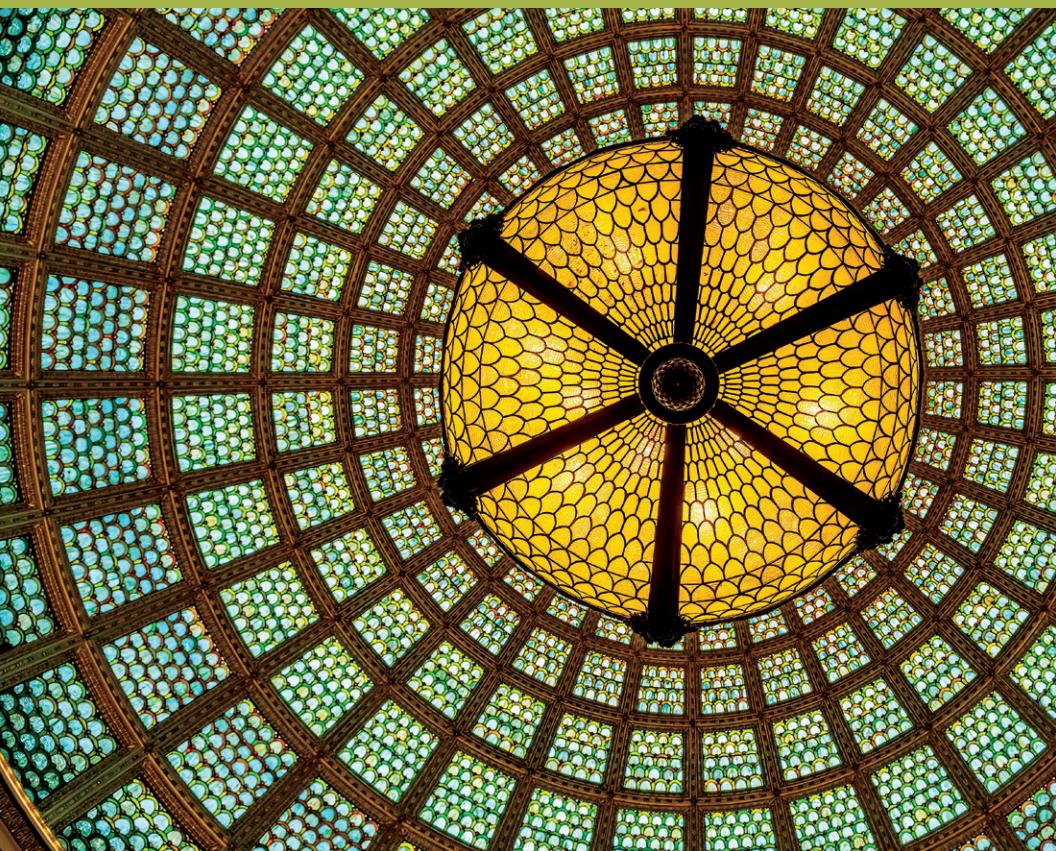


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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

# Chicago Studies



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## 2019

**Kaesha Freyaldenhoven**  
**Olivia Jia**  
**Eleanor Khirallah**  
**Breck Radulovic**  
**Nora Sullivan**

MANAGING EDITOR

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# Chicago Studies 2019

- 1 Preface
- 6 Acknowledgments
- 10 *Rush More*  
The Monumental Mural, A Study  
of Contemporary Chicago Public Art  
Kaesha Freyaldenhoven
- 44 Boundary Maintenance  
and the Build Environment  
Chicago's Chinatown  
Olivia Jia
- 82 Presumed Innocent, Yet Purged  
from the Rolls  
Navigating Welfare Programs upon Release  
from Cook County Jail  
Eleanor Sara Josephine Khirallah
- 154 Chicago at the End of Time  
Millennial Imaginings in the World's Fair City  
Breck Radulovic
- 204 Repurposed or Unpurposed?  
The Evolution of Chicago Public School  
Buildings Closed in 2013  
Nora D. Sullivan

# Preface



A

As we prepare this volume for publication, the University and the city look optimistically to the full reopening of schools, restaurants, parks, theaters, sports venues, and many other public spaces for gathering in Chicago. These things will signal the reemergence of our public life, and they are integral to the local and collective identity of the city. As we insist in the Chicago Studies program, living in this city is a foundational part of student experience in the College, an essential partner in student intellectual and civic development.

The pandemic has raised fascinating challenges for the program since March 2020. First there was Chicago Studies without Chicago, as the physical campus and the city itself emptied of the most routine manifestations of activity. Even as parts of social life filled, not least through engagement in protests and the partial reopening of campus in autumn, we have inhabited a much quieter cityscape, lacking many of the personal exchanges between College and city that enrich a typical year. This has been Chicago Studies in a subdued, largely virtual Chicago, memorable for a thousand virtues and anxieties, but challenging for courses, events, research, and engagements that prioritize a lived urban reality and immersion.

It is therefore encouraging to note that the investment of undergraduates in Chicago has been undiminished, as are the rewards in creativity. The 2020 Chicago Studies Research Prize Colloquium drew high-quality submissions from fifteen disciplines in the College, inviting six students to present their imaginative theses to a Zoom audience of faculty, friends, and family on May 26. We were delighted to award the prize to Alexandra Price, AB'20 (History), for her richly textured essay, “Finding Yiddishland in America: Chicago’s Yiddish-Language Press and the Challenges of Americanization, 1918–1932,” and look forward to sharing it with a wider readership in the next *Annual*. In the current academic year, the questions, stories, and geography of Chicago continue to attract student interest in the form of BA thesis topics and faculty-mentored research projects, even under very limited conditions for fieldwork and archival research. Meanwhile, programs of study have generated new place-based courses that interweave coursework and local engagement in dynamic ways, even without the tools of excursion and first-hand observation. The spring 2021 quarter will feature Chicago Studies “course bundles” dedicated to significant global topics such as the role of water in urban life, democratic practice, and sustainable (re)development.

Together with these topical markers of interest, Chicago Studies has adapted to the needs of the day with virtual resources on the application Vamonde, which supports a menu of self-guided tours that encourage students and the public to explore the city individually. The ability to access the expertise of staff and faculty about neighborhoods, historical themes, and natural areas at one’s own pace and leisure—or remotely—has sustained the curiosity of explorers in the last year and will be an asset even when our public spaces are again crowded. You can find a growing list of tours organized by Dean John W. Boyer and Professor J. Mark Hansen, among others, at <https://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/tours>.

Yet perhaps the most compelling question is not whether the symbioses

of 2019 will hold, but how the pandemic has changed Chicago and what opportunities will greet our students in the future. Readers of a vast number of media sources, from *Crain’s Chicago Business* to the *New Republic* and the *Wall Street Journal*, not to mention Zillow and Redfin, have recognized a narrative of urban decline that has grown fashionable in the last year. The isolation and health concerns of the pandemic have converged to make close-knit social life in America’s densest cities far less attractive than before. Combine this with ultra-low interest rates, high local taxes, options for remote work, and political polarization, among other factors, and we see a striking outflow, whether toward leafy suburbs or younger, warmer, and less expensive metropolitan areas. In this story, Chicago suffers only somewhat less than San Francisco, New York, and Boston from a post-COVID appreciation for space, distance, and autonomy.

In 2021, Chicago Studies has convened a vigorous campus-wide discussion about the future of the city, taking the story of decline as a useful, if overwrought, idea for discussion with experts from our faculty and local practitioners. The Chicago Futures Project commenced in the winter and continues in spring, with a program of distinguished lectures and conversations that consider the trends and potential outcomes for the city in many areas, from housing, health care, and public administration to justice and equity to restaurant, music, and theater culture. Students are contributing to this conceptualization through the Chicago Futures Design Challenge, which invites teams of students to articulate a vision of Chicago in 2050 in one specific domain of their choice. The response to this call has been strong and imaginative. It attests to our students’ sharp observations and concern for the future and health of our city.

It has been a joy to work with the five contributors to the current volume of the *Annual*, who all participated in the 2019 Chicago Studies Undergraduate Research Colloquium and who labored with the tools of their academic majors to bring vital aspects of Chicago’s past and present to public view.

Kaesha Freyaldenhoven, AB'19 (Art History) /AM'19 (Humanities), offers a deep reading of the motives behind the commission, design, and production of Kerry James Marshall's mural *Rush More*, located on the western façade of the Chicago Cultural Center. Intended to showcase the contributions of women to Chicago culture, the mural captures a multiplicity of meanings and experiences, and shows how public art can be instrumentalized for political, commercial, and representational purposes.

Olivia Jia, recipient of the Chicago Studies 2019 Research Prize, explores the relationships between the built environment of Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood and the overlapping, at times competing constructions of identity that have emerged there. Using sources like cognitive maps and ethnographies, Jia, AB'19 (Environmental and Urban Studies/Sociology), discovers how structures with a traditionally Eastern appearance help to identify and demarcate the neighborhood as "Chinese" for residents, even as contemporary designs support more open-ended visions of community.

Eleanor Khirallah, AB'19 (Public Policy Studies), brings our focus westward, to the Cook County Jail and the fates of hundreds of individuals who are discharged each year without trial. Though not convicted, Khirallah argues, these individuals face significant barriers to successful reentry, particularly as regards access to welfare programs like Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI. A formidable evidentiary basis informs Khirallah's recommendations to reduce these barriers, both formal and informal.

Eschatological understandings of Chicago's future from the 1893 World's Fair—a counterpoint to the anxiety of 2020—support an engaging story of urban religious culture in the contribution from Breck Radulovic, AB'19 (Religious Studies/History). This study of Chicago's liberal Protestants, taking its cues from W. T. Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago!*, considers the popular use of millennial language and symbols to make sense of Chicago's uneven moral and social development at the end of the nineteenth century.

The fate of forty-four school buildings closed by Rahm Emanuel's administration in 2013 centers our final contribution from Nora Sullivan, AB'19 (Comparative Human Development). For Sullivan, it is not the controversial process of the closings that needs explaining but rather the subsequent, halting efforts to repurpose the buildings in ways that will continue to serve their communities. Finding that the majority had not been repurposed as of spring 2019, she identifies several factors that have determined the success of these ventures and makes recommendations to improve the process.

I hope that this volume of the *Annual* finds you in good health and reminded of all that our graduates contribute to the life and knowledge of our city. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the support of James Dahl Cooper, AB'76 (Political Science), in bringing this volume to print and ensuring that the work of Chicago Studies has continued with vigor throughout a challenging year.

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

# Acknowledgments



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**ELEANOR KHIRALLAH** | I would like to first thank my family and friends for consistently listening to me vent about my frustrations with the criminal legal system and how to navigate any part of it, let alone obtaining public assistance. My parents in particular have always been so incredibly supportive, so thank you! I would also like to thank Instructional Professor Chad Broughton and Andrew Hammond, formerly a senior lecturer at the university, for always being available to help me with both the research and content of my thesis. Lastly, thanks to every person I interviewed for taking the time to talk to me and teach me about their incredibly important work. I am currently in my first year at the University of Minnesota Law School, and I intend to go into public defense. I hope to use my newfound on-the-ground understanding of the criminal legal system to better understand my clients with my future legal work.

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# Rush More: The Monumental Mural



## A Study of Contemporary Chicago Public Art

KAESHA FREYALDENHOVEN, AB'19

### Introduction

Three blocks from Lake Michigan, two blocks from the Chicago Athletic Association, and one block from Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate* in Millennium Park is Kerry James Marshall's mural: *Rush More* (see fig. 1). Located on the western façade of the Chicago Cultural Center, the 100-foot-high by 132-foot-wide work hides between service entrances and garages, only accessible from Garland Court.<sup>1</sup> Illuminating the concrete alleyway, the mural depicts a Chicago park-scape of five trees with the faces of twenty women who shaped the city's cultural heritage carved into the trees' trunks.

*Rush More* was conceived in 2017 as a joint effort between Murals of Acceptance (MoA) and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE).<sup>2</sup> MoA is a nonprofit organization that seeks to encourage social tolerance through art; DCASE is a branch of city government

1. Miriam Di Nunzio, "Kerry James Marshall to Create Massive Mural for Cultural Center," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sept. 21, 2017.

2. Ibid.

Left: Nancy Stone/*Chicago Tribune*/TCA



**Figure 1:** Kerry James Marshall, *Rush More*, 2017, Collection of the City of Chicago, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (Claire Voon for Hyperallergic)

that aims to enrich artistic and cultural vitality in Chicago.<sup>3</sup> These entities recruited Marshall, secured a location, supervised execution, and publicized the finished mural.

In this thesis, I examine the genesis of *Rush More* by considering planning designs, paintings and murals, legal contracts, policy briefs, and newspaper articles. I argue that *Rush More* is an idealistic and aesthetic response to deep racial and social divisions. This response, put forth by MoA and the City of Chicago, is not only inadequate to address the city's problems but also ignores the multiplicity of meanings within the artwork. The creation of the *Rush More* mural, therefore, is a story about the instrumentalization of art for political, economic, and representational purposes.

3. "Who We Are," Murals of Acceptance, accessed Apr. 8, 2019, [www.murals-ofacceptance.org/whowear](http://www.murals-ofacceptance.org/whowear); "Cultural Affairs and Special Events," City of Chicago, accessed Apr. 8, 2019, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca.html).

Chicago, like many postindustrial urban cities, is shaped by social and institutional racism. Many contemporary racial problems are rooted in discriminatory policies that began in the early to mid-twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> During the Great Migration, African Americans left the rural South for industrial employment in the urban North, including in Chicago.<sup>5</sup> Mexicans, Asians, and other ethnic groups also flocked to Chicago.<sup>6</sup> In response to the influx of new residents, white communities devised a variety of barriers to intimidate new arrivals and to forestall integration. The Supreme Court ruling against racially restrictive covenants (*Shelley v. Kraemer*, 1948) and the Federal Fair Housing Act (1968) formally outlawed housing discrimination, but social and economic forms of racism persisted.<sup>7</sup> Disparities of income, life expectancy, and treatment by police and the courts demonstrate that institutional racism remains embedded in Chicago civic life.<sup>8</sup>

4. Kasey Henricks et al., *A Tale of Three Cities: The State of Racial Justice in Chicago Report* (Chicago: Institute for Race and Public Policy, 2017), 14.

5. James Grossman, "The Great Migration," in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, ed. James R. Grossman, Ann Durkin Keating, and Janice L. Reiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 363–64.

6. Ibid. See especially entries on Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, and European Catholic migrations.

7. Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, *A City Fragmented: How Race, Power, and Aldermanic Prerogative Shape Chicago's Neighborhoods* (Chicago: Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance and Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, 2018), 16.

8. Henricks et al., *A Tale of Three Cities*, 8.

## The Organizer, the Artist, and the City

It is within Chicago's urban context that the main actors of my story—Kevin McCarthy of Murals of Acceptance, the artist Kerry James Marshall, and the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events—worked and came together in common cause.

### The Organizer: Kevin McCarthy

Kevin McCarthy's public biography is sparse and self-generated. He describes himself as a “singer, bassist, guitarist, and DJ. With his roots in the Chicago [musical] underground.”<sup>9</sup> His disjointed education (five schools over fourteen years) was divided between pursuing artistic passions (music and film) and gaining practical skills (web design and computer programming).<sup>10</sup> He has held a variety of day jobs while performing music in Chicago, Nashville, and Los Angeles.<sup>11</sup>

Self-described as a “shark,” he claims: “I want to rule the world to improve it.... I will fight for causes I believe in.”<sup>12</sup> It was with this spirit that he grappled with the death of his best friend, Alexis Arquette.

9. Kevin McCarthy, “About,” KevinJK DJ Fraud, Apr. 2013, [jkfraud.wordpress.com](http://jkfraud.wordpress.com).

10. Kevin McCarthy, “Profile,” LinkedIn, n.d., accessed Dec. 11, 2020, [www.linkedin.com/in/kevinjohnmccarthy123](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kevinjohnmccarthy123). McCarthy attended Illinois State University, Heartland Community College, Normal, Illinois, and Columbia College, Chicago, between 2001 and 2004. He later attended Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills, Illinois, and Oakton Community College, Des Plaines, Illinois, between 2011 and 2015. He appears not to have received a degree.

11. Ibid.; McKayla Reece (@McKaylaReece), “Meet the McKayla Reece Band,” Facebook, Nov. 1, 2017, [www.facebook.com/McKaylaReece/posts/1597937883-603064](https://www.facebook.com/McKaylaReece/posts/1597937883-603064).

12. Kevin McCarthy, “Profile.”

Arquette was a transgender actress and activist who brought increased visibility to the transgender community; she died on September 11, 2016, at the age of forty-seven.<sup>13</sup> Inspired by Arquette’s activism through art, McCarthy determined to use art to catalyze social tolerance.<sup>14</sup> He established Murals of Acceptance in 2017 “to create public art that portrays the message of diversity and acceptance of all people.”<sup>15</sup> It was his first and, to date, only nonprofit venture.

Murals of Acceptance was the outcome of grief over the untimely death of a beloved friend, a chance visit to the Kerry James Marshall retrospective, connections, and luck. In late September 2016, less than two weeks after the death of Patricia’s younger sister, McCarthy, Patricia Arquette and her partner, the artist Eric White, attended EXPO Chicago, an international exposition of contemporary art.<sup>16</sup> After viewing White’s work at the exposition, McCarthy says that they “went to the [Museum of Contemporary Art] together to see Kerry’s exhibit, where we cried partially because of his work and partially because we missed Lex so much and wished she was there.” For Patricia, “standing in those galleries and surrounded by the genius of Kerry James Marshall was overwhelming,” while McCarthy viewed Marshall as a “a civil rights leader through his art,” similar to his activist friend Alexis.<sup>17</sup> He decided

13. Matthew Barbato, dir., *Alexis Arquette: She’s My Brother* (London: Tigerlily Productions, 2007); Libby Hill, “Alexis Arquette, Transgender Activist and Actress, Dies at 47,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 11, 2016.

14. “Who We Are,” Murals of Acceptance.

15. Roy Moraly, “Murals of Acceptance 2017 IRS Form 990: Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax,” Department of the Treasury, Nov. 12, 2018, [www.open990.org/org/822579505/murals-of-acceptance](https://www.open990.org/org/822579505/murals-of-acceptance).

16. Eric White, “CV,” Eric White Studio, n.d., accessed Dec. 20, 2020, [ewhite.com/cvcv](http://ewhite.com/cvcv); “EXPO Chicago 2016,” UChicago Arts, n.d., accessed Dec. 10, 2020, [arts.uchicago.edu/expo-chicago/expo-chicago-2016](https://arts.uchicago.edu/expo-chicago/expo-chicago-2016).

17. “Who We Are,” Murals of Acceptance.



**Figure 2:** Chicago Cultural Center's North and West Facades, 2017 (WTTW)

to ask Marshall to create a public mural that “brings fine art to the streets and promotes acceptance to all people.”<sup>18</sup>

McCarthy contacted Nathan Mason, the city’s curator of exhibits and public art, who said that “we might have a wall for you.”<sup>19</sup> In a stroke of luck, McCarthy’s plan for a public mural coincided with the city’s plan to designate 2017 as a year of public art.<sup>20</sup> Mason knew Marshall—he had included Marshall’s painting, *Knowledge and Wonder*, in a 2014 exhibit at the Chicago Cultural Center—and agreed to contact him.<sup>21</sup>

18. Steve Johnson, “Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall Honors Chicago Women of Culture,” *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 3, 2017.

19. Ibid.

20. Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), “Vision and Background,” in *Chicago’s Public Art Plan* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 2017), 21.

21. Jyoti Srivastava, “2014 Temporary Exhibition: 25 Years of Public Art, Part II,” Public Art in Chicago, Mar. 24, 2014, [www.publicartinchicago.com/2014-temporary-exhibition-35-years-of-public-art-at-chicago-cultural-center-2/](http://www.publicartinchicago.com/2014-temporary-exhibition-35-years-of-public-art-at-chicago-cultural-center-2/); “Who We Are,” Murals of Acceptance.

Perhaps struck by McCarthy’s sincerity, Marshall agreed, for a fee of one dollar, to design the mural: “In a moment of weakness, I managed to be corralled into spending a lot of time I really didn’t have designing.”<sup>22</sup> The “wall” was the west façade of the Cultural Center (see fig. 2).

McCarthy quickly raised \$207,000 to cover the mural’s production costs through his connections to the Arquette family.<sup>23</sup> Patricia Arquette, her brother David Arquette, and Marc and Lynne Benioff financed the project.<sup>24</sup> Work on the mural began on September 21, 2017, and was finished on December 2, 2017.<sup>25</sup>

### The Artist: Kerry James Marshall

Kerry James Marshall is an inspired chronicler of the African American experience. For Marshall, the civil rights movement is central to his art: “You can’t be born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1955, and grow up in South Central [Los Angeles] near the Black Panther headquarters, and

22. Johnson, “Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall.”

23. “[Murals of Acceptance] desires to provide a grant in an amount not to exceed \$187,000.00 ... to the City for a mural by Kerry James Marshall installed on the Chicago Cultural Center.” See Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Grant Agreement between the City of Chicago and Murals of Acceptance, Dec. 1, 2017, 1, contract in the author’s possession, hereafter, MOA Agreement; the remaining \$20,000 covered MOA administrative expenses, see Moraly, “Murals of Acceptance 2017 IRS Form 990”

24. Johnson, “Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall.” Patricia Arquette and Marc Benioff, Salesforce CEO, shared an interest in social justice. In early 2016 they had hosted a “Dinner for Equality” to draw attention to the gender-based wage gap in Hollywood. See David S. Cohen, “Gender Equality: Patricia Arquette’s Speech Cost Her Jobs,” *Variety*, Feb. 26, 2016.

25. Christine Carrino, “A Gift to the City of Chicago, Kerry James Marshall Will Create a Monumental Mural,” Cultural Affairs and Public Events, Sept. 21, 2020, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public\\_art\\_program/news/2017/september/kjm.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public_art_program/news/2017/september/kjm.html); Johnson, “Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall.”

not feel like you've got some kind of social responsibility. You can't move to Watts in 1963 and not speak about it. That determined a lot of where my work was going to go.”<sup>26</sup>

Marshall studied painting at the Otis College of Art and Design in the late 1970s, mentored by the master draftsman Charles White (1918–1979).<sup>27</sup> As an activist and an artist, White saw himself as a political agent, dedicated to shaping the social and political life for African Americans in the United States. While still a teenager, White was a staff artist for the Chicago chapter of the National Negro Congress, which fought for labor and civil rights; he then studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; and he later worked for the Works Progress Administration.<sup>28</sup> White believed that an artist “must be accountable for the context of his work. And that work should reflect a deep, abiding concern for humanity,”<sup>29</sup> which he expressed in figurative works that render “the beauty of black people.”<sup>30</sup>

Teacher and student were committed to the figure and resisted the dominant artistic trends of their times: abstraction expressionism for White and conceptualism for Marshall. They also “kept common cause

with the great masters of art history.”<sup>31</sup> For both artists, the rendering of black bodies with a dignity previously afforded only to white bodies in Western art was inherently political.<sup>32</sup> The similarities between White’s *Sound of Silence* (see fig. 3) and Marshall’s *The Actor Hezekiah Washington as Julian Carlton Taliesin Murderer of Frank Lloyd Wright Family* (see fig. 4) demonstrate the artists’ ideological alignment. Both White and Marshall position a man against an abstract background, which focuses attention on the figure. The men are depicted with elegance and authority, and the artists’ technical skill and sensitivity aim to represent their subjects with beautiful strength.

In 1980, Marshall created his “breakthrough” painting, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self* (see fig. 5).<sup>33</sup> Henceforth, Marshall’s portraits and tableaux would include jet-black<sup>34</sup> figures that possess “an estranged and de-familiarized quality.... By virtue of this move, Marshall plays upon the ambivalence of blackness as a signifier, which may refer at one and the same time to the abstract phenomenon of colour and to the concrete reality of historically constructed ‘racial’ identities.”<sup>35</sup> Marshall’s figures draw attention to the relative absence of black figures in museums while simultaneously portraying blackness in

26. “Alumnus Kerry James Marshall,” Otis College of Art and Design, Aug. 11, 2015, [www.otis.edu/fine-arts/spotlight/alumnus-kerry-james-marshall](http://www.otis.edu/fine-arts/spotlight/alumnus-kerry-james-marshall).

27. Kerry James Marshall, “A Black Artist Named White,” *Paris Review*, May 31, 2018.

28. Eric Gellman, “National Negro Congress,” in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, 559; John Murphy and Ashley James, “Chronology,” in *Charles White: A Retrospective*, ed. Sarah Kelly Oehler and Esther Adler (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2018), 196.

29. Quoted in Ester Adler, *Charles White: Black Pope* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2017), 8.

30. Quoted in Richard A. Courage, “Charles White and the Black Chicago Renaissance,” IRAAA+, n.d., accessed Apr. 8, 2019, [iraaa.museum.hamptonu.edu/page/Charles-White-and-the-Black-Chicago-Renaissance](http://iraaa.museum.hamptonu.edu/page/Charles-White-and-the-Black-Chicago-Renaissance).

31. Marshall, “A Black Artist Named White.”

32. Kerry James Marshall, “Visiting Artist Lecture Series,” Otis Speaks, Sept. 7, 2008, YouTube video, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXzYrkFteMY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXzYrkFteMY).

33. Ibid.

34. Editor’s note: “Marshall uses three kinds of black: carbon black, originally from soot; mars black, from iron oxide; and ivory black, originally from burned bone.” Wyatt Mason, “Kerry James Marshall Is Shifting the Color of Art History,” *New York Times*, Oct. 17, 2016.

35. Kobena Mercer, “Kerry James Marshall: The Painter of Afro-Modern Life,” *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 24 (Summer 2010): 82.



**Figure 3:** Charles White, *Sound of Silence*, 1978, lithograph on white wove paper. © The Charles White Archives. Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, New York.



**Figure 4:**  
Kerry James Marshall,  
*The Actor Hezekiah  
Washington as Julian  
Carlton Taliesin Murderer  
of Frank Lloyd Wright  
Family*, 2009, acrylic  
on PVC panel.  
© Kerry James Marshall.  
Courtesy of the artist and Jack  
Shainman Gallery, New York.



**Figure 5:** Kerry James Marshall, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self*, 1980, egg tempera on paper. © Kerry James Marshall. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

a technically magnificent way.<sup>36</sup> “There is a double-sided move at play here that is best captured by Houston Baker’s description of black modernism as a set of artistic acts that perform the ‘deformation of mastery’ while asserting the ‘mastery of form.’”<sup>37</sup>

## The City: The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

Hoping to recruit Kerry James Marshall for the mural project, Kevin McCarthy pitched his idea to Nathan Mason. Mason worked for the city’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), which oversees over five hundred public artworks and which one city administrator called “a Museum without Walls.”<sup>38</sup>

DCASE’s involvement with public art started inadvertently, less than fifty years ago.<sup>39</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s private companies and philanthropies began commissioning modern art to attract public attention to corporate and public plazas and lobbies in Chicago’s downtown.<sup>40</sup> In 1963 the Woods Charitable Fund, the Chauncey and Marion Deering McCormick Foundation, the Field Foundation of Illinois, and the architects of the Richard J. Daley Center commissioned Pablo Picasso to

36. Helen Molesworth, “Thinking of a Mastr Plan: Kerry James Marshall and the Museum,” in *Kerry James Marshall: Mastry*, ed. Helen Molesworth (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and New York: Skira Rizzoli, 2016), 37–39.

37. Mercer, “Kerry James Marshall: The Painter of Afro-Modern Life,” 82.

38. “Chicago Public Art Program,” Cultural Affairs and Special Events, n.d., accessed Dec. 21, 2020, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public\\_art\\_program.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public_art_program.html); Jeff Huebner, “Nice Works if You Can Find Them,” *Chicago Reader*, Apr. 8, 1999.

39. Huebner, “Nice Works if You Can Find Them.”

40. Ibid.

create a monumental sculpture for the center’s plaza.<sup>41</sup> Left to sculpt without instruction, Picasso designed an untitled and perplexing cubist figure and gave it to the city as a gift. Originally an object of ridicule, today the sculpture is known affectionately as “the Chicago Picasso.” Many public commissions followed, including works by Alexander Calder, Marc Chagall, Jean Dubuffet, Sol LeWitt, and Joan Miró.<sup>42</sup> Many criticized these works as “plop” art, “made with industrial materials (such as Cor-Ten steel) [and] dropped in plazas almost haphazardly, without regard to their surroundings.”<sup>43</sup>

Following these corporate commissions, the City of Chicago became interested in public art.<sup>44</sup> In 1976, Alderman Dick Simpson collaborated with the Chicago Artists’ Coalition (CAC) to design a percent-for-art program that sets aside a portion of city construction costs for art. Simpson and the CAC struggled to convince the public and politicians that art was a civic asset worth creating and maintaining or that favoring established international artists missed the opportunity to promote and support local artists. Robert Kameczura, a CAC founder, recalled: “It was not an easy thing. It was one of the biggest percent-for-art programs in the country and the biggest public fund to create artwork for the city. We were running [up] against a lot of aldermen who didn’t know what the hell you were talking about—‘Art? What’s that?’ You really had to educate these people. It was uphill, one step at a time.” Kameczura, Simpson, and the CAC members pushed for a “broad-based democratic kind of thing” in which local artists could receive funding to develop

41. “Chicago Picasso, 1962–64 by Pablo Picasso,” Pablo Picasso: Paintings, Quotes, and Biography, n.d., accessed Dec. 21, 2020; Rebecca Zorach, “Art & Soul: An Experimental Friendship between the Street and a Museum,” *Art Journal Open*, Sept. 16, 2011, [artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=2104](http://artjournal.collegeart.org/?p=2104).

42. Thomas Dyja, “City of Makers,” in *Chicago’s Public Art Plan*, 9.

43. Huebner, “Nice Works if You Can Find Them.”

44. See ibid. for all quotes in this paragraph.

their artistic practices and contribute to their neighborhoods. On April 5, 1978, the aldermen reached a legislative compromise with Simpson, the CAC, and the general public that “one percent of the construction costs for any public building built for or by the City of Chicago … shall be set aside for the purchase of art works to be located in or at such buildings.” The city could commission international and domestic artists, but the distribution had to be equal.

By the late 1990s the percent-for-art program had evolved from a simple financial ordinance into a highly technical and highly staffed program called the Chicago Public Art Program, an agency within the Department of Cultural Affairs.<sup>45</sup> In 1987 Alderman David Orr helped increase the program’s budget from 1.0 to 1.33 percent of construction costs; in the 1990s the program introduced public art to neighborhoods beyond the downtown; and, within budget limitations, it began to use standard conservation methods on existing works.<sup>46</sup>

The Chicago Public Art Program was part of Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s goal to achieve “global prominence for Chicago’s arts and culture,” to increase tourism, and to attract international visitors, who were “a top opportunity for growth, as they spend more, stay longer, and travel farther from home.”<sup>47</sup> Since the mid-2010s the Chicago Public Art Program’s parent, DCASE, has sought to increase “media coverage about Chicago arts and culture” and to “promote Chicago artists via a public

45. Ibid. Editor’s note: In October 2010 the Department of Cultural Affairs merged with the mayor’s Office of Special Events. See Jonathan Abarbanel, “New Emanuel Arts Team Settles Cultural Dept. Confusion,” *WBEZ*, May 16, 2011.

46. Huebner, “Nice Works if You Can Find Them”; “Chicago Public Art Program: Percent-for-Art Guidelines,” Cultural Affairs and Special Events, n.d., accessed Apr. 8, 2019, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp\\_info/public\\_art\\_program.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/public_art_program.html).

47. Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, *Strategic Plan, 2013–2016* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 2013), 6, 34.

awards ceremonies or annual celebration and international marketing.”<sup>48</sup> These cultural and tourism goals culminated in 2017 with the citywide launch of “the Year of Public Art.”<sup>49</sup>

## The Mural

On July 25, 2017, Murals of Acceptance provided a project description, then named for Alexis Arquette.<sup>50</sup> Mark Kelly, DCASE’s commissioner, on the city’s behalf, co-signed three contracts with Kerry James Marshall for the “Design for Artwork,” with the muralist Jeff Zimmerman to execute it, and with Kevin McCarthy that outlined the grant agreement between Murals for Acceptance and DCASE.<sup>51</sup>

Work on the mural began on September 21.<sup>52</sup> A press release described the mural, its location on the Cultural Center, and quoted Marshall’s artistic intentions for it:

When I was asked to design a mural for narrow Garland Court, it was immediately clear to me that the site had to be “opened up”

48. Ibid, 31.

49. DCASE, *Chicago’s Public Art Plan*, 3; Christine Carrino, “The City of Chicago Will Celebrate the Year of Public Art,” Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Aug. 8, 2017, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public\\_art\\_program/news/2017/august/yopa\\_festival.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/public_art_program/news/2017/august/yopa_festival.html).

50. Murals of Acceptance, “Alexis Arquette Art Project,” July 25, 2017, 1, project overview in the author’s possession.

51. Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Agreement for the Commission of Design for Artwork, Sept. 12, 2017 (signed on Aug. 17, 2017), contract in the author’s possession, hereafter, Marshall Agreement; DCASE, Agreement for the Commission of Artwork for the Chicago Cultural Center, Sept. 6, 2017 (signed Sept. 11, 2017), contract in the author’s possession, hereafter, Zimmermann Agreement; MOA Agreement.

52. Christine Carrino, “A Gift to the City of Chicago.”



**Figure 6:** Mural Nears Completion. From left, Jeff Zimmermann, Erik C. Harris, and Keith Smith have been the primary painters of the Kerry James Marshall mural, and as the mural gets close to being finished, they consult the drawing. (Nancy Stone/*Chicago Tribune*/TCA)

in some way. My solution was a park-like view with a bright sun and stand of trees to bring light and green space to the location while at the same time honoring the mission of the building as the hub of artistic activity in Chicago. My idea was to make of the trees a kind of Forest Rushmore acknowledging the contribution of twenty women who've worked to shape the cultural landscape of the city, past and present.<sup>53</sup>

Marshall executed his idea as a small color drawing (see fig. 6). The muralists, Jeff Zimmermann, together with Jane George, Erik C. Harris, Keith Smith, and Kinga Szopinska, expanded the drawing to fill a

53. Ibid.

100-foot-high by 132-foot-wide section of the west wall of the Cultural Center, which surrounds a loading dock.<sup>54</sup> Marshall added final details to the mural, which he named *Rush More*, on December 2, and the city held a public inauguration on December 4.<sup>55</sup>

Marshall was inspired by the history of the Chicago Cultural Center to design a mural that addresses “the acquisition of knowledge and experience of culture and history” and that honors “the women who were so central to helping develop a lot of organizations in Chicago.”<sup>56</sup> Challenged by the physical constraints of Garland Court (a narrow alley shrouded in the shadows of tall corporate offices), he created “a type of vista” for women who have been symbolically left in the shadows.<sup>57</sup>

At the top of the façade a solar orb rises above Chicago, casting radiant beams across the city. From the sidewalk to the roofline grow five white oaks; eight cardinals flit among the leaves, carrying a white ribbon with the names of the twenty women.<sup>58</sup> Their faces are carved into the oaks’ trunks to form totems. Some of the women are widely recognized, such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Maggie Daley, and Oprah Winfrey. Other

54. Johnson, “Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall.”

55. Ibid.; Marc Vitali, “Kerry James Marshall Unveils Monumental Mural in the Loop,” *WTTW News*, Dec. 4, 2017.

56. Kerry James Marshall, telephone interview with author, Jan. 10, 2019.

57. Ibid. The practice of linking a work of art to location developed with minimalism during 1960s. A location’s “physical attributes” create a “phenomenological or experiential understanding” that serve “as a foil for the art work.” See, Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 3.

58. White oaks and cardinals are symbols of Illinois. See, “State Symbols,” Illinois.gov, n.d., accessed Apr. 8, 2019, [www2.illinois.gov/Pages/About/StateSymbols.aspx](http://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/About/StateSymbols.aspx). The women’s names, sometimes upside down, are difficult to read. Marshall hopes curious viewers will “look at the women whose names are not in close proximity to their image and figure out how to link those names on the banner.” Kerry James Marshall, telephone interview with author, Jan. 10, 2019.

trees feature women with intimate ties to Marshall, such as Susanne Ghez, director of the Renaissance Society during Marshall's *Mementos* exhibition (1998), and Cheryl Lynn Bruce, Marshall's wife and cofounder of the Dearborn Homes Youth Drama Workshop.<sup>59</sup> Marshall admires their resolve and grit: "Culture is made by individuals first, [which] then becomes institutions, and they inspire other individuals who make new institutions. This is how you keep the cultural life of a city alive.... Everyone who is represented here, they are the backbone, the spine, the spirit, the heart of what it means."<sup>60</sup>

*Rush More* expectedly recalls the national memorial, Mount Rushmore (1927–41), in South Dakota; however, differences in subject matter and the title challenge past traditions of monumental public art. Mount Rushmore and *Rush More* were both government commissions intended to promote civic pride and tourism. The sculptor Gutzon Borglum (1867–1941) conceived Mount Rushmore as a "shrine of democracy," which his son felt would symbolize "what it means to be an American!"<sup>61</sup> More recently, "Mount Rushmore's duality—sacred indigenous ground, patriotic bucket-list destination—means it remains a protest site today."<sup>62</sup> In contrast, Marshall's intentions for his monument to women begins with its title. A slight pause between *Rush* and *More* imbues the title with agency. "Rush" alludes to forward momentum, and "more" provides an

59. Kori Rumore and Steve Johnson, "Meet the 20 Trailblazing Women in Kerry James Marshall's Massive New Mural." *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 12, 2017.

60. Jyoti Srivastava, "2017 Cultural Center Unveiling of Mural 'Forest Rush More' by Kerry James Marshall." Public Art in Chicago, Dec. 4, 2017, [www.publicartinchicago.com/2017-chicago-cultural-center-unveiling-of-mural-forest-rush-more-by-kerry-james-marshall](http://www.publicartinchicago.com/2017-chicago-cultural-center-unveiling-of-mural-forest-rush-more-by-kerry-james-marshall).

61. Albert Biome, "Patriarchy Fixed in Stone: Gutzon Borglum's Mount Rushmore," *American Art* 5, no. 1/2 (Spring 1991): 162, 144.

62. Amy McKeever, "The Heartbreaking, Controversial History of Mount Rushmore," *National Geographic*, Oct. 28, 2020, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/the-strange-and-controversial-history-of-mount-rushmore>.

additional push of encouragement. The title encapsulates the determined spirit of the twenty women and encourages a particular mode of engagement with the work itself.<sup>63</sup> Marshall believes viewers should find inspiration from these women and take on their attitude to "do more, act more."<sup>64</sup> In recalling the name of Mount Rushmore, Marshall makes women, who often go unacknowledged, on par with the rest of American history. But whereas the presidents are carved in stone, stiff and cold, Marshall depicts a living "Forest Rushmore" in the heart of Chicago. As a forest grows and expands, the power of these women will continuously increase and affect future generations.<sup>65</sup>

## Common Cause, Divergent Motives

Each of my story's actors brought a different motive to the common cause of a mural for Chicago: Kevin McCarthy wanted to memorialize an activist and provide hope to all people through the universal language of art; Kerry James Marshall saw an artistic challenge and a chance to make a statement about women; and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events helped fulfill an ambitious mayor's plan to make Chicago an international tourist destination.

## Art as Universal Language

Patricia Arquette and Kevin McCarthy agree that visual arts speak an "elemental" and "a universal" language that "does not discriminate."<sup>66</sup> Their sincere optimism—that visual arts have the capacity to transcend language and cultural barriers and that a public mural would communicate

63. Kerry James Marshall, telephone interview with author, Jan. 10, 2019.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. "Who We Are," Murals of Acceptance.

to all viewers a “message of diversity and acceptance”—can be called into question by comparing it to peace photography.<sup>67</sup> The social scientist Frank Möller coined the term *peace photography* in order to consider whether photographs can depict peace.<sup>68</sup> Möller argues that there can be no universal understanding of peace; rather, peace is a cultural concept that varies across time or place. Some people may consider a family snapshot an expression of peace due to the absence of visible violence, but others may see hidden “power relationships and forms of domination and exploitation.”<sup>69</sup> One person may view a photograph of the World Trade Center before 9/11 and see the twin towers “as if in heavenly repose—[a] peaceful reflection on what was no more,” but another might see the “arrogance of power and forms of institutionalized exploitation inherent in global politico-economic structures.”<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, the cultural critic W. J. T. Mitchell points out how little is known about the complexity of visual art: “We still do not know exactly what pictures are, what their relation to language is, how they operate on observers and on the world, how their history is to be understood, and what is to be done with them.”<sup>71</sup> Given these uncertainties and the subjectivity of viewers based on their cultural backgrounds, Mural of Acceptance’s desire to erect a work of art that can be *universally* understood to promote diversity and acceptance would be difficult to achieve.

67. Moraly, “Murals of Acceptance 2017 IRS Form 990.”

68. Frank Möller, “Politics and Art,” Oxford Handbooks Online, June 2016, [www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935307.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935307-e-13?print=pdf](http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935307.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935307-e-13?print=pdf).

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 16.

## Art as Activism

In 1977 the art critic Harold Rosenberg argued that all artists are a “cultural minority” and detailed the particular situation of an artist who is also “black … or when ‘he’ is a woman.”<sup>72</sup> He thought that civil rights movements strove to assimilate minority groups into the mainstream and, therefore, a black or woman artist would reject these movements as a “mediocre idea”: “For the artist, fulfillment of self consists not in marching in the ranks of liberators but in being entered in the roll of the Masters.”<sup>73</sup> Rosenberg’s *New Yorker* article appeared at the beginning of Marshall’s last year of art school where his mentor, Charles White, had taught him to negotiate his identities as both a master artist and a black activist.<sup>74</sup>

McCarthy was drawn to Marshall for both his skill (“painting black people into art at the level of Renaissance painters”) and his activism (“a civil rights leader through his art”).<sup>75</sup> Whereas civil rights leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, sought to pave the way for civil, political, and legal equality, Marshall seeks to introduce the civil rights movement, black subjects, and quotidian black American life to

72. Harold Rosenberg, “Being Outside,” *New Yorker*, Aug. 22, 1977, 83.

73. Ibid. Editor’s note: Rosenberg failed to account for artists’ multifaceted existences. In contrast, the legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw argues that a person who is black, a woman, and a feminist is not either/or—not black/white, woman/man, feminist/traditionalist. Rather, she exists at the intersection of many identities. See, Crenshaw’s “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989): 140.

