorsement symbolized Washington’s solidarity with Lozano’s goals of political self-determination for Mexican American neighborhoods. Other Mexican American political activists such as Linda Coronado, Juan Soliz, Jesús

60. José Jiménez, “Cha-Cha Jimenez: A Young Lord,” ed. Antonio Lopez, Michael Prindle, Hannah Burton, and Jonathan Lewandowski (unpublished manuscript, April 15, 2011), 11. Accessed on January 28, 2017, issuu.com/josejimenez1/docs/cha_cha_pamphlet. The “Puerto Rican Diaspora Coalition” was the political guise of the Young Lords Organization, which was still trying to distance itself from the negative gang connotations of its name.

61. Gary Rivlin, “Who Killed Rudy Lozano?” stapled booklet, circa 1983, Rudy Lozano Papers, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago.

García, and Juan Velázquez worked with Lozano to advance Washington's independent agenda in their neighborhoods and would continue this work after the primary.

Yet, outside of these links to two of the largest Mexican American and Puerto Rican neighborhoods, Washington's efforts to garner Latino support were limited when compared to his mass mobilization and precinct organization in the Black South Side before the primary. One of the more notable publicity events was the endorsement from a national Latino leader brought in to speak at a meeting of Operation PUSH, where "Washington also received the support of Tony Bonilla, president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, the oldest and largest Hispanic organization in the United States."⁶² Additionally there were two campaign benefit parties, themed "Blues and Salsa" and featuring groups such as La Confidencia, the Latin Ensemble, and the Latin Jazz Presence III.⁶³ Aside from these events, the general informational literature distributed by the Washington campaign made some references to Latinos. In the mailer, "A Candidate for ALL of Us—An Agenda for our City," Washington addressed the Chicago's difficult economic situation: "under Jane Byrne, Blacks hold only 18 percent of all full-time city jobs; Latinos hold only 4 percent of city jobs."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the focus of the Washington campaign appeared to be centered on the mobilization of the Black electorate. With most of the campaign's efforts focused on Black voters during the primary, the race was very close come February.

On February 22, 1983, Harold Washington won the Democratic primary with 36.3 percent of the vote, Byrne was second at 33.6 percent,

62. Mitchell Locin, "Byrne Invades 'Enemy' Turf," *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1983.

63. "Blues and Salsa Benefit Party," 29 January 1983, and "Benefit Concert Invitation," 19 February 1983, box 11, folder 16, HWAC.

64. "A Candidate for ALL of Us—An Agenda for our City," Committee to Elect Harold Washington mailer, January 1983, box 25, folder 7, HWAC.

and Daley was third at 29.7 percent. Due to the unprecedented turnout of Black voters and the split of the machine vote between Byrne and Daley, Washington had the narrow margin of victory.⁶⁵ So what happened to the Latino vote? Perhaps overestimating the power of his racial coalition rhetoric or the early support of elite Latino progressives in Little Village and Humboldt Park, Washington's campaign failed to court votes in Latino areas effectively, as shown in figure four. In his post-primary analysis, David Fremon pointed to some specific areas that demonstrated the leanings of heavily Latino wards. In the 7th Ward, which included the historically Mexican American neighborhood of South Chicago, "Washington carried the Black precincts; the others won the Mexican areas."⁶⁶ In the 32nd Ward, approximately half Latino, incumbent Jane Byrne "carried the Hispanic precincts" with the rest of the mainly White vote going to Daley.⁶⁷ In the end, Latinos broadly supported either the incumbent or Richard M. Daley. Though the exact breakdown of Latino voting during the primary is not clear, the Midwest Voter Registration Education Project estimated that 51.4 percent of Latinos supported Byrne, 34.5 percent Daley, and 12.7 percent Washington.⁶⁸

In heavily Democratic Chicago, winning the Democratic primary was tantamount to winning the mayoralty given that there were no Democratic runoff elections and the machine usually did not contest or challenge the results. However, since Washington was a Democratic reform candidate whose platform was not favored by the Regular Democratic Party, many leaders decided to endorse a Republican candidate for mayor, Bernard Epton, a Chicago lawyer and state legislator with a

65. "1983 Chicago Mayoral Primary Results," *Chicago Democracy Project*. Accessed in 2015, chicagodemocracy.org/ChooseElection.jsp.

66. Fremon, *Chicago Politics, Ward by Ward*, 61.

67. *Ibid.*, 215.

68. Statistics from the Midwest Voter Education Registration Project published in Torres, "The Commission on Latino Affairs."

fiscally conservative agenda. Edward Vrdolyak, chairman of the Cook County Democratic Committee and president of the City Council, publicly supported Epton during the general election campaign and worked to turn a great majority of White voters over to Epton. Racism also played a genuine role in the turn of many White Democrats to the Republican Party in this election. This shift in party politics was unprecedented in Chicago and pointed to the depth of anxiety about racial change among ethnic White voters and leaders. Washington and Epton would face off in the general election on April 12, 1983. In the span of just forty-nine days, both candidates engaged in a ruthless campaign filled with smear ads, debates, and polarizing racial tension, which made the general

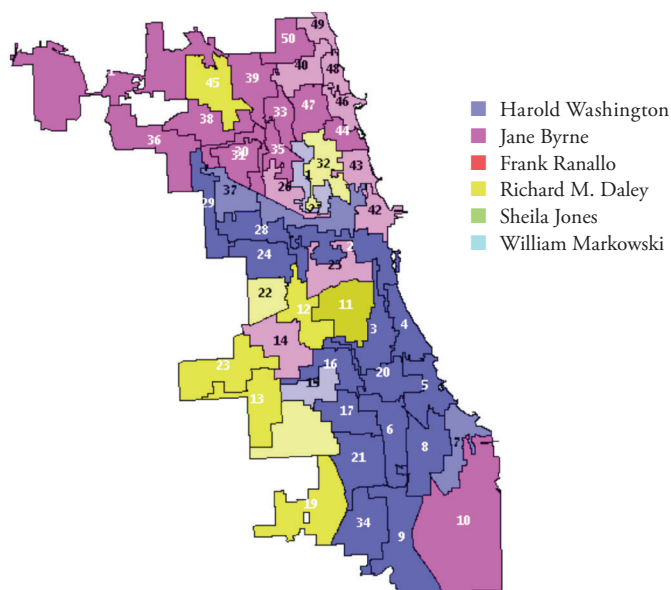


Figure 4. Election Map by Ward for the 1983 Chicago Democratic Mayoral Primary

Source: "1983 Chicago Mayoral Primary Election Results," *Chicago Democracy Project*. Accessed in 2015, chicagodemocracy.org/ChooseElection.jsp.

election "one of the dirtiest in history."⁶⁹ But one question remained: who would the politically split Latino voters of the primary election support now?

Washington's base was in the Black South and West sides. He did not win any of the four wards (22, 31, 26, and 25) with over 50 percent Latino population, which supported White candidates.

Contested Constituency: February–April 1983

As the Vrdolyak-led Democratic leadership backed the Republican candidate Bernard Epton, so went the majority of loyal, ethnic White voters in addition to a significant proportion of nonethnic White voters that followed this leadership to the Republican side, if just for one election.⁷⁰ Washington had already made inroads with liberal White voters in the primary, particularly with middle-class liberals who lived along Lake Michigan. Moving forward, Washington increased his support in these progressive White neighborhoods.

However, the primary victory was bittersweet for the Washington campaign. While an unprecedented mobilization of African American voters gave Washington the upper hand, the support from Latino neighborhoods, especially Mexican American precincts, was strikingly low. A few days after the primary, the *Chicago Tribune* pointed to the need for Washington to refocus his campaign in order to "greatly improve the

69. Levinsohn, *Harold Washington: A Political Biography*, 232.

70. The Chicago Regular Democratic Organization, or the machine, historically functioned by mobilizing ethnic White immigrant communities such as the Irish, Bohemians, Italians, and Poles. In exchange for political loyalty and turnout, voters received special privileges and city services. Generally, nonethnic White voters were more independent, but more often than not took part in machine political organizing. By and large, people of color were removed from the machine's reward system, especially after the civil-rights movement.

less-than-10 percent he received from white and Hispanic voters.”⁷¹ This was both an essential and impossible task. Essential because the political leaning of the approximately 85 percent of Latinos that didn’t support Washington in the primary was unclear, and had the potential to become a deciding swing vote.⁷² Impossible because of the racial, ethnic, and political cleavages that divided Latinos and kept them from forming a cohesive electoral bloc prior to the primary.

Chicago’s Latino voters were a “contested” constituency. Contested in the sense that Latino support was coveted and *fought* for by the Washington campaign. But more importantly, contested in the sense that the Washington campaign *argued* for and crafted an image of Latinos as a pan-ethnic and cohesive voting bloc. In order to galvanize support among such a disjointed constituency, the campaign focused on pushing a pan-ethnic agenda that not only emphasized similarities between disparate Latino groups in the city, but also stressed their shared, non-White identity with Blacks. This project of racial consciousness raising and pan-ethnic identity formation was not a typical responsibility of an electoral campaign in the 1980s, thus making the Washington campaign ground breaking in its methods and ideology. In the forty-nine days leading into the April general election, Latino political elites and the institutions they led took advantage of Washington’s political momentum to express their pan-ethnic ideals and unify Latinos around a progressive political agenda.

In addition to the Latinos who had already been in the Washington camp since the primary, other Latino elites from across the city quickly contacted the campaign after the election. The day after the primary, Washington received a congratulatory telegram from Jose F. Pletz, president of the Hispanic Federation of Illinois Chambers of Commerce,

71. David Axelrod, “Washington’s New Focus,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 27, 1983.

72. Basil Talbott, “Two Key Mayor Battlegrounds,” *Sunday Sun-Times*, March 13, 1983.

who asked to discuss issues relating to the “Hispanic business agenda.”⁷³ Similarly, Phil Ayala, executive director of El Centro de la Causa, congratulated Washington “on behalf of the Hispanic community” and added, “you can be assured of our continued support in the general election.”⁷⁴ It is interesting to note how Ayala seemed to speak for *all* Latinos in Chicago and assures continuing support despite the considerably low turnout for Washington just three days before. Continuing to speak on behalf of the Latino “community” was WOJO 105FM, Radio Ambiente; the station’s special events director congratulated Washington and wrote: “As Chicago’s Hispanic population, now at 14 percent, continues to grow the need for political leadership is vital. I would like to offer our services to you should information about the Hispanic community be needed.”⁷⁵ It is not necessarily clear why these individuals offered their help, but perhaps we can infer that they sought to establish themselves as a kind of political vanguard for a population that was quickly growing in both number and political potential.

Washington’s campaign manager, Albert Raby, responded with messages like “I welcome your offer of support. Your expertise in the Latino community would be instrumental.”⁷⁶ These messages of gratitude were not mere formalities, but indicative of the campaign’s genuine need to expand support across Latino communities. In fact, March of 1983 would mark the beginning of the Washington campaign’s revamped Latino

73. Jose F. Pletz to Harold Washington, telegram, 23 February 1983, box 4, folder 11, HWAC.

74. Phil Ayala to Harold Washington, mailgram, 25 February 1983, box 4, folder 11, HWAC.

75. Claire Hochberg to Harold Washington, letter, 25 February 1983, box 26, folder 6, HWAC.

76. Albert Raby to Homer Alvarado and Rolando Capdevilla, March 1983, box 4, folder 11, HWAC.

strategy. Both the media and the campaign understood Washington's precarious relationship to Latinos after the primary. An aggressive and expanded engagement with Latino voters had to be carried out in a month. Beginning on March 1, talk of establishing a "Latino Operations Department" within the Washington campaign had started. Peter Earle, Linda Coronado, Rudy Lozano, Stephen Carter, and Bill Zayas led this initiative. Earle and Coronado outlined the twelve potential functions of the Latino Operations Department, which would have an estimated cost of \$32,000 from March through April. The most significant were production of Spanish-language campaign materials, coordination of Spanish-language media, and convening Latino interest groups.⁷⁷ These three functions would come to define Harold Washington's campaign in Latino neighborhoods, all aspects of which would emphasize a pan-ethnic political identity.

The Latino Literature Review Committee was the group of staff members and community leaders that focused on the creation, publication, and distribution of campaign literature targeted towards Latinos, most of which was printed in Spanish. Dozens of memoranda point to the extensive planning that took place in the first half of March prior to the launch of a full-fledged media campaign.⁷⁸ Stephen Carter, the committee chair, oversaw the rapid expansion of resource allocation toward Latino-specific materials like posters, stickers, and buttons numbering in the hundreds of thousands combined. A committee meeting on March 9 outlined the work in progress, including the creation of a button, a flyer, and press releases. At first, two button designs were considered: fifty thousand with a Puerto Rican theme and fifty thousand with a Mexican American theme. Resisting this idea, several committee members "suggested

77. Peter Earle and Linda Coronado to Campaign Manager Al Raby, memorandum, 1 March 1983, box 4, folder 11, HWAC.

78. Members of the committee included Stephen Carter, Slim Coleman, Mosi Kitwana, Rudy Lozano, Lucia Elias-Olivares, William Lampillo, Alicia C. Santelices, Lauren Marten, Carlos Heredia-Ortiz, Linda Coronado, and others.

consideration be given to one button with design that covers Puerto Rican, Mexican, et al."⁷⁹ This is illustrative of the campaign purposefully breaking from traditional campaign tactics that tailored materials to Latino nationality subgroups. Similarly, the discussion of the flyer centered on finding a theme that had "broad Latino appeal" and linked Blacks and Latinos historically.⁸⁰

Many of the drafts for this historical-themed flyer were drawn to be "in line with Harold Washington's policy in developing the Black/Brown ties."⁸¹ The artist commissioned to create the flyers was also very aware of the pan-ethnic consciousness-raising mission that the leadership of the Latino Literature Review Committee desired. In a first draft, a group of Black and Latino people and Harold Washington are seen protesting a sign that reads "*Reagan en el City Hall*" ("Reagan in City Hall"). The image sought to reinforce the idea that the policies of the Reagan administration were harmful to Latinos who, like African Americans, benefitted from government assistance programs. In all the campaign posters, the artist emphasized a strong upright posture and tight-knit groups of individuals to convey themes of solidarity and protest.

The theme of ethnic consciousness figured prominently in a second draft that featured a group of young people looking up with open eyes with a teacher saying, "don't let another person think for you."⁸² Here, the language touches on two points. First, it echoes the mission of the independent political movement, which was working to break the hegemony of the machine and to elect Washington. In this way, thinking for

79. Latino Literature Committee, minutes, 9 March 1983, box 21, folder 9, HWAC.

80. Ibid.

81. Stephen Carter on "Finalizing Latino Literature," memorandum, 15 March 1983, box 21, folder 9, HWAC.

82. "No Deje Que Otra Persona Piense por Usted," flyer, March 1983, box 21, folder 9, HWAC.

oneself meant voting on the issues effecting one's community and not according to the mandates of the machine leadership. Second, the uplifted heads and open eyes signaled a kind of racial and ethnic awareness. By recognizing the bonds between all Latino groups and by extension the link between Blacks and Latinos, Latinos could see through the racial fear mongering that kept them from building strong political coalitions.

Many of these illustrated flyers were especially powerful in the courting of Puerto Rican voters. Perhaps the most striking of these published flyers was released under the "Puertorriqueños por Harold Washington" logo that was also distributed in non-Puerto Rican Latino neighborhoods. The "In Unity There Is Strength" flyer (fig. 5) includes a striking image of a chain, with a black link and a white link united in the middle by a gradated link, representing the historical and racial similarities between Latinos and African Americans. Two individuals embrace, demonstrating that a Black-Latino coalition would secure a stronger and brighter future for both groups. It is unclear which groups of Latinos this imagery appealed to most, but it is likely that Puerto Ricans were expected to react the strongest to this appeal. Conversations on Black ancestry and shared struggle were not unheard of in the Puerto Rican community, given the efforts of the Young Lords, among others. For Mexicans, on the other hand, this conversation was not as familiar, which forced the campaign to think in innovative ways.

A booklet, entitled "What are We? Our Historic Ties Unite Us," served as a beginner's guide to shared issues of identity and race within the Latino community (fig. 6).⁸³ The booklet covered a brief history of Latinos' shared racial colonization and mixed racial heritage: "being 'Latin American' is the product of a syncretism created by three social groups: Spain, the Indigenous race—comprised of Tainos in the Puerto Rican case—



Figure 5. Washington Campaign Flyer, c. 1983

Source: "En la Unidad Esta la Fuerza," c. 1983, box 4, folder 40, Rudy Lozano Papers, University of Illinois at Chicago, Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections and University Archives.



Figure 6. Washington Campaign Booklet, March 1983

Source: ¿Qué Somos? Booklet, March 1983, box 26, folder 5, Harold Washington Archives and Collection: Mayoral Campaign Records, Library Special Collections and Preservation Division, Chicago Public Library.

83. "¿Qué Somos? Nuestros Lazos Historicos Nos Unen," booklet, March 1983, box 26, folder 5, HWAC.

and Africa.”⁸⁴ The booklet’s racially conscious rhetoric continued with an exploration of the historical links between Black and Brown communities through the shared experience of slavery and oppression. Compared to a typical political campaign, the imagery and language employed by Washington’s team were bold, pushing Latinos across the city to rethink their racial identities as deeply tied to indigeneity, blackness, and a struggle against oppression. Amplifying this rallying cry to Latino unity were the hundreds of posters with the slogan, “The Sun Comes Out for the Latino with Washington!”⁸⁵ Again, speaking to a pan-ethnic constituency.

In less explicitly racial ways, the various press releases of the Latino Literature Committee used specific language that applied to all Latinos, like Washington’s concern over the lack of Latino police officers, a push to reject “*Reaganeconomia Republicana*,” the appointment of a Latino deputy mayor, and the establishment of a Latino Affairs Commission if Washington was elected.⁸⁶

The collaboration with Spanish-language media bolstered the campaign’s pan-ethnic messaging. Almost three fourths of the approximately \$32,700 allocated for Latino media was for radio spots and newspaper ads. Leading the charge on this front was Bill Zayas, a Puerto Rican resident of Humboldt Park and the campaign’s Latino media and advertising campaign coordinator. At its March 9 meeting, the Latino Literature Committee discussed the Spanish-language advertising strategy, emphasizing voter registration, Latino issues, and identifying “individuals for photographs with Harold Washington that have the widest Latino appeal.”⁸⁷ This wide appeal served a practical and economical

84. Ibid. “Ser ‘Latinoamericano’ es el product de un sincretismo creado por res grupos sociales: España, la raza Indígena—compuesta por los Tainos en el caso de Puerto Rico—y Africa.”

85. “El Sol Sale para el Latino con Washington!”

86. “All Latino Community,” flyer, March 1983, box 21, folder 9, HWAC.

87. Latino Literature Committee, minutes, 9 March 1983, box 21, folder 9, HWAC.

purpose: the more people you reach with one message the better. But more importantly, these Latino political elites would serve as representatives of pan-ethnic unity.

This rhetorical framing of a pan-Latino vote was clear in the Spanish-language radio spots. Working with Rossi Advertising, a Chicago marketing group owned by Latino entrepreneur Luis H. Rossi, Zayas created extensive lists of Spanish-language media avenues. Options were limited, given that many radio stations operated in Spanish for only part of the day or did not have as strong a signal as the largest Spanish-language station, WOJO. Several drafts of radio scripts from early March focused on bread-and-butter issues like jobs and education, but with a Latino focus. One of these scripts was a conversation between two older Latina women:

Godmother 1: Where are you going in such a hurry?

Godmother 2: I am a Harold Washington volunteer, the Democratic candidate.

Godmother 1: Are you sure he is worth the trouble?

Godmother 2: He is the only candidate who can help all the Latinos!

Godmother 1: Why?

Godmother 2: He was a staunch supporter for the development of the bilingual program. He has always supported social oriented programs such as “Day Care” and he is the first who has promised 14 percent of the city jobs.

Godmother 1: Wow! I did not know that!

Godmother 2: Not only that, now that we have a Republican in the White House, why have another as Mayor?⁸⁸

88. “Dialogue between Godmothers—Spot #1,” WOJO radio script, March 1983, box 26, folder 6, HWAC. The script in the archive is printed in English, but specified that it was read in Spanish on the radio.

The script emulates a typical Latino social scenario while also highlighting Washington's Latino platform around bilingual education and affirmative action in city job allocations. Nearly all Latino-specific media was in Spanish, and the use of Spanish was the most effective way to make clear that the message had been specifically tailored with a Latino audience in mind.

Another half-minute radio script formulated by Zayas and Rossi used language that was more direct: "The Latino vote has been identified as one of the determining factors in this struggle. It is hoped that Latinos recognize that Washington is the only candidate that has incorporated Latino needs in his many political 'platforms' and that they vote accordingly to such a commitment."⁸⁹ The "Latino vote" not only appears as a deciding swing vote in this ad, but Latinos are presented as a politically cohesive ethnic group. The February primary results had contradicted this message: Latinos were split both between sub-ethnic groups and *within* their own groups, as was the case with Mexican Americans divided among all three candidates but mostly against Washington. By virtue of pointing solely to *Latino* needs and the *Latino* vote, the general election campaign capitalized on and facilitated the efforts of Latino political elites to overcome these ethnic divides. Full-page ads in Spanish-language newspapers complimented the pan-ethnic messaging on the airwaves. Full issues of *El Independiente* were funded by the campaign to publicize Washington's agenda for the Latino community, and Zayas and the Latino Literature Committee expanded ads from Pilsen, Little

89. "El voto Latino ha sido señalado como uno de los factores determinantes en esta lucha. Se espera que el Latino reconozca que Washington es el unico candidato que ha incorporado las necesidades Latinas en sus 'plataformas' politicas y que ellos correspondan con sus votos a ese gesto." Rossi Advertising for Washington, script, March 1983, box 26, folder 6, HWAC.

Village, and Humboldt Park into West Town, South Chicago, Back of the Yards, and along North Avenue.⁹⁰

These media efforts made Washington's platform visible to the Latino public, but the convening role that the campaign played in gathering Latino interest groups at the same table had perhaps the most lasting impact. Washington's role as a convener manifested itself in two ways: bringing together Chicago's Latino political elites and inviting nationally recognized Latino leaders to Chicago to rally for pan-ethnic unity. Latino political elites like Rudy Lozano, Maria Cerda, "Cha Cha" Jiménez, and others urged their communities and networks to support Washington. Through the month of March, the campaign brought together many more Latino political elites for group strategy meetings with individuals like the Reverend Jorge Morales and Juan Solis, a reception for the twenty-five members of the Hispanic Lawyers Committee for Washington, and larger events like the Hispanic Steering Committee reception for three hundred people, with Washington present.

The "Song of the People" fund-raiser, hosted by Artists for Harold Washington, captured the more unorthodox activities and strategies of the campaign. While most political campaigns typically created affinity groups for key constituencies and demographics, Washington's campaign was exceptional and unparalleled in the ways that it pushed for Latino pan-ethnic unity through a hybrid of politics and culture. The fund-raiser's title referred to only one community, one "*pueblo*," thus promoting the idea of a cohesive *Latinidad*. Held on Easter Sunday of 1983, the event featured over a dozen Latino artists and was carried out under the aegis of the "*voceros de la comunidad*," (spokesmen of the community), Juan Velázquez, "Cha Cha" Jiménez, Rudy Lozano, and Juan Solis, who evenly representing the Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities. Though already well known and revered in their neighborhoods, their involvement and connection with Washington

90. Some of these papers included *El Mañana*, *La Raza*, *El Herald*, *West Side Times*, and *Northwest Extra*, among others.

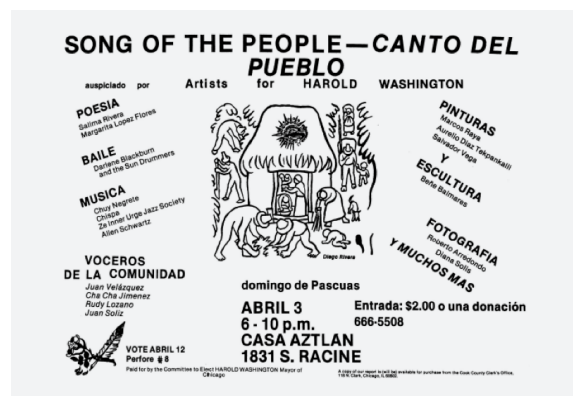


Figure 7. Washington Campaign Invitation, April 3, 1983

Source: “Song of the People—Canto del Pueblo,” 3 April 1983, box 11, folder 16, Harold Washington Archives and Collection: Mayoral Campaign Records, Library Special Collections and Preservation Division, Chicago Public Library.

positioned these activists as figureheads for the broader, pan-ethnic Latino “community.”

