

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

SELECTIVE RENEWAL:

CHOICE, COMMUNITY, AND SCHOOL IN POST-CIVIL RIGHTS CHICAGO

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

NICHOLAS KRYCZKA

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

DECEMBER 2019

Copyright © 2019 Nicholas Kryczka

In memory of Harold Baron,

1931-2017

and

To the coalition members and staff of  
the Chicago Housing Initiative.

## Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Introduction: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberalism in the American Schoolhouse.....	1
Chapter 1: Neighborhood Schools and the Urban Middle Class in Civil Rights-Era Chicago.....	32
Chapter 2: Activists, Educationists, and Chicago’s Integration Research Project.....	80
Chapter 3: Improvising a City Without Walls: Choosing the Integration Experiment in 1970s Chicago...	110
Chapter 4: From Deseg to Diversity: Inventing Latino Education in the Segregated City.....	152
Chapter 5: Communities of Choice: Schools and Renaissance in the Third City.....	217
Conclusion: Decreeing Choice, Schooling the Ghetto.....	278
Bibliography.....	295

## List of Figures

Figure 1:	
Selective Open Enrollment in the Chicago Public School System, 1964-1982.....	7
Figure 2A:	
Out South Neighborhoods.....	37
Figure 2B:	
Black Residency, 1960.....	37
Figure 2C:	
Owner Occupied Homes, 1960.....	37
Figure 3: South Shore Commission Members Pass Flyers, 1968.....	110
Figure 4A:	
C. William Brubaker, (untitled sketch), 1967.....	129
Figure 4B:	
C. William Brubaker, (untitled sketch), 1967.....	129
Figure 5:	
Areas of Spanish-surnamed populations in Chicago, 1970.....	154
Figure 6:	
Juarez-Harrison Boundary Adjustment, May 11, 1977.....	215
Figure 7:	
Whitney M. Young Magnet High School Pamphlet, 1975.....	230
Figure 8:	
LPCA Annotation of Donald Leu, Cultural-Educational Park Map, 1968.....	245
Figure 9A:	
Lincoln Park High School Pamphlet, 1979.....	274
Figure 9B:	
Lincoln Park High School Pamphlet, 1979.....	274
Figure 10:	
Access to Excellence Parents Guide, 1977.....	283

## Acknowledgements

Before I became a historian, I was a history teacher. My sense of what it means to love history, do history, and argue about it was forged with my colleagues and students in the social studies department at Von Steuben Metro Science Center High School in Chicago. High school teaching wrapped social, intellectual, and political life into a blur of constant community. In collaboration and in conflict, on vacation and on strike, my colleagues and I wrestled with fundamental questions: Why should we learn about the past? How do we think social change happens? How do we communicate our answers with clarity and balance? If the pages that follow imply a coherent answer, my brothers and sisters at Von Steuben deserve the credit. For abetting the delusion that I belonged in a PhD program, I have to single out Ivan Rodriguez—the ultimate hype man and a friend throughout.

It was at Northeastern Illinois University where I first caught the historian's bug. Andrew Shankman deserves first mention for bringing historiography to life and for having convinced me to stick with NEIU's MA program. His modelling of the discipline endures in my practice. Mark Schmeller, Zach Schiffman, and Francesca Morgan took my research interests seriously, read my work with care, and advised me on the road ahead. The late Susan Rosa showed me what passion and rigor looked like in a college classroom.

On a November afternoon in 2012, I climbed the stairs to the Harper Café, hoping to gauge whether I had any business applying for the PhD program at the University of Chicago. Jane Dailey met with me and I have counted her as an ally ever since. As mentor, model, and chair of my committee, Jane's consistent advocacy, attentive criticism, and good humor kept me from being scared off at a dozen points along a challenging road. Jane's eye for strong, concise writing remains an initialism in my head—WWJD: What Would Jane Delete? I am in debt to

the many examples of professionalism, poise, and warmth that Jane has been over these past six years. When I first assisted for Adam Green in his Black Chicago class, his scholarly reputation preceded him, but it would take the experience of hearing him pose questions of my writing to appreciate the depth of his thinking and the generosity of his spirit. Seemingly offhand remarks from Adam burrowed their way into my thinking for months, spurring entirely new research agendas and inspiring whole chapters of this dissertation. Sara Ray Stoelinga brought the bearing of a consummate professional to every encounter that I had with her. A policy expert, an exacting reader, and a relentlessly positive personality, Sara's feedback and support reassured me that my research could translate across disciplines. Many thanks to Sonja Rusnak and David Goodwine for the countless times they helped me troubleshoot the logistics of every stage of the doctoral program.

It might have been tough to become a historian of education without any historians of education in my home institution. Fortunately, historians of education are an incredibly generous bunch, and an unofficial second committee of mentors, readers, and colleagues have welcomed me into a rich and dynamic field. It began when Elizabeth Todd-Breland met me for coffee during the proposal stage. I will always admire and appreciate Elizabeth's generosity as an open ear, a collaborator, and a civic force for good will. Dionne Danns stepped in later, giving my work a thoughtful and thorough engagement at the AERA conference, and encouraging me to finally get it out into publication. Joy Williamson-Lott continued the encouragement in her role as co-editor of the *History of Education Quarterly*, along with Kathy Nicholas and the insightful contributions of anonymous reviewers. In the context of the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, I had the privilege of extensive mentorship sessions with Tracy Steffes, Ansley Erickson, and Campbell Scribner, all

of whom went beyond the call of duty, offering insights that were somehow both expansive in conceptual scope, and applicable to the immediate needs of my writing. Tracy's willingness to share research leads helped immensely. At sessions of the History of Education Society and the International Standing Conference on the History of Education, and the Organization of American Historians, I enjoyed long conversations with John Rury, Daniel Perlstein, and Jack Dougherty, whose vast knowledge, playful intellect, and moral urgency pushed my arguments toward ambitious targets. Many others in the educational history circuit, including Ethan Hutt, Sophie Rudolph, Michael Johanek, Mirelsie Velasquez, Lauren Lefty, Jisoo Hyun, Louis Mercer, and Brittany Lewer have shared their time and counsel, shaping my questions and sharpening my answers.

Urban historians are friendly, too. D. Bradford Hunt, Ann Durkin Keating, and Robert Johnston were paper mentors before I ever met them, and once I did, I was pleased to discover that respected scholars could also turn out to be warm, genuine, and helpful people. Brad, Ann, and Robert appeared multiple times along my path, always as friendly faces, eager to offer advice, collaborate on projects, and connect me to others in the field. Other scholars of race, space, politics, and culture in the urban context have made time to read or listen to my work, improving it with every round of input. Conversations, questions, and comments from Larry Bennett, Timothy Gilfoyle, Daniel Kay Hertz, Cedric Johnson, Amanda Seligman, Joshua Salzman, and E. James West have found their way into this final product. Thanks also to all the participants in the Newberry Library's Urban History Dissertation Working Group, including Chelsea Denault and Ruby Oram. Ruby has been an especially powerful source of great ideas, and a keen teammate on multiple fronts.

While at the University of Chicago, I had the benefit of a world-class faculty and graduate student cohort, whose teaching and commentary shaped the intellectual toolkit I brought to my research. First credit goes to Amy Lippert, whose assignment in an urban history seminar began the hunt for sources that formed the base for this project. Amy is also an exemplar of college teaching—modelling both the discipline and the joy that we all should bring to our classrooms. I learned how to think hard with the late Moishe Postone and how to read maps with Michael Conzen. In UChicago’s U.S. History Workshop, faculty and fellow graduate students read and commented on my work, marking the path to what I hope became a better product. Nathalie Barton, Larry Bauer, Kathleen Belew, Mariana Brandman, Matthew Briones, Emilio de Atuñano, Julius Jones, Topher Kindell, Jonathan Levy, Naama Maor, Gregory Montoya-Mora, Kai Parker, Pablo Rangel, and especially Emily Masghati all pushed my thinking in new directions with written and oral feedback, both in workshop and beyond. Emily was in step with me throughout my time at UChicago, and our long conversations—about the work of teaching, researching, writing, and critique—gave me the sense of having a real partner in a process where one can often feel alone. It was a privilege to reach the finish line together. As a BA preceptor for undergraduate history majors at UChicago, my students became some of my most attentive readers. Special thanks to Elizabeth Dia and Elizabeth Lindberg for their many insights.

I thank the University of Chicago’s Center for Teaching for providing me a special home and a great job. Bill Rando, Joe Lampert, Kiki Zissimopoulos, Julie Hanlon, Cheryl Richardson, and Sydney Curtis have built an indispensable community in the CCT. Special thanks to Sarah Weicksel for her mentorship and partnership in the Fundamentals program, to Mary Robertson for carrying it forward with me, and to Nicole Beckmann-Tessel for her dedication and camaraderie during the final frenzied year. Conversations with Nicole always renewed my faith

that we—historians and teachers—had something unique and important to contribute to the common good.

It pays to get paid. This project would not have been completed without the fellowship grants that paid me for the time it took to get it done. I am very grateful to the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation for their dissertation fellowship and their exceptional professional development retreats. Thank you to Maria Gahan for her handling of all the logistics. Thanks are due to the Black Metropolis Research Consortium for their Summer Short-Term Fellowship, and to Anita Mechler for her coordination. Thanks to the UChicago Urban Network (now the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation) for conference travel funding, and for the community that Stephen Baker and Anne Dodge curated in the Urban Doctoral Fellows cohort. Thanks also to the Illinois State Historical Society for summer scholarship funding and to the International Standing Conference on the History of the Education for their conference travel grant. I'm very grateful to have had five years of fellowship funding from the University of Chicago Social Sciences Division. I also thank the members and leaders of Graduate Students United for their ongoing fight for our recognition as a collective bargaining unit.

It was in countless conversations across library countertops that I found my way to a good lead, shared delight in a new discovery, and ultimately discovered whether I could answer the questions I posed. The dissertation that follows represents the labor and guidance of special collections librarians, archivists, staff, and interns at the Chicago History Museum Research Center, the Chicago Board of Education, the Richardson Library at DePaul University, the Daley Library at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Municipal Reference Collection at the Harold Washington Library, the Regenstein Library at the University of Chicago, the Ronald Williams Library at Northeastern Illinois University, the McCormick Library at Roosevelt University, the

Harsh Collection at the Woodson Library, the Art Institute's Ryerson Library, the National Archives at Chicago, the Deering Library at Northwestern University, and the Archives of the Circuit Court of Cook County. I also thank the many veteran educators and advocates who sat down with me for oral history interviews. Harold and Paula Baron were my first subjects, and their lives remain a source of fascination and inspiration to me. Hal's passing in 2017 was a loss of civic proportions, and I offer this dissertation in his memory.

During the frantic, final months of writing, I had the invaluable assistance of a virtual "writers' assembly." I owe a great debt to our ambitious organizer, Nicoletta Montaner, and to fellow dissertators Jean Marie Clifford and Ella Wagner. Together, they built the sanity, solidarity, and accountability that got me to the end.

For as thankful as I am for the scholarly community that made their mark on this document, I'm even more grateful to have had so many people in my life with who had little to say about it except good luck and good job. From old friends to reminisce with (Tony, Seb, James, Pat, Tom, Ivan, Reinhardt, and Jason) to new friends to draw with (Mike, Elaine, Carlos, Clair, Calvin, Julian, and Slang) to neighbors to raise my kids with (Michael, Jeanette, Amy, Dominika, Alton, Carolina, Becky, Alex, Sylvia, and Karen), I count myself lucky in the extreme to have such a full, fun, and supportive family that I'm not even related to.

About halfway through this project, some of the issues that I was studying as history—racism, development, and urban politics—burst into my life in the present tense. As I became an active participant in local struggles for affordable housing, I struck new friendships and allegiances within my neighborhood and across the city. Thanks to Sara and Jason and the rest of Neighbors for Affordable Housing for diving in with me. Countless hours that were supposed to be spent with my dissertation were instead spent knocking on doors, strategizing in meetings, researching

policy, designing flyers, organizing events, chanting at protests, and sitting in City Council chambers. I wouldn't trade a minute of it. If there's one person to blame for pulling me out of the past and into the present, it's Leah Levinger. Leah and the dozens of coalition members of the Chicago Housing Initiative redefined politics for me, demonstrating that the energies, critiques, and commitments of the Chicago Freedom Movement might find a second life. I dedicate this project to them.

None of this—none of anything I do—could happen without Meghan Thomas. Her contributions to my scholarship and my soul are immeasurable; my gratitude for her partnership and support is eternal. The bargain we struck back in 2013 sounded simple: her full-time job would keep a roof over our head and food in our fridge; my reading and writing lifestyle would give me time for some homemaking and childcare. In broad strokes, the bargain worked. But the weekly grind was often a juggle of uneven deals, frustrated expectations, revised schedules, and simmering resentments. Through it all, Meghan modelled the patience we both needed, kept me pointed toward my destination, and kept us focused on the priorities that mattered most: Sam and Eddie. To say I'm thankful for Sam and Eddie undersells their place. I cannot imagine my adulthood without the disruptive laughter, wonder, and joy that their childhoods send careening through my life. Thank you to Ruth and Al Thomas for sharing in the joy and tolerating their son-in-law's doctoral detour. Over the past several years, Anna Kryczka transformed from being my little sister to my professional mentor. I'm grateful to have Anna there to tell me what's next around the academic corner. If I'm doing anything right as a parent or a historian, it's because my parents, Martha Barry and Marion Kryczka, instilled a love of stories, a humility before the past, and a hope in the promise of the city. Their love has been ever-present, and their approval still means the world to me. Thank you for everything.

## **Introduction:**

### **From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberalism in the American Schoolhouse**

At the end of the 1981-1982 school year, Chicago Public Schools superintendent Ruth Love published an open letter to parents, announcing that next school year would mark a new chapter in the history of public education. Although a school desegregation consent decree, negotiated between the Chicago schools and the Justice Department had triggered the new arrangement, Love explained that the demographics of the city's "majority-minority" system meant that most schools would not find their immediate ethnic surroundings altered. What *was* new was the "exciting array of programs" from which parents could find what Love called "The School of Your Choice."<sup>1</sup> Chicago's program leaned on an ascendant reform concept of the era, the magnet school, by that point thriving in over one hundred school districts nationwide, and already a familiar programming feature at dozens of Chicago schoolhouses.<sup>2</sup>

The magnet school was the programmatic expression of a broader genre of reform known as "voluntary integration." This study presents an urban case study of voluntary integration's political and intellectual history—a history rooted in the problems faced by Benjamin Willis, who held Ruth Love's job some two decades earlier. It was then, when Willis faced an aggressive civil rights challenge to the neighborhood-school concept, and when civic elites scrambled to organize a response to white flight, that the concept was born.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ruth Love, "September '82: The School of Your Choice" *Chicago Sun Times* [special supplement], April 23, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Rolf Blank, et al, *Survey of Magnet Schools. Analyzing a Model for Quality Integrated Education. Final Report of a National Study for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation* (Washington: James H. Lowry & Associates, 1983), 10.