74. Kerry James Marshall, “Biography,” David Zwirner [Gallery], Nov. 27, 2020, [www.davidzwirner.com/artists/kerry-james-marshall/-/media/D8001073A33843E3A63E727AF18AEA15.ashx](http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/kerry-james-marshall/-/media/D8001073A33843E3A63E727AF18AEA15.ashx).

75. “Who We Are,” Murals of Acceptance.

museum audiences.<sup>76</sup> He elevates the experiences of black people in American by using an epic scale normally reserved for grand historical themes and an Ingres-like precision in portraiture.<sup>77</sup> Unlike civil rights activists who worked to change society broadly, Marshall's project is narrower: to construct a black image in paintings that is "ideal," has "value," and is "uncompromising" and, thus, to make art (and art history) fuller and more inclusive.<sup>78</sup>

## Art as Economic Engine

The Chicago Cultural Center is significant to the city's history and to Marshall's career. The center was originally the city's first public library. After the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed private libraries the city passed a one percent tax to fund a new library. The Boston firm, Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge, which had already designed the Art Institute of Chicago, created another grand neoclassical building for the city. At the opening ceremony on October 9, 1897, it was declared "the Palace of the People."<sup>79</sup> Over the years, the library served as a tangible demonstration of the city's cultural ambitions. The beautifully hushed reading rooms were decorated in rich materials (green-veined marble from Vermont, pink marble from Knoxville, gold inlays, and a dome of Tiffany Favrlile

76. Jessie L. Whitehead, "Invisibility of Blackness: Visual Responses of Kerry James Marshall," *Art Education* 62, no. 2 (Mar. 2009): 33.

77. "The best [of Ingres's painting] is the portraiture. It's stunning." Kerry James Marshall, "Artist Project," Metropolitan Museum of Art, Aug. 8, 2015, artist-project.metmuseum.org/2/kerry-james-marshall.

78. "Kerry James Marshall: Mastry," Museum of Contemporary Art, May 2, 2016, YouTube video, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2bmHE7MRQU&feature=emb\\_logo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2bmHE7MRQU&feature=emb_logo).

79. Iker Gil, "The Continuous Reinvention of Chicago's 'Palace of the People,'" Chicago Architecture Biennial, Aug. 10, 2017, [archinect.com/features/article/150021755/the-continuous-reinvention-of-chicago-s-palace-of-the-people](http://archinect.com/features/article/150021755/the-continuous-reinvention-of-chicago-s-palace-of-the-people).

glass).<sup>80</sup> By the 1930s the library had outgrown the building, which, despite its distinctive features, faced demolition in the late 1960s. Saved through an eight-year preservation campaign and placement on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972, the building reopened in 1974 as a cultural center.<sup>81</sup>

Marshall had his "very first exhibition" in Chicago at the Chicago Cultural Center.<sup>82</sup> *Terra Incognita: Works by Kerry James Marshall and Santiago Vaca* (April 4–May 30, 1992) included *Terra Incognita* (1991, acrylic, ink, and paper collage on canvas with metal grommets), one of Marshall's "first major large-format history paintings."<sup>83</sup> It "employ[s] the distinctly expressive painterly language characteristic for his work between the early to mid-1990s" and includes a red-jacketed black waiter and a Benin warrior as well as an ocean liner, a caravel, and fish in a roiling sea of drippy blue paint.<sup>84</sup> Marshall centers the waiter high on the canvas and surrounds his head with a radiant halo, propelling a dialogue about the African diaspora, racial inequality, and saintliness, which anticipate themes of his later works. The show marked the beginning of Marshall's relationship with the New York gallery owner, Jack Shainman, which broadened interest in his art beyond Los Angeles.<sup>85</sup>

80. Ibid.

81. Nancy Seeger, *The People's Palace: The Story of the Chicago Cultural Center* (Chicago: Chicago Cultural Center, 1999), [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp\\_info/the\\_people\\_s\\_palace/the\\_story\\_of\\_the\\_chicago\\_cultural\\_center1.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/the_people_s_palace/the_story_of_the_chicago_cultural_center1.html).

82. Johnson, "Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall."

83. "How the '90s Shaped Kerry James Marshall's Meteoric Rise," Phillips, 2018, [www.phillips.com/article/38297600/how-the-90s-shaped-kerry-james-marshall-s-meteoric-rise](http://www.phillips.com/article/38297600/how-the-90s-shaped-kerry-james-marshall-s-meteoric-rise).

84. "Lot 14: 20th-Century and Contemporary Art," Phillips, 2018, [www.phillips.com/detail/KERRY-JAMES-MARSHALL/NY010718/14](http://www.phillips.com/detail/KERRY-JAMES-MARSHALL/NY010718/14).

85. "How the '90s Shaped Kerry James Marshall's Meteoric Rise."

In 2017, twenty-five years after the *Terra Incognita* show, Kelly, DCASE's commissioner, remarked that Marshall's "first one-man show was right here in the Chicago Cultural Center, so for him, it's full circle because now he returns with this 100-foot-tall masterpiece."<sup>86</sup> Kelly failed to mention Santiago Vaca, whose work was also in the 1992 show, when speaking to a television reporter at the mural's inauguration.<sup>87</sup> It is possible that he misspoke or had been poorly briefed by his staff, but Kelly's rush to claim credit for Marshall's early success establishes a narrative in which the Chicago Cultural Center has a particular artistic foresight. The center's gallery program *does* place "special emphasis ... on emerging and underrepresented artists, particularly those who live and work in the Chicago area."<sup>88</sup> Given this focus, Kelly should have gone out of his way to acknowledge that Marshall shared the gallery in 1992 with another promising younger artist. To focus solely on Marshall perpetuates a poetic yet false narrative of recognizing genius or, worst, only valuing "star" artists whose works sells for millions at auction.<sup>89</sup>

The city's legal agreements with Marshall and the muralist Zimmerman demonstrate a division of labor, copyright, and compensation that allowed DCASE and MoA to create public proximity to the celebrated artist, while simultaneously downgrading the talent and labor provided

86. Vitali, "Kerry James Marshall Unveils Monumental Mural."

87. See Santiago Vaca, "SV Art Resume 2011," accessed Dec. 12, 2020, [www.neiu.edu/sites/neiu.edu/files/hub.neiu.edu/curriculum\\_vitae/Vaca%20Art%20Resume%202011.pdf](http://www.neiu.edu/sites/neiu.edu/files/hub.neiu.edu/curriculum_vitae/Vaca%20Art%20Resume%202011.pdf); Kerry James Marshall, "Biography," David Zwirner [Gallery], Nov. 27, 2020, [www.davidzwirner.com/artists/kerry-james-marshall/-/media/D8001073A33843E3A63E727AF18AEA15.ashx](http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/kerry-james-marshall/-/media/D8001073A33843E3A63E727AF18AEA15.ashx). Editor's note: Vaca and Marshall both list the 1992 show in their biographies under the heading of solo exhibitions, but Marshall is careful to indicate in brackets, "[two-person exhibition]."

88. "Chicago Cultural Center Visual Arts Program," Chicago Cultural Affairs and Special Events, n.d., accessed Dec. 22, 2020, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp\\_info/chicago\\_culturalcenter0.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/chicago_culturalcenter0.html).

89. Vitali, "Kerry James Marshall Unveils Monumental Mural."



**Figure 7:** Jeff Zimmermann and his The ConAgra Brands Mural, 2016 (Alisa Hauser for DNAinfo)

by Zimmerman and his team of other artists. The city required Marshall to "deliver the Design for Artwork no later than August 28, 2017[...] a unique and original product of the Artist's creative efforts," and Zimmerman promised to produce a "mural of artwork created by the artist Kerry James Marshall provided by the Chicago Cultural Center.... The Artwork production will take approximately 8 weeks."<sup>90</sup> Zimmerman's style contrasts with Marshall's. Zimmerman trained in graphic design and his murals are "hyper-realistic" and have highly saturated colors; Marshall prefers matte paints and flattened perspective (see fig. 7).<sup>91</sup> Zimmerman's public commissions often include individuals traditionally excluded from public narratives, and the size and grandeur of his

90. Marshall Agreement; Zimmerman Agreement.

91. Jeff Zimmermann, "About," Jeff Zimmermann, n.d., accessed Dec. 23, 2020, [www.jeffzimmermann.com/about](http://www.jeffzimmermann.com/about).

portraits subvert the “newsworthiness” of products and celebrities who dominate corporate billboards.<sup>92</sup> Zimmermann abandoned his own style for the *Rush More* mural, using the pouncing technique to render the mural “as faithful to the small painting” as possible.<sup>93</sup>

The contracts further state that “the copyright in the Design of Artwork shall be and remain the sole property of the Artist [Kerry James Marshall].”<sup>94</sup> The city claimed “the right to use KJM’s name, likeness, and biographical information in connection with the display or reproduction and distribution of the Artwork[,] including all advertising and promotional materials regarding the City.”<sup>95</sup> DCASE offered Zimmermann no copyright (“[Zimmermann] relinquishes all rights of possession to the Artwork to the City”) and no requirement to mention his name in publications or press releases.<sup>96</sup> Most city publicity about *Rush More* focused on Marshall; Zimmermann received little recognition.<sup>97</sup>

Regarding compensation, the city stressed that Marshall’s mural “is a true gift to the people of Chicago” and mentioned that DCASE had recently honored Marshall with a Fifth Star Honor.<sup>98</sup> The Fifth Star, which honors “legendary Chicago artists and cultural institutions” with

92. Jeff Zimmermann, telephone interview with the author, Jan. 24, 2019.

93. Ibid.

94. Marshall Agreement, 4; and, with slightly different wording, in Zimmermann Agreement, 6.

95. Zimmermann Agreement, 6.

96. Ibid., 2; Marshall Agreement, 5–6.

97. Mayor’s Press Office, “Mayor Emanuel and City Officials Unveil Monumental Kerry James Marshall Mural on the Chicago Cultural Center,” Office of the Mayor, Dec. 4, 2017, [www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2017/December/120417\\_KJMMural.pdf](http://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2017/December/120417_KJMMural.pdf).

98. Ibid.; see also “2017 Fifth Star Honors,” Cultural Affairs and Special Events, July 27, 2017, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/attractions\\_eventsand\\_exhibitions/news/2017/july/fifth\\_star\\_honors.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/provdrs/attractions_eventsand_exhibitions/news/2017/july/fifth_star_honors.html).

“electrifying performances and moving tributes,” only dates to 2014.<sup>99</sup> The Fifth Star helped fulfill the second strategic objective of DCASE’s recently published Strategic Plan “to heighten international recognition for … Chicago’s artists and cultural organizations” and to use art as an economic engine to “ensure that Chicago reaches or surpasses Mayor Emanuel’s goal of 50 million tourists by 2020.”<sup>100</sup> Official language about the honor is self-aggrandizing and promotional: Commissioner Kelly stated that the award “will celebrate the significant influence these … honorees have had on not only Chicago’s art scene but the world’s.”<sup>101</sup>

Although the 2017 Fifth Star honorees were announced in May, the timing of the Fifth Star awards ceremony (August 28) and the public announcement of the Marshall mural (August 27) created the unfortunate appearance of a transaction.<sup>102</sup> The “transaction” favored the city, which derived a secondary fame by association with a celebrated artist and a tertiary financial gain through future tourism.

In contrast, Zimmermann was not compensated with widespread recognition. DCASE and MoA valued Zimmermann not as artistic creator but as laborer. His contract emphasized mechanics (“installation,” “maintenance,” and “technical accuracy”) and even held Zimmerman responsible for “all loss or damage to the site.”<sup>103</sup> Zimmerman self-defined his job as “producing” a mural “created” by an “artist,” which he outlines

99. “Fifth Star Honors—2017 Rising Star Honor Roll,” City of Chicago, n.d., accessed Apr. 8, 2019, [www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp\\_info/fifthstar/fifth\\_star.html](http://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dca/supp_info/fifthstar/fifth_star.html).

100. DCASE, *Strategic Plan*, 29.

101. James Currie, “2017 Fifth Star Honors Chicago Artists,” In the Loop Magazine, May 18, 2017, [beintheloopchicago.com/2017-fifth-star-honors-chicago-artists-common-jeanne-gang-kerry-james-marshall-steppenwolf-theatre-company](http://beintheloopchicago.com/2017-fifth-star-honors-chicago-artists-common-jeanne-gang-kerry-james-marshall-steppenwolf-theatre-company).

102. Ibid.

103. Zimmermann Agreement, 2–3.

in terms of dimensions, materials, time, and labor.<sup>104</sup> In short, he “indicate[s] scientifically” how he will bring about this artistic “product.”<sup>105</sup> Zimmermann’s role in the compensatory structure of the city’s economic art engine is to be paid the amount that he quoted—nothing more and nothing less.

## Conclusion

*Rush More* successfully achieved Marshall’s goal of amplifying the stories of women who had shaped and were shaping culture in Chicago. Many articles in local<sup>106</sup> and national<sup>107</sup> publications brought attention to the

104. Ibid., 29.

105. This self-definition places him outside of Kant’s definition of artistic genius, which must possess originality, must set an exemplary standard that others imitate, and “cannot indicate scientifically how it brings about its product.” See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 137.

106. Noël Jones, “Go, Girl and Go Big: Kerry James Marshall’s All-Female Mural in the Loop,” *FNewsmagazine*, Nov. 9, 2017; David Matthews, “Chicago’s Own Mount Rushmore?” DNAinfo, Sept. 21, 2017, [www.dnainfo.com/chicago](http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago); Rumore and Johnson, “Meet the 20 Trailblazing Women”; Kris Vire, “A Kerry James Marshall Mural on the Chicago Cultural Center Will Depict Women of Chicago’s Arts and Culture,” *TimeOut Chicago*, Sept. 21, 2017.

107. “Kerry James Marshall Mural Honoring 20 Iconic Women Unveiled at the Chicago Cultural Center,” artdaily, Dec. 5, 2017, [artdaily.cc/news/100743/Kerry-James-Marshall-mural-honoring-20-iconic-women-unveiled-at-the-Chicago-Cultural-Center](http://artdaily.cc/news/100743/Kerry-James-Marshall-mural-honoring-20-iconic-women-unveiled-at-the-Chicago-Cultural-Center); “Kerry James Marshall Paints 132-foot by 100-foot Mural in Chicago Honoring 20 Iconic Women,” *Juxtapoz Magazine*, Dec. 28, 2017, [www.juxtapoz.com/news/street-art/kerry-james-marshall-paints-132-foot-by-100-foot-mural-in-chicago-honoring-20-iconic-women](http://www.juxtapoz.com/news/street-art/kerry-james-marshall-paints-132-foot-by-100-foot-mural-in-chicago-honoring-20-iconic-women); Andrew Russeth, “Kerry James Marshall Has Created a Mural for Chicago,” *ARTnews*, Sept. 21, 2017, [www.artnews.com/art-news/news/kerry-james-marshall-has-created-a-mural-for-chicago-featuring-oprah-winfrey-susanne-ghez-and-more-9027](http://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/kerry-james-marshall-has-created-a-mural-for-chicago-featuring-oprah-winfrey-susanne-ghez-and-more-9027); Bere Wangge, “Kerry James Marshall Honors 20 Women in Arts in His Largest Mural to Date,”

mural and highlighted the names, occupations, and contributions of the twenty featured women, which augmented public awareness of the women’s accomplishments and influence. The writer and actor Sandra Delgado was “tagged in a press announcement” and “had to read it, like, five times”; she “was so excited … to be included in a mural with [Oprah Winfrey].”<sup>108</sup> Barbara Gaines of Chicago Shakespeare Theater felt “the shock and the joy of someone throwing you a surprise party.... It’s difficult to take in.” *Windy City Times* noted the two LGBTQ women monumentalized in the mural: novelist Achy Obejas and arts organizer Jane M. Saks.<sup>109</sup>

More recently, a Design Museum of Chicago exhibition, *Great Ideas of Humanity: Passing the Torch* (February 25–December 31, 2020), featured artwork by Chicago Public School students, which were inspired by the *Rush More* and Cooper Dual Language Academy murals. The murals helped “elevate the voices of Chicago teens and grow the [canon] of artists and thinkers to include those traditionally left out of the conversation, bringing their ideas to the fore.”<sup>110</sup> In this sense, *Rush More* has the potential to broaden acceptance beyond female cultural leaders to include young and queer activists, which fulfills McCarthy’s original intention for a mural honoring Alexis Arquette, “who was an activist that fought for acceptance and change through art.”<sup>111</sup>

Globetrotter, Jan. 19, 2018, [www.globetrottermag.com/news-features/kerry-james-marshall-honors-20-women-in-arts-in-his-largest-mural-to-date](http://www.globetrottermag.com/news-features/kerry-james-marshall-honors-20-women-in-arts-in-his-largest-mural-to-date).

108. Jones, “Go, Girl and Go Big.”

109. Liz Baudler, “LGBTQ Figures Part of New Marshall Mural,” *Chicago Windy City Times*.

110. “Great Ideas of Humanity: Passing the Torch,” Design Museum of Chicago, 2020, accessed Dec. 11, 2020, [www.designchicago.org/great-ideas-of-humanity-passing-the-torch](http://www.designchicago.org/great-ideas-of-humanity-passing-the-torch).

111. “Who We Are,” Murals of Acceptance. Despite such a positive outcome, *Rush More* is Murals of Acceptance’s only completed project to date.

Finally, *Rush More* helped fulfill the city's plan to make Chicago a cultural tourist destination. At the December 4 unveiling Mayor Emanuel declared that "Chicago is recognized across the country and around the world as an epicenter of innovative art, architecture, and design." Many announcements merely parroted the mayor's self-congratulatory message that the mural is "a strong addition to Chicago's public art portfolio."<sup>112</sup> Chicago Detours agreed that "public art plays a big role in Chicago's history" but also expressed unreserved appreciation for the "badass Chicago women" featured in the mural.<sup>113</sup> More mainstream tour guides now include the mural as a mandatory stop on a tourist's agenda: "Head west on Randolph to Garland Court to view *Rush More*, artist Kerry James Marshall's enormous mural honoring Chicago women in arts"; "Marshall, who has had paintings sell for millions at auction, painted this work—his largest—for a fee of \$1."<sup>114</sup>

Despite the prolific qualities of *Rush More*, the city only plans to maintain it for a period of ten years, and Zimmermann agreed to protect it with a final coat of varnish that would only "provide minimal protection."<sup>115</sup> This short lifespan does not seem to bother Marshall: "The most interesting part is successfully solving the problem of making something work on that space. My interest starts to wane after I've solved the problem."<sup>116</sup>

112. See "Kerry James Marshall Mural on the Chicago Cultural Center Unveiled" at the River North Residents Association and the River View Condominium websites.

113. Alex Bean, "Art on the Mart and More New Public Art in Chicago," Chicago Detours, Sept. 26, 2018, [chicagodetours.com/art-on-the-mart](http://chicagodetours.com/art-on-the-mart).

114. Fodor's *Chicago Full Color Travel Guide*, 31st ed. (New York: Fodor's Travel, Jan. 22, 2019); Robert Loerzel, *Walking Chicago*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: Wilderness Press, 2020).

115. Zimmerman Agreement, 29; Jeff Zimmermann, telephone interview with the author, Jan. 24, 2019.

116. Johnson, "Giant Mural by Kerry James Marshall."

Regardless of the brief materiality of *Rush More*, the legacy of the mural will live in the minds of school students, a diverse community of locals, and tourists alike. ○

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# Chicago's Chinatown



## Boundary Maintenance and the Build Environment

OLIVIA JIA, AB'19

### Introduction

This research project utilizes Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood as a case study for analyzing the ways in which the built environment can sustain conflicting and at times contested meanings that create distinctive patterns of community identity formation from the level of street block to building. Original data generated from interviews, ethnographies, and cognitive mapping exercises with research participants indicate that aspects of the built environment more traditionally Eastern or Oriental in appearance reinforce outsider perceptions and stereotypes, marking the space as distinctly "Chinese," as well as create important boundary markers for the Chinatown community itself. Conversely, architectural structures that reflect more contemporary design styles and sensibilities, such as the Chinatown Public Library, allow for more dynamic and flexible constructions of self and community identity. Ultimately, how Chinatown's community negotiates and finds balance in urban spaces that serve both performative and interpersonal ends proves to be an essential element of boundary maintenance across physical, generational, and cultural lines.

At a time when Chinatowns in major cities around the country, namely, New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, are experiencing economic and population decline, Chicago's Chinatown has largely avoided gentrification and disinvestment and continues to grow in size. Over the past several decades, the neighborhood has witnessed a series of urban renewal and development projects, and in the process, the population has expanded into bordering neighborhoods, such as Bridgeport and McKinley Park (Eltagouri 2016). The ways in which this community has formed an understanding of collective identity rooted in this particular built environment may function as a template for the survival of ethnic enclaves and minority communities in other parts of the country for decades to come.

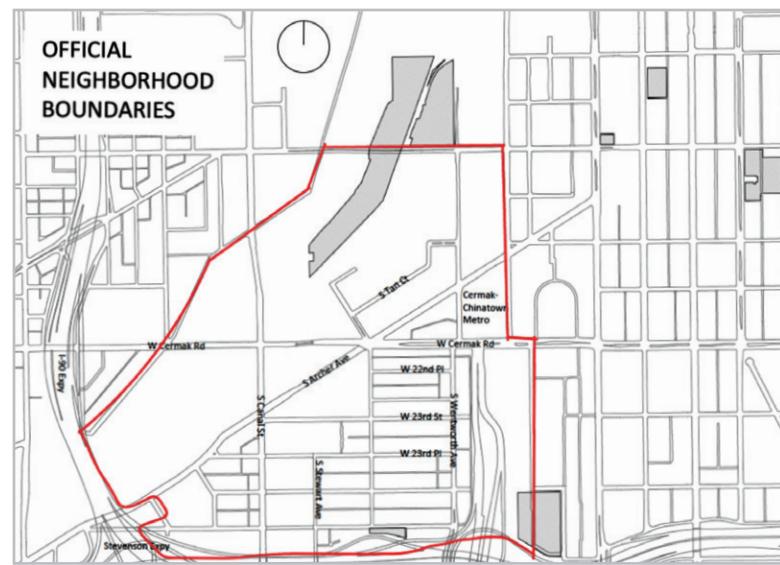
For the purposes of this research, the term community is defined according to McMillan and Chavis's four-part structure, which includes "membership": a feeling of belonging, "influence": a perceived ability to make a difference in a group, "integration and fulfillment of needs," and "shared emotional connection" (1986, p. 9). In the case of Chinatown's community, in what ways do Chinese Americans balance insider versus outsider expectations about Chinese culture? What does boundary maintenance<sup>1</sup> across different scales of the built environment and with respect to the emotional and psychological experiences of community members look like? This research paper explores forms of collective identity as they are negotiated by Chicago Chinatown's Chinese American community. In particular, I analyze boundary maintenance and the tensions between performative versus interpersonal spaces in the built environment as they play out across physical, generational, and cultural lines.

1. "The concept of boundary has been central to the study of ethnic and racial inequality as an alternative to more static cultural or even biological theories of ethnic and racial differences" (Lamont & Virág 2002, p. 174). The term *boundary maintenance* in sociology describes "the ways in which societies (or social systems) maintain distinctions between themselves and others" (Scott & Marshall 2015).

## Ethnic Enclaves and Chinatown as a Case Study

Segregation and the movement of ethnic groups into, out of, and within a city are central components of urban sociology. Particularly in the United States, given the country's complex history of immigration, segregation, and race, the centrality of urban place to ethnic identity (Berry & Henderson 2002) remains increasingly relevant to contemporary studies that investigate sense of place among minority and immigrant groups. With particular respect to Asian American communities in the United States, some researchers point to the effectiveness of ethnic enclaves at simultaneously assimilating and shielding immigrants from mainstream American culture (Kuo & Lin 1977, Portes & Manning 1986, Zhou 1992, Logan, Alba, & Zhang 2002). Others point to the emergence of these urban spaces as hubs of consumer and touristic appeal and socio-economic mobility, rendering them increasingly central to local economies and policymaking (Zhou & Logan 1989, Lin 2011). The tensions that emerge among commercialism, strategic forms of self-Orientalism, and identity politics in Asian American communities, especially in spaces nominally designated as Asian enclaves (e.g., Chinatowns, Koreatowns, or Little Vietnams), remain central to continuing discussions about collective identity for Asian American minority groups and immigrant communities (Feng 1996, Umbach & Wishnoff 2008, Li 2015a & b). How these broader themes interplay with Chinatown's specific built environment and how residents reinforce—or dismantle—these boundaries are the focus of this research paper.

Chicago's Chinatown has a storied past within the city's broader immigration and economic history. The first wave of Chinese immigrants to the United States began in the 1850s during the California gold rushes. With the expansion of railroads in the 1870s, Chinese immigrants facing persecution and anti-Chinese sentiment on the West Coast fled to Chicago, making the city the second oldest settlement of Chinese in the



**Figure 1:** Chicago Chinatown's Official Neighborhood Boundaries

country (Ling 2012). In response to the pressures of adjusting to a life in a foreign land, Chinese immigrants formed family associations and organizations as a means of providing social networks and bolstering a sense of community for new immigrants, in addition to functioning as local authority figures and an informational resource. Originally clustered in enclaves in downtown Chicago, the Chinese community gradually gravitated south due to the combined pressures of discrimination and its growing population size. The present-day South Side Chinatown location was founded in 1912, its appeal largely predicated upon the availability of affordable land and its proximity to the Loop (Ling 2012).<sup>2</sup> Although the construction of interstate highways to the west and south of China-

2. The Loop in downtown Chicago functions as a commercial hub; the term also refers to the elevated commuter rail line that encircles the downtown.

town cut its original size in half, the neighborhood occupies the same site to this day (see fig. 1).

As of 2013, eight thousand people lived in Chinatown with 90 percent identifying as ethnic Chinese (Lee 2013). A majority of these residents are elderly and have chosen to relocate to Chinatown from the suburbs to benefit from the neighborhood's walkability and the proximity of Chinese grocery stores and social services. While family associations remain a central part of the cultural and social fabric of the neighborhood, their functions are now largely symbolic. In their place, community organizations such as the Pui Tak Center, the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC), and the Chinese American Service League (CASL) provide financial, medical, and legal resources for immigrants, in addition to English lessons and job training.

## How Do Place and Identity Interrelate?

Place-based identity has been researched and studied at length within the fields of sociology and urban studies. From Georg Simmel's (1908) foundational work in urban sociology on the interrelation between space and social interaction to Lewis Mumford's (1970) and Jane Jacobs's (1961) seminal writings on urban life, social scientists have long studied the role that the built environment plays in social processes and identity formation. More contemporary research examines ties among place, identity, and community through the lens of urban versus rural environments or the experiences of certain social or economic groups. As some sociologists argue, however, a majority of urban sociology research stresses urbanization (the development of cities) over urbanism (the way of life within cities) (Zukin 1980, Borer 2006). Additionally, there has been little effort to construct a systemic theory of sense of place (Stedman 2002).

Continuing research in the field, as Borer (2006) argues, should shift towards an “urban culturalist perspective” that considers a range of representative, symbolic, and narrative markers, such as civic culture or the role of sentiment, as a framework for evaluating culture- and

place-based relationships in cities. To that end, an increased understanding of the linkages between self- and group identities as a “collective accomplishment” underscores the importance of studying individual and communal senses of place in tandem (Brown-Saracino 2015). Lastly, little sociological work has been conducted on the explicit roles of architecture and the built environment in constructing—or deconstructing—identity and sense of place, particularly for minority or marginalized groups. My research merges both traditional and more contemporary approaches to studying sense of place across the fields of sociology and urban planning and design, utilizing qualitative methods to merge theoretical frameworks from both disciplines.

Within Chinatown’s built environment, there remains a tension between the performative role of Oriental façades and structures and a desire to project a distinct and authentic Chinese American identity that reflects the entire community. For the purposes of this analysis, the term *performative* describes aspects of the built environment that outwardly and unmistakably present themselves as Asian or Chinese in appearance, rendering these structures easily identifiable to outsiders. As a result, I pay particular attention to the specific impacts of physical, built space on the Chinatown community’s understanding of sense of place and identity. I found that the community acknowledged and approved the symbolic and performative features of the built environment as a means of simultaneously appealing and catering to outsiders in addition to sending a clear message about the neighborhood’s enduring cultural legacy. This research provides a case study for the ways in which the built environment can sustain conflicting and at times contested meanings that create distinctive patterns of consumption and identity formation at the level of street block or building.

## Theoretical Framework

### Sociological Precedent

Within the field of sociology, sense of place is largely understood as “a collection of symbolic meanings, attachment, and satisfaction with a spatial setting” (Stedman 2002, p. 563). Places hold meaning and value that are determined both by individual experience and social interaction within groups (Tuan 1974, 1977). A place is effective if it is imbued with some manner of social, psychological, or emotional meaning. Most writings on sense of place address “physical setting, human activities, and human social and psychological processes rooted in the setting” (Stedman 2002, p. 562) as a means of defining the phenomena and positioning it in relation to other sociological processes (Relph 1976, Brandenburg & Carroll 1995). Existing sense-of-place theory and research falls under the purview of positivistic or phenomenological approaches (Lalli 1992). Positivistic research is characterized by its emphasis on “quantitative methods and traditional hypothesis” (Stedman 2002, p. 562). This approach often fails to engage with theoretical arguments, ignoring the role symbolism or human emotion and behavior might play in defining sense of place. Conversely, the phenomenological approach has more often defined the work of major place theorists and urban sociologists, such as Edward Relph (1976) or Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1977). Their research emphasizes the peculiarities of social, emotional, and psychological experience, such as the amount of time spent in a setting, social mobility, or relationships and social networks.

Other theorists question the validity of place attachment altogether. Cultural geographer Doreen Massey claims “places do not have single, unique ‘identities’; they are full of internal conflicts.... Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries[,]... they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations” (1991, p. 29). Similarly, time-space compression—the process by which technological advancements conflate our understanding of spatial and temporal

distance (Harvey 1991)—in contemporary contexts has largely compounded humankind’s “movement and communication across space,” resulting in “the geographical stretching-out of social relations” (Massey 1991, p. 28). In other words, how can one study or seek to define sense of place in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world? How do boundaries, fixity, and the “rootedness” of place influence an individual’s or community’s sense of place and belonging?

Research on sense of place and community identity remains largely shaped by the concepts of collective efficacy and social cohesion (Granovetter 1973, Chaskin 1997, Sampson 2012). Collective efficacy (the success with which members of a group exert social control within their community to construct a structured environment) and social cohesion (the willingness of community members to aid and interact with one another) play an active role in determining the diversity and success of social ties and networks within a given community (Sampson 2012). Especially when considered in a sociological or psychological context, research on sense of place and neighborhood-level identity often considers the role of collective efficacy and social cohesion in defining community dynamics and networks. For the purposes of this study, the constructs of collective efficacy and social cohesion frame questions about individuals’ involvement in or engagement with local community groups and programming as a means of determining the scope and efficacy of these organizations and the extent to which their missions and members overlap.

## **Urban Design and Planning Precedent**

Aesthetics and physical appearance play a large role in urban planning and design literature that seeks to define sense of place and community identity vis-à-vis the built environment. These qualitative and quantitative studies often provide design suggestions and modifications for future design work, rather than the policy-focused conclusions of sociological research. For instance, research by Wilkerson et al. (2012) observes how

the physical environment can have an effect on neighborliness; aspects of the built environment such as “sidewalks, front porches, traffic-calming devices, bars on windows, and the presence of litter or graffiti” (597) had different effects on levels of neighbor social interaction and engagement. The findings of Wilkerson et al. underscore the importance of humanistic urban design, such as sidewalks and accessible front porches, in generating positive senses of community and placemaking. On a broader scale, urban studies scholars also investigate the qualities of urbanity or “cityness,” (Sassen 2005) and the ways in which urban dwellers intrinsically attribute a sense of “spatial DNA” (Burdett 2012, p. 92) to their sense of identity and belonging. Familiarity with and an affinity for a given physical environment constitutes a major role in an individual’s construction of self and ability to relate to other community members.

Recent work in the field often focuses on the effects of New Urbanism design principles on sense of place and community, which emphasize walkable, environmentally friendly neighborhoods through mixed-use and mixed-density planning strategies (Congress for the New Urbanism). Analysis of active frontages and compliance to other New Urbanism design policies often correlates with more positive perceptions of safety, comfort, sociability, and vitality (French et al. 2014, Heffernan, Heffernan, & Wei 2014, Foster et al. 2016). The long-term efficacy and appeal of design principles that advocate for compact, walkable, and diverse communities have been thoroughly studied and, overall, point to positive resident social interactions, improved health, and increased safety (Talen & Koschinsky 2014). Moving forward, researchers in the field often advocate for participatory approaches to urban planning that require cooperation among citizens, planners, and policymakers to ensure more dynamic and authentic forms of future placemaking (Cilliers & Timmermans 2014).

As previously mentioned, within the fields of urban design and planning, theory and research frequently revolve around the creation of design philosophies and guidelines that inspire more dynamic, diverse, and accessible neighborhoods and define sense of place along a myriad of

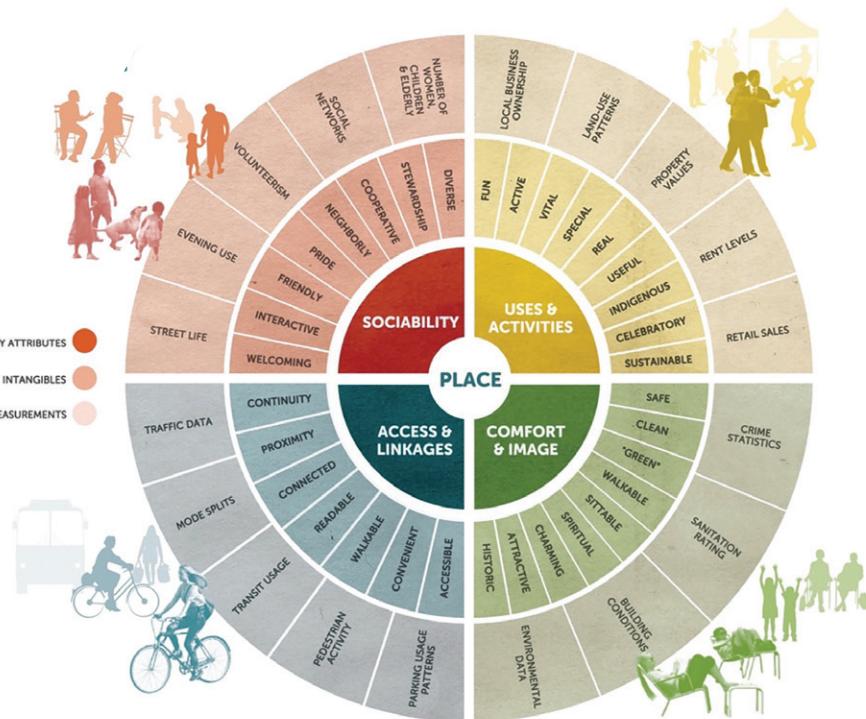


Figure 2: Place Diagram, Project for Public Spaces

place-specific characteristics. For instance, the Project for Public Spaces' "Place Diagram" (see fig. 2) is a tool for determining whether a space constructs positive or negative senses of belonging according to four variables: sociability, uses and activities, access and linkages, comfort and image. Included under these four variables are a handful of intuitive or qualitative aspects by which to judge a space, such as levels of interaction, perceptions of safety, cleanliness, or walkability. These qualitative variables are further elaborated upon by quantitative aspects that can be measured by statistics or research, such as traffic data, property values, or

crime statistics. For the Place Diagram, a focus on micro-level, everyday lived experiences is key in qualifying sense of place and quality of life.

Less thoroughly addressed in the field of sociology, but a central component to urban studies, are the impacts of architecture and urban planning in creating, reinforcing, and/or threatening place-based identity and community. Baydar (2004) investigates the role of commodification and symbolism in the built environments of minority and immigrant communities. Baydar's research finds that the maintenance and propagation of Western architectural styles help to reinforce colonial legacies and other socioeconomic and political hierarchies, to the detriment of minority and marginalized communities. Other research points to self-commodification as an avenue for commercial and economic success for marginalized communities. For instance, Chinatowns across the United States from New York City to Chicago and even Beijing engage in "self-Orientalization" (Feng 1996, p. 58) as a means of attracting tourism and investment opportunities and "(re)asserting spatial identity" (Li 2015a, p. 1118). This architectural phenomenon is not simply an economic opportunity unique to immigrant communities, but also a fixture of commerce in their countries of origin. Research on the 1950s redevelopment plan for Manhattan's Chinatown encapsulates the tensions that exist between residents' ownership over their Chinese identity and heritage alongside a need to prosper economically in Western contexts. The plans "represented an effort to infuse Chinatown with a sense of exoticism that would attract visitors. It claimed for the ethnic enclave to exhibit distinct architectural characteristics that were uniquely 'Chinese.' Many of the community members disagreed with this plan as it might change Chinatown into a 'Chinese Broadway,' as had happened in San Francisco" (Li 2015a, p. 1123).

Central to this subfield of study are the implications of symbolic boundaries and boundary maintenance on sense-of-place formation (Lamont & Fournier 1992). Symbolic boundaries refer to socially and culturally created and maintained demarcations that may or may not conform to a corresponding physical environment. Symbolic boundaries

play a key role in the construction of in-groups and out-groups and the assignment of meaning. Exclusionary in nature, boundary maintenance aids in the formation and management of group identity across gender, ethnicity, race, age, religion, or nationality, among other social and cultural categories. Due to its extensive conceptual variance in application (Lamont & Fournier 1992), boundary maintenance plays a recurrent role in research on sense of place. This research project combines sociological and urban design theory and methods of analysis to examine the ways in which Chinese American sense of place is informed by a built environment that serves dual functions for community members and outsiders.

## Data and Methodology

This project draws on qualitative data, namely interviews and mental maps. I interviewed individuals currently living and/or working in Chinatown and individuals who had spent more than a year living and/or working in the neighborhood at some point in their life, for a total of fifteen interviews. I chose the Chinatown neighborhood as the site for examining the relationship between the Chinese American community and the built environment because the neighborhood is nearly 90 percent ethnically Chinese and home to more than eight thousand residents according to the most recently published estimates (Lee 2013).

I identified interview candidates I considered to be community leaders through their titles or roles in various Chinatown public and social-service organizations, such as the Chinatown Public Library, Pui Tak Center, CBCAC, or CASL and contacted them directly through publicly available contact information or snowball sampling (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981) from their colleagues. Community resident interviewees were recruited using fliers posted in community centers and in public Facebook groups. I contacted architects for interviews through a firm's online site, from referrals, or through snowball sampling. Both of the architects I interviewed are Chinese American and are currently or were previously

involved in a project for Chinatown. By interviewing both community leaders and members with differing agendas and levels of engagement with Chinatown, I was able to construct a more comprehensive portrait of community life as informed by the built environment. Additionally, interviews with architects provided technical and ideological insight into Chinatown's overall design and the intended purposes of some of its public spaces.

I conducted fifteen in-person, in-depth interviews in October 2018 (see appendix 1). Eight interviews were conducted with community leaders, five with community members, and two with architects. Interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour and thirty minutes, with the average interview lasting one hour. As the majority of my data relies on in-depth interviews and mental maps that reveal individual rationalizations and narratives, I account for the likelihood that my data may represent more extreme viewpoints and is not generalizable nor fully representative of the entire Chinatown community (Mueller & Abrutyn 2016).

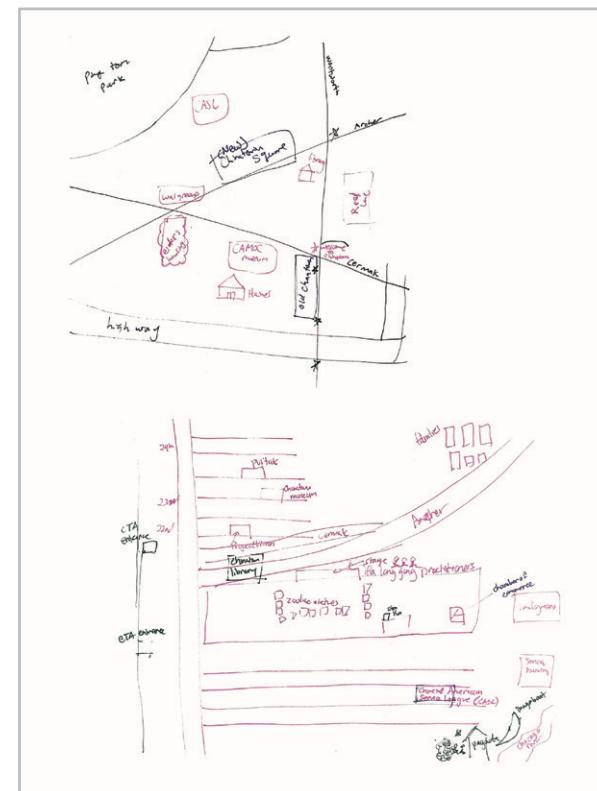
I audio-recorded each interview and used the Temi transcription service for the initial transcription, using the platform's editing features to play back each interview at a slower speed and correct any inconsistencies between the recording and the transcript. I then used qualitative hand-coding to identify common themes and to analyze my data (Saldaña 2016). Before reading the transcripts, I outlined several broader themes I knew had reoccurred throughout all of my interviews, such as immigration, family, or mention of a physical location in Chinatown. I then used abductive reasoning (Timmermans & Tavory 2012) to identify additional or unexpected themes through detailed coding of the transcripts. From this detailed coding process, eighteen specific themes emerged. I then used "focused" coding to analyze three transcripts (one from a community leader, one from a community member, and one from an architect) to determine whether or not these eighteen themes were consistent and relevant across all of my data. The analysis section condenses these themes into three broader categories: physical boundaries, generational

boundaries, and cultural boundaries, as defined by the surrounding built environment. As my research details, these boundaries effectively serve as a lens for observing the ways in which the Chinatown community negotiates insider versus outsider understandings of Chinese identity.