Complementing the pan-ethnic messaging of the Chicago spokespersons for *Latinidad* were the nationally recognized Latino leaders that the campaign brought to Chicago. As mentioned earlier, Washington connected first with Tony Bonilla, the president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, who publicly endorsed Washington before the primary election. National engagements and endorsements increased during the general election campaign. Beginning in early March, Bill Zayas recommended that the campaign fly in “members of the [Congressional] Hispanic Caucus” and celebrities like Erik Estrada, Ricardo Montalbán, and Rita Moreno.⁹¹ Though these celebrities never made it to Chicago, many political leaders did. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus

91. “Restructuring for Victory,” Bill Zayas to Peter Earle, note, 4 March 1983, box 21, folder 9, HWAC.

was one of the most visible promoters of pan-ethnic political rhetoric seeking to establish Latinos as a cohesive voting bloc in order to increase Latino representation in Congress and beyond. The two-day visit of Grace Montañez Davis, the first Mexican American woman to serve as deputy mayor of Los Angeles and a founding member of the Mexican American Political Association, and Herman Badillo, a New York politician and the first Puerto Rican elected to the US Congress, included radio talks, grassroots campaigning, a dinner with Latino leaders, and a forum at the Latino Institute on “Latino unity.”⁹² The visit demonstrated that the issues common to all Latinos in Chicago were in fact common to Latinos across the country.

The Hispanic Unity Dinner was the final and most significant Latino event of the campaign. The event drew hundreds of supporters from all Latino neighborhoods *and* national Latino leaders. Toney Anaya, governor of New Mexico was a clear choice as keynote speaker—both his political traction and his national vision for Latino political unity were in line with the aspirations of the Washington campaign and the Latino political elites. In a Spanish-language opinion piece in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Governor Anaya began by saying that “there is great diversity among Latinos...I commit myself to unify the Latinos of this country so that our political presence may be felt,” and concluded with an appeal for national pan-ethnic unity: “We Latinos must unite. In unity there is power, in power there is strength, in strength there is hope.”⁹³

Anaya spoke to reporters and community members at a press conference prior to the dinner: “As the nation’s highest elected Hispanic, I am

92. Herman Badillo and Grace Montañez Davis, itinerary, 19–20 March 1983, box 11, folder 16, HWAC.

93. “Hay mucha diversidad entre los hispanos...Me propongo unificar a los latinos de este país para que nuestra presencia política se sienta,” “Los Hispanos debemos unirnos. En la unidad esta el poder, en el poder esta la fuerza, en la fuerza esta la esperanza.” Toney Anaya, “Latinos: Es Hora de Aliarse,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 11, 1983.

urging all Latinos to unify behind Harold Washington because only through him can we reverse some of the terrible injustices that have been done against Hispanics.”⁹⁴ Anaya’s call to action centered on the point that in order to better their lived conditions, Latinos had to mobilize and cohere politically—a necessary task given their divided political leanings in the February primary. After the press conference, Arturo Velásquez Sr., president of the Mexican-American Democratic Organization of Chicago and cochairman of the event, introduced Harold Washington. Most of Washington’s talking points focused on jobs, government contracts, bilingual education, and other benefits particular to Latinos. Many of these issues were national policy issues that brought Latinos together in the 1970s, but now framed within the context of Latino electoral influence and the *national* project of Latino unity. Washington reiterated his intentions to create a mayoral Commission on Latino Affairs and to assign a Latino as deputy mayor. Towards the end of the speech, Washington made clear the broader socio-racial implications of his candidacy. By recognizing their shared histories of racial discrimination and political exclusion, Blacks and Latinos could stand as examples of racial and ethnic unity. In this way, Chicago could serve as a microcosm of racial politics and set a precedent for political empowerment and racial progress across the country.

The significance of the dinner went far beyond the immediate goal to produce electoral support for Washington. Washington’s candidacy convened hundreds of Latinos from different national backgrounds and geographic locations in the city, and Anaya’s and Washington’s rhetoric reified the notion of a Latino voting bloc, a concept that was not self-evident given the results of the primary. The campaign catalyzed a discussion of Latino politics as pan-ethnic rather than regionally or

94. Roy Larson and Lillian Williams, “Washington Makes Pledges to Hispanics,” *18th Street Businessmen’s Association Bulletin*, April 1983, box 25, folder 5, HWAC.

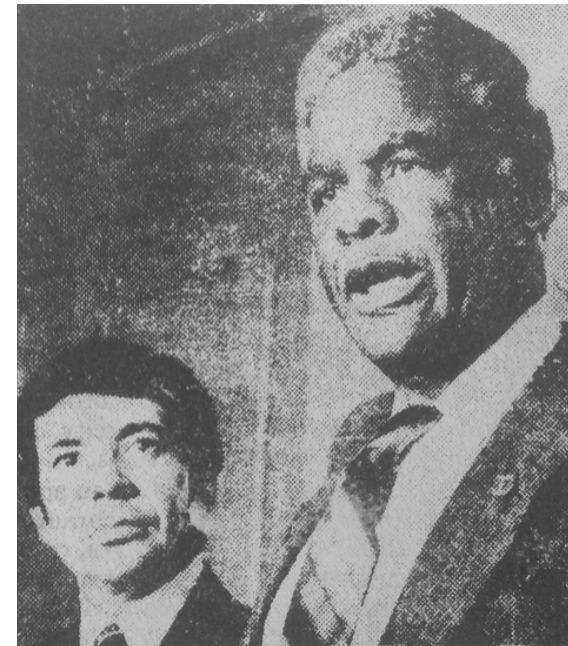


Figure 8. Governor Anaya and Congressman Washington at the Hispanic Unity Dinner on April 2, 1983

Source: Unmarked photo clipping, box 25, folder 5, Harold Washington Archives and Collection: Mayoral Campaign Records. Library Special Collections and Preservation Division, Chicago Public Library.

neighborhood specific, which had arguably never been instantiated as it was in March and April of 1983. Taking into consideration the implications of this election, the Hispanic Unity Dinner represented a turning point in the legitimization of Latino pan-ethnicity. Washington made a final ask for support and captured the importance of Latino unity in his concluding comments: “The Latino community turnout on Election Day is absolutely essential. The Latino community has the potential to be a critically important swing vote. The Latino vote is key to winning this election. We have the same goal: one Chicago, on the move for all

its people.”⁹⁵ The race was close and Washington’s prediction of the Latino swing vote would be proven accurate.

General Election

A common misconception about the 1983 election is that most of the Latino opposition to Washington had been dissolved by April due to his campaign’s message and efforts. Admittedly, Washington gained rapid support from dozens of Latino community organizations and increased his Latino base throughout March of 1983 from Democrats who refused to follow machine leaders’ endorsement of the Republican candidate. More than any election in Chicago history, however, the issues and racial politics leading up to the general election placed Latinos in a precarious position that deserves a more careful analysis than assuming a Latino tendency to vote for the winner of the primary. While much of the mobilization for Washington was based on an anti-Reagan and anti-Republican narrative to fight against reduced resources for all communities of color, the fears of race-based resource competition between Latinos and Blacks did not disappear with Washington’s nomination as the Democratic nominee. How Latinos would vote, if they would vote together, or if they would vote at all were still up for debate until Election Day. One of the earliest signs of instability was a Latino political roundtable convened by Augie Salas, a figurehead of South Chicago’s Mexican American community. According to Washington’s envoy Peter Earle, these regular Democratic Latinos were closely associated with Vrdolyak and the machine, had supported incumbent Jane Byrne in the primary, and many held the political line “that Latinos should exercise a demonstration of potential political power by boycotting the election.”⁹⁶

95. Congressman Harold Washington to Hispanic Unity Dinner, remarks, 2 April 1983, box 11, folder 15, HWAC.

96. Peter Earle at Hispanic Political Roundtable, 7 March 1983, box 4, folder 11, HWAC.

Juan Andrade Jr., director of the Midwest Voter Registration Education Project and an expert on Latino political behavior, said on March 24, 1983, that “the Hispanic vote is still a political wild card.”⁹⁷ Despite the rapid increase in endorsements from Mexican American and Puerto Rican political organizations, many influential Latino leaders and neighborhoods were hesitant to side with Washington. Raul Villalobos, president of the Chicago Public School Board, who withheld his endorsed in the weeks leading up to the election, said “we are exploring and waiting to see if there is a commitment to Hispanics on the part of either candidate [Washington or Epton].”⁹⁸ Together with this strategic and skeptical attitude towards the general election some articles and flyers pointed to serious Latino opposition. Four days before Election Day, the *Daily Calumet* reported that an “open revolt against Democratic mayoral nominee Harold Washington has been called for by Hispanic precinct captains of the 7th Ward” in South Chicago.⁹⁹ Though most depictions of Latino political leanings were not as inflammatory, clear opposition remained by the end of Washington’s campaign.

On April 12, 1983, the polls opened for one of the largest turnouts in mayoral elections in Chicago history, with a total of 1,291,307 votes cast. At the end of the day, Harold Washington came out on top with a narrow victory of 51.7 percent to Bernard Epton’s 48.0 percent of the vote, a difference of 47,549 votes.¹⁰⁰ The vote was almost even divided between Washington’s Black and liberal White voters and Epton’s blue-

97. Joye Brown, “City Hispanics Hold ‘Swing’ Vote,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 24, 1983.

98. “Washington Promote Trabajos a Hispanos,” *Primero y Unico Diario en Español*, March 29, 1983.

99. John Kass, “Hispanics Angry at Washington, Call for Revolt,” *Chicago Daily Calumet*, April 8, 1983.

100. “Election Results for 1983 General Election, Mayor, Chicago, IL,” *Chicago Democracy Project*. Accessed 2015, chicagodemocracy.org/ElectionResults.jsp?election=crdd_general%2Crdd_1983_general_election%2Cil_chi_mayor.

collar, ethnic White supporters. As Washington, Latino political activists, and the media had predicted, Latinos were a decisive swing vote in the general election.¹⁰¹ The Puerto Rican 31st Ward, with Latinos representing the majority of registered voters, overwhelmingly sided with Washington. On the Near Northwest Side, where the majority of Latinos had supported incumbent Jane Byrne in the primary, many voters sided with Washington in the general election. As sociologist Teresa Córdova argues, of the 47,549-vote difference between Washington and Epton, “27,915 of those were cast by Washington supporters of the four wards where Latinos have the highest populations” (fig. 9).¹⁰²

Latino wards made up the majority of undecided voter areas that ultimately gave Washington the winning margin in the general election. “Other” refers to liberal White voters and Asian American voters who supported Washington.

Washington’s aggressive campaigning in Latino neighborhoods was not in vain. Thousands of undecided Latino voters who had not supported Washington in the primary were convinced by his rhetoric surrounding equality, opportunity, and fairness in all aspects of city governance. But Latinos who did not support Washington demonstrate that ethno-political cleavages remained *within* the larger Latino community (fig. 10). Eighty-five percent of registered Puerto Rican voters,

101. The exact ways in which Latinos voted in the election is complicated by contrasting and inconclusive sources of electoral data. Political polls describing Latino voting behavior before the 1990s were scarce and inconsistent within the same city, and most polls did not even count Latinos due to insufficient methods to identify the population. Oftentimes, Latinos were subsumed into the White category due to census records that only began to identify US “Hispanics” as a whole in 1980. The general consensus, though, pointed towards Latinos as the critical swing vote.

102. Teresa Córdova, “Harold Washington and Latino Electoral Politics,” in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. David Montejano (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

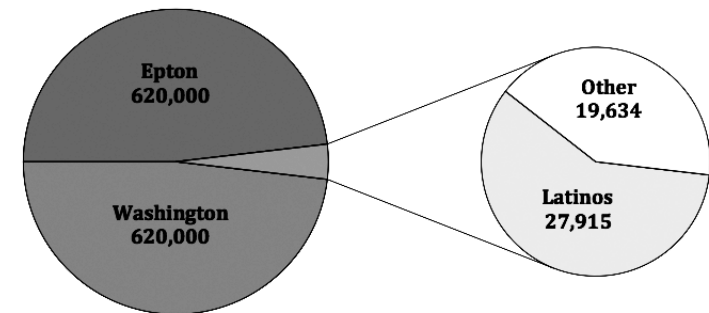


Figure 9. Swing Vote in 1983 Mayoral Election

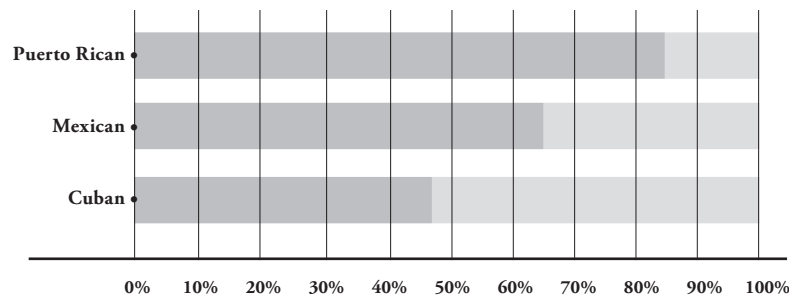
Source: Teresa Córdova, “Harold Washington and Latino Electoral Politics,” in *Chicano Politics and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*, ed. David Montejano (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

65 percent of Mexican American voters, and 48 percent of Cuban voters cast their support behind Harold Washington.¹⁰³ As some of the earliest Washington supporters, Puerto Rican voters maintained their strong allegiance to the Black-Latino coalitional rhetoric that was especially salient in a community that embraced the Afro-Latino heritage of Puerto Rico. On the other side of the spectrum, the Cuban American Chamber of Commerce and Cuban American-controlled conservative media, like *El Norte*, opposed Washington. However, the Cuban population in Chicago was in decline by the 1980s and did not have as much impact as the larger numbers of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans voters.

Mexican Americans’ 65 percent support for Washington pointing to the political divisions and complicated relationship with the machine

103. Figure ten statistics are the average of several approximations concerning the sub-ethnic breakdown of Latino electoral decisions in the 1983 general election: Torres, “The Commission on Latino Affairs” and notes from the Lozano Collection.

Figure 10: General Election Support for Washington by National Origin



Source: Torres, María de los Angeles Torres, "The Commission on Latino Affairs: A Case Study of Community Empowerment," in *Harold Washington and the Neighborhoods: Progressive City Government in Chicago, 1983–1987*, ed. Pierre Clavel and Wim Wiewel (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991) and notes from the Lozano Collection.

in this longstanding Latino community. In his postelection analysis, Fremon noted that the largest Mexican American community of the 22nd Ward "was the only ward won by Washington in which he failed to garner at least 60 percent of the vote."¹⁰⁴ In the end, the unpredictability of Mexican American voters leaned in Washington's favor. The race to win Latino support in the general election wasn't between Washington and Epton, but between Washington and low turnout. Andrade's prediction ("I don't see Hispanics moving a whole lot toward Epton, he has no program that addresses Hispanic issues. Those who can't get themselves to vote for Washington are going to stay home."¹⁰⁵) was proven on Election Day: 40 percent of Latino voters stayed home, but those that did vote gave Washington the necessary electoral swing to win. By making

104. Fremon, *Chicago Politics, Ward by Ward*, 150.

105. James Martinez, "Mayoral Contenders Aim at Winning Hispanic Voters," *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 7, 1983.

clear his commitment to Latino representation and community uplift, as well as Latino commitment to voting on Democratic lines, Washington convinced tens of thousands more Latinos that he was their best option.

Conclusion

For those who believed in the Black-Latino coalition, Washington's election was a victory of racial solidarity and proved that moving beyond racial differences was the only way to achieve change in their communities. For others, this election represented more of a crossroads for Latino involvement in formal politics. Milton Rakove, a political scientist at the University of Illinois at Chicago, provided a postelection analysis on the fragility of Washington's coalition. He "warned that the unique black vs. white, independent vs. machine dynamics of the election formed some peculiar, temporary alliances," and that the possibilities for cleavage between Blacks and Latinos, and among Latinos themselves, would probably grow after the racially charged atmosphere of the campaign subsided.¹⁰⁶ Both perspectives on the nature of Latino political unity—one that viewed the election as proof of Latino cohesion, and the other seeing it as a temporary and limited unity—are to some extent true. First and foremost, Washington's campaign effectively reified the political terminology of a pan-ethnic Latino constituency in Chicago. The Mayor's Commission on Latino Affairs continued the campaign's work in promoting the image of a unified Latino interest group into Washington's administration, concretizing the media and public's conception of Latino voters.

The Washington campaign's skillful use of campaign imagery and rhetoric proved that a pan-ethnic Latino unity and a Black-Latino unity were possible. However these unities did not become a political reality after the campaign. As seen in the breakdown of Latino support during

106. James Martinez, "Black-Hispanic Alliance's Future Pondered," *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 15, 1983.

the general election, Latinos were still divided in their political priorities. Influenced by a diversity of class, racial, cultural, and geographic differences, Latinos would remain a contested constituency. Hinging heavily on Washington's platform and charisma, Latino unity grew unstable after the election, as Latinos grew frustrated with unmet campaign promises of increased Latino representation and political appointments.¹⁰⁷ The day before Thanksgiving of 1987, some months after winning reelection to a second term, Washington died of a heart attack at his desk. As most histories emphasize, "with Washington's death, the multiethnic coalition began to unravel, but his campaigns and elections had already changed the political power equation in Chicago."¹⁰⁸ That is to say, despite failing to create a cohesive and lasting Latino unity, the Latino political elites and the Washington campaign were able to establish rhetorically the symbolic importance of Latinos in formal politics. Ultimately, they worked parallel to the national project of constructing Latino pan-ethnic identity, but in an ethnic landscape that would require much more time to develop politically.

The contemporary discourse on Latino politics and the "Latino vote" parallels the disputes and challenges that faced the actors in this narrative over thirty years ago. As political scientist Cristina Beltrán argues, "for advocates of pan-ethnicity, the assumption is that Latinos in the United States share not only cultural and linguistic characteristics, but also a political perspective."¹⁰⁹ This misconception contributes to a monolithic

depiction of the diverse Latino population. At the same time, the argument for the existence of a tangible and cohesive Latino electorate can be made now more than ever before. Ricardo Ramírez posits that "the uncertainty about the salience of ethnicity for Latinos has faded as the U.S. political system has consistently engaged Latinos as one ethnic group."¹¹⁰ In this way, the unique contribution made by Harold Washington's campaign toward the legitimation and construction of pan-ethnic *Latinidad* continues to have a lasting mark on our current understandings of Latino politics. Today, Latinos continue to stand at the nexus of division and unity. The project of constructing pan-ethnic *Latinidad* continues, and as we in America grapple with the complexities of imposed identity and imperfect cohesion, Latinos will continue to be a contested constituency.

107. Manuel Galvan, "Washington Losing Latino Connection," *Chicago Tribune*, August 28, 1983.

108. "Achieving the Dream: Harold Washington," *WTTW Chicago*. Accessed July 29, 2016, www.wttw.com/main.taf?p=76,4,6,8.

109. Cristina Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 106.

110. Ramírez, *Mobilizing Opportunities*, 5.

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Digital Dividends



Investigating the User Experience in Chicago's Public Computer Center System

ERIN M. SIMPSON, AB'15

Introduction

On Saturday mornings in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood YWCA, the staff of the Parks-Francis Center for economic empowerment hosts open computer-lab hours. The lab is a designated community technology center, complementing the Y's robust member services around job training, financial literacy, and the prevention of violence against women. The lab boasts twenty-four desktop computers, a SMART Board, and a certified computer instructor who teaches digital-literacy courses. Adults, primarily women, are searching for jobs, creating e-mail accounts, writing resumes, learning to navigate the Web, or checking Facebook. A pair of giggling ten-year-old girls, having just finished a class in app development for young women, are playing a world-building game while their mothers use the computers. Asked what effects she thought the YWCA's lab had on the neighborhood, one woman commented: "It gives the residents hope. It connects residents and provides a platform to discuss common community concerns. It provides people with information regarding jobs, social problems, etc." Another explained: "I have hope again... My spirit is alive again! The love of knowing and growing of positive things, that's important to me." The people at the Y, like users at many of the

261 places in Chicago that host a public computer center (PCC), find that the computer lab has become a central part of their lives and work.

PCCs provide public access to computers and related technology to address the oft-discussed problem of the “digital divide” (Broadband USA 2015). Sponsored by the government or foundations, PCCs are in nearly every community area in Chicago (City of Chicago Data Portal n.d.), housed in libraries, public housing, senior centers, schools, public-health clinics, designated community technology centers, and others. The rationale for providing PCCs is clear: over the past decade, access to computers and the Internet has gone from a convenience to a necessity (Mossberger et al. 2012; Dailey et al. 2010; US Department of Commerce 2010). This trend hurts families and individuals who are unfamiliar with or unable to gain access to technology (high-speed Internet, computers, licensed software, printers, etc.). In response, the US federal government included \$201 million in funding for PCCs nationwide in the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP), a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Broadband USA 2015). Funds were awarded to cities, states, library systems, and community organizations, and then distributed to hundreds of sub-grantees and thousands of institutions like the YWCA (Broadband USA 2015; Dumerer 2014).

PCCs are now a part of the public’s institutional resource network. Study of these spaces is particularly important in the context of growing socioeconomic inequality in the United States, where income is the primary predictor of whether someone has home Internet access (Mossberger et al. 2012, 7). Policymakers must first understand how, why, and with what degree of success residents, especially low-income people in under-invested neighborhoods, utilize public institutions; they can then design effective services that work towards equal access to resources and opportunities.

Limited research exists on PCCs despite their growing prominence as a policy strategy, their impact on users and communities, and their success in workforce development, education, community building, and the reduction of digital inequality. Without better understanding the use of PCCs, it will be impossible to evaluate the effective use of BTOP PCC funds;

possible political bias/motivation on the part of policymakers; metrics of success; improvement strategies; and continued funding justification.

To help build a body of knowledge about PCCs, this study will provide background on recent federal policy efforts concerning digital inequality, the development of the PCC system in Chicago, review the literature on the social outcomes of digital access and skills, analyze the survey, and discuss policy recommendations supported by this analysis.

I gathered data from 371 original surveys of PCC users, including approximately three thousand written responses to open-ended questions. I analyzed the implementation of Chicago’s BTOP PCC grant and the experience of users. I then compared these results to the stated goals of providers, funders, and users to evaluate the success of Chicago’s PCC system as a policy tool. I hope to arrive at specific policy recommendations for Chicago PCCs and theorize more broadly about the limitations and potential that PCCs have as a policy strategy to achieve workforce and community development.

The results of this study show that PCCs are an important resource for the unemployed, a place of learning for users of all ages and skill levels, and a facilitator of community building and social-service access. More than three quarters of respondents used PCCs each week. Data suggest that PCCs distribute resources equitably, serve very low-income users successfully, and African American users particularly. However, this analysis does not support the claim that lack of home access is the sole or primary driver of PCC use: people with an array of technical backgrounds, including those with high-speed Internet and computers at home, frequently use PCCs for a variety of activities. Users place high value on staff support and the centers’ safe, quiet atmosphere. Students hoping to enhance their computer skills and job seekers were strong and successful users of PCCs: 88 percent of youth reported that PCC use improved their performance in school, and 43 percent of users aged 18–65 reported that PCCs helped them find a job. These findings address original goals of providers and funders, but many improvements remain to be made to PCCs, educational institutions, and other public-access points.