Building from a source base in Board of Education archives, the papers of educational academics and public education administrators, the records of civil rights organizations and community-based advocacy groups, court documents, local newspapers, schoolhouse ephemera, published educational research, census data, and oral history interviews, “Selective Renewal” chronicles Chicago’s voluntary school integration efforts between the 1960s and the 1980s, interpreting their effects on political life at the neighborhood level and their consequences within civic discourses of reform and renewal. The dissertation poses three interventions in the broader historiography. First, I trace the prehistory of school choice to its roots in the era of civil rights and urban crisis. Second, I demonstrate the role that voluntary integration played in processes of spatial renaissance in the urban core of the late-twentieth-century city. Finally, I present educational politics as an ideological arena in which post-civil-rights creeds of multiculturalism were made coherent with the stratifications of meritocratic markets and shifting valuations of urban space. During the years covered by this dissertation, watchwords of the era—choice and community—shaped the intellectual framework, policy toolbox, and moral language that educational reformers brought to their work. Ultimately, I argue that these concepts generated new definitions of success for urban education, marked particular spaces with the promise of that success, and in doing so, ratified new regimes of inequality in urban education. In addition to affording a ground-level view of the contingent development of the magnet concept—an exceptionally resilient innovation of America’s desegregation era—the story told here provides an indispensable context against which the the choice-and-accountability movements of the late twentieth century ought to be understood. The ideological embrace of choice as a reformist agenda at the end of the century required the administrative practice of choice during the desegregation era that preceded it.

## *I. Chapter Overview*

Each of this dissertation's chapters covers a distinct timespan, advances an interpretation about how a change in school policy or educational advocacy occurred over that span of time, anchors the action in a particular urban space, and proposes a unique historiographic intervention. By narrating the changes in school policy as they relate to local political contests over race and property, the dissertation underscores the ways in which ideas about urban school reform and race relations were continually shaped by conceptualizations of urban space.

In Chapter 1, I visit the high point of the Chicago's civil rights movement to reveal how conceptions of parental choice, racial transition, and academic selectivity structured the strategic vision that activists and their allies pursued in their fight against school Superintendent Benjamin Willis in the early 1960s. The chapter's geographic focus is on the city's far South Side, where a core of middle-class black parents formed the front line of civil rights agitation against de facto school segregation, and where an interracial coalition of black and white homeowners began to propose alternatives to the neighborhood school. To histories of the civil rights movement, Chapter 1 offers an account of the limits of school politics as a front within social movement activism in the urban north. While the school-overcrowding issue provided civil rights activists with a powerful opportunity to mobilize a citywide, cross-class coalition of black Chicagoans in opposition to the city's political order, the activist critique of the neighborhood school also enlisted black and white parents into localized attempts to devise alternative systems of attendance and enrollment. In these formations, a more class-protective politics prevailed, as parent concerns with college-preparatory education and homeowners' anxieties about racial transition were joined to civil-rights arguments for integrated schools.

In Chapter 2, I track the role of activist researchers and academic educational experts as collaborators, translators, and promoters for the nodes of advocacy presented in Chapter 1. While some researchers elaborated their critiques of de facto segregation into systemic accounts of racial subjugation, others worked to integrate proposals for school desegregation into frameworks of metropolitan renewal and racial stabilization. While other chapters reside in particular neighborhoods, Chapter 2's spatial frame is the one deployed by social scientists as they puzzled through the dynamics of civil rights, white flight, and urban crisis. The tools they devised—open enrollment, parental choice, and racial quotas—formed an influential blueprint for programs of “voluntary integration,” instituted by Willis' successor, James Redmond, beginning in 1967. This chapter offers a contribution to intellectual histories of racial liberalism, demonstrating how sociological conceptions of metropolitan development, as opposed to psychological notions of human relations, shaped the path by which integrationist urban educational policy was made.

In Chapter 3, I chronicle Chicago's first brick-and-mortar expressions of voluntary integration, tracing the opening of the city's first three magnet schools between 1968 and 1974. With the collapse of the liberal paradigm of racial stabilization on the South Side, Chicago's early magnets opened opportunities for educators and reformers to experiment with antiauthoritarian pedagogies, novel programming, innovative architecture, and managerial autonomy under the aegis of integrated education. South Shore provides the neighborhood setting for this chapter's account of the end of racial stabilization. The experimental educational spaces of the city's early magnets afford a view of educators' attempts to square the progressive ethos of their educational projects with the imperatives of a nascent educational marketplace. Chapter 3 intervenes in histories of educational reform, demonstrating how the pressure on urban

administrators to innovate and integrate in the early 1970s opened opportunities for a younger generation of educational entrepreneurs, whose interests had shifted—away from the high vista of metropolitan planning to the cultural subsystems that structured the relations between students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

In Chapter 4, I revisit the decade between 1968 and 1978 to reconstruct the local political contexts by which the ideology of educational multiculturalism—a bedrock within the progressive reform circles covered in Chapter 3—came to incorporate Spanish-speaking Chicagoans as a nonwhite minority with a distinctive educational agenda. As this chapter portrays, bilingual education, while influenced by changing federal policy over educational civil rights, was subject to unique panethnic application in Chicago, where advocates sought to empower local enclaves of Spanish-speakers within a transitioning political order at the end of the 1960s. By the early 1980s, their attempts to bridge the space between the patronage of established political partisans, the research frames of educational progressives, the youth activism in Mexican and Puerto Rican neighborhoods, and the place-based racial conservatism of local parents had successfully assembled a legible Latino constituency around a defined set of educational programs. Pilsen provides the neighborhood setting for a story of how Mexican-American advocacy was shaped by the emerging Latino paradigm. Chapter 3 contributes an urban-educational history to the literature on the political and conceptual construction of Latinos in the American social and racial order, demonstrating the role of the Latino school reformers in redefining ethnic politics in Chicago's post-machine transition.

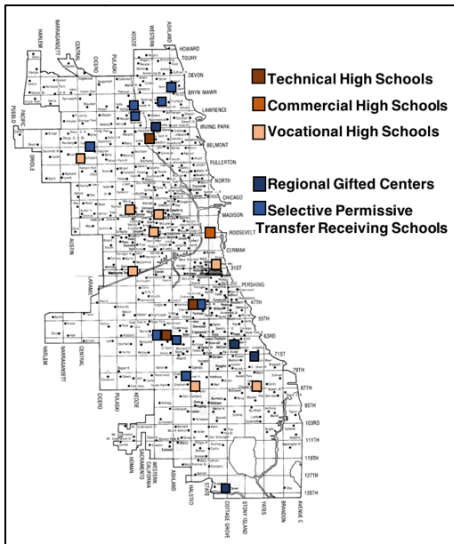
In Chapter 5, I chronicle the local conflicts surrounding two of Chicago's early magnet high schools, demonstrating how voluntary integration served to assist middle-class resettlement and reinvestment in the inner city. Two neighborhoods—the Near West and Near North Side—

provide the setting for these stories, which, in their various contingencies, reveal the dynamic relationship between the demobilization of social movements at the beginning of the 1970s and the elaboration of an entrepreneurial approach to urban renewal and school renaissance by the early 1980s. Chapter 5 contributes to interpretive debates in urban history, suggesting that venues of community-driven school reform, in addition to hosting fraught contests between different class interests, allowed discredited logics of urban renewal to be revived as projects of local educational initiative.

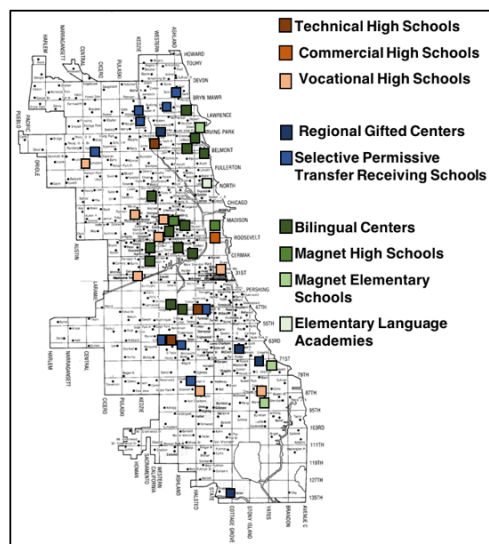
The dissertation concludes with an epilogue that narrates how the exertion of state and federal pressure at the close of the 1970s provoked a massive scaling up of the policies of the previous two decades. (The ascendance in the concept of selective open enrollment is visualized clearly in figure 1). In closing, I consider the ideological consequences of this landscape of choice-based integrated education alongside the persistence of a racialized spatial order in Chicago. In the same way that magnets taught administrators of urban education that choice “worked,” parents, children, and teachers, learned that multiculturalism worked—for some.

**FIGURE 1: SELECTIVE OPEN ENROLLMENT IN THE CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, 1964-1982**

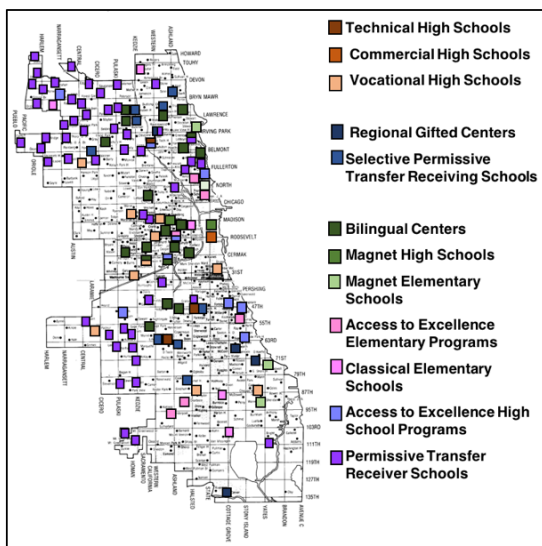
**1964-1967**



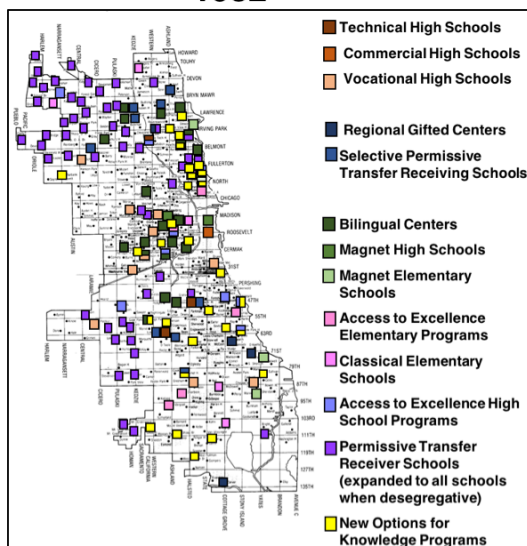
**1967-1977**



**1977-1982**



**1982**



Mapping by the author. Data and locations sourced from Chicago Board of Education Reports on permissive transfer program, bilingual programming, desegregation planning documents, and publicity documents for Access to Excellence and Options for Knowledge, Desegregation Collection, Chicago Board of Education Archives. Base map adapted from Map 2 in Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986) 78-79.

## ***II. Historiographic Position***

As a history of an educational policy and its impacts in a major U.S. city, the dissertation contributes to scholarship in history of education and urban history, but it also aspires to build a bridge between these fields and a category best described as the social and political history of ideas, inclusive of the history of racial ideology. Below, I review relevant issues in each historiographic area, and offer a summary of key interventions.

### ***A. History of Education***

The dissertation contributes to the history of education by bringing voluntary integration forward as a unique subject of study, occupying a critical place between midcentury histories of school desegregation and latter-century histories of school choice. The dissertation also adds force to the mounting argument that histories of the postwar United States need to “get schooled.”

#### ***1. Schooling, Sorting, and Choosing in the Late-Twentieth-Century United States***

Every year since 1950, American schoolhouses have enrolled an ever-greater share of American children, produced ever-larger cohorts of teenagers with high school diplomas, and received an increasingly substantial investment of institutional resources and oversight by all levels of the American state.<sup>3</sup> Since midcentury, schools have become a resonant stage for acts

---

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988) 502; National Center for Education Statistics, *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait*, Thomas D. Snyder, ed. (Washington: U.S. Department of Education, 1993) 31; William J. Reese, *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011) 219; Lawrence McAndrews, *The Era of Education: The Presidents and the Schools, 1965-2001* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Gareth Davies, *See Government Grow: Education Politics from Johnson to Reagan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

of political protest, incubators of political and social movements, intimate sites of direct democracy, and points of leverage for federal strategies of geopolitical and macroeconomic advantage.<sup>4</sup> The school is thus more than just a site at which to witness larger forces of social and political change at work; in the late-twentieth-century period, it was *the* institution that historical actors *most* expected to mediate their experience with the changes that swirled around them.

In the 1970s, as public schools became both focal points for the adjudication of racial repair, and targets of critique for those who perceived them as social failures, historians of education were recruited into similarly polarized disputes. Schools were either beneficent ladders of opportunity and expressions of democratic ideals or they were tools of ruthless capitalist exploitation and racial domination.<sup>5</sup> As scholars pivoted and debated between these extremes,

---

<sup>4</sup> As some have argued, the rising profile of schooling in the U.S. is but a sample of a global late-twentieth-century transformation—a “quiet revolution” in which mass education has independently transformed postindustrial culture’s most basic expectations about individual success and the social order. See David Baker, *The Schooled Society: The Educational Transformation of Global Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). A growing historiography of American education has begun to grant schoolhouses and education policy a central place in twentieth-century reorderings of state and nation. See Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America: Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Jonathan Zimmerman, *Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Wayne J. Urban, *More than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), esp. chapter 7; Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, *Classroom Wars: Language, Sex, and the Making of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Tracy Steffes, “Governing the Child: The State, the Family, and the Compulsory School in the Early Twentieth Century” in *Boundaries of the State in American History* James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, Steven W. Sawyer, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Adam Laats, *The Other School Reformers: Conservative Activism in American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); Leah Gordon, *From Power to Prejudice: The Rise of Racial Individualism in Midcentury America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Scholarship classed under the “revisionist” or “structuralist” camp included Michael B. Katz, *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); Clarence Karier, “Testing for Order and Control in the Corporate Liberal State,” *Educational Theory*, 22, no. 2 (April 1972) 154- 180; Harold Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality: Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); Joel Spring, *The Sorting Machine: National Educational Policy Since 1945* (New

more nuanced theoretical models emerged, which sought to capture schooling as an ongoing dialectic, in which school “never empowers without at the same time constraining...never frees without at the same time socializing.”<sup>6</sup> American educational systems, as one theoretical synthesis has it, are thus called upon regularly to resolve “a dynamic balance between two conflicting goals: providing social access and preserving social advantage.”<sup>7</sup> In this construction, the class inequalities of a liberal economy fuel a demand for those at the bottom of the social order for schools to facilitate their children’s access to social mobility, while those already in advantaged positions expect schools to help them preserve and pass on their status. Policymakers and school administrators, both subject to some degree of democratic pressure, enact policies that attempt to respond to both impulses, contingent on shifting balances of political power.<sup>8</sup>

---

York: McKay Company, 1976); Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (New York: Praeger, 1975); Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1976). Leading the charge against the critical turn was Diane Ravitch, *The Revisionists Revised: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Lawrence Cremin quoted in Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir, *Schooling for All: Class, Race, and the Decline of the Democratic Ideal* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 4.