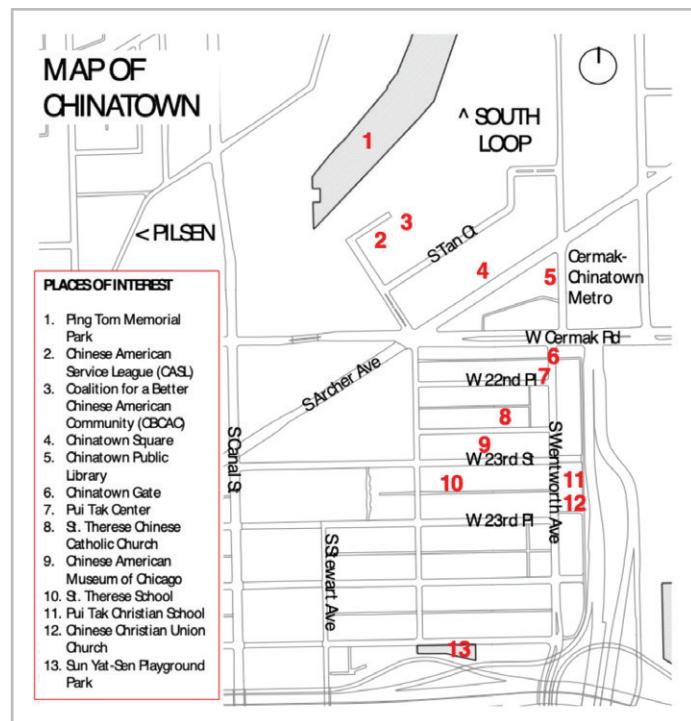
Kevin Lynch (1960) developed mental maps, also referred to as cognitive mapping, in 1960 as a tool for representing how individuals distinguish “relationships between space, place, and social and physical features of the physical and built environment” (Powell 2010). I interpret the cognitive maps generated by my interview participants according to well-established and existing methodologies that outline specific procedures for using and interpreting this visual information (Pacione 1978, Richardson 1981, Montazemi & Conrath 1986). These methods underscore the behavioral, psychological, and social implications nested in cognitive maps. In particular, cognitive maps often identify contextual factors that affect decision-making and provide individualistic constructions of an interviewee’s environment, contributing to my understanding of how space is perceived on an individual level (Montazemi & Conrath 1986).

Mental maps function as important analytical and organizational representations of space and place, and many researchers have used them to study placemaking and representational forms of space qualitatively (Pacione 1978; Richardson 1981, Montazemi & Conrath 1986, Mendoza 2006, Mendoza & Ortiz 2006). As Mendoza explains, “These spatial representations may be composed of organizing elements which are central to people’s lives (or may lack any element that defines a place).... [They] are an amalgam of information and interpretation which reflects not only what an individual knows about the places but also how he/she feels about them” (2006, p. 544). An individual’s objective place-based knowledge and his or her subjective, emotional responses to place provide important insights into the layered meanings that built environments can acquire physically, cognitively, and psychologically. Furthermore, I believe these methods of qualitative coding and interpreting cognitive maps are effective for the purposes of my research

as preexisting research on the construction, maintenance, or erasure of Chinese American ethnic and cultural identity in the United States has utilized similar or equivalent forms of data collection and interpretation (Kuo & Lin 1977, Wong 2002, Li 2015b). Included here are two examples of mental maps generated by respondents (see fig. 3), as well as a map indicating places of communal interest that research participants identified most frequently in the speaking and/or mapping portion of the interview (see fig. 4).



**Figure 3:** Chinatown mental maps created by research participants.



**Figure 4:** Chinatown Places of Interest

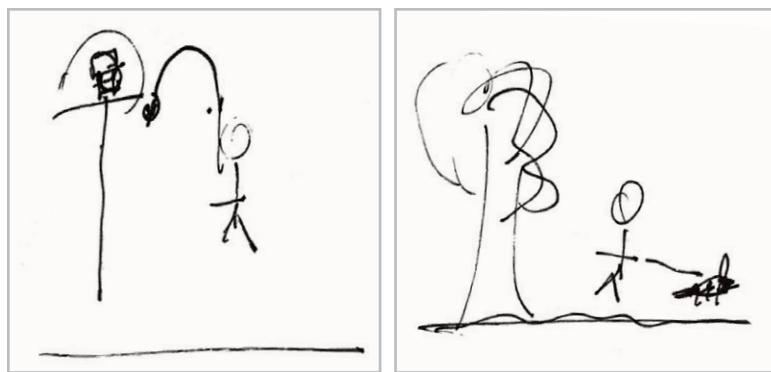
## Analysis

On the whole, research participants had fairly positive views about the Chinatown community and were hopeful about the future growth and potential of the Chinese American community beyond the boundaries of the neighborhood. Residents and nonresidents alike cited the predominance of community organizations and family associations as crucial resources, as well as the Chinese American community's heightened political voice through the election of State Representative Theresa Mah—the first Asian American to serve in the Illinois House of Representatives—as indicative of Chinatown's increasing vitality and visibility.

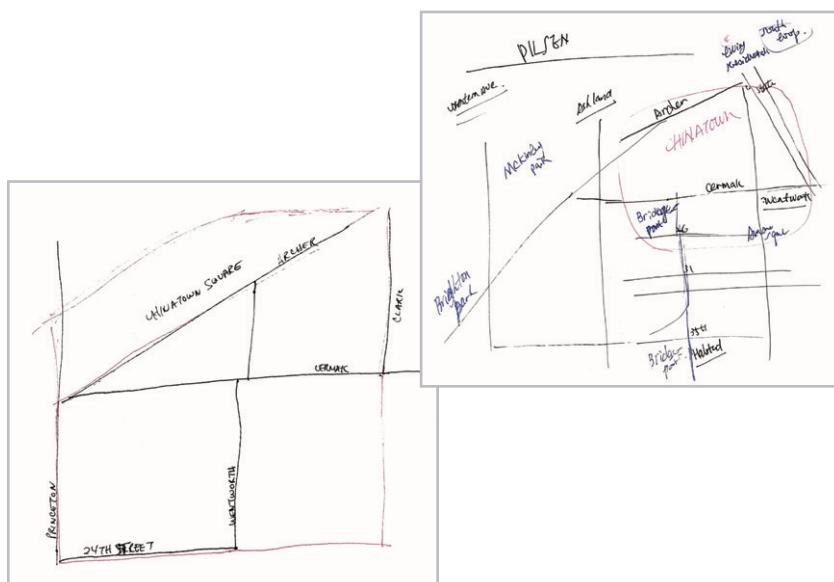
A treasured and well-preserved cultural heritage, general walkability throughout the neighborhood, and resistance to gentrification also contribute to a strong sense of place and belonging. In fact, many research participants pointed out that Chicago's Chinatown is the only Chinatown in the United States currently expanding in size, especially into neighboring Bridgeport, South Loop, McKinley Park, and Brighton Park. In contrast, most other Chinatowns in the country are experiencing economic and population decline (Eltagouri 2016). While research participants had few criticisms about the state of their community, there was an overwhelming consensus over safety concerns, particularly involving homelessness and theft, and a perceived lack of space in Chinatown that inhibits large scale development and investment opportunities.

## Physical Boundaries

Overall, most research participants identified Chinatown as very walkable and easily navigable—likely due to its small physical size and high density, as one can walk from its northernmost tip in Ping Tom Memorial Park to its southernmost point in Sun Yat-Sen Park in approximately fifteen to twenty minutes. Even “greater Chinatown,” an area that loosely incorporates neighboring Bridgeport, South Loop, McKinley Park, and Brighton Park, and more distant areas with high concentrations of Chinese American residents are easily accessible via local bus routes (the Chicago Transit Authority’s Red Line runs parallel to the neighborhood) and nearby Interstates 55 and 90. Despite the diversity of transportation offerings, Jeanne, who has a public health background, noted that the community “really need[s] to put more emphasis on community access and having walkable streets rather than driving cars.... You don’t have to be rich or poor to have access to these things. It helps with having a healthier lifestyle.” Recent planning projects in the neighborhood also point to the community’s heightened focus on walkability and accessibility within Chinatown. Arthur, whose architecture firm is currently involved in redesigning and straightening the streetscape along



**Figure 5:** Tim's aspirational images of Chinatown, with basketball courts (L) and dog parks (R).



**Figure 6:** Mental maps of different scale, but with the same official boundaries outlined in pink.

Wentworth Avenue and its intersection with West Cermak Road, believes the project will transform a parking lot under the Red Line that runs adjacent to Wentworth Avenue into a lively commercial strip that will activate the streetscape and increase Chinatown's mixed-use density.

The largest complaint regarding accessibility in Chinatown centered around green spaces. Participants deemed both Sun-Yat Sen and Ping Tom Parks as relatively inaccessible or even unpleasant due to their proximity to busy streets or highways. One participant noted that Ping Tom Park feels “hidden” because you have to cross railroad tracks behind a series of recently developed high-density housing complexes in order to access the park. Within the park itself, oversights in urban and landscape planning hamper some community members’ ability to enjoy the space. When asked about the appeal, or lack of appeal, of certain public spaces, John explained: “I wouldn’t say people would like to stay in [Ping Tom] park for a long time.... There are not many places to sit.” However, plans to expand the Chicago Riverwalk along Ping Tom Park has Chinatown hopeful about future tourism opportunities, as well as the expansion of green space and increased walkability in the neighborhood. For instance, Tim, who grew up in Chinatown, created an aspirational mental map of Chinatown, detailing recreational spaces where he could play sports with friends or walk his dog—amenities he finds lacking in Chinatown’s current urban landscape (see fig. 5).

Due to the predominance of natural and physical barriers, such as the Chicago River to the north and west, the Red Line to the east, and the highway to the south, historic Chinatown has clear geographical borders that were almost always observed in the cognitive maps that featured community boundaries for the neighborhood (see fig. 6). While a sense of place and belonging can vary immensely according to scale (Rose 1995), most of the cognitive maps generated by my research participants depicted Chinatown at a scale that mirrored its official, city-designated neighborhood boundaries. I believe this reflects a widespread understanding of the community's physical boundaries shared by insiders (community members) as well as outsiders (policymakers, tourists, and other Chicagoans).

While these barriers give residents and visitors to historic Chinatown a very firm and mutual understanding of the neighborhood's physical extent, many locals feel limited by the lack of space, as reflected by the expansion of the Chinese American community into neighboring South Loop, Bridgeport, McKinley Park, and Brighton Park, or even as distant as Chicago's suburbs. As one participant noted "[Chinatown is] close [to meeting a threshold for density]. It's getting close. So, I do see more and more families moving down what I call the Archer corridor, down to Bridgeport [and] McKinley Park." As a result, many of the participants I interviewed had a very fluid understanding of the population boundaries of the broader Chinese American community, and did not associate Chicago's Chinese population strictly with Chinatown proper. As Margaret, who works in local politics, observes:

Growing up, I've always thought most of the Chinese people live within [historic] Chinatown. But then through working in my current capacity.... [I know] Bridgeport has ... more of a Chinese constituency, so that was interesting because I've always felt that [Chinatown] had a higher density [of Chinese residents], but if you count how many families live in Bridgeport, I would say that's where most of the Chinese community live, but then they come to Chinatown for grocery shopping and restaurants.

In other words, Chinatown functions as an important hub for commercial and cultural activity for many Chinese Americans in the Chicago area, but due to its geographic constraints, only houses a limited number of Chinese residents, who are predominately older and seek out Chinatown due to its physical and linguistic navigability. As a result, many community members and leaders feel there is little room for continued development in Chinatown and that it has met its threshold in terms of growth opportunities. Some participants expressed concern that new infrastructure, construction, or increased density might come at the cost of destroying older, historical structures. At the same time, some

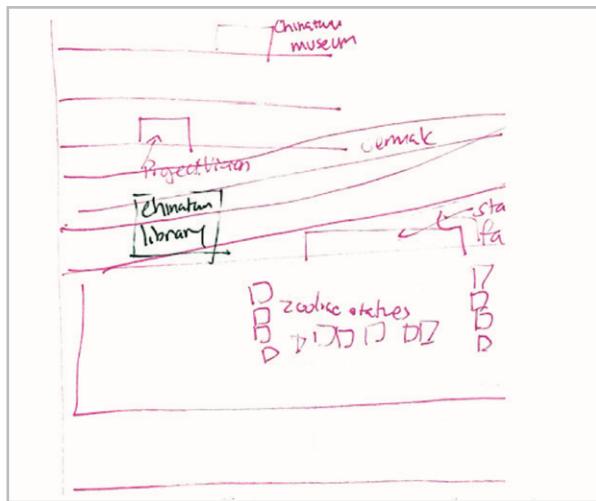
residents fear that geographic restraints may hurt Chinatown's appeal for future development or investment opportunities and detract from the neighborhood's ability to market itself as an attractive destination with modern amenities.

## Generational Boundaries

Community organizations and family associations function as essential third places—a neutral social gathering space separate from work or home (Oldenburg 2001)—in the Chinatown community. Residents and non-residents of all ages frequent spaces such as the Chinatown Library, Pui Tak Center, Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC), or Chinese American Service League (CASL) for employment opportunities, child care, health care, help with the immigration process, voter registration, and even English lessons. These third places also provide important spaces for socialization and gathering in the neighborhood, especially for schoolchildren and the elderly. In particular, residents commented on the welcoming atmosphere of the public library, which opened in 2015:

I remember talking to the head librarian [of the Chinatown Chicago Public Library] and like the first day they were open, they were averaging one thousand two hundred people a day, which probably for libraries is pretty unheard of.... So I think the librarians just decided, okay, let's just make the community feel welcome in the library. And so if you go on Saturdays, they have Chinese opera playing in their community room.... I think the librarians have given up on hushing people and just make it more of a lively place than probably any other library would be.

The library was one of the most frequently cited spaces when research participants were asked to identify popular public or communal spaces, both in the interview and cognitive map portions of the conversation. The library was a definitive landmark on cognitive maps and often the



**Figure 7:** Mental map with Chinatown's library in black, to underscore its importance.



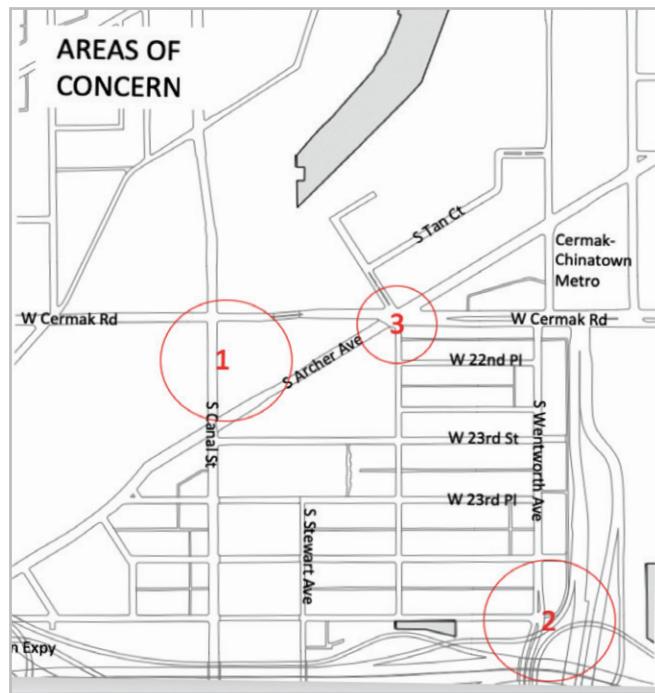
**Figure 8:** Mental Map of "New Chinatown" versus "Old Chinatown"

second or third item drawn when participants were composing their maps (see fig. 7). Notably, the library appears to be one of the most universally beloved public space, whereas community organizations or family associations were at times criticized for their political agendas or lack of programming diversity. The library was cited as an important and versatile public space that served functional needs as a study space or resource for searching and applying for jobs, in addition to providing "lively" opportunities for socialization and engagement in cultural activities and clubs.

The most apparent generational divides in the built environment occurred across spaces of consumption: "New Chinatown" versus "Old Chinatown" (see fig. 8). Almost all of the residents identified the commercial strip along Wentworth Avenue as "Old Chinatown," a space most often frequented by elderly members of the community and families. Conversely, "New Chinatown" or Chinatown Square, a more recent bi-level commercial development, features trendier restaurants and shops and international chains that cater to teens and young adults. Many participants also noted that Chinatown Square appealed to Chinese international students attending school in the city as well as non-Chinese tourists and other Chicagoans.

## Racial and Cultural Boundaries

In both the interview and cognitive map components of my discussions about safety in Chinatown, individuals were quick to point out three specific areas in which they felt unsafe or which they felt had a reputation for being dangerous (see fig. 9). The first is located under the viaducts that intersect with Cermak Road and Archer Avenue to the west; the second is the portion of Wentworth Avenue that intersects with West 24th Place and the expressways; the third is the intersection at Cermak Road, Archer Avenue, and Princeton Avenue. The first and second locations house homeless encampments or have been the site of recurrent thefts, and many identified the third location as a frequent site for traffic congestion and pedestrian and vehicle accidents.



**Figure 9:** Areas of Concern

Many residents expressed generally welcoming attitudes towards outsiders, who were predominately identified as tourists or other Chicagoans of Caucasian or Asian backgrounds. According to community members, these outsiders are essential to the local economy and do not pose any threat of gentrification or displacement. Several respondents even mentioned methods or strategies the community might enlist in order to further promote Chinatown as a tourist destination, such as more nightlife to attract young adults. This welcoming sentiment excluded Chinatown's predominately Black homeless population; "people's main concern here is around safety and oftentimes it's very anti-Black" noted one interviewee. Despite these fears, however, Chinatown experiences much lower levels of crime and violence than other neighborhoods in Chicago, as pointed out by a participant who frequents community

meetings with the Chicago Police Department. Regardless of these statistics, the local community perceives of safety and crime as significant problems:

I would say safety has always been a really big issue and it continues to be, so it's definitely something I see that needs to be changed. Yeah, there's not really any action towards [fixing] that. I don't know what has to be done, but people are constantly getting injured and hurt and hospitalized.... Chinatown is getting so much more dangerous now. You can't go out at night, you can't be alone, so I want to see that get better.

Many participants cited an inadequate police presence and inconsistent reporting on behalf of residents as reasons for the neighborhood's persistent crime and homelessness problems. In fact, some residents have formed their own neighborhood watch group as a means of overcoming language barriers with the police and encouraging locals to report criminal or suspicious behavior. Notably, the most successful or popular communal spaces identified by participants were indoor spaces. Public outdoor spaces such as the Chinatown Square Plaza or Ping Tom Park had less uniformly positive associations for interviewees and were less frequented throughout the day. Participants' clear preferences for indoor spaces as centers for placemaking and community-building point to some noticeable oversights in the neighborhood's overall planning and design. Future efforts to reimagine Chinatown's built environment might benefit from creating more engaging and accessible outdoor spaces.

While a handful of individuals were critical of the overtly Chinese or Eastern aesthetic of certain structures in Chinatown, most saw the use of traditional symbolism, iconography, or architecture as serving a crucial role in underscoring Chinatown's culturally and historically informed sense of identity. Not only do these structures lend a greater sense of permanence and belonging to the surrounding area, they also serve as important symbolic markers for outsiders. Architectural and aesthetic

markers, such as archways, pagoda-style roof adornments, and Chinese-looking statues and façades dominated by the color red, signify to out-groups a space that is recognizably Asian. The role of aesthetics in defining Chinatown's built environment extends beyond outsider expectations, however. When asked whether it is important for community members to see Eastern or Chinese architectural styles reflected in the built environment, one participant responded, "I think so, because if it's not [there], then what makes it Chinatown?" Another noted, "I think it's important to have some kind of Chinese style expressed through the architectural style. If you want to remodel it, you still need to have some kind of thing that can symbolize Chinese culture."

Regardless of cultural authenticity or accuracy, the persistence of Chinese-styled buildings, gateways, or public art is important for preserving Chinatown's touristic appeal and for promoting a sense of local pride in the community's culture and heritage. One participant noted that these styles help "mark the area as being Asian ... as being Chinese." Moving forward, however, residents appear split as to whether new buildings should continue to incorporate these styles or diverge from them and embrace more contemporary aesthetics that challenge the community to shape its identity into something different. One participant was adamant about new construction incorporating traditional elements into its designs:

For me, I like the [buildings] that are traditional because it's hard to recreate that now. Like we can make everything modern, but that will maybe be out of place. So I'm okay with structures where it combines kind of like the modern take with the traditional. But I think all the modern buildings have to still have a traditional element to it.

On the other end of the spectrum, some participants—typically younger interviewees or architectural professionals—were more willing to incorporate different aesthetics and architectural styles into the built

environment as a means of reassessing and reimagining the community's identity in a contemporary context. Arthur, who is an architect, noted,

I think that the future holds the discovery of a new identity [for Chinese Americans in Chinatown], of who we are. That's why I was really happy about ... the Chinatown Library.... It's a very modern building.... Place-making isn't about place, it's about the people who inhabit that place.... I think there are things that you always want to remind people about [like] who they are and what their history is, but [creating a new architectural or aesthetic identity] can be done.

The tension between envisioning a new architectural or aesthetic identity while at the same time honoring Chinatown's longstanding historical legacy was a latent topic in many of the conversations I had with participants about public space and the future of Chinatown. While components of the built environment that appeared Chinese or Eastern were often cited as important symbolic markers of Chinatown's cultural and ethnic identity (see figs. 10 & 11), the Chinatown Library, which is more contemporary in design (see fig. 12), serves as a focal point for cultural life and social gathering in Chinatown. With regards to the future of Chinatown, new development stands to benefit from residents' assessments about the importance of architectural form versus function. Architects, planners, and developers should seek to merge the symbolic and social potential of design as a means of reinforcing existing notions about Chinatown, in addition to prompting the neighborhood to reevaluate and adapt their understanding of identity and community moving forward.



**Figure 10:**  
Pui Tak Center  
(*Red Line Project*)



**Figure 11:**  
Chinatown Gate  
(*Trover*)



**Figure 12:**  
Chinatown's Public  
Library (*Chicago  
Public Library*)

## Conclusion

Chinatown has prevailed as an anomaly among its peers, expanding not only in population size, but also witnessing a steady growth in economic opportunities, outside investment, and political visibility on a citywide scale. Notably, the community has been successful in leveraging a shared cultural and historical legacy as a means of not only appealing to outsiders, a crucial form of revenue, but also securing its own sense of belonging. This form of split identity is only strengthened by institutional and structural frameworks of support, with community organizations and family associations promoting both assimilation into and protection from mainstream American culture and society. Arguably, Chinatown's ability to find a balance between performance and insularity, particularly as embodied by the built environment, is central to the community's distinctive identity.

The results of this research complement existing work in the field, reinforcing theories of boundary maintenance, segregation, place attachment, collective efficacy, and social cohesion as central components to our understanding of sense of place. More notably, it recommends a thorough integration of mental mapping practices, urban design, and planning principles into future sociological research. The incorporation of this visual data adds an important spatial and sensorial dimension to studies on sense of place and identity, which are largely predicated on the results of interview and ethnographic data. This two-dimensional realization of space allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals conceive of and interact with their physical environments.

If I were to expand this project further, I would add ethnographic data and more qualitative analysis to supplement and strengthen the data and allow for a more nuanced understanding of community and public space. In particular, I would conduct ethnographies in the sites my interview respondents most frequently identified as communal or public spaces in order to provide a clearer picture of how both in-groups and out-groups utilize and interpret different facets of the built environment. The

inclusion of neighboring communities with large Chinese American populations such as Bridgeport and McKinley Park in my interview pool might also shed light on the ways in which a distinctly Chinese American sense of place and community is defined in a built environment that is less overtly Oriental in appearance.

Future research should enlist similar tactics for examining sense of place and community identity in other Chicago neighborhoods with large minority populations, Chinatowns around the country, ethnic enclaves in general, or immigrant communities located in suburban or rural contexts. Due to the small field of study, the results of this project may not be indicative of how all minority or immigrant groups negotiate belonging in the context of American culture and society. However, the dynamic and divergent understandings of sense of place and community for Chinese Americans in Chicago's Chinatown may point to this specific built environment's heightened role as marker and anchor of identity and belonging for minority or marginalized groups.

With regards to future policy and design implications, the results of this research underscore the importance of policymakers, architects, and urban planners making more concerted efforts to integrate themselves into the communities they intend to serve in order to design more effective plans for the future. Despite Chinatown's fairly homogenous ethnic and racial makeup, research participants expressed a variety of concerns and opinions about the state of their community, highlighting subtle conflicts between pressures to conform to outsider expectations about what it means to be Chinese American and a desire to realize an authentic and inclusive sense of community. With regards to the built environment in particular, the undeniable success of the Chinatown Public Library—which is decidedly absent of self-Orientalization—as a multifaceted public resource for all members of the community points to the ways in which more open-ended aesthetic and architectural formal choices can imbue a space with greater functional flexibility and future potential. ○

## Appendix I: Research Participant Demographics

PSEUDONYM	ROLE	LIVES / HAS LIVED IN CHINATOWN		GENDER
		WORKS / HAS WORKED IN CHINATOWN		
Jeanne	Community development coordinator		○	F
Linda	Museum executive director		○	F
Margaret	Constituent services coordinator			F
Ying	Senior wellness and independence manager		○	M
Fei	Head librarian		○	F
George	Executive director		○	M
Nancy	Community organizer		○	F
John	Employment and financial empowerment manager		○	M
Zheng	Community member		○	F
Sophie	Community member		○	F
Christine	Community member		○	F
Tim	Community member		○	M
Lesley	Community member		○	F
Ping	Architect		○	M
Arthur	Architect		○	M

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# Presumed Innocent, Yet Purged from the Rolls



## Navigating Welfare Programs upon Release from Cook County Jail

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### Introduction

"So I'm on the 94 [Damen bus], right in front of the [Cook County Criminal] courthouse, and this guy gets on and starts waving his discharge paper, begging the driver to let him get on. I get up and pay for his fare, then he sits next to me and I ask him, 'Where are you going?' and he says, 'Honestly, I'm just trying to get out of here.... The jail said I should just show these papers to people on public transit and see what happens.'<sup>1</sup> While this is only one anecdote of an interaction that Matt McLoughlin of the Chicago Community Bond Fund had with a person recently released from Cook County Jail, it represents the general level of assistance provided by the Cook County Sheriff's Office to those released from jail. Where they end up after discharge is uncertain. Some reunite with loved ones waiting for them in the Bond Room, while others attempt to take the 94 and get as far away as possible. If someone's immediate destination is unclear, what does that suggest about future ones?

1. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019. Appendix A lists all interviewees mentioned in the text.

“They all come back,” is a common way to frame the issue of people leaving carceral institutions like Cook County Jail to ambiguous circumstances.<sup>2</sup> Due to mass incarceration, communities are dealing with millions of people “coming back” each year, creating a crisis of reentry that necessitates action and intervention.<sup>3</sup> More people exit jails than prisons each year, but the majority of scholarship and policy is on convicted individuals leaving prisons rather than individuals awaiting trial and released from jails, such as the man waving his discharge papers on the bus.<sup>4</sup> Reentry into society after conviction creates obvious challenges, such as access to welfare programs.<sup>5</sup> The reentry of the pretrial population should be of equal concern due to its size and similar needs.

To understand the true scope of mass incarceration, we need more research on the individuals whose involvement with the justice system is with jails and not prisons. Sixty percent of the national jail population and 85 percent of Cook County Jail’s population are pretrial.<sup>6</sup> Although the majority of jail detainees in the United States are not convicts, individuals who spend even “a few hours at jail” can experience “far-reaching

2. Jeremy Travis, *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005).

3. Bruce Western and Becky Pettit, “Incarceration and Social Inequality,” *Daedalus* 139, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 8, [www.amacad.org/publication/incarceration-social-inequality](http://www.amacad.org/publication/incarceration-social-inequality); National Reentry Resource Center, “Facts and Trends,” Bureau of Justice Assistance, US Department of Justice, n.d., accessed Feb. 9, 2019, [nationalreentryresourcecenter.org//facts-and-trends](http://nationalreentryresourcecenter.org//facts-and-trends).

4. Ibid.

5. For example, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 bars drug felons from receiving welfare. See section 115 in Pub. L. No. 104–193, 110 Stat. 105 (1996).

6. Kevin Keenan and Emily Whitfield, eds., “The State of Jails” in *The State of Justice* (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2017), [www.vera.org/state-of-justice-reform/2017/the-state-of-jails](http://www.vera.org/state-of-justice-reform/2017/the-state-of-jails); Business Intelligence Unit, *Jail Population Characteristics 2018-01-24* (Chicago: Cook County Sheriff’s Office, Jan. 1, 2018).

impacts not only on the individuals themselves, but also on their families and communities.”<sup>7</sup> Most detainees spend much longer in jail. The national average jail detention was twenty-five days in 2016, and the Cook County Jail average was 57.4 days in 2012.<sup>8</sup> This suggests that the consequences of pretrial detention is a concern in Cook County, which has the second largest jail in the country.<sup>9</sup>

Cook County Jail is an ideal case study of how individuals access public assistance, due to the large number of detentions and releases from a single location into a large urban area.<sup>10</sup> Cook County Jail is the “largest single-site jail in America,” a massive complex that spans ninety-six acres, or the “size of seventy-two football fields,” approximately five miles southwest of Chicago’s central business district.<sup>11</sup> On November 1, 2018, it

7. Business Intelligence Unit, *Jail Population Characteristics 2018-01-24*.

8. Zhen Zheng, *Jail Inmates in 2016* (Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Feb. 2018), 6, [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ji16.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ji16.pdf); “Length of Stay,” Cook County Performance Management, n.d., accessed Feb. 10, 2021, [performance-archive.cookcountyil.gov/Public-Safety/Length-of-Stay/ydqd-2c8s](http://performance-archive.cookcountyil.gov/Public-Safety/Length-of-Stay/ydqd-2c8s).

9. On June 10, 2010, Harris County Jail (Houston) housed 10,264 inmates and Cook County Jail housed 9,777. See David E. Olson and Sema Taheri, “Population Dynamics and the Characteristics of Inmates in the Cook County Jail,” *Cook County Sheriff’s Reentry Council Research Bulletin*, Feb. 2012, 3, [ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=criminaljustice\\_facpubs](http://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=criminaljustice_facpubs).

10. “Over one third of defendants leave jail when they post bond … more than ten thousand detainees leave jail because their cases have been dismissed. Still others are sentenced to time served or probation.” Ali Abid, *Pretrial Delay and Length of Stay in the Cook County Jail: Observations and Recommendations* (Chicago: Chicago Appleseed Center Fund for Justice, Oct. 2013), 3, [chicagoappleseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CAFFJ-Pre-Trial-Delay-and-Length-of-Stay-Final.pdf](http://chicagoappleseed.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CAFFJ-Pre-Trial-Delay-and-Length-of-Stay-Final.pdf).

11. Matt Ford, “America’s Largest Mental Hospital Is a Jail,” *Atlantic*, June 8, 2015; Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve, “The Waiting Room,” Marshall Project, Oct. 31, 2018, [www.themarshallproject.org/2018/10/31/the-waiting-room](http://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/10/31/the-waiting-room).

held 6,046 individuals, with 83.6 percent in pretrial status.<sup>12</sup> The jail releases several hundred people per day, and the majority return to Chicago neighborhoods in which they lived prior to incarceration.<sup>13</sup> I will examine how pretrial detention affects access to welfare in two ways: by disrupting current access or by exacerbating prior disconnection.

Research demonstrates that receipt of welfare benefits leads to positive reentry outcomes and lower rates of recidivism.<sup>14</sup> A comparative study found that “countries that spend a greater proportion of GDP on welfare have lower imprisonment rates” and that “the United States spends the smallest proportion of its GDP on welfare and has by far the highest imprisonment.”<sup>15</sup> Cook County Jail leadership is interested broadly in the reentry process, but it also struggles with recidivism.<sup>16</sup> I argue that

12. Business Intelligence Unit, *Sheriff's Daily Report 11/1/2018* (Chicago: Cook County Sheriff's Office, Nov. 1, 2018), [www.cookcountysheriff.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CCSO\\_BIU\\_CommunicationsCCDOC\\_v1\\_2018\\_11\\_01.pdf](http://www.cookcountysheriff.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CCSO_BIU_CommunicationsCCDOC_v1_2018_11_01.pdf); Business Intelligence Unit, *Jail Population Characteristics 2018-01-24*.

13. Olson and Taheri, 4, 6.

14. Erkmen Giray Aslim et al., *The Effect of Public Health Insurance on Criminal Recidivism*, Law and Economics Research Paper Series, vol. 19 (Fairfax, VA: George Mason University, July 23, 2019), 1–54, [papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3425457](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3425457); Julie Costopolous et al., “The Impact of US Government Assistance on Recidivism,” *Criminal Behavioral Mental Health* 4 (Oct. 2017): 303–11, [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27038185](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27038185/); Crystal S. Yang, “Does Public Assistance Reduce Recidivism?” *American Economic Review* 107, no. 5 (May 2017): 551–55, [www.law.harvard.edu/programs/olin\\_center/papers/pdf/Yang\\_920.pdf](https://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/olin_center/papers/pdf/Yang_920.pdf).

15. David Downes and Kirstine Hansen, *Welfare and Punishment: The Relationship between Welfare Spending and Imprisonment* (London: Crime and Society Foundation, Nov. 2006), 1, 4, [static.prisonpolicy.org/scans/csf/WelfareandPunishment\\_embargo.pdf](http://static.prisonpolicy.org/scans/csf/WelfareandPunishment_embargo.pdf).

16. Lesley Stahl, “Sheriff Tom Dart on 60 Minutes,” *60 Minutes*, May 21, 2017, [www.cbsnews.com/news/cook-county-jail-sheriff-tom-dart-on-60-minutes](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/cook-county-jail-sheriff-tom-dart-on-60-minutes). In 2011, Cook County Jail admitted 10,938 men and 1,178 women two or more times during the year; see Olson and Taheri, 3.

there needs to be more research on whether the length of time spent at the jail affects access to welfare, whether pretrial detention creates these barriers or exacerbates existing barriers to receiving welfare, and how the jail can combat these challenges. I will focus on Medicaid, SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and SSI (Supplemental Security Income) benefits, due to several factors that I will explain in the next section and in my analysis.

People leaving Cook County Jail face formal and informal barriers. Federal and state statutes and Cook County Jail policies create the formal barriers; bureaucratic practices and personal circumstances, such as insecure housing, create the informal barriers. Pretrial detention causes a coverage gap for people who had access to Medicaid, SNAP, and/or SSI prior to incarceration and exacerbates disconnections that others had from these programs prior to incarceration. The longer someone is detained, the more likely they are to lose access to the programs.

I recommend that federal, state, and county governments establish policies and programs to connect the disconnected. Not only is there an obligation to prevent disconnections created by a process that jails people who are presumed innocent, but there are public health, safety, and economic reasons for combating these barriers. Access to Medicaid, SNAP, or SSI is linked to better health outcomes and lower rates of recidivism, suggesting that any barriers to access are harmful in the long run to society. My research reimagines jails, like Cook County Jail, as having a role to play in removing some of the vulnerabilities of reentry.

## Case Study and Program Selection

I selected Cook County Jail for two reasons: population size and location in a state with expanded access to Medicaid and SNAP, which increases the number and likelihood of former detainees eligible for public aid. Cook County Jail is a massive compound that processes hundreds of people daily (196.3 admission and 201 discharges per day), with an average daily population of 9,000.<sup>17</sup> Not only are many people leaving, but a significant portion (approximately 9,500) were “admitted to the jail multiple times in 2011.”<sup>18</sup> The majority return to the South and West Sides, which have above-average poverty and below-average high-school graduation rates, suggesting limited opportunities and a poor reentry environment.<sup>19</sup> A sample of former Illinois state prisoners (of which a large portion were detained at Cook County Jail prior to sentencing) showed that “54 percent returned to just seven of the seventy-seven Chicago neighborhoods,” all of which have similar situations of poverty, high unemployment, and social disinvestment.<sup>20</sup> Within Cook County Jail, 62.5 percent of inmates who lived in three West Side neighborhoods (Austin, Garfield Park, and Lawndale) “returned to the jail within the three-year follow-up period,” compared to 51.8 percent of detainees from “other community areas in Chicago and the suburbs.”<sup>21</sup> The large churn of individuals from impoverished areas creates a site suitable for research

17. Olson and Taheri, 1, 4, 6.

18. Ibid., 3.

19. Ibid., 4; Christy Visher and Jill Farrell, *Chicago Communities and Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Sept. 2005), 3, [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42891/311225-Chicago-Communities-and-Prisoner-Reentry.PDF](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42891/311225-Chicago-Communities-and-Prisoner-Reentry.PDF).

20. Visher and Farrell, 3.

21. David E. Olson, “Characteristics of Inmates in the Cook County Jail,” *Cook County Sheriff’s Reentry Council Research Bulletin*, Mar. 1, 2011, 7, [ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=criminaljustice\\_facpubs](http://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=criminaljustice_facpubs).

on a reentering population that might be enrolled in or attempting to enroll in welfare programs.

I selected Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI because these programs allow single individuals to apply. The majority of the jail’s pretrial population is independent adult men.<sup>22</sup> Otherwise known as able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD), they are excluded from other programs that prioritize families.<sup>23</sup> Individual eligibility means incarceration could be the causal factor in whether a person is admitted to or remained on the rolls of one of my target programs. This direct analysis between pretrial incarceration and public assistance means my analysis could be applicable to future research on how to avoid recidivism, which is beyond the scope of my thesis.

Medicaid, the jointly funded federal and state health-insurance program for citizens and permanent residents, and SNAP, the federally funded and state-administered food allowance, are based on need.<sup>24</sup> The majority of the pretrial population qualifies for these programs. A 2018 study found that 56 percent of incarcerated individuals had no prior income and that the average income was only \$12,780 among former workers.<sup>25</sup>

22. Jane Longo, interview with the author, [Dec. 15, 2018].

23. Anne Marie Buron, *Systemic Barriers to SNAP Benefits for Able-bodied Adults without Dependents* (Chicago: Illinois Hunger Coalition, Feb. 14, 2017), 2–3, [ilhunger.org/resources/systemicbarriersforabawds.pdf](http://ilhunger.org/resources/systemicbarriersforabawds.pdf).

24. “Medicaid,” US Center for Medicare and Medicaid, n.d., accessed Feb. 3, 2019, [www.healthcare.gov/glossary/medicaid](http://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/medicaid); “Facts About SNAP,” Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, Aug. 14, 2019, [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/facts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/facts).

25. Adam Looney and Nicholas Turner, *Work and Opportunity before and after Incarceration* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Mar. 2018), 7–8, [www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/es\\_20180314\\_looneyincarceration\\_final.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/es_20180314_looneyincarceration_final.pdf). The federal poverty line is \$12,490 for an individual; therefore, many pretrial individuals qualify for welfare programs if they meet other eligibility requirements. See Alison Evans Cuellar and Jehanzeb Cheema, “Health Care Reform, Behavior Health, and the Criminal Justice Population,” *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research* 41, no. 4 (Oct. 2014): 453.

SSI, the federally funded Social Service Administration (SSA) program, is also need-based and helps the aged (over sixty-five) or disabled.<sup>26</sup> The county jail's population with mental illnesses might qualify for SSI: "Approximately 20 percent of inmates in jails ... have a serious mental illness," and "there are more mentally ill individuals in the Los Angeles County Jail, Chicago's Cook County Jail, or New York's Rikers Island Jail than in any psychiatric hospital in the United States."<sup>27</sup> Further, those with "psychiatric disability" or "impairment" from mental illness constitute the largest group of SSI recipients.<sup>28</sup>

Illinois has expansive eligibility standards for Medicaid and SNAP, which make it an ideal location for a reentry analysis, as my identified population is either already enrolled in or is eligible for benefits.<sup>29</sup> The federal government dictates SSI standards, though some states, like Illinois, offer additional payments to SSI beneficiaries.<sup>30</sup> I focus on the

26. "Fact Sheet. Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI): What's the Difference?" Social Security Administration, Nov. 2009, [www.ssa.gov/sf/Fact-Sheets/aianssavssifinalrev.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/sf/Fact-Sheets/aianssavssifinalrev.pdf)

27. Treatment Advocacy Center, *How Many Individuals with Serious Mental Illness Are in Jails and Prisons?* (Arlington, VA: Treatment Advocacy Center, Nov. 2014), 1, 2, [www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/backgrounder/how%20many%20individuals%20with%20serious%20mental%20illness%20are%20in%20jails%20and%20prisons%20final.pdf](http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/backgrounder/how%20many%20individuals%20with%20serious%20mental%20illness%20are%20in%20jails%20and%20prisons%20final.pdf).

28. Gary Bond, Haiyi Xie, and Robert E. Drake, "Can SSDI and SSI Beneficiaries with Mental Illness Benefit from Evidence-Based Supported Employment?" *Psychiatric Services* 58, no. 11 (Nov. 2007): 1,415.