Background

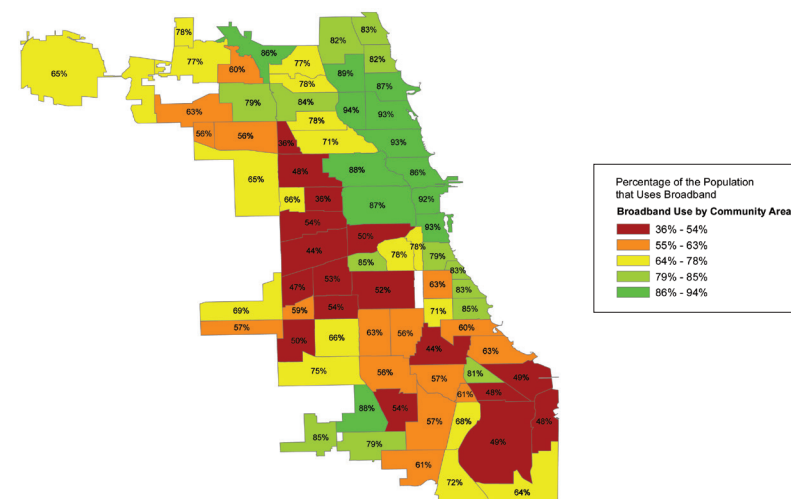
Conceptualizing Digital Inequality

There is broad consensus that in the United States the Internet is a critical prerequisite to accessing information of all kinds (Beltran et al. 2008; Mossberger et al. 2012; Dailey et al. 2010; US Department of Commerce 2011; Riel 2012; Powell et al. 2010). Yet despite a near universal need, gaps and disparities in Internet and computer access remain. Disparities are largely consistent with other inequalities in demography and geography. Nationally, 70 percent of Americans have the Internet in their homes, but this percentage falls with income: 64 percent (\$20–30K income), 54 percent (\$10–20K income), and 42 percent (less than \$10K income) (Zickuhr and Smith 2012). More than race, age, or gender, economic inequality is the main predictor of lack of access (Mossberger et al. 2012, 7), and “within low-income neighborhoods, technology disparities have the potential to exacerbate existing place-based inequalities in health, the labor market, the democratic sphere, and in access to public goods” (Mossberger et al. 2012, 147).

Growing Internet use through mobile and smartphones is not a panacea to the “digital divide.” As of January 2014, 90 percent of American adults owned a mobile phone and 58 percent owned a smartphone. Smartphones were the primary source of Internet for lower-income Black and Hispanic respondents (Pew 2013). However, smartphones complement but cannot replace laptops or desktops. Also, mobile-only users have less skills than laptops or desktops users (Mossberger et al. 2012).

Internet access in Chicago is comparable to nationwide statistics. According to a 2009 study commissioned by the City of Chicago, as many as 40 percent of residents lack home broadband¹ (Mossberger and Tolbert 2009, 12). Three fourths of Chicagoans use the Internet and the report

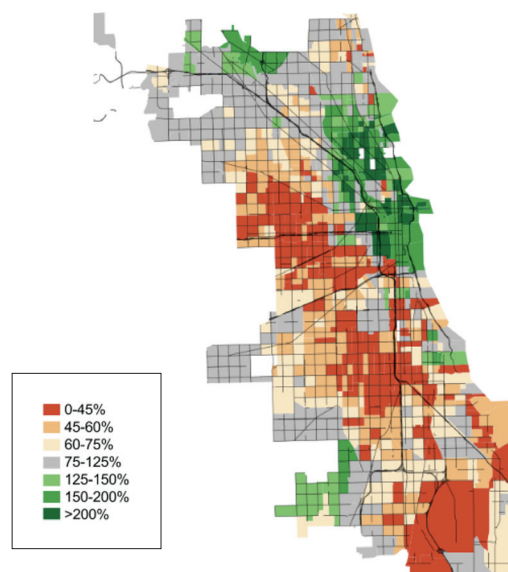
1. The *Internet* is one component of *broadband*, which may also include telephone and cable-television services; broadband encourages more frequent Internet use than a slower dial-up modem (Mossberger et al. 2012, 12).



Map 1: 2011 Broadband Use by Community Area
(Broadband Illinois 2012)

found that those who are less well-connected are more likely to be older, Latino, African American, and low income, with low income the most important factor. Higher levels of broadband adoption (Map 1) correlate with higher family incomes by community areas (Map 2). Overall, the most recent figures, though dated, show large gaps in Chicagoans' Internet skills: while 25 percent know how to create a website, another 25 percent hardly ever use the Internet (Mossberger and Tolbert 2009, 5).

Finally, the concept of a “digital divide” between the rich and poor is a reductionist view. Differences in skills are multifaceted and complex, mirroring the diversity of skills themselves. A have-and-have-not mentality ignores the importance of recurring and progressive training, the vastly different levels of skill that users can have, and the distinctions between mobile and computer access. Relying on the “digital-divide” concept may also make how upper-class users learn the norm by which other learners are judged (Gonzales 2010). This analysis demonstrates the need to think more critically about the depth and scope of the “digital divide.”



Map 2: 2012 Median Family Income, Percentage of Metro Area Median (Hertz 2014)

The Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

Threats of economic and social exclusion and the hypothesized benefits associated with digital literacy and access motivated federal policymakers to include broadband and computer literacy in the recovery investment strategy after the 2008 financial crisis. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARARA) allocated \$4.7 billion to expand access to broadband and computer training through the US Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (Broadband USA 2015; ARARA 2009). BTOP administered grants to improve community infrastructure, increase use and adoption among vulnerable populations, support digital-literacy training, and establish or upgrade public computer facilities, especially those used by disadvantaged popu-

lations. State grants were administered between 2009 and 2010. The majority of funds promoted broadband in rural areas (Mossberger et al. 2012, 189), but BTOP also funded "projects to establish new public computer facilities or upgrade existing ones that provide broadband access to the general public or to specific vulnerable populations, such as low-income individuals, the unemployed, seniors, children, minorities, and people with disabilities" (Broadband USA 2015). The grants totaled \$201 million and generated 3,500 new and upgraded PCCs. The act did not allocate any funds to evaluate the program's effectiveness (Schejter and Martin 2013).

To date, the policy focus has been on providing benefits. There has been limited critical analysis on the ways in which these policy efforts affected users and leaves foundational assumptions about Internet—such as privacy and security, the protection of children from harmful content or abuse, addiction, misinformation and scams, discriminatory algorithms, and the potential for political manipulation through government Internet provision—unexamined (Abu-Jawdeh 2013).

Chicago Policy Efforts

The City of Chicago identified digital inclusion as a priority in 2007. Building on an Illinois law (Elimination of the Digital Divide Law 2001), the Mayor's Advisory Council on Closing the Digital Divide recommended that

the city should recruit committed civic leaders to organize and launch the Partnership for a Digital Chicago, a new nonprofit entity, housed at The Chicago Community Trust and led by corporate, philanthropic, city, community and technology industry representatives. Its mission will be to ensure that all of Chicago achieves digital excellence and takes advantage of the social and economic opportunities that arise from universal use of digital technology, (Stasch 2007, 6).

The 2008 recession had strained the capacity of libraries, who were the sole service provider in 73 percent of American communities (Bertot et al. 2008, 286). In 2009, the City of Chicago found that over 60 percent of Chicago Public Libraries experienced average wait times of three hours or longer for computers (Broadband USA 2015). Chicago asked for \$9,142,997 from the BTOP and received \$8,974,283 in 2009; it also received \$3.9 million in matching funds from the Chicago Housing Authority, the City Colleges of Chicago, and Smart Chicago; the State of Illinois provided \$1.5 million of the \$3.9 million (Bhatt 2010, 37). The city implemented the four-year program from 2009 to June 2013. The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust agreed to support and guide the Smart Chicago Collaborative beyond the timeframe of BTOP.

Smart Chicago provided 460,592 training hours² through 16,384 training programs and deployed approximately 2,500 workstations at nearly 139 upgraded and 38 new PCCs (Dumerer 2014). The plan supported vulnerable populations, including those who were low income, at-risk youth, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and the unemployed (Smart Chicago n.d., Bhatt 2010). In 2014, eighty thousand Chicagoans visited centers each week (Dumerer 2014). Smart Chicago's Connect Chicago website helps users find one of 261 PCCs.³

The majority of PCCs had been operating for a decade or more independently, led primarily by the Chicago Public Library (CPL). Connect Chicago loosely integrated these existing computer labs with the newly established or improved BTOP-funded centers and the Illinois Digital Divide's community technology centers under one umbrella (Connect Chicago n.d.). More than 190 centers taught digital literacy, including introductory computer-science courses, Microsoft Office Suite

2. As of December 31, 2013, as reported to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, US Department of Commerce, in the final report of April 15, 2014 (Dumerer 2014).

3. www.smartchicagocollaborative.org/work/special-initiatives/connect-chicago.

training, and community health training. Computer labs were located in public libraries, Chicago Housing Authority residences, City Colleges of Chicago, community technology centers, Smart Health Centers, community service centers, senior centers, workforce centers, Illinois workNet locations in Chicago, and career development centers for youth (Dumerer 2014).

Chicago's PCC grants were part of an ambitious urban technology initiative that included infrastructure upgrades, investment in innovation, coordination of public and private resources, public-education reform, and business development, which were all intended create jobs:

A technology-friendly city allows residents to readily access the Internet and gain the technical knowledge and skills necessary in today's job market. Having a skilled workforce attracts technology sector investments, driving economic development and job creation (Tolva and Berman 2013, 19).

Now, as then, Chicago's eighty public libraries are the largest providers of free access to technology, and the library is recognized internationally for its commitment (CPL n.d.; CPL 2014). The CPL provides nearly three thousand computers and laptops for public use and offers access to electronic books, online databases, digital music and videos, and training programs (Thorton 2014). But these resources still do not meet public demand, as described in Chicago's 2010 BTOP PCC application: "At 51 libraries users wait over 3 hours on average before they access a computer and the Internet; at 34 of those locations, the wait is over 6 hours" (Bhatt 2010, 10).

Review of the Literature: Social Outcomes of Computers, Internet, and Access Spaces

The variety of strategies employed by BTOP PCC grantees and the initial lack of evaluation make it difficult to judge whether the program was effective. The following section summarizes the literature on the services offered by public libraries and the impact of broadband access in order to understand the theory behind how policymakers thought PCCs would work and to critique that logic.

Use and Users at Public Libraries

Two studies consider public Internet provision during the 2000s: the 2007 *Public Libraries and the Internet*, which sampled more than six thousand public libraries and receive over four thousand responses (Bertot et al. 2008), and the 2010 *US Impact Study*, which investigated the use and users of public-access computing centers through a national telephone survey, nearly forty-five thousand online user surveys, and hundreds of interviews (Becker et al. 2010). In the 2007 study, 73.1 percent of responding libraries were the only providers of public Internet access in their community (Bertot et al. 2008, 286). The study found that libraries have a major impact on access to information and technology, with a secondary impact on educational and job-search goals, but little focus on economic development. Two thirds of public Internet providers offered education resources for K–12 students, 44 percent provided services for job seekers, and 29.8 percent provided Internet and skills training (Bertot et al. 2008). Only 3.9 percent provided information for local economic development, 3.2 percent provided information regarding investments, and 2.9 percent provided information about state- and local-business opportunities (Bertot et al. 2008).

The 2010 study offers a better picture of what users, rather than providers, do and value. The number one use was social connection (60

percent), followed by the education (42 percent), employment (40 percent), health and wellness (37 percent), government and legal (34 percent), and community engagement (33 percent). Managing finances and entrepreneurship were the least reported activities (Becker et al. 2010, 5). Of the 30 million respondents that used the library computers for employment and career purposes, three quarters reported that they were searching for job opportunities (Becker et al. 2010, 5).

Major systemic studies have yet to look at issues of inclusion, use case, frequency of use, or technology history of users.

Educational Literature

The relationship between Internet access and educational achievement is strong: “among our respondents, students from grade school to college universally reported that Internet access is critical to their studies” (Dailey et al. 2010, 22). Thus it is unsurprising that increased access to computers (correlated with school wealth) encourages greater academic achievement (Judge et al. 2006). Digital inequality could compound the academic challenges of students at low-income schools, given the correlation between less-frequent computer use by youth and less-developed skill sets (Hargittai and Hinnant 2008; Judge et al. 2006). Appropriately, more than two thirds of libraries surveyed provided educational resources and databases for K–12 students (Bertot et al. 2008).

Nearly 30 percent of public libraries offer training in digital literacy, a key advantage that PCCs have over simply increasing broadband access in the home, where users do not have access to training (Bertot et al. 2008). In other words: to effectively address digital inequality, digital-literacy training is a prerequisite (Dailey et al. 2010; Gonzales 2010; Liu and Wnuk 2009; Valadez and Duran 2007).⁴ Even when PCC do not

4. According to the American Library Association, “Digital Literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills,” (Visser 2012).

offer formal training, lower-income individuals still use public-access spaces to work toward digital literacy by patching together informal trainings and using social networks (Gonzales 2010). Similarly, in a multicity study commissioned by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), though most centers offered training, “both new users and community intermediaries emphasized that informal coaching, often one-on-one, was the key to helping new users gain confidence and proficiency” (Dailey et al. 2010, 42). While research indicates that individuals would prefer to use the Internet at home, it is clear that they appreciate and benefit from PCC staff (Dailey et al. 2010, 24). Unfortunately, staff members are among the first cut when organizations reduce budgets, and for libraries and community organizations that are expected to provide increasing social services on decreasing budgets, adequate in-person assistance may be a challenge.

Social and Civic Literature

Digital literacy correlates positively with civic awareness: users with low levels of digital skills were less able to recognize and leverage the civic possibilities in social and digital media than their better-skilled counterparts (Dailey et al. 2010; Riel 2012). Teaching digital citizenship to students was found to reduce their misuse of technology, including plagiarism and illegal downloads (Boyle 2010). Community portals and increased neighborhood Internet activity create large, dense networks of ties among neighbors that are a prerequisite to collective action (Hampton 2003). Beyond analog communities, the Internet brings social cohesion to families that would otherwise be separated. One ethnography of transcultural families’ computer use found that

technology becomes a way to support their trans-immigrant identities and strengthen the networks of friends and family used to identify places to live and work. Rather than creating a homogeneous global society, technology may actually serve to strengthen national identities across borders (Pruett-Mentle 2008, Abstract).

In 2007, fewer than 10 percent of libraries were found to provide information on accessing government documents (Bertot et al. 2008). Today, as more political information and government services move online, the threat of political marginalization for disconnected communities is increasing (Mossberger et al. 2012). This shift from in-person to online services has put pressure on existing providers of access, and one analysis finds that libraries are often the sole public mediator of access to online civic opportunities, at great cost to libraries (Bertot et al. 2008, 299).

Economic Development Literature

The 2010 FCC found that “broadband access is increasingly a requirement of socio-economic inclusion, not an outcome of it—and residents of low income communities know this” (Dailey et al. 2010, 3). A community’s broadband availability is associated with greater economic growth over communities with only limited broadband access (Gillett et al. 2006; Dutz et al. 2009; Mossberger et al. 2012). It is important to note that while the popular hypothesis that Internet access promotes economic development, economic-development resources are absent from the activities of most public libraries, and perhaps most PCCs, as of the studies in 2007 and 2010. Little evidence exists on the oft-discussed link between successful job searches and Internet access, but this analysis will seek to explore user experience in this area.

The literature supports the idea that “investments in Internet proficiency remain critically important in low-income communities, where large numbers of people are encountering the Internet for the first time—often in context of job losses and other high pressure situations” (Dailey et al. 2010, 51). While these users are likely to find access to digital-literacy training and educational resources in PCCs, the long waits, time-limited sessions, limited hours, or limited yet highly valued staff support, might inhibit access overall.

The existing data show strong support for improved digital literacy and educational attainment after training and mixed support for the

more complex goals for PCCs. For example, most public libraries do not offer services to support economic development beyond basic job-search functions; and while civic engagement is associated with connected communities, research is needed to determine how PCCs themselves encourage and engage in social connections and civic engagement.

Methodology

This paper analyzes original survey data to contribute to a fuller picture of the user experience and perceived outcomes in Chicago PCCs. I developed the survey after three years as a volunteer in a community technology center on the South Side of Chicago, five observational visits to PCCs, and a conversation with the director of the Smart Chicago Collaborative. I also reviewed the Smart Chicago data catalog in the City of Chicago Data Portal (n.d.).

To recruit PCCs to participate in the survey, I presented my research proposal to a Smart Chicago event in January 2015, sent e-mails to all PCC directors and managers, contacted individual directors and managers, called centers, and met with PCC managers. I administered the survey in February and March to 371 individuals, aged 13 and older.

Participating centers posted English and Spanish flyers advertising a cash prize for a ten-minute survey (Appendix A). The survey was an anonymous, self-administered, online instrument provided in both English and Spanish (English survey in Appendix B)⁵. All responses were translated into English for analysis. As with any survey-based dataset, sampling error may have been introduced for the following reasons:

- This method is better suited for users with basic Internet competency; center directors were asked to help respondents enter the URL into a web browser if needed.

5. The Spanish-language survey is available upon request.

- This method presumes the ability to see a poster on a wall.
- This method asks users to sacrifice ten minutes of their computer time, which is limited at some locations. The entry into a drawing for a cash prize (\$50, \$100, or \$150) was intended to help limit sampling error due to time limits.
- This method is best suited for users who are literate in either English or Spanish.

To limit measurement error, I invited Chad Broughton and Woody Carter, lecturers at the Harris School of Public Policy, and a number of College statistician tutors to review the survey methodology. English and Spanish speakers also tested the survey. It is possible that individuals interpreted questions in a different way or entered typos, thus introducing error.

Center participation was voluntary and could not be statistically random, which raises the possibility of coverage error. Here several factors give us some degree of confidence: the diversity and distribution of responses, the randomness of whether a center choose to participate, and the randomness of whether someone saw the flyer and had the time and desire to complete it. Indeed, the normal distribution of the sample across demographic categories validates this confidence. Thus, conditions are sufficient for a representative sample. At the same time, I concede the possibility that I am unable to gauge representativeness of centers due to incomplete information about their existence and programming online, especially if only those centers who are fully functioning had the capacity to administer the survey. I will attempt to keep these empirical limitations in mind throughout my analysis and acknowledge them where appropriate.

In sum, I took steps to minimize error when possible within the inherent limitations of a voluntary online survey instrument.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The survey generated data from twenty-five quantitative prompts. I used various methods to explore this dataset from multiple angles. Selected variables were cross tabulated to show the interaction between demographic factors and primary variables: reliance, frequency, job attainment, personal satisfaction, community impact, and training quality. I include a narrative of individual tables for selected significant results. Hypothesis testing to determine whether the distribution of responses was significantly different than expected was performed using the chi-square statistic.

Welch's t-tests were used to test significant differences of means on the primary outcomes variables between various sets of two demographic groups. In a small number of cases, responses to five-point scale questions were averaged to create these means. There is some risk in using t-tests with categorical data this way. However, this risk was mitigated by the large sample size. There is an assumption of continuous data, but this requirement is relaxed here with a sample size of 371.

Limitations with factor and categorical data types, inherent in any study looking at similar types of information, are also present in this analysis. Furthermore, some variables have been given numerical equivalents where no numerical system is inherent to the data, which is noted in descriptions of those tests.

Quantitative data analysis was performed in R. Unless otherwise noted, the threshold for significance in this analysis is p-value 0.05. Truncation, rather than rounding, was used in the presentation of data to two significant figures in tables where possible and truncated with no decimal places in text for readability.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The survey required users to give ten written responses explaining their choices, yielding approximately three thousand descriptive data points. These responses generated a detailed picture of how users think, feel, and evaluate their computer-lab experiences. In addition to reading

through all responses and annotating outliers and compelling data points, I analyzed and grouped the responses appropriately into major categories to allow for the identification of trends and relationships within the data.

Notes from site visits and selected participant-observation sessions are also included. Where necessary, quotations have been edited for spelling and punctuation.

Analysis

Connect Chicago's PCCs: Locations, Offerings, and Implementation Examples

Connect Chicago locations are distributed somewhat evenly throughout the city, with heightened concentration on the Northwest side (Maps 3 and 4). The maps, however, tells us nothing about the quality of the centers or the geographic distribution of higher-quality centers.

Of the approximately 261 locations, at least 197 provide some sort of technology training and 182 provide Wi-Fi access (City of Chicago Data Portal n.d.). Of centers reporting on the Connect Chicago dataset, 36 percent provide timed computer sessions, 32 percent provide unlimited sessions, and others vary in their requirements. The average number of computers is twenty-three and the median is sixteen, ranging from Wilbur Wright College with 226 to the Northwest Senior Center with one. Common training include digital literacy (including Internet use), online GED classes, online job seeking, and Microsoft software certification programs. Training is offered primarily at the beginner level, with a minority of centers offering intermediate trainings, and few offering advanced trainings.

For individuals with accessibility needs, about a quarter of centers are accessible, a third are partially accessibility, and eight centers are not accessible. Nearly 40 percent fail to give a clear answer about their accessibility in the online dataset. Individuals with accessibility needs could supplement the incomplete data theoretically by looking through the Smart Chicago Flickr gallery or by calling the centers. However, this may create an extra burden for some individuals.

A comprehensive overview of the Chicago PCCs would require a level of detail beyond this analysis. A sampling of centers illustrates how the BTOP PCC grants, Illinois Eliminate the Digital Divide funding, and private donors and foundations provide direct, on-the-ground public technology training and access (City of Chicago Data Portal n.d.; Eliminate the Digital Divide Law 2001):

- The Asian Human Services is an Illinois workNet center in Uptown with staff fluent in more than twenty-five languages. It offers eighteen computers for categorical use: youth, general public, users accessing resources for the Department of Human Services or Asian Human Services, and employment. Use is limited to one hour. The center offers training in getting food-stamp benefits and assists with youth-employment programming. Its goal is to “positively transform lives among Chicago’s immigrants, refugees, and other underserved communities.” It is funded by a “wide spectrum of government [federal, state, and city], business, and private philanthropy organizations,” (Asian Human Services n.d.).
- The Parks-Francis YWCA is a community technology center located in Woodlawn on the South Side. The lab is one part of the Y’s community center and has twenty-four computers located in a bright cheery classroom with a Smart Board. The YWCA offers digital-literacy training that is open to the public, extensive computer-lab time, and staff support to help members with their job searches; it also run a program to interest young girls in science, technology, engineering, and math careers. The goal of the YWCA is “eliminating racism and empowering women.” It is part of the YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago system, which is itself part of the national YWCA organization.
- The Kelvyn Park Senior Satellite Center in Belmont-Cragin offers seven computers for public use during certain weekday hours for seniors fifty-five and older in a multipurpose room. The center

does not offer training. Senior satellite centers are run by the City of Chicago.

- The Harold Washington Library is the CPL’s central library, with nine floors in Chicago’s Loop. Hundreds of computers are available to all CPL members six days per week, but time is limited to two sessions per day, capped at one hour each. The library offers a variety of classes and resources at all technology levels, from the CyberNavigator Program on Internet use to the Maker Lab with 3-D printers, robots, and an electric loom. The mission of the Chicago Public Library is to “welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and lifelong learning. Working together, we strive to provide equal access to information, ideas and knowledge through books, programs and other resources. We believe in the freedom to read, to learn, to discover” (CPL n.d.)

The goals for participants differed at each level of the BTOP PCC grant implementation. Generally, BTOP seeks to advance economic development, education, health care, and public safety. Chicago’s application outlined dozens of objectives, which are detailed versions of the following general goals (Bhatt 2010):

- Increase access to broadband
- Deploy 3,495 new computers
- Deliver nearly two hundred thousand new hours of technology training
- Create jobs at all skill and experience levels; help twenty thousand find employment through expanded technology training opportunities

Implementers also bring their own missions to the table: the Chicago Public Library seeks to foster lifelong learning and provide equal access to information; the City of Chicago seeks digital excellence, defined as

active and meaningful participation; the Smart Chicago Collaborative seeks to improve lives in Chicago through technology; and the community institutions that host the centers have their own goals. Survey data allow us to analyze user perception of PCCs versus the goals set forth by policymakers, funders, and implementers.

Survey Sample and Demographics

Although the survey distribution was not scientifically random, there is a reasonable probability, but not certainty, that it is representative of the total population of users. Overall, PCCs in Chicago are somewhat equitably distributed and attract people of all ages, incomes, education levels, races, and ethnicities. Compared to the population of Chicago, users in this sample are more likely to be very low income, 55–59 years old, and Black; they are less likely to be White or Hispanic.

The participating labs in this survey are similar to labs in the entire system, with public libraries and community technology centers the most common types. At least sixty-five and not more than ninety-three centers participated in this analysis.⁶ Half of responses were generated from users at libraries, 14 percent from community technology centers, 13 percent from community service centers, 10 percent from LISC Chicago⁷ centers for working families, and 8 percent from other workforce centers. Other types had a handful of responses; none of four youth career-development centers participated (Maps 3, 4, and 5).