<sup>7</sup> David Labaree has been the most consistent purveyor of this model. See David Labaree, *The Making of an American High School: The Credentials Market and the Central High School of Philadelphia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); David Labaree, *Someone Has to Fail: The Zero-Sum Game of Public Schooling* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). Quote in David Labaree, “Balancing Access and Advantage in the History of American Schooling,” in Rolf Becker, Patrick Bühler, and Thomas Bühler, eds., *Bildungsungleichheit und Gerechtigkeit: Wissenschaftliche und Gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen* (Bern: Haupt Verlag, 2013) 101-114

<sup>8</sup> For scholarship on the ambitions, limits, contradictions, and frustrations of reform, see David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974); David Tyack, *Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1890-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), Charles Payne, *Getting What We Ask For: The Ambiguity of Success and Failure in Urban Education* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984); David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering Toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Frederick Hess, *Spinning Wheels: The Politics of Urban School Reform* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1998); Jeffrey Henig, et al, eds. *The Color of School Reform: Race, Politics, and the*

For historians who track these contradictions across time, the late-twentieth-century moment stands out for its intensively privatized and stratified view of educational success. As universal compulsory education became a reality, a broadening demand for competitive advantage and educational credentials drove school managers to sort, select, and track students in performance of meritocratic ideals.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the success in putting schools at the center of the movement for African American civil rights meant that school administrators faced unprecedented state pressure to secure a regime of equal opportunity. Magnet schools—which mandated racial integration by racial quota *and* which allowed for specialized, selective, college preparatory programming—would seem a quintessential attempt to hack the access and advantage puzzle of American schooling. As this study makes clear, however, while the divergent class interests of parents were certainly drawn to the orbit of voluntary integration, magnet schools were more than just credentialing bodies or sorting machines. Voluntary integration was also seen and sold as a project of civic renewal, in which individual striving and choosing could be recruited toward ends of racial reconciliation and spatial revitalization. For education scholars bringing attention to twenty-first-century “efforts to enlist schools in a

---

*Challenge of Urban Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Kathryn Neckerman, *The Roots of Failure in Inner-City Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007); Charles Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2008); Diane Ravitch, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Diane Ravitch, *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America’s Public Schools* (New York: Vintage, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> See Joel Spring, *The Sorting Machine Revisited: National Education Policy Since 1945* (London: Longman, 1988); David Labaree, *How to Succeed in School Without Really Learning: The Credentials Race in American Education* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Nicholas Lemman, *The Big Test: The Secret History of American Meritocracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1999).

particular vision of urban prosperity,” this study offers the typical historian’s reprimand that these processes are older than they might first appear.<sup>10</sup>

In a similar spirit, this dissertation suggests that comprehending the remarkable success of the choice and accountability movements in American school reform circles of the late twentieth century requires the administrative prehistory of voluntary integration. The political and intellectual history of of charters and other late-twentieth century reform initiatives cry out for a more thorough historical accounting, and this dissertation’s endpoint in the early 1980s fails to answer the call.<sup>11</sup> However, the story of choice-driven models of racial desegregation told here should cast doubt on a number of popular narratives that characterize the late-twentieth-century reform package as a reanimated analog to segregationist “schools of choice,” a product of Milton Friedman’s propaganda machine, or the work of an agentless “rise of neoliberalism.”<sup>12</sup> While it

---

<sup>10</sup> Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara, *Marketing Schools, Marketing Cities: Who Wins and Who Loses When Schools Become Urban Amenities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 3.

<sup>11</sup> The beginnings of the historiography hover at grand scales. A polemical (if also compelling) first draft comes in Ravitch’s *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*. On vouchers, see Jim Carl, *Freedom of Choice: Vouchers in American Education* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011). Two broad syntheses attempt a comparative and trans-historical approach to school choice: Jurgen Herbst, *School Choice and School Governance, A Historical Study of the United States and Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Sigal Ben-Porath and Michael C. Johanek, *Making Up Our Mind: What School Choice Is Really About* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> For associations with segregationism, see Leo Casey, “When Privatization Means Segregation: Setting the Record Straight on School Vouchers,” *Dissent*, August 9, 2017; Steve Suits, “Segregationists, Libertarians, and the Modern School Choice Movement,” *Southern Spaces*, June 4, 2019; On Friedman, see Caroline Hoxby, ed. *The Economics of School Choice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). The positing of neoliberalism as “logic” or “project” in education reform is especially pronounced in work by education scholars Pauline Lipman and David Stovall. See Pauline Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City* (London: Routledge, 2011); David Stovall, “Against the Politics of Desperation: Educational Justice, Critical Race Theory, and Chicago School Reform,” *Critical Studies in Education*, 54, no. 1 (February 2013) 33-43. Influential recent work has reinforced an essentialist rendering of educational neoliberalism. In her account of twenty-first-century school closures, sociologist Eve Ewing credits neoliberalism with having split civic space into “dual realities”—in which black parents mourn the loss of community while school administrators make cold calculations about efficiency. See Eve Ewing, *Ghosts in the Schoolyard: Racism and School Closings on Chicago’s South Side* (University of Chicago Press, 2018). While

was absolutely the case that a band of ideologically committed economists and political scientists were pushing an aggressive market-libertarian approach to school reform by the end of the 1980s, and that choice and accountability achieved a bipartisan hegemony among urban educational reformers by the end of the century, we still lack an account in which the material basis and political stakes of these ideas are rendered at the level of human action.<sup>13</sup> The stories told here contribute to an ongoing effort to discover the historically specific contexts that allowed discrete reforms to find their way into the realm of plausibility, both for the educational reformers and administrators who enacted them, and for the urban parents who pursued them.

## 2. *Civil Rights and School Desegregation*

Scholars in economics, law, and sociology have rendered a rich demographic, ethnographic, economic, and legal portrait of the desegregation generation. On the basic question of whether desegregation has happened, there is scholarly consensus that between the late 1960s and the late 1980s, various court-ordered and voluntary measures produced a sharp nationwide decline in segregated schools, and an impressive narrowing of the so-called “achievement gap” between black and white students.<sup>14</sup> On voluntary integration in particular, policy scholars have

---

historian Elizabeth Todd-Breland invokes Lipman in positing a fully formed neoliberal “apparatus,” her account moves toward a more nuanced dialectic of “odd alliances,” narrating how a “politics of black achievement” fed and was fed by privatizing features of post-1970 school reform. See Elizabeth Todd-Breland, *A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago Since the 1960s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

<sup>13</sup> For early pushers of markets in education, see John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, “No School is an Island: Politics, Markets, and Education,” *The Brookings Review*, 4 (Fall 1986) 21-28; John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, “America’s Public Schools: Choice is a Panacea,” *The Brookings Review* 8 no. 3 (Summer 1990) 7.

<sup>14</sup> See Charles Clotfelter, *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Claire Smrekar and Ellen Goldring, eds. *From the Courtroom to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2009); Amy Stuart Wells, Jennifer Jellison Holm, Anita Tijerina Revilla, Awo Korantemaa Atanda, *Both*

documented the legislative and legal underpinnings of magnet reforms, tracked their numerical rise across time and region, measured their educative and desegregative efficacy, and presented a critical appraisal of the retreat of their integrationist mission as a result of legal and political developments beginning in the 1990s.<sup>15</sup> Missing in these accounts, however, is an analysis of the

---

*Sides Now: The Story of School Desegregation's Graduates* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2009). There is, it should be noted, significant interpretive debate concerning post-1990s trends toward segregation within and between American school districts. These disputes stem from methodological differences, but also tend to reflect scholars' preferred set of policy prescriptions. Those using indices of racial exposure and racial isolation argue that the judicial retreat from desegregation orders has marked the post 1990-era with a disturbing trend toward resegregation. For this analysis, see Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996); Erika Frankenberg, Chungmei Lee, and Gary Orfield, "A Multiracial Society with Segregated Schools: Are We Losing the Dream?" The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University (January 2003). Critics of these studies question the relevance of racial isolation indices, arguing that formulas of racial dissimilarity (also called imbalance or unevenness) reveal that the decrease of minority students' "exposure" to whites is principally a product of shifting demographic change. For revisions and critiques of the resegregation narrative from the dissimilarity perspective, see John R. Logan, Deirdre Oakley, Jacob Stowell, "School Segregation in Metropolitan Regions, 1970-2000," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 113, no. 6 (May 2008); Jeremy Fiel, "Decomposing School Resegregation: Social Change, Racial Imbalance, and Racial Isolation" *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 5 (October 2013), 828-848; Nicholas Stephanopoulos, "Civil Rights in Desegregating America," Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper No. 549 (The Law School: The University of Chicago, October 2015).

<sup>15</sup> See Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1978); Rolf Blank, et al, *Survey of Magnet Schools: Analyzing a Model for Quality Integrated Education* [sponsor: U.S. Department of Education] (Washington: James H. Lowry and Associates, 1983); Christine Rossell, "The Carrot or the Stick for School Desegregation Policy?" *Urban Affairs Review*, 25 no. 3 (March 1990): 474-499; Christine Rossell, "Controlled Choice Desegregation Plans: Not Enough Choice, Too Much Control?" *Urban Affairs Review*, 31, no. 1 (September 1995): 43-76; Claire Smrekar and Ellen B. Goldring, *School Choice in Urban America: Magnet Schools and the Pursuit of Equity* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999); Christine Rossell, "The Desegregation Efficiency of Magnet Schools," *Urban Affairs Review*, 38, no. 5 (May 2003): 697-725; Gary Orfield, "Prologue: Lessons Forgotten" and "Conclusion: Challenges for This Generation: Integration and Social Transformation" in Erika Frankenberg and Gary Orfield, eds. *Lessons in Integration: Realizing the Promise of Racial Diversity in American Schools* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Erika Frankenberg and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, "The Forgotten Choice?: Rethinking Magnet Schools in a Changing Landscape: A Report to Magnet Schools of America," UCLA Civil Rights Project (November 2008); Erika Frankenberg and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, "Reviving Magnet Schools: Strengthening a Successful Choice Option, A Research Brief," UCLA Civil Rights Project (February 2012); Claire M. Smrekar and Ngaire Honey, "The Desegregation Aims and Demographic Contexts of Magnet Schools: How Parents Choose and Why Siting Policies Matter," *Peabody Journal of Education*, 90, issue 1 (2015): 128-155.

political and intellectual contexts that generated magnets' technical content, and brought them into sustained use. This dissertation supplies a backstory.

Historians have excelled in the case study, presenting histories of numerous school districts and cities during eras of civil rights movements, desegregation, and local control.<sup>16</sup> In some cases, this literature suggests a declension narrative, wherein the most radical projects for integration are dashed on some combination of the massive resistance and eventual suburbanization of white populations, the fiscal limits of deindustrialization, and turns toward Black nationalism and community control. As recent scholarship has noted, however, the literature's "inescapable melancholy," resulting from the persistent tendency to judge all school reform by the metric of *Brown*, may be in need of reorientation.<sup>17</sup> In place of a static and monolithic post-Brown "struggle" (for integration? for local control? for school quality? for relevant curriculum? for equality? for dignity? for opportunity? for choice?), newer scholarship opts in the direction of "continuing local struggles."<sup>18</sup> Recent work has pushed these

---

<sup>16</sup> See Ronald P. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); Jack Dougherty, *More than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Christopher Bonastia, *Southern Stalemate: Five Years Without Education in Prince Edward County Virginia* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012); Gregory S. Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown: Desegregation, Development, and the Columbus Public Schools* (Ohio State University Press, 1998); Broader single-city studies have also put school desegregation in the longer context of urban decline and redevelopment. See Jeffrey Mirel, *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-81* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Kevin Fox Gotham, *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experiment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014). For synthesis, see James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), esp. chapter 8.

<sup>17</sup> Jacobs, *Getting Around Brown*, xi.

<sup>18</sup> Dougherty, *More than One Struggle*, 198.

implications into new frameworks, mapping the limits of desegregation as a program of redistribution and racial justice. In these treatments, desegregation is no longer narrated as an isolated legal and numerical history, but embedded within the political history of metropolitan development. This has allowed a productive shift in the critical assessment of desegregation's history, turning to schools' relationship "with a broad range of municipal policy areas, from city planning practice, housing development, and urban renewal plans to local and state economic development efforts and growth boosterism."<sup>19</sup> This dissertation builds on these initiatives, tracing the specific actors, motives, and moments that built and justified these relationships in the Chicago case.

Histories of school desegregation have also become important plot-points in accounts of regional and national political realignment since the 1960s. In this influential scholarship, the experience of school desegregation is key to understanding how segregation survived as a matter of residential and educational life even as segregationism quickly disappeared from politics.<sup>20</sup> Central to this literature is the notion that a neighborhood-school/freedom-of-choice/concerned-parent/angry-taxpayer language, understood across Southern and eventually national, suburban constituencies, was forged in direct local struggles to limit the extent and define the terms of school desegregation, underwriting a conservative political revival in the late twentieth century. Recent interventions in the spatial-educational history of American politics have shifted scholarly attention to new ideological and geographic settings. Work on the suburban Northeast

---

<sup>19</sup> Ansley Erickson, *Making the Unequal Metropolis: Desegregation and its Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016) 4.

<sup>20</sup> See Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), esp. chaps. 4, 5, and 6; Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), esp. chaps. 2, 3, 5, & 6.

tells how it was that while urban whites in Boston were in open revolt against busing, affluent suburbanites could lead an ambitious embrace of voluntary school integration. These “liberal, knowledge-oriented professionals” built new Democratic constituencies and political ideologies around a mix of cosmopolitan and technocratic values, all while retaining the material exclusions of homeowner community.<sup>21</sup> Other work shifts attention away from the city-suburb line that became the flashpoint in the post-civil rights era, and onto the boundaries between rural and suburban districts in an earlier, postwar moment. In the rural North and West, “the protection of traditional values and community governance” originated not as cynical cover for resistance to desegregation, but in a long-waged resistance to rural school-district consolidation—traditions which were then directed toward questions of race as the suburbs began to absorb the rural hinterland.<sup>22</sup> In moving these questions to the Democratic strongholds of the urban north, and seeking the deeper roots of the rebirth of the city, rather than suburban secession, this dissertation describes how voluntary school integration built a distinctive set of political constituencies around multicultural values in urban centers—something like a color-conscious meritocracy. Rather than assuming the rise of multiculturalism as feature of liberal political discourse, this study demonstrates the unique role played by schools in joining spatial processes of middle-class revanchism to a civic embrace of diversity.

With its focus on voluntary integration, this project adds something qualitatively distinct to the literature on the desegregation era, not least because magnets and the like have proven to be the era’s most durable innovations, pulling generations of students, parents, and reformers into

---

<sup>21</sup> Lily Geismer, *Don’t Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017) 1.

<sup>22</sup> Campbell Scribner, *The Fight for Local Control: Schools, Suburbs, and American Democracy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016) 5.

their orbit.<sup>23</sup> Although this dissertation, like the historical actors it studies, spends time tracking the technical rules and tallies that structured integrated schoolhouses, the “desegregation era” was something more than the sum of these parts. The legal framework of school desegregation shaped a vast arena of policy and spaces for political deliberation. These venues hosted a range of different activities—the independent mobilization of black citizens, the research agendas of social scientists, the political reframing of ethnic politics, the funding priorities of philanthropic non-profits, the organized activism of parents and homeowners—that had little to do with the mingling of students across racial lines. In tracking these moments, this dissertation reframes a view of the “education state” and the “civil rights state” as embedded, local features of political life, rather than a federal-administrative phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> The dissertation is suggestive of a “state

---

<sup>23</sup> By the latest estimates, roughly six thousand schools bear the magnet label or house a magnet program, enrolling close to three million students nationwide. See, Sarah Grady, Stacey Bielick, and Susan Aud, *Trends in the Use of School Choice: 1993 to 2007: Statistical Analysis Report* (Washington: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010), 4. Magnet Schools of America, *Annual Report*. See also Christine H. Rossell, “Magnet Schools: No Longer Famous, but Still Intact,” *Education Next*, 5, no. 2 (Spring 2005); Frankenberg and Siegel-Hawley, 57. Much of the literature on magnet schools tends to view the reform positively, both as meaningful spaces of interracial community and as public, egalitarian counterweights to privatized models of school choice. See Frankenberg and Siegel-Hawley, “The Forgotten Choice?: Rethinking Magnet Schools in a Changing Landscape: A Report to Magnet Schools of America,” UCLA Civil Rights Project (November 2008), 4.