29. US Department of Agriculture, *State Options Report: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*, 14th ed. (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, May 31, 2018), 2, 49 [fnss-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/14-State-Options.pdf](http://fnss-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/14-State-Options.pdf).

30. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Policy Basics: Supplemental Security Income* (Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2018), 2, [www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/PolicyBasics\\_SocSec-IntroToSSI.pdf](http://cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/PolicyBasics_SocSec-IntroToSSI.pdf).

federal SSI payment, because a barrier to federal SSI automatically means a barrier to state SSI.

The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act limits SNAP benefits to no more than three months in a thirty-six month period if applicants do not meet the following requirements: work at least twenty hours per week, participate in qualified education and training activities for at least twenty hours per week, or comply with a state-sanctioned "workfare" program.<sup>31</sup> Even a short period of incarceration prevents a person from meeting the SNAP work requirement. However, the federal government has granted Illinois an "ABAWD [able-bodied adult without dependents] waiver," which eliminates the work requirement in every county except for DuPage.<sup>32</sup> The majority discharged from Cook County Jail stay in the county and benefit from the waiver.

Illinois also has wider standards for Medicaid that make the majority of the jail's detainees eligible, based on income and regardless of dependent status. The Affordable Care Act (2010) expanded Medicaid coverage for adults without dependents making up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.<sup>33</sup> In 2012 the Supreme Court ruled that states have the right to expand or not expand Medicaid—Illinois was among the states that chose

31. Andrew Hammond and MacKenzie Speer, *SNAP's Time Limit: Emerging Issues in Litigation and Implementation* (Chicago: Heartland Alliance, 2017), 2, [www.heartlandalliance.org/policy-and-advocacy/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/09/SNAPs-Time-Limit-Emerging-Issues-1.pdf](http://www.heartlandalliance.org/policy-and-advocacy/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2017/09/SNAPs-Time-Limit-Emerging-Issues-1.pdf).

32. Buron, 3.

33. Larisa Antonisse et al., *The Effects of Medicaid Expansion Under the ACA: Updated Findings from a Literature Review* (Washington, DC: Kaiser Family Foundation, Mar. 2018), [files.kff.org/attachment/Issue-Brief-The-Effects-of-Medicaid-Expansion-Under-the-ACA-Updated-Findings-from-a-Literature-Review](http://files.kff.org/attachment/Issue-Brief-The-Effects-of-Medicaid-Expansion-Under-the-ACA-Updated-Findings-from-a-Literature-Review).

expansion.<sup>34</sup> As a result, Cook County Jail's low-income, ABAWD population is eligible for Medicaid.<sup>35</sup> Despite eligibility, individuals entering county jails are often uninsured.<sup>36</sup>

## Methodology

I analyzed documents, collected data from interviews, chose Cook County Jail as my case study, and surveyed the larger “map” of my case study: nonprofit and advocacy organizations that work with the formerly incarcerated in Cook County. For comparison, I conducted additional documentary analysis and interviews outside of the case-study area with government agencies, other urban jails, and nonprofits in states with expansive eligibility for Medicaid and SNAP.

First, I examined federal, state, and local welfare statutes in order to understand Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI in general and eligibility restrictions

34. National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius, 567 U.S. 519 (2012); Kathleen Gifford et al., *A View from the States: Key Medicaid Policy Changes* (Washington, DC: Kaiser Family Foundation, Oct. 2019), 5, 11, 17, 22, 38–43, 45–46, 48, 53, 56–59, 62, 64, 67–69, files.kff.org/attachment/Report-A-View-from-the-States-Key-Medicaid-Policy-Changes.

35. Of those entering local and county jails, 60 percent have earnings below the poverty line. See National Health Care for the Homeless Council, *Medicaid Expansion and Criminal Justice-Involved Populations: Opportunities for the Health Care for the Homeless Community* (Nashville, TN: National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Jan. 2013), 2, www.soa.org/globalassets/assets/Files/Sections/health-MedicaidExpansion-Justice-Final.pdf.

36. “A survey of San Francisco county jails found that about 90 percent of people who enter county jails have no health insurance. Another survey of inmates returning to the community from Illinois jails found that more than eight in ten were uninsured” after release. See Alexandra Gates, Samantha Artiga, and Robin Rudowitz, *Health Coverage and Care for the Adult Criminal Justice-Involved Population* (Washington, DC: Kaiser Family Foundation, Sept. 5, 2015), www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/health-coverage-and-care-for-the-adult-criminal-justice-involved-population.

due to pretrial detention specifically. Second, I reviewed policy briefs that study the statutes’ effects on the formerly incarcerated. Third, I reviewed internal policy procedures from correctional and welfare agencies; I obtained the majority of the internal documents (e.g., Cook County Jail’s intake procedure and the Chicago Police Department’s evidence protocols) through the Freedom of Information Act.

I contacted individuals by email and phone with a basic introduction to my research and a request for an informational interview. Phone, in-person, or email interviews lasted from fifteen minutes to two hours. I conducted follow-up interviews with some individuals by phone or email.

I recorded or took notes of my phone and in-person interviews. I asked each interviewee for consent to record, offered them the chance to remain anonymous, and told them they could review the interview (recording or transcription) before I incorporated it into my research.<sup>37</sup> I sent questions by email prior to interviews, so many knew the basic idea of my research and, as such, might have oriented their response around it. Questions were mainly about procedures and general work information, thus, I was not concerned with desirability bias.

I began with ten to fifteen preliminary guiding questions, depending on how involved the interviewee was with the jail population or the three welfare programs. My first few questions were related to roles, such as, “What’s your current role with X organization?” and “What led you to this position?” With phone and in-person interviews, my questions changed based on responses, which made these interviews less structured and more varied, but the questions were always about process. I asked welfare administrators if they had ever worked with or offered programs to the formerly incarcerated, and their answers changed how I approached the rest of the interview; I asked jail staff about intake and discharge procedures, about the inmates’ common basic needs before and upon release, and to verify information given to me by other interviewees; I asked nonprofits staff and prison advocates about their interactions with

37. Of forty-one interviewees, one state employee requested anonymity.

Cook County Jail and state welfare agencies, as well as to validate information given to me by jail staff and welfare agencies.

I put substantive thought into whom I contacted (see Appendix A). In total, I interviewed forty-one people: eleven outside Cook County and thirty within Cook County. I spoke with people from other city agencies, other jail systems, and nonprofits in states with large urban jails (e.g., New York City's Rikers Island) or with expansive eligibility standards for SNAP and Medicaid (e.g., California and New York).<sup>38</sup> I focused my comparison on New York, due to similarities to Illinois: both have an ABAWD waiver, Medicaid expansion, a large urban prison, and understand the need for good reentry programs and lower recidivism. Mayor Bill de Blasio seeks to "reduce New York Jail's population" and to close Rikers in favor of smaller jails, and Thomas Dart, the Cook County sheriff, is committed to lowering the jail population through more in-prison programs and less recidivism.<sup>39</sup> Due to these similarities, Rikers Island's and Cook County Jail's staff frequently share policy-planning and programmatic inspiration.<sup>40</sup>

I also spoke with the staff in smaller jails (Monroe County Jail, New York, and San Diego County Jail), which have inmate ID programs and some welfare enrollment efforts. Like New York, California has wide eligibility standards. These smaller jails increased access to public assistance on small budgets, which could be persuasive when recommending policies to Cook County Jail.

I found interviewees in welfare agencies and nonprofits through referrals from jail staff or during my policy analysis on related programs. I spoke with caseworkers at welfare agencies that use SNAP pre-enrollment waivers and SSI prerelease agreements to see if those agreements could

38. Michael Schwirtz et al., "Rethinking Rikers," *New York Times*, Dec. 16, 2017.

39. "The Plan," NYC: A Roadmap to Closing Rikers, n.d. accessed Feb. 11, 2021, [rikers.cityofnewyork.us](http://rikers.cityofnewyork.us); Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

40. Anna Calabrese and Felicia Henry, interviews with the author, Nov. 20, 2018.

be implemented in Cook County Jail. Many interviewees connected me with others in their fields or provided information from their organizations that I used in my documentary analysis. Most have duties beyond their established roles and many provide services or create programs for this population as a matter of need and circumstance.

Overall, I grouped interview information into three categories: the criminal justice system (jails and courts), other government aid agencies (federal and state welfare agencies and some related county agencies), and advocacy organizations and nonprofits. The categories are not exact, as individuals associated with each category often engage with more than one category or are only peripherally involved in one by virtue of being part of another. The following outlines the operations of my case-study site, Cook County Jail, and the organizations related directly to it, which I call the *map of the field*.

## The Criminal Justice System

Cook County Jail is the central node that brings pretrial detainees into contact with other parts of the criminal justice system and outside advocacy groups. It is often the source of obstacles that detainees face in accessing public aid. The jail is supervised by its affiliated agency, the Cook County Sheriff's Office under Tom Dart's leadership (2006–present). The jail detains people awaiting trial in the Cook County Circuit Court, and the court's Pretrial Services Division does risk assessments and determines bail.<sup>41</sup>

41. Editor's note: On February 22, 2021, Illinois eliminated cash bail. See Maria Cramer, "Illinois Becomes First State to Eliminate Cash Bail," *New York Times*, Feb. 23, 2021. For an overview of pretrial bail in the United States, see Barry Mahoney et al., *Pretrial Services Programs: Responsibilities and Potential* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, Mar. 2001), [www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/181939.pdf](http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/181939.pdf).

## Government Aid Agencies

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), which oversees the state's Medicaid budget, has contracted with the Cook County Health and Hospital System (CCHHS) to provide Medicaid in the county.<sup>42</sup> Illinois launched CountyCare in late 2012 through a Section 1115 waiver, which expanded coverage to adults without children and to non-custodial parents.<sup>43</sup> The waiver allows adults making 133 percent of the federal poverty level to receive Medicaid and for adults without dependents to receive Medicaid through the pilot program. CCHHS used the pilot period to build capacity and to enroll hundreds of thousands of newly eligible county residents. According to Jay Shannon, CEO of CCHHS: "We were fortunate to get a one-year head start in Medicaid enrollment.... Everyone else had to wait until 2014 to start enrolling new Medicaid-eligible adults [through the Affordable Care Act]. We were the only plan in Illinois that was given a head start."<sup>44</sup> CountyCare transitioned to a managed care organization (MCO) in 2014, which changes its interactions with clients, including those in Cook County Jail.<sup>45</sup>

Other aid offices include the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), which processes Medicaid applications through local Family

42. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018; "Why CountyCare?" CountyCare: A Medicaid Health Plan, n.d., accessed Mar. 10, 2021, [countycare.com/prospective-members/why-countycare](http://countycare.com/prospective-members/why-countycare).

43. Section 1115 of the Social Security Act gives the federal government authority to waive Medicaid requirements, which allow states to use federal Medicaid funds in new and innovative ways and to expand coverage to groups formerly ineligible for Medicaid. See "Compilation of Social Security Laws," Social Security Administration, n.d., accessed Mar. 8, 2021, [www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/ssact/title11/1115.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title11/1115.htm).

44. Cheryl England, "CountyCare: A Medicaid Expansion Success Story," Chicago Medical Society, n.d., accessed Feb. 10, 2021, [www.cmsdocs.org/news/county-care-a-medicaid-expansion-success-story](http://www.cmsdocs.org/news/county-care-a-medicaid-expansion-success-story).

45. John Kiamos, interview with the author, Dec. 17. 2018.

Community Resource Centers.<sup>46</sup> IDHS also processes applications for the US Department of Agriculture's SNAP program.<sup>47</sup> The Social Security Administration administers SSI through regional field offices.<sup>48</sup>

## Advocacy Organizations and Nonprofits

During the 2013 pilot year of CountyCare, Cook County Jail joined with the Illinois-wide nonprofit, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), to enroll detainees in Medicaid during intake. TASC volunteers provide this service.<sup>49</sup> Now that CountyCare is an MCO, the volunteers no longer enroll detainees in CountyCare automatically but offered them range of MCOs.

Other groups work with the currently or formerly incarcerated as part of their larger goal to alleviate poverty; these include Thresholds,<sup>50</sup> Heartland Alliance,<sup>51</sup> and the Greater Chicago Food Depository.<sup>52</sup> Still others help detainees specifically with reentry (Teamwork Englewood),<sup>53</sup> bail (Chicago Community Bond Fund),<sup>54</sup> or the courts (Cabrini Green Legal Aid).<sup>55</sup>

This map is an orientation to my thesis, which focuses on public aid, but I recognize that my focus is only one part of the complex work that

46. Ramon Marrero, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

47. Kate Fink, interview with the author, Dec. 28, 2018.

48. Colby Calloway, email message to the author, Dec. 30, 2018.

49. Robin Moore, interview with the author, Nov. 11, 2018.

50. Laura Lord, interview with the author, Feb. 15, 2019.

51. Sheena Ward, email message to the author, Feb. 6, 2019.

52. Aimee Ramirez, interview with the author, Dec. 4, 2018.

53. Mark Mitchell, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

54. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 10, 2018.

55. Samuel Elder, interview with the author, Nov. 20, 2018.

former detainees must do upon release. Many rely on kin networks for care and reentry assistance, so the role of the family in reentry and in providing for or maintaining an individual's welfare access should not be underestimated.<sup>56</sup> Cook County Jail's most robust reentry programs target mental illness and drug abuse.<sup>57</sup> Jail administrators' tend to understand the needs of these populations more than the welfare needs of the jail population as a whole. Upon release, the homeless and/or mentally ill are particularly hard to reach and are often disconnected from advocacy or nonprofit organizations, suggesting that these individuals face different barriers from the population that is my focus. As such, my overall results are limited in scope.

My research on Cook County may not be generalizable to the wider US jail population, particularly in regards to informal bureaucratic barriers, which may be unique to Cook County Jail. As the political scientist, Michael Lipsky notes, the "street-level bureaucrat," such as social workers, jail administrators, and benefit caseworkers, function as "front-line officials facing decisions of such irreducible complexity so far removed from supervision that they routinely exercised discretion in ways that can not be effectively reviewed."<sup>58</sup> Cook County Jail's street-level bureaucrats have practices, policies, and ideologies that might not be applicable to other jail or welfare systems. Because of this specificity, Lipsky argues that there are limited ways of challenging this discretion and overseeing these

56. Elizabeth Marlow et al., "But, now, you're trying you're trying to have a life': Family Members' Experience of Reentry and Reintegration," in *And Justice for All: Families & the Criminal Justice System*, ed. Joyce A. Arditti and Tessa le Roux, vol. 4, *Groves Monographs on Marriage and Family* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2015).

57. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

58. Charles Sabel, "Rethinking the Street-level Bureaucrat: Tacit and Deliberate Ways Organizations Can Learn," in *Economy in Society: Essays in Honor of Michael J. Piore*, ed. Paul Osterman (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 3.

practices. Thus, I limit my policy recommendations on program creation and implementation to Cook County Jail.<sup>59</sup>

My focus on Cook County street-level bureaucrats may limit the generalizability of on-the-ground practices. (Although, my interviews in other jail and welfare systems revealed many of the same street-level problems as Cook County.) Barriers caused by federal welfare statutes have national implications.

The circumstantial problems of leaving prison or jail exist for most formerly incarcerated individuals. Exploring welfare interventions, therefore, may be helpful regardless of the specific street-level bureaucrats in these systems. The challenges that prompt the formerly incarcerated to need welfare are symptomatic of larger issues, too, such as an inherently racist and classist criminal justice system and the failure of the welfare state. Such nationwide issues warrant my recommendation of federal legislative action and should prompt other jail systems to explore the feasibility of my recommendations for programmatic interventions.

## Data Analysis

My case study of Cook County Jail uncovered two barriers for the detainees trying to access welfare upon release from jail—formal and informal. Federal and state statutes and jail procedures create the formal barriers. Bureaucratic practices create the informal barriers. Some informal barriers are explicitly related to incarceration at Cook County Jail (e.g., indefinite length of detention) and others may be produced or exacerbated by detention (e.g., insecure housing or homelessness). Formal and informal barriers create problems regardless of whether or not someone was enrolled in a welfare program prior to pretrial detention. However, formal barriers most likely affect those already enrolled, while informal barriers make it harder for people to enroll or for jail administrators to create interventions that increase enrollment.

59. Ibid., 4.

The complexity of the statutes and procedures confuses even administrators and advocates, let alone the individuals who attempt to enroll. This confusion and the on-the-ground realities triggered by statutes and procedures create the most problems for detainees trying to access welfare after leaving Cook County Jail.

## Formal Barriers

Formal barriers are two fold: federal/state statutes and jail policies. Statutory barriers are Medicaid suspension and thirty-day detention limits. Jail procedural barriers are guidelines on inmate property, inmate telephone access, and access to identification cards.

### Medicaid Suspension

Section 1905 of the Social Security Act prohibits “payments with respect to care or services for any individual who is an inmate of a public institution.”<sup>60</sup> This broad statute includes jails and does not distinguish between the pretrial and convicted population. Some states terminate inmates’ Medicaid while others, including Illinois, suspend coverage.<sup>61</sup> Illinois mandates that the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) “shall not cancel a person’s eligibility for medical assistance, nor shall the Department deny a person’s application for medical assistance, solely because that person has become or is an inmate of a public institution, including … a county jail.”<sup>62</sup>

60. “Compilation of the Social Security Laws,” Social Security Administration, Dec. 20, 2019, [www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/ssact/title19/1905.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title19/1905.htm); see, also, Gates, Artiga, and Rudowitz.

61. “States Reporting Corrections-Related Medicaid Enrollment Policies In Place for Prisons or Jails,” Kaiser Family Foundation, 2019, [www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/states-reporting-corrections-related-medicaid-enrollment-policies-in-place-for-prisons-or-jails](http://www.kff.org/medicaid/state-indicator/states-reporting-corrections-related-medicaid-enrollment-policies-in-place-for-prisons-or-jails).

62. Illinois Public Aid Code, 305 ILCS 5/1–8.5 (2014, 2015), [www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=030500050K1-8.5](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=030500050K1-8.5).

Lynne Thomas of HFS explained how Medicaid suspension works for inmates of Cook County Jail. An incarcerated individual’s Medicaid “services are restricted so that only inpatient hospital services are accepted by HFS claims processing” through a “manual process.”<sup>63</sup> The jail pays for inmates to receive medical care *onsite* at the jail’s Cermak Hospital, which HFS cannot claim as *inpatient* hospital services.<sup>64</sup> The individual’s case is “edited” but not submitted to Medicaid. As a result, the detainee remains enrolled in benefits, or if uninsured, is able to apply for Medicaid while incarcerated, and benefits are “manually” reactivated upon release.<sup>65</sup> Persons who apply for Medicaid while in prison may still have to wait for coverage upon release. Although federal guidelines require states to process applications within forty-five days, Thomas said that Illinois “experiences backlogs.” A person can receive temporary coverage pending approval.<sup>66</sup> The unpredictable length of incarceration at Cook County Jail makes “manual” case editing unfeasible, and because inmates receive medical care onsite there is there little or no financial incentive to report claims.

Despite explicit federal policy, some interviewees expressed confusion about Medicaid suspension and said that the jail has no formal process. The majority of interviewees stressed the lack of clear procedures and delays in the reactivation of benefits upon release. While Thomas stated that HFS lifts suspensions and provides a “quick” reactivation of benefits, none of the Cook County Jail employees I interviewed knew when or if suspension or reactivation had occurred. CountyCare executives expressed confusion with the system at large, claiming that their clients’ coverage is “not truly suspended” for short-term incarcerations or that clients “really just drop off the face of the earth” when they are detained in jail.

63. Lynne Thomas, interview with the author, Dec. 31, 2018.

64. Ibid. “Inpatient hospital services” refers to care received outside of the institution for twenty-four hours or more.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

Samuel Elder of Cabrini Green Legal Aid said that after release “it takes a little while to get the process up and running again” since cases “get lost in the ether.”<sup>67</sup>

These ambiguities about suspension prevent former inmates from caring for their health. Multiple interviewees stated that clients worry about getting medical or psychological help if they are unsure that they have Medicaid and would have to pay out of pocket. Their clients didn’t want to take the risk, even for essential services. Since having health insurance upon release leads to lower recidivism rates, there is reason for concern when a federal statute produces gaps in insurance for those in pretrial incarceration in Cook County—a population already at risk of recidivism.<sup>68</sup>

The very real, formal barrier of Medicaid suspension and ambiguous agency practices produce barriers and should be addressed.

### **Thirty-Day Detention Time Limits**

Federal SNAP and SSI statutes prohibit benefits for individuals who are incarcerated in a public institution for more than thirty days. These statutes are barriers for people already enrolled in SNAP and SSI upon entrance to Cook County Jail; they do not affect those who apply after release.

Regarding SNAP, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 requires states “to verify and otherwise ensure that an individual who is placed under detention in a Federal, State, or local penal, correctional, or other detention facility for more than 30 days shall not be eligible to participate in the food stamp program as a member of any household.”<sup>69</sup> The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), which processes SNAP applications, has one procedure for former detainees who are single and another for former detainees in households. A single person must reapply for

67. Samuel Elder, interview with the author, Nov. 20, 2018.

68. The expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act “decrease[s] recidivism for both violent and public-order crimes.” See, Aslim et al., 1.

69. Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-33, 111 Stat. 251 (1997).

benefits at an IDHS office and “prove” he was released.<sup>70</sup> Ramon Marrero, an office manager of an IDHS Family Community Resource Center, said the application is “treated like expedited SNAP benefits,” meaning an interview is conducted the same day or by the next business day.<sup>71</sup> Marrero said that “at the end of the day, if your income is zero, you’re going to qualify for expedited”; he described an “easy” process of verifying lack of income in “a face-to-face” or telephone interview, with benefits ready in three-to-five days.<sup>72</sup> For detainees living in a household “there’s no special process,” although the caseworker might cite incarceration as a reason for removal in the case notes.<sup>73</sup> For the released person reentering a household, a caseworker reviews eligibility based on income and assets, and the applicant or a household member must provide release papers from the Cook County Department of Corrections; caseworkers “attempt” to process the request on the same day.<sup>74</sup>

Marrero said that caseworkers restore people’s SNAP benefits fairly quickly. However, multiple interviewees in prisoner advocacy groups said that clients have problems obtaining discharge papers, are not told to keep the papers, or need to return to jail for copies. As a result, starting a new application or even the relatively simple re-addition to a household may take time.

70. Ramon Marrero, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

71. Ibid. IDHS expedites applications for individuals without income in the last thirty days; former inmates who lost SNAP after thirty days in prison are part of this category.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid. A national study demonstrated that one of the common “hardship triggers” for SNAP beneficiaries is the loss of a wage-earning household member due to incarceration. See Kathryn Edin et al., *SNAP Food Security In-Depth Interview Study: Final Report* (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Mar. 2013), 21–22, fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/SNAPFoodSec.pdf.

74. Ramon Marrero, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

The loss of benefits while incarcerated creates coverage gaps and increases food insecurity.<sup>75</sup> Aimee Ramirez of the Greater Chicago Food Depository said that a majority of individuals risk going hungry upon release from Cook County Jail.<sup>76</sup> Multiple interviewees said that “expedited SNAP benefits” should be extended to those who were unenrolled prior to incarceration, because federal law allows individuals without any income in the last thirty days to receive up to two months of SNAP benefits while IDHS processes their new application.<sup>77</sup>

Some advocates questioned the “easy” and “quick” nature of IDHS processing, and its promise of expedited benefits within three days. The IDHS in-person interview can be a burden to some clients, who have to arrange childcare or transportation.<sup>78</sup> Although the USDA requires states to conduct in-person interviews, “most states applied for and received waivers that allow for telephone interviews in all cases,” and “new technologies and data exchange” allow some states to eliminate interviews completely.<sup>79</sup> Language barriers play a “large role” in stopping some from “applying for food stamps once they try and contact the food stamp

75. Emily A. Wang et al., “A Pilot Study Examining Food Insecurity and HIV Risk Behaviors among Individuals Recently Released from Prison,” *AIDS Education and Prevention* 25, no. 2 (Apr. 2013): 112–23, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3733343](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3733343).

76. Aimee Ramirez, interview with the author, Dec. 5, 2018.

77. The “computer tells caseworkers” whether the person will receive one or two months. Ramon Marrero, email message to the author, Mar. 3, 2019.

78. Editor’s note: There are twelve IDHS Family Community Resource Centers in Chicago: Downtown (1), South Side (6), West Side (4), North Side (1). See “Office Locator,” IDHS, n.d., accessed Mar. 12, 2021, [www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12).

79. Gretchen Rowe et al., *Assessment of the Contributions of an Interview to SNAP Eligibility and Benefit Determinations: Final Report* (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, May 2015), xi, 2, [fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/SNAPInterview.pdf](http://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/SNAPInterview.pdf).

office.”<sup>80</sup> The IDHS Family Community Resource Centers do have a Spanish-language telephone option, which is the second option after English. In one study, many Spanish speakers are “unaware” that a message is “repeated in Spanish and hang up during the English message.”<sup>81</sup>

IDHS has created specific procedures for working with incarcerated individuals, but further improvement is needed to on-the-ground practices. Many advocates said clients continue to have trouble navigating the current system. Matt McLoughlin of the Chicago Community Bond Fund described one client whose benefits were suspended: “Even with whatever the emergency [expedited] process is, it was still going to take over ten days,” to get benefits.<sup>82</sup> McLoughlin went so far as to say that “we’re creating the situation where … people do things like [retail theft] in order to survive,” implying that a lack of public assistance forces people to commit “Jean Valjean” crimes that could result in a return to jail.

Finally, in regard to SNAP enrollees, all jail administrators and Marrero of IDHS said that IDHS and Cook County Jail do not share information. Kasey Reagan of the IDHS Bureau of Collections suggested otherwise: a “cross match” between the IDHS eligibility system and Cook County creates an alert or “task” for a caseworker to review. She added that Cook County Jail is the “only County jail that has any systematic information sharing.”<sup>83</sup> Despite this, the collections bureau will charge recipients with “overpayment” fines if the released person (or household members) uses benefits that accumulated while the person was in jail; the rationale being

80. Vivian Gabor et al., *Seniors’ Views of the Food Stamp Program and Ways to Improve Participation—Focus Group Findings in Washington State: Final Report* (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, June 2002), 38, [www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/43151/51497\\_efan02012.pdf?v=0](http://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/43151/51497_efan02012.pdf?v=0).

81. Ibid.

82. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019.

83. Kasey Reagan, email message to the author, Apr. 18, 2019.

that they did “not report that they went into an institution.”<sup>84</sup> This suggests that—despite agency communication—the burden of proof of incarceration rests with the SNAP recipient, which, as I will explore later, is made impossible by the fact of incarceration itself. The ambiguity around this process is alarmingly similar to Medicaid suspension, suggesting a general lack of familiarity with departmental procedures resulting from federal laws.

Regarding SSI, Title 42 of the US Public Code states that “no payment [of Supplemental Security Income] shall be made … during any period for which such individual … is an inmate of a public institution that is a jail, prison, or other penal institution or correctional facility.”<sup>85</sup> A detainee’s SSI payments are suspended for the “entire period of time from the first moment of the first day … through the last moment of the last day of the month.”<sup>86</sup> Recipients must bring prison discharge papers to a local SSA office, and, if they meet current eligibility requirements, payments are reinstated during the month of release; they earn partial payments when released mid-month.

Laura Lord of Thresholds said a large part of her job was helping clients “turn SSI back on.” As with SNAP, discharge papers (also known as a letter of incarceration) are a stumbling block. The letter is the “last thing on their mind,” because they “just want to get out of there.” For someone released after business hours, “nobody from [the] record [office] will be there to give them that letter.”<sup>87</sup> Lord and clients must regularly return to the jail for the letter. She did commend records staff as “particularly helpful,” as well as the jail’s social workers who were willing to get

84. Ibid.

85. Public Health and Welfare of 2012, 2 U.S.C. § 1383 (2012).

86. Doug Nguyen, email message to the author, Dec. 5, 2018. For example, for a person incarcerated on June 1, SSI payments stop on July 1; for a person incarcerated in mid-June, the first “full calendar month” of incarceration began on July 1 and SSI payments stop on August 1.

87. Laura Lord, interview with the author, Feb. 15, 2019.

letters for clients who could not enter the jail because they lacked IDs.

SSI suspension becomes a termination when a person is detained for “a year or more,” including any days with an active warrant for arrest.<sup>88</sup> A termination triggers a new application, including a lengthy medical review.<sup>89</sup> Reapplicants wait an average of three-to-five months for a decision. SSI applications are not processed until the first day of the following month, which is a further delay.<sup>90</sup>

The Social Security Administration pays jails what it calls “bounties” to report ineligible detainees.<sup>91</sup> Participation is voluntary, but Cook County Jail is an active reporter. Under the Memorandum of Understanding between SSA and Cook County Jail (see Appendix B), the jail sends a periodic “prisoner inmate report” to an SSA field office.<sup>92</sup> SSA pays the jail \$400 for inmates reported within thirty days of incarceration and \$200 for inmates reported within ninety days of incarceration.<sup>93</sup> SSA suspended SSI benefits for 584 individuals at Cook County Jail in 2017 and 419 detainees through October 2018 (see Appendix C). The jail collected \$186,400 in bounties from January 2017 through October

88. Ibid.

89. Colby Calloway, email message to the author, Dec. 10, 2018.

90. Gary M. Pettigrew to Local Mental Health Directors et al., “DMH Information Notice NO: 98-05. Amendments to the Social Security Act,” memorandum, Department of Mental Health Archives, State of California, Mar. 17, 1998, 1, [www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/MHArchives/InfoNotice98-05.pdf](http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/MHArchives/InfoNotice98-05.pdf).

91. “Program Operations Manual System,” Social Security Administration, Aug. 8, 2018.

92. Doug Nguyen, email message to the author, Nov. 19, 2018; Social Security Administration, *Incentive Payment Memorandum of Understanding: Agreement between the Social Security Administration and the Cook County Department of Corrections* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, 2018), memorandum obtained through FOIA and in the author’s possession.

93. “Program Operations Manual System,” Social Security Administration; SSA, *Incentive Payment Memorandum*, 10.

2018 for SSI and SSDI suspensions, the latter are not covered in my analysis (see Appendix D).<sup>94</sup>

Cara Smith of Cook County Jail described the human cost of the suspensions and benefit gaps, saying that most detainees relied on the checks they thought would be “waiting in their mailboxes” upon release.<sup>95</sup> SNAP and SSA justify suspensions or terminations when beneficiaries’ welfare needs are met by other public institutions; state agencies scrabble to return these SNAP and SSI beneficiaries to the rolls after their releases; and advocates are left to deal with the on-the-ground reality of people facing benefit gaps when they most need a safety net. Matt McLoughlin of the Chicago Community Bond Fund asked me to “imagine what would happen if you were removed from your life for thirty days . . . everything that you could think of begins to unravel.”<sup>96</sup> My analysis of statutes demonstrates the unraveling of access to public aid, but more so, it suggests that pretrial incarceration disconnects people from help when help is most need: the moment when a person leaves jail and tries to rebuild his or her life in Chicago.

### **Cook County Jail Intake and Property Procedures**

Property procedures during arrest and intake create barriers when inmates attempt to retrieve their confiscated property. After release, people may not know if their belongings, including crucial identification cards, are located at the Chicago Police Department’s property section (1101 S. Homan Avenue) or at Cook County Jail (2700 S. California Avenue)—nearly three miles away. Until they track down their identification, they cannot apply or reapplying for public assistance, a barrier confirmed by all of my interviewees.

94. Social Security Administration, *Cook County Jail Statistic Information for January 1, 2017, through October 1, 2018* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, 2018), data obtained through FOIA and in the author’s possession.

95. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2018.

96. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019.

An arrested person is first held at a Chicago Police Department station. The lockup officer completes a two-part Personal Property Form (CPD 11.502, REV. 3/14). Part I includes an identification section (arrestee’s address, physical description, birthdate, and property list) and a detention facility section, but CPD procedure does not explain how or when the detention section is completed (see Appendix E).<sup>97</sup> Part II includes an inventory stub that the officer removes and places with the property in a sealed envelope, after which the office is supposed to give part II to the arrestee as a receipt (see Appendix F). The officer also completes an Arrestee and Property Transport Manifest for Cook County Jail to verify when the transfer occurred and that the property was received.<sup>98</sup> None of my interviewees knew of detainees who received part II or of the existence of the manifest. Cook County Jail inventories “any property received from the inmates” during booking.<sup>99</sup> The inmate signs and receives a Cook County property receipt and a copy is placed with the inmate’s property.<sup>100</sup> The jail’s manual states that an inmate or “authorized family members and/or other person” may pick up property “within forty-five days” of discharge.<sup>101</sup> Despite these procedures, it is unclear whether the Chicago Police Department routinely transfers property to Cook County Jail. Multiple jail administrators suggested that property is never transferred, with Jane Gubser of the jail saying, “I’m not quite

97. Eddie T. Johnson, *Special Order S07-01-01: Inventorying Arrestees’ Personal Property* (Chicago: Chicago Police Department, Dec. 1, 2017), 3, 5.

98. Ibid., 4.

99. Cook County Department of Corrections, *Policy 702: Custody Manual—Inmate Reception and Intake* (Chicago: Cook County Department of Corrections, Oct. 1, 2018), 5.

100. Ibid., 6.

101. Ibid.

sure how that would happen.”<sup>102</sup> If the jail does receive property from the police, it is returned to the individual upon release. Multiple interviewees inside and outside of the jail provided anecdotal evidence of inconsistencies in this approach.

The Chicago police transfers property after ninety-six hours from the local station to the property section on Homan Avenue, and within thirty days of transfer, a person must present the property form and a photo ID to retrieve property. (Detainees must mail copies.<sup>103</sup>) The police do not explain how a person should proceed if the photo ID was one of the confiscated items, and the logistics of copying and mailing the form and ID from jail is difficult without the help of a jail caseworker and outside help.<sup>104</sup> Maanasi Laird of Teamwork Englewood said that “they give them thirty [days] to get their property, but who’s to say they have someone that can come back and get their property?”<sup>105</sup>

As a result of these procedures, detainees often leave Cook County Jail without IDs, a common problem of US jails and prisons: “Only one-third of state prisons ensure that individuals leave prison with a state-issued identification … effectively barring people from driving a car, opening a bank account, leasing an apartment, or verifying their identity for prospective employers.”<sup>106</sup> Public aid is also out of reach without a state ID, birth

102. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

103. “Procedures for Return of Property” on the CPD Personal Property Form (see Appendix E); “Notice to Property Owner,” Chicago Police Department, Sept. 2015, directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-34.523-PART%204-A-ENGLISH.pdf.

104. Laura Lord, interview with the author, Feb. 5, 2019.

105. Maanasi Laird, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

106. Emily Livingston et al., *Reducing Recidivism: An Ecosystem Approach for Successful Reentry* (Washington, DC: Deloitte Center for Government Insights, 2018), 7, www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/4935\_Reducing-recidivism/DI\_Reducing-recidivism.pdf.

certificate, and a Social Security Card. When I asked about people’s most immediate needs after leaving jail, Laird said “really the only things they need when they first get out are an ID and a Link Card.... The ID will get them around and the Link Card is going to feed them wherever they go.... They never have either of these when they leave.”

Interviewees frequently discussed the difficulty of getting new IDs for clients, citing the catch-22 of needing a form of ID to get an ID and the long wait (fifteen to ninety days) for IDs to arrive in the mail.<sup>107</sup> Alan Mills said access to identification, the ID hump,” is the biggest challenge that the Uptown People’s Law Center faces in connecting or reconnecting clients to SSI: “If they have nothing, we have no way of getting them anything.”<sup>108</sup> McLoughlin expressed frustration with the entire process: “People are leaving the jail and not being given an ID.... To me it’s crazy.... What do you do if you don’t have any documentation?”<sup>109</sup>

### Cook County Communication Policies

The jail’s phone and internet policies bar detainees from complying with reporting obligations (including reporting their incarceration) or receiving case updates that allow them to maintain public assistance. These barriers apply only to inmates already enrolled in Medicaid, SNAP, or SSI.

Detainees can use phones “as long as they like,”<sup>110</sup> but with restrictions. They may call collect to landlines but cannot receive calls. They may call cell phones if the receiver has a prepaid account with the jail’s contracted

107. “Central Issuance: Frequently Asked Questions,” Office of the Illinois Secretary of State, 2015, www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/drivers/drivers\_license/central\_issuance/ci-faq.pdf.

108. Alan Mills, telephone interview the author, [Dec. 15, 2018].

109. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019.

110. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2018.

communication service, Securus Technology.<sup>111</sup> Detainees share phones with others in a cellblock; the number of calls they can make depends on the division and how crowded it is.<sup>112</sup> Aside from a “reasonable number” of free calls at intake “to an attorney and to a family member,” detainees pay for calls with phone cards purchased at the commissary or have receivers accept collect calls or buy Securus prepaid cards.<sup>113</sup>

Detainees cannot access the internet. The jail does not have a computer lab due to “old infrastructure” and “bad wiring.”<sup>114</sup> This prevents Medicaid and SNAP recipients from updating their cases or seeing case changes on Illinois’s online portal, ManageMyCase.<sup>115</sup> Missing an online redetermination notice from Medicaid, for example, also means missing reapplication.<sup>116</sup>

Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI mandate that beneficiaries alert their case-worker of a change in income or incarceration.<sup>117</sup> Although the agencies accept changes by various methods, detainees are limited to phone calls.<sup>118</sup>

111. Editor’s note: As of June 13, 2019, rates per minute are six cents within the United States, eight cents to Canada or Mexico, and thirteen cents to other countries with the jail’s new provider, Legacy Inmate Communications. See “Set Up An Inmate Phone,” Cook County Sheriff’s Office, n.d., accessed Mar. 18, 2021, [www.cookcountysheriff.org/how-do-i/set-inmate-phone](http://www.cookcountysheriff.org/how-do-i/set-inmate-phone).

112. Cara Smith, email message to the author, Feb. 20, 2019.

113. Cook County Department of Corrections, *Inmate Information Handbook* (Chicago: Cook County Department of Corrections, [2013]), 22, [www.law.umich.edu/special/policyclearinghouse/Documents/Cook%20County%20Inmate%20Manual.pdf](http://www.law.umich.edu/special/policyclearinghouse/Documents/Cook%20County%20Inmate%20Manual.pdf); “Set Up An Inmate Phone,” Cook County Sheriff’s Office.

114. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018

115. Carol West, interview with the author, Dec. 7, 2018.

116. Lynne Thomas, in discussion with the author, December 31, 2018

117. Ramon Marrero, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

118. Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI accept changes by phone or office visit; SNAP and SSI also accept changes by mail.

Multiple interviewees said they had never heard of inmates being able to call the state and federal welfare agencies’ toll-free numbers. Cara Smith of the jail said detainees could call toll-free numbers, which was refuted by Securus Technologies and McLoughlin of the Chicago Community Bond Fund.<sup>119</sup> Failure to report incarceration can mean sanctions and fines for overpayment. One anonymous employee explained that the IDHS Bureau of Collections “always figured out” if someone had been in jail and charges for overpayments received while incarcerated. Kasey Reagan, also from the Bureau of Collections, said in her experience that most people “would elect to voluntarily return the funds [on their Link Cards] to avoid or pay off the overpayment from their incarcerated time.”<sup>120</sup> As Reagan explained, a person could be taxed 10 percent of their monthly benefits “for not reporting that they went into an institution.”<sup>121</sup> The point remains, though, that the jail’s communication policies limit an incarcerated person’s ability to contact agencies and avoid collection or the tax.<sup>122</sup>

119. Cara Smith, email message to the author, Feb. 20, 2019; Securus Technologies customer service representative, live chat with the author, Feb. 15, 2019; Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019. Several states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons prohibit inmates from making toll-free calls. See, “Phone Correspondence with an Offender,” Virginia Department of Corrections, n.d., accessed Mar. 14, 2021, [vadoc.virginia.gov/families-friends-of-offenders/phone-correspondence-with-an-offender](http://vadoc.virginia.gov/families-friends-of-offenders/phone-correspondence-with-an-offender); “Program Statement: Inmate Telephone Regulation,” Federal Bureau of Prisons, Feb. 11, 2008, [www.bop.gov/policy/program-statutes/5264\\_008.pdf](http://www.bop.gov/policy/program-statutes/5264_008.pdf); “Telephone Calls,” Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, n.d., accessed Mar. 14, 2021, [docs.ny.gov/telephone-calls](http://docs.ny.gov/telephone-calls).

120. Kasey Reagan, email message to the author, Apr. 18, 2019.

121. Ibid.

122. SSA also includes various sanctions for failing to report changes in a “timely and accurate” manner, which include withholding SSI benefits for six months to two years. See “Understanding Supplemental Security Income Reporting Responsibilities—2019 Edition,” Social Security Administration, 2019, [www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-report-usi.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-report-usi.htm).

All interviewees at state and federal welfare agencies stressed themes of “expectation” and “individual responsibility” for detainees. They compared the relationship between enrollees and their programs as a worker to a company, who must take the initiative on reporting. Ramon Marerro of IDHS said it was “easier” and “quicker” to deal with cases upon release if people had self-reported incarceration. Inmate advocates expressed exasperation at the expectation that people know they have a duty to report a change in status or would even be able to do so while incarcerated. They said that jail caseworkers or administrators are unaware of the state’s reporting expectations and do not facilitate reporting. This places an undue burden on the detainees, who must navigate communications on their own. The assumption that detainees have friends or family who are able to help is also untenable, especially for the jail’s mentally ill or homeless who typically do not have anyone “in or outside of jail.”<sup>123</sup> Advocates said that welfare agency caseworkers themselves often do not understand reporting procedures: detainees or their families would report changes, and the caseworker would cancel benefits preemptively and incorrectly. As a result, reporting expectations are at odds with the circumstances of detainees, circumstances directly tied to jail communication policies and procedures.