Several notable differences emerge between the sample and Chicago demographics overall (Table 1). The sample has a greater proportion of Black respondents and a lower proportion of White respondents compared to Chicago. Although this could be due to sampling biases, the large differences—the sample has 19 percentage points more Black and 18 percentage points less White than Chicago overall—more likely

6. This uncertainty is caused by users' unclear descriptions of their locations.

7. Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

reflect true variation in the population of center users versus Chicagoans overall. Latino respondents were nine percentage points fewer than Chicago overall.

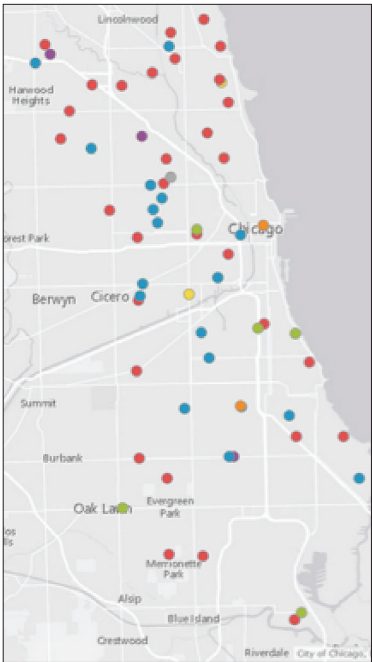
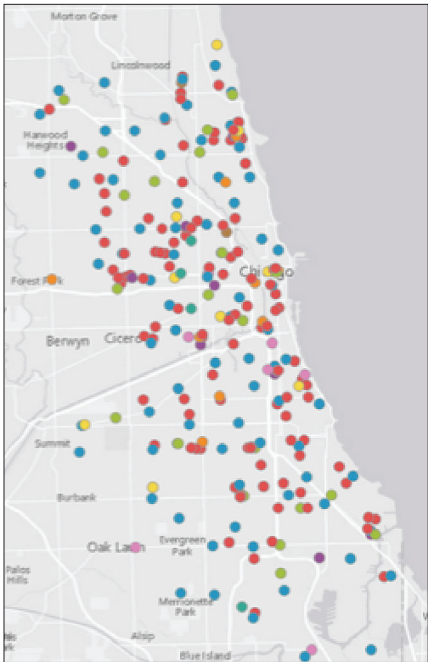
The age of users and in the city overall were similar, except for a greater proportion of 55–59 year olds in the sample. The age distribution did vary significantly across race and income: there was a significant difference in the ages of Black and White respondents: Black ($M=36.75$, $SD=15.18$) and White ($M=45.82$, $SD=16.85$) respondents; $t(221.46)=-4.76$, $p=3.34e-06$. This suggests that White users are, on average, nearly a decade older than Black users. There was also a significant difference in the ages of very poor (Income $< \$10K$) and other users. For the very poor ($M=47.17$, $SD=14.47$) versus all other ($M=39.38$, $SD=14.00$) respondents; $t(242.94)=-4.31$, $p=2.32e-05$. This suggests that the very poor individuals using PCCs are on average eight years older than other users.

Highest level of education was similar to Chicago overall. Income is difficult to compare to Chicago due to data-collection differences between the sample and the American Community Survey. In the sample, 34 percent of respondents 24 or older made less than \$10,000 per year; ACS counts only 11 percent of Chicagoans in this income bracket. This suggests that adult users of PCCs have disproportionately very low incomes.

Technology Profile of Respondents: Skills and Hardware

The premise of PCCs is to provide access to technology for people without computers at home, who are computer illiterate, or both. The majority of respondents (87.6 percent) rated their Internet skills as fairly skilled to expert (Table 2).⁸ A British study found that self-reported technology skill compared accurately to demonstrated skill, but whether or not that

8. Average-skilled users are those who reported fairly skilled. High-skilled users are those who reported very skilled or expert; low-skilled users are those who reported not very skilled or not skilled at all.



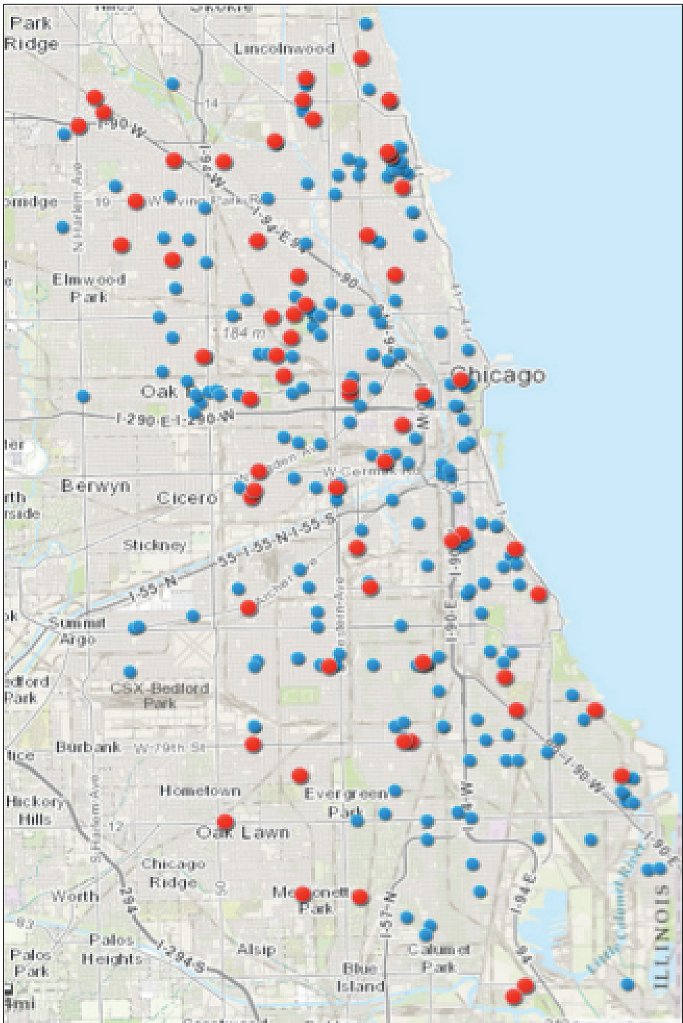
Map 3:
All Computer Labs

(City of Chicago Data Portal n.d.)

Map 4:
Participants in Survey

(City of Chicago Data Portal n.d.)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Community Technology Center | ● City Colleges of Chicago | ● Community Service Center |
| ● Chicago Public Library | ● WorkNet Chicago | ● Youth Career Development Center |
| ● Senior Center | ● WorkForce Center | |
| | ● Chicago Housing Authority | |



Map 5: Connect Chicago PCC Locations
(City of Chicago Data Portal n.d.)

● Survey-participants in red ● Non-participants in blue

Table 1: Summary of Survey Demographics Compared to Chicago Demographics

Gender	Sample	Chicago*	% Difference
Female	58.76%	51.50%	+7.26%
Male	40.70%	48.50%	-7.80%
Other	0.54%	N/A	
Race			
Black	53.10%	33.20%	+19.90%
White	31.27%	49.50%	-18.23%
Other	12.40%	10.90%	+1.50%
Asian	2.96%	6.40%	-3.44%
Prefer not to answer	0.27%	N/A	
Ethnicity			
Hispanic or Latino	19.41%	28.70%	-9.29%
Age**			
Other	1.62%	N/A	
13–9 (15–19 in Chicago)	10.24%	6.60%	+3.64%
20–24	10.24%	8.10%	+2.14%
25–34	19.41%	19.10%	+0.31%
35–44	16.44%	14.10%	+2.34%
45–54	19.68%	12.50%	+7.18%
55–59	18.06%	5.50%	+12.56%
60–64	9.70%	4.60%	+5.10%
65–74	4.31%	5.70%	-1.39%

Differences between the survey and Chicago that are greater than 10 percent are bolded in red; majority categories in sample subsets are bolded in blue.

N=371. Respondents answered basic questions about their demographics.

*Chicago statistics (2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).

**The most relevant ACS category reports only 15–19 year olds. Results are listed as 15–19 for Chicago.

***Chicago statistics for education for those 25 and older (2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). The ACS segments responses by age, giving the option of 25 and up as the closest comparison. Thus, this comparison give a general and not specific sense of how the results compare.

Gender	Sample	Chicago*	% Difference
Highest Level of Education***			
Middle School	3.77%	N/A	
Some High School	8.63%	N/A	
High School Graduate or Equivalent	19.95%	23.20%	-3.25%
Trade or Vocational Degree	4.58%	N/A	
Some College	22.37%	18.30%	+4.07%
Associate Degree	5.39%	5.50%	-0.11%
Bachelor's Degree	15.09%	20.40%	-5.31%
Graduate or Professional Degree	12.40%	13.80%	-1.40%
Prefer Not to Answer	7.82%	N/A	
Income (24 and Older)			
Under \$10,000	34.23%	11.3%	+22.93%
\$10,000–\$20,000	4.31%	N/A	
\$20,000–\$30,000	13.75%	N/A	
\$30,000–\$40,000	3.23%	N/A	
\$40,000–\$50,000	2.16%	N/A	
\$50,000–\$75,000	2.16%	N/A	
\$75,000–\$100,000	0.27%	10.7%	
\$100,000–\$150,000	0.54%	4.6%	-4.06%
\$150,000 or more	0.54%	N/A	
Prefer Not to Answer	19.95%	N/A	

Table 2: Computer and Internet Skill

	Count	Percent
Expert	34	9.16%
Very skilled	116	31.27%
Fairly skilled	175	47.17%
Not very skilled	32	8.63%
Not at all skilled	14	3.77%

N=371. In terms of your computer and Internet skills, do you consider yourself to be an expert, very skilled, etc.?

Table 3: Skill Acquisition Method

	Count	Percent
School	207	55.80%
Work	136	36.66%
Picked it up on my own elsewhere	111	29.92%
A computer skills class at this computer lab	95	25.61%
Family and friends taught me	83	22.37%
A computer skills class elsewhere	77	20.75%
Staff at this computer lab taught me	63	16.98%
Picked it up on my own at this computer lab	49	13.21%
Used online tutorials	36	9.70%
Other users at this computer lab taught me	16	4.31%

N=371. How did you acquire these skills? Check all that apply.

remains true to this sample cannot be verified (Henshaw et al. 2012). There was a significant difference in the ages of low-skilled ($M=46.93$, $SD=11.91$) and average- or higher-skilled ($M=38.70$, $SD=16.51$) respondents; $t(69.765) = -4.11$, $p=1.03e-04$. Older users have less developed skill than younger users. Notably, there was not a significant relationship between skill and income.

Users acquired skills at school (55 percent) and work (36 percent) more commonly than through independent learning. A quarter of respondents acquired skills in class at the computer lab where they were completed the survey and 20 percent acquired skills elsewhere. (Table 3).⁹

Users accessed the Internet in several ways, with smartphones the most popular at 32 percent (Table 4). This is lower than the 58 percent of Americans with smartphones, which may be related to the skew of users toward lower incomes (Pew 2013). Over 50 percent had a home

9. The survey asked respondents to check all that apply; thus, the total percentage is over one hundred.

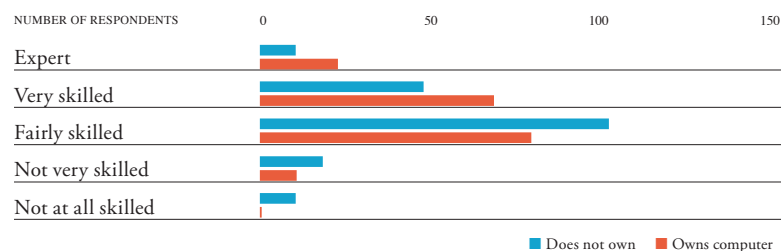
Table 4: Alternative Access Method

	Count	Percent
I use my smartphone	121	32.61%
I own a computer and have high-speed Internet at home	100	26.95%
I own a computer but don't have high-speed Internet at home	88	23.72%
Other	81	21.83%
Borrow from family and friends	49	13.21%
My school	47	12.67%
My place of employment	37	9.97%
Borrow from neighbors	10	2.70%

N=371 How else do you access computers and the Internet?

computer with either high-speed Internet (26 percent) or no high-speed Internet (23 percent). In the qualitative responses, respondents reported other technology barriers (missing software, reliable printers, 3-D printers, and reliably Internet) that led them to use PCCs.

To test for statistical significance, I assumed equal distance between skill levels and converted them to a numeric scale with numbers ranging from 1 (very low skill) to 5 (expert). Whether one owned a computer or not was significantly correlated with skill level in cross tabulation (Chisq =16.359, $df=4$, $p\text{-value}=0.002573$). People with expert skills were more than twice as likely to own a computer as people who do not. Computer owners are 10 percent more likely to be very skilled than non-computer owners. Among the three lowest skilled, people who do not own a computer constitute a greater proportion than people who do, but for the two highest-skilled categories, people who own computers make up a larger proportion—supporting the idea that greater computer exposure (as one would expect with home access) engenders higher computer skill (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Skill Level by Computer Ownership

Character of Use: Reliance and Frequency

Half of respondents use PCCs nearly every day (Table 5). A staff member at the help desk in the main computer lab at the Harold Washington Library confirmed this finding: “every weekday we’ve got a line out the door before the library even opens. People waiting to get into the computer lab, every day, like their own little club.” Others integrated PCCs into their work life: “I am on my short lunch break and want to check my personal email and other websites... nearly every day.” Twenty-seven percent report using a PCC nearly every week. In total, 78 percent report using PCCs at least every week. Frequent lab users may be overrepresented in this sample because they were more likely to see the survey; nonetheless, this finding indicates that a significant proportion of users do use the centers frequently.

PCCs were less than twenty minutes away for nearly three quarters of respondents. Transit time was a factor in which center respondents chose and was a barrier to others who did not use the center. Walking distance was a concern, especially during winter months.

Most respondents (85 percent) came alone. Users commented that this was a requirement of a class or program, related to their ability to get work done, or simply circumstantial:

- I come alone because I love the peace and quiet.
- I am in a program through DHS [the Illinois Department of Human Services]... alone.

Table 5: Selected PCC-Use Characteristics

Frequency of Use	Count	Percent
Nearly every day	189	50.94%
Nearly every week	102	27.49%
Every few weeks	36	9.70%
Less than once per month	26	7.01%
Once per month	18	4.85%
Transit Time to Center (minutes)		
Less than 5	76	20.49%
5–10	88	23.72%
10–20	110	29.65%
20–30	38	10.24%
30–45	25	6.74%
45–60	18	4.85%
More than 1 hour	16	4.31%
Place Coming From		
Home	313	84.37%
Work	10	2.70%
School	21	5.66%
Other	27	7.28%
Alone or with Others		
Alone	318	85.71%
With Friends	32	8.63%
Other	2	0.54%
With Family	19	5.12%

N=371. How frequently do you use the center? How long does it take you to get to the center? What is the address of the place you usually travel to the center from? What place does that address describe? Do you usually come to the center alone or with friends?

- I come alone so that I'm able to concentrate on learning, focus on my searching as well.
- I'm a writer so I'm rather solitary and like my TIME to think without continual jibber-jabber. Sure you know what I mean!
- I come while my daughter is in school plus a lot of my friends are either working or at school.
- Alone because I'm single and my friends have their own internet connections at home while I don't.

For those who come with others, responses included convenience, support, and safety:

- [I come with my] friends/brother because, it is a long way from my home to the library, and it may be dangerous.
- I come alone and with my son because it is a relaxing environment and I am able to get my work done faster.
- I come to the center with my daughter because she is the only child willing/interested in accompanying me.
- I come with my aunt we are trying to achieve the same goal.
- I often visit to library alone to look for jobs or to work on my blog, some days my Mother comes along with to use the computer (She is a senior citizen and I help her to use to computer).

A question that follows is whether people are using PCCs so frequently out of necessity, convenience, for some other reason, or all of the above. The survey data demonstrated that 42 percent rely completely on PCCs for their access to computers and the Internet. Although 25 percent had both high-speed Internet and a computer at home, only 5 percent of users said, "I don't rely on this computer lab," which suggests that some users with home access depend of PCC for other reasons (Table 6).

Those who do not own computers are more likely to be highly reliant on the PCCs (Chisq=50.64, df=3, p-value=5.85e-11), validating the

Table 6: Reliance on PCCs

	Count	Percent
Completely, this center provides my only access to computers and the Internet	158	42.59%
Mostly, this center provides most of my access to computers and the Internet	96	25.88%
Partly, I use it frequently, but I have other options too	95	25.61%
I don't rely on this computer lab	22	5.93%

N=371. How much do you rely on this computer lab (or similar public computer labs) for your Internet and computer access?

assumption of the relationship between computer skills and access. Respondents who did not own computers were more than twice as likely to be completely reliant on PCCs as people who did own computers.

There was also a significant difference in reliance based on skill: each respondent who reported that they were not at all skilled was completely reliant on the center (Chisq=35.56, df=12, p-value=3.81e-4) (Cross-Tabulation 1). Of the respondents either not very skilled or not at all skilled, 71 percent (32 of 45) were completely reliant on the center, compared to only 40 percent of users (61 of 150) who were very skilled or expert.

There was also a significant difference in the reliance of respondents of different races (Chisq=17.682, df=9, p-value=0.039) (Cross-Tabulation 2). The expected distribution across these two variables was significantly different than the observed distribution. This demonstrates a relationship between race and reliance that is generalizable to the population, namely, that Black respondents were more likely to be reliant on a center than their White counterparts.

Thus, lower-income and lower-skill respondents who do not own computers and Black respondents are more likely to be more highly reliant on PCCs than their counterparts.

Cross-Tabulation 1: Reliance / Skill

RELiance	Expert	Very skilled	Fairly skilled	Not very skilled	Not at all skilled	Total
Completely	12 7.59%	49 31.01%	65 41.13%	18 11.39%	14 8.86%	158 99.98%
Mostly	6 6.25%	28 29.16%	52 54.16%	10 10.41%	0 0%	96 99.98%
Partially	15 15.78%	30 31.57%	48 50.52%	2 2.10%	0 0%	95 99.97%
Do not	1 4.54%	9 40.90%	11 50.00%	1 4.54%	0 0%	22 99.98%
Total	34	116	176	31	14	371

Chisq=35.56, df=12, p-value=3.81e-4, n=371

Cross-Tabulation 2: Reliance / Race

RELiance	Asian	Black	Other	White	Total
Completely	3 27.27%	97 49.23%	18 38.29%	40 34.48%	158
Mostly	3 27.27%	51 25.88%	13 27.65%	29 25.00%	96
Partially	3 27.27%	39 19.76%	16 34.04%	37 31.89%	95
Do not	2 18.18%	10 5.07%	0 0%	10 8.62%	22
Total	11 99.99%	197 99.94%	47 99.98%	116 99.99%	371

Chisq=17.682, df=9, p-value=0.03905, n=371

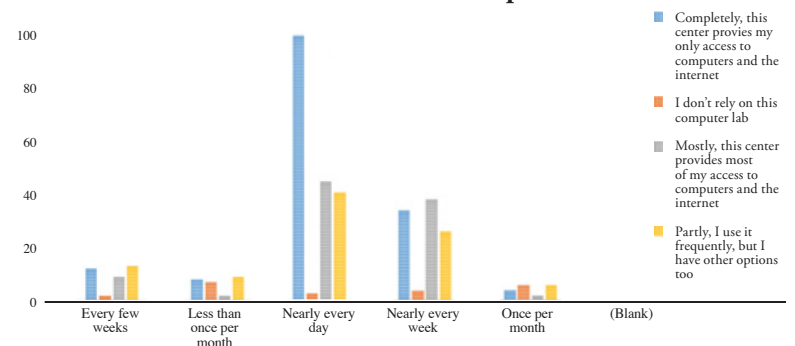
Cross-Tabulation 3: Reliance / Frequency

RELiance	Nearly every day	Nearly every week	Every few weeks	Once per month	≥ Once per month	Total
Completely	100 52.91%	34 33.33%	12 33.33%	4 22.22%	8 30.76%	158
Mostly	45 23.80%	38 37.25%	9 25.00%	2 11.11%	2 7.69%	96
Partially	41 21.69%	26 25.49%	13 36.11%	6 33.33%	9 34.61%	95
Do not	3 2.00%	4 3.92%	2 5.55%	6 33.33%	7 26.92%	22
Total	189 99.98%	102 99.99%	36 99.99%	18 99.99%	26 99.98%	371

Chisq=73.13, df=12, p-value=8.27e-11, n=371

Frequency and reliance are also significantly related. People who use a center nearly every day are more than twice as likely to rely completely on it as people who only mostly or partially rely on a center (Chisq=73.13, df=12, p-value=8.27e-11) (Cross-Tabulation 3). A full twenty-nine percentage points separate the proportion of completely reliant every-day users from partially reliant every-day users. This large variance between people who are completely, partially, and mostly reliant, however, only exists for people who use the center every day. Smaller differences in reliance exist for users of other frequencies (Chart 2).

Beyond reliance, however, it is difficult to ascertain what might drive PCC-use frequency. Each of the following variables were not significant with regard to frequency of use: skill, race, income, sex, age, education, whether or not the respondent owned a computer, and perception of the PCC's effect on the neighborhood. It is particularly interesting to note that skill and computer ownership do not effect the frequency of use, which again, was surprisingly high, with half of users using the center every day and one quarter using the center every week. One might assume that lack of a computer was a driver to use the centers more, but this assumption is not born out by the data. Instead, we see that all types of users frequently come to computer labs, and that people who own computers don't necessarily come less frequently.

Chart 2: Reliance of Users of Different Frequencies

Qualitative responses help to further illuminate why we find no relationship between frequency and either skill or computer use. Three contributing factors emerge to explain why people use computer centers regardless of their skill or computer ownership:

1. Staff and Training

Of the 45 percent of respondents who had attended training, 86 percent said they were very satisfied or satisfied. Apart from a handful of complaints about irritable or impatient staff, dozens of responses praised the staff for being helpful and courteous; 81 percent reported that they have received staff help.

2. Atmosphere

People cited three primary qualities—clean (8), quiet (8), and safe (10). Said one respondent, “I come alone because I love the peace and quiet.” Commented another, “It helps bring people together and study. The teens have some place to go that they don’t get into trouble and belong to gangs.”

3. A Home Computer Is Not Enough

Underscoring our finding that the “digital-divide” thesis proves insufficient, qualitative responses show that users need many pieces of equipment to have a fully functioning technology suite at home. A quarter of respondents had a computer and high-speed Internet, a quarter had a computer but lacked high-speed Internet, and half had neither. A third reported using a smart phone. Qualitative responses brought out a number of additional needs, including software, printers, 3-D printers, and better Internet.

Activities

Common computing activities are also common at PCCs: roughly 65 percent checked e-mail, 41 percent did word process, 36 percent read the news, and 28 percent checked social media. Consistent with work-

Table 7: Activities Performed at Lab

	Count	Percent
E-mail	241	64.96%
Search or apply for jobs	216	58.22%
Word processing (writing, editing, creating documents)	155	41.78%
Learning (online classes, homework, apply for college, etc.)	152	40.97%
News	135	36.39%
Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	104	28.03%
Access government services	81	21.83%
Find health information	75	20.22%
Data processing (working with numbers, Excel, accounting)	66	17.79%
Business (manage website, correspond with clients, sell goods)	41	11.05%
Creative activities (audio, visual, or graphic production)	40	10.78%
Online banking or investing	38	10.24%
Online gaming	29	7.82%
Web, app, or software development	24	6.47%
Online dating	5	1.35%
Pornography	3	0.81%

N=371. Which of the following activities do you do at this computer lab?

force development goals, the number-two activity (58 percent of all users; 63 percent for 18–65 year olds) reported was to search or apply for jobs. And consistent with the training goals for PCCs: 40 percent use centers for learning (Table 7). Other activities include supplementing income by taking online surveys, searching for housing, listening to music, printing, learning animation, taking GED classes, and fulfilling TANF¹⁰

10. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

and unemployment-insurance job-search requirements. Below is a sampling of adult respondents' reasons for using PCCs:

- The center provides opportunities to job train and to job search. The staff is nice. It is non-discriminatory.
- I come for help in improving my skills and knowledge of various teachings on the computer i.e. Word, Excel, Power Point and Facebook and more. My friends already have knowledge of these tools.
- I always come ...to complete my albums, which I make money from to pay my bills. It's a great resource for employment and learning. Thank you, without it I will be nothing.
- Because when I bring my granddaughters here, they have the opportunity to do their homework for the respective schools that they attend. Also, I have the opportunity to do the practice programs that are available to people who come here.
- I have to do service hours for DHS [Department of Human Services] to receive my monthly benefits.
- I usually come to the library alone to check emails, check grocery ads, balance checking account, update investment account, update movie and book listings, and update spreadsheets on sporting events.
- My printer broke quite a while ago, and I see no need to replace it. I can print out the occasional pages from this library.
- I get personal attention from the person who helps assist others on the computer. The person who assists me has a lot of patience and understands what I'm trying to convey, when it comes out as a person with very little computer knowledge.