<sup>24</sup> The directives enshrined in *Brown II* and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act had little in the way of federal bite until Title I of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act added \$1 billion of unprecedented education funding to the mix. The link between civil rights and education remained embedded in the Office of Civil Rights’ regulatory regime inside the HEW Office, and later at the U.S. Department of Education. As some have argued, however, K-12 education’s link to civil rights has in fact been weakened with each round of reauthorization for the ESEA. A preoccupation with educational inputs (defined as points of equal access and opportunity for students) in the 1960s and 1970s gave way to an obsession with outputs (measured by standardized tests), ascendant by the 1990s. Because the lion’s share of funding and administration of schools remained a matter of local control, however, this shift—from an opportunity regime to an accountability regime—was necessarily staggered and uneven across localities. On the links between civil rights, the Great Society, and federal education funding, see Harvey Kantor, “Education, Social Reform, and the State” *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 1 (November 1991): 47-83. “The Education State” comes in Douglas Reed, *Building the Federal Schoolhouse: Localism and the American Education State* (Oxford University Press, 2014). On the “Civil Rights State,” see Desmond King, “America’s Civil Rights State: Amelioration, Stagnation or Failure” in *Developments in American Politics* 7, Gillian Peele, et. al, eds. (New York: Palgrave

in society” portrait of governmental activity in the late twentieth century, in which particular classes of experts and interest groups defined and discovered the limits of democratic participation in local educational policy.<sup>25</sup>

## ***B. Urban History***

The dissertation contributes to urban history by placing schools at the center of late-twentieth-century cities. I respond directly to the “push for a new methodological approach that recognizes the mutually constitutive nature of public education and private housing on the metropolitan landscapes of modern America.”<sup>26</sup> The dissertation contributes to two subgenres of urban historical analysis: the racial politics of “the urban crisis” and the political economy of “the neoliberal city.”

### *1. Urban Space and Urban Crisis*

In his classic 1967 essay, Charles Haar captured the braided panoply of racial, spatial, and fiscal woes of the “urban crisis” in dystopic present tense:

The long hot summer becomes a routine experience...Police forces are expanded; they take on the characteristics of occupation armies in the ghettos. Gangs roam the streets. Whites, fearful of Negro violence, flock in ever swelling numbers to the suburbs. So do business firms, hospitals, and universities... Negro mayors are elected in more and more of the major cities, [but] black power has won a Pyrrhic victory. Drained of the institutions and businesses that once provided job opportunities, the central city survives as an angry and unstable mixture...The Negro community has captured the central city and has become its captive. The

---

McMillan, 2014). As a mostly disparaging term of analysis, see R. Shep Melnick, “The Odd Evolution of the Civil Rights State,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 37.

<sup>25</sup> On “state in society,” see William Novak, “The Concept of the State in American History,” in *Boundaries of the State in U.S. History*, James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, Steven W. Sawyer, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015) 325-350.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Lassiter, “Schools and Housing in Metropolitan History: An Introduction,” *Journal of Urban History* 38 no. 2 (March 2012) 196.

white community, safely ensconced in the suburbs, sees little reason to support municipal services for those living at the center of the metropolis.<sup>27</sup>

In the historical literature, the urban crisis becomes a symptom of both larger forces and discrete choices. On one central point, scholarship agrees: the flight of middle-class capital and white residents were not “natural” products of regional ecosystems. Unambiguous (though also often unwitting) choices by city politicians, federal administrators, urban planners, corporate managers, labor leaders, real estate agents, and homeowners were crucial to determining the increasingly unequal geography of the postwar metropolis. The variety of historical actors under scrutiny has allowed for some diversity in emphasis. Some accounts stress the concerted efforts by whites to structure and strengthen the terms of racial segregation during the era of the second great black migration.<sup>28</sup> Others highlight the incapacity of political machines to incorporate the urban poor during an era of deindustrialized job markets, shrinking pies, and devolved authority.<sup>29</sup> Vistas taken at longer timescales underscore a decades-long process of capitalist development. At the scale of the nation, these imperatives relocated industrial employment

---

<sup>27</sup> Charles M. Haar, “Thinking the Unthinkable About Our Cities: A Scenario in Four Parts” (1967) in *Major Problems in American Urban and Suburban History*, Howard Chudacoff and Peter C. Baldwin, eds. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005) 403-404.

<sup>28</sup> See Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983). In a sociological vein, see Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). For enrichments of Hirsch, see D. Bradford Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009) and Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago’s West Side* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> For the urban crisis as the failure of distributive-ethnic-territorial pattern of American city politics, see Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (New York: Pantheon, 1981); For the urban crisis as tragic irony—both built by and destructive of the New Deal order—see John Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). On political contingency in the urban crisis, see Heather Ann Thompson, *Whose Detroit: Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). On the political contexts in Chicago, see *Chicago: Race, Class, and the Response to Urban Decline* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

opportunities to the lower-wage and lower-tax climes of the South and West; at the scale of the city, they motivated urban real estate players toward an array of racially exploitive and segregative practices.<sup>30</sup>

As educational historians have lamented, the classic urban crisis literature on the is scant in its treatment of schools.<sup>31</sup> The massive scale and racial complexion of midcentury suburbanization gave American traditions of local control a new meaning and a sharper edge. The hardening link between housing markets and public schools at midcentury, it has been argued, tipped school politics away from their aspirational-egalitarian roots and converted the boundaries of school districts into “a force for division and inequality.”<sup>32</sup> In the urban-crisis/desegregation moment that occasioned the birth of voluntary integration, this recognition—that inequalities across metropolitan space were manifest both between and within schools—formed the core of a righteous urban indignation and the conventional wisdom for a new round of liberal reforms. But as I argue, even the most forward-looking attempts to build policies responsive to the knot of

---

<sup>30</sup> See Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); for a region-level analysis of such relocations, see Robert Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). For these processes as structural enactors of social isolation in the inner city, see William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). For urban underdevelopment as racial capitalism, see N.D.B Connolly, *A World Made Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

<sup>31</sup> See Jack Dougherty, “Bridging the Gap Between Urban, Suburban, and Educational History” in William J. Reese and John L. Rury, eds. *Rethinking the History of American Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 250-251. Dougherty writes specifically in reference to Hirsch, Sugrue, and Self, but also notes the lack of engagement with schooling in the classic suburban history of Kenneth Jackson.

<sup>32</sup> Ira Katznelson and Margaret Weir, *Schooling for All: Class, Race, and the Decline of the Democratic Ideal* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) 27.

space, race, and schools were unable to cut free from the black-space-as-bad-bet logic that had built metropolitan inequality to begin with.

By highlighting how planners, politicians, and parents saw schoolhouses as both a problem within and a solution to the urban crisis, this dissertation brings a school-centric focus that is lacking from the classic literature. As motive and metaphor for school reform, the tropes of the urban crisis have a history both before and beyond the late-1960s. While the civil disorders presented the unraveling of the urban social order as a punctuated series of explosive events, Chicago's schoolteachers and administrators had fought a protracted urban power struggle over classrooms and corridors for nearly a decade. For educators, the workaday problem of maintaining school discipline and student safety was intimately bound to the mounting sociological discourse of "cultural disadvantage" and the political and tactical centrality of schools to the civil rights movement. At multiple moments during the narrative presented in this project, the specter of a breakdown in social control, respect for authority, and public safety loomed behind parents, teachers, and administrators as they debated policy, fought for reforms, and undertook their daily routines. During civil rights actions in the early sixties, only a small faction of teachers dissented from Superintendent Willis' view that activists had invited a dangerous tension into their classrooms: "influencing and aiding children and youth to flaunt the law on one hand, and expecting them to respect the law and duly constituted authority."<sup>33</sup> At the end of the sixties, student activists organizing under a Black Power motif were able to push these

---

<sup>33</sup> Benjamin Willis, Statement for Press Conference, March 10, 1964, Box 2, Folder 3, Cyrus Hall Adams III Papers (hereafter Adams Papers), Chicago History Museum Research Center.

tensions to productive effect, using acts of confrontation and occupation to secure a number of institutional responses from the new superintendent.<sup>34</sup>

But political acts of social disruption in schools shared space and time with less coordinated, recurrent episodes of mayhem, gang activity, and violence in urban schoolhouses by the early 1970s. Though this dissertation's focus is not on discipline policy, it is clear that school administrators' inability to assert social control prompted a significant erosion of their legitimacy in the eyes of urban parents. To histories of black politics in the wake of the urban crisis, this study suggests that schoolhouse disorder in black neighborhoods played a major role in framing both the demand for new educational "options" and shaping the skills and tools adopted by black administrators, whose share of the system's workforce soared in the early 1970s.<sup>35</sup> By the early 1980s, some black parents could avail themselves of the opportunities provided by permissive transfer and magnets, while prominent black administrators cultivated profiles as "no-nonsense"

---

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed account of the black student protest movement of 1968, see Dionne Danna, *Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools, 1963-1971* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 61-92. On the cultural and curricular front, the Board approved the development of an Afro-American Studies curriculum, and named over thirty new schools after African Americans. See Chronicle of Race and Schools in Chicago, 1962-1976, (compilation from *Integrated Education*, June 1976), Desegregation Collection, Chicago Board of Education Archives, Chicago, IL (hereafter CBOE archives).

<sup>35</sup> Between 1965 and 1975, Chicago's system witnessed a tenfold increase in the number of black school principals. By the mid-1970s, a third of the city's district superintendents were black, along with forty per cent of its assistant principals. "Chronological Fact Sheet on Faculty Desegregation in the Chicago Public Schools," series III, box 9, folder 1000, Chicago Urban League Records (hereafter CUL records), Daley Library, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago; John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform: Chicago Public Education, 1929-1970* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 204. For black urban political classes and urban crises, see Adolph Reed, Jr. *Stirrings in the Jug: Black Politics in the Post-Segregation Era* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Cedric Johnson, *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics and Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009); Roger Biles, *Mayor Harold Washington: Champion of Race and Reform in Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018); James Forman, Jr. *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2017).

or “back-to-basics” advocates, whose policies were cited approvingly by social conservatives in their culture war against the permissiveness of the sixties.<sup>36</sup>

## 2. *Gentrification and the Neoliberal City*

By the middle of the 1970s, observers of urban America began to describe what appeared to be the opposite of an urban crisis. The ghetto had not disappeared. Nor had modernist renewal wiped clean the blight of urban despair. In select pockets of vacant or working-class turf, however, middle class urbanites appeared to be spurring a series of block-level and neighborhood-level transformations. Historical preservation, resettlement, renaissance, revival, reinvestment, and revitalization were early descriptors of the urban rebirth, but “gentrification,” which migrated from the academy to the general public over the course of the 1970s and 1980s, proved the winning term. While an assessment of the displacement consequences of gentrification proved difficult, by the mid-1980s, a scholarly synthesis began to emerge about why it was happening. The ingredients could be listed:

corporate centralization in a small number of urban cores, widespread devalorization and underutilization of inner-city property, a resulting rent gap between the inner city and the periphery, and new consumption patterns that follow the expansion of white-collar jobs.<sup>37</sup>

In place of the initial empirical focus on micro-level decisions and demographics, scholars foregrounded the economic restructurings of postindustrial transition and attended to the way that middle-class tastes constituted urban space as a cultural market. Following David Harvey’s

---

<sup>36</sup> “Getting Tough on Reading,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 9, 1976; Phyllis Schlafley, “Diploma Mill Schools Cheat Students,” *Human Events*, October 30, 1976; Casey Banas, “Tough Reading Policy Sinks Eighth Graders,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 1, 1977.

<sup>37</sup> Sharon Zukin, “Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (August 1987) 142.

view that the post-1973 crisis in global capitalism prompted a sudden and variegated series of “spatial fixes” to descend upon the world’s urban landscapes, scholarship increasingly underscored financialization to explain how the urban crises of the sixties became the urban rebirths of the eighties.<sup>38</sup> Even as industrial manufacturing lost its home in urban centers of the American Midwest and Northeast, the corporate appetite for ever-more elaborate and numerous services (legal, finance, insurance, accounting, consulting, etc.) meant that some cities stood equipped to weather (or committed themselves to promoting) the transition to a postindustrial economy. “Urban growth machine” sociologists kept the state in, stressing the fundamentally constructed nature of markets, highlighting the unanimity among elites about the need for developmentalist urban policy.<sup>39</sup> By the 1990s, scholars began to stress the planetary scope and transnational interconnectedness of these processes. From the vantage of the “global cities” literature, the luxury-gourmet-boutique-bohemian spaces of urban consumption (and the low-wage employees who staffed them) were both product of and process within a new network of international capital.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> David Harvey, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985). For an updated synopsis of his perspective, see David Harvey “Globalization and the Spatial Fix,” *Geographische Revue: Zeitschrift für Literatur und Diskussion* 3 (2001) 23-30.

<sup>39</sup> See Paul Peterson, *City Limits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Harvey Molotch and John R. Logan, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

<sup>40</sup> See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: London, New York, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Susan Fainstein, *The City Builders: Property Development in New York and London, 1980-2000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001). While “global” and “neoliberal” labels have been applied in retrospect, insightful analyses of the basic process were already afoot during the era of transition itself. See Berry, ed. *Transformations of an Urban System* (1976) and Mollenkopf, *The Contested City* (1983). For more on the neoliberal city, see Jason Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

While having benefitted from the structural-global conceptualizations, historians have complicated the top-down, economic tenor of urban renaissance narratives. For some, the complication still assumes a scheduled destination, as in calls to place “the politics of race and property at the center of a broad-based, bottom-up analysis of the long march toward neoliberal hegemony in the metropolitan United States.”<sup>41</sup> Others, skeptical of neoliberal hegemony, have tracked the incessant focus on downtown revitalization along a longer but contingent historical continuum, showing how shifting conceptions of gender, race, class, and age shaped economic investment decisions.<sup>42</sup> Scholarship in urban history is increasingly blurring the ideological lines between classic historical antagonists (Jacobs versus Moses; conservationists versus renewers; old-timers versus gentrifiers) and historical periods (pro-growth statism versus neoliberal privatism; community activist sixties versus gentrifying eighties). Recent work on New York City has traced key debates about white-collar taste-making and urban authenticity to the 1940s and 50s, while research on Chicago shows that a consistent menu of urban planning choices and political bargains between the 1960s and the 1980s secured an upwardly mobile corporate and residential future for the Loop and its adjacent neighborhoods.<sup>43</sup> The role of Latino immigrants on landscapes of American urban renaissance has also attracted attention. As one scholar has noted, “white flight from U.S. cities was for at least three decades remediated by Hispanic flight

---

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Diamond, “The Long March Toward Neoliberalism: Race and Housing in the Postwar Metropolis,” *Journal of Urban History*, 36, no. 6 (November 2010) 923.

<sup>42</sup> See Alison Isenberg, *Downtown America: A History of the Place and the People Who Made It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> On New York, see Samuel Zipp, *Manhattan Projects: The Rise and Fall of Urban Renewal in Cold War New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). On Chicago, see Joel Rast, *Remaking Chicago: The Political Origins of Urban Industrial Change* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002); Andrew Diamond, *Chicago on the Make: Power and Inequality in a Modern City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017).

to cities.”<sup>44</sup> If a city’s integration into global capital networks was one way to predict an episode of urban rebirth, its integration into networks of Mexican migrants was another. On this particular point, this dissertation argues that school politics were key ideological condensers for the social changes brought by these migrations, defining new boundaries of urban space and new categories in the racial order. By the early 1970s, Chicago had the second-largest concentration of Mexican immigrants in the country, and the third-largest enclave of Spanish speakers. As chapter 4 argues, the mobilization of Mexican ethnicity as a revitalizing force within Near Southwest Side neighborhoods was dependent on its reinvention as a Latino political interest, a category made possible by the particulars of educational civil rights.

As conceptual shorthand, eras of urban crisis and urban renaissance imply a periodization in which the latter follows the former, with the suburbs pulling and pushing middle class populations accordingly. In general, the dissertation supports the argument that drawing this line between eras of crisis and renewal is misleading. Unlike businesses or families, schools could never flee the city limits. School policymakers and educators assumed the continuity and simultaneity of uneven urban fortunes, and in the venues afforded by voluntary integration, invited some communities into the process of renewal and not others.