123. Maanasi Laird, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

## Informal Barriers

Informal barriers are the jail’s bureaucracy and the circumstances of detention caused by the discretion and practices of street-level bureaucrats at the jail, the court, and welfare agencies. Informal barriers affect aid recipients regardless of prior enrollment status.

### Indefinite Detention

Regardless of why someone is in Cook County Jail, he or she has “no idea how long they’re going to be there.”<sup>124</sup> Cara Smith of the jail said that “only about 20 percent go to a state prison system following their time with us.... The vast majority return to the communities where they came from, either on probation, on some other form of supervision, ... or ... after charges are dropped.”<sup>125</sup> For 80 percent of detainees indefinite detention creates barriers in two ways: it limits the ability of jail administrators to organize a coherent discharge plan, and it limits the ability of advocates and state agencies to prepare for reentry. All of the jail administrators see value in a good discharge plan: “Is it there? Yes. Could it be better? Yes.”<sup>126</sup>

Currently, Medicaid is the only aid program that people apply for upon entering jail. A national study indicates that jail intake is an ideal point to enroll people in Medicaid: “It is expected that roughly 5.9 million (one-third) of the newly insured Medicaid population in 2016 will be people who will have been booked into jails during the year. By 2022, that number is estimated to increase to approximately 7 million.”<sup>127</sup> As

124. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 10, 2019.

125. Ibid.

126. Marlena Jentz, interview with the author, Dec. 13, 2018.

127. National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies, *The Patient Protection and ACA and the Pretrial System: A “Front Door” to Health and Safety* (Washington, DC: National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies, Feb. 2014), 6, [www.pacenterofexcellence.pitt.edu/documents/Patient%20Protection%20and%20Affordable%20Care%20Act%20and%20the%20Pretrial%20System.pdf](http://pacenterofexcellence.pitt.edu/documents/Patient%20Protection%20and%20Affordable%20Care%20Act%20and%20the%20Pretrial%20System.pdf).

discuss earlier, CountyCare and the nonprofit, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), enroll people in Medicaid during intake. TASC has enrolled twelve thousand people, and Cook County Jail administrators stressed its success and manageable implementation, with Marlena Jentz of the jail saying it “takes less than ten minutes.”<sup>128</sup> Jane Longo, a former CountyCare consultant, said that the program is “well-supported” by the detainees who receive insurance; she cited several notable “success stories” from a focus group one year after the program’s implementation: one man “got his life together” and another said that “I only ever got health care when I was inside.... I could never access health care on the outside, and now with CountyCare, I can.”<sup>129</sup>

Jail administrators stressed that intake is the best time to reach people for intervention. Currently, the jail enrolls people in Medicaid but does not tell detainees about how to select a managed care organization (MCO) upon release from jail. There’s “no time” to explain MCOs at intake, despite the fact that interviewees frequently call plan selection “confusing.”<sup>130</sup> Carol West of Get Covered Illinois emphasized the importance of “critical” health-care literacy for new inmates: “We’re working with people that may have never had insurance in their life, and there needs to be that education piece.... These questions are very personal, and there’s a trust issue with ... not only going online and just throwing your information out there, but there’s a trust issue with am I going to make the right choice for myself and my family.”<sup>131</sup> Allowing individuals to select their managed care plans can “facilitate continuity of care,

128. Ibid. The jail had to first overcome the fact that the police had confiscated the new inmates’ IDs. Jentz said the jail uses fingerprints and “unique” jail ID numbers, which she calls the “justice system’s version of the Social Security Number.”

129. Jane Longo, interview with the author, [Dec. 15, 2018].

130. Marlena Jentz, interview with the author, Dec. 13, 2018.

131. Carol West, interview with the author, Dec. 7, 2018.

maintenance of needed medication regimes, transfer of medical records, and the establishment of a medical home.”<sup>132</sup> Without explaining MCOs or helping people select their plans on-site, the jail fails to provide full access to Medicaid.

Statutes trigger suspension or discontinuation of benefits, but welfare agencies do have initiatives that allow detainees to apply for assistance while incarcerated for immediate assistance upon release. SSA has prerelease agreements with correctional institutions.<sup>133</sup> SNAP’s Prisoner Prerelease Application Filing Waiver “allows them to take applications and conduct eligibility interviews from incarcerated applications prior to their release.”<sup>134</sup> Interviewees stressed, though, that without a known release date, it is “impossible” to implement these prerelease applications. The interviewees all cited strict federal guidelines about who can submit an application, when, and how submission “starts the clock” and sets deadlines in motion.<sup>135</sup> Ramon Marrero of IDHS described a hypothetical scenario to demonstrate the pitfalls of implementing a pre-enrollment agreement in Cook County Jail. A Family Community Resource Center must interview applicants within a certain number of days of application,

132. David Panush to Jennifer Kent, letter regarding Coordinated Care Assessment Project Comments: [California] Prison and Jail Reentry, Dec. 20, 2018, p. 7, calhps.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/DHCS-Coordinated-Care-Pilot-Project-Comments-12.20.18.pdf.

133. Doug Nguyen, email message to the author, Nov. 19, 2018; Social Security Administration, *Audit Report: The Social Security Administration’s Pre-release Procedures of Institutionalized Individuals* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, Feb. 2015), B1–2, oig.ssa.gov/sites/default/files/audit/full/pdf/A-02-14-24085\_0.pdf.

134. Kate Fink, interview with the author, Dec. 14, 2018; Ecaterina Burton, “Realignment: The Policy Opportunity for a CalFresh Pre-enrollment Program” (MA thesis, University of California at Berkeley, 2016), 30–33, wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Reducing-Hunger-Recidivism-by-Pre-Enrolling-Into-CalFresh.pdf.

135. Virginia Hanson, interview with the author, Dec. 7, 2018.

but detainees might still be incarcerated, making it impossible to conduct an in-person or phone interview; within thirty days the office must approve or deny the application. If the jail extends incarcerations, then inmates' applications are automatically denied. He summed up the process as "confusing."<sup>136</sup>

The jail is currently trying to implement an SSI application legal clinic at discharge, which has proven to be particularly difficult, due to SSI's lengthy application.<sup>137</sup> Without knowing the length of a detainee's stay, it is hard to determine when to start the SSI process.

Posting bond does not make aid applications more orderly. The jail may take hours to discharge some people and discharges others too early. In just one example, the Chicago Community Bond Fund "communicated with the guy's brother [to pick Leon up], and we thought that everything was lined up.... His brother gets there and his brother, Leon, is gone, and he can't figure out where he is.... We find out a day later that Leon got let out of jail and wasn't given bus fare and walked from 26th and California to Uptown at like 11 o'clock at night to get home."<sup>138</sup>

Other advocates confirmed these implementation hurdles and grapple with planning their clients' discharge. Samuel Elder of Cabrini Green Legal Aid said the release date is a "guessing game" and the hardest part of his job; together with multiple interviewees, he relies on public defenders who "had a sense of how that court date is going to go."<sup>139</sup> Even when a caseworker has an "expected release date," often "people kind of get released out of the blue."<sup>140</sup> Aimee Ramirez explained how the Greater Chicago Food Depository proposed to come into the jail and pre- or

136. Ramon Marrero, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

137. Marlena Jentz, interview with the author, Dec. 13, 2018.

138. Matt McLoughlin, interview with author, Dec. 11, 2019. Editor's note: Chicago's Uptown neighborhood is approximately ten miles from Cook County Jail.

139. Samuel Elder, interview with the author, Nov. 20, 2018.

140. Ibid.

re-enroll people in SNAP: her staff "got their hands slapped a bit while trying to time" how to help someone fill out an application without a known release date; IDHS told the depository that it could not keep prefilled applications until the date of release, because "federal rules are very strict."<sup>141</sup> The rigidity of application deadlines makes an orderly reentry difficult nationwide:

While adequate time is needed in order to secure resources, to communicate with agencies and persons involved in an inmate's reentry plan, and to meet with the inmate, corrections agencies must be mindful that many activities specifically focused on the moment of release cannot be planned for too far in advance. For example, housing can only be secured once an individual's release date is known; similarly, benefits and resources available to prisoners at the moment of release, or soon after, are contingent upon timely submission of application material based upon a known release date.<sup>142</sup>

The depository is working with the jail to include a food insecurity or SNAP-eligibility screening at intake, but it's more of a "long-term" goal at this point.<sup>143</sup>

The majority of interviewees said that direct interaction with inmates is more effective than providing referrals or outreach materials. Discharge planning is especially important for people with mental illnesses and substance-abuse disorders, who are more likely to be responsive to a warm hand-off "in which the client never loses contact with the referring

141. Aimee Ramirez, interview with the author, Dec. 4, 2018.

142. Nancy La Vigne et al., *Release Planning for Successful Reentry: A Guide for Corrections, Service Providers, and Community Groups* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, Sept. 2008), 6, [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/32056/411767-Release-Planning-for-Successful-Reentry.PDF](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/32056/411767-Release-Planning-for-Successful-Reentry.PDF).

143. Aimee Ramirez, interview with the author, Dec. 4, 2018.

provider until contact with the new provider is established.”<sup>144</sup> Interviewees said that good discharge programs are essential to decreasing recidivism and increasing positive outcomes overall. Currently, though, discharge planning is a “very difficult gymnastics, kind of at the drop of a dime.... We never know when someone leaves and goes to court, whether they’re going to come back [to the jail] with an order to release them.”<sup>145</sup>

### **Extended Detention**

The length of stay at Cook County Jail is much longer than the national average.<sup>146</sup> I codify extended stay as an informal barrier, because it is linked to current and historical bureaucratic practices of Cook County Criminal Court, which is “plagued by unnecessary delays” that violate the constitutional right to a speedy trial.<sup>147</sup> Extended stays bar SSI and SNAP recipients from keeping benefits, which require periodic redeterminations and are suspended after thirty days of incarceration.

Cara Smith said that “jails are ... supposed to be ... a short-term stay for people,” but stressed that Cook County Criminal Court’s practices are unique and produce extended detentions.<sup>148</sup> The majority of interviewees confirmed that the longer a person is incarcerated, the harder it is to “keep things together on the outside.”<sup>149</sup> People lose housing and jobs as well as opportunities to seek new work that might limit the need for welfare: “The most outrageous thing is that this is all occurring before people have been convicted of anything.... I think everyone is probably

144. Panush, 8.

145. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 10, 2019.

146. Zheng, 6; “Length of Stay,” Cook County Performance Management.

147. Spencer Woodman, “No-show Cops and Dysfunctional Courts Keep Cook County Jail Inmates Waiting Years for a Trial,” *Chicago Reader*, Nov. 16, 2016.

148. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 10, 2019.

149. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019.

in agreement that the most serious thing you can do to a person is take their life.... The second most serious thing you can do to a person is put them in a cage. And we’re obviously doing that at astonishing rates that are disgusting, and the consequences even for just that short period of time are just so severe.”<sup>150</sup>

Tanya Anderson of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts said that the first source of delay is Pretrial Services, which conduct risk assessments prior to bond hearings. Pretrial officers have a backlog due to high caseloads, resource constraints, and limited support staff.<sup>151</sup> Cook County has taken steps to address cash-bail practices that hurt poor inmates disproportionately, but the problem of extended detention remains for pretrial inmates denied bond.<sup>152</sup> Interviewees noted the case backlog in Cook County Criminal Court and overwhelmed public defenders, who each have “as many as eighty to ninety cases.”<sup>153</sup> A US Department of Justice report criticized Cook County “judges and police commanders who fail to ensure that officers appear in court when needed and a state crime lab so overburdened it can take up to a year to turn around basic DNA samples.”<sup>154</sup> An Illinois Supreme Court audit of the court found “problems with staffing, supervision, training, organization, information sharing and ‘a general

150. Ibid.

151. Tanya Anderson, telephone interview the author, [Feb. 15, 2019].

152. “No defendant [shall be] held in custody prior to trial solely because the defendant cannot afford to post bail, to ensure fairness and the elimination of unjustifiable delay in the administration of justice” and requires the court to “consider the defendant’s social and economic circumstances when setting conditions of release.” See “General Order 18.8A: Procedures for Bail Hearings and Pretrial Release,” State of Illinois, Circuit Court of Cook County, July 17, 2017, [www.cookcountycourt.org/Manage/Division-Orders/View-Division-Order/ArticleId/2562/GENERAL-ORDER-NO-18-8A-Procedures-for-Bail-Hearings-and-Pretrial-Release](http://www.cookcountycourt.org/Manage/Division-Orders/View-Division-Order/ArticleId/2562/GENERAL-ORDER-NO-18-8A-Procedures-for-Bail-Hearings-and-Pretrial-Release).

153. Samuel Elder, interview with the author, Nov. 20, 2018.

154. Woodman.

lack of understanding' among court and law enforcement officials about how the system is supposed to work."<sup>155</sup>

Interviewees said that a common problem for detainees, regardless of the welfare program, is missing redetermination notices while in jail.<sup>156</sup> Alan Mills of the Uptown People's Law Center described someone who misses an SSI redetermination as "essentially starting from scratch."<sup>157</sup> Missing a SNAP redetermination notice closes a case file, which requires a person to complete a lengthy application and again provide proof of identity.<sup>158</sup> "Starting from scratch" is a barrier for recent inmates, who, as detailed above, struggle to regain confiscated IDs, as well once again gathering proof of income or medical disability.

### Siloed Services and Agency Relationships

Street-level bureaucrats in Cook County operate in a massive system that stymies collaboration. The system prevents government officials and advocates from launching new programs to connect the formerly incarcerated with public assistance. Cara Smith of the jail described the system as "siloed" and offered one example: "Probation just operates on its own. If someone is being transitioned to probation, we often have a very difficult time making sure there's an appropriate transition of care that follows the person to the new agency that's going to be monitoring them."<sup>159</sup>

155. "How to Unclog Cook County's Criminal Courts," *Chicago Tribune*, Mar. 23, 2014.

156. Benefit recipients must periodically prove eligibility by completing lengthy "redetermination" forms. See "Medical, Cash and SNAP Redetermination Notice," Illinois Department of Human Services, revised Jan. 2018, [www.dhs.state.il.us/ononetlibrary/12/documents/Forms/IL444-1893-IES.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ononetlibrary/12/documents/Forms/IL444-1893-IES.pdf).

157. Alan Mills, telephone interview the author, [Dec. 15, 2018].

158. Ramon Marrero, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

159. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 6, 2018.

Another example is the relationship between Cook County Jail and Cook County Health and Hospital System (CCHHS). The jail houses the onsite Cermak Hospital, which CCHHS runs, but CCHHS and Cermak Hospital "answer to the [Cook County Board]" separately, making coordination, collaboration, and oversight difficult.<sup>160</sup> Gerry Gorman of the University of Illinois at Chicago Nursing's Community Health Practicum said that "the two don't really get along."<sup>161</sup>

As noted earlier, the majority of people who enter the jail with health insurance are enrolled in CountyCare, the county's Medicaid plan. CountyCare executives all cited a lack of data and a lack of data sharing between CCHHS and the jail. CountyCare does not know when or if any of its clients are in jail and has trouble "reengaging" them after release. Andrea McGlynn is trying to create an alert system that would allow CountyCare to reactivate benefits automatically; the system would ensure that clients have coverage of medical treatments and prescriptions upon release and allow CountyCare to contact inmates and plan reentry-focused care: "We have this beautiful thing in place, we just don't leverage it.... The health system and health plan data could talk, ... could coordinate."<sup>162</sup>

Advocates understand that health is linked to food insecurity, disability, and health insurance but, when they attempt to help current and former inmates, they discover records and responsibilities are divided between CCHHS and the jail, which creates a general confusion of whom to contact and why. Even though CCHHS operates the jail's hospital, Aimee Ramirez had to hold separate conversations with CCHHS and the Sheriff's Office about launching SNAP outreach in the jail, because the two entities do not have a joint committee to oversee coordination and collaboration.<sup>163</sup>

160. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

161. Gerry Gorman, interview with the author, Feb. 13, 2019.

162. Andrea McGlynn, interview with the author, Dec. 17, 2018.

163. Aimee Ramirez, interview with the author, Dec. 4, 2018.

### Agency Inefficiencies

Federal and state welfare agencies are riddled with inefficiencies like backlogs, confusing application processes, and caseworker discretion, such that former detainees have a hard time applying for benefits upon release. One could argue that bureaucratic inefficiencies affect everyone's interactions with government agencies, but former detainees are often forced into this maze due to the coverage gaps produced by prolonged pretrial detention.

Some agency interviewees stressed the ease of restarting benefits, but advocates suggested otherwise. They described confusing and extensive application processes and negative interactions between their clients and state welfare agencies. Multiple interviewees independently described navigating the process as a "maze" and a "puzzle." Laird of Teamwork Englewood had a client who spent eight hours at a Family Community Resource Center trying to restart SNAP.<sup>164</sup> One interviewee was forced to concede bluntly that former detainees "are just screwed."<sup>165</sup>

Backlogs at the Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI agencies prolong case decisions, with clients waiting longer than federal guidelines for approval of benefits. For example, IDHS is supposed to follow federal guidelines and process Medicaid applications within forty-five days, but "Illinois has experienced backlogs."<sup>166</sup> Clients who receive medical care during the application period can apply for retroactive payment after approval; however, multiple advocates said their clients view retroactive payments as "risky" and "anxiety-producing." Most cannot afford to pay upfront for doctors' visits and do not want to accrue debt while waiting for a potential approval from Medicaid. Lynne Thomas of HFS said that people can receive temporary medical coverage if the final Medicaid decision takes longer than forty-five days, but none of my other interviewees knew of clients who had received this temporary coverage.

164. Manaasi Laird, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

165. Matt McLoughlin, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2019.

166. Lynne Thomas, interview with the author, Dec. 31, 2018.

Agency caseworkers often lack knowledge about the nuances of pretrial detention and aid eligibility. Advocates provided numerous anecdotes of caseworkers giving clients conflicting information that affected their benefits or that prevented them from applying for future benefits. Other agency caseworkers exercise discretion that helped or hindered recipients. Kate Fink of the USDA asserted that "there is no 'discretion' in the approval of benefits" due to strict federal standards of eligibility, but multiple advocates noted that their clients felt stigmatized by welfare caseworkers and were ashamed to admit incarceration.<sup>167</sup> Maanasi Laird of Teamwork Englewood said her clients were given arbitrary "assignments" to prove they had "used their time in jail well" before they could apply for benefits.<sup>168</sup>

Laird was particularly frustrated with IDHS on the day of our interview. She was trying to enroll a man released from Cook County Jail in SNAP. An IDHS representative had given him confusing information about whether or not he had to go to a Family Community Resource Center before he could start the application online; he went to the office and then tried to start the application online. Laird's later attempt to access his profile and finish his application blocked his account for identity fraud. During our interview, she was on hold with IDHS, trying to lift the fraud hold. Her coworker, Mark Mitchell, said this happens "all the time" and delays the SNAP application.<sup>169</sup>

### Lack of Valid Address

The Prison Policy Initiative found that the formerly incarcerated are ten times more likely than the general public to face homelessness and "those

167. Kate Fink, interview with the author, Dec. 28, 2018.

168. Manaasi Laird, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018. For the incarcerated person's "debt to society" and expectation to "give back," see Reuben Jonathan Miller and Forrest Stuart, "Carceral Citizenship: Race, Rights and Responsibility in the Age of Mass Supervision," *Theoretical Criminology* 21, no. 4 (2017): 542, journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1362480617731203.

169. Mark Mitchell, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

who have had a long history of going in and out of jail are twice as likely to be homeless.”<sup>170</sup> Homelessness or insecure housing means welfare programs do not have a valid address to communicate with clients. This is a particular concern at Cook County Jail, which many interviewees described as a “revolving door.” Pretrial incarceration exacerbates circumstances that cause the lose a valid address and produces an informal barrier to maintaining or receiving Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI.

The majority of interviewees cited homelessness or unstable housing as a fundamental problem for the jail population.<sup>171</sup> Jail intake officers are “good at knowing what the shelter addresses are,” because people mention them so often during intake.<sup>172</sup> The jail also has a van to take released inmates to Pacific Garden Mission, a homeless shelter on the Near South Side.<sup>173</sup> Even an arrest can “trigger” the eviction of a person or an “entire household from public or private housing.”<sup>174</sup> Jail time can makes it impossible to pay rent through a loss of income or subsidized housing vouchers. Those who had lived with friends or family may not be able to return “for whatever reason,” including pending domestic violence charges or fear of being “back” in an environment, such as drug use, that contributed to detention.<sup>175</sup>

170. Tanvi Misra, “The Homelessness Problem We Don’t Talk About,” Bloomberg CityLab, Aug. 16, 2018, [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-16/the-jail-to-homelessness-pipeline](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-16/the-jail-to-homelessness-pipeline).

171. See, also, Eric Grommon, Jason Rydeberg, and Timothy Bynum. *Understanding the Challenges Facing Offenders Upon Their Return to the Community: Final Report* (Lansing: Michigan State University, Jan. 2012), 13–14, [cj.msu.edu/\\_assets/pdfs/mjsc/MJSC-UCFOURC-Jan2012.pdf](http://cj.msu.edu/_assets/pdfs/mjsc/MJSC-UCFOURC-Jan2012.pdf).

172. Cara Smith, interview with the author, Nov. 10, 2019.

173. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2019.

174. “Know Your Rights: Housing and Arrests or Criminal Convictions,” Bronx Defenders, Oct. 2, 2010, [www.bronxdefenders.org/housing-and-arrests-or-criminal-convictions](http://www.bronxdefenders.org/housing-and-arrests-or-criminal-convictions).

175. Laura Lord, interview with the author, Feb. 15, 2019.

State welfare agencies send midpoint and redetermination notices for SNAP by mail; if people miss those notices they will lose benefits.<sup>176</sup> Teamwork Englewood’s Maanasi Laird recounted anecdotes of clients who “missed” receiving their new Link Cards, because they were “bouncing from shelters or friends’ homes.” Colby Calloway of Senator Gary Peters’s Michigan office said, “I don’t feel like there is any effort on the part of SSA to connect with people exiting jails.”<sup>177</sup> Medicaid and SSI also notify individuals by mail of closed cases. Individuals in detention or who are released without a valid address may be unaware of lost benefits until they go to the doctor or try to buy groceries with an expired Link Card. Interviewees did not know how detainees could learn that they had lost these benefits while they were incarcerated or how they could access reinstatement information upon release, especially if their addresses had changed or if they were already homeless or transient. These struggles with insecure housing effectively bar many from obtaining public assistance despite their eligibility.

## Policy Recommendations

Pretrial detention creates formal and informal barriers for Cook County Jail inmates who are eligible for Medicaid, SNAP, or SSI. First, I propose legislative action, because federal statutes create formal barriers to eligibility for individuals in pretrial detention. Second, I propose jailhouse programs that address informal barriers and promote awareness of eligibility and enrollment for all prisoners, regardless of length of stay.<sup>178</sup>

176. Ramon Marrero, email message to the author, Apr. 3, 2019. Marrero said that IDHS allows the homeless to use the office’s address on their applications, which requires them to return to the office routinely to “see if there is any mail.”

177. Colby Calloway, email message to the author, Dec. 30, 2018.

178. The longer the incarceration, the more inevitable the barriers, but certain barriers exist regardless of length of stay. Thus, while my recommendations are mindful of the length of detention, I attempt to embrace welfare enrollment for as many people as possible, including those with “only” short lengths of stay.

## Legislative Action

Congress needs to amend the Social Security Act (which governs Medicaid),<sup>179</sup> the US Public Code (which governs SSI),<sup>180</sup> and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 (which governs SNAP)<sup>181</sup> to exclude pretrial detainees from suspension of benefits. These amendments would recognize the unique bureaucratic challenges of those in pretrial detention and protect them as a class. The amendments would bring the earlier statutes into agreement with the language of the most recent federal statute, the No Social Security Benefits for Prisoners Act (NSSBPA), which was signed into law in 2009.<sup>182</sup> NSSBPA amends Title II (SSDI) and Title XVI (SSI) “to prohibit retroactive payments to individuals” who have been convicted of crimes and excludes individuals who have only been accused of crimes.<sup>183</sup> Cook County Jail regularly houses people for longer than thirty days for reasons unrelated to the severity of charges or the fault of the detainee, such as backlogs in the county’s criminal justice

179. Section 1905 prohibits Medicaid “payments with respect to care or services for any individual who is an inmate of a public institution.” See “Compilation of the Social Security Laws,” SSA.

180. Title 42 states that “no payment [of Supplemental Security Income] shall be made … during any period for which such individual … is an inmate of a public institution that is a jail, prison, or other penal institution or correctional facility.” See Public Health and Welfare of 2012, 2 U.S.C. § 1383 (2012).

181. The act requires states “to verify and otherwise ensure that an individual who is placed under detention in a Federal, State, or local penal, correctional, or other detention facility for more than 30 days shall not be eligible to participate in the food stamp program as a member of any household.” See Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-33, 111 Stat. 251 (1997).

182. Pub. L. No. 111-115, 111 Stat. 4218 (2009).

183. Ibid. SSDI eligibility is based on disability and work credits; SSI eligibility is based on age/disability and low income. See Brandy Bauer, “SSI vs. SSDI: the Differences, Benefits, and How to Apply,” National Council on Aging, Nov. 23, 2020, [www.ncoa.org/article/ssi-vs-smdi-what-are-these-benefits-how-they-differ](http://www.ncoa.org/article/ssi-vs-smdi-what-are-these-benefits-how-they-differ).

system, a lack of funds to post bail, racially biased bail terms, or the inability to hire a private attorney.<sup>184</sup> Finally, I recommend that suspension of benefits be replaced by a pause in benefits during the time that Cook County Jail pays for inmates’ health care and food. Jail administrators would be responsible for notifying the relevant agencies as part of their standard intake and release procedures (see below for details). Pausing benefits would eliminate the bureaucratic—and unnecessary—hoops that force state officials’ to create ad hoc suspension policies and that force inmates into the difficult process of notifying agencies of incarceration from jail and of reactivating benefits upon release.

## Direct Enrollment Programs and Single-Stop Model

In regards to Medicaid, Illinois and Cook County Jail should end case-worker discretion and the informal practice of not suspending and not reporting. A formalized system would pause detainees’ benefits at intake and reactivate benefits automatically upon release, similar to Rikers Island Jail. Ashley Smith of New York City’s Health and Hospitals System explained that Rikers shares inmate data with the city’s Human Resources Administration, which reactivates Medicaid automatically upon release, a process that “takes, at most, twenty-four hours.”<sup>185</sup> This procedure should be relatively easy to implement, because the data already exists in the Cook County system.<sup>186</sup>

184. David Arnold, Will Dobbie, and Crystal S. Yang, “Racial Bias in Bail Decisions” (Working Paper 23421, National Bureau of Economic Research, Cambridge, MA, May 2017), 3, [www.nber.org/papers/w23421](http://www.nber.org/papers/w23421); Douglas L. Colbert, Ray Paternoster, and Shawn Bushway, “Do Attorneys Really Matter? The Empirical and Legal Case for the Right of Counsel at Bail,” *Cardozo Law Review* 23 (2002): 1,719–93, [digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1290&context=fac\\_pubs](http://digitalcommons.law.umaryland.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1290&context=fac_pubs).

185. Ashley Smith, telephone interview the author, [Feb. 15, 2019].

186. Andrea McGlynn, interview with the author, Dec. 17, 2018.

In regards to SNAP, Cook County Jail should incorporate food-security screenings into its intake procedure, which the Greater Chicago Food Depository considers a long-term goal.<sup>187</sup> Multiple interviewees described SNAP pre-enrollment programs in other state prisons where detainees are screened. SNAP applications could be started at Cook County Jail even without a known release date by using flexibility in the federal guidelines for on-the-ground administrators. Virginia Hanson of the South Dakota Department of Social Services said that caseworkers “hold applications” for people expected to be released after South Dakota’s thirty days SNAP-waiver mandate. They “flag it on their calendar” to process the application later or “go ahead and put the application on, deny it, and then use the same application sixty days later … for the next month, as it’s still eligible.”<sup>188</sup> If Illinois welfare agencies are not willing to shoulder this burden, external partners might. Melanie Hickcox of Feeding Missouri, a nonprofit similar to the Greater Chicago Food Depository, helps individuals complete applications in prison and submits the applications on their behalf close to the release date; the “clock” starts in Missouri (as in Illinois) when an application is received.<sup>189</sup> Holding SNAP applications would require Cook County Jail administrators to dedicate a group of staff members to monitor and submit applications by email to IDHS caseworkers when a release date approaches. Despite limitations that would need to be overcome—e.g., staff training and release-date ambiguity—this recommendation could be the start of a larger conversation around targeted outreach and enrollment for detainees.

In regards to SSI, Cook County Jail should assist detainees who might be eligible. Marlena Jentz of the jail said that its administrators are already considering a mini-clinic for SSI, where a legal team would come and

187. Aimee Ramirez, interview with the author, Dec. 5, 2018.

188. Virginia Hanson, interview with the author, Dec. 7, 2019.

189. Melanie Hickcox, telephone interview the author, [Feb. 15, 2019].

assist detainees with SSI applications.<sup>190</sup> A recommended improvement would be to use the technical assistance offered by the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery Program (SOAR) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services.<sup>191</sup> SOAR offers free online seminars for caseworkers, social workers, and correctional officers working with “high-risk” individuals, including the currently and formerly incarcerated. Jails and state prisons that implement SOAR training see higher SSI application approval rates and lower recidivism rates for former inmates.<sup>192</sup>

SOAR can “facilitates partnerships with community service providers to share information, acquire pre-incarceration medical records, and translate prison functioning into post-release work potential.”<sup>193</sup> Participating institutions may apply for SAMHSA grants targeted at interventions for specific populations, like the homeless or mentally ill.<sup>194</sup> Kristin Luper, a SOAR coordinator, said that this program is designed specifically for discharge planners within carceral institutions, state caseworkers, and advocates for the formerly incarcerated.<sup>195</sup> Luper stressed that the training is most successful when organizations “dedicate a position to focus

190. Marlena Jentz, interview with the author, Dec. 13, 2018.

191. “What is SOAR?” Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, n.d., accessed Mar. 19, 2021, [soarworks.prainc.com/content/what-soar](https://soarworks.prainc.com/content/what-soar).

192. Kristin Luper, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

193. Dazara Ware and Deborah Dennis, *Best Practices for Increasing Access to SSI/SSDI Upon Exiting Criminal Justice Settings* (Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Jan. 2013), 4, [soarworks.prainc.com/sites/soar-works.prainc.com/files/bestpracticesCJ-508.pdf](https://soarworks.prainc.com/sites/soar-works.prainc.com/files/bestpracticesCJ-508.pdf).

194. Kristin Luper, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018. For example, SOAR training explains how to use jail disciplinary infraction reports to demonstrate symptoms of mental illness to SSA.

195. Ibid.

on the applications,” rather than simply adding SOAR or SSI application preparation into the “massive” caseloads of existing staff.<sup>196</sup> This may be hard to implement at the jail due to resource constraints, such as existing staff caseloads and the lack of funding for new staff.<sup>197</sup> Additionally, the SSI application requires a release date, though Luper said that “it doesn’t really matter … SSA just needs … an expected release date.”<sup>198</sup> Similar to my SNAP proposal, this recommendation depends on less bureaucracy, but even having jail staff complete the free training might facilitate more baseline SSI outreach for detainees.

Although Cook Count Jail could implement these recommendations individually, I further recommend that the jail incorporate them into a single-stop service, modelled on the Rikers Island program. Nicole Quinn, the program’s coordinator, describes its two benefit centers, which are run by the nonprofit Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) as a “one-stop shop for public benefits right on the Island.”<sup>199</sup> CUCS counsels detainees on SNAP, Medicaid, and cash assistance and makes referrals to affiliated agencies and community health organizations; an on-site Legal Aid Society—much larger than Cook County Jail’s proposed legal clinic—provides “assistance on … eviction prevention; public benefits appeals; employment issues; and family law issues.”<sup>200</sup> This successful jail-nonprofit collaboration has been well received by jail staff, which suggest it could also work in Cook County.

196. Ibid.

197. Jane Gubser, interview with the author, Nov. 16, 2018.

198. Kristin Luper, interview with the author, Dec. 11, 2018.

199. Nicole Quinn, email message to the author, [Feb. 15, 2019].

200. “Rikers Island Single-Stop Support Center,” Center for Urban Community Services, 2018, program description shared by Nicole Quinn and in the author’s possession. See, also, “CUSC Benefit Centers,” Center for Urban Community Services, n.d., accessed Mar. 19, 2021, [www.cucs.org/financial-stability/benefit-centers](http://www.cucs.org/financial-stability/benefit-centers).

## Inmate ID Program

I recommend that Cook County Jail implement an identity card program, similar to one at New York’s Monroe County Jail.<sup>201</sup> Twice a month, Department of Motor Vehicles staff process state ID applications for pretrial detainees. Former inmates leave jail with either a real or temporary state ID.<sup>202</sup> Monroe County Jail’s size (1,300 inmates) may prevent translating this ideal program to Cook County Jail (6,046 inmates), due to larger costs and more complicated logistics.<sup>203</sup> If that is the case, then the jail could issue Chicago CityKey cards, which Chicago residents may use as a “valid, government-issued ID” throughout the city, including city agencies.<sup>204</sup> Tonantzin Carmona of the clerk’s office said that the card, which is issued without a fee, may function as secondary identification for federal and state welfare programs for people with Social Security Cards.<sup>205</sup> The clerk’s office has worked with jail and prison administrators and Safer Foundation, a nonprofit advocate for those with criminal records, to expand the list of documents to include Cook

201. “Inmates at Monroe Co. Jail Can Now Receive Non-Driver ID Cards,” WHAM ABC 13, June 27, 2018, [13wham.com/news/local/inmates-at-monroe-co-jail-can-now-receive-non-drive-id-cards](http://13wham.com/news/local/inmates-at-monroe-co-jail-can-now-receive-non-drive-id-cards).

202. John Kennedy, email message to the author, Dec. 13, 2018.

203. Erin L. George, *New York’s Jails by the Numbers* (New York: JustLeadership-USA, Mar. 26, 2018), 4, [justleadershipusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FREEnewyork-ByTheNumbers\\_032618.pdf](http://justleadershipusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/FREEnewyork-ByTheNumbers_032618.pdf); Business Intelligence Unit, *Sheriff’s Daily Report 11/1/2018*.

204. The card “serves as a government-issued ID, a Chicago Public Library Card, a Chicago Transit Authority Ventra Card, and a Chicago prescription drug discount card.” See “Chicago CityKey,” Office of the City Clerk, n.d., accessed Mar. 19, 2021, [www.chicityclerk.com/chicagocitykey](http://www.chicityclerk.com/chicagocitykey).

205. Tonantzin Carmona, interview with the author, Feb. 22, 2019. The Chicago CityKey does not require applicants to have a Social Security Number or fixed address.

County Department of Corrections IDs and Illinois Department of Corrections verification forms, conditions-of-aftercare release papers, and parole documents.<sup>206</sup>

In 2019 the clerk's office began issuing CityKey Cards to women inmates at Cook County Jail, had hoped to expand the program to men, and was "in talks with the Illinois Secretary of State's office about helping inmates get state identification."<sup>207</sup> After confirming eligibility, CityKey Cards are printed "within minutes" at the clerk's office, at mobile sites, or in jail (for women inmates). CityKey could benefit up to two-thirds of detainees who are Chicago residents, but not the remaining detainees who reside in the suburbs or elsewhere.<sup>208</sup> Immediate access to ID cards is an advantage over the Monroe County Jail state ID program, in which some inmates leave with temporary cards and may have trouble receiving real cards if they lack a mailing address.

These policy recommendations would require a cultural shift at the jail and additional staff training, which potentially limits successful implementation at Cook County Jail. Gerry Gorman of UIC Nursing said that all jail employees are "incredibly diligent and committed to helping the population" but are "very" confined to their roles and rarely knew or understood "things happening across cells or in different departments."<sup>209</sup> Numerous interviewees discussed the general low morale of the jail's staff, especially among correctional officers. In order to

206. Ibid.

207. Andy Grimm, "Female Inmates Issued CityKey ID Cards in Jail Pilot Program," *Chicago Sun-Time*, Nov. 8, 2019, [chicago.suntimes.com/news/2019/11/8/20955419/inmates-chicago-citykey-id-card-jail-program](http://chicago.suntimes.com/news/2019/11/8/20955419/inmates-chicago-citykey-id-card-jail-program). The program's expansion was threatened by city budget cuts in 2020; see Justin Laurence, "Cuts to City Key ID Program Proposed," Block Club Chicago, [blockclubchicago.org/2020/10/28/cuts-to-city-key-id-program-proposed-to-help-close-cities-1-2-billion-budget-gap](http://blockclubchicago.org/2020/10/28/cuts-to-city-key-id-program-proposed-to-help-close-cities-1-2-billion-budget-gap).

208. Olson and Taheri, 4.

209. Gerry Gorman, interview with the author, Feb. 13, 2019.

implement successful programs, interviewees stressed that buy-in from correctional officers, who interact the most with detainees, is essential. Sociologist Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve said that correctional officers "make fun" of Sheriff Dart and his reform efforts and do not think jails should give inmates "handouts."<sup>210</sup> Inmates, in turn, harbor fears about the jail staff.<sup>211</sup> However, jail leadership can improve correctional officers' morale and buy-in by including them in the planning process and offering services to the officers themselves.<sup>212</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite a presumption of innocence during pretrial incarceration, a person must navigate complex challenges, including access to Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI, while in Cook County Jail and after release. These welfare programs are crucial. They lower recidivism and extend the basic human rights of food, health, and housing to an often demonized group—the poor and formerly incarcerated.

I focused on the pretrial population as a single group, but there are ultimately two distinct groups to be considered: people connected to public assistance who lose aid due to detention and people disconnected from welfare whose disconnection grows after detention. Formal barriers almost exclusively affect people with aid who have been detained for more

210. Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve, telephone interview the author, [Feb. 15, 2019]. See, also, Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve, *Cook County: Racism and Injustice in America's Largest Criminal Court* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016).

211. For example, men at the jail commonly fear that officials add poisons to their food, which will "emasculate" and "feminize" them for easier control. Gerry Gorman, interview with the author, Feb. 13, 2019.

212. "Ten Steps Correctional Directors Can Take to Strengthen Performance," Pew Center on the States, May 2008, [www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/pew\\_report\\_ten\\_steps\\_corrections\\_dir\\_can\\_take\\_to\\_strengthen\\_performance\\_may\\_2008.pdf](http://www.prisonlegalnews.org/media/publications/pew_report_ten_steps_corrections_dir_can_take_to_strengthen_performance_may_2008.pdf).

than thirty days, while informal barriers affect everyone, even people detained for only a few hours. Cook County Jail deviates from the norm of jails as a form of short-term incarceration, which causes a larger portion of people to face barriers to Medicaid, SNAP, and SSI benefits upon release. Cook County Jail should combat or mitigate these barriers as much as possible by taking advantage of Illinois's expansive eligibility factors.

Many of Illinois's jail population are eligible for at least one of these welfare programs; the pool of potential enrollees and people entering the jail already enrolled is large; and these programs provide a safety net that helps former inmates rebuild productive lives. There are numerous systemic and institutional reasons why people end up in jail, including the over policing of communities of color, a lack of social investment in marginalized communities, and the state's failure to provide a social safety net that might prevent crimes of survival.<sup>213</sup> Until such large-scale injustices within the criminal justice system are ameliorated, jail will continue to receive a population that is historically disenfranchised, hard-to-reach, and potentially eligible for welfare. The jail's leadership already recognizes that "on any given day, between 25 and 30 percent of the inmates at Cook County Jail suffer from mental illnesses" and has twice hired psychologists as wardens, with the understanding that treating mental illness in jails reduces recidivism and increases quality of life.<sup>214</sup> For the same practical and humanitarian reasons, the jail should now recognize the needs of its larger population who receive or are eligible for public aid.

213. Andrea J. Ritchie and Beth E. Richie, *The Crisis of Criminalization: A Call for a Comprehensive Philanthropic Response*, vol. 9, *New Feminist Solutions* (New York: Barnard Center for Research on Women, Sept. 19, 2017), 4, [bcrw.barnard.edu/wp-content/nfs/reports/NFS9-Challenging-Criminalization-Funding-Perspectives.pdf](http://bcrw.barnard.edu/wp-content/nfs/reports/NFS9-Challenging-Criminalization-Funding-Perspectives.pdf).

214. "Mental Health Policy and Advocacy," Cook County Sheriff's Office, n.d., accessed Mar. 20, 2021, [www.cookcountysheriff.org/departments/mental-health-policy-advocacy](http://www.cookcountysheriff.org/departments/mental-health-policy-advocacy); Nader Issa, "Cook County Jail Hires 2nd Consecutive Mental Health Professional as Warden," *Chicago Sun-Times*, Mar. 6, 2019.

Implementation will be challenging. Since the 1970s, the US criminal justice system has viewed incarceration as punitive and not rehabilitative.<sup>215</sup> At the level of on-the-ground administration, multiple interviewees stressed the importance of relationships and building trust when working with people on welfare, which will require a cultural shift given the current staff-detainee relationship at Cook County Jail. I believe firmly, though, that there remains an obligation to try. Mass incarceration has produced a class of people in the United States—"carceral citizens"—which is overwhelmingly poor people of color.<sup>216</sup> This will require reimagining Cook County Jail as a critical site of intervention—rehabilitation, if you will—for marginalized people. As my thesis has demonstrated, there is a growing understanding among mayors and sheriffs of the practical need to reintegrate pretrial detainees into the general population as a means of reducing recidivism; nonprofit advocates are willing to help in this endeavor; and Illinois's expansion of federal welfare benefits makes these interventions feasible. Cook County Jail is ideally situated to become a model for these types of reforms, and I urge the jail's leaders to try. ○

215. Michelle S. Phelps, "Rehabilitation in the Punitive Era: The Gap between Rhetoric and Reality in U.S. Prison Programs," *Law Society Review* 45, no. 1 (Mar. 2011): 33, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3762476](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3762476).