A greater proportion of respondents under eighteen pursued learning: 79 percent for youth as compared to 40 percent for the sample overall.

An encouraging 88 percent of users under eighteen reported that they had performed better in school from using PCCs. In fact, 70 percent mentioned (unprompted) that they do their homework at the PCC, many of them adding that the staff provide help. A troubling trend was the degree to which youth view PCCs as a safe place to avoid violence: of the 27 responses from users under eighteen to the question—What effects do you think public computer labs have on your neighborhood and why?—one third said PCCs were a safe place for children. Among their comments:

- I am able to get my [school] assignments done on time.
- This lab keeps me out of trouble and off the streets.
- This lab has made it easier to apply for colleges and scholarships when I have the time.
- I have learned computer skills that will help me in college.
- Anybody can come in so the kids would have a less chance of getting hurt.

Those over fifty-five more frequently emphasized the staff support at the PCC, with a handful of respondents praising the staff by name.

Although only 3 percent reported watching pornography at PCCs, observational and anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise. The CPL does not block pornography sites, but other PCCs, particularly those with a workforce focus, do. In an informal discussion, a CPL branch librarian said that “porn is the number one activity” of older men. On three weekday trips to that branch's computer lab at different times I observed between 7 and 10 percent of users who appeared to be viewing pornography.

Skill acquisition at PCCs includes formal training and independent learning. Of the 45 percent involved in training half were very satisfied and less than 2 percent were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied—a remarkable success rate for trainers (Table 8). I conducted cross tabulations

Table 8: Training Satisfaction

	Count	Percent
Very Satisfied	86	50.89%
Satisfied	61	36.09%
Neutral	6	3.55%
Unsatisfied	1	0.59%
Very Unsatisfied	1	0.59%
N/A	5	2.96%
Blank	9	5.33%

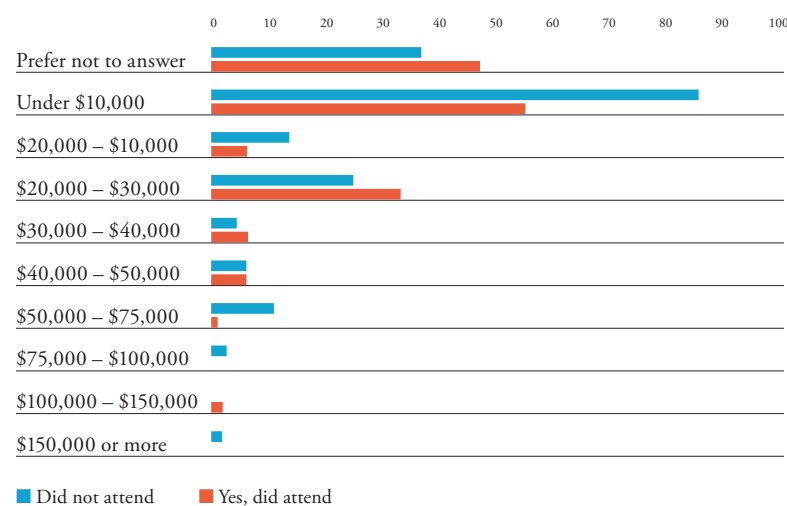
N=169. How would you rate your experience with the training?

between the variable for training participation and a number of other factors. Gender played a significant role in whether a respondent had attended a training: whereas women did or did not attend a training in equal proportion, twenty-five percentage points separated men who did (37 percent) and did not (62 percent) attend a training (Chisq=9.284, df=2, p-value=9.63e-3). Income also had a significant effect on whether or not a respondent attended a training (Chisq=26.044, df=9, p-value=2.00e-3). Individuals with incomes under \$10,000 were twenty-one percentage points less likely to have attended a training than the rest of the sample (Chart 3).

I performed chi-square tests on two-way tables on training attendance and each of the following variables were not significant: skill, race, income, and whether the individual owned a computer. T-tests did not reveal a significant difference in the means of the ages of those who did and did not attend a training. In evaluating the characteristics of job seekers, no relationship between training and actually finding a job was observed through cross tabulation.

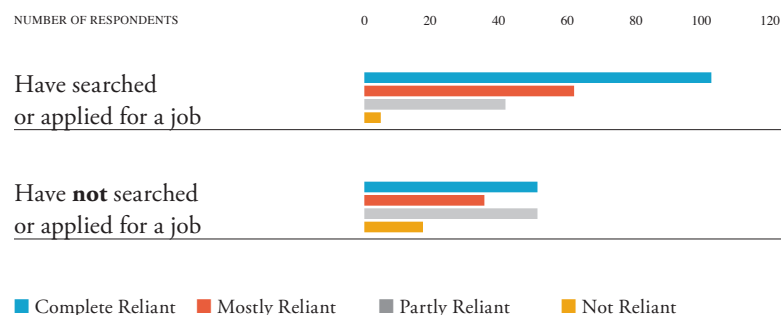
On the other hand, I found a very strong relationship between reliance and job seekers (Chisq=25.017, df=3, p-value=1.532e-05) (Cross-Tabulation 4). People who have searched or applied for a job at the center are

13 percentage points more likely to be completely reliant on the center than those who have not. The trend is clear for those who have searched or applied for a job: they are much more likely to have higher reliance (Chart 4).

Chart 3: Training Participation of Income Groups**Cross-Tabulation 4: Reliance / Job Seekers**

RELIANCE	Have searched or applied for a job	Have NOT searched or applied for a job	Total
Completely	104 48.14%	54 34.83%	158
Mostly	63 29.16%	33 21.29%	96
Partially	45 20.83%	50 32.25%	95
Do not	4 1.85%	18 11.61%	22
Total	216 99.98%	155 99.98%	371

Chisq=25.017, df=3, p-value=1.53e-05, n=371

Chart 4: Reliance and Job-Seeking Activity

On the whole, the survey's discussion of activities revealed strong support for PCCs acting as a hub for job seekers, students, and others coming to enhance their computer skills. A wide variety of activities are pursued, and trainings, when taken, are reviewed with great enthusiasm.

Social Dynamics

PCCs are an interesting social settings because they gather people into a public place for an activity that is commonly done alone. However, at PCCs, being social appears to be a key part of the experience. Despite 85 percent of users arriving alone, over 80 percent got help from staff, 46 percent got help from another user, and 32 percent made new friends. In addition to social media, a number of responses discussed the community aspect of PCCs or how they use PCC resources to build community (Table 9):

- [I] perform duties for my veterans group (I am on [the] Board) and Community Policing Program (where I am a Beat Facilitator).
- [The center] gives the residents hope; it connects residents and provides a platform to discuss common community concerns; it provides people with information regarding jobs, social problems, etc.

- More people can connect with each other.
- Keeps us apprised of local politics and its changes.
- Allows everyone to participate in the community.

Less than 5 percent reported harassment and less than 3 percent reported being shamed for low technology skills (Table 9). The survey polled users for potentially negative social situations: "Do you feel welcome and comfortable at this computer lab? Why or why not?" "Are there barriers that prevent your friends who need to use computers from using this computer lab? What are they?" A handful of responses discussed pornography: "There are a lot of creepy looking guys on the computers that I figure are probably looking at pornography. It creeps me out." Other responses mentioned negative interactions with PCC staff:

The computer helper, the person who is supposed to help computer-illiterate people become comfortable with the different functions of the computer, is not a very patient person. He makes you feel

Table 9: In-Person Interaction

	Count	Percent
Gotten help from staff	304	81.94%
Gotten help from another user	171	46.09%
Made new friends	122	32.88%
Given help to another user	119	32.08%
Discussed community events	72	19.41%
Made new business connections	36	9.70%
Been harassed	18	4.85%
Been made to feel bad about your technology skills	11	2.96%

N=371. Have you had any of the following in-person interactions at the computer lab? Check all that apply.

Table 10: Respondents' Attitudes Toward Technology and Relationships

	Count	Percent	Pew–Midwest*
Strengthens	268	72.24%	79.90%
Not sure	49	13.21%	0.40%
Neither	44	11.86%	0.00%
Weakens	10	2.70%	19.15%

Sample N=371. Thinking about your relationships in general, overall, would you say that communicating online with friends and family generally STRENGTHENS those relationships, OR WEAKENS those relationships?

**Comparison data: This survey question is identical to Pew (N=214) (Pew 2014).*

stupid for not knowing how to do things on the computer. I try not to ask him for help very often.

However, only twenty-nine out of 371 responses said they felt uncomfortable at PCCs. Respondents use words like inspired, empowered, safe, understood, and welcome, and one responded said: “I always feel welcome at this computer lab, as the staff is pretty much on a first name basis with most of the local residents, and are an extremely resourceful collective group. I feel that it’s a safe environment.”

PCCs may also help build communities online, with users reporting that they connected with people in Chicago more than any other group. To evaluate user attitudes on the social effects of technology, a question was borrowed from the Pew “The Web at 25 in the U.S.” survey: “Thinking about your relationships in general, overall, would you say that: Communicating online with friends and family generally STRENGTHENS those relationships, OR WEAKENS those relationships?” For midwesterners in the Pew survey, 79 percent noted strengthened relationships, slightly higher than Chicago PCC users’ 72 percent. However, whereas 19 percent of the Pew respondents said technology has a weakening effect, only

Table 11: Personal Outcomes

	Count	Percent
Helped me learn new computer skills	164	44.20%
Generally improved my life and well-being	157	42.32%
Helped me find a job	139	37.47%
Helped me connect with my community	98	26.42%
Made me a more competitive job applicant	94	25.34%
Performed better at work	81	21.83%
Performed better in school	79	21.29%
Helped me connect with new friends	76	20.49%
Helped me apply for college	39	10.51%
Helped me grow my business	28	7.55%
Helped me start my business	26	7.01%
Helped me apply for scholarships	21	5.66%

N=371. Has using this computer lab and attending training offered here affected your life in any of the following ways? Check any that may apply.

2 percent of Chicago PCC respondents thought so, suggesting that PCC users are, on average, more positive about the effects of technology on their relationships than the average Midwesterner (Table 10) (Pew 2014).

Outcomes

Data on the impact of PCCs to lives and community was much higher than I had hypothesized (Table 11):

- **Economic development:** 37 percent of users overall and 43 percent of users aged 18–65 reported that PCCs helped them find a job, 25 percent said PCCs made them a more competitive job applicant, 21 percent said they performed better at work, and 14 percent said PCCs helped them start or enlarge a business.

- **Education:** 44 percent learned new computer skills, 21 percent performed better in school, 10 percent applied for college, and 5 percent applied for scholarships. These numbers are higher for those under eighteen, where 88 percent reported performing better in school.

- **Social:** 26 percent connect with their community and 20 percent made new friends.

Qualitative responses echoed those findings. PCCs help users keep in touch with family and friends, find jobs, improve their computer skills, make friends, perform essential tasks, and look for jobs. It should be noted that a small minority of responses reported no impact. Some respondents elaborated on how PCCs affected their lives:

- This computer lab is a very great part of my social life as well as providing me a great way to access the computer for my research, projects, and internet shopping.
- I do not have internet access at home, and have done most of my job searching and applications on computers here at the library.
- All those skills significantly contributed to more knowledge of the new computer technology and to save my time in doing my home business and teaching.
- I learned skills that makes me more competitive in the job market and my startup.
- I am able to continue to live my life and make sure basic things are taken care of, like bills.
- I'm more up to date with computers, I'm able to access and attain important things to better myself and I'm growing mentally. I have depression and a host of other illnesses, and this lab helps me do things to stop the depression. I'm more focused on activities. It gives me a challenge to soar.

Table 12: Rate Effects of Lab on Neighborhood

	Count	Percent
Very good	287	77.36%
Good	59	15.90%
Not good nor bad	22	5.93%
Bad	2	0.54%
Very bad	1	0.27%

N=371. Overall, how would you rate the effects of public computer labs on your neighborhood?

Users were also asked, “Overall, how would you rate the effects of public computer labs on your neighborhood?” The responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive: 77 percent rated the effects as very good and 15 percent rated the effects as good. Only one person in the 371-person survey, rated the effects as very bad. The total negative responses for the survey were less than 1 percent (Table 12).

It is possible that for a public resource that is this in demand and this often used, even basic provision makes users very grateful. However, the detailed responses in this survey suggest a larger phenomenon. Overall, the network of Chicago PCCs has achieved an impressive level of client satisfaction: users are satisfied with training, report positive life outcomes, describe excellent effects on the neighborhood, and report very few instances of harassment, discrimination, or negative social interaction. In fact, they overwhelmingly report the opposite: that PCCs give support to all types of people and provide a space for community building. Undoubtedly, the data suggests opportunities for improvement, as do users. Yet even among users, around 10 percent said they had no suggested improvements because “everything” was currently great.

The effect of the center on the neighborhood produced a significant difference in the answers of men ($M=1.21$, $SD=0.26$) and women ($M=$

1.36, SD=0.70) respondents; $t(367) = -2.31$, $p\text{-value} = 0.02$.¹¹ This suggests that women rate the effects slightly higher than men.

Income had a significant effect on the answers of respondents (Chisq = 62.52, $df = 45$, $p\text{-value} = 4.28e-2$). As income increased, ratings of PCC effect on the neighborhood decreased. This suggests that wealthier users were less impressed, but still positive, about the effects of PCCs on neighborhoods. There appears to be a consensus about the value of providing Internet and computer access to those who can't afford it: many low-income users mention the problem of affordability, but so did middle- and higher-income users who have technology at home. Skills are also frequently mentioned, followed by concerns about children's academic performance and safety. A sample of responses reveals the diversity of perceived impacts:

- In my hood a lot of people can't afford a computer for school and work so it's great.
- I think that public computer labs are an asset to the community because they create equal opportunity for job applications, school, and many other resources that require a computer.
- The positive effects are that the lab is centrally located a block down from a local high school and several elementary schools—allowing students to come in during their lunch breaks and after school to work on their studies, or simply to have a place to congregate with their friends in a positive environment. Also, the lab provides many in the community who don't have access to the internet in their homes, to come out and work diligently on whatever goals they're striving to accomplish.

11. Here, the Likert Scale was converted a numeric scale ranging from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good).

- It helps to keep people, mainly the young ones busy. Hopefully, it can diminish crime rates, if there are more programs, and computer labs available to the community.
- Definitely positive around my neighborhood, not too many people have computers, and it seems like you need access to one just to live in this world. From shopping to banking to finding a job.
- Public computer labs bring the neighborhood together just by meeting other like-minded people and learning from each other.

A minority of responses raised concerns about possible negative effects from the computer labs:

- The gangs and how they do stuff on the computer.
- The majority of the people are watching Child porn, and masturbating, girls fighting on Facebook. All of the things that Chicago Public Library encourages and supports that works against our community.
- Negative stuff on Facebook.

Finally, approximately 10 percent of responses reported that the labs didn't have an effect, and a handful of responses commented that any positive effects that a lab might have had were eliminated by outdated computers, insufficient numbers of computers, or unhelpful staff.

Summary of Survey Findings

The following findings summarize the key takeaways from this analysis:

- **A core function of PCCs is as a resource center for the unemployed.** Fifty-eight percent reported using PCCs to search or apply for jobs; 37 percent reported finding a job through using a PCC.

- **A core function of PCCs is as a place of learning.** The number one reported personal outcome of PCC use, at 45 percent, is learning new computer skills; 88 percent of users under eighteen reported that they performed better in school through PCC use.
- **Users of all skill levels work at PCCs.** Novices are not the sole users of PCCs. The majority were fairly skilled or very skilled; older users were less skilled on average.
- **PCCs are used with very high frequency.** Half report using PCCs nearly every day and 27 percent report using PCCs nearly every week. People who own computers do not come less frequently than people who do not own computers.
- **Users are highly reliant on PCCs.** Forty-two percent rely completely on PCCs for their computer/Internet access. Only 5 percent of users said they are not at all reliant on PCCs, despite the fact that one quarter of users have a computer and high speed Internet at home. Lower-skilled, Black, lower-income, and job-seeking respondents are more likely to rely on PCCs. If the sample is representative and Smart Chicago's estimate of over eighty thousand center users per week is accurate, this suggests that approximately thirty-three thousand individuals rely on PCCs each week.
- **PCCs are highly valued for the access they provide.** When describing what effects they thought the lab had on their neighborhood, more than a third spoke about or alluded to giving computer and Internet access to people who cannot afford it.
- **PCCs are valued for more than access.** Half of users had a computer at home and a quarter had both a computer and high-speed Internet. Other reasons for using a PCC seem to be the need for staff assistance, enjoying a safe and quiet atmosphere, and enjoying the community-building aspect of the PCC.

- **Staff support is well liked and trainings are well attended.** Eighty-one percent received assistance from PCC staff; 45 percent have taken a PCC training, and 86 percent of those users reported being either satisfied or very satisfied.
- **PCCs are viewed as a leveler between poor and wealthy communities.** Respondents frequently commented that PCCs helped level the resource gap between rich and poor neighborhoods. Overall, 77 percent rated the effects on their neighborhood as very good and 15 percent rated the effects as good.
- **PCCs are viewed as a safe place for youth.** To an open-ended question about the effects of PCCs, one third of youth mentioned that PCCs kept them "out of trouble."
- **Trainings do not correlate with greater success in the job market.** No significant relationship was found between attending PCC training and finding a job.
- **Systemic discrimination in PCCs was not found.** The BTOP PCC grant focused on vulnerable and marginalized populations. PCC users, according to this sample, are more likely to be Black, low-income, and over the age of fifty-five than the Chicago population overall. Ability was not included in the survey, but should be included in future iterations.
- **Harassment and discrimination occur infrequently.** According to this sample, fewer than 5 percent were harassed, shamed for their technology skills, or feel unwelcome at a center. Those that do complain mention other users viewing pornography or the restriction of resources to certain demographics (i.e., older users wanting to use resources designated for youth).

Rhetoric vs. Reality: Analysis of Goal Fulfillment

These findings permit a preliminary evaluation of whether Chicago's implementation of the BTOP PCC grant met its goals.

The FCC and the city had economic-development goals for PCC. Chicago's application for BTOP aimed to "create jobs at all skill and experience levels, with the specific objective of helping approximately twenty thousand find employment through expanded technology training opportunities." Due to the self-reported nature of the findings in this survey and the lack of additional data, it is not possible to give an estimate of how many jobs were created. However, considering that Smart Chicago estimates that eighty thousand people use PCCs every week, and that 37 percent of users reported finding a job through PCC use, these data point toward a strong likelihood of that goal being fulfilled. Furthermore, results indicate that PCCs also assist users in starting and enlarging businesses, performing better at work, and conducting online banking and investment.

The FCC, the city, CPL, and the other community organizations studied had education, skill-development, and information-access goals. As we have seen, learning is very popular, trainings are very well received, and students report performing better in school. All of these point toward the fulfillment of goals in this category, particularly toward the City of Chicago's broad goal of "digital excellence," defined as "universal meaningful participation."

The BTOP and city did not highlight community health as a goal. The survey shows that 20 percent looked for health information online and 21 percent accessed government services (Table 7). Of those 21 percent, qualitative responses indicate that individuals receiving food stamps use PCCs to help meet their requisite job-search hours; one could extrapolate that meeting this requirement and continued access to food stamps helped fulfill the nutritional needs of the unemployed. Overall, though, this analysis is inconclusive on whether health was improved.

Regarding BTOP's goal to improve public safety there is anecdotal evidence in this data. Numerous users provided responses on how PCCs keep youth off the streets and away from danger in a positive environment suggest that neighborhood safety is improved by PCC existence.

Smart Chicago seeks to improve lives generally, and there is some evidence that this has occurred. Appropriately 42 percent reported that PCCs generally improved their lives, 26 percent reported being more connected the community, and 20 percent made new friends (Table 11). More analysis is needed to determine the degree to which this occurs and why this occurs for some users but not others.

Equitable access to technological resources is a goal of Smart Chicago and CPL. The sample's overrepresentation of very low-income and Black respondents suggests fulfillment. There is some concern with the slightly underrepresented proportion of Latino respondents, but this may be attributable to sampling error.

Policy Improvements and Recommendations

Chicago received \$8,974,283 in grant funding, out of a requested \$9,142,997, and \$3.9 million in matching funds from the Chicago Housing Authority, the City Colleges of Chicago, and the Smart Chicago Trust Fund; the State of Illinois contributed \$1.5 million of the \$3.9 million (Bhatt 2010, 37). To sustain the project, the city worked with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust to support and guide the Smart Chicago Collaborative beyond the timeframe of BTOP. BTOP grants went largely toward capital improvements, and it appears that PCC host organizations funded PCC staffing. Many PCCs appear to be securely sustained by their host institution's existing funding, but it is unclear whether the host institutions will be able to provide the funds next time a capital upgrade is required.

Overall, this analysis provides strong evidence that PCCs are a valuable policy for improving the economic development and educational

outcomes of its users. It recommends that the City of Chicago, Smart Chicago, their partners, and other supporters of public computer labs continue to fund these essential resources for neighborhoods, with a number of the improvements outlined here.

Building off of user suggestions, this analysis provides strong support for the value of staff to PCC users. I caution against cutting funding for staff in the unfounded belief that accessibility alone is sufficient. Rather, staff is used and needed across the spectrum of skill levels and technology access, and is especially important to job seekers, an important population for many PCC funders.

Additional resources to expand training to include intermediate and advanced skills would be welcomed by users. An interesting follow-up study could determine if users who felt helped by basic classes would find advanced classes at PCCs equally helpful.

Connect Chicago's website is easy to use for those with existing computer skills. Smart Chicago should continue to pursue marketing campaigns and offline strategies to connect users with PCCs. This analysis did not investigate capacity problems beyond mentioning the resource constraints faced by CPL, but continuing to market effectively may work toward maintaining equity in accessibility (Bertot et al. 2008).

PCCs should consider accessibility needs when upgrading their centers. At the least, they should update the information on the Connect Chicago dataset so users know which PCCs will meet their accessibility needs.

PCCs should attempt to better serve the needs of men, very low-income individuals, and Latinos. These differences do not necessarily imply discrimination—given that no significant differences were found in user satisfaction with PCCs—but PCCs can evaluate their programs to ensure that they are in fact meeting the needs of these populations.

The structure of Chicago's PCC system also appears to be working. The decentralized model of many government and nongovernment actors has produced a collection of reasonably well-distributed, diverse, high-quality centers. Decentralization may have contributed to quality in a number of ways; perhaps, due to competition among centers, the

system as a whole remains proactive and conscious about keeping the quality of service high. This may also explain the high level of differentiation in PCC trainings and target populations, in that competition pushed PCCs to specialize in precisely the in-demand areas of their user community. Different lab models provide a petri dish for providers to experiment with different trainings and approaches. Combined with the essential component of Smart Chicago's facilitation of best-practices sharing, this may contribute to good ideas being identified, tested, shared, and scaled more effectively than if all PCCs were being administered by a single entity. Other cities may wish to look at the way Chicago used BTOP funds to upgrade this loosely connected system while providing users a single point-of-information access as a model for success.

This analysis also reveals the high degree to which users rely on traditional educational institutions to gain computer skills: PCC users acquired their computer skill primarily in K–12 schools or continuing education classes. Given this, education policymakers may wish to include computer-science classes as a requisite component of public education. Similarly, it's clear that students who don't have computers at home are concerned about their ability to do their homework and succeed academically. These data suggest that PCCs are helping to support students, but, as discussed in the literature review, a preferable option would be for all students to have access to a computer at home. If this is not possible for a school district, the district may wish to work with their local PCC to provide hours and staff support specifically tailored to students.