### ***C. History of Ideas***

At the broadest scale, this dissertation is a social and political history of ideas. At the end of the 1950s, when the action covered in this project begins, the notion that the administration and governance of large urban school districts’ curriculum, attendance,

---

<sup>44</sup> Andrew K. Sandoval-Strausz, "Latino Landscapes: Postwar Cities and the Transnational Origins of a New Urban America," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (December 2014).

enrollment, staffing, and programming would be constituted in anything but the central superintendent's office was unimaginable. By the mid-1980s, social movements, reform campaigns, court decisions, and acts of Congress had altered these assumptions significantly. Above the head of the superintendent was an expanding federal education state, new tranches of funding at State Boards of Education, and multiple strata of oversight within state and federal, and municipal bureaucratic structures. Beneath the superintendent's office was a patchwork of decentralized and devolved authority, dropped into various parental bodies, each of which laid claim to varying levels of legitimacy, often with lines of assistance running to the State and Federal education states, as well as to an expanding ecosystem of University-based education research groups and educational non-profits. Rendering some coherence to these competing pieces were two bywords of the era: choice and community.

Choice had emerged as a technical solution to the peculiar problems facing urban school integrationists during the civil rights era. Against a backdrop of white flight, residential segregation, and without a court order for mandated transfer, urban education scholars like University of Chicago sociologist Robert Havighurst advised that the city would need to rely on voluntary mechanisms of integration. Stably integrated schools, so the argument went, would be impossible to produce, unless parents were persuaded to choose not to attend their neighborhood school. In Chicago, choice came slowly but steadily, with Willis reluctantly initiating permissive transfer and selective transfer allowances for high school students as early as 1963.<sup>45</sup> In the name of increased access and “managed integration,” white liberals and black homeowners

---

<sup>45</sup> Permissive transfer was adopted as a tepid response to the overcrowding crisis in black schools, allowing transfer “permits” for students to leave their schools if class size was above forty. Selective transfer was a targeted plan to allow high achieving high schoolers to opt out of their neighborhood school in search of honors-level offerings at other schools.

across the South Side were drawn to these choice-driven programs.<sup>46</sup> Willis' successor, James Redmond, put choice-based novelties like magnet schools and educational parks at the center of his 1967 Desegregation Plan. While no one believed that voluntary methods would be enough to truly "open the city" as civil rights activists demanded, planners at the end of the sixties saw such tactics as politically feasible steps by which interracial education could achieve its first curated successes.

Community was a more slippery concept, but part of its appeal came as an alternative to the politically loaded terminology of "neighborhood" and "ghetto." Neighborhood, as both its supporters and opponents understood clearly, stood for white defense against black encroachment. Ghetto, and even its less pejorative relative, the "inner city," had unmistakably negative associations with deprivation and riot. Community proposed a more tolerant, harmonious, and participatory school unit in which the cultural lives of students and the political voice of parents were invited into the educational process. For social scientists sympathetic to the plight of the poor and the fight for civil rights, the "community school" emerged as a critique of the rigid and insensitive "four-walls school" that Benjamin Willis defended, and as a tool to reach the "culturally disadvantaged child."<sup>47</sup> The precise terms of how the community would be let into the schoolhouse were subject to debate and experimentation. Some educational progressives proposed a more culturally responsive curriculum, less "middle-class" bias, and a

---

<sup>46</sup> Nicholas Kryczka, "Building a Constituency for Racial Integration: Magnet Schools and the Prehistory of School Choice in Chicago," *History of Education Quarterly*, 59, no. 1 (February 2019) 1-34.

<sup>47</sup> On the "community school" approach, see Robert J. Havighurst, and Bernice L. Neugarten, *Society and Education* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967). For influential literature on cultural deprivation (converted to "social disadvantage" by the early seventies), see Allison Davis, *Social-Class Influences on Learning*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948); Frank Reissman, *The Culturally Deprived Child* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962); and Benjamin Bloom, *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics* (New York: Wiley, 1964).

less authoritarian pedagogy, while others sought ways of devolving school governance to parent councils or other bodies.

How these ideas came to be articulated through politics, expressed as policy, and embraced as values is the story of this dissertation. The links of causation running between these realms—politics, policy, and culture—is best rendered as an ongoing dynamic rather than a linear chain. As one helpful guide describes it, “What matters are the processes by which the flux and tensions of experience are shaped into mental frames and pictures that, in the end come to seem themselves natural and inevitable: ingrained into the very logic of things.”<sup>48</sup>

Here, a history of ideas comes close to something more like a history of ideology—some network of values, which, with a tight grip on the minds of many, renders daily social activity into common sense, while obscuring the unequal features of the dominant political order.<sup>49</sup> That race serves precisely this function in American social life has become a truism, even as scholars debate the precise circuitry by which racial ideas have been sustained during the long period after slavery.<sup>50</sup> In loosely drawn distinctions between the “material anchors” of racial ideology on one hand, and the sustaining logics of the “cultural everyday” on the other, schools have typically been seen as the latter: places where textbooks, songs, and games socialized children to ideas of racial difference and prejudices about racial groups—

---

<sup>48</sup> Daniel Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011) 9-10.

<sup>49</sup> For this patchwork definition of ideology, see Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 1991) 1, 2, 156, 23.

<sup>50</sup> For classic provocations, see Barbara Jeanne Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States,” *New Left Review*, 1, no. 181 (May-June 1990) 110; Thomas C. Holt, “Marking: Race, Race-Marking, and the Writing of History,” *The Journal of American History*, 100, no.1 (February 1995) 7.

or, after the 1940s, socialized to ideas of racial pluralism and tolerance. As close proxies to the racial values of residential property, however, schools always had a material anchorage as well as a cultural function. In the time period covered by this dissertation, the sustaining anchors for racial ideology in the urban north—segregated schools, segregated neighborhoods, and black political subordination—were substantially challenged, but not overturned. In the midst and in the wake of civil-rights era disruptions, Chicagoans, like others across the country, turned to integrated schools as places where new frames of common sense could be fashioned. As this study clarifies, however, many integrated urban schools, while breaking their connections to white property, rooted themselves in the other ascendant material unit of postwar class advantage: college preparatory education. Moreover, in an overt play for the stabilization and return of white property, the intercultural contact at these schools was pitched as the new common sense: diversity is our strength. Rather than seeing the multiculturalism of the late twentieth century as simply a retread of postwar racial liberalism, this dissertation suggests that its historical origins lie in the moment of urban crisis, when a class-limited set of urban parents, educators, and academics placed a bet that racial integration could save the city, or at least some of it.

## Chapter 1:

### Neighborhood Schools and the Urban Middle Class in Civil Rights-Era Chicago

#### Introduction

On January 2, 1962, seventh grader Tony Burroughs went to school, but didn't go to class. Instead, he and twenty-seven other students, accompanied by moms and a few dads, scaled the salt-stained terrazzo steps of Burnside Elementary into the first floor hallway, where they sat and stayed. For two weeks, the ritual continued. The confused principal set up chairs in the hallway while parents led tutoring sessions. During the third week, arrests for criminal trespass and disorderly conduct were made, only to have a local judge dismiss the case. Upon learning that the sit-in had been staged to protest segregation, the judge declared incredulously, "These people have a right—a duty—to fight segregation if there is any."<sup>1</sup> A press release issued by the parents made clear that they were ready for the fight.

...when the school board does not keep faith with the parents, it is incumbent upon the parent to protect the rights accruing to them and their children from the arbitrary and dictatorial manner of the School Board in finding any and every means of fostering segregated education within the Chicago School system at the expense of the children.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the January, Tony had become the lead plaintiff in a class action civil rights suit against the Board of Education. In a frontal assault on de facto segregation, the *Burroughs* case joined another suit, the *Webb* case, which had been brought four months earlier by some of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Anderson & Pickering, 89. *Jet* February 1, 196, 2, 16-18.

<sup>2</sup> Copy of January 5, 1962 Press Release, A Statement of the Burnside School Parents of Children Involved in the Burnside Sit-in, box 101, folder 1109, CUL Records.

very same children and parents who sat with Tony in the Burnside hallway. The sit-in and the civil rights cases are typically and correctly understood as decisive sparks that launched Chicago's civil rights movement. In addition to their place in that story, these events represent turning points in the history of urban school policy. Understanding the content and implications of the Burnside sit-in requires accounting for the community life that brought it into being. The parent activism that began at Burnside illuminates the uneven path that connected a self-protective agenda of homeowner entitlement to a sweeping critique of *de facto* segregation and educational inequity. The critique, argued in court, elaborated by activists, and shouted in the streets ultimately cohered around a fundamental insight: the neighborhood school concept was an artifact of state-sponsored racism and needed to be abolished. As unanimous as the mantra became among civil rights activists and liberal reformers, the route to an anti-neighborhood school worldview was circuitous, its premises shot through with the tensions of class and property in a resegregating city.

This chapter reconstructs how the neighborhood geography and school politics of Chicago's far South Side built a vision of integrated education for the urban middle class. In chronological terms, the chapter moves within the bounds of a well-established chronicle of Chicago's school-centered civil rights struggle, but with a focus on the political evolution of enrollment policy, I open new lines of inquiry.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the dissertation, the chapter reconstructs the source

---

<sup>3</sup> For the earliest published sources, see John E. Coons, "Chicago" in *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools: Cities in the North and West* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962) and; Robert Havighurst, *The Public Schools of Chicago* (Chicago: The Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1964); Phillip Hauser, et. al. *Integration of the Public Schools—Chicago: A Report to the Board of Education, City of Chicago, by the Advisory Panel on Integration of the Public Schools* (Chicago: The Advisory Panel on Integration of the Public Schools, 1964). John E. Coons, "Chicago" in *Affirmative School Integration: Efforts to Overcome De Facto Segregation in Urban Schools* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1967). For early retrospectives, see Mary Herrick, *The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1970); Paul Peterson, *School Politics, Chicago Style* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). The historiography typically begins with Alan B. Anderson and George W. Pickering,

material onto which educational reformers and academics (the focus of chapter 2) projected their sociological imaginations when conceiving of feasible paths to voluntary integration. While this destination lends frame and focus to the argument, I emphasize the unplanned character of the educational agenda that took shape in 1960s Chicago. Neighborhood activists, civil rights advocates, and educational sociologists made their way through a political, legal, and demographic landscape that they hoped to bend to their will, but their path was never predetermined. My reconstruction of events charts a path toward the rise of a particular genre of school reform, but it also affords views of other themes: the place of class and homeownership in the Northern civil rights movement; a place-based interpretation of interracial liberalism; and an account of the educationalization of class in an era of urban crisis. Along the way, I also reinterpret two moments within the classic narrative of Chicago's civil rights struggle: the school sit-in undertaken by parents at the Burnside Elementary school in 1962 and the aborted resignation of school Superintendent Benjamin Willis in 1963. I begin with the first of these.

---

*Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); James Ralph, *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); John L. Rury, "Race, Space, and the Politics of Chicago's Public Schools: Benjamin Willis and the Tragedy of Urban Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 39 no. 2 (Summer 1999) 117-142; Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008) 452-454; Dionne Danns, *Desegregating Chicago's Schools: Policy Implementation, Politics, and Protest, 1965-1985* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Tracy Steffes, "Managing School Integration and White Flight: The Debate over Chicago's Future in the 1960s" *Journal of Urban History* (February 2015); Mary Lou Finley, Bernard LaFayette Jr. James R. Ralph Jr., and Pam Smith, eds., *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North*, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2016); Matthew Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); Elizabeth Todd-Breland, *A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago Since the 1960s* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

## **Part I: At Home and at School Out South**

### *Defending the Neighborhood*

Burnside had been Tony's neighborhood school since third grade, when his mother, father, and brother moved from one family-owned two flat near Washington Park to another family-owned two flat on 92nd Street. The way Tony remembered it, he ran everywhere he went: to school, where he got along with his classmates and respected his teachers; up and down gangways and alleyways; across the gravel and dirt trenches of nearby construction sites for new homes where kids made forts from rugs and plywood; across his own double-wide lot, spacious enough to play strikeout against the brick wall; from base to base at Tuley Park where everyone knew that Burnside's own Comets were the best Little League team around. At age eleven, at full speed, he ran himself aground in the alley, sliding onto a piece of glass that buried itself deep into Tony's hand. Tony remembered his dad driving him south, to two different hospitals, only to be told that they would not "serve niggers," before heading north to the University of Chicago hospital where he finally got treatment. As he grew older, Tony was told not to run east of Cottage Grove, or over to Roseland, where the white kids were a threat. He learned not to run with the black girls from Princeton Park, just to the west of the construction trench for the new South Expressway, where some rougher boys had run him and his friends off.<sup>4</sup>

By the time Tony found himself sitting in the hallway of his elementary school in January of 1962, the tree-lined homeowner communities that surrounded him—Burnside, Chatham, Avalon

---

<sup>4</sup> Tony Burroughs, Interview with the author, November 21, 2016. Burroughs has shared these stories with others. See Natalie Y. Moore, *The South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016) 115-118.

Park, and West Chesterfield—had become symbolic shorthand for black accomplishment in the postwar era. On the pages of *The Crisis*, the college degrees, stable incomes, and tidy lawns in these neighborhoods were posed in purposeful contrast to the “vicious propaganda” that led whites to associate blacks with the devaluation of property and the decay of public amenities.<sup>5</sup> Since the fall of racial covenant rules in 1948, black Chicagoans of means were free to purchase their way out of the overcrowded and degraded conditions of the old Black Belt, provided that they were also willing to brave the threats to personal safety and dignity that smoldered in white neighborhoods.<sup>6</sup> By 1960, only twenty-one percent of black Chicagoans lived inside the boundaries of St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton’s classic Black Metropolis (down from fifty-one percent in 1950).<sup>7</sup> At the south end of the new, deconcentrated Black Metropolis, postal workers, bus drivers, schoolteachers, and crossing guards invested their savings and raised families in squat brick bungalows and scattered two flats (see figures 2A-2C).<sup>8</sup> Taken together, the new Black Belt, running between State Street and Cottage Grove, between 71st street and

---

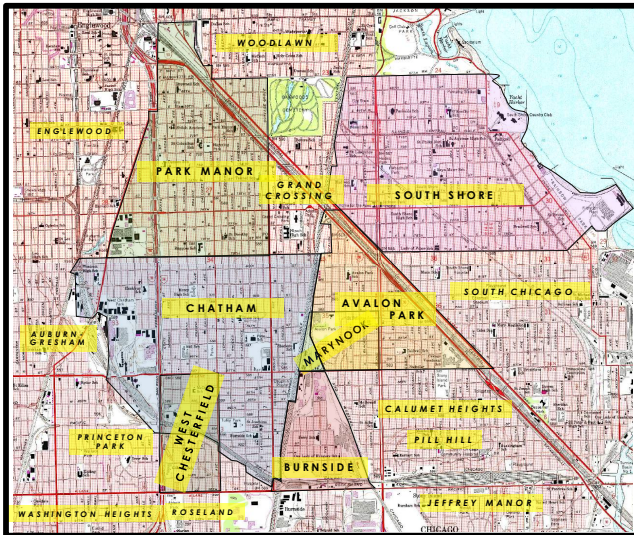
<sup>5</sup> Carl Fuqua, *The Crisis*, June-July 1959.’