216. Miller and Stuart, 533–34.

## Appendix A:

### Interviewees Cited in Text

#### Criminal Justice System — 9 contacts

TITLE	AFFILIATION	LOCATION
<b>Tanya Anderson</b> Pretrial coordinator	Administrative Office of the Courts	Illinois
<b>Anna Calabrese</b> Re-entry director	Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice	New York
<b>Gerry Gorman</b> Clinical professor of nursing	University of Illinois Chicago	Illinois
<b>Jane Gubser</b> Program head	Cook County Jail	Illinois
<b>Felicia Henry</b> Re-entry manager	Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice	New York
<b>Marlena Jentz</b> Program administrator	Cook County Jail	Illinois
<b>John Kennedy</b> Captain	Monroe County Jail	New York
<b>Cara Smith</b> Policy chief	Cook County Jail	Illinois
<b>Unknown name</b> Customer service	Securus Technologies	Texas

#### Government Agencies — 15 contacts

TITLE	AFFILIATION	LOCATION
<b>Anonymous</b> Collections employee	Department of Human Services	Illinois
<b>Colby Calloway</b> Social Security liaison	US Senator Gary Peters (D-MI)	Michigan
<b>Tonantzin Carmona</b> Policy chief	Office of the City Clerk of Chicago	Illinois
<b>Kate Fink</b> External affairs director	USDA Food and Nutrition Services	DC
<b>Virginia Hanson</b> Program specialist	Department of Social Services	South Dakota
<b>John Kiamos</b> Chief executive	CountyCare Medicaid	Illinois
<b>Jane Longo</b> Administrator	CountyCare Medicaid	Illinois
<b>Kristin Luper</b> SOAR project director	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	DC
<b>Ramon Marrero</b> Administrator	Department of Human Services	Illinois
<b>Andrea McGlynn</b> Clinical service director	CountyCare Medicaid	Illinois
<b>Doug Nguyen</b> Communications director	Social Security Administration	Illinois

*Continued*

**Government Agencies — 15 contacts** *continued*

TITLE	AFFILIATION	LOCATION
<b>Nicole Quinn</b> Program director	Center for Urban Community Services	New York
<b>Kasey Reagan</b> Service administrator	Department of Healthcare and Human Services	Illinois
<b>Lynne Thomas</b> Senior administrator	Department of Healthcare and Family Services	Illinois
<b>Carol West</b> ACA coordinator	Department of Human Services	Illinois

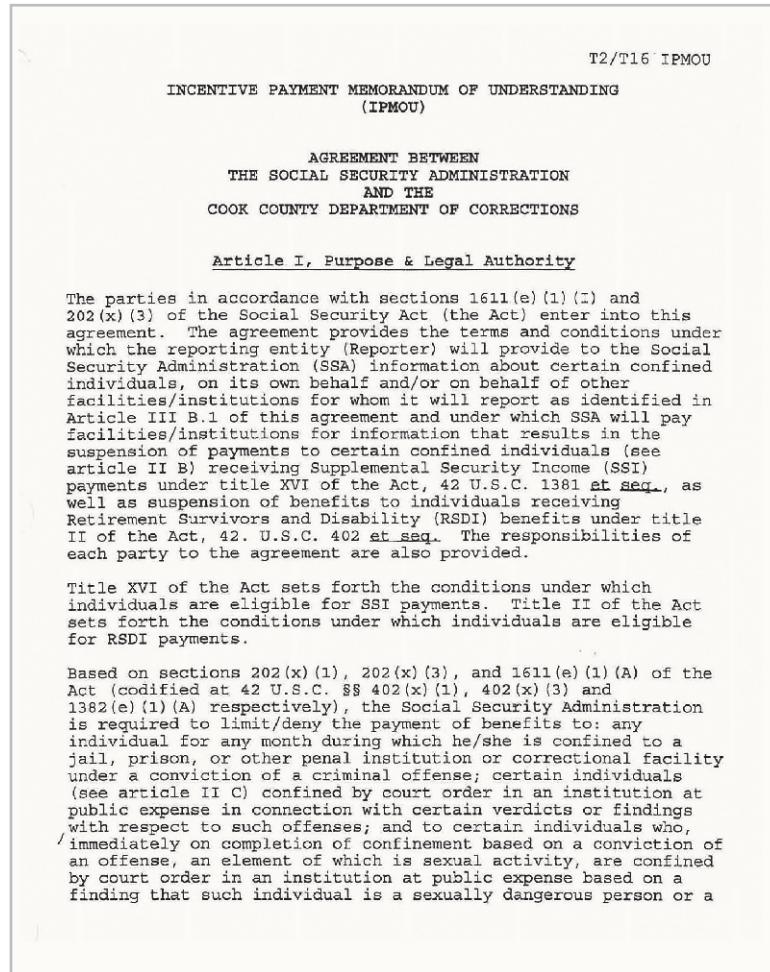
**Nonprofits — 11 contacts**

TITLE	AFFILIATION	LOCATION
<b>Samuel Elder</b> Social worker	Cabrini Green Legal Aid	Illinois
<b>Melanie Hickcox</b> SNAP project manager	Feeding Missouri	Missouri
<b>Maanasi Laird</b> Case manager	Teamwork Englewood	Illinois
<b>Laura Lord</b> Program administrator	Thresholds	Illinois
<b>Matt McLoughlin</b> Cofounder	Chicago Community Bond Fund	Illinois
<b>Alan Mills</b> Chief executive	Uptown People's Law Center	Illinois
<b>Mark Mitchell</b> Reentry director	Teamwork Englewood	Illinois
<b>Robin Moore</b> Release administrator	Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities	Illinois
<b>Aimee Ramirez</b> Policy manager	Greater Chicago Food Depository	Illinois
<b>Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve</b> Sociology professor	Brown University	Rhode Island
<b>Sheena Ward</b> Medicaid coordinator	Heartland Alliance	Illinois

## Appendix B:

### MOU between SSA and Cook County Jail (pp. 1-2, 10)

Source: Social Security Administration, *Incentive Payment Memorandum of Understanding: Agreement between the Social Security Administration and the Cook County Department of Corrections* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, 2018), memorandum obtained through FOIA and in the author's possession.



T2/T16 IPMOU Page 2

sexual predator or a similar finding (title II of the Act); or to any individual for any month throughout which the individual is an inmate of a public institution (title XVI of the Act).

Section 1611(e)(1)(I)(i) and section 202(x)(3) of the Act authorize SSA to enter into agreements described in those sections with a specified type of interested State or local institution (such as a jail, prison, or other penal institution or correctional facility or other institutions in which people are confined by court order at public expense). These sections of the Act provide the general terms and conditions under which, based on this agreement, the Reporter will provide information about confined individuals to SSA. SSA will also use the information provided by the Cook County Department of Corrections under authority of sections 205(j)(1)(A), 205(j)(5), 1631(a)(2)(A)(iii) and 1631(a)(2)(E) of the Act which require SSA to revoke certification for payment of benefits to representative payees under certain circumstances and investigate and monitor the performance of such representative payees. (See also 20 C.F.R. 404.2050; 416.655). The incarceration or confinement of a representative payee is a circumstance that SSA will consider under the above referenced representative payee provisions.

This agreement and any subsequent addenda supersede any similar agreement entered into previously under the above-cited statutory provisions by the reporter and SSA concerning disclosure of records of confined individuals or inmates of public institutions.

Section 552a(a)(8)(B) of title 5, U.S.C., as amended by section 402(a)(2) of Public Law 106-170 exempts this agreement, and information exchanged under this agreement, from certain provisions of the Privacy Act, i.e., those relating to computer matches.

## Appendix B: MOU between SSA and Cook County Jail *continued*

T2/T16 IPMOU Page 10

**NOTE:** See article III, B.2. for data elements required to qualify for Title XVI incentive payments as described above.

### RSDI (Title II) Incentive Payments

In accordance with section 202(X)(3) of the Act, SSA will pay an incentive payment to a facility/institution covered by this agreement for information on a confined and convicted individual which the Reporter furnishes to SSA within the time periods specified below, provided that the confined individual is:

- Is receiving an RSDI payment for the month preceding the first month in which the confined individual is in a facility/institution; and
- Determined by SSA to be ineligible for an RSDI payment for any part of the first month as a result of the information provided by the Reporter under this agreement.

**NOTE:** See Article III, B.3 for the data elements required to qualify for Title XVI and/or Title II incentive payments as described above.

### Payment of Incentives

SSA will pay such facility/institution:

- \$400 if the Reporter furnishes the information on a confined individual described above to SSA within 30 days after the date the individual's confinement in such facility/institution begins; and/or,
- \$200 if the Reporter furnishes such information to SSA after 30 days after such date but within 90 days after such date.
- The dollar amounts above will be reduced by 50 percent if the Commissioner is also required to make a payment to the reporter with respect to the same individual under an agreement entered into under section 202(x)(3)(B); and, conversely will be reduced by 50 percent if a payment is made with respect to the same individual under section 1611(e)(1)(I).

## Appendix C: SSI (Title XVI) Suspensions at Cook County Jail

Source: Social Security Administration, *Cook County Jail Statistic Information for January 1, 2017, through October 1, 2018* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, 2018), data obtained through FOIA and in the author's possession.

Cook County Jail Statistical Information  
for January 1, 2017 through October 1, 2018

### Title XVI Prisoner Suspensions for 1/2017 through 10/2018

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	
Number of Title XVI Suspensions		Number of Title XVI Suspensions	
January	25	January	54
February	35	February	37
March	45	March	54
April	52	April	16
May	56	May	39
June	60	June	36
July	98	July	80
August	47	August	72
September	54	September	31
October	64	October	0
November	36		
December	12		
<b>Total</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>419</b>

## Appendix D: SSI/SSDI Incentives Paid to Cook County Jail

Source: Social Security Administration, *Cook County Jail Statistic Information for January 1, 2017, through October 1, 2018* (Washington, DC: Social Security Administration, 2018), data obtained through FOIA and in the author's possession.

### Incentive Payments (IPs) Paid to Cook County Jail for 1/2017 through 10/2018

<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
<b>Payment Amount</b>	<b>Payment Amount</b>
January \$13,200	January \$2,400
February 8,200	February 11,000
March 5,400	March 8,000
April 6,000	April 8,600
May 5,800	May 4,200
June 7,400	June 3,600
July 4,400	July 10,600
August 14,400	August 11,800
September 10,800	September 13,000
October 13,800	October 1 2,800
November 13,600	
December 7,400	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$76,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$110,400</b>

## Appendix E: CPD Personal Property Form, part I

Source: Olivia Medina, Public Information Officer, Office of Legal Affairs, Chicago Police Department, to author, Dec. 13, 2018.

PERSONAL PROPERTY FORM  
CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT  
RECEIPT NO. P  
DATE RECEIVED  
DISTRICT/UNIT NO.  
NAME OF OWNER  
OWNER'S ADDRESS CITY C STATE  
TOTAL CASH AND COINS MUST BE \$500.00 OR LESS  
MONEY COUNT 1's 2's 5's 10's 20's 50's 100's Cash TOTAL VALUE OF CASH AND COINS  
NUMBER  
QTY ITEM QTY ITEM  
LOCKUP PERSONNEL (SIGNATURE) STAR NO/EMP. No  
CPD-11.502 (Rev. 3/14) DETENTION FACILITY  
IF SEE OTHER SIDE DO NOT DETACH THIS PERMANENT COPY FROM THE BOOK  
DATE PROPERTY RECEIVED CB NO  
LOCKUP PERSONNEL (SIGNATURE) STAR NO/EMP. No  
BY PROPERTY OWNER (SIGNATURE)  
FROM SHOW THE RECEIPT NO. ON PROPERTY INVENTORY.  
PROPERTY INVENTORY RECEIPT NO. P

BIRTH DATE - DAY - MONTH - YEAR  
FROM LOOKUP PERSONNEL RETURNING PROPERTY (SIGNATURE) STAR NO/CB NO  
TO OWNER'S SIGNATURE  
OWNER'S ADDRESS CITY  
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION  
SEX HEIGHT RACE HAIR COLOR EYE COLOR  
BUILD SLENDER MEDIUM HEAVY GLASSES  
OTHER PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS  
PROPERTY OWNER'S BIRTH DATE DAY MONTH YEAR  
S. H. H.

## **Appendix F: CPD Personal Property Form, part II**

Source: City of Chicago, "Exhibit 3: Chicago Police Department Sample Forms," n.d., 19–20, accessed Mar. 21, 2021, [www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dps/ContractAdministration/Addendum/2017Addendum/Spec136744Exhibit3.pdf](http://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/dps/ContractAdministration/Addendum/2017Addendum/Spec136744Exhibit3.pdf)

<b>PERSONAL PROPERTY FORM</b> CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT		RECEIPT NO. <b>R 2526801</b>	
DATE RECEIVED		DISTRICT/ART NO.	
NAME OF OWNER			
OWNER'S ADDRESS		CITY	
C. B. NO.			
TOTAL CASH AND COINS MUST BE \$500.00 OR LESS.			
MONEY COUNT	1's 2's 5's 10's 20's 50's 100's	COINS	TOTAL VALUE OF CASH AND COINS
NUMBER			
CITY	ITEM	CITY	ITEM
LOCKUP PERSONNEL (SIGNATURE)		STAR NO/EMP #	
CPD-11.50X (Rev. 3/14)			
SEE OTHER SIDE		<b>PRISONER'S RECEIPT</b>	
DATE PROPERTY RECEIVED		CB. NO.	
LOCKUP PERSONNEL (SIGNATURE)		STAR NO/EMP #	
BY	(PROPERTY OWNER'S SIGNATURE)		
(PLACE THIS LOWER PORTION IN THE PROPERTY ENVELOPE)			
FROM		RECEIPT NO.	
(INVENTORY STUB)			
		<b>P 2526801</b>	
1. FULL BOTTOM STUB DOWNWARD TO REMOVE CARBON, E, DISCARD		2. REMOVE WHITE OR FINAL 3. LEAVE DUPLICATE, E, BOOK	

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# Chicago at the End of Time



## Millennial Imaginings in the World's Fair City

BRECK RADULOVIC, AB'19

*It was the twentieth century.... The great impulse born of the World's Fair led the citizens to decide, when the White City had gone up in flames, that their black city should be transformed according to the best thought of the world's greatest thinkers....*

*If Christ came to your city would He find you ready? If so you will not have long to wait.<sup>1</sup>*

The chaotic landscape of 1893 Chicago gave rise to two visions of the city. In the popular imagination, the White City of the World's Fair was glorious and perfect, while the vice districts and slums held countless terrors. Chicago's wealth and capital were alternately blamed for the destruction and hailed for the city's triumphs. To comprehend these oppositions, many turned to apocalyptic symbolism and rhetoric, most notably in *If Christ Came to Chicago*, written by British journalist William T. Stead. Much of these popular religious musings blurred theological categories of Social Gospel and pre- and postmillennialism. The plasticity of millennial imaginings among nineteenth-century liberal Protestants

1. W. T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago! A Plea for the Union of All Who Love in the Service of All Who Suffer* (London: Review of Reviews, 1894), 415, 434.

evinced a society struggling to navigate the spectacles and dangers of the modern capitalist city, while also constructing a new understanding of time, divinity, and progress.

A year after the World's Fair Columbian Exposition the London newspaper editor, William T. Stead, presented a tantalizing vision of Chicago fifty years in the future. By the 1940s, social reformers would have all but eradicated poverty, saloons, drug stores, and prostitution; the glorious splendor of the fair, which had captivated the city from May to October 1893, would be recreated, phoenix-like, after a series of devastating fires; and the US capital would move to Chicago, the seat of government housed in a marble replica of "the architectural glories of the World's Fair."<sup>2</sup> Chicago's transformation had a simple impetus: "The Church of God in Chicago [had] only one belief, and that [was] to do what Christ would have done if He were confronted with the problems with which they have to deal."<sup>3</sup> In other words, each Chicagoan should "Be a Christ!"<sup>4</sup> Stead's vision sprung from a moral urgency: Chicago had let vice and sin run rampant. Chicagoans listened and talked about little else than the stranger's four hundred-page judgment and guide to redemption, *If Christ Came to Chicago*.

Stead arrived to a dual and dueling city in the last months of 1893. Visitors described the fair's White City as a divine revelation, a "New Jerusalem" that could rival heaven itself.<sup>5</sup> The so-called Black City writhed beneath, in the vice districts where saloons, brothels, and lodging houses arose as quickly as the fair had sprung from the swamps of

2. Ibid., 415.

3. Ibid., 418.

4. Ibid., 432.

5. W. Hamilton Gibson, "Foreground and Vista at the Fair," in *Some Artists at the Fair* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), 82. "New Jerusalem" is drawn from Revelation 21:9–22:5. For one example from the vast exegesis of Revelation, see J. A. du Rand, "The Imagery of the Heavenly Jerusalem," *Neotestamentica* 22, no. 1 (1988): 65–86.

Jackson Park.<sup>6</sup> These warring versions of Chicago cast an apocalyptic aura at the time of Stead's arrival, who believed that social reformers like himself would soon bring about social revolution. Both a scathing exposé and a prophetic fantasy, *If Christ Came to Chicago* polarized readers in March 1894 and quickly sold a hundred thousand copies in Chicago alone.<sup>7</sup> Critics accused Stead of casting himself as the titular savior, some of his supporters called him a prophet, and he himself claimed to be a "demagogue."<sup>8</sup>

A liberal Protestant raised as a Congregationalist, Stead was not alone in his optimistic belief in an urban utopia.<sup>9</sup> The dominant nineteenth-century Protestant eschatology was postmillennialism, which held that Jesus Christ would return to earth after a thousand-year period of blessedness and perfect Christian ethics brought about by believers.<sup>10</sup> The appeal of postmillennialism, and apocalypticism in general, was that the

6. As used by nineteenth-century white Protestants, *Black City* carried moral and religious, rather than racial overtones. Although approximately fifteen thousand African Americans lived in Chicago in the 1890s, white Protestants were more concerned with the larger immigrations of Irish and European Catholics. Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Table 14: Illinois," in *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990: For Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States* (Washington, DC: US Census Bureau, 2005).

7. Joseph O. Baylen, "A Victorian's 'Crusade' in Chicago, 1893–1894," *Journal of American History* 50, no. 3 (Dec. 1964), 433.

8. "Stead for Reform," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1893.

9. Much utopian fiction at the time was influenced by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a futuristic utopian novel from 1888. See Peggy Ann Brown, "Edward Bellamy: An Introductory Bibliography," *American Studies International* 26, no. 2 (Oct. 1988): 37–50.

10. Eschatology refers to theology of the end times, the end of the world, and the return of the divine to earth. For most Christians, eschatology concerns the destiny of the individual soul, humanity, and all temporal reality.

progression of time was purposive and just, rather than senseless and pointless, as each century brought humanity closer to a perfect future.<sup>11</sup>

Like postmillennialists, Stead believed Chicago could become the perfect city envisioned in the Revelation of John, but he also believed that the modern city was experiencing a crisis of social degradation. He turned to the opposite apocalyptic vision of premillennialism to warn Chicagoans of the dangers of social ills. Premillennialism holds that Christ will return to judge the living and the dead after a series of violent and horrific tribulations. Some readers would have understood the title of Stead's book as a very real threat—the earthly visitation of the wrathful Christ. Numerous events in the late 1890s lent themselves to apocalyptic symbolism: the assassination on the last day of the fair of Chicago's mayor, Carter Harrison, known as a people's mayor; an economic depression; increasing labor agitation; and the series of fires that destroyed the White City in early 1894. Even before the violent death of "Our Carter," as he was known to supporters, ministers and reformers had pointed to vice and crime as evidence of an imminent premillennial apocalypse.

Just as Chicagoans navigated between the grandeur of the fair and the degradation of the vice districts, journalists and theologians interpreted Chicago in the equally opposite theologies of pre- and postmillennialism. These interpretations incorporated the modern inclination toward spectacle, manipulated traditional theological assumptions, and challenged understandings of time as progressive. These popular perversions of eschatological doctrine, including *If Christ Came to Chicago*, produced new and plastic millennialisms that were created out of and for the moral tumult of the modern city.

The United States was in flux in 1890s. Industrial capitalism was transforming a formerly agrarian nation into an urban workshop of iron

11. James H. Moorhead, *World without End: Mainstream American Protestant Visions of the Last Things, 1880–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

and steel. American youths increasingly left rural homes and families for cities, where they worked in factories, department stores, and slaughterhouses. They were joined by immigrants, giving rise to the entangled fears of urbanization and foreigners. American moralists condemned cities for excessive drinking, gambling, and "white slavery," or prostitution—hazards that threatened to rend American society. American Christians also grappling with Darwinism and biblical criticism, which threatened the unquestioned accuracy of the Bible. These strands of social, economic, political, and religious change created a crisis for American Protestants, who feared both moral degradation and the loss of their social authority.<sup>12</sup>

While most scholarship of American postmillennialism and premillennialism considers the attitudes and beliefs of elite Protestants, the same pressures of modernity influenced laypeople's eschatologies. Chicago in 1893 is a rich case study to understand turmoil in liberal Protestant theology, and popular literature offers greater insight into the broader millennial imagination of the city than a focus on elites alone. Chicagoans in the hundreds of thousands read vice novels, like *If Christ Came to Chicago*, for both entertainment and personal betterment. International attention on the World's Fair caused a publishing boom in Chicago of magazine and newspaper articles, books, tour guides, and sermons about the city. The apocalyptic themes and symbols in Chicago's popular literature indicate a proliferation of changing millennial ideas.

12. Paul Boyer's *Urban Masses and Moral Order, 1820–1920* remains a definitive text on nineteenth-century social reform and Social Gospel. However, Boyer offers no general analysis of postmillennialism or apocalypticism, aside from a few allusions to growing premillennial attitudes. Boyer argues that Stead's goal was to bring supreme order to American cities, a vision which united him with other more rational urban reformers. See Paul S. Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

Written by a man who appears not to have read the rules of religious orthodoxy or theological coherence, *If Christ Came to Chicago* problematized nearly every theory, tenet, and maxim of late nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism. If, as Martin E. Marty contends, modern American religion is defined by its ironies and contradictions, then *If Christ Came to Chicago* is a rich case study.<sup>13</sup> Floridly written and incessantly detailed, the book juxtaposed an exposé of sin with a radical utopian vision as imagined by a controversial and imperfect author who would become increasingly involved with heterodox spiritualism.<sup>14</sup>

*If Christ Came to Chicago* was an anomaly among late nineteenth-century liberal Protestant beliefs when compared to its theological predecessor, postmillennialism. Many nineteenth-century Americans believed that one day the world would end in an apocalypse hastened by evangelization and social reform.<sup>15</sup> While postmillennial theology had existed for centuries, the American strand was rooted in English puritanism and the

13. Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, vol. 1, *The Irony of It All, 1893–1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

14. Shortly after *If Christ Came to Chicago*, Stead abandoned Protestantism for spiritualism. He published a spiritualism journal, *Borderland* (1893–97), conducted a “census of ghosts” among *Review of Reviews* readers, and held a 1909 “interview” with the deceased William Gladstone. He was ostracized by reputable English society by the time of his death on the *Titanic* in 1912. Stead had eerily predicted in 1893 that thousands would die on the White Star Line’s *RMS Majestic* due to an encounter with an iceberg and a lack of life vests. For Stead’s spiritualism, see Laurel Brake et al., *W. T. Stead: Newspaper Revolutionary* (London: British Library, 2012).

15. In 1850, 34 percent of the US population was religious, with Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians the majority. Religiosity increased to 45 percent by 1890; Catholics were the single largest denomination (7,343), but the combined number of the largest Protestant denominations (Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian) was double (14,958) that of Catholics. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churhing of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 23, 121.

Second Great Awakening.<sup>16</sup> James Moorhead argues that during the mid-nineteenth century, postmillennialism represented a compromise between this transcendent apocalyptic view of time and a more modern evolutionary view that embraced natural science and secular thinking.<sup>17</sup> Postmillennialism, the dominant eschatology among moderate to liberal Protestants from the Revolutionary Era to the Gilded Age, all but died out by the 1920s, challenged by increasing social pessimism after the Civil War, the rise of Darwinian, historical criticism of the Bible, income inequality, and more.

Scholars dispute the exact nature of the relationship between postmillennialism and the Social Gospel movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For Moorhead, attention to social works was the legacy of postmillennialism’s progressive optimism: “Postmillennialism had become rather like Lewis Carroll’s Cheshire Cat, faith in continuing social and moral improvement constituting the residual grin.”<sup>18</sup> Nancy Koester sees the Social Gospel as a “prophetic, this-worldly eschatology, opposed to an apocalyptic, transcendent one” of postmillennialism.<sup>19</sup> William McLoughlin argues that the period from the 1890s to the 1920s saw a Third Great Awakening, in which liberal Protestants interpreted the new laws of nature as evidence of God’s omnipresence and by

16. See Catherine Wessinger, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Postmillennialism was first used in the mid-nineteenth century, but belief in gradual progress toward the millennium is found in different eras and religions; Wessinger, thus, argues that progressive millennialism is a less anachronistic term.

17. Moorhead, 23.

18. Ibid., 47. See also, W. Michael Ashcraft, “Progressive Millennialism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 44–65.

19. Nancy Koester, “The Future in Our Past: Post-millennialism in American Protestantism,” *Word & World* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1995), 143.

which they performed a “rescue operation to sustain the culture, redefine and relocate God[,] … and sacralize a new world view.”<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the rational accommodations to science and modernity by liberal Protestants, journalists and other popular writers described modern life in dramatic apocalyptic terms. Stead joined them by blending elements of pre- and postmillennialism to guide Chicagoans through the spectacular nature of the fair and the existential threat of the city’s social ills. His hybridized apocalyptic symbolism was an emotional attempt to confront and understand modern hopes and fears, spectacles and slums, divinity and time.

## New Jerusalem in Old Chicago: The World’s Fair in the Apocalyptic Imagination

After the 1832 Black Hawk War, the Potawatomi relinquished their land in eastern Illinois. An influx of white settlers, unfettered capital, and a ceaseless flow of human labor created Chicago, the largest city in the West.<sup>21</sup> The Great Fire of 1871 all but razed the still young city, and, a few years later, the 1886 Haymarket Affair pitted anarchists and labor activists against capitalists and police.<sup>22</sup> The recovery and expansion after the fire made Chicago a symbol of the hardscrabble West, but the Haymarket violence solidified its reputation as dangerous and socially chaotic. Discussing the city’s trajectory from the fire to the fair, one New York preacher

20. William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607–1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 152.

21. Janice L. Reiff, Ann Durkin Keating, and James R. Grossman, eds., *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org.

22. Ibid.

claimed: “Chicagoans have a love for their city which we cannot have for ours, because they built their city with their own hands, but New York was built by generations 270 years ago.”<sup>23</sup> Yet other commentators derided the city. Rudyard Kipling wrote of his 1889 visit to Chicago: “Having seen it, I urgently desire never to see it again.”<sup>24</sup> He claimed that Chicagoans were a “terrible people who talked money through their noses.”<sup>25</sup> By hosting the next World’s Fair, Chicago’s boosters hoped to upend the city’s vulgar reputation and prove that the city was a cultural and civic rival to New York and the Old World.

Chicago’s bid for the fair was far from assured. Many doubted the city’s ability to put on a fair without national embarrassment, regardless of Chicago’s notorious self-confidence. Competition from New York, St. Louis, and Washington was intense, but in 1890 the US Congress awarded the fair to Chicago for its rail connections, the unprecedented speed of its rebuilding after the fire, and a pledge of \$4 million from a wealthy citizens’ committee.<sup>26</sup> The *Chicago Daily Tribune* announced triumphantly: “Great is Chicago. It gets the World’s Fair.”<sup>27</sup> Cartoons of victorious trumpeters decorated the front page of a special edition, alongside a drawing titled “Uncle Sam Awards the World’s Fair Prize to the Fairest of All His Daughters.”<sup>28</sup> Although Philadelphia had hosted a

23. Rev. Dr. Collyer, “From Chicago Fire to World’s Fair,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 10, 1893.

24. Rudyard Kipling, “How I Struck Chicago, and How Chicago Struck Me: Of Religion, Politics, and Pig-Sticking, and the Incarnation of the City among Shambles,” in *As Others See Chicago: Impressions of Visitors, 1673–1933*, ed. Bessie Louise Pierce (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933), 251.

25. Ibid., 252.

26. Donald L. Miller, *City of the Century: The Epic of Chicago and the Making of America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 379.

27. “Chicago Wins,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1890.

28. Ibid.

World's Fair in 1876 in honor of the US centennial, the planned 1892 fair, which celebrated the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's arrival in the New World, was America's chance to prove itself, especially after the success of 1889 fair in Paris. A committee of Chicago's leading businessmen and politicians, including Philip Armour, Marshall Field, the Palmers, and George Pullman, commissioned the Chicago architectural firm of Burnham and Root and the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to pull off the grandest fair yet in less than three years.<sup>29</sup>

## The Celestial City

The dedication ceremony on Friday, October, 21, 1892, drew thousands of spectators, despite the muddy grounds and scanty construction. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* glamourized the scene: "The guns that saluted the rising sun over the waters of Lake Michigan yesterday morning announced not only the dedication of the World's Columbian Exposition, but the beginning of the world's millennium. That is to say, the booming of the cannon ushered in a new era in the world's history ... the Columbian Exposition [is] the highest realization yet vouchsafed to man of his ideals of development."<sup>30</sup> That Sunday, Rev. Dr. Clinton Locke of Grace Episcopal Church, a powerful mainstream institution, used the dedication as a parable of both human and moral progress. He likened the fair's building to "sermons in stone" and "palaces of art," which would prove that "we can advance from the level of the savage brute to the heights of genius"; the fair allowed Christians to "look forward to that happy time when all men shall love each other" until "the last act in the world's drama," meaning the millennium.<sup>31</sup>

Attempts to reconcile evolutionary human progress with religious

29. Robert W. Rydell, "World's Columbian Exposition," in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

30. "Dedication—Exposition Buildings Presented by the Columbian Commission to the Nation," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 22, 1892.

31. "It Teaches the Gospel of Peace," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Oct. 24, 1892.

millennial traditions were not uncommon in the period. The new theory of evolution potentially challenged Christian doctrine. Rather than deny science or abandon long-held religious doctrine, some liberal Protestants sought to unify evolution and millennialism. On the other hand, evangelicals, like Chicago's famous revivalist, Billy Sunday, rejected Darwinism outright. Other Protestants attributed evolution to God's design or abandoned millennialism altogether.<sup>32</sup> Many visitors and commentators concluded that while the fair might represent the millennium, it was not necessarily God alone but human ambition that Chicago could thank for its splendor.

Rev. Herbert Stead, the brother of William Stead and a fellow reformer in London, attended the fair's opening day, May 1, 1893, as the exposition correspondent for his brother's monthly journal, the *Review of Reviews*. He wrote: "The great white city which rose before me, silent and awful, seemed to belong to an order of things above our common world.... It was an Apocalypse of the architectural imagination.... It was a vision of the ideal, enhaloed with mystery."<sup>33</sup> Stead quoted a fellow visitors' impressions that the fair resembled a New Jerusalem (Fig. 1): "This would have given 'points' to the writer of Revelations, had he seen it."<sup>34</sup> Another British commentator, Walter Besant, described the fair through the eyes of an "Average Pair" from small-town American:

These lines of columns; these many statues standing against the deep, blue sky; these domes; these carvings and towers and marvels reflected in the waters of the Lagoon—will this Pair ever forget them? When they have seen at night the innumerable lines of white electric light; the domes outlined with the yellow light; the electric fountain; the illuminations; the gleaming waters.... It will remain

32. McLoughlin, 146, 154.

33. Herbert Stead, "The Opening of the World's Fair," *Review of Reviews*, June 1893.

34. Ibid.

in their minds as the Vision of St. John—an actual sight of the New Jerusalem; all the splendors that the apostle describes they will henceforth understand.<sup>35</sup>

To see New Jerusalem was to see both the end of time and heaven, as depicted in the book of Revelation. Revelation is known for cataclysmic violence, but postmillennialists often spoke of the massive gilded city depicted in chapter 21, whose verses would have had particular resonance for fairgoers like the Average Pair: “The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”<sup>36</sup> Some rural fairgoers saw electric light for the first time while visiting the White City: modern science had made possible what Revelation attributed to the apocalypse.

The Midway, which welcomed more visitors than the White City itself, might seem to diminish commentators’ declarations of divine perfection. Called the “Department of Ethnology” by fair organizers, it could be more accurately described as a racist imperialist human zoo and carnival.<sup>37</sup> Among the “harmless seductions” were “the bad men from Borneo, savages from the Cannibal islands, Algerians, Bedouins, Turks, Indians, Laplanders, and Javanese.”<sup>38</sup> The Midway was “redeemed from the commonplace by … the Ferris wheel, whose huge circumference seems like part of the solar system.”<sup>39</sup> The Midway reinforced Western cultural superiority, with the *Cosmopolitan* assuring its audience that “we are living

35. Walter Besant, “A First Impression,” *Cosmopolitan*, Sept. 1893, 538.

36. Revelation 21:23.

37. Rosemarie K. Bank, “Representing History: Performing the Columbian Exposition,” *Theatre Journal* 54, no. 4 (Dec. 2002): 590–92.

38. John J. Ingalls, “Lessons of the Fair,” *Cosmopolitan*, Dec. 1893.

39. Ibid.



**Figure 1:** E. R. Walker, World’s Columbian Exposition Court of Honor. University of Chicago Photographic Archives (apf3-00077), Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

in the best age of history and the most favored portion of the globe.”<sup>40</sup> Another observer wrote that the Midway represented the “sliding scale of humanity.”<sup>41</sup> Dozens of countries created small exhibits, with European nations like Germany situated closer to the White City than voyeuristic, caricatured reproductions of North African villages. Others understood the contrast between the White City and the “mile-long babel” of the Midway as representative of heaven and earth: a character in a pulp novel says that “perhaps dyin’ is goin’ to be somethin’ like crossin’ the dividin’ line that separates the Midway from the White City.”<sup>42</sup>

40. Ibid.

41. Quoted in Robert Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 65.

42. Clara Louise Burnham, *Sweet Clover: A Romance of the White City* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1894), 201–2. Clara (née Root) Burnham is apparently not related to Daniel Burnham or John Root.

Fair organizers structured the Midway so that as a visitor approached the White City the ethnographic exhibits became ever whiter, culminating in an architectural expression of American exceptionalism. This architectural program established that white supremacy was ordained by God as part of America's teleology and was demonstrated by evolution as scientific. Journalist Ida B. Wells boycotted the fair for this reason, arguing that if the fair were really a "tribute to the greatness and progressiveness of American institutions," it would have exhibited the "progress made by a race in 25 years of freedom as against 250 years of slavery."<sup>43</sup> The fair's only references to slavery and emancipation were a small exhibit about Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the Woman's Building and the inclusion of the Haitian Pavilion in the White City, rather than on the Midway.<sup>44</sup>

Many scholars debate how and whether the fair's underlying ethos of consumption, racial hierarchies, and capitalism is compatible with its common epithets as a "New Jerusalem" and "Celestial City." Eric Zolkowski argues that the fair used the sacred ambiance of American Protestantism to prove the superiority of American capital and culture.<sup>45</sup> Phillip Mackintosh and Clyde Forsberg noted that some Protestant city planners considered wealth and urbanization as vehicles of religious

progress and included postmillennialism ideas in their work.<sup>46</sup> The historian Gary Scott Smith argues that Gilded Age Protestants "emphasized the happiness, holiness, and love of heaven,"<sup>47</sup> which suited the opulence of their lives. James Gilbert, on the other hand, claims that the fair failed in its goal of balancing the heavenly impression of the White City with the unfettered consumerism of the Midway.<sup>48</sup> The Midway had been offered as a mass-entertainment "concession," but eventually it dwarfed the high-minded White City in attendance, revenue, and lasting importance.<sup>49</sup>

Kipling had observed this blending of the sacred and profane in Chicago four years before the fair. At "a place officially described as a church," he watched the preacher build up "for his hearers a heaven on the lines of the Palmer House."<sup>50</sup> When a concerned parishioner asked if he should be afraid of Judgment Day, the preacher responded, "No! I tell you God don't do business that way."<sup>51</sup> The preacher was "giving them a deity whom they could comprehend, in a gold and jewel heaven in which they could take a natural interest."<sup>52</sup>

Many turn-of-the-century Protestants held fluid millennial categories that helped them to understand the complexity of the fair and Chicago—each a patchwork of high culture and crass entertainment. They could

43. Ida B. Wells, ed., preface to *The Reason Why the Colored American Is not in the World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: printed by the author, 1893), 4, [www.loc.gov/item/mfd.25023](http://www.loc.gov/item/mfd.25023).

44. Barbara Hochman, "Uncle Tom's Cabin at the World's Columbian Exposition," in The Woman's Building Library of the World's Columbian Exposition, ed. Sarah Wadsworth, special issue, *Libraries & Culture* 41, no. 1 (Winter 2006), 82–108; Frederick Douglass, *Lecture on Haiti: The Haitian Pavilion* (Chicago: Violet Agents Supply Co., 1893), [www.loc.gov/item/02012340](http://www.loc.gov/item/02012340).

45. Eric Zolkowski, "Heavenly Visions and Wordily Intentions: Chicago's Columbian Exposition and World's Parliament of Religions (1893)," *Journal of American Culture* 13, no. 4 (Dec. 1990): 9–15.

46. See Phillip G. Mackintosh and Clyde R. Forsberg Jr., "'Co-Agent of the Millennium': City Planning and Christian Eschatology in the North American City, 1890–1920," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103, no. 3 (2013): 743.

47. Gary Scott Smith, *Heaven in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 133.

48. James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities: Chicago's Utopias of 1893* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 130.

49. Ibid., 128.

50. Kipling, 253.

51. Ibid., 254.

52. Ibid.

experience the heavenly New Jerusalem just after visiting the riotous Midway, and the sensuality of the Midway only heightened the apocalyptic symbolism of the White City. As fairgoers walked through the Midway into the White City, they mimicked society's progress towards the millennium. The architectural design of the fair overlaid present-day Chicago with Columbus's arrival in the New World and the imagery of Revelation, creating a through line linking the first, fifteenth, and nineteenth centuries with the millennium.

## **Autumn Leaves Doubly Deep: Chicago Bids Farewell to the White City**

For all its splendor, the White City's spectacle provided but a temporary distraction from the ravages of urban chaos. While visitors milled about the fairgrounds, Chicago's reformers and moralizers worked to eradicate vice and sin from the city's slums, but the saloon owners, gamblers, and brothelkeepers were equally intent on maintaining their domain. Historian Carl Smith contends that through the end of the nineteenth century "urban disorder became the shape of belief."<sup>53</sup> After the Great Fire, Haymarket Affair, and the impending Pullman Strike, "disorder on a significant scale was normalized, and in this view, for better and for worse, the city in disorder was the city at its most urban."<sup>54</sup> In the broader scheme of Chicago's urban imagination, the fantastical World's Fair was just that—a fantasy. The true Chicago was the slums and vice districts known as the Black City. As powerful an image as its dreamlike counterpart, the Black City of 1893 generated its own apocalyptic rhetoric and symbolism that in turn shaped and defined the eschatological imaginings of Chicago.

53. Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 8.

54. Ibid.

The city was reminded of the pandemonium outside of the White City at the fair's end. In late October, Mayor Carter Harrison addressed a gathering of American mayors. He proclaimed in typically brash style that he would live to see Chicago become the greatest city in the world, for Chicago "knows nothing that it will not attempt, and thus far has found nothing that it cannot accomplish."<sup>55</sup> He spoke of his sadness at the closing of the fair, announcing his intention to keep the grounds open for another year before burning the White City, which had been constructed out of impermanent staff and wood, "let[ting] it go up into the bright sky of eternal heaven."<sup>56</sup> Harrison had every reason to feel triumphant: the fair had been a tremendous success, and he was to marry early the next month. A Chicago paper wrote that "he personified in himself all the restlessness, the energy, the ability, and the ambition which have built the World's Fair city into the greatest metropolis in the Nation."<sup>57</sup> Despite the economic depression that ensnared the country in 1893, Harrison had overseen Chicago's most remarkable year, inspiring the admiration and envy of the other mayors. It was the last speech he ever gave.

Later that night, Patrick Eugene Prendergast knocked on the door of Harrison's Ashland Boulevard mansion. A maid allowed the visitor in, as Harrison was known to hold audiences with all sorts of Chicagoans—perhaps no mayor had been so friendly to the city's immigrants and working class. Prendergast shot Harrison four times before surrendering at a nearby police station.<sup>58</sup> Prendergast told the police that he had assassinated Harrison because the mayor had failed to find him a city job, a

55. "His Last Address," *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 29, 1893.

56. Ibid.

57. Quoted in Miller, 348.

58. Richard Allen Morton, "A Victorian Tragedy: The Strange Deaths of Mayor Carter H. Harrison and Patrick Eugene Prendergast," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 96, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 7–8.

reward of the so-called spoils system. The Chicago press labeled Prendergast a “crank,” much like President James A. Garfield’s assassin, Charles Guiteau.<sup>59</sup> On what was supposed to be the triumphant close of the fair, half a million took to the streets for Harrison’s funeral.<sup>60</sup> Some threatened to lynch Prendergast, but most were silent, showing their support for their slain leader with badges that read “Our Carter.”<sup>61</sup>

Chicago’s preachers devoted their sermons to Harrison’s assassination. Rev. O. P. Gifford of Immanuel Baptist Church was particularly sorrowful: “The hand of crime has spread a pall over the glory and pride of Chicago. Like a white lily touched by a frost it blackens and withers.”<sup>62</sup> Baptist preacher P. S. Henson contrasted the orderliness and beauty of the fair with the lawlessness consuming Chicago: “If there had been a more reverent regard for the laws of God and man,” then “the sun that rose so brilliantly upon our opening might have set in soft splendor instead of such a lurid glare, and the last page of the Columbian Exposition need not have been written in blood and tears.”<sup>63</sup> Rev. David Swing, Chicago’s most beloved minister, told a large crowd at the Central Music Hall that the assassination made “the layer of autumn leaves doubly deep.”<sup>64</sup>

59. “Harrison is Killed,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 29, 1893. Guiteau also claimed that Garfield had defaulted on a promised political appointment in exchange for support during the campaign.