PCCs may also wish to reconsider whether they want to filter pornography that makes users uncomfortable. The question of whether to restrict user activity has practical dimensions given the resource constraints and wait times that some PCCs experience. The idea that school children who rely on PCCs to do their homework or unemployed individuals who use the PCC to find a job experience long waits due to individuals watching porn may give policymakers cause to reconsider these restrictions. However, limiting access by content might also be

seen as condescending or paternalistic, an image which PCCs may wish to avoid in the name of treating all users with equal dignity. There is also the argument that filtering Internet content is the slippery slope of censorship. Given that most PCCs in Chicago receive city, state, or federal funding, they may have incentive to filter content to pursue political ends, including promotion of candidates who support PCCs. Either way, considering that some users feel uncomfortable using PCC resources while others are watching pornography, this analysis would urge PCCs that have not done so to consider a policy on adult content, or perhaps segregating adult users.

In an effort to gather granular data about how to improve PCCs, this survey asked users to recommend improvements. The two most common suggestions were as follows:

1. Provide more intermediate and advanced training. Specific trainings requested included Photoshop, advanced Microsoft office, animation, graphic design, coding, printing, and using social media.
2. Provide faster Internet, more terminals, and longer hours. Longer or different PCC opening hours were frequently requested. With regards to time limitations, feelings were mixed: a few users noted that time constraints were a positive aspect because they ensured equity in resource distribution, while others commented that they were unable to get their work done.

This analysis encourages PCC directors to examine the improvements suggested by users in their centers. Of course, all of these locations are under resource and staff constraints, so all improvements may not be feasible. Yet there is clear value to hearing precisely what users value and what they would like to see improved.

Conclusion

This research concludes that PCCs are a highly valued and highly effective resource for job seeking, learning, and skill development. It also suggests that even if everyone in Chicago were to have high-speed Internet and computers at home, there would still be a need for computer centers, given that staff support is as big a need as technology itself. In a market-driven economy, technology continues to evolve and higher-income users have the money and expertise to adopt it first; this top-down pattern means that PCCs will remain relevant instruments for closing skill and technology gaps in the future.

The value of PCCs goes beyond technology itself. The public computer center has become a hybrid social-services organization, connecting people with their government, their schools, their neighborhoods, their work and businesses, their families, and each other. They are also a new neighborhood center, which is safe and multigenerational, where community is built online and in reality.

Undoubtedly, this analysis shows the need for continued attention to PCCs as twenty-first-century community institutions. Future analyses may wish to explore the connection between these results and the PCC-organization type or trainings in greater detail. A more in-depth study of how various groups went about implementing BTOP PCC grants could provide useful lessons for future funding ventures. Finally, it would prove worthwhile to study how Chicago's model—with a sustainable funding model provided through a government-foundation partnership—compares to cities that did not continue to support PCCs after BTOP funds ended.

Ultimately, this study reveals that PCCs show great promise as a tool for economic and community development. In light of this, future research is necessary for a better understanding of how to maximize and amplify PCC impact.

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Appendix A: Instructional Fliers

SURVEY TAKERS WANTED!

Take a short 10 minute survey about using this computer lab and be entered into a drawing for one of 3 prizes: **\$150, \$100, or \$50.**

1. Open your Internet Browser
2. Type this link into the Address Bar:

bit.ly/computerlabsurvey

3. Take the 10 minute survey and, if you wish, be entered into win one of three cash prizes. Must be 13 or older.

NECESITAMOS PARTICIPANTES DE ENCUESTA

Tome una encuesta de sólo 10 minutos sobre este laboratorio de computadoras y se entre en un sorteo para un de tres premios: **\$150,**

\$100, o \$50.

1. Abra su navegador de internet
2. Entre este enlace en la barra de dirección :

bit.ly/labsdecomputadoras

3. Tome la encuesta de 10 minutos, y si quiera, se entre para ganar un de tres premios en efectivo. Tiene que tener más de 13 años.

Appendix B: English Survey

Chicago Computer Lab Survey

Hello and welcome! This is an anonymous survey to learn more about how people use public computer centers in Chicago. At the end of the survey, you'll be given the opportunity to provide your contact information, which will enter you into a raffle to win one of three cash prizes: \$150, \$100 or \$50. The survey is expected to take approximately 10 minutes.

Only users aged 13 or older should take this survey.

Please fill out each section to the best of your ability with the most detailed answers you're willing to provide. Your thoughts and opinions are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time!

If you have any questions or concerns, please email Erin Simpson, the researcher conducting this survey, at chicomputersurvey@uchicago.edu.

1. Where are you? Please give the name of the location that hosts the computer lab you are in.
2. Select the type of location you are in:
 - ☐ Library
 - ☐ Senior Center
 - ☐ Community Technology Center
 - ☐ Youth Career Development Center
 - ☐ City College
 - ☐ Community Service Center
 - ☐ Workforce Center
 - ☐ WorkNet Center
 - ☐ Not sure
 - ☐ Other

3. How frequently do you use the center?
 - ☐ Nearly every day
 - ☐ Nearly every week
 - ☐ Every few weeks
 - ☐ Once per month
 - ☐ Less than once per month
4. How long does it take you to get to the center?
 - ☐ Less than 5 minutes
 - ☐ Between 5 and 10 minutes
 - ☐ Between 10 and 20 minutes
 - ☐ Between 20 and 30 minutes
 - ☐ Between 30 and 45 minutes
 - ☐ Between 45 and 60 minutes
 - ☐ More than 1 hour
5. What is the address of the place you usually travel to the center from?
6. What place does that address describe?
 - ☐ Home
 - ☐ Work
 - ☐ School
 - ☐ Other
7. Do you usually come to the center alone or with friends?
 - ☐ Alone
 - ☐ With Friends
 - ☐ Other
8. Why do you usually come alone or with friends?
9. Are there barriers that prevent your friends who need to use computers from using this computer lab? What are they?

10. How much do you rely on this computer lab (or similar public computer labs) for your internet and computer access?

- ☐ Completely, this center provides my only access to computers and the internet
- ☐ Mostly, this center provides most of my access to computers and the internet
- ☐ Partly, I use it frequently, but I have other options too
- ☐ I don't rely on this computer lab

11. How else do you access computers and the internet?

- ☐ I own a computer and have high speed internet at home.
- ☐ I own a computer but don't have high speed internet at home.
- ☐ My place of employment
- ☐ My school
- ☐ Borrow from family and friends
- ☐ Borrow from neighbors
- ☐ Use my smartphone
- ☐ Other

12. In terms of your computer and internet skills, do you consider yourself to be:

- ☐ Not at all skilled
- ☐ Not very skilled
- ☐ Fairly skilled
- ☐ Very skilled
- ☐ Expert

13. How did you acquire these skills? Check all that apply:

- ☐ School
- ☐ At work
- ☐ A computer skills class at this computer lab
- ☐ A computer skills class elsewhere
- ☐ Family and friends taught me

- ☐ Other users at this computer lab taught me
- ☐ Staff at this computer lab taught me
- ☐ Used online tutorials
- ☐ Picked it up on my own at this computer lab
- ☐ Picked it up on my own elsewhere

14. Why do you come to this computer lab?

Which of the following activities do you do at this computer lab?

- ☐ Learning activities (online classes, do homework, apply for college, etc.)
- ☐ Search or apply for jobs
- ☐ Email correspondence
- ☐ Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- ☐ Find health information
- ☐ Read the news
- ☐ Word processing (writing, editing, creating documents)
- ☐ Data processing (working with numbers, Excel, accounting)
- ☐ Business activities (manage website, correspond with clients, sell goods)
- ☐ Access government services
- ☐ Creative activities (audio, visual, or graphic production)
- ☐ Web, app, or software development
- ☐ Online banking or investing
- ☐ Online dating
- ☐ Online gaming
- ☐ View pornography

15. What other activities do you do at this computer lab?

16. Has using this computer lab and attending training offered here affected your life in any of the following ways? Check any that may apply:

- ☐ Performed better in school
- ☐ Performed better at work

- ☐ Helped me find a job
- ☐ Helped me apply for college
- ☐ Helped me apply for scholarships
- ☐ Helped me start my business
- ☐ Helped me grow my business
- ☐ Helped me connect with my community
- ☐ Helped me learn new computer skills
- ☐ Helped me connect with new friends
- ☐ Made me a more competitive job applicant
- ☐ Generally improved my life and well-being

17. How has access to this computer lab and any skills learned here affected your life?

18. Have you had any of the following in-person interactions at the computer lab? Check all that apply:

- ☐ Gotten help from staff
- ☐ Gotten help from another user
- ☐ Given help to another user
- ☐ Discussed community events
- ☐ Made new friends
- ☐ Made new business connections
- ☐ Been harassed
- ☐ Been made to feel bad about your technology skills

19. Thinking about your relationships in general, overall, would you say that communicating online with friends and family generally STRENGTHENS those relationships, OR WEAKENS those relationships?

- ☐ Strengthens
- ☐ Weaken
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Not sure

20. Have you attended a training at the center?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21. How would you rate your experience with the training?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Unsatisfied
- ☐ Very unsatisfied
- ☐ Not applicable

22. What additional trainings or resources would you like to see at the computer lab?

23. When you connect with other people online at this computer lab, do you connect with:

- ☐ Other people in the computer lab
- ☐ Other people in your neighborhood
- ☐ Other people in Chicago
- ☐ Other people in the United States
- ☐ Other people around the world

24. Overall, how would you rate the effects of public computer labs on your neighborhood? Please explain: What effects do you think public computer labs have on your neighborhood and why?

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Not good
- ☐ Not bad
- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Very bad

25. Please explain: What effects do you think public computer labs have on your neighborhood and why?

26. Do you feel welcome and comfortable at this computer lab? Why or why not?

27. What is this computer lab doing well?

28. How could this computer lab improve?

29. What year did you start using computers?

30. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other

31. What's your highest level of education?

- ☐ Middle school
- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school graduate or equivalent
- ☐ Trade or vocational degree
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associate degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Graduate or professional degree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ Other

32. What is your income?

- ☐ Under \$10,000
- ☐ \$10,000 – \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 – \$30,000
- ☐ \$30,000 – \$40,000
- ☐ \$40,000 – \$50,000

- ☐ \$50,000 – \$75,000
- ☐ \$75,000 – \$100,000
- ☐ \$100,000 – \$150,000
- ☐ \$150,000 or more
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

33. What is your age?

34. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other

35. What is your race?

- ☐ Black
- ☐ White
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Other

36. What neighborhood do you live in?

37. What neighborhood is this computer lab in?

Waste Not



Schools as Agents of Pro-Environmental Behavior Change in Chicago Communities

RACHEL WHALEY, AB '15

I. Introduction

As cities across the United States struggle to balance their budgets many question the cost-effectiveness of offering municipal recycling services. The city of Chicago recycles only 11 percent of its solid waste through its municipal residential-recycling program, which is less than the 34 percent average recycling rate for cities across the United States (Tweed 2013). This low rate is troubling for many reasons, not least because studies show that recycling is most cost-effective when at least one third of the waste stream is being recycled. In order to make Chicago's recycling program financially sustainable, the city must increase its recycling rate. One of the reasons for Chicago's low overall recycling rate is that this rate varies widely within the city. The city's North Side recycles nearly 20 percent of waste, while the South Side recycles a little over 5 percent of its waste (Chicago Data Portal n.d.).

At the end of 2013 two important recycling initiatives occurred in Chicago: the Blue Cart residential-recycling program was expanded to the entire city and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) signed a five-year contract with Lakeshore Recycling Systems to offer recycling in all public schools (Chicago Board of Education 2013). For the first time it is

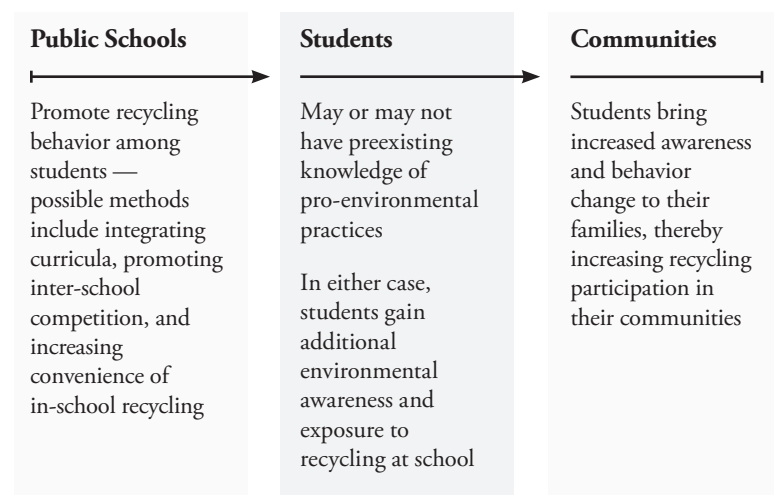


Figure 1. Theory of Change for Community Environmental Behavior

possible to compare recycling rates in schools to those in the surrounding communities. This study combines these two data sources with demographic data to create a more nuanced picture of Chicago's recycling trends and argues that schools can positively affect recycling behavior in communities. Ultimately, I make recommendations about how the city and schools can best work together to increase pro-environmental behavior among Chicagoans and reap the financial and environmental benefits of sending less waste to landfills.

My study will analyze and compare data from Chicago's Blue Cart recycling program with neighborhood demographics and public school recycling programs to assess the following questions: whether schools recycle at rates comparable to the neighborhoods in which they operate; how neighborhood demographics correlate with recycling rates; and whether school recycling programs are effectively instilling recycling habits in students. I will put forward a theory of change (Figure 1) that proposes a series of conceptual links between student experiences with

recycling in schools and improved recycling outcomes in the community. The following analysis will test this theory using recent data from Chicago's Blue Cart and public school recycling programs.

By approaching public schools as a mechanism to improve community recycling behavior, this study will also reflect upon a set of larger policy questions: whether efforts to promote recycling in public schools will allow the city of Chicago to reap greater environmental benefits, increase community participation, and improve the economic sustainability of its Blue Cart recycling program.

II. Background

Federal waste-management policy has delegated most of the responsibility for waste management and recycling to state and local governments. Due to this delegation of responsibility, Chicago has a history of municipal recycling programs that have come and gone. Today, Chicago operates its Blue Cart recycling program under tough scrutiny of the costs and benefits for communities. This section explores three critical areas for understanding present-day recycling in Chicago: the history of federal waste-management policy; contemporary studies of the costs and benefits of recycling; and the evolution of recycling policies in Chicago in response to these pressures.

Role of Federal Government in Promoting Recycling in the United States

In the early twentieth century, after the federal government began to regulate the disposal of waste in waterways, land disposal became the most common fate of solid wastes (Phillips 1998, 22). Practices typically consisted of open-pit dumps that left garbage to accumulate without any oversight or management (Hunsaker-Clark 2012, 839). By the 1950s Americans began to realize that the "throwaway culture" of single-use disposable products was generating a massive amount of solid waste

(Jacobson 1993, 120). Amid postwar prosperity, many Americans, who had lived through the economic necessity of reusing household materials during the Great Depression and the civic duty during the war of recycling materials to support the armed forces, reveled in the ease, convenience, and modernity of disposables (Weeks 2007, 1046). This expanded as “industry... sold the idea that single-use, throw-away items were absolute necessities of a modern lifestyle” (Strong 1997, 32). In response, the environmental movement of the 1960s worked to promote solid-waste management as an important health and pollution-control problem rather than just an aesthetic one (Hunsaker-Clark 2012, 840).

Increasing urbanization and suburban sprawl in the postwar era also contributed to waste-management policy. Growing cities scrambled to find ways to manage waste in high-density areas, resorting to large landfills or incinerators just outside city limits (Weeks 2007, 1,045). But city residents complained about the smell and appearance of these sites, and neighborhood groups lobbied local governments against locating these facilities in their neighborhoods. For example, in 1953, when residents became alarmed at the untreated runoff from a landfill on the South Side of Chicago, they organized to push the city to improve its operating procedures and to open an incinerator, which was less of a nuisance to residents than the landfill (Pellow 2004, 42). Environmental groups, as well, pushed for the expansion and improvement of recycling programs in Chicago, citing the lack of landfill space in Illinois and especially in Cook County (IL EPA 2014). Cities across the nation witnessed similar protests throughout the 1950s and 1960s (Pellow 2004).

Strict zoning regulations in the rapidly expanding suburbs forced cities to look farther and farther outside city limits for landfill sites (Pellow 2004, 44). Influenced by the environmental movement and citizen complaints about pollution, city public officials began to realize that existing waste-management practices were posing public-health risks. Many local officials began to call for federal regulatory action on waste management (Phillips 1998, 26). Beginning in 1963 mayors of Chicago, New York, and other cities called on the federal government

to act on solid-waste management (Phillips 1998, 22). President Lyndon B. Johnson supported their concerns. He saw pollution as one of the many serious social issues he hoped to address with his Great Society programs (Hunsaker-Clark 2012, 840). Johnson recommended that Congress pass legislation to “assist the states in developing comprehensive programs for some forms of solid waste disposal [and] provide for research and [the] demonstration of projects leading to more effective methods for disposing of or salvaging solid wastes” (1966, 163). The president’s support, combined with his argument that improved waste management was an important part of his overall social reforms, led to the passage of the Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA) in 1965.

The most important contribution of the SWDA was that it thrust solid-waste management into public consciousness as a major issue affecting public health and environmental well-being. The SWDA and its amendments allocated federal funding for research on waste-management practices to promote improvements in waste-management technology. This funding led state and local governments to pay unprecedented attention to solid waste-management practices. Through many subsequent amendments and new pieces of legislation, the SWDA (and federal solid-waste policy more generally) has upheld the principle that local and state governments should deal with waste management (US EPA, ORCR 2011, 17). The first amendment to the SWDA was the 1970 Resource Recovery Act, which shifted the focus of the federal government’s involvement away from waste disposal towards “recycling, resource recovery, and conversion of waste to energy” (Roberts 2011). In the same year the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was created to oversee federal waste-management policy (US EPA 2014). The Resource Recovery Act represented the first significant support from the federal government for policies that recovered materials rather than disposed of them (Gumm 2012, 750). With resources provided by the SWDA and the Resource Recovery Act, all fifty states had adopted solid waste regulations by 1975 (Phillips 1998, 26). This was major progress, since no state had been regulating solid-waste disposal just one decade

earlier (Phillips 1998). However, as the environmental movement grew alongside consumerism and throwaway culture through the 1970s it became clear that the federal government would need to play a greater role in regulating solid-waste management nationally.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), which passed in 1976 as another amendment to the SWDA, became the most comprehensive federal action on solid-waste management. RCRA gave the EPA authority to spell out “explicit, legally enforceable requirements for waste management” as well as “guidance documents and policy directives [to] clarify issues related to the implementation of the regulations” (US EPA, ORCR 2011, I–2). The scope of the RCRA, which included all hazardous- and nonhazardous-waste management, created vast new domains of responsibility for the EPA. Even with this increased scope, the EPA maintained the role originally laid out for the federal government in the SWDA: making recommendations, setting minimum federal criteria for waste-management practices, and providing information to local and state governments; states and regional offices still managed implementation and enforcement (US EPA, ORCR 2011, I–4). In part the RCRA was successful: by 1986, two thirds of the nation’s landfills closed (Phillips 1998, 31). In part it was unsuccessful: a Government Accountability Office study reported that the Department of Commerce, which was supposed to stimulate and develop markets for recycled materials (subtitle E, RCRA), had yet to act (Stephenson 2006, 5).

No additional federal laws or amendments related to solid-waste management have been passed since minor amendments to the SWDA and RCRA in 1984, 1992, and 1996 (US EPA, OSWER 2013). Today, the regulations of the SWDA and its amendments continue to govern solid-waste management in the United States (US EPA, OSWER 2013). As such, there is no federal legislation or policy in the United States that addresses solid waste recycling in homes, cities, or schools, leaving cities like Chicago to develop and manage their own programs.

The SWDA and its amendments brought improvements to waste-management practices in individual cities, but these pieces of legislation

do not form a comprehensive solution. They fall short in many ways of their stated goals of decreasing waste and protecting human and environmental health. None of this legislation has changed or challenged American consumption habits, which means that the consumption of disposable goods has continued to increase over time (Pellow 2004, 58). Manufacturers continue to extract larger and larger quantities of natural resources to meet consumer demands, with little oversight from the Department of Commerce, which has failed to stimulate the market for recycled materials. In response to DOC inaction, President Clinton issued an executive order in 1998 requiring that paper and other goods purchased by federal agencies contain a minimum percentage of post-consumer waste, which provides a small amount of much-needed stability for recycled-materials markets (Executive Order 13101 1998, 49,649). Many state governments, including Illinois, have followed suit, and these practices have played a small but important role in developing markets for goods made from recycled materials (Weeks 2007).

In spite of these efforts, the global demand for recycled materials remains unstable, leaving many American cities, states, and recycling companies operating recycling programs at a loss (Weeks 2007, 1,052). In 2002, responding to a tight city budget, New York City cut its recycling program for two years, and other cities have also cut back on recycling in response to financial pressures (Weeks 2007, 1,045). Scholars continue to debate whether solid-waste recycling is financially sustainable, especially as more cities and states delegate recycling to private contractors (Bohm, Folz, Kinnaman, & Podolsky 2010). Another concern is large waste-management corporations involved in recycling who are motivated by profits, sometimes at the expense of the best environmental practices (Weeks 2007, 1,051).

Congress has recently considered a few federal waste-management-related bills, including a national program for recycling computers and other electronics and a national “bottle bill” to expand existing programs to recycle plastics and aluminum (Weeks 2007, 1,050). However, since existing legislation delegates most responsibility for waste management to

local governments, city and state officials must also increase efforts to improve waste management and recycling rates in their communities.

Recycling Benefits Communities

In the 1970s activists promoted the practice of bringing waste to recycling centers more as an effort to raise environmental consciousness than to make recycling a self-sustaining practice (Gottlieb 1993). Today, global markets for recycled materials, especially metal, make recycling a theoretically attractive revenue generator for local governments. However, market volatility can make recycling less attractive to local governments on tight budgets (Stephenson 2006).

Local governments can maximize cost-effectiveness by the economies of scale: the decrease in operating costs that occurs once the quantity of recycled materials passes a certain threshold. Even critics of recycling concede that once recycling programs reach a certain volume municipalities can save money over disposing of all of their wastes (Bohm, Folz, Kinnaman, & Podolsky 2010). A recent study of a New York municipality indicates that approximately 31 percent of total waste must be diverted into recycling programs for cities to see the most financial benefit (Tonjes & Mallikarjun 2013). In 2014 Chicago recycled on average only 11 percent of waste, proof that the city needs to promote recycling if it is to realize profits (City of Chicago 2015). Additionally, exposing individuals to recycling can cause them to adopt other pro-environmental behaviors, including water and energy conservation practices (Thomas and Sharp 2013). The city may reap additional environmental and financial benefits by devoting public-outreach resources toward recycling.

Pro-environmental policies and practices have other indirect benefits. Cities that promote environmental sustainability are attracting larger proportions of more young adults (Juday 2015). Cities that promote recycling along with other environmental initiatives present an image of modernity and sustainability that is important to young professionals

as they choose where to live and work. In this way, Chicago can both improve its environmental reputation and foster economic growth.

Recycling in Chicago

Chicago currently operates a “Blue Cart” program, as distinguished from its previous “blue bag” program, which was ineffective and too costly given its limited environmental impact (Weinberg, Pellow, & Schnaiberg 2000). The Blue Cart program is single-stream; all recyclable materials are collected in the same bin, which attracts higher participation rates than programs that require residents to separate materials (City of Chicago 2015). The pilot began in 2007 in seven Chicago communities and was expanded over a period of seven years. By the end of 2013 the city collected recyclables every other week from all single-family homes and two-, three-, and four-flat buildings in Chicago at no charge (City of Chicago 2015).

Chicago’s Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) oversees recycling. The DSS divides the city into six zones; the city collects in zones two and four and contracts collection to private companies through a competitive bidding in the remaining zones (City of Chicago 2015). Waste Management, Inc., collects in zones one, three, and six, and Simms Metal Management Recycling collects in zone five (City of Chicago 2015). Landlords of multiunit buildings (five flats or larger) must contract with a private hauler; DSS does not track or report on multiunit recycling rates (City of Chicago 2015). The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) contracts with Lakeshore Recycling Systems, another private waste-management company, to offer recycling services to all 658 public schools in Chicago (Engineer 2014). Lakeshore Recycling Systems publishes data on recycling in public schools as part of its contract with CPS.

III. Literature Review

The Blue Cart recycling program is an exciting opportunity to engage all city residents in recycling. However, given Chicago’s low recycling rate compared to other major U.S. cities (Table 1), the city will need to review and improve its current strategies for public outreach about recycling.