<sup>6</sup> See catalogue of violence in Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

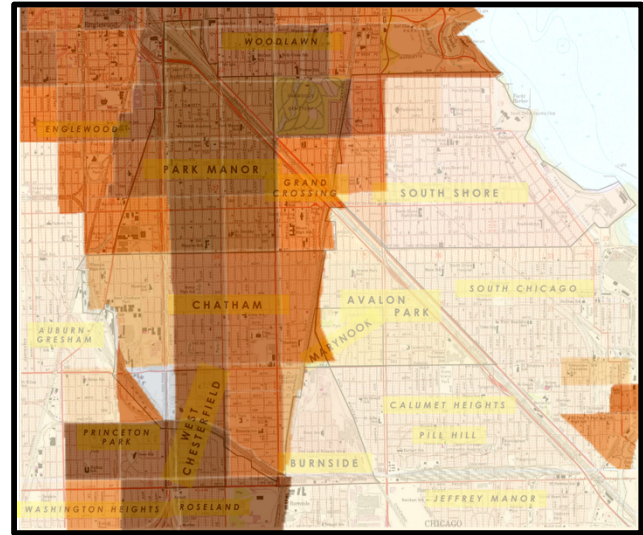
<sup>7</sup> St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1945) [1961 postscript in 2015 edition] 816-822. This shift in concentration was also due to the growth of the West Side’s new Black Belt, a decidedly more impoverished community than that forming Out South.

<sup>8</sup> See Kathryn Neckerman, *Schools Betrayed: Roots of Failure in Inner-City Education* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007) 53, 56-57. Persistence in schooling among select ranks of black Chicago had paid dividends in particular segments of the white collar labor market, most especially for black women. In addition to the salaries earned by African American men in the industrial unions, women’s work in clerical, nursing, teaching, and government work helped fund a postwar wave of first-time homeownership.

95th, hosted more government-sector employees than could be found in any comparable city community.<sup>9</sup> In

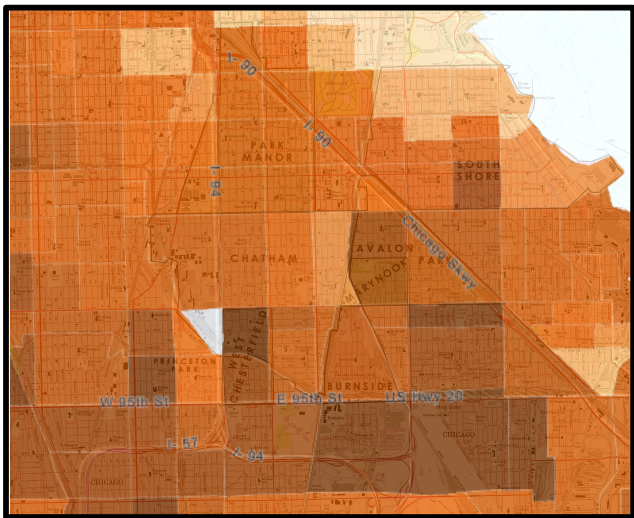


**Figure 2A: Out South Neighborhoods**



**Figure 2B: Black Residency, 1960**

darkener value indicates higher proportion of Negro population within census tract.  
Source: 1960 US Census via SocialExplorer.



**Figure 2C: Owner-Occupied Homes, 1960**

darkener value indicates higher proportion of owner-occupied homes within census tract.  
Source: 1960 US Census via SocialExplorer.

select pockets, Black Chicago’s college degrees clustered at rates two and three times as high as those found among their white neighbors immediately to the south and west.<sup>10</sup> In spacious, newly constructed modernist set pieces, big names from Chicago’s black commercial and cultural elite took up residence.

In the early 1960s, gospel great Mahalia Jackson,

<sup>9</sup> The census tracts constituting the new Black Belt of the 1960 census (tracts south of 71st street with black percentages above 80%) were also those with the highest concentrations of government sector employees in the city—well over 25%. See 1960 U.S. Census, Employment: Government Sector, *Social Explorer*, [socialexplorer.com](http://socialexplorer.com) (accessed December 20, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> See 1960 U.S. Census, Education: College Degree, *Social Explorer*, [socialexplorer.com](http://socialexplorer.com) (accessed December 20, 2016).

haircare magnate George Johnson, Soul Food Queen Helen Maybell Anglin, and Chicago Cubs superstar Ernie Banks all claimed addresses on prestige blocks “Out South.”<sup>11</sup>

Among many of the first black pioneers who ventured south of 71st street, the neighborhood schools, well-resourced and well-regarded, constituted a major draw. For those who saw the schoolhouse as a factory of American racial progress, Burnside in the year of the *Brown* decision might have seemed promising. On picture day, thirty-one black faces mingled peacefully among a class of one hundred and thirteen smiling kindergarteners. Far from a freeze-frame of integration in motion, however, Burnside’s class photos were snapshots of the opposite process, endemic across the urban North. By the time they reached eighth grade, only two white faces remained in Burnside’s class of 1962.<sup>12</sup> “Transition,” declared one early report on the phenomenon, “is the opposite rather than the equivalent” of integration.<sup>13</sup> As the schoolhouse went, so also went the neighborhood.

While the press reported white evacuations with anxious regret, and sociologists referred to these newly resegregating areas as extensions or “gildings” of the ghetto, many black residents saw things differently.<sup>14</sup> With the departure of white neighbors, spates of violence, harassment,

---

<sup>11</sup> See Krisann Rehbein, “At Home in Chatham: A Bounty of Mid-Century Modern on the South Side, Where the African-American Elite Once “Strutted Their Stuff” Newcity Design, design.newcity.com accessed December 23, 2016; Trevor Jensen, “Helen C. Maybell Anglin, 1929-2009: Restaurant ‘Soul Queen’ had long reign on South Side,” *Chicago Tribune* September 17, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> See Burnside Bugle, June 1954, Box-Schools B-F, Folder-Burnside, School Files, Archives of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago (hereafter CBOE Archives); Exhibit K, box 42, folder 1, Case File, Burroughs et al v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 63c206., National Archives and Records Administration—Great Lakes, Chicago (hereafter *Burroughs* Case File).

<sup>13</sup> “De Facto Segregation in the Chicago Public Schools,” *The Crisis*, February 1958, 90.

<sup>14</sup> Updating their view of Bronzeville in 1961, St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton noted the homeowner energy that had streamed out south from the original Black Belt, but their assessment was ambivalent. To Drake and Cayton, the new black bungalow belts were engaged in “the ritual of ‘advancing the race’,” a trope of self-interested self-improvement that they viewed with no small amount of suspicion. The fact

and property damage abated, while educational opportunities appeared to remain intact.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the territory in which black youngsters like Tony could safely indulge in the free-ranging joys of midcentury childhood was greatly enlarged. The black children that had attended Burnside ahead of Tony had been chased off or beaten up before they could ever play ball at Tuley Park. When they ran to school, they did so while ducking from rocks and bricks thrown by white kids from the railroad viaduct at 91st street.<sup>16</sup>

---

remained that most of Chicago's black residents were not thriving and the old sectors of the Black Belt were as poor and as cramped as ever. The view from 1961, Drake and Cayton argued, was a "gilded ghetto, but a ghetto all the same." St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1945) [1961 postscript in 2015 edition] 795-796. The dominance of the ghetto as analytical rubric for black residential life in pre-and-postwar Chicago, accentuated in fair housing and school integration litigation during the civil rights movement, became historiographic bedrock in Arnold Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto* (1983). Hirsch's account remains definitive, and new scholarship has elaborated the specific means by which black Chicagoans' faced both physical barriers and financial exploitation in urban real estate markets and public policy. See Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009); Andrew W. Kahrl, "Capitalizing on the Urban Fiscal Crisis: Predatory Taxbuyers in 1970s Chicago," *Journal of Urban History*, 44, no. 3 (2015), 382-401. Other recent scholarship has added nuance to Hirsch's classic account, reconstructing the constrained agency, political diversity, and class-differentiated residential development that characterized postwar black Chicago. See Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); D. Bradford Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); Preston Smith II, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Jeffrey Helgeson, *Crucibles of Black Empowerment: Chicago's Neighborhood Politics from the New Deal to Harold Washington* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); Will Cooley, *Moving Up, Moving Out: The Rise of the Black Middle Class in Chicago* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2018).

<sup>15</sup> See Will Cooley, "Moving Up, Moving Out: Race and Social Mobility in Chicago, 1914-1972" (PhD diss., Hamline University, 1999) 239. Neighborhoods with a strong record of white violence against black newcomers in the postwar era tended to be those in working-class or lower-class enclaves, but exceptions could certainly be found. See discussions of Trumbull Park and Roseland in Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*. Recollections of the transition in Chatham are inconsistent. Some recall a peaceful shift; see informants in Mary Pattillo, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999). Cooley recounts more violent episodes in "Moving Up, Moving Out," 248-252.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Tribbett (The HistoryMakers A2005.073), interview by Larry Crowe, March 21, 2005, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive.

The transition of these communities—from working-class white to middle-class black—became a point of pride for black Chicagoans who took up residence in the era of “turnover.”<sup>17</sup> The boom in new single-family home construction had not slowed with the departure of white families, and as black residents ascended to chair the various PTAs, homeowner associations, Lion’s Clubs, and block clubs in the area, the associational life of the community appeared to become more vibrant and interconnected.<sup>18</sup> Chatham’s slogan, “A Community of Excellence,” was retained and revived by black entrepreneurs and neighborhood leaders who saw their community as a leading edge of black uplift and political power.<sup>19</sup> By 1963, the 17th Ward had elected a self-declared black independent Democratic alderman on a platform of resistance to the “plantation politics” of the Daley machine.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> For memories of Chatham as crucible of entrepreneurship and “career development,” see Eric Johnson, (The HistoryMakers A 2000.027), interview by Julieanna Richardson, March 15, 2000, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 1, story 11. On Chatham as a hotbed of black professional associationalism, see Charles Tribbett (The HistoryMakers A2005.073), interview by Larry Crowe, March 21, 2005, The History Makers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 1, story 7. For memories of Park Manor as a place of pseudo-suburban idylls alongside white harassment, see The Honorable Carol Moseley-Braun, (The HistoryMakers A2002.024), interview by Julieanna Richardson, March 19, 2002, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 1, story 4. For memories of Chatham as a “high achieving” but “anal” community, see Kahil El’Zabar (The HistoryMakers A2003.072), interview by Adele Hodge, April 5, 2003, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 1, story 8.

<sup>18</sup> During and even after the era of transition, the Chatham Lion’s Club became an integrated organization, alleged by some at the time as the only interracial chapter of the Lions to be found anywhere. See “Decision at 83rd Street,” videorecording, WBBM-ch. 2, 1962. Transitions of power were not always amicable. As one West Chatham mother recalled, the remaining white members of her local PTA refused to work with the new black parents, and even kept the association’s funds under their control until the moment they left. See Jorja Palmer HistoryMakers interview.

<sup>19</sup> See The Honorable Gus Savage (The HistoryMakers A 2001. 068), interview by Julieanna Richardson, April 26, 2001, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 3, story 2.

<sup>20</sup> The alderman, Charles Chew, was the only victorious black reform candidate for alderman 1963, but seven others ran for office across the city. Though he would very soon turn toward collaboration with Daley and the machine, Chew was initially welcomed by many reformers and civil rights activists as a challenger to the “silent six,” the nickname for Daley’s slate of loyal black aldermen. Supporters joked that Chicago now had two Negro alderman, with Chew joining Leon Despres, the stalwart Jewish liberal from Hyde Park. See William Grimshaw, *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 102-104 and Richard A. Keiser, *Subordination or*

Politics in the new Black Belt also thrived on the grist of everyday life, where community was rendered in more intimate terms. Like their counterparts across America's postwar homeowner communities, Out South mothers built rich associational lives around their local elementary schools. Daily sendoffs to school and weekly schedules of "PTA this and chaperone that" structured the laboring lives and class identities for a generation of women on the far South Side.<sup>21</sup> For Tony's mom, jobs outside the home—as a candy store salesgirl, a shoe store clerk, and a crossing guard—came and went, but the PTA was a constant. At Burnside, the PTA was an especially active organization, led by local mother and doctor's wife, Alma Coggs. Having spent an earlier stint of her life in the Altgeld Gardens housing project, Coggs appreciated the value of a "stable neighborhood," where schools served as the means by which her own upward mobility could transfer to her children.<sup>22</sup> Quality neighbors made quality schools, and by all appearances, the neighbors in Burnside, Chatham, and West Chesterfield were among the best types one might want to be around.<sup>23</sup>

---

*Empowerment? African-American Leadership and the Struggle for Urban Political Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 53-54. See also various coverage of Chew's aldermanic campaign in the *Chicago Defender* January and February, 1963. By 1967, Chew had moved on to the Illinois State Senate, where he would spend the rest of his life. Meanwhile, his protege William Cousins was elected alderman of the adjacent eighth ward, securing the beginnings of a new base of black Democrats on the South Side.

<sup>21</sup> Zerrie D. Campbell, (The HistoryMakers A2003.074), interview by Adele Hodge, April 11, 2003, HMDA. Session 1, tape 2, story 2.

<sup>22</sup> James R. Ralph Jr. and Mary Lou Finley, eds. "In Their Own Voices: The Story of the Movement as Told by the Participants" in *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North*, Mary Lou Finley, Bernard LaFayette Jr. James R. Ralph Jr., and Pam Smith, eds., (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2016) 14-16. The excerpt is a telephone interview with Alma Coggs, conducted by James Ralph in 1988.

<sup>23</sup> The high hopes that Out South parents invested in their neighborhood schools was never a blind optimism, however. For decades, the problem of double-shifted, triple shifted, overcrowded and under-resourced schools had been a known and despised quantity in the Black Belt. For two decades, parents had mobilized sporadically among themselves, sought support from civil rights organizations, and reached out to their political patrons to get improvements to their local schools, without ever raising the

Beginning in 1958, however, area parents sensed that their newly achieved status was eroding. As more families moved into the blocks surrounding Burnside Elementary and Gillespie Elementary, class sizes began to creep upward, cresting above an average of forty pupils per class. With what had become a standard set of procedures in schools with rapidly increasing enrollments, district administrators cut into the privileges of space and time. Libraries, art rooms, auditorium stages, and teachers' lounges were converted to classrooms, eliminating enrichment programs. Increased staffing needs were filled by substitute teachers, and rumor spread that the school would be placed on a double-shift. Alma Coggs and the PTA leapt into action, activating the full ecosystem of concerned homeowners to demand relief. Partnering with the Chatham Village Association, the West Chesterfield Community Council, the Chesterfield Community Council, and the Vernon Park-Burnside Improvement Council, where she was also the Chairman of the Schools Committee, Coggs arranged multiple meetings with the principal and district superintendent, and organized a group appearance at the Board of Education's Budget Hearing in December of 1959.<sup>24</sup>

As neighbors in the Out South coalition understood things, their local schools—Burnside, Gillespie, Dixon, Ruggles, Neil, and Hookway—were bound together by the overcrowding problem. In their statements to the board, they suggested that the issue could be solved in the way that school superintendent Benjamin Willis was best known to solve problems: construction.

---

question of segregation. In the early 1950s, the Chicago Urban League had intervened on behalf of black parents in Park Manor, then the southern fringe of black residency. Conceding that “possible problems in human relations arising from redistricting” ought to be avoided, the League advocated shifts in attendance boundaries that would relieve overcrowding without introducing “new racial or religious groups” into existing student populations. See Park Manor Community Background, Box 101, folder 1098, CUL Records.

<sup>24</sup> See various letters to Mayor Daley, Benjain Willis, and district superintendent, Box 101, Folder 1109, CUL Records,

By the end of the decade, Willis had completed fifty brand new school buildings, forty additions on existing structures, and was in the process of acquiring over one hundred and twenty new construction sites, funded by two hundred million dollars in bond issues.<sup>25</sup> Out South, parents argued that plans for the new McDade primary school required an immediate expansion to accommodate a full K-8 facility, while new plans needed to be drawn up for an Upper Grade Center, and for annexes at Dixon and Gillespie. In the meantime, some suggested, classes could be held at the park fieldhouse, or in a local church, or in “portables” that could be installed immediately on Burnside School grounds.