60. “Funeral of Carter Harrison (Summary),” *Dziennik Chicagoski*, Nov. 2, 1893, Foreign Language Press Survey, Newberry Library, flps.newberry.org/article/542\_3968\_9\_0206.

61. Miller, 437.

62. O. P. Grifford, “Pardons Set a Premium on Anarchy,” From the Pulpits, *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1893.

63. P. S. Henson, “Setting of the Fair’s Sun,” From the Pulpits, *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1893.

64. David Swing, “Autumn Leaves Doubly Deep,” From the Pulpits, *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1893.

Harrison had attended an Episcopal church, but his tolerance of gambling, saloons, and brothels, coupled with his close ties to Catholic Irish and German immigrants, won him few friends among the Protestant clergy. Most shied away from blaming Harrison for his own assassination, but a visiting Congregational minister from Boston, Rev. Isaac Lansing, suggested Harrison’s policies as the motive: “If Carter Harrison was right in his policy toward law breakers,” then “this murder … is justified. But if this murder is, as I affirm, a diabolical crime, then all the immorality and lawlessness which encourage contempt for laws of both God and man … are to be condemned.”<sup>65</sup> The preachers spoke of a growing lawlessness and disorder in their sermons and implied that the violent end to the World’s Fair was divine retribution. Harrison’s assassination, a looming winter recession, and increased attention to vice and sin prompted the city to reconsider the fair’s postmillennial utopia. Perhaps Chicago was due for a different kind of apocalypse.

### “Reaping the Whirlwind”

The public grief following Harrison’s assassination contrasted with his bitter mayoral campaign a few months before. Harrison reclaimed the mayor’s office for his fifth term in the spring of 1893, after having lost reelection in 1887 for his handling of the Haymarket Affair. The city’s moralizers, among them the *Chicago Tribune*’s publisher and editor, Joseph Medill, fought ruthlessly to keep him out of office. Historian Donald Miller writes that the *Tribune*’s anti-Harrison coverage was “almost unprecedented in American urban politics.”<sup>66</sup> Reformers and temperance advocates branded Harrison an irredeemable supporter of the saloons and “gambling hells.” Harrison himself agreed with this assessment, telling the *Chicago Times*: “You can’t make people moral by

65. Isaac J. Lansing, “Lenient Toward Law Breakers,” From the Pulpits, *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1893.

66. Miller, 427.

ordinance and it is no use trying. This is a free town.”<sup>67</sup> Later, one of his advisers said that Harrison “consistently held that the masses are better judges of their own needs than are the constituted censors of the press or of ‘citizen’s associations.’”<sup>68</sup> Despite these criticisms, Harrison’s success reelection demonstrated the weakened influence of Protestant institutions in city life.

The assassination of Carter Harrison illuminated apocalyptic possibilities for premillennial ministers, too. In late October, the First Congregational Church invited Rev. Joseph Cook to preach. It is likely that he was a Boston preacher who came to Chicago through his affiliation with the evangelist Dwight Moody.<sup>69</sup> The preacher told the audience, “Red floats across the American sun”—an appeal to public fears of communism, anarchy, and immigration. John Wilkes Booth, Charles Guiteau, and Eugene Prendergast represented “a trinity of infamy, a trinity of lawlessness, a trinity that no other nation could have produced within so short a time.” This trinity of assassins, in direct opposition to the sacred trinity, suggested an antichrist common to the premillennial apocalyptic narrative. Drawing from Hosea 8:7, Cook asked: “Can we sow the wind and not reap the whirlwind?”<sup>70</sup> That same Sunday, Rev. Lansing also turned to Hosea to discuss lawlessness with the congregation of Third Presbyterian: “We have sown the wind, we are reaping the whirlwind. Alas that in the reaping the whirlwind should have struck the city’s Chief Executive.”<sup>71</sup>

Hosea 8:7—“for they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid, 449.

69. Dwight Lyman Moody, “*The Gospel Awakening*”: Comprising the Sermons and Addresses, Prayer-Meeting Talks and Bible Readings of the Great Revival Meetings Conducted by Moody and Sankey (Saint Louis, MO: F. H. Revell, 1883), 44.

70. “Pardons and Assassinations,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1893.

71. “Lenient Toward Law Breakers,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1893.

whirlwind”—is more apocalyptic than just getting one’s just deserts. A widely read contemporary commentary interpreted the phrase to mean Israel’s “present conduct is unprofitable to himself, and the requital of it shall be actual destruction.”<sup>72</sup> Preachers Cook and Lansing and the bibli-cally literate members of the audience would have understood this passage as a warning of God’s wrath. The assassination of a mayor, notoriously agnostic to sin, was a sign of apocalyptic consequences for ignoring God’s law. As the autumn of 1893 continued, commentators noticed another premillennial harbinger. Hosea’s final verse is a prophetic apocalyptic image of a coming catastrophe in the White City: “For Israel hath forgotten his maker, and buildeth temples … but I will send fire upon his cities, and shall devour the palaces thereof.”<sup>73</sup>

## In Memory, A Monument of Flame

The Panic of 1893 was affecting the rest of the country, but fair-related construction had temporarily protected Chicago.<sup>74</sup> Now, men who had worked at the fairgrounds or in the tourism surrounding twenty-six million fairgoers were out of work. Many had come to Chicago expecting unlimited success and could not leave once jobs disappeared. Others continued to flock to Chicago, believing the myth of economic prosperity that the White City had offered only a few months prior. By the end of the fair, a hundred thousand people were out of work in Chicago—nearly 10 percent of the population.<sup>75</sup> In the evocative words of William Stead,

72. T. K. Cheyne, *Hosea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), 88.

73. Hosea 8:14. I quote from the King James Version, which the historical actors likely read.

74. Richard Schneirov, *Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism in Chicago, 1864–97*, Working Class in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 332. Sincere thanks to Grace Ann Quigley, AB’19, for her help and astute description of the economic crisis.

75. Ibid.

"Like the frogs in the Egyptian plague, you could not escape from the tramps go where you would."<sup>76</sup> The city was in crisis. Many of those newly without shelter moved into the desolate White City ruins, setting fire to fairground detritus for warmth.<sup>77</sup>

On a frigid day in early January 1894, the icy remnants of the Court of Honor went up in flames (Fig. 2). The *Tribune* blamed the fire on "insolent tramps."<sup>78</sup> A crowd of twenty thousand watched the inferno: "A shower of sparks fell upon the ice in the lagoon until it looked like a sea of fire.... It was the greatest pyrotechnic display of the Fair."<sup>79</sup> Within a few hours the Columbus Quadriga and Peristyle were destroyed, revealing the "blood-red skeleton of arch and column."<sup>80</sup>

To some, the fair's destruction was more dramatic and entertaining than its original splendor. Some judged the fire to be the "best possible solution" to the problem of the abandoned White City.<sup>81</sup> Reactions in national newspapers ranged from sorrow to barely contained glee at Chicago's misfortune. The *Sioux City Journal* wrote that "to the poetic it may seem that so much beauty elected suicide rather than undergo the murder of piecemeal dismemberment."<sup>82</sup> The *Minneapolis Journal* declared the conflagration preferable over "moth and rust corrupt[ing] and the tooth of time nibbl[ing] at its decaying columns."<sup>83</sup>

76. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, 1.

77. For a discussion of the depression, which lasted four years, see Douglas W. Steeples and David O. Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation: The Depression of 1893* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1998).

78. "Fair Is Fire Swept," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 9, 1894.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. "Fair Flames," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 12, 1894.

83. Ibid.



**Figure 2:** Peristyle after the Fire. Chicago History Museum.

A number of smaller fires in January and February destroyed more of the fairgrounds, and by July nearly every building had burned to the ground.<sup>84</sup> On July 5, a fire raged for three hours and drew over a hundred thousand spectators to Jackson Park. After much speculation that the fair would be dismantled and auctioned off by salvage companies, a *Tribune* writer, using the initials EJM, thought that most Chicagoans were pleased "that the elements and not the wrecker should wipe out the spectacle of the Columbian season."<sup>85</sup> EJM offered one of the few self-reflexive commentaries on the desolation: "The fire showed no disposition to ravish" the lesser buildings of the fairground, like an uncompleted auditorium known as MacKaye's Spectatorium, but destroyed its beautiful center. EJM speculated that it was "perhaps in anticipation of the rise of anarchy in the Black City that the Spirit of Beauty fled in garments of flame from

84. The fireproofed Palace of Fine Art survived and is now the Museum of Science and Industry. See Chicago Architecture Center, [www.architecture.org/learn/resources/buildings-of-chicago/building/museum-of-science-and-industry](http://www.architecture.org/learn/resources/buildings-of-chicago/building/museum-of-science-and-industry).

85. EJM, "White City Burned," *Chicago Tribune*, July 6, 1894.

the fairest shrine that men ever raised in her worship.”<sup>86</sup> To EJM, the fire was America’s coming of age. EJM reflected on John Ruskin’s remark that America had no ruins and concluded that “she has them now.... As one turns northward and sees the clouds that are lowering over the Black City one cannot help fearing that we may one day have other ruins than those described to show to Mr. Ruskin.”<sup>87</sup> For all the optimism of the social reformers and the fascination of the fire’s spectators, EJM could not help but wonder what the destruction of such beauty meant in the face of urban chaos.

## Into the Malebolge: Chicago’s Slums and the Black City

Urban slums haunted the nation’s imagination at the close of the nineteenth century. Novels, newspaper articles, and statistical reports purported to show the true nature of the Black City. The thick, braided tangle of Chicago’s poverty, polluted industries, and moral corruption had no definite boundaries. Vice districts and tenement housing appeared quickly, only to be eradicated by city officials within months. These amoebic slums encompassed much of the city’s industrial core. Smoke and offal poured out of factories and slaughterhouses, while deadly railways “cross and recross the city, and form a complex network of tracks, every mesh of which is stained with human blood.”<sup>88</sup> Upton Sinclair would make the slaughterhouses infamous in *The Jungle* (1906), but for Stead, it was the railways that resembled “one of Doré’s pictures of a scene in Dante’s hell.”<sup>89</sup> Capitalist industry and progress celebrated in the fair’s Manufacturing Hall had a very different tenor in the Black City.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, 181.

89. Ibid., 185.

Italian playwright Giuseppe Giacosa, who visited the fair, wrote that “the dominant characteristic of the exterior life of Chicago is violence. Everything leads you to extreme expressions: dimensions, movements, noises, rumors, window displays, spectacles, ostentation, misery, activity and alcoholic degradation.”<sup>90</sup>

Far worse than poverty and industrial pollution was vice. Saloons, brothels, and gambling halls brought Stead and other reformers into the Black City. Districts like the Levee, the Black Hole, and Little Hell had almost twice as many saloons as elsewhere in the city, according to Labor Commissioner Carroll Wright.<sup>91</sup> While only one in eleven people in Chicago experienced crime in 1893, one in four residents of the 2nd- and 21st-district slums were victims of crimes.<sup>92</sup> The districts were loosely located in what is today Chicago’s South Loop, between Harrison and Polk Streets. Stead, in the melodramatic rhetoric of the times, said: “As of adverse Destiny, the dislodged unit gravitates downward, ever downward into the depths of the malebolgic pool of our social hell.”<sup>93</sup> In the malebolge of Dante’s *Inferno*, concentric funnel-like ditches prevent the soul’s escape; in Chicago, poverty, drunkenness, and moral degradation trapped those who entered the Levee. The Black City had existed before the White City, but the close of the fair, the assassination of Carter Harrison, and the economic depression focused the city’s attention on its moral darkness. Whereas the White City represented white, Protestant, capitalist achievement, the Black City was majority foreign born, often Catholic, and incredibly poor. Wright calculated that 15 percent of Chicago’s population lived in these slums.<sup>94</sup>

90. Giuseppe Giacosa, “A City of Smoke,” in *As Others See Chicago*, 278.

91. Carroll Wright, *The Slums of Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia* (Washington, DC: United States Congress, 1894), 19.

92. Ibid., 16.

93. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, 16.

94. Wright, 18.

Sensational, purportedly factual books about the slums were a staple of urban publishing houses before Stead's. *Chicago's Dark Places*, released in 1891 and republished in 1893 as the more commercial *Mysteries of Chicago*, examined the "many dark 'dens' and 'black holes' of Chicago."<sup>95</sup> George Wharton James hope his book would "result in the awakening of the People of Chicago to the urgent needs and demands of the present hour."<sup>96</sup> He examined the saloons, prisons, and brothels of the Black City, using personal anecdotes and proto-sociology. *Mysteries of Chicago* is a bleaker text than Stead's. Stead complimented the saloons as hubs of political activity and feeders of the poor, but James argued against the practice of providing a free meal with a drink. Saloon owners "rob and pillage their poor victims, who are so blinded by their devilish arts as to be willing to be thus plundered ... of money ... health, position, character, honor and religion."<sup>97</sup> The cost to human life "can never be fully known until the day of judgment, when the whole of this infernal traffic will be banished to the hell to which it belongs, and from whence it sprang."<sup>98</sup>

Divine judgment and punishment fill *Mysteries of Chicago*, but James never endorsed a particular millennial belief: "Whilst we don't believe the millennium would dawn on Chicago," if saloons were eradicated "so much wretchedness and poverty would disappear as to make it a heaven to many whose existence in it now is a continual hell."<sup>99</sup> James's concerns with immediate welfare for the poor is closer to the Social Gospel moment. He argues that if Chicago's Christians were truly determined, then not "three months would elapse before there would be such

a change as would make Chicago a heaven to these poor wretches, after the hell it has been and now is to them."<sup>100</sup>

### "Temporal Power in America": Slums, Immigrants, and a Catholic Armageddon

Chicago's native-born elites blamed the problems of the slums on Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Eastern Europe. The 1890 census revealed that nearly half (450,666) of Chicago's 1,099,850 residents were foreign born, and 855,523 persons of native or foreign birth had at least one foreign-born parent.<sup>101</sup> Although the census did not record religious affiliation, 70,028 were Irish, 25,105 Bohemian, and 24,086 Polish, all majority-Catholic ethnic groups.<sup>102</sup> A further 188,232 were German, a country of both Catholic and Protestant beliefs.<sup>103</sup> Chicago had thirty-eight Catholic parishes before 1880; Irish and Eastern European immigrants built ninety-four new churches between 1880 and 1902.<sup>104</sup> The increase in Catholic parishes far outpaced Protestant growth, giving rise to anti-Catholic rumors, including a fear of Catholic revolution. In October 1892, Rev. R. S. Martin of the Methodist Episcopal Church claimed that an "unquestionably authentic" secret circular written by

100. Ibid., 169. No evidence exists that James considered himself a millennialist of any stripe, but his publisher Craig Press did produce a few premillennialist tracts in the early 1890s; book advertisements in the back of *Mysteries of Chicago* included *The Illustrated Apocalypse* by Thomas William Greenwell, which was "decidedly in sympathy with the premillennial principle of interpretation," according to the *Boston Herald*.

101. Charles H. Shanabruich, *Chicago's Catholics: The Evolution of an American Identity* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 235.

102. Ibid., 236.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid., 235.

95. George Wharton James, *Mysteries of Chicago* (Chicago: Craig Press, 1893), 9.

96. Ibid., 10.

97. Ibid., 45.

98. Ibid., 35.

99. Ibid., 34.

Pope Leo XIII on Christmas Day 1891 “called upon the church to assume temporal power in the United States” and to “grant absolution in advance to all who had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States, to break that oath in favor of the Pontiff ‘on or about Sept. 5, 1893,’” the day of a Catholic congress affiliated with the World’s Fair.<sup>105</sup> While a number of the audience supposedly left in the middle of the sermon, the *Tribune* reported that it was “frequently interrupted by the applause of the congregation” and “many members gathered about the pastor to congratulate him for attacking Catholicism.”<sup>106</sup> Martin claimed the circular was specifically targeted at immigrant citizens who had recently taken an oath of allegiance to the United States, a population that far outnumbered native-born Chicagoans. Similar to anti-Semitic backlash towards Eastern European Jewish immigrants, who were feared as “a stranger to loyalty,”<sup>107</sup> the relationship between the pope and Catholics threatened American notions of democracy, personal liberty, and secular government.

### “Like Old Jerusalem”: Chicago Marching Toward Destruction

Some of Chicago’s most prominent ministers, like Presbyterian John Barrows, helped organize the fair, but others criticized the fair as a distraction from the terrible conditions of the slums.<sup>108</sup> A Baptist preacher

105. R. S. Martin, “Temporal Power in America,” *Chicago Tribune*, Oct. 17, 1892. Rumors of Catholic plots to seize the American government during public holidays and festivals persisted into the twentieth-century era of the second Ku Klux Klan. See Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

106. Ibid.

107. Bernard Lazare, *Antisemitism: Its History and Causes* (New York: International Library, 1908), 332.

108. Barrows chaired the fair’s religious parliament. See John Henry Barrows, *The World’s Parliament of Religions* (Chicago: Parliament, 1893).

accused the city of “hid[ing] some astonishing and tremendous degrees of wretchedness” in a sermon on the eve of the fair.<sup>109</sup> At the fair’s height, a Rev. Wheeler contrasted the “magnificent White City” with “the lamentable spectacle of thousands of unemployed men crying for bread.”<sup>110</sup> Rev. P. S. Henson, a Baptist, bemoaned the modern tendency to ignore moral degradation, a common fundamentalist critique: “Our age is less disposed to believe in [hell] … for it has the highest conception of man and the lowest of God.”<sup>111</sup> He reminded the congregants that hell is “here on earth in a human bosom, and sin will make a hell anywhere.... God has nothing to do but just let man loose upon himself and he will make a hell for himself wherever he goes.”<sup>112</sup> Wheeler and Henson warned that the “violation of the laws of God and a shameless disregard of moral as well as religious obligations” caused the social ills of the Black City.<sup>113</sup> If God chose to truly punish these violations, the “destructive elements at work” would “make a hell of this globe.”<sup>114</sup>

Baptists like Wheeler and Henson were early advocates of premillennialism. Their sermons warned that God would “let loose” apocalyptic forces on the earth if human morality were to degrade. While mainstream liberal Protestants turned to Social Gospel or progressive postmillennialism to urge reform, premillennialists favored fear. However, even professed postmillennialists sometimes interpreted the city’s moral evils in terms of fire and brimstone. Simon McPherson, a prominent Presbyterian minister, was confident that “God cannot fail in the end,” but he was less certain of Chicago’s fate. Speaking to the city of the World’s Fair, he said

109. H. A. Delano, “Moral Needs of Chicago,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 16, 1893.

110. “These Times of Trouble,” *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 4, 1893.

111. “Hell’ Discussed by Dr. Henson,” *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 11, 1892.

112. Ibid.

113. “These Times of Trouble,” *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 4, 1893.

114. “Hell’ Discussed by Dr. Henson,” *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 11, 1892.

that “Jerusalem was likewise a festival city,” “notable for its beauty” and wealth. However, Jerusalem was “blind to the lessons of history.... They who ought to have saved the city were forcing it on to the inevitable catastrophe.” When Jerusalem was destroyed like Nineveh, Sodom, and Babylon, it was “suicide” by moral evil. McPherson’s violent warning resembled premillennial warnings and also transposed a biblical event onto the modern city.<sup>115</sup> The White City was a similar historical conflation, combining Columbus’s 1492 journey with present-day Chicago and the future millennium. The apocalyptic possibilities of 1893 Chicago made time itself fungible.

McPherson, as a liberal Protestant, believed that apocalypse could be avoided: “But if Christ wept as he looked upon Jerusalem he rejoiced as he looked up toward the New Jerusalem. Could we have a converted, Christianized Chicago?”<sup>116</sup> McPherson was at heart a postmillennialist who believed that apocalypse was conditional at the local level: if Chicago surmounted the moral odds and followed Christ, the city could change its eschatological trajectory.

The slums encapsulated turn-of-the-century Protestants’ fears. Slum dwellers were morally degraded: at best they were Catholics, beholding to a foreign, papal authority, and at worst they were hard-drinking brothel-going criminals. Some Protestants, like Wright, the labor commissioner, used science and reason to ferret out the causes of corruption, a technique later adapted by Social Gospel Christians like George Wharton James. Others appealed to the supernatural, dangling the carrot of postmillennial perfection or the stick of premillennial punishment before their congregants. Yet, even as McPherson threatened that catastrophe was imminent, postmillennial tradition required that he gesture at the millennium, too. Ministerial influence and the eradication of sin were more important

115. Simon McPherson, “Christ Mourning Over the Impending Fall of Jerusalem,” *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 4, 1893.

116. Ibid.

than strict theological purity. Categories that had been immutable in American Protestantism had begun to warp under the pressures of the modern city.

## Satan’s Invisible World Displayed: Stead Comes to Chicago

William Stead’s *If Christ Came to Chicago*, published in March 1894, captured the eschatological drama unfolding in the split city. Called “the most sensational book of the decade,”<sup>117</sup> it “allegedly sold seventy thousand copies on its publication day.”<sup>118</sup> Stead demanded of “the men of the world, to busy administrators, to labour agitators, to the crook and to the harlot, the question: ‘If He came to Chicago, what would He think of us and our lives?’”<sup>119</sup> The proposition was premillennial, arguing that Christ could return to earth to levy judgment on the city. Yet, despite his condemnation, Stead believed Chicago could pull itself out of the mire of the Black City. Stead painted a picture of Chicago’s future, a stronger postmillennial vision of the perfect urban landscape than even the White City had been. Stead collapsed the two forms of millennialism that had hung over the city in the wake of the World’s Fair. Rev. Josiah Strong expressed Chicago’s paradox in a review of the book: “Chicago is at the same time one of the worst and one of the best cities in America. Nowhere is wickedness more wicked, and nowhere is goodness more aggressive.”<sup>120</sup> For Stead and many others, it seemed equally likely that the city would suffer Christ’s judgment or bring the dream of the White City to fruition.

117. Baylen, 418; “Stead and Chicago,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Mar. 11, 1894.

118. Timothy J. Gilfoyle, “*If Christ Came to Chicago*,” in *Encyclopedia of Chicago*.

119. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, ix.

120. Quoted in William Stead, “If Christ Came to Chicago,” *Review of Reviews* (London: April 1894), 366.

Stead, forty-five years old, the son of a Congregationalist minister, and a lifelong Congregationalist, was widely known for his efforts to end child prostitution in England. More notoriously, Stead served a three-month prison sentence in 1886 after an ill-conceived stunt to draw the public's attention to "white slavery" by purchasing a thirteen-year-old girl from her mother. These reform efforts and his successful monthly journal, the *Review of Reviews*, made Stead perhaps Britain's best-known newspaper editor.<sup>121</sup>

Over two days in November, the *Tribune* devoted four pages, including a nine-column interview, to the whereabouts, actions, and opinions of this famous English journalist and reformer. Stead's arrival coincided with the end of the 1893 Colombian Exposition. He was initially far more interested in the work of Jane Addams, Thomas J. Morgan, and other social reformers than in the fair. He had earlier instructed his brother, Rev. Herbert Stead, to report on the White City, which had tempted him to come to Chicago. Herbert convinced his brother to attend the fair's closing day on October 30, 1893. Stead said in his *Tribune* interview, "I must honestly say that if you allow these buildings [of the fair] to be destroyed the fact will be fraught with same and disgrace to your children's children. Of Chicago it may be said, as it was said of the still more eminent and ambitious entity, 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Star of the Morning?'"<sup>122</sup> Stead was enchanted by the World's Fair, and he began to see Chicago as a potential moral replacement for Europe, despite the threat posed by the slums.

In early November, Stead's thinking was not premillennial, but he was thinking about the trajectory of history. Apparently unconcerned with an imminent apocalypse, his focus on "your children's children" demonstrated a future-oriented approach for Chicago, which was less than sixty years past its incorporation as a city and only twenty-two years beyond

121. W. T. Stead, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon: The Report of the Secret Commission*, ed. Antony E. Simpson (Lambertville, NJ: True Bill Press, 2007).

122. "Stead for Reform," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1893.

its Great Fire. However, he believed Chicago's future children would be fixated on the past, mourning the loss of the World's Fair buildings. Like his brother, who discussed the fair as a New Jerusalem, Stead brought together several moments in time by referencing the life of Jesus Christ, Chicago's present, and Chicago's glorious future.

Stead, unlike most visitors, ventured beyond the fair to the slums. He journeyed with private detectives to Chicago's vice districts, known as Cheyenne and the Levee, to meet and talk with drunkards, tramps, gamblers, and prostitutes, which shocked the press and Chicago's religious elite. He held two talks, announced with provocative posters and flyers: "W. T. Stead of London, who was imprisoned for his sympathy with the fallen, invites you to be present at the Central Music Hall this afternoon and evening, 2:30 and 7:30 o'clock."<sup>123</sup> The talks were the height of Stead's influence in Chicago. Over two thousand members of every social strata attended: "Preachers and saloonkeepers, gamblers and theological professors, women of the Levee and members of the W.C.T.U., anarchists and professional people sat side by side."<sup>124</sup> The two-thirty meeting began ominously when Thomas J. Morgan, a socialist, warned the crowd, "If you well-to-do people do not listen ... a desperate man, feeling in himself all the injustice that is inflicted on his fellows, will kill, will destroy.... And if the pleadings of Editor Stead in the name of Christ and for justice cannot shake you out of your false security may somebody use dynamite to blow you out."<sup>125</sup> A man fled the building, screaming "no dynamite! Christ is enough for me!"<sup>126</sup> Morgan, although not an anarchist, did

123. "Stead in the Slums." *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1893. The Central Music Hall had been the site of many religious gatherings during the summer, most often led by David Swing. See David Swing, *Echoes from Central Music Hall: Selections from the Recent Sermons of Professor David Swing* (Chicago: Donohue, Henneberry, 1894).

124. "Strong Words Used," *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 13, 1893.

125. Ibid.

126. Ibid.

represent the view of many labor activists and the fears of the American public in warning of a violent revolution, a coming judgment, but at the hands of the people, not Christ's.

Stead, too, exhorted the audience to change their ways or face a reckoning, and in doing so, developed the premise for his new book: “O, how sorry I am for Christ. His heart, so full of love for men as ours are not.... That is the real cross of Christ. That is the cross which you are fashioning for him in Chicago and we are fashioning for him in London and all are fashioning in whose hearts love is not.”<sup>127</sup> Stead collapsed the time between Christ’s first coming and the modern day by claiming that inaction by Christians re-crucified Christ. This unification of past and present allowed Stead to argue that Christ was already in Chicago, just as he had been in Judea and as he would be at the millennium. What Christ would see presented Stead with an opportunity to explain his vision for a more moral future for Chicago and the entire country. He portrayed the city as utterly lacking in morality, the “*cloaca maxima*” of the world, but insisted on “the essential goodness of her citizens, and the magnificent future before the city,” should it implement his suggestions for reform.<sup>128</sup> According to Stead, Chicagoans resisted his message: “We take no stock in Christ in Chicago! He was all very well nineteen hundred years ago in Judea, but what have we to do with Him in civic life in Chicago?”<sup>129</sup> Stead described the prisons, saloons, and “houses of ill-repute” that Christ would find and then predicted the city’s fate after Christ’s judgment. He included tales of sordid business deals by the city’s elite, the lot of the poorest gambler, episodes of drunkenness and imprisonment, and the bleak reality of young prostitutes. Finally, he laid out his suggestions for civic reform, sparing no harsh words for Chicago’s churches, press, or leading citizens.

127. Ibid.

128. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, 3, v–vi.

129. Ibid., ix.

## The Very Excrescence of Hell

In many ways *If Christ Came to Chicago* was a typical nineteenth-century text, which drew on the British tradition of slum fiction and the American Christian moral novel. Slum fiction of the 1840s and 1850s was meant “to alert readers to the conditions of the slums in hopes of kindling awareness, charity and social reform.”<sup>130</sup> In the 1880s and 1890s, a second generation of slum writers combined investigative journalism, proto-sociology, and “contemporary explorer narratives,” typified by books like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.<sup>131</sup> Stead freely used the voyeuristic lens of the explorer genre to gaze at Chicago’s own “heart of darkness.” The majority of late nineteenth-century travel books, slum fiction, and social reform tracts were unremarkable. Stead’s amalgamation of these genres made *If Christ Came to Chicago* dynamic. Stead used the voyeuristic elements of travel books and slum fiction to capture his audience’s attention with a tantalizing glimpse at “how the other half lives.”<sup>132</sup> He then used standard moral tropes of fallen women and unfortunate tramps to generate sympathy.

Despite his own sensationalist tendencies, Stead was predominantly concerned with moral reform, which he borrowed from his engagement in American moral realism. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was one of the most widely read examples of this genre. Stead was good friends with Stowe’s brother, Henry Ward Beecher, who convinced Stead to share his ideas in America. Other works of moral realism, like Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1900) and Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906), exposed Chicago’s dark side in the decade after Stead published his book. Christian authors

130. Matthew K. McKean, “Rethinking Late-Victorian Slum Fiction: The Crowd and Imperialism at Home,” *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920* 54, no. 1 (2011): 28.

131. Ibid., 29, 34.

132. Jacob Riis’s *How the Other Half Lives*, a photographic study of New York tenements, was published in 1890 to instant success.

also turned to realism, such as *In His Steps*, written in 1896 by Charles Sheldon after reading *If Christ Came to Chicago*. These homiletic novels sought to alleviate “parishioners’ enervating doubts about religion’s relevance in an age of industry, mechanization, and scientific advancement” by creating a narrative of daily Christian living.<sup>133</sup>

In a proto-sociological style, *If Christ Came to Chicago* included a map of the Nineteenth Precinct, with an almost bloody splash of red brothels, to shock and draw the attention of readers, who could read of the Levee’s sensual pleasures at home (Fig. 3). In the first edition, Stead also included an appendix—the infamous “Black List”—with the names of hundreds of saloons and brothels, together with each building’s owner. Uproar over the list, which the Union News company called “blasphemous” and “a directory of sin,” caused two publishers to reject the book.<sup>134</sup> Stead claimed that the only “shocking outrage upon religion [was] to couple the names of Christ and Chicago!”<sup>135</sup> Many Chicagoans also objected to the voyeuristic display of their city, even if social reform was the stated goal. A British expatriate named Austyn Granville defended his new home in the cheeky rebuttal, *If the Devil Came to Chicago*. Satan read the Black List but finds nothing of interest in the morally upstanding city.<sup>136</sup>

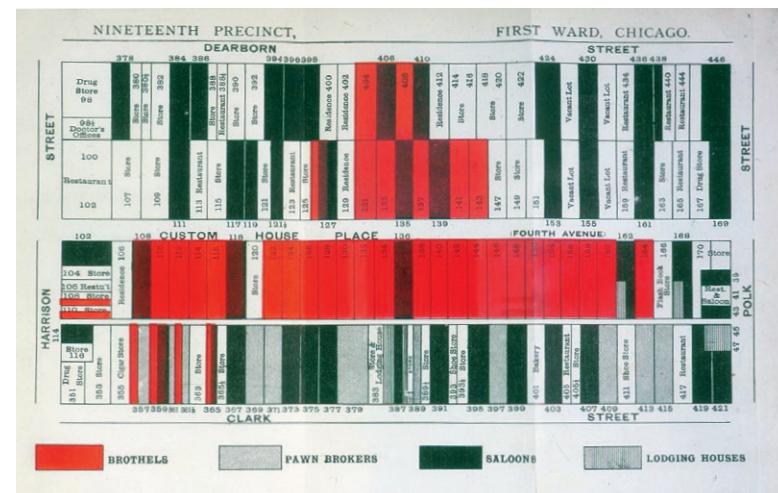
The book’s apocalyptic premise enchanted some readers and infuriated others. Chicagoans’ hatred for the book guaranteed that it would be read elsewhere, with New Yorkers and other urbanites especially eager to hear

133. Gregory S. Jackson, “What Would Jesus Do?: Practical Christianity, Social Gospel Realism, and the Homiletic Novel,” *PMLA* 121, no. 3 (May 2006): 642.

134. “Refuse to Handle Stead’s Book,” *Chicago Tribune*, Apr. 7, 1894. Stead removed the Black List from later editions.

135. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, 508.

136. Austyn Granville, *If the Devil Came to Chicago: A Plea for the Misrepresented by One Who Knows What It Is to Be Misrepresented Himself* (Chicago: Bow-Knot, 1894).





**Figure 4:** Frontispiece, W. T. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago!* (London: Review of Reviews, 1894).

or an inspired evangelist.”<sup>140</sup> Stead agreed: “If there ever was a demagogue in the world[,] ... I am one.”<sup>141</sup>

Stead’s manipulations of genres and instinct for controversy were clever. He seized a cultural moment fascinated with spectacle and sensation to create and market his text. However, Stead’s most important innovation was his unification of three major strands of Protestant thinking: Social Gospel for the book’s reform elements, premillennialism for its title, and postmillennial for its hope.

140. Ibid., 202.

141. “Stead for Reform,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1893.

## A Collapse of Millennialisms

The book might not have been so memorable if not for its memorable title.<sup>142</sup> “If you were to place the title of this book in one scale,” Stead wrote in a review of his own book, “and all the 450 pages which it contains in the other, I would far rather let the book perish if so be that the title could be engraved upon the memory.... There is a whole Gospel in that simple phrase, ‘If Christ came.’”<sup>143</sup> Stead derived the idea of Christ’s return from the poem, “The Parable,” by the American James Russell Lowell:

Said Christ our Lord, “I will go and see  
How the men, my brethren, believe in me.”  
He passed not again through the gate of birth,  
But made Himself known to the children of earth.<sup>144</sup>

Stead believed that his simple query would induce Chicago, indeed the whole world, to eradicate vice and sin and usher in the new millennium.<sup>145</sup> He believed that the “Divine potency” of the phrase would be “the lever which will raise the world and redeem mankind.”<sup>146</sup> This was postmillennialism in its purest form. Human beings, by adopting the image of Christ, could bring about a perfect world. However, Stead claimed that Chicagoans had failed to minister “to the physical, social and moral necessities of our fellow-men” and accused Protestants

142. Stead next publication, which considered Chicago’s labor movement after the Pullman strike, is little remembered even in the most pedantic scholarship of Stead’s life. See W. T. Stead, *Chicago To-Day; or, The Labour War in America* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1894).

143. Stead, “If Christ Came to Chicago,” 508.

144. Ibid., xii; James Russell Lowell, *Poems* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1892), 254.

145. Stead, “If Christ Came to Chicago,” 508.

146. Ibid.

specifically of having “succumbed largely to the temptation of ‘being at ease in Zion.’”<sup>147</sup> By this reckoning, Chicago had failed to fulfill both the postmillennial’s moral duty to perfect the world and the Social Gospel movement’s duty to do good works. Ultimately, Stead threatens Chicagoans with the premillennial vision of the wrathful God.

The book’s frontispiece shows Jesus Christ in biblical attire overturning a gambling table frequented by Chicago’s wealthiest citizens (Fig. 4).<sup>148</sup> The Administration Building of the World’s Fair looms in the background and a man not dissimilar to George Pullman struggles to pick up his gold and a train car. The caption is Matthew 21:23: “It is written, my house shall be called the house of prayer; yet ye have made it a den of thieves.” Stead’s ire falls squarely on the shoulders of Chicago’s elites. Premillennialists conventionally directed their ire at the criminalized lower classes, but Stead did not believe they caused the city’s rot: “Prostitution of the conventional kind is, however, a bagatelle compared with the prostitution of justice and honesty and fair dealing which is rampant everywhere in the government of Chicago.”<sup>149</sup> He named Marshall Field, Philip Armour, and George Pullman the “Chicagoan Trinity” and “the syndicate of millionaires which ran the World’s Fair, … [who] loom up before the eyes of their fellow-men because they have succeeded in ascending a pyramid largely composed of human bones.”<sup>150</sup> The worshipers of Mammon “having accepted Cain’s gospel … are reaping the consequences.”<sup>151</sup> Like the ministers preaching after Carter Harrison’s

assassination, Stead drew comparisons between Chicago and Old Jerusalem, reminding his audience that as Jerusalem was “smote” and “so it is to-day in the city of Chicago.”<sup>152</sup>

*If Christ Came to Chicago* collapsed all notions of past, present, and future, which makes it neither premillennial nor postmillennial in the conventional sense. Pre- and postmillennialism have opposite teleologies of history: premillennialism views society as decaying over time, while postmillennialism views society as progressing over time. Stead argues that Christ could visit 1894 Chicago like he had first-century Jerusalem. The provocative frontispiece depicts an event from the Gospel of Matthew in contemporary Chicago: the city is not merely similar to Old Jerusalem, but *is* Old Jerusalem; Pullman, Field, and the like are not merely similar to the Pharisees, they *are* the money changers; and the fair’s Administration Building further situates the scene in the here and now. For Stead, time itself became irrelevant.

Stead was able to collapse pre- and postmillennialism for two reasons. First, the apocalyptic symbolism that had permeated the city since the opening of the World’s Fair was as confusing as Stead’s blended eschatology. The perfect city in flames, the controversial but triumphant mayor cut down, and labor strife permitted Stead to draw on the postmillennial hope of the White City and a premillennial judgment of the Black City’s vice. Secondly, Stead collapsed the trajectory of history. For Stead, the life of Christ, the present day, and the future apocalypse—be it pre- or postmillennial—were all concurrent. Christ’s hypothetical return to Chicago was at once a continuation of the Gospel, a vicious judgment of the present, and a triumphant postmillennial visitation. Stead proclaimed that “the Passion and the Cross are for us day by day and hour by hour, moment by moment. Nor will He cease from dwelling amongst us—the living word made manifest in his flesh—as long as men and women live,

147. Stead, *If Christ Came to Chicago!*, 122, 258.

148. Ibid., frontispiece.

149. Ibid., 511.

150. Ibid., 59, 62–63.

151. Ibid., 178.

152. Ibid.

and love, and sin, and suffer, and go down forlorn into the pit.”<sup>153</sup> Stead did not have to wonder what would occur if Christ came to Chicago, because He was already there. This collapse of time allowed Stead to hold supposedly incompatible eschatologies.

The dominant strains of theology all failed, in their own ways, to sufficiently mollify the fears of many Chicago Protestants who were trying to understand urban modernity. Progressive and transcendent postmillennialism, though lingering, was a vestige of pre–Civil War America. In a moment of increasing social fracture and anxiety, postmillennialism’s successor, the Social Gospel, failed to provide the recourse to divine justice that premillennialism did. However, the pessimism of premillennialism could not satisfy the needs of a society that believed strongly in American exceptionalism. The pragmatic teleology of the Social Gospel and the pessimistic teleology of premillennialism were incompatible with the continuing dream of the fair. Thus, Chicagoans developed their own hybrid millennialisms.

No doubt, some enjoyed *If Christ Came to Chicago*’s promise of divine justice for capitalists and politicians who profited on the misery of the working classes. Nowhere did Stead condemn the average Chicagoan; he castigated wealthy elites and impotent ecclesiastic institutions, who, naturally, loathed his book. The frontispiece promised more than justice—it promised a spectacle of divine vengeance. Revelry in apocalyptic spectacle was hardly a nineteenth-century innovation in Christian thinking. In *De Spectaculis*, the church father Tertullian beseeched third-century Christians to avoid the Roman circus: “What a spectacle is that fast-approaching advent of our Lord!”<sup>154</sup> Tertullian promised that monarchs and philosophers, poets and actors, would “be consumed in one great flame” during

the Second Coming, while he “fix[ed] a gaze insatiable on those whose fury vented itself against the Lord.”<sup>155</sup> To many of Stead’s readers, the specific doctrinal elements of pre- or postmillennialism were less important than the promise of justice and progress that each theology entailed. And most intriguing was the prospect of justice being *spectacular*. Just as late nineteenth-century Chicagoans hungered for the unimaginably grandiose World’s Fair and the marvelous gilded department store of Marshall Field, they found the flames that consumed the pinnacle of the city’s ambition and achievement to be a grand entertainment on par with the fair itself. For all the theological hand-wringing of Chicago’s elite ministers, the majority of the population—the ones who visited the fair on Chicago Day, who frequented saloons and gambling halls, and who read Stead’s Black List with delight—was entertained by the various apocalyptic symbols offered by the modern city. They chased the next grand spectacle and responded to each apocalyptic symbol as it came. ○

153. Ibid., 252.

154. Tertullian, “The Shows, *De Spectaculis*,” in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian*, vol. 3, trans. S. Thelwall, The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887), 91.

155. Ibid.

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# Repurposed or Unpurposed?