To explain Chicago’s low rate, this section closely examines the roles of attitudinal, demographic, and behavioral factors in shaping individuals’ participation in recycling. I will also explore the connection between public-school and community recycling behaviors in order to determine how the city can more effectively target outreach efforts to improve recycling citywide.

Schools as Mechanism for Promoting Pro-Environmental Behavior

The city needs to promote both institutional change and behavior change, especially in the neighborhoods with the lowest recycling rates. Public-school systems are in the unique position of both benefitting financially from recycling and helping to instill recycling habits in the community’s youngest members. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) offers recycling services in all of its schools, but recycling rates vary widely from school to school, indicating that some schools and communities are not supporting recycling efforts as much as others. The

Table 1. Recycling Rates in Select U.S. Cities
(Tweed 2013; City of Minneapolis n.d.)

City	Solid-Waste Recycling Rate
Seattle (2013)	60%
National Average (2013)	34%
Minneapolis (2014)	25%
New York City (2013)	15%
Chicago (2014)	11%

potential benefits of recycling for schools are significant: a 2014 study in Minneapolis shows that raising the rate of recycling in public schools can cut the waste-management budget of a large public-school system in half (Chavez 2014). Chavez’s analysis finds that the district pays less landfill tipping fees associated with bringing waste to a landfill. Though haulers may have to pay recycling tipping fees instead, these are typically much less than landfill tipping fees (Chavez 2014, 54).

A large body of research indicates that schools have the capacity to instill behavioral patterns in students that differ from behavioral norms in surrounding neighborhoods (Chavez 2014). A comparative study of Colorado high schools has shown that schools that make an integrated effort to introduce environmental awareness into school culture see significant increases in pro-environmental behavior at an individual level, as well as significant financial savings from decreased school energy costs (Schelly et al. 2011). The integrated approach succeeds when school leaders focus on environmentalism, the school adds an ecology and environmental-science curriculum, and a teacher spearheads the effort and encourages fellow teachers to participate (Schelly et al. 2011, 329). Vaughn Occupational High School in Chicago followed the integrated approach. Math and science teachers use recycled materials in class projects, which the school’s building engineer supports by storing eco-friendly cleaning supplies in reusable containers (Chicago Public Schools n.d.). CPS could promote pro-environmental behavior change in thousands of Chicago students each year by expanding these practices across the district.

Some scholars argue that promoting recycling behavior in schools is only effective if students’ parents also encourage pro-environmental behaviors at home (Thomas & Sharp 2013). However, studies of in-school behavioral interventions suggest that the positive effects can flow in the opposite direction, back to the home environment. A study of a school-based obesity-prevention program (with curricular and behavioral components) found that the program had a positive impact on children’s behavior, eating, and exercise habits overall, even outside of school

(Hollar et al. 2010). An environmental-education program in Tokyo elementary- and junior-high-school science classes promoted behavior change in children, which lead to increased awareness and behavior change in their families (Hiramatsu et al. 2014). In this first major evaluation of the effects of children's environmental education on families, Hiramatsu et al. found that children's increased awareness of environmental issues, increased knowledge of the effectiveness of pro-environmental practices, and increased practice of pro-environmental behavior (as promoted by the program) led families to report increased levels of interest and pro-environmental behavior. The authors identify two mechanisms for these changes in families' behavior: (1) families hearing from the children directly about the benefits of pro-environmental behavior; and (2) families observing pro-environmental changes in their children's behavior. In particular, the study found "the higher the awareness of the child, the greater the spillover effect on the family as a result of education" (2014, 49). While results of public outreach campaigns on recycling have been mixed, this encouraging new research shows that spreading pro-environmental behavior through existing channels at public schools can be more effective (Sidique, Joshi, & Lupi 2010).

Schools can take many different approaches to integrate environmental awareness into their curricula. A 2014 study found that the most important factor determining pro-environmental behavior is a person's attitude toward nature; environmental knowledge was a secondary factor in influencing behavior. Individuals are more likely to seek out pro-environmental behaviors after achieving "a certain level of appreciation for the environmental system" (Roczen, Kaiser, Bogner, & Wilson 2014, 978), and individuals who read pro-environmental literature (for example, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* or Aldo Leopold's *The Sand County Almanac*) are more likely to engage in more pro-environmental behavior (Mobley, Vagias, & DeWard 2010). Schools could incorporate grade-level pro-environmental texts into existing curricula, though more research is needed to determine how much exposure to this type of literature is necessary to promote behavioral change.

While school leaders and teachers who are personally invested in environmentalism can be successful in promoting pro-environmental behavior in their schools, Schelly et al. argue that inter-school competition over pro-environmental behavior, introduced through a simple mechanism such as a report comparing the performance of schools on environmental and energy-use metrics, "seems effective in motivating behavioral change in a school setting" (2011, 338). With so many possible strategies to promote recycling behavior among students and schools, more research is needed to determine which of these practices would be most effective if expanded across the district.

Demographic and Neighborhood Factors that Effect Environmental Behavior

A neighborhood's rate of participation in recycling programs is typically correlated with race, income, and education level (Pellow 2004). The mechanisms at work here are complex. Environmental attitudes matter for behavior (as will be discussed in the next section), but these attitudes also vary along racial and socioeconomic lines. There is strong historical evidence to suggest that the environmental attitudes of racial and ethnic groups have been shaped by decades of environmental racism, a term used to describe how racial and ethnic groups are disproportionately subject to environmental deterioration and mismanagement (Pellow 2004, 8). Dozens of studies published throughout the 1990s show that racial and ethnic minorities (primarily African Americans, but also Latinos and Native Americans) are significantly more likely to reside near a waste-management facility, near a hazardous waste-disposal site, near an incinerator, and in areas with high levels of pollution, high incidences of lead poisoning, and high levels of illegal garbage dumping (Pellow 2004, 69), which result from racially biased decisions about the siting of these facilities (Pellow 2004, 9). In his 1994 executive order, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," President Clinton stating that "each Federal

agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States” (Clinton 1994), but this did little to alleviate existing social patterns of environmental inequity (Pellow 2004, 71).

Robert Sampson describes pro-environmental attitudes and recycling behavior as “social indicators at the upper end of what many would consider progress,” which are distributed disproportionately across neighborhoods (2012, 46). These indicators are not clustered in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods of racial and ethnic minority populations, who suffer from higher rates of crime and health problems as a result of “concentrated disadvantage” in the neighborhood (Sampson 2012, 46). However, collective efficacy, or “social cohesion combined with shared expectations for social control” in a neighborhood, can help to counteract some of the effects of concentrated disadvantage; some neighborhoods achieve high levels of collective efficacy in spite of their concentrated disadvantage (Sampson 2012, 27). This concept has encouraging implications for achieving recycling progress in neighborhoods that face concentrated disadvantage.

Social capital, a close relative of collective efficacy, has also proven to be an important predictor of environmental behavior. Sampson defines social capital as “a resource embodied in the social ties among persons—networks, norms, and trust”; he argues that the study of social capital is useful as part of neighborhood-level analysis (2012, 38). If social capital can be fostered in a neighborhood of concentrated disadvantage, it can help alleviate some of the neighborhood effects that seem to be related to low rates of recycling (Sampson 2012, 178). Macias and Williams found that individuals who spend social evenings with their neighbors (as compared to family or friends) are much more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior, even when controlling for demographic characteristics and environmental attitudes (2014). The highly variable distribution of recycling participation in Chicago (with lower rates of

recycling in predominantly black and predominantly Latino areas) begs further investigation of the causes of this disparity.

The ways that community members interact with each other are closely linked to the level of social capital in the neighborhood. Nation, Fortney, and Wandersman show that race is correlated with how one is likely to engage with one’s neighbors: people identifying as white are significantly more likely to engage in social activities with neighbors, while people identifying as black are more likely to engage with neighbors by watching each other’s property (2010, 581). If true, this would suggest that black communities, which are more likely to be located in higher-crime neighborhoods, may be less likely to engage in the type of neighborly interaction linked to pro-environmental behavior.

Clarke and Maantay compared recycling rates in New York City communities along four demographic indicators: the percentage of the population lacking a high-school diploma; the percentage living below the poverty level; the percentage of female-headed households with children; and the percentage of minority population. They found each of these four factors to be closely correlated (*r*-squared values > 0.8) with the recycling rate in each of the fifty-nine community areas in New York (2005). Interestingly, Laidley found civic action and advocacy groups related to environmental sustainability occurred in many neighborhoods, without correlation to demographics (2013). This suggests that action, advocacy, and social capital are effective in disadvantaged communities and can help promote social progress in spite of the challenges these communities face.

Effects of Environmental Beliefs and Attitudes on Behavior

Adults with stronger pro-environmental attitudes are likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior, but studies of young children have not found the same relationship. Evans et al. find that parental environmental attitudes and behavior did not effect their children (2007). The data may

have been skewed by self-reporting; it is also possible that the effect of children's environmental attitudes do not manifest until later in life, as posited by Larson Green, and Castleberry (2011). Children with strong pro-environmental attitudes may be constrained by external factors, for example, whether their home has a recycling bin (Larson, Green, & Castleberry 2011). Many studies suggest that the apparent disconnect between pro-environmental attitudes and behavior is related to the logistical and social challenges of engaging in behaviors that are not prioritized in society; removing a logistical barrier to recycling and providing a recycling bin to this type of individual increases engagement in pro-environmental behaviors (Guagnano, Stern, & Dietz 1995).

Behavioral Economics of Recycling

Behavioral and social factors effect an individual's recycling behavior much more than most financial incentives (Mueller 2013). These factors fall into two broad categories: (1) choice architecture, as described by behavioral economists, refers to the various ways that the presentation of an individual's options effects behavior; and (2) factors that pressure individuals to behave in a socially desirable manner (Houde & Todd 2011).

City officials and waste-management providers must ensure that recycling services are as convenient and reliable as the default option, which is to not to recycle at all. Convenience is by far the most important factor, even more so than a financial incentive or penalty (Jenkins et al. 2003; Mueller 2013). A convenient program provides clear and current information and minimizes the effort required by the individual (Wagner 2013). Programs that are unreliable and irregular and that force individuals to seek out alternative services or give up on recycling until services resume are least successful (Martin, Williams, & Clark 2006).

Increased spending on public outreach can increase recycling, depending on how funds are spent (Sidique, Joshi, & Lupi 2010). A review of several different programs shows that the four most effective practices are easing the process; providing information about why

recycling is important (justification for the behavior); addressing cognitive dissonance (encouraging an individual to bring recycling behavior in line with beliefs and attitudes); and asking individuals to commit to practicing recycling informally for a period of time (Osbaldeston & Schott 2012). Programs that place an informational sign on each recycling bin do not change behavior unless combined with supplemental outreach. Funds are perhaps better spent stressing convenience, publicizing the importance of recycling, and encouraging citizens to bring actions in line with existing beliefs (Andrews et al. 2013; Osbaldeston & Schott 2012).

The motivation to act in a socially desirable manner, even without financial benefit, can be a strong incentive for individuals to maintain a new behavior. Houde and Todd show that an effective method of social motivation is to let individuals know whether they are meeting pro-environmental standards (2011). How individuals are motivated by social pressure, however, depends on their perceptions of what socially desirable behavior is. When policymakers and program implementers provide information about the behaviors of one's peers or neighbors, they help shape perceptions and thereby encourage the adoption of behaviors seen as socially desirable (Houde & Todd 2011). When an energy company sent letters to its customers telling them how their usage compared to their neighbors', they found that consumers decreased their energy usage by 2 percent, and that this method was more cost-effective than financial-incentive programs (Alcott 2011). Social pressure from neighbors influences both the probability that an individual will recycle and will take responsibility for the environmental impacts of her/his own behavior (Thaler & Sunstein 2009, 267). These findings suggest that an effective way for the city or a school to promote recycling is to inform individuals about the recycling behavior of fellow citizens or other schools (Thaler & Sunstein 2009, 268).

The argument against social motivations is that such "nudges" toward pro-environmental behavior are "unacceptably intrusive forms of paternalism" (Thaler & Sunstein 2009, 239). To address these concerns, letters can include clear and simple instructions to opt-out of receiving

future mailings. An initial action of not sending letters can be considered a nudge in the opposite direction, by encouraging individuals to not change their behavior. A city or other body choosing to send letters is actively selecting the behavioral nudge that is overall more beneficial for individuals, the city, and the environment (Thaler & Sunstein 2009, 240).

Few financial incentives effectively increase recycling behavior. Imposing a variable pricing scheme for residential waste increases the rate of recycling, but may encourage illegal dumping of garbage (Sidique, Joshi, & Lupi 2010; Fullerton & Miller 2010). Fullerton and Miller advocate levying “advance disposal fees,” or fees that apply at the time of purchase of a waste-generating product, in order to encourage consumers to reevaluate their purchases rather than only consider wastefulness at the end of a product’s life (2010). However, financial-incentive programs or advance disposal fees can be more difficult to implement than a thoughtfully designed publicity or education campaign. By applying principles of choice architecture and pro-social motivations, designers and implementers of recycling programs can expect to see significant increases in the rate of recycling in their programs.

Political and Financial Obstacles to Recycling

Recycling programs, like many programs whose primary benefits cannot be measured in dollars, often suffer at the hands of governments narrowly focused on revenue. If governments were more amenable to employing shadow pricing (the practice of accounting for social and environmental factors when performing cost-benefit analysis), recycling would have clearer benefits for cities, since landfills have high environmental costs (Weinberg, Pellow, & Schnaiberg 2000, 179). There are two primary obstacles to the use of shadow pricing: disputes about how to measure nonmonetary costs and benefits, and the organization of cities into separate departments that manage their own budgets (Weinberg, Pellow, & Schnaiberg 2000, 193–94).

Considering only direct monetary costs and benefits, residential recycling programs are intended to save cities money by diverting waste from landfills and incinerators and bringing in revenue from the sale of recycled materials. The less waste the city sends to landfills, the less it pays in tipping fees, which are one of the costs rolled into the price of a contract with a waste-disposal service (IL EPA n.d.). Whether these savings are enough to compensate the city depends on the difference between the cost of tipping fees and the cost of sending items to a recycling plant. Cities must consider three other factors beyond tipping fees when calculating costs of a recycling program: participation rates (cities with low rates will not have enough recycled materials to make a profit); the quality of the recycled materials (lower-quality material is worth less); and the volatile global market for recycled materials (Stephenson 2006). Cities must also consider start-up costs, tax revenue, and the job creation of the recycling program (DSM Environmental 2010). Since the federal government have not stabilized markets for recycled materials, the economic viability of recycling programs can only be measured in terms of cost savings over landfill costs (Stephenson 2006). When markets for recycled materials stabilize, either through federal policy or through the stabilization of international demand, then revenue from sales can be figured into overall cost and benefits of recycling programs.

Evaluating the benefits of recycling depends in part on accurately measuring waste produced and materials recycled. Accurate measurement (weighing collection trucks and collecting data from each waste hauler) and errors inherent in these processes make it logistically difficult to determine whether a municipality is meeting environmental goals (Chowdhury 2009). Both Chowdhury and DSM Environmental call for improved collection and management of waste-management data in order to more accurately assess progress toward municipal goals and to identify possible areas for improvement (DSM Environmental 2010). Until this happens, cities must be aware that data likely carries some margin of measurement error.

IV. Methodology

To conduct my analysis of recycling trends in Chicago, I used data from Chicago's Blue Cart program, which divides the city into six zones and reports recycling rates by zone. I also used data from Lakeshore Recycling Systems, the vendor for CPS, which consists of school-level data on recycling rates and total waste for 589 of CPS's 658 schools. Both datasets cover the time period January–December 2014. The Blue Cart program was phased in over several years and only expanded to all households at the end of 2013,¹ and CPS data only exists beginning in January 2014. I used census socioeconomic data to compare school recycling performance to neighborhood demographics.

This approach is as an alternative to survey-based research on recycling behavior, which relies on individual self-reporting and is likely to contain biases. A meta-analysis of self-reported data found that nearly half of survey results were effected by the tendency of a respondents to give answers that are more socially desirable than how they really think or behave (Van de Mortel 2008). Environmental-behavior surveys are usually administered by pro-environmental groups, making the risk of bias particularly high. The opportunity to investigate recycling behavior without self-reporting biases is significant and may offer a more accurate view of recycling practices in schools and communities.

Gathering School and Blue Cart Data

To synthesize the school-recycling data with the residential-recycling data, I used a publicly available map of Chicago's six Blue Cart recycling zones to divide all public schools into the six Blue Cart zones. To produce conclusions about the relationship between recycling behavior in schools

1. The Blue Cart pilot included wards in each of the six current recycling zones (City of Chicago 2015). Each zone had a similar exposure to the program, thus differences in rates between zones are not attributable to the timeline of the program's pilot or expansion.

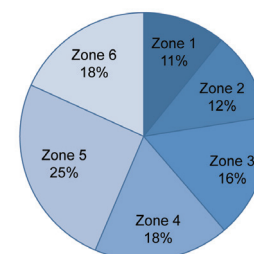


Figure 2. Distribution of Neighborhood Elementary Schools Among City Recycling Zones

and recycling behavior in that school's community, I narrowed my focus to what the CPS calls "neighborhood schools"² rather than "selective schools" that take students from anywhere in the city (Chicago Data Portal n.d.). I studied only elementary schools because of the prevalence of "selective schools" among Chicago's high schools. My research also excludes charter schools, which may also draw students from anywhere in the city.

These limits identified 351 neighborhood elementary schools,³ which I mapped onto the six recycling regions to determine how they are divided among the six Blue Cart zones (Figure 2). I then selected ten schools from each recycling region to investigate in more detail using a random-number generator, for a total sample of sixty schools. The baseline characteristics of the sample of schools closely match those of the district on the whole (Table 2).

I gathered the publicly available data for each of the sixty sampled schools on the total volume of waste (in cubic yards), volume of

2. "Neighborhood schools" draw students from a specified attendance boundary that surrounds the school.

3. There are five schools that appear in the list of neighborhood schools but not in the master list of school locations; these schools are not included in this count because I was unable to confirm their locations and status as neighborhood schools.

Table 2. Baseline Characteristics of Sampled and District Schools (2014–15)

School group	Students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch	Enrollment
Sampled Schools (sample average)	82.19%	612
All CPS Schools (district average)	86.02%	627

contaminated recyclables (in cubic yards), and the net volume of recycled material (total recycled material minus the contaminated portion) for each month in 2014. Approximately one third of schools do not have complete recycling data available for 2014; so I randomly selected other schools to build a sample of sixty schools with complete data.⁴ To allow for enrollment fluctuations in the first few weeks of the school year, I referred to the CPS website for twentieth-day enrollment, which I used to calculate the annual waste generated per student (comparing waste per student prevents biasing results toward larger schools).

To establish the community context of each school I used the U.S. Census Bureau's Geocoder (an online application that translates addresses to census geographies) to identify the census tracts in which the each of the sampled schools is located. While census tracts are only a rough approximation of a school's surrounding community (for example, a school's attendance boundaries may include many surrounding census tracts) this information can provide important characteristics of the community in which a school operates. I collected demographic data⁵

4. It is unclear why some schools have incomplete recycling data: they may have begun participating midyear or perhaps had difficulty measuring waste (Chowdhury 2009).

5. Median income, total population, racial and ethnic minority population, total number of households, number of individuals living below the poverty line, number of female-headed households with children under age eighteen, total number of adults over age eighteen, and number of adults without a high-school diploma.

on each of these census tracts from the 2013 American Community Survey five-year estimates. Finally, I collected data on recycling rates from the Blue Cart program. The city publishes monthly reports, available online, on waste volume and recycling rates in each of the six Blue Cart recycling zones.

Measuring Recycling and Pro-Environmental Behavior

I will use three metrics to analyze to what extent schools and communities are recycling and exhibiting pro-environmental behavior:

1. Recycling rate (sometimes called the diversion rate or the percentage of the total waste stream that is recycled) is calculated by dividing the volume of recycled material by the volume of all waste material. This data is available for both the Blue Cart program and for each school.
2. Waste volume per capita measures the ability of schools to lower overall waste and increase recycled waste. This data is available at the school level only.
3. Recycling contamination rate measures the efficacy of a school's recycling program; schools with a low contamination rate are educating students well about recycling. This data is available at the school level only.

School-level data means that this study can search for correlations between community-level factors and school-recycling performance. Correlations would indicate that schools that recycle at a low rate need to counteract the effects of their surrounding communities to encourage pro-environmental behavior in their students. A lack of correlation between schools and community-level factors would indicate that schools are not subject to neighborhood effects where environmental behaviors

and practices are concerned. This would make a strong case for the expansion of environmental education and other efforts to increase the rates of recycling within their walls (Clarke & Maantay 2005).

In order to determine how school-recycling rates effect residential-recycling rates I will compare school recycling with community recycling for each month in 2014. I will then look for changes in the relationship between the two in each zone in July, when most schools are closed and their total waste levels and recycling rates are close to zero. If the residential-recycling rate drops in July when schools are not in session, this would suggest that schools are having a positive, but not habit-forming, effect on community recycling. If there is no change in the residential recycling rate, this would indicate that schools are not having a significant effect on encouraging students and families to translate recycling habits into their homes.

V. Analysis

Given Chicago's low recycling rate, I consider Chicago's public schools a potential agent of behavior change, as schools have the capacity to

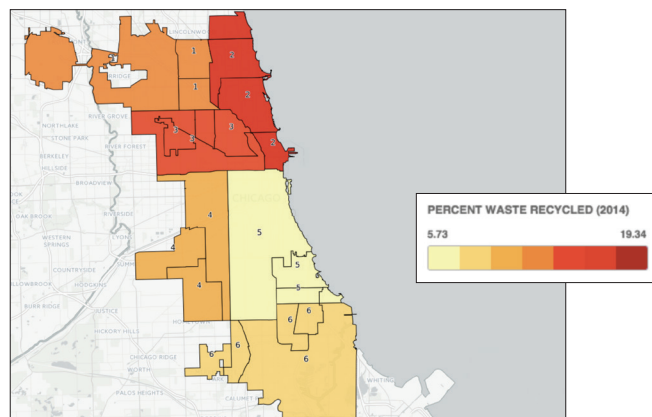


Figure 3. Residential Recycling Rate by City Recycling Zone

teach children about pro-environmental behavior, shape their environmental attitudes, and make recycling a habit that students will bring to their communities. My analysis examines three related questions: whether Chicago's schools engage in the same patterns of recycling behavior that exist in city communities; whether recycling patterns in Chicago schools follow the same demographic trends that the literature predicts for residential recycling; and whether Chicago's schools act as agents of change for community recycling behaviors. I also outline some of the financial implications for CPS of increasing recycling in schools.

Do schools follow the recycling patterns of the surrounding communities?

The recycling rate in Chicago varies widely across the city's recycling zones (Figures 3 and 4). The three zones in the northern half of the city

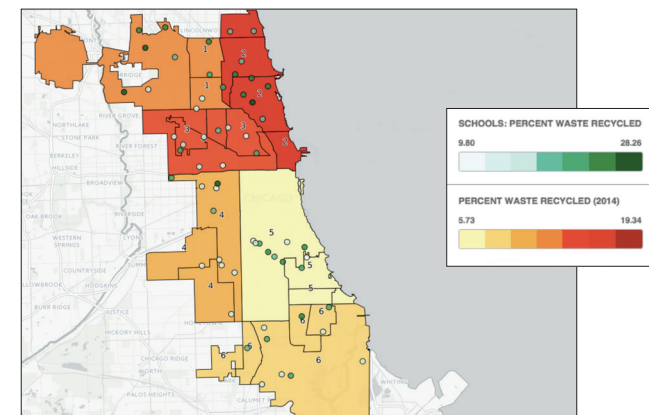


Figure 4. School Recycling Rates and Residential Recycling Rates by City Recycling Zone*

Note: This map represents a sample of sixty randomly selected Chicago public elementary schools.

*See rachelwhaley.github.io for a dynamic version of this map with a zoom feature, separate layers, school details (name, recycling rate, percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, waste volume per student, and median income of the surrounding census tract).