Any of these would have been preferable to the double shift, which parents across Chicago had learned to despise, but which, over the past decade, increasing numbers of black parents had been forced to accept.<sup>26</sup> In addition to downgrading education to a part-time activity and extending the maternal workday, the double shift carried the unmistakable stigma of hard times and poor places. The double shift likely conjured memories and stories of the Black Belt during the Great Depression, when three quarters of the city’s black children attended overcrowded schools for fewer than four hours a day.<sup>27</sup> For Out South parents, the notion that their forward momentum would put them on a return course to past eras of powerlessness was unacceptable,

---

<sup>25</sup> See Cynthia Ann Wnek, “Big Ben the builder: School construction—1953-66” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 1988) 114; 220-221; Rury, “Race, Space.”

<sup>26</sup> John E. Coons, “Chicago” in *Civil Rights USA, 1962* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962). By 1960, it was estimated that over 33,000 students in the Chicago system attended a school on double shift. As the Urban League’s research team made clear, the double shift of the 1950s had become even more concentrated in black areas than it had in the 1930s, with nearly no white schools receiving the treatment. Along with the installation of portables, Willis’ ramped up construction efforts made a considerable reduction in double shift patterns, bringing the total students impacted down to 4,300 by 1962.

<sup>27</sup> Neckerman, *Schools Betrayed*, 88-89.

the Board's rickety procedures "coeval with the industrial revolution."<sup>28</sup> As Alma Coggs and others wrote in frustrated indignation, "THIS IS THE SPACE AGE."<sup>29</sup>

Coggs and her allies made their case as parents, citizens, taxpayers, and not least, as "homeowner-families."<sup>30</sup> As one Avalon Park mother informed School Board members, quality schools were bulwarks of "community standards," without which, she stressed, "our efforts to maintain and conserve our area will be jeopardized."<sup>31</sup> For others, the argument from privilege and property needed no euphemism. Speaking for the Vernon Park-Burnside Council, one father reminded board members bluntly, "We left overcrowded apartments to BUY our homes."<sup>32</sup> As these statements revealed, Coggs and her cohort accepted the basic premise of the neighborhood school concept. Indeed, it was because parents equated the geography of homeownership with the privileges of educational opportunity that many had moved Out South in the first place, and it was also why Coggs could summon such substantial energy through her networks when conditions appeared to be declining.

---

<sup>28</sup> Mary Grady, Edsel Ammons, and Alma Coggs to Board of Education, October 13, 1961, Box 532, Folder 3, Case File, Webb v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 61c1569, National Archives and Records Administration—Great Lakes, Chicago (hereafter Webb Case File).

<sup>29</sup> Mary Grady, Edsel Ammons, and Alma Coggs to Board of Education, October 13, 1961, Box 532, Folder 3, Webb Case File (as emphasis in the original).

<sup>30</sup> Statement of Edwin Turner, West Chesterfield Community Organization at Chicago Board of Education Budget Hearing, December 16, 1959, Exhibit E of Affidavit of Alma P. Coggs, Box 42, Folder 1, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>31</sup> Statement of Mrs. Paul L. Weltman, Chatham-Avalon Park Community Council, at Chicago Board of Education Budget Hearing, December 16, 1959, Exhibit D of Affidavit of Alma P. Coggs, Box 42, Folder 1, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>32</sup> Statement of Thomas A. Marks at Chicago Board of Education Budget Hearing, December 16, 1959 Exhibit C of Affidavit of Alma P. Coggs, Box 42, Folder 1, Burroughs Case File (Emphasis in the original).

Parents registered the decline of schools in terms consonant with their view of “community standards.” Degradations to class size, length of school day, and teacher credentials were quantifiable affronts to “standards,” but the tactics that Willis used to manage surging enrollments impacted qualitative definitions of “community” as well. When school administrators began to relieve the overcrowding at Drew Elementary by diverting its fifth and sixth graders to Gillespie, parents balked. Students from Drew, located in the midst of the Princeton Park Homes, on the west side of the construction trench for the South Expressway, were, to some, an unwelcome presence.<sup>33</sup> In contrast to the owner-occupied housing stock in Burnside, Chatham, and West Chesterfield, Princeton Park was decidedly a renter community, including one hundred and thirty units of public housing.<sup>34</sup> It was this unique affront to dignity, manifest in the inability to protect the privileges of middle-class community, rather than any specific desire for racially integrated schoolhouses, that led Out South parents to question their faith in the neighborhood school concept. To anyone with a view from Black Chicago, it was clear that the only neighborhood school boundaries that Benjamin Willis felt obliged to protect were those that coincided with the color line.

It was in this moment of frustration that the grievances of black homeowners found their fit with the argument of civil rights lawyers and activists who had trained their eyes on the most pressing civil rights question of the urban north: de facto school segregation. By 1961, the Civil

---

<sup>33</sup> Statement of Edwin Turner, West Chesterfield Community Organization at Chicago Board of Education Budget Hearing, December 16, 1959, Exhibit E of Affidavit of Alma P. Coggs, Box 42, folder 1, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>34</sup> In contrast to the area around Burnside and Gillespie, where owner-occupied units constituted between 56% and 97% of the households, Princeton Park was a community with 80% units being rentals, an especially high rate compared to neighboring communities. See 1960 U.S. Census, Housing: Owner-Occupied; Renter-Occupied, Social Explorer, [socialexplorer.com](http://socialexplorer.com), (accessed, December 20, 2016).

Rights Commission was contracting investigators to report back on what was estimated to be the single most intensive eighteen-month period of demonstration and legal protest since 1954.<sup>35</sup> Emboldened by attorney Paul Zuber's victory in *Taylor v. New Rochelle*, Northern advocates evinced new confidence that that de facto school segregation might be felled by the same standard that had voided de jure regimes in *Brown*.<sup>36</sup> As the second-largest school system and the most segregated large district in the nation, Chicago's status as a key battleground was undisputed, and local NAACP leadership had already placed the schools issue at the top of an active agenda. Lorded over by superstars of midcentury urban management, however, no one ever saw Chicago as easy pickings. On the political front, the connections tying Black Chicago to Mayor Richard J. Daley's powerful Democratic organization appeared to be strengthening, sapping insurgent voices of their power.<sup>37</sup> Right up until the eve of their sit-in, Coggs and her team had held out hope that the mayor might offer his "personal participation" in resolving their issue.<sup>38</sup> At the helm of the school system was Willis, the most respected urban school

---

<sup>35</sup> Civil Rights Commission, *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools: Cities in the North and West* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962) 1.

<sup>36</sup> On Zuber's path as a "gadfly" attorney vis a vis the NAACP's national strategy, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008) 451-458.

<sup>37</sup> In addition to the patronage that ensured that politicians of all colors would be subordinate yes-men for the mayor, Daley occasionally took more direct action to chill rumblings of civil rights militancy. Most exemplary was the sacking of Willoughby Abner as the head of the local NAACP in 1957. Opening the first front in a confrontation with the school system, Abner had sponsored the publication of a report chronicling *de facto* segregation in *The Crisis* in 1957. Abner's sudden departure from the organization was seen by most observers as Daley's retribution, orchestrated by William Dawson. See Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) 183-191; Anderson and Pickering, 77.

<sup>38</sup> Alma Coggs, Thelma Scruggs, Xenia Gray, Elmer Burroughs to Richard J. Daley, January 1, 1962, CUL Records, Series III, Box 101, Folder 1109 (emphasis in the original).

administrator in the country, the third-most highly paid American public official of any category, and a self-declared barricade against what he called “the winds of uninformed public opinion.”<sup>39</sup>

While Willis’ efforts to portray administrative competence and political independence impressed many, a contingent of activists and researchers at the NAACP, CORE, and the Urban League had begun to build a case against him. Frustrated by the administration’s refusal to provide any data on racial characteristics, researchers improvised their own “color-conscious” methods, cobbling together observation, interview, and inference to establish a set of reliable estimates. To students of the problem, the numbers supported a clear and provocative thesis: de facto segregation in Chicago had produced harms comparable to those enforced by de jure regimes in the South, and the Board of Education was doing all it could to make things worse. By the 1961-1962 school year, black students comprised roughly forty per cent of elementary schoolchildren in the Chicago system. Somewhere between eighty and ninety per cent of those children attended schools that were virtually all black. Black pupils sat in more crowded classrooms, led by less experienced teachers, in buildings with fewer special programs.<sup>40</sup> Contrary to claims that all Chicago students received an equal share of the city’s education dollar, NAACP researchers calculated that the uneven distribution of teacher talent meant that

---

<sup>39</sup> On Willis’ salary, see Charles and Bonnie Rosenberg, “Chicago Voices: Tales Told Out of School” in *Our Children’s Burden: Studies in Desegregation in Nine American Communities*, Raymond Mack, ed. (New York: Random House, 1968), 283. The quoted lines are Willis’ most infamous and repeated words, appearing in his 1954 article in the *Chicago Schools Journal*. They have subsequently been repeated in Mary Herrick, *The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1971), 425; Anderson and Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line*, 67; and Rury, “Race, Space,” 126.

<sup>40</sup> The wave of reports began with Faith Rich, “De Facto Segregation in the Chicago Public Schools” *The Crisis*, February 1958; Harold Baron, “An Equal Chance for Education,” box 89, folder 965, CUL Records; Coons, “Chicago” in *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools: Cities in the North and West*.

per pupil spending in black schools was well below the citywide norm.<sup>41</sup> On the question of overcrowding, the Urban League's research team deployed a sophisticated audit on Willis' own data, revealing that the double-shift had become a feature almost entirely reserved for black schools, and that the superintendent had substantially underreported the available classroom space at white schools. As CUL research director Hal Baron stressed to Executive Director Bill Berry,

In light of the current movement for equalization of educational opportunity and school integration, we can only conclude that this under-reporting is an attempt to disguise vacant and under-utilized rooms in white schools so that they will not be made available to Negro pupils.<sup>42</sup>

For civil rights lawyers like Paul Zuber, who had been invited to consult in Chicago, a challenge to Chicago's de facto school segregation required evidence that, at the fringe areas between black and white residential areas, Willis's flurry of attendance-boundary shifts and construction projects were being undertaken with precisely this intention.

---

<sup>41</sup> "NAACP Calls upon Chicago Board of Education to Integrate Chicago Public Schools: Releases Findings of School Survey." Dec. 10, 1957, reel 1, at 00745, Papers of the NAACP, Part 27: Selected Branch Files 1956-1965.

<sup>42</sup> Harold Baron to Edwin C. Berry, December 5, 1961, series III, box 101, folder 1111, CUL Records. Even public advocacy groups that kept their petitions within the bounds of Willis' "color-blind" frame were compelled to note the clearly uneven distribution of classroom space. As Louise Malis of the Chicago Region Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers, stressed in 1958, "a policy of flexible use" with regard to attendance boundaries and classroom utilization could go a long way in relieving the stresses of overcrowding on "less fortunate children." As a last resort, Malis concluded, the use of busing might be necessary to relieve the overcrowding issue. See Louise Malis, "Report of the School Education Committee on Vacant Classrooms in the Chicago Public Schools," box 1, folder 1, Adams Papers.

### *Arguing Against the Neighborhood*

During the 1961-1962 school year, members of the Chicago Branch of the NAACP took their first steps toward a confrontational mode and constitutional challenge. Two weeks before the first day of school, Chicago's NAACP president launched "Operation Transfer," calling on black parents to show up at out-of-district white schools and ask to enroll their children. In September, Zuber, in collaboration with the Chatham-Avalon Park Council brought the *Webb* case, with Alma Coggs volunteering her two daughters among the thirty-two plaintiffs. In December of 1961, Burnside got its last straw, when the Board announced that seventh graders would be required to leave in the middle of the year and attend Gillespie school, provoking the sit-in and the *Burroughs* suit in January of 1962.<sup>43</sup> These initiatives revealed that Chicago's Out South communities presented the constituency and geographic base for the legal challenge against de facto segregation. In court, lawyers moved the argument in two directions at once. In their demands for a systemic remedy, they advanced a radical critique of the the neighborhood school concept, echoing the perspective of movement activists, and departing from the homeowner thesis that had spurred litigants into action. At the same time, they struggled to redefine where a right to education could properly be found. In the face of violations of equal protection, attorneys argued, the court was obliged to decouple educational resources from residency and property, and instead respect parental initiative.

Announcing Operation Transfer in an open letter to black parents in August of 1963, NAACP branch president Carl Fuqua made clear that "because of the stubborn attitude of the Board of Education," it had become necessary to "strike a telling blow at Chicago's segregated school

---

<sup>43</sup> "Supplemental Affidavit of Dr. Eileen Stack in Opposition to Plaintiffs' Application for Temporary Restraining Order," box 42, folder 1, Burroughs Case File.

system.”<sup>44</sup> Armed with the data provided by research teams, Fuqua could target precisely those all-black schools that lay within a three quarter-mile to two-mile radius of an all-white school. By the NAACP’s count, forty-seven elementary schools fell into this category, and could be found wherever a predominantly black residential area abutted one that was not. As a symbolic event, Operation Transfer was a citywide affair. As a tactical effort to recruit the city’s most energized black parents as litigants for a planned lawsuit, however, the effort confirmed where the movement against de facto segregation could most plausibly begin.<sup>45</sup> On the first day of school, 160 parents of 225 black children showed up to be denied admission at eleven all-white schools. The coordination by homeowner groups in Chatham, Avalon Park, West Chesterfield, and Park Manor ensured that seven of these were schools on the fringes of the Out South black belt, with Alma Coggs leading one of the largest contingents.<sup>46</sup> Within two weeks, nineteen parents, including Coggs’s husband, signed on to sue on behalf of their children, with the sons of the Reverend James R. Webb of Chatham’s Bethlehem Presbyterian Covenant Church taking the

---

<sup>44</sup> Open Letter of Carl Fuqua, August 23, 1961, reprinted in *The Crisis*, October 1961.

<sup>45</sup> Burnside at 91<sup>st</sup> and Langley; Cornell at 76<sup>th</sup> and Maryland; Dixon at 83<sup>rd</sup> and Saint Lawrence; Drew at 93<sup>rd</sup> and Princeton; Gillespie at 93<sup>rd</sup> and State; Harvard School at 75<sup>th</sup> and Vincennes; Revere School at 72<sup>nd</sup> and Ellis, Ruggles School at 79<sup>th</sup> and Prairie, Shoop School at 112<sup>th</sup> and Laflin; Fermi School at 70<sup>th</sup> and Dorchester; Neil School at 85<sup>th</sup> and Michigan.

<sup>46</sup> The Out South schools were Perry at 91<sup>st</sup> and Greenwood; Bryn Mawr at 74<sup>th</sup> and Chappell; O’Keefe at 70<sup>th</sup> and Merrill, Fort Dearborn at 90<sup>th</sup> and Throop; Cook at 81<sup>st</sup> and Laflin; Fernwood at 101<sup>st</sup> and Union; Schmid at 97<sup>th</sup> and Greenwood. Three schools flanked either side of the West Side: Hammond sat just south of black Lawndale at Cermak and California; Orr was just north of black areas in West Garfield Park at Augusta and Cortez; and Spencer sat just inside South Austin near Lake Street and Cicero. One school, McClellan Elementary, was less than a block away from Mayor Daley’s home in Bridgeport, which must have been someone’s idea of an irresistible prank.