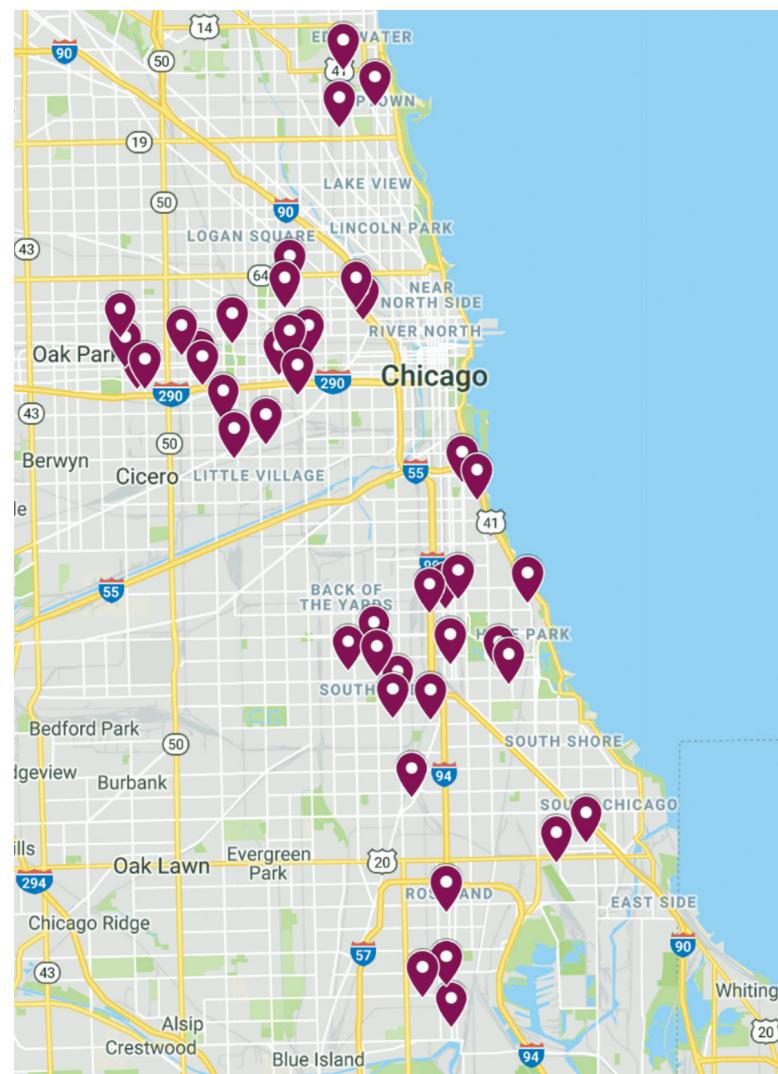
## The Evolution of Chicago Public School Buildings Closed in 2013

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### Introduction

In 2013 Chicago Public Schools (CPS) closed forty-four school buildings, which housed fifty schools, and relocated nearly twelve thousand students (Gorden et al., 2018). It was the largest mass closing of schools in the United States (Gorden et al., 2018). This study investigates the process of repurposing these buildings and the extent to which they still serve their respective communities. I interviewed eighteen people connected to the closings: academics, journalists, CPS personnel, community members, and building buyers. The three factors that influence the closing and repurposing of buildings are differences in the vested interests of stakeholders; inadequate communication; and physical and structural obstacles. This study concludes that the influence of these factors has prevented the majority (thirty) of the forty-four school buildings closed in 2013 from being successfully repurposed by 2018–19, the time of this study.

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) district is composed of 644 schools serving 361,314 students as of the beginning of the 2018–19 school year (Chicago Public Schools, 2019). Nearly twenty years ago CPS enrollment was over 435,000, and enrollment has dropped by 16.9 percent since then. Declining enrollment mirrors the declining



**Figure 1:** Location of forty-four school closed in 2013. Google map by author.

population of the city of Chicago and is expected to continue into the near future (Emmanuel, 2019).

Mayor Rahm Emanuel led the movement to close fifty Chicago schools with low enrollments and to repurpose the buildings. The Chicago Board of Education said it faced a “utilization crisis” and deemed a school efficiently utilized if enrollment was 20 percent above or below the school’s ideal enrollment, which was calculated as the ideal number of students in a fourth-grade classroom of thirty (Weber, Farmer, & Donoghue, 2018, p. 10). Using this rationale, the grand shake-up of 2013 saw some schools and school buildings close indefinitely. Some schools, including faculty, students, and school identities, were kept intact but moved into other school buildings of higher quality, while other students and staff from closed schools were dispersed to different schools. Therefore, this study will distinguish clearly between *schools*, defined as the students and staff that make up a school community, and *school buildings*, defined as the physical space that houses a school community. The process affected 133 schools and 47,000 students in closed and receiving schools (Weber et al., 2018, p. 10). The forty-four closed buildings are largely clustered on the South and West Sides of Chicago (Fig. 1). Some researchers find the rationale of underutilization empirically valid (Weber et al., 2018, p. 28); others question this rationale, as well as the district’s formula to quantify underutilization, citing the history of racism in the management of the education system in Chicago as a main reason for school closures (Ewing, 2018; Kunichoff, 2019).

The term *repurposing*, sometimes called adaptive reuse, refers to the process of recycling school buildings for other uses. Chicago is not new to repurposing. The fall of industrialism in the mid-twentieth century left the city with a multitude of vacant manufacturing buildings (Lindberg, 2017). Many of these buildings have been repurposed as apartments and condominiums, some of which now comprise a large proportion of the most desirable real estate in the city (Bergin, 2015). This successful repurposing shows that it is possible to repurpose vacant school buildings as well (Cox, 2017; Feldman, 2017; Harvey, 2018; Nitkin, 2018; Rodkin, 2018).

This investigation explores the actions and interactions between communities, school building buyers, CPS personnel, researchers, and journalists regarding school closings in an attempt to understand how the repurposing of these buildings has and will affect communities. The goal of this investigation is to contribute to the understanding of the importance and use of institutional school buildings within a community. The majority of these buildings have the potential to serve communities in new ways. In this research, I want to find out if and how these school buildings will continue to serve their communities in order to further understand the evolving role of institutional buildings within Chicago neighborhoods. This study has the potential to improve and inspire the process of repurposing of the remaining vacant school buildings from the series of Chicago school closings that began in 2002 (Vevea, 2018).

## Literature Review

### Academic Scholarship

Most scholarship on school closings focuses on the impact of closings on the child and family. The UChicago Consortium on School Research (UCSR) found that 66 percent of students enrolled in their designated welcoming school and 34 percent chose another school for varied reasons, although the proximity of the new schools to the families' homes and communities was a paramount concern (Torre Moore, & Cowhy, 2015). Another UCSR report found that CPS poorly executed the school closings, the school movements, and the general transition process (Gordon et al., 2018). The report cited a period of mourning after school closures, which was caused by the severing of the "long-standing social connection" between families and schools (Gordon et al., 2018, p. 36). The effect of school closings on students and families has been understandably the primary concern of researchers. A school's most apparent and essential function is to promote learning and academic success, and a decline in learning and academic success has indeed been the most detrimental

consequence of the school closures for some students who enrolled in schools of lower quality than their previous school (Torre & Gwynne, 2009). However, another consequence of the closings has been the extended vacancy of school buildings across the South and West Sides of Chicago (Belsha, 2017a-d; Belsha 2018).

Schools play a large role in the community. Various studies show the connection between high or improved academic achievement and strong community ties. Strong relationships between schools and families help families to better support their childrens' school learning and access to social services and community agencies (Henderson & Mapp, 2002); close ties between schools and the community improve community development, vitality, and environment (Sobel, 2008, p. 6); and students exhibit better behavior and experience more academic success if they feel like a true member of their school community (Osterman, 2000). According to the most recent UCSR report, communities were damaged by the school closings and CPS administration did not do enough to mitigate the damage (Gordon et al., 2018).

### Journalism and Nonprofits

New articles provide the most information about the 2013 CPS school closings. The *Chicago Reporter*, for example, has a more comprehensive inventory of schools closed, for sale, and sold than can be found on the CPS website (Belsha & Kiefer, 2017). The *Chicago Reporter*'s series of articles, "Empty Schools, Empty Promises," has chronicled the evolving process of school repurposing in Chicago (Belsha, 2017a-d; Belsha 2018). The *Chicago Tribune* interviewed community residents (Perez, 2018a; Perez, 2018b) and reported extensively on upcoming school closures in Englewood and the neighborhood's subsequent backlash (Perez, 2018b). These reports were supplemented by interactive maps (Epton, Richards, & Courtney, 2013; Belsha & Kiefer, 2017). The Chicago radio station WBEZ analyzed the shake-ups caused by a "generation of school closings" beginning in 2002 and delved deeply into the data on school

closures, concluding that approximately two hundred schools and 70,160 students have been affected by school shake-ups (Lutton, Vevea, Karp, Cardona-Maguigad, & McGee, 2018). Social organizations and nonprofits, such as Creative Grounds, which was founded by the architect Paola Aguirre, have compiled information on the state of Chicago schools closed in 2013. Creative Grounds briefly repurposed Overton Elementary as an art gallery in an attempt to bring attention to the state of and potential reuses for closed schools (Creative Grounds, 2017; Robinson, 2017). CPS has failed to publish any account of the success stories of school repurposing or to create an online map of their properties.

## Urbanism

Some urbanism literature, including the work of Clarence Perry, Jane Jacobs, Emily Talen, and Sharon Haar, focuses on the purpose of schools within a neighborhood. According to Perry's seminal model of neighborhood design, *The Neighborhood Unit*, the elementary school should be the central feature of a neighborhood and should serve as a community center, offering services to all neighborhood residents within a half-mile radius of the school (Perry, 1929). According to Perry, a "vigorous local consciousness would be bound to arise and find expression in all sorts of agreeable and useful face-to-face associations" in a neighborhood with a successful community center and, thus, elementary school (Perry, 1929, p. 41). Although *The Neighborhood Unit* is a prescriptive account of what an elementary school should be, it does offer insightful background information on the rationale behind the construction of elementary schools. In her seminal work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs delves deeply into urban planning of the 1950s, criticizes it, and proposes an alternative theory of urbanism. Jacobs argues that thoughtful city planning, including the presence of parks and sidewalks, could result in a more useful, healthier, and welcoming city (Jacobs, 1961). Although, Jacobs's theory is not empirically grounded, it could be applied to schools as physical spaces that should serve the community to the best of their

abilities. Elizabeth Moule argues that if all spaces serving a community's daily needs are centered around children and schools, then commutes would be reduced and time for "caring for one another," work, and personal growth would increase (as cited in Talen, 2013, p. 157). This argument relates very closely to Perry's (1929). I will apply these theories of the centrality of schools to my investigation of modern neighborhood schools.

More recent work, such as Sharon Haar's, has examined the role that schools play within cities. Haar characterizes schools as "vital community anchors" (Haar, 2003, p. 8) that both educate students in the most conventional sense and provide an "education for today's students about neighborhood and community development" (Haar, 2003, p. 9). Haar focused on the construction of schools, but I contend that this understanding of schools as community anchors should also be considered in the demolition, closing, or repurposing of schools. These urbanists provide a grounding for my research as I analyze how schools as institutional buildings serve their communities.

## School Closings and Repurposing

Eve Ewing's *Ghosts in the Schoolyard* focuses on the racism of the 2013 school closings in the Bronzeville neighborhood of Chicago. She also explores the role that the physical buildings themselves played in the community and the pain inflicted by the closings. Ewing uses the term "institutional mourning" to describe "the social and emotional experience undergone by individuals and communities facing the loss of a shared institution they are affiliated with ... especially when those individuals or communities occupy a socially marginalized status that amplifies their reliance on the institution or its significance in their lives" (Ewing, 2018, p. 127) and questions the fate of the physical buildings: "What should we do with the vacant school buildings across the city that have yet to be repurposed?" (Ewing, 2018, p. 161). With this research, I hope to address the question of how repurposed schools could heal some of the damage caused by closures.

Policy studies on the repurposing of school buildings are limited. When closing schools in 2013, Mayor Rahm Emanuel commissioned an Advisory Committee for School Repurposing and Community Development, which produced a framework for school repurposing (Millhouse, 2014). However, the committee's guidelines have not been heeded. In contrast, Kansas City Public Schools (KCPC), which closed half its schools in 2009–10 (Belsha, 2017b), implemented numerous repurposing guidelines produced by urban planners that were "community-driven" (KCPC, n.d.). The University of North Carolina School of Government found that vacant school buildings can be effectively repurposed as charter schools, affordable housing, senior housing, and retail (Patterson, 2015). A Pew Charitable Trusts study of the mass closings and sale of school buildings in Philadelphia identifies size and location, state and local policies, marketing, and public engagement as the foremost factors contributing to the repurposing and sale of former school buildings (Dowdall & Warner, 2013). Architect Lilane Wong asserts that past identities and experiences of the building, or "ghosts" as she calls them, will inevitably influence the repurposing process (Wong, 2017, p. 147). Ariel H. Bierbaum analyzes the "divergent narratives of school closures and building dispositions" in Philadelphia and connects these narratives to the "material stakes of urban change" (Bierbaum, 2018, p. 11). Bierbaum identifies two opposing narratives, one focused on quantification and business efficiency and the other focused on the relational meaning of school buildings, specifically on the "educational, social, and political infrastructure in neighborhoods" (Bierbaum, 2018, p. 11).

At this juncture, the existence of academic research on school repurposing and sale processes in Chicago does not exist. Using the lens of urbanism, my research intends to focus academic research and refocus citywide action regarding school repurposing on the communities where schools closed in 2013.

## Methods

From October 2018 to January 2019 I conducted eighteen interviews with stakeholders in the 2013 Chicago public-school closings that I classified into three groups: A) individuals with knowledge of the process of school closings and repurposing, including CPS personnel, academics, and journalists; B) community members affected by the closures; and C) buyers of school buildings. Recorded interviews were conducted in person or over the phone and lasted approximately thirty minutes. The interview format was semi-structured (Kvale, 2007). Each interview began with the individuals' connections to the 2013 school closures, moved on to their opinions and experiences throughout the closure and repurposing process, and concluded with their thoughts on how the process of school closures and repurposing could be improved in the future (see Appendix 1). The objective of the interviews and the study at large was to understand the role that closed school buildings play within neighborhoods. The interaction and communication among stakeholders were of particular interest, because they shed light on the agency of the stakeholders in the evolution of the school buildings and the way in which the buildings served or continue to serve their neighborhoods.

I began with convenience sampling and then progressed to snowball sampling. I first interviewed researchers at the UChicago Consortium on School Research and other connections made within the University of Chicago. These interviewees introduced me to Chicagoland education journalists and activists, who in turn connected me to more school and neighborhood interlocutors (see Appendix 2).

The second wave of interviewees helped me select five case study schools: Key Elementary and Leland Elementary in the Austin neighborhood on the West Side; Dodge Elementary in the East Garfield Park neighborhood on the West Side; Drake Elementary in the Douglas neighborhood on the South Side; and Stewart Elementary in the Uptown neighborhood on the North Side. Each case study building serves a different role within their neighborhood. Except for one building that is

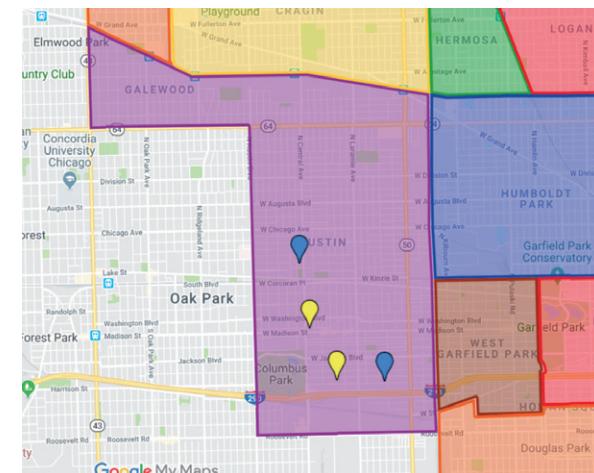
currently under construction, the case study schools have been successfully and completely repurposed. The city has sold a total of seventeen school buildings to private buyers. The buyers have repurposed or are in the process of repurposing eight buildings; the other nine remain vacant (see Appendix 3).

I transcribed electronic interview recordings using Temi Software and quality checked and edited transcriptions by hand. I analyzed the interview data using grounded theory, a theory developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, which aims to “generate theory from data” (Walter, 2013, p. 327) through an inductive process. I kept notes throughout the interview process. I began the coding process with open coding (identifying, naming, and describing categories) by hand, in order to address the similarities, differences, and themes across interviews. I then used axial coding—the process by which the codes that are developed are more vigorously specified and elaborated” (Walters, 2013, p. 328)—to form relationships between the codes. I finished with selective coding, in which I identified a core category and organized the other categories around it (Walters, 2013, p. 328).

## Case Studies

**Austin** is one of the largest community areas of Chicago and is on the western edge of the city. Until the white flight of the 1960s, Austin was almost completely white. Currently, its population of 97,611 is approximately 82 percent black and has a median household income of approximately \$31,920.<sup>1</sup> Austin was greatly affected by the 2013 school closures, with four closed elementary schools: Emmet, Key, Leland, and Louis Armstrong (Fig. 2). Leland has reopened as Kidz Express, an after-school program associated with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (Fig. 3); the Field School, a private Christian grade school, purchased Key, and

1. All the data in this section data is from 2016, the most recent year available (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2019).



**Figure 2:** Austin's closed elementary schools, with two case study school in blue: Key (north) and Leland (southeast). Google map by author.



**Figure 3:** Leland Elementary, now Kidz Express. Photograph by author.



**Figure 4:** Key Elementary. Photograph by author.



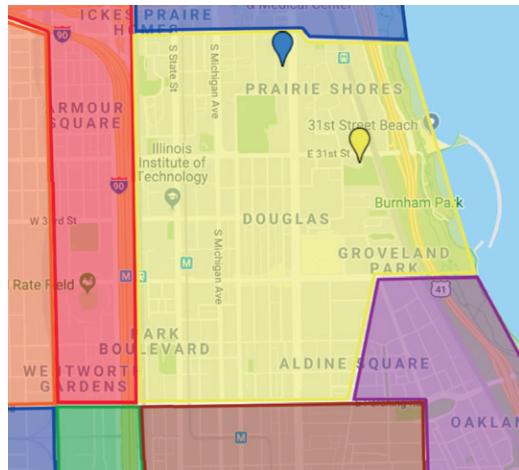
**Figure 5:** Emmet Elementary. Photograph by author.

it is currently being repurposed (Fig. 4); the nonprofit Westside Health Authority purchased Emmet, which is currently vacant (Fig. 5); Rivers of Living Water Ministries failed to close on Louis Armstrong, and it remains vacant.

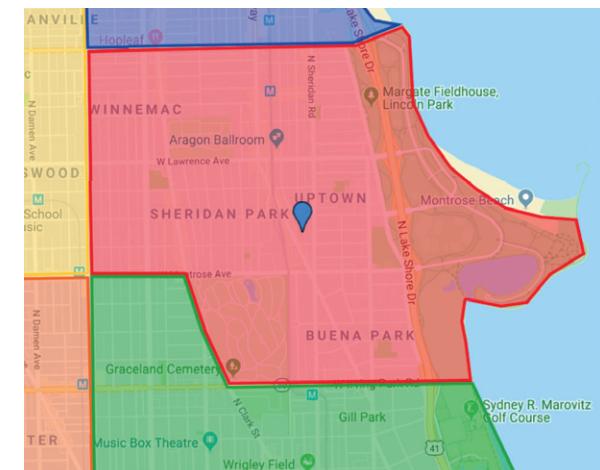
**Douglas** is a community area located on the South Side. It is named for the Illinois politician Stephen A. Douglas and experienced significant development in the early twentieth century. Currently, its population of 20,559 is 70 percent black, with a median household income of \$29,398. As spotlighted in Eve Ewing's *Ghosts in the Schoolyard* (2018), Bronzeville, a neighborhood that straddles the Douglas and Grand Boulevard community areas, was plagued by school closures and shake-ups for over a decade. In 2013 two elementary schools closed (Fig. 6): the school district repurposed Pershing as the Pershing Magnet School for Humanities; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 134 purchased Drake and repurposed the building as a union hall (Fig. 7).

**Uptown** is a community area located on the North Side. It has a population of 56,296, is racially diverse and 54 percent white, with a median household income of \$45,644. Historically an entertainment district, Uptown was home to a number of immigrant groups in the twentieth century, but more recently it has experienced gentrification. In 2013, only Stewart Elementary closed in Uptown (Fig. 8). A for-profit real estate firm purchased and quickly repurposed the building as the Stewart School Lofts (Fig. 9).

**East Garfield Park** is a community area located on the West Side. It has a population of 20,225, is 90 percent black, and has a medium household income of \$24,000. In 2013, two elementary schools closed (Fig. 10): the nonprofit Heartland Housing's purchase of Calhoun is pending; the school district repurposed Dodge Elementary as administrative offices (Fig. 11).



**Figure 6:** Douglas's closed elementary schools, with the case study school, Drake, in blue. Google map by author.



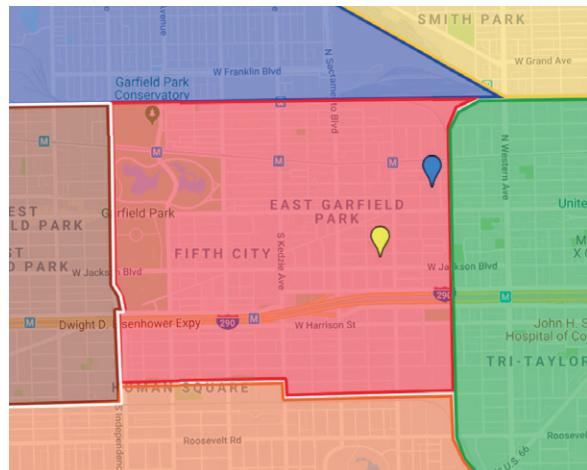
**Figure 8:** Uptown's closed elementary school, Stewart. Google map by author.



**Figure 7:** Drake Elementary, now the IBEW Local 134 Union Hall. Photograph by author.



**Figure 9:** Stewart Elementary, now the Stewart School Lofts. Photograph by author.



**Figure 10:** East Garfield Park's closed elementary schools, with the case study school, Dodge, in blue. Google map by author.



**Figure 11:** Dodge Elementary, now the CPS Garfield Park Offices. Photograph by author.

## Findings

The initial purpose of this study was to determine how the forty-four school buildings closed in 2013 were serving their communities, and this question remains relevant to the fourteen schools repurposed or undergoing repurposing. However, thirty buildings remain vacant for a number of reasons: eleven have yet to sell; seven have pending sales; sixteen sold, but remain vacant; and three were transferred to the City of Chicago and remain vacant (see Appendix 3). Due to these persistent vacancies, this study also investigated the process of and obstacles to school sales and repurposing. Throughout the eighteen interviews, three main themes emerged: differences in the vested interests of stakeholders in the closing and repurposing process; inadequate communication regarding the process; and physical and structural obstacles to successful sales and repurposing.

## Stakeholder Differences

There are a significant number of stakeholders in the process of school closures and repurposing whose vested interests differ greatly based on background and profession, as well as their goals and expectations from the school closures and repurposing. In some cases, these interests are in direct opposition to one another. Overwhelmingly, school buyers and CPS personnel distance themselves from the closures, while community members still feel a great sense of closeness to the schools and school buildings that were left behind.

The stark contrast among stakeholders is evident in the opinions of Anna Solomon<sup>2</sup> and Henry Bienen. Solomon is a CPS teacher and an activist with Northside Action for Justice, which works to prevent all school closures; Bienen is a former member of the Chicago Board of Education who served throughout the school closings in 2013. When asked how she thought the process of school closures and repurposing

2. Anna Solomon is a pseudonym.

could be improved, Solomon responded: “That supposes that it is okay to close schools, so I can’t say that I would endorse that point of view.” Bienen’s interest throughout the school closings was to ensure the district’s economic efficiency. In an attempt to cut costs caused by under enrollment, Bienen said that the board “should have closed another thirty [schools]” in addition to the fifty that were closed in 2013. With respect to the sales process, Bienen acknowledged that the board “knew a lot of those buildings could not be easily sold” and that the district’s first strategy was to “sell where you could.” Solomon criticized the process of school repurposing for its lack of genuine community involvement, while Bienen was surprised that any of the school buildings had been repurposed.

In very few cases did the interests of the school board and city, the community, and a buyer converge. One example of a convergence of interests is the repurposing of the Drake Elementary building in Douglas. Ted Fitzgibbons, president of the IBEW Local 134, stated that Mayor Rahm Emanuel played an instrumental role in encouraging Local 134 to move from the West Loop to Drake. Emanuel, who was negotiating with S. C. Johnson & Son to bring its North American Regional Headquarters to Chicago, thought that Local 134’s West Loop location would appeal to the company. According to Fitzgibbons, “through negotiations with [Emanuel’s] real estate team” the union sold its West Loop building and purchased the Drake building. Fitzgibbons explained that the union gained community support by sharing space in the new union hall with the Terry Allen Community Center, which hosts such events as senior mixers and soccer practice. The union also developed a partnership with nearby Dunbar High School, which offers students four years of electrical-training classes and guarantees students a place in an electrical workers apprenticeship program upon graduation. The repurposing of the Drake Elementary school building is an excellent but rare example of the convergence of interests of different stakeholders.

## Inadequate Communication

The greatest complaint from community members, education researchers, journalists, and some school buyers about the process of school closures and repurposing was inadequate communication and the overall opacity of the school district. Dwyane Truss, the runner-up in the 2019 election for 29th Ward alderman and a member of the Austin Community Action Council, stated that the process of school repurposing went “poorly because CPS did not have the intention to work with the community. The buildings just sit empty and deteriorated.” Even in cases of successfully repurposed school buildings, such as Leland’s transformation into Kidz Express, Truss stressed that “the process should always be open and transparent,” but that the the district’s sale of Leland and other former school buildings in Austin was not. Pastor Michael Neal, who leases a former school building from CPS and is familiar with school closures on the South Side, echoed Truss’s sentiments, explaining that “people [in the school district] can cherry pick which buildings they want to sell and which ones they don’t. From my understanding, it’s still not totally clear when or if they’re going to sell what.” Given that thirty of the forty-four school buildings remain vacant six years after the 2013 closings, community members are calling for a clearer and more transparent process of building sales and repurposing.

Academics and journalists agree with community members that the process of sales and repurposing remain unclear. During our interview, education researcher Eve Ewing said that she advocates for a “genuine inquiry-based process wherein people who are impacted by a proposed policy have the chance to think through, talk through, research, and debate all the potential implications of that policy [of school closings].” Ewing also described the process of repurposing as a “mess” and that “it was never clear what the process was.” Initially, aldermen conducted community meetings and ran the process of bidding on vacant buildings in their wards. According to Ewing, the aldermen’s commitment to the process was “inconsistent.” After this process failed, the CPS was forced

to centralize the bidding process in 2017, nearly four years after the 2013 closures. Andrea Zopp, a former member of the Board of Education, said that her greatest memory of the aftermath of the school closures was about “who would own the process.” Zopp stated that the board resolved the issue after she left the board, but that, to this day, confusion about the process of bid solicitation persists.

The Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) Repurposing Initiative is an example of successful communication by a school district and a more straightforward process for school sales and repurposing. Shannon Jaax, director of the initiative, began the repurposing process with a three-month investigation about the buildings themselves and the needs of respective communities. Next, the initiative focused on “pushing out” its research at open houses for all thirty “surplus buildings.” One of Jaax’s foremost goals was to “make sure we were very transparent informing the community.” The initiative also has a marketing strategy for sales, sets deadlines for bid solicitation, and maintains an online inventory of school buildings with a status dashboard (KCPS, n.d.). CPS did provide buyers with an initial online inventory, a bidding process, and deadlines, but does not have a marketing strategy or status dashboard (CPS 2018a–b; CPS n.d.a–b). Districts such as KCPS demonstrate that clear communication and thoughtful engagement between the district and the community are possible and ultimately successful.

## Obstacles to Sales and Repurposing

This investigation revealed a number of physical and structural obstacles to the sales and repurposing of school buildings.

Physical obstacles include the sheer number of buildings that needed to be sold, their locations, their disrepair, and the cost of repairs. The district purposely closed school buildings in the greatest state of disrepair and in some cases transferred a school from a run-down building to a building in better condition. Board member Bienen stated that many potential buyers “underestimate the cost of repairing these buildings.”

Jeremy Mann, principal of the private Field School, estimates that renovating the Key building in Austin will cost \$5–6 million; the IBEW leader Fitzgibbons said renovation of the Drake building on the South Side cost about \$25 million. The IBEW has completed its renovation, and the Field School is on track to stay within their renovation budget. Other school buyers have not been as successful. The architect Paola Aguirre works closely with the community development organization that purchased Overton Elementary (Borderless, n.d.); she said that progress has stalled due to a lack of funding. Other stakeholders have questioned the scale of the closings. Education reporter Kalyn Belsha said that “the sheer number of buildings … made it more difficult to sell any one of them.” The administrative legwork required to close fifty schools and sell forty-four buildings is immense (Belsha, 2017a–d; 2018), and others (Gordon et al., 2018) have noted the district’s lack of preparation and planning for such a large-scale closing.

Chicago politics was the main structural obstacle to the sale and repurposing of school buildings. The backing of the mayor or other political players helped some bidders, such as the IBEW, to the disadvantage of others. Mann, the private school principal and buyer, noted the “politically charged” tension among the parties who gathered together to make bids. Ewing called the bidding process an “arcane labyrinth” that is difficult to navigate for those without strong social capital in Chicago politics.

## Discussion

Of the forty-four buildings closed in 2013, thirty remain vacant six years after their closing. Through a series of eighteen interviews with various stakeholders in the process of school repurposing, three major themes emerged: the differing interests of stakeholders; inadequate communication; and physical and structural obstacles within the process. Further investigations into the process of school repurposing should include an even greater range of stakeholders, such as current CPS board members,

city aldermen who have vacant buildings in their districts, and a greater number of school community members.

Chicago news outlets, such as the *Chicago Reporter*, WBEZ, and the *Chicago Tribune*, have conducted the majority of contemporaneous investigations into the city's school vacancies. This investigation is one of the first formal academic studies of the process of school repurposing in Chicago. Although much education research has focused on the impact of school closings on the academic outcomes of students affected by closures, community impacts are also of great importance and should be investigated with similar rigor. This investigation begins to scratch the surface of the current process of school repurposing in Chicago, and its inclusion of the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders is significant. Future investigations should maintain the diversity of opinions and positions presented in this study but should be conducted at a greater scale and should cover all forty-four school buildings closed in 2013, instead of focusing on five case studies.

## Conclusion

Overarching, vacant school buildings in Chicago impede growth and progress. It is imperative that Chicago thinks critically about how to address the number of vacant school buildings on the West and South Sides before it is faced with future school closures. Critical consideration about the future of so many buildings across the city requires the collaboration of a large and diverse group of people, including community members, CPS personnel, school buyers, city planners, and researchers, among others.

The findings of this study call for interventions to address factors impeding the repurposing of schools, especially in light of impending political changes in Chicago: the end of the moratorium on school closings in 2018 (Masterson, 2017) and the election of a new mayor, Lori Lightfoot, in 2019 (Stewart, 2019).

Each of these recommendations is informed by the data and findings of this study with the aim of improving the process of school repurposing in the city of Chicago. First, CPS should facilitate interactions and conversations among the various stakeholders—community members, CPS personnel, school building buyers, among others—about the process of repurposing. Second, it is vitally important that CPS clarify its processes of school closures, building sales, and repurposing. For example, CPS could create a consistently updated online database with a dashboard inventory of their vacant properties and steps to be taken to purchase those buildings. This model is consistent with Kansas City Public Schools, a district that has undergone a similar mass school closing. Such interventions would mitigate some of the other physical and structural obstacles related to school repurposing efforts. Third, clear communication and transparent purchasing policies would ensure that buildings sell more quickly, without becoming dilapidated, and potential buyers who lack political connections or business acumen would not be disadvantaged. Fourth, school closures should not come in overwhelmingly large waves. A smaller scale of closings would allow the district to take greater care with the sale and repurposing of each individual building.

This research demonstrates that there are a number of ways to successfully repurpose school buildings across the city. Within the case studies addressed in this study, three vacant school buildings have great potential to serve their communities: Emmet Elementary (Austin), Louis Armstrong Elementary (Austin), and Calhoun Elementary (East Garfield Park). The commercial success of Stewart School Lofts has shown that housing is a viable option for repurposing large buildings. Many of the neighborhoods most affected by school closures, such as Austin or East Garfield Park, would benefit from the presence of more affordable housing. The large size of the Emmet and Calhoun Elementary school buildings on the West Side make them particularly well-suited to affordable housing. The success of Leland's repurposing as Kidz Express has shown the school buildings' potential as locations for after-school programs and community centers. Louis Armstrong Elementary has a similar layout to Leland and

could serve well as a community center due to its small size and location near a major park in Austin.

These broader policy recommendations and building-specific recommendations aim to improve and inspire the process of school repurposing and therefore facilitate the growth and progress of neighborhoods across Chicago. The process of school repurposing can be purposeful, well communicated, and accessible rather than haphazard, unclear, and inaccessible. ○

## Appendix 1: Guiding Questions for Interview

### **Class A: CPS Personnel, Academics, and Journalists**

- How do you identify yourself in relation to the process of school closings and repurposing?
- Can you tell me a bit about your professional journey?
- Will you allow me to use your name and professional title in my research? If not, may I use your professional title and credentials? Otherwise you may choose to remain completely anonymous and I will employ a pseudonym.
- To what extent were school repurposing efforts included in the deliberation process of school closings in 2013? Should it be part of the conversation?
- What do you believe is preventing some buildings from being sold and repurposed?
- Do you anticipate more school closures now that the moratorium is over?
- How could the process of school closings and repurposing be done differently or “better” in the future?

### **Class B: Community Members**

- How do you identify yourself in relation to the process of school closings and repurposing?
- Will you allow me to use your name and professional title in my research? If not, may I use your professional title and credentials? Otherwise you may choose to remain completely anonymous and I will employ a pseudonym.

- To what extent is the process of a school closure systematized (a predictable pattern was followed throughout)?
- To what extent was community input taken into consideration throughout the closing of your school? How about during the repurposing process?
- To what extent were school repurposing efforts included in the deliberation process of school closings in 2013?
- Were you able to make your voice heard during the process of school closures and the subsequent sales of the buildings? How?
- Do you agree or disagree with the closing of your school?
- How has the closing of your neighborhood school affected your community?
- What hopes do you have for the future of the building?
- What needs does your community have?
- Do you think the current identity of the school building serves any of these needs?
- Does the community at large have any access to the school building? What are the general sentiments of the community about the repurposed building?
- What are your views on future school closings?
- How could the process of school closings and repurposing be done differently or “better” in the future?

### Class C: Buyers of School Buildings

- How do you identify yourself in relation to the process of school closures and repurposing?
- Will you allow me to use your name and professional title in my research? If not, may I use your professional title and credentials? Otherwise you may choose to remain completely anonymous and I will employ a pseudonym.
- Can you walk me through the process you went through to purchase the building?
- Why did you purchase this building?
- To what extent did you engage with the community prior to purchasing this building?
- What has community’s reaction been to the repurposed building?
- What role does your building serve in the community?
- How does your building engage with the community?
- Who has access to this newly repurposed building?
- How does the building improve the neighborhood?
- How could the process of school closings and repurposing be done differently or “better” in the future?

## Appendix 2: Interlocutors

\*Indicates pseudonym

### Class A: CPS Personnel, Academics, and Journalists

**Paola Aguirre**, founder and architect, Creative Grounds

**Kalyn Belsha**, education journalist, *Chicago Reporter*

**Henry Bienen**, former member, Chicago Board of Education; president emeritus, Northwestern University

**Eve Ewing**, assistant professor of education, University of Chicago; former CPS teacher

**Molly Gordon**, education researcher, UChicago Consortium on School Research

**Shannon Jaax**, director, Kansas City Public School Repurposing Initiative

**Mary Smith**\*, education researcher, UChicago Consortium on School Research

**Rachel Weber**, associate professor of urban planning and policy, University of Illinois at Chicago

**Andrea Zopp**, former member, Chicago Board of Education

### Class B: Community Members

**Suzanne McBride**, founder, AustinTalks

**Anna Solomon**\*, activist, Northside Action for Justice; CPS teacher

**Mike Tomas**, executive director, Garfield Park Community Council

**Analisa Trofimuk**, journalist, AustinTalks

**Dwayne Truss**, member, Austin Community Action Council; 29th Ward aldermanic candidate

### Class C: Buyers of School Buildings

**Ted Fitzgibbons**, president, IBEW Local 134; buyer, Drake Elementary

**Jeremy Mann**, principal, Field School; buyer, Key Elementary

**Michael Neal**, pastor, Glorious Light Church; former volunteer, Drake Elementary; leaser, Price Elementary (closed in 2012)

**Alison Soloway**, marketing director, Stewart School Lofts

### Appendix 3: Current Status of Schools Closed in 2013

SCHOOL	ADDRESS	COMMUNITY AREA	SCHOOL STATUS	SCHOOL BUYER
<b>Armstrong, Louis</b>	5345 W Congress Pkwy	Austin	vacant, sale did not close	Rivers of Living Waters Ministries
<b>Attucks</b>	5055 S State St	Grand Boulevard	vacant, sold	KMIS Developers
<b>Bontemps</b>	1241 W 58th St	West Englewood	vacant, sale did not close	Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF)
<b>Buckingham</b>	9207 S Phillips Ave	Calumet Heights	vacant, for sale	
<b>Burnham</b>	1903 E 96th St	South Deering	vacant, for sale	
<b>Calhoun</b>	2833 W Adams St	East Garfield Park	vacant, sale pending	Heartland Housing
<b>Canter</b>	4959 S Blackstone Ave	Kenwood	repurposed by district	Kenwood Academy Academic Center
<b>Courtenay</b>	1726 W Berteau Ave	Lake View	repurposed, sold	German International School of Chicago
<b>Dett</b>	2306 W Maypole Ave	Near West Side	vacant, sale did not close	IFF
<b>Dodge</b>	2651 W Washington Blvd	East Garfield Park	repurposed by district	CPS Garfield Park Offices
<b>Drake</b>	2722 S King Dr	Douglas	repurposed, sold	IBEW Local 134
<b>DuPrey/Von Humboldt</b>	2620 W Hirsch St	West Town	vacant, sold	IFF Von Humboldt
<b>Earle</b>	6121 S Hermitage Ave	West Englewood	vacant, sale pending	Gorman & Company
<b>Emmet</b>	5500 W Madison St	Austin	vacant, sold	Westside Health Authority
<b>Fiske</b>	6145 S Ingleside Ave	Woodlawn	vacant, transferred to city	City of Chicago
<b>Goldblatt</b>	4257 W Adams St	West Garfield Park	vacant, for sale	
<b>Henson</b>	1326 S Avers Ave	North Lawndale	vacant, sale pending	Single Room Housing Assistance Corporation
<b>Key</b>	517 N Parkside Ave	Austin	currently being repurposed, sold	The Field School
<b>King</b>	740 S Campbell Ave	Near West Side	vacant, sold	Lex Polk LLC on behalf of Laura L. Llamedo
<b>Kohn</b>	10414 S State St	Roseland	vacant, for sale	
<b>Lafayette</b>	2714 W Augusta Blvd	West Town	repurposed by district	Chicago High School for the Arts
<b>Leland</b>	5221 W Congress Pkwy	Austin	repurposed, sold	Kidz Express
<b>Marconi</b>	230 N Kolmar Ave	West Garfield Park	repurposed, sold	Camelot Academy Garfield Park
<b>Mays</b>	838 W Marquette Rd	Englewood	vacant, sold	Shepherd's Hope
<b>Melody</b>	412 S Keeler Ave	West Garfield Park	vacant, sale pending	Single Room Housing Assistance Corporation

### Appendix 3: *continued*

SCHOOL	ADDRESS	COMMUNITY AREA	SCHOOL STATUS	SCHOOL BUYER
<b>Morgan</b>	8407 S Kerfoot Ave	Auburn Gresham	vacant, sale pending	Amalgamated Transit Union Local 241
<b>Near North</b>	739 N Ada St	West Town	currently being repurposed, sold	Svigos Asset Management
<b>Overton</b>	221 E 49th St	Grand Boulevard	vacant, sold	Washington Park Development Group
<b>Owens</b>	12450 S State St	West Pullman	repurposed by district	Jesse Owens Elementary
<b>Paderewski</b>	2221 S Lawndale Ave	South Lawndale	vacant, sale did not close	MR Properties LLC
<b>Parkman</b>	245 W 51st St	Fuller Park	vacant, for sale	
<b>Peabody</b>	1444 W Augusta Blvd	West Town	vacant, sold	Svigos Asset Management
<b>Pershing</b>	3113 S Rhodes Ave	Douglas	repurposed by district	Pershing Magnet School for Humanities
<b>Pope</b>	1852 S Albany Ave	North Lawndale	currently being repurposed, sold	Chicago Housing Authority
<b>Ross</b>	6059 S Wabash Ave	Washington Park	vacant, transferred to city	City of Chicago
<b>Songhai</b>	11725 S Perry Ave	West Pullman	vacant, sale pending	Songhai, LLC on behalf of VLV Development & Financial Services Corp.
<b>Stewart</b>	4525 N Kenmore Ave	Uptown	repurposed, sold	Morningside Equity Group; Stewart School Lofts
<b>Trumbull</b>	5200 N Ashland Ave	Edgewater	repurposed, sold	Svigos Asset Management; Chicago Waldorf School
<b>Wadsworth</b>	6420 S University Ave	Woodlawn	vacant, transferred to city	City of Chicago
<b>Ward, Laura S.</b>	410 N Monticello Ave	Humboldt Park	vacant, sold	Turnstone Development
<b>Wentworth</b>	6950 S Sangamon St	Englewood	vacant, sale did not close	MR Properties LLC
<b>West Pullman</b>	11941 S Parnell Ave	West Pullman	vacant, sold, now for sale through new entity	Cook County Land Bank on behalf of Celadon Holdings LLC
<b>Woods</b>	6206 S Racine Ave	West Englewood	vacant, sale did not close	Greater Southwest Development Corporation
<b>Yale</b>	7025 S Princeton Ave	Greater Grand Crossing	vacant, sale pending	Climate Leadership Innovation Center, LLC, on behalf of VLV Development & Financial Services Corp

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