(1–3) recycle at a higher rate than the three zones (4–6) in the southern half of the city (Table 3). The sampled schools in the three northern zones with the highest recycling rates in the Blue Cart program also have the lowest average recycling contamination rates. This suggests that schools in zones 1, 2, and 3 are educating their students better about recycling or implementing the program better; it may also suggest that students arrive with more knowledge about recycling or come from homes with pro-environmental behaviors. In all zones, schools on average recycle at a higher rate than residents who participate in the Blue Cart schools program. The percentage-point variance across zones averages less for schools (5.3) than variance across Blue Cart zones (13.6). These findings indicate that recycling rates in schools are much more consistent across neighborhoods than recycling rates in the Blue Cart program.

To identify how much schools recycle relative to their recycling zones I calculated the difference between each school's recycling rate and the recycling rate of the zone in which each school is located. Most schools (42 of 60) recycle at noticeably higher rate (greater than two percentage points) than the recycling zone in which they are located; the rest of the

Table 3. City Recycling Zones Ordered by Percent Residential Waste Recycled

RESIDENTIAL		SAMPLED SCHOOLS IN ZONE			
Recycling Zone	% Waste Recycled (Blue Cart)	Average % Waste Net Recycled	Average % Recycling Contaminated	Average % Receiving Free/Reduced Price Lunch	Average Waste Volume Per Student (cubic yards)
2	19.3%	18.7%	2.4%	61.9%	2.98
3	12.6%	13.9%	2.2%	93.5%	2.86
1	11.6%	19.7%	2.4%	58.3%	2.55
Average	7.25%	8.72%	1.17%	35.62%	1.4
4	10.3%	15.1%	4.4%	96.8%	3.44
6	9.1%	16.6%	10.1%	85.2%	2.76
5	5.7%	13.4%	13.4%	97.5%	3.10

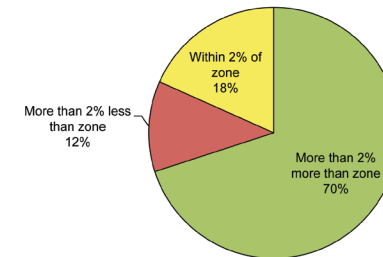


Figure 5. Recycling Rates: Difference Between Sample Schools and City Zone

schools (18 of 60) recycle at a similar or lower rate compared to their recycling zone (Figure 5). All schools in the three lower-performing recycling zones are recycling at a higher rate than their zones, while schools in the two highest-performing recycling zones are recycling at rates closer to or less than the recycling rate of their zones (Figure 6). This indicates that schools are not only capable of outperforming recycling patterns of their surrounding neighborhoods, but that most schools are already doing so.

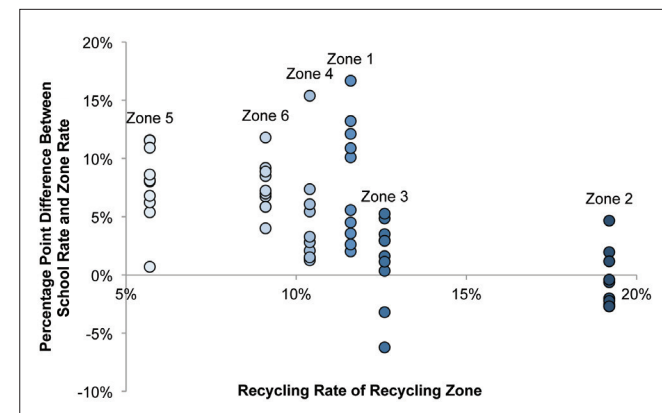


Figure 6. Difference Between School and Residential Recycling Rate By Zone

In summary, schools tend to report better recycling rates than their communities, and recycling trends in schools are not closely tied to residential recycling trends.

Do schools follow the recycling patterns that demographics would predict?

The literature suggests that recycling behavior in communities is correlated with a number of demographic factors: communities of racial and ethnic minorities and lower incomes are likely to recycle at a lower rate than more affluent and white communities. I analyzed the four factors that Clarke and Maantay identify as correlated to a community’s recycling rate: percent of adults below the poverty line, percent of adults without a high-school diploma, percent of female-headed households with children, and percent of racial minorities in the population (2005). I apply their framework to outcomes in schools rather than outcomes in communities. I used census data for the four factors (hereafter, the Clarke-Maantay factors) to look for correlations between the demographics of the surrounding communities and the recycling habits of students. The census tracts of sampled schools vary widely along each of

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables of Sampled School Census Tracts

Variable	Min.	Max.	Range	Mean	Median	S.D.
Adults without H.S. diploma (%)	0.00	65.71	65.71	21.54	18.22	13.37
Persons below poverty level (%)	0.65	100.00	99.35	24.78	21.53	17.30
Female head with children (%)	0.00	90.23	90.23	38.57	30.34	28.40
Minority population (%)	0.00	99.96	99.96	70.07	88.60	32.81
School recycling rates (%)	6.38	28.26	21.88	16.81	16.49	4.01

these factors; tracts range from zero percent to 99.96 percent non-white and zero percent to 100 percent living below poverty level (Table 4). Bearing in mind that the use of census tracts is a rough estimate of a school’s community, this analysis sheds light on which of the Clarke-Maantay factors matter most for recycling in schools.

I generated a linear regression for each of the Clarke-Maantay factors (Table 5). The null hypothesis for these analyses is that the Clarke-Maantay factors do not affect school recycling rates. Each factor is negatively correlated to the school’s recycling rate, though only two of the factors (percent adults without a high-school diploma and percent of minority population) are significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. For each of the factors, the r -squared value is relatively low, meaning that each factor explains relatively little of the overall variation in school-recycling rates. The most significant factor of the four is the percent of minority population of the census tract, which accounts for 11.3 percent of the variance in school-recycling rates. This is consistent with findings from the literature that racial and ethnic minority groups are less likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior for a variety of social and historical reasons (Pellow 2004).

Scatterplots for each of the Clarke-Maantay factors versus school recycling rates indicate the strength of the correlations (Figure 7). For all four factors the slope of the correlation is negative, indicating that a higher level of any of these factors in a community is linked to a lower rate of recycling in the community’s neighborhood elementary school.

Table 5. Linear-Regression Analysis of Clarke-Maantay Factors

Variable associated with diversion rate	r2-value	Intercept	Slope	p-value
Adults without H.S. diploma (%)	0.088	0.187	-0.089	0.022*
Persons below poverty level (%)	0.049	0.181	-0.051	0.090
Female head with children (%)	0.017	0.175	-0.018	0.321
Minority population (%)	0.113	0.197	-0.041	0.009*

* indicates significance at the $p < 0.05$ level

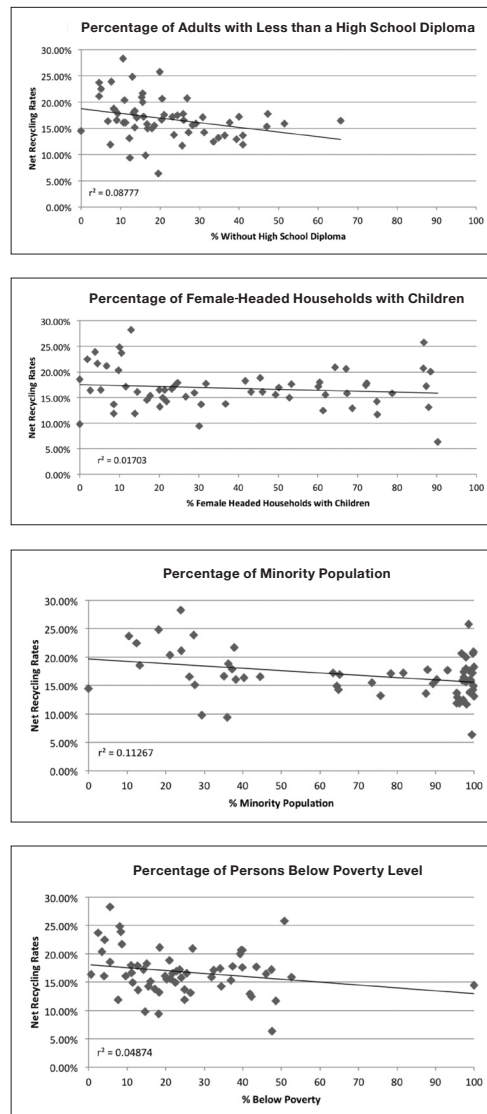


Figure 7. Linear Regressions of Community Clarke-Maantay Factors on School Recycling Rates

These findings suggest that percent minority population and percent adults without a high-school diploma did influence recycling at the school level. Percent population below the poverty level and percent of households with children headed by a single female did not significantly influence school-recycling rates.

Because Blue Cart recycling data is not available at the census-tract level, it is not possible to calculate the effects of the Clarke-Maantay factors on residential recycling. The study by Clarke and Maantay in New York suggests a significant correlation between each of these factors and the residential recycling rate, but a similar analysis for Chicago would require Blue Cart data in smaller geographic units (2005). The lack of a strong correlations with these factors in the sampled public schools leads me to conclude that demographics do not influence school recycling in the same ways as demographics influences residential recycling.

Some schools in the sample recycle at much higher rates than others. To explore this differences we can compare school-level characteristics. The ten sample schools with the highest recycling rates have a higher-average median income, a lower average percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunch, and lower average waste per capita than the ten schools with the lowest recycling rates in the sample (Table 6). Schools that recycle more are producing less waste (trash and recycling

Table 6. Top-Ten and Bottom-Ten Schools from Sample by Recycling-Rate Characteristics

School Group	Average % Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch	Average Median Income of Census Tract of Schools	Average Waste Volume Per Student	Average % Waste Net Recycled
Top-10 Schools by Recycling Rate	51.54	56,096	2.62	23.33
Bottom-10 Schools by Recycling Rate	91.93	47,369	3.18	11.27

combined) overall, suggesting the presence of an overall pro-environmental attitude at these schools.

Another important aspect of pro-environmental behavior is minimizing the volume of waste overall. Pellow suggests that the volume of waste in a community is positively correlated with the community's income level (Pellow 2004). I analyzed the income level of each school's census tract alongside the waste volume per student at each school to determine whether there is a correlation between the school's volume of waste and the community's income level. There is a loosely negative correlation (r -squared value = 0.09) between the median income of a school's census tract and the school's annual waste per student (Figure 8). Two possible explanations for the loose negative correlation are: (1) more affluent schools exhibit more pro-environmental behavior and thereby produce less waste overall; or (2) some schools in lower-income neighborhoods produce higher waste due to factors correlated with location in a lower-income area; for example, disposable cafeteria trays or more disposable goods, such as fast-food packaging. While the negative correlation found here conflicts with Pellow's suggestion that higher-income schools produce more waste overall, and may be due to factors beyond low-income schools'

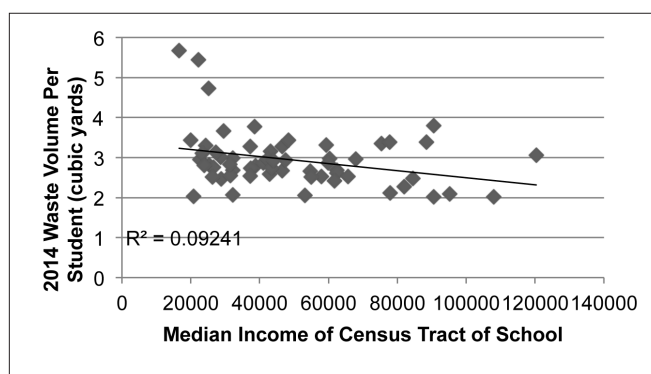


Figure 8. School Waste by Median Income of School Census Tract

control, it remains an important metric for determining a school's overall adoption of pro-environmental behavior.

Are schools effecting recycling behavior in the community?

As a means to explore whether schools are influencing the recycling rate in the surrounding communities, I compared the summer residential-recycling rate with the school-year residential-recycling rate in each Blue Cart zone to determine whether the absence of reinforcement in school effects community participation. The school year extends into mid-June and begins in August, so I have used data only from the month of July. The monthly Blue Cart recycling rate for each zone in 2014 indicates that the summer recycling rate is among the lowest for each zone (Figure 9, grey highlight). I compare the July recycling rate for each Blue Cart zone with the average rate for the rest of the year (Figure 10). In every zone, the community's recycling rate is slightly lower in July than the average for January through June and August through December. These findings suggest that schools have an effect on student (and therefore community) recycling behaviors during the school year, but that some other factor

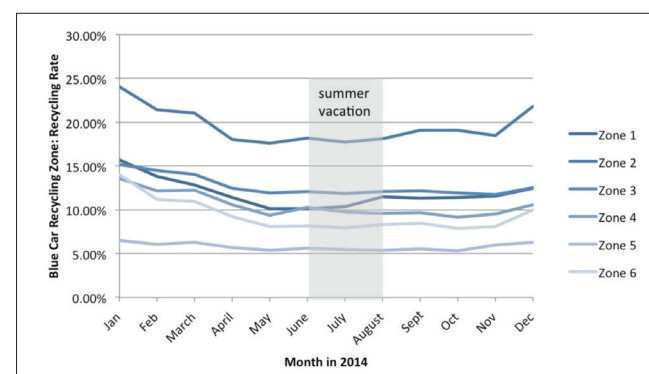


Figure 9. Blue Cart Residential Recycling by Zone by Month in 2014

affects the summer recycling rate. It is possible that recycling fades in the summer when students' recycling habits are not being reinforced at school, that students use different kinds of products in the summer, which may not be recyclable, or that students who are most likely to recycle are also the most likely to travel during the summer.

Costs savings of recycling for the Chicago Public Schools

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency sets the statewide municipal landfill tipping fee at \$1.051 per cubic yard for landfills receiving more than 150,000 cubic yards of waste annually (IL EPA n.d.). Since Lakeshore Recycling Systems, CPS's waste services provider, does not operate its own landfill, it is subject to these fees, which are typically passed on to the customer in the contract. For the sixty schools sampled for this analysis, the average volume of total waste in 2014 was 1,761.9 cubic yards. Less the average volume of recycling among these schools (287.2 cubic yards), each of the sampled schools sent an average of 1,474.7 cubic yards of waste to landfills in 2014. Assuming this average holds for all 658 CPS schools, CPS schools sent approximately 970,353

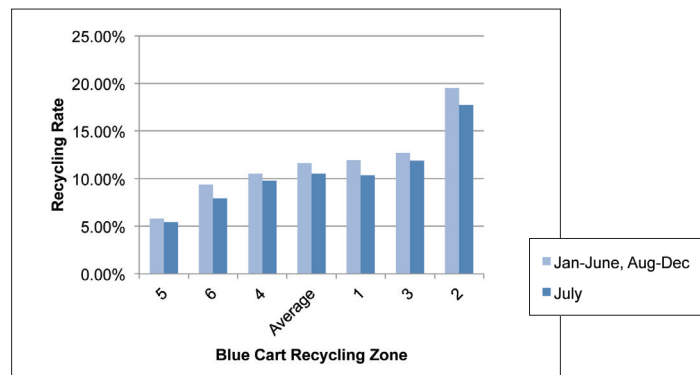


Figure 10. Recycling Rate in July Compared to Other Months by Recycling Region

cubic yards of waste to landfills in 2014. In tipping fees alone, this cost CPS \$1,019,841. The five-year contract between CPS and Lakeshore Recycling Systems stipulates that CPS will pay Lakeshore “approximately \$3,784,600 annually, total cost not to exceed \$18,923,000 for the five year term” for waste and recycling disposal services; based on my calculations, slightly more than one quarter of the annual contract amount covered landfill tipping fees in 2014 (Chicago Board of Education 2013). If CPS is able to increase recycling (and send less waste to landfills), the district would likely be able to negotiate a more advantageous contract for waste services, as the hauler would pay less in landfill tipping fees. This potential cost savings provides financial motivation for CPS to work toward increasing recycling in its schools.

VI. Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations outline methods for increasing the rate of residential recycling in Chicago, based on the results of my analysis and findings from the literature. The Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) will need to work with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Lakeshore Recycling Systems to implement these recommendations. However, plans to implement policies jointly often fail due to unclear definitions of roles (Pressman & Wildavsky 1984). In anticipation of this complication, I recommend that the DSS lead the implementation of the following recommendations, collaborating with Lakeshore Recycling Systems and the CPS as needed. The DSS is responsible for Chicago's residential-recycling rate; this rate that should be used to assess the effectiveness of each of the following methods over time.

Recommendation #1:

Focus on increasing recycling in public schools.

This analysis shows that schools can improve residential-recycling rates for three reasons: school demographics do not effect school-recycling rates

in the same way that community-demographic factors effect residential-recycling rates; most schools (and especially schools in communities with low recycling rates) already outperform their communities; and schools already increase community-recycling rates. Focusing on outreach to schools will be more efficient than outreach to each residence citywide, or even to a subset of residences, as schools already have existing channels for communicating with students and families and implementing programs. In addition, as more students learn and absorb these practices through expanded efforts by schools, they will be more empowered to act as agents of pro-environmental change in their communities. The next three recommendations suggest methods for increasing rates of recycling in schools.

Recommendation #2:
Use comparative feedback and competition
to motivate schools.

Behavioral economics shows that individuals will change their behavior when they know how their peers are behaving (Schelly et al. 2011; Thaler & Sunstein 2009). Lakeshore Recycling Systems does provide online reports of each school's recycling habits at www.cpsrecycles.com, but only reports each individual school's information over time. A comprehensive public website that allows schools to compare themselves to other schools, the district, and district goals, combined with a monthly e-mail newsletter to schools highlighting high-performing schools and suggesting activities to engage students in recycling, would, as suggested by the literature, increase recycling rates. Lakeshore already collects the data so the additional costs of a website and e-newsletter would be minimal, involving a side project for an existing employee of Lakeshore or a team of interns.

Recommendation #3:
Promote the integration of pro-environmental
education into curricula.

The literature suggests a significant correlation between attitudes toward nature and behavior. School should prioritize the integration of ecology (and specifically individual and social interconnection with nature) into the existing curricula in environmental education and science, as well as English, social studies, or elective courses (Schelly et al. 2011; Chavez 2014; Mobley, Vagias, & DeWard 2010). These studies do not specify how much environmental education is necessary to encourage pro-environmental behavior in students; in the absence of this information, if we presume a continuous relationship between the amount of environmental education and engagement in pro-environmental behavior, schools could choose to start small. For example, English teachers could assign environmentalist texts for a few reading exercises, or a science teacher could assign a laboratory exercise on ecology or environmental sustainability. As an extra step, if CPS collected information from schools and teachers who chose to increase the amount of environmental education in their curricula, CPS would be able to analyze this data over time to identify specific curriculum-integration practices.

This method will likely require professional development for teachers. Given that interested teachers are likely to have some background knowledge in the subject, a session would take a half day or one full day. The Illinois State Board of Education requires that teachers accrue 120 hours of professional development every five years, with considerable flexibility for the creation of professional-development sessions; thus the overhead for offering these sessions is low (ISBE 2015). If CPS were already working closely with Streets and Sanitation, the DSS could support this professional development by providing educational materials on recycling. Additionally, CPS and the DSS could collaborate with a pro-environmental nonprofit to offer the sessions, since ISBE allows a variety of providers to offer professional development (ISBE 2015). These three

actors would need to coordinate their efforts in order to implement these sessions: CPS would need to approve the nonprofit organization to provide the sessions, and the DSS would need to collaborate with the nonprofit to help design the curriculum.

Recommendation #4:

Make recycling easier and more convenient in schools.

Schools would benefit from making recycling as convenient as possible for students, teachers, and staff (Jenkins et al. 2003; Mueller 2013; Wagner 2013). Lakeshore Recycling Systems and the DSS could support schools by working with school building engineers to ensure that every trash bin is paired with a recycling bin and posting clear signage on every bin. Schools could work to enlist student volunteers to make presentations at school assemblies about the importance of recycling, how to separate recyclables from trash, and the importance of translating pro-environmental attitudes into behavior, all factors that increase recycling behavior (Osbaldiston & Schott 2012).

If resource limitations make it infeasible to implement these changes in all schools, CPS and the DSS should work together to identify a group of target schools. There are many possible strategies for identifying this group. One method would be to focus on schools located in Blue Cart zones four, five, and six, which have the lowest average recycling rates. Another possible method would be to compile the recycling data from all of the schools and rank schools by three criteria: recycling rate, recycling contamination rate, and waste volume per student. A group of target schools could then be selected from the schools that rank near the bottom for each of these criteria.

VII. Conclusion

This study finds that promoting recycling in schools is an effective way to increase recycling rates in Chicago communities. While this analysis has identified comparative feedback, curriculum integration, and increased convenience as effective methods of increasing recycling rates in schools and thus in communities, more research is needed on what specific implementations of these methods are most effective. For example, future research is needed to determine whether comparative feedback is more effective in changing behavior when made available online or when announced at school assemblies and whether particular methods of curriculum integration are more effective than others. In working with the DSS to implement these recommendations, CPS has the opportunity to pilot different methods in different groups of schools, compare the results, and implement the best methods across the district.

The 2013 contract between CPS and Lakeshore Recycling Systems that made school-level data on recycling rates publicly available was a positive policy step in itself, but Lakeshore and CPS need to take additional steps to make this data more easily accessible and to promote more data-driven improvements in recycling practices. This should be part of the growing movement toward open civic data and civic technology. “The use of technology to make cities more transparent and better coordinated” promotes public sharing of data on civic issues (like recycling) by researchers and curious citizens and holds governing bodies and public institutions more accountable for their performance (Deng 2014). Online recycling data is available for the city by recycling zones and for individual schools, but is posted in a series of separate files for each school, making it tedious to access data for multiple schools (Sunlight Foundation 2014). Aggregated data would allow researchers and citizens to analyze trends more easily and draw useful conclusions from the data about other possible methods of improving recycling performance.

The DSS must also be careful not to overburden schools in the process of implementing these recommendations. The notion of the school as

an effective agent for community change is not new, but the implications of this idea for policy are endless; therefore, when promoting pro-environmental behavior in schools, the DSS should shoulder most of the responsibility for implementation of these recommendations. In general, local governments and school districts must exercise restraint in considering how to enlist schools in the implementation of social-change programs, given the limited resources of schools. However, schools are an extremely powerful channel for promoting pro-environmental behaviors and ideas to thousands of children. If the promotion of these behaviors can be implemented by the DSS without imposing significant burdens on schools, teachers, and staff, then other city governments may also benefit from working with their school systems to implement these recommendations.

Additionally, it is important to consider the circumstances of Chicago's public schools. In 2014, the year from which data for this study was drawn, Chicago had just closed dozens of neighborhood elementary schools. Even the most well-intentioned education plans and programs suffer when implemented in the face of turnover and chaos, and the pro-environmental programming laid out in the recommendations of this study is no exception. This perhaps puts special emphasis on the DSS and other city agencies to support implementation of these initiatives, to minimize distraction for CPS teachers and leaders focused on more immediately pressing issues in the school system.

This study addresses two previously unanswered questions about municipal recycling policy: how recycling in public schools compares with residential recycling in neighborhoods in Chicago, and whether schools are able to effect pro-environmental behavior change in their communities. By evaluating data on recycling in schools and communities, this analysis finds that public schools follow general neighborhood trends in recycling, with schools consistently outperforming their communities in recycling. Since the literature suggests that students who learn a

particular behavior in school are likely to spread that behavior to their families and neighborhoods, I compared residential recycling rates during the summer with residential recycling rates during the school year. This analysis found consistently lower residential recycling rates during the summer, providing suggestive evidence that schools are successfully instilling pro-environmental behavior change in students, and that students are spreading this behavior to their families and others in their neighborhoods during the school year.

In order to apply these findings toward improving recycling in Chicago, I recommend that the city, through its Department of Streets and Sanitation, focus its recycling outreach efforts on public schools. I recommend three approaches for effectively promoting recycling in schools, inspired by research in behavioral economics. First, I recommend motivating schools to promote recycling by providing schools with comparative feedback on their recycling rate and encouraging friendly competition for high recycling rates in schools. Second, I recommend that schools work to integrate pro-environmental education into existing curricula, in order to teach students that pro-environmental behavior is socially desirable. Finally, I recommend that the DSS work with Lakeshore Recycling Systems to make recycling more convenient in schools, since the literature shows that convenience increases recycling rates. Further research on the relative effectiveness of each of these methods is needed before selecting a single CPS-wide approach or combination of approaches. However, given the availability of data on recycling in Chicago, the success of each of these methods can be quantitatively evaluated, and the method or methods deemed most effective can be shared with other cities seeking to improve their recycling rates.

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