See coverage in “Operation Transfer Hits Chicago School Bias,” *Chicago Defender*, Sept. 7, 1961, 1- 2. At a subsequent meeting, twenty-eight area groups formed the beginnings of a coalition, calling itself the Equal Educational Opportunities Committee.

role of lead defendants.<sup>47</sup> Meanwhile, Coggs ramped up her actions at Burnside. By January, Webb and Fuqua were getting themselves arrested in support of Coggs' sit-in at Burnside. While Zuber took the reigns of the *Webb* case with the help of James D. Montgomery, local NAACP litigators George Leighton and William Ming argued the *Burroughs* case.

Once in court, attorneys were faced with the challenge of explaining both the harms that had been imposed on their clients and the means by which Benjamin Willis had imposed them. Deploying the playbook that civil rights attorneys had perfected since *Brown*, Zuber, Montgomery, Leighton, and Ming argued that their clients had been compelled by state action to attend a school based on their race, that this had resulted in their attending segregated schools, thus violating their rights to due process and equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>48</sup> However, in making their case for the threshold issue—that Willis assigned students to schools based on race—and in defining the terms of the relief sought—which was in both cases a decree enjoining Willis from exercising his power to register students—the legal teams marched in uneven step.

Confined by the very specific conditions of the Burnside action, Leighton and Ming found it difficult to depart from arguments that hewed to the neighborhood school concept. Convenience, distance, and traffic hazards were all cited as reasons to enjoin Willis from transferring students to Gillespie. Even the remedy sought was confounding, since although the complaint asked that

---

<sup>47</sup> Bob Hunter, "Judge Butler Frees 17 'Walk-Ins' In Burnside School Demonstration," *Chicago Defender*, January 18, 1962, 1.

<sup>48</sup> Both teams asserted jurisdiction for the U.S. district court pursuant to provisions of Title 28 U.S. Code § 1343 (3), which allows suit of a State for constitutional violations, identifying the Chicago Board of Education as a municipal corporation of the State of Illinois and naming Willis as its duly appointed and authorized executor of school attendance policy. Ming and Leighton also sought \$500,000 in damages.

the Board be enjoined from “enforcing...a policy by which Perry Elementary is retained and maintained as a school for members of the Caucasian race,” Tony and his classmates were not seeking assignment to Perry.<sup>49</sup> They were, in fact, asking to remain at all-black Burnside, rather than being transferred to all-black Gillespie. Leighton and Ming struggled to explain why plaintiffs claiming to be harmed by segregation would be asking to remain segregated. In the second hearing, Ming clarified that the overcrowding at Burnside, the under-enrollment at Perry, and the transfer order to Gillespie were links in larger chain of “Negro shuffling” by which Willis shifted attendance boundaries *within* black residential enclaves in order to maintain the “sacrosanct eastern boundary” between white and black attendance areas.<sup>50</sup> Were it not for these practices, the attorneys explained, Burnside would not be congested and their clients would not be facing a transfer to Gillespie. Thus, Ming argued, the transfer order was an administrative artifact of an illegal purpose, “the plan and scheme of...operating a segregated school system.”<sup>51</sup> The transfer was the means to an unconstitutional end, and had to be stopped.

While much of the clash between Board attorneys and Burnside parents centered on what counted as evidence of Willis’ “plan and scheme,” the comparison of two all-black schools pushed the question of school quality and parental choice into the discussion. In their many petitions and their complaint, parents had made explicit reference to the “overtaxed” conditions at Burnside. The Kirkland and Ellis attorneys representing the Board of Education hurried to agree with these characterizations, pointing out that as an upper grade center, Gillespie was in fact a superior and specialized educational environment. Why, but for motives of “chicanery” or

---

<sup>49</sup> Complaint, pp. 20-21, box 42, folder 1, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>50</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, p. 22, box 42, folder 2, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>51</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, p. 33, box 42, folder 2, Burroughs Case File.

“charlatanism,” asked attorney Thomas M. Thomas, would “these people cry out for good education and ask to be returned to a school they pretend to condemn[?]”<sup>52</sup> Eventually, Leighton came around to an innovative response:

The question of whether Gillespie is a better school than Burnside is a question which the plaintiffs have a right to decide upon if the assignment there to them is on a basis of race, and we say it is.<sup>53</sup>

Ming elaborated, noting that the court, in order to allow parents to assert their constitutional rights, ought to “be impressed with the attitude of these parents as to what they regard to be the best...for their children.”<sup>54</sup> In their remarks, Leighton and Ming revealed an odd implication of the civil rights argument against de facto segregation—in gaining standing as persons harmed by segregation, parents also gained the privilege to choose from among public educational options.

While Leighton and Ming found themselves arguing that children be allowed to continue to attend their neighborhood school, the dynamics of the *Webb* case afforded Paul Zuber and James Montgomery an opportunity to take on attendance area policy more directly. When parents involved in Operation Transfer were refused access to white schools on the first day of class in 1961, Zuber’s complaint alleged, they were deprived of their constitutional rights by an illegal system. In his own affidavit, Zuber tallied the various tactics that Willis used to segregate Chicago’s schools: the purposeful overcrowding of K-8 facilities; the construction of Upper Grade Centers deep inside black residential areas; the eventual conversion of elementary schools

---

<sup>52</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, p. 58, box 42, folder 2, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>53</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, p. 30, box 42, folder 2, Burroughs Case File.

<sup>54</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, p. 76, box 42, folder 2, Burroughs Case File.

into K-6 attendance centers.<sup>55</sup> Rather than focusing on any one of these procedures, however, Zuber preferred to confront the system in its totality. The “neighborhood school policy,” he declared, “is one of the containment of Negro pupils in Negro schools by means both ingenious and ingenuous.”<sup>56</sup> Even if the Board took none of the various individual actions he recited, Zuber insisted, “the utilization of the ‘neighborhood school’ policy... must of necessity, produce segregated schools.”<sup>57</sup> In this way, Zuber argued,

every school boundary line which has been drawn or altered in the school system was altered and drawn” and “every site selected by Defendants for the construction of new schools and additions to existing schools throughout the school system of the City of Chicago has been selected to further perpetuate and maintain a racially segregated public school system.”<sup>58</sup>

The presiding judge, Julius Hoffman, who claimed to “lie awake thinking about this case,” announced himself as sympathetic to the moral and civic mission of school integration. But Hoffman also appeared to have his favorites. He considered Benjamin Willis “to be a great educator and a wise and courageous minister,” and expressed frequent annoyance with Zuber during oral argument.<sup>59</sup> Hoffman was skeptical of Zuber’s capacious indictment of the neighborhood school, and had trouble imagining that a demand to transfer out-of-district might be made for anything other than reasons of individuated preference. Lecturing Zuber, Hoffman

---

<sup>55</sup> Paul Zuber, Affidavit in Support of Motion for Preliminary Injunction, p. 4 (p. 22 of case file) Webb Case File.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Zuber, Affidavit in Support of Motion for Preliminary Injunction, p. 8 (141 of case file), Webb Case File.

<sup>57</sup> Amended Complaint, p. 5 (9 of case file), Box 531, folder 1, Webb Case File.

<sup>58</sup> “Answers to Interrogatories Propounded by Defendants” filed May 8 1962 1-2 (134-135of case file) box 531, folder 2, Webb Case File.

<sup>59</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, July 31, 1962, p.9, box 532, folder 3, Webb Case File.

recalled that in his youth, if a “boy might have liked a girl in another neighborhood, or maybe the dressing rooms were more comfortable in the other school—whatever the reason, if he knew somebody of influence, he went to that person of influence.”<sup>60</sup> Here, Hoffman tipped his hand. If Zuber’s clients were simply seeking a leg up, or as Hoffman provocatively suggested, “to discriminate amongst yourselves,” then they should get better at working the levers of local politics rather than taking things to the courts or the streets.<sup>61</sup>

As the *Webb* and *Burroughs* cases moved through the courts and ultimately to dismissal by summer of 1962, confusion regarding the push away from the neighborhood school concept rippled across the black homeowner communities of the far South Side. Activist leaders in the West Avalon Community Association drafted a controversial resolution proclaiming opposition to any new school construction in the neighborhood, including a planned project at 85<sup>th</sup> and Ingleside. While its authors saw the resolution as a principled stand against Willis’ program of “building for segregation,” other parents dissented aggressively, seeing only a recipe for further overcrowding and deprivation.<sup>62</sup> While systemic arguments about neighborhood schools as agents of racial containment were legally necessary and morally inspiring, the thought of refusing educational resources in one’s own neighborhood was a harder sell.

While middle-class community groups were divided on strategy, others saw an opportunity to heighten the confrontation. In court, William Ming had hoped to persuade the judge that a restraining order would “shed some light” and “reduce the heat” that the schools issue was generating. With the court unpersuaded, the heat spread, igniting actions among the network of

---

<sup>60</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, December 18, 1961, p. 14, box 532, folder 3, Webb Case File.

<sup>61</sup> Transcript of Proceedings, December 18, 1961, p. 6, box 532, folder 3, Webb Case File.

<sup>62</sup> “Opposition To School Stirs Row,” *Southeast Economist*, November 16, 1961.

radical allies that had grown around the *Webb* case. For activists in working-class Woodlawn, Judge Hoffman's instruction to plaintiffs that they should "exhaust more remedies" was taken literally. Amassing over one thousand signatures from parents at Tesla, Carnegie, McCosh, Dulles, Fiske, Wadsworth, Fermi, Madison, and Scott schools in Spring of 1962 to petition the State Board of Education for redress, The Woodlawn Organization (TWO) began an aggressive organizing drive, with the schools question as its central focus.<sup>63</sup> In May, TWO organized a boycott of Carnegie. Over the course of the next year, TWO's organizers would join with members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) to bring continued pressure in the form of "truth squads" to monitor the conduct of the Board and the utilization of classroom space along the fringes of the Black Belt. Unwilling to take no for an answer, Zuber filed an appeal in August of 1962, spurring a year-long series of negotiations with Board attorneys toward an eventual out-of-court settlement.

At the core of Chicago's earliest civil rights agitation was a distinctively middle-class frustration with the inability to protect the educational advantage that moving to a nice neighborhood was understood to ensure. Upon making the legally necessary argument against neighborhood schools, however, a number of radical implications followed. Ditching the neighborhood school implied that the parent was someone with the right to choose where their kid went to school rather than having it chosen for them. While individualizing in tenor, the anti-neighborhood school view also suggested that if education was to be made fair, the

---

<sup>63</sup> Complaint of Segregation, Signers Rosters, 1962, box 22, folder 345, Industrial Areas Foundations Records, Daley Library, University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections and University Archives, the University of Illinois at Chicago (hereafter IAF Records); George T. Wilkins to Harold Buck, et al, Oct 25, 1962, box 22, folder 345, IAF Records.

consumerist choices that were stored in residential property might need to be disaggregated and redistributed. While Alma Coggs was hitching her neighbors' frustrations to a citywide strike against de facto segregation, parents just a mile and a half away were experimenting with another strategy.

## **Part II: From Neighborhood to Community in the Greater South East**

Just north of 87th street, Chicago's gridded matrix of right angles sheared off into gently curving cul de sacs. Fronted by broad driveways, some four hundred single-family ranches and split-levels declared themselves a space apart. Marynook, built in 1958, promised families the morphology and sociology of suburbia within the city limits. Legally enforceable covenants prohibited built-on additions or subdivision into rental units, and homebuyers became immediate dues-paying members of the Marynook Homeowners Association.<sup>64</sup>

Census takers tallied no black residents in Marynook in 1960, but white homeowners were hardly ignorant of the fact that their neighbors in Chatham, Avalon Park, and Burnside were mostly black. For self-described liberals in Marynook, the inevitable arrival of black homebuyers needed to be met with the full neighborly force of the Homeowners Association. Marynookers had high hopes for their potential as interracialists, pointing often to the fact that their neighborhood had a higher concentration of college and graduate degrees than any community in the city.<sup>65</sup> Still, liberals never slept on the notion that Marynook couldn't fall to white vandalism and violence, or to the panic-selling that had already "broken" and "turned"

---

<sup>64</sup> Terry Sullivan, "Marynook Meets the Negro," *Saint Jude's* (June 1963) 1.

<sup>65</sup> Marynook Parents "Presentation to Board of Education, September 12, 1962" CUL Papers, Series III, Box 101, Folder 1104.

other South Side neighborhoods. After soliciting expert advice from their integrationist counterparts in Kenwood, Marynook housewives like Jean Doyle and Naomi Brodkey went door-to-door as part of “public information committees,” winning hearts and minds over to the notion that black newcomers would be “pleasant, orderly people,” while praying that their white neighbors would prove to be the same.<sup>66</sup>

While they hoped that prejudice might be incrementally solved by interpersonal appeals, many middle-class homeowners in the greater South East recognized that questions of school integration and school quality required a broader, concerted effort. Like Alma Coggs in Burnside, white parents and homeowners saw schools as anchors of community, bellwethers of social stability, and symbols of middle-class identity. And like Coggs, parents in Marynook stumbled into the civil rights critique of the neighborhood school and ran with it. Over the next several years, middle-class parents in Marynook, Chatham, Avalon Park, and South Shore, seeking alliances across racial and neighborhood lines, articulated a vision what a community without neighborhood schools might look like. In invoking the bonds of interracial “community” over the rigid boundaries of “neighborhood,” they linked civil-rights arguments for

---

<sup>66</sup> Sullivan, 3. Naomi Brodkey, “They Chased the Gloom Peddlers Out of Marynook,” *New City*, December 1963. While Marynook’s interracial encounter was indeed more orderly than other Chicago neighborhoods, its first black residents weren’t exactly raving with positive reviews. A broken window and a splash of red paint greeted one family. As one black resident put it, CIT. Marynookers were not the first Chicagoans to develop a plan of action for stabilized integration in the post-covenant era. An early effort by the Oakland-Kenwood Association in the late 1940s was unable to retain white residency. More successful on the count of white retention was the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, which in concert with the University of Chicago, undertook a program that combined block-club level “orderliness” initiatives with large-sale acts of slum clearance and urban renewal. Hyde Park’s vision of class-conscious, university-sponsored integrationism became at once a badge of honor for interracial liberals, a symbol of craven elitism and “Negro Removal” among antipoverty radicals, and an object of disdain among skeptical whites outside of the “Lakefront Liberal” circuit. See Julia Abrahamson, *A Neighborhood Finds Itself* (New York: Harper, 1959); Peter Rossi, *The Politics of Urban Renewal* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); Drake & Cayton, *Black Metropolis*, 1961 postscript 820-822; Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Random House, 1966); Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*.

integrated schools with their desire to protect a college-bound future for their children and the unique anxieties of “stabilization” in a racialized real estate market.

### *Planning for Community*

In June of 1960, in his capacity as the Marynook School Committee chairman, Stanley Drigot convened a meeting of concerned parents who resided in the greater Chatham-Marynook-Avalon Park area.<sup>67</sup> The Chatham-Avalon Park Schools Committee was headed by George Reed, who, like Drigot, was a chemist and a father.<sup>68</sup> The problem, the chemists and their neighbors agreed, was the local high school. Hirsch High had become a “disciplinary barracks” rather than a place of higher education.<sup>69</sup> In Drigot’s living room, the interracial cohort of concerned parents set to work inventing a vision of “a regional high school.” The idea was cribbed from a write-up by University of Chicago sociologist and education professor Robert Havighurst in the quarterly newsletter of the Citizens Schools Committee, a longstanding liberal watchdog on education issues.

In that issue, Havighurst offered what became a trope of his view of urban education. In the postwar era, Havighurst explained, higher-income families had moved to the suburbs and unskilled rural migrants had come to the city. With the number of “culturally privileged” urban

---

<sup>67</sup> Drigot had grown up in Marquette Park, educated at the University of Chicago and Wayne State. When he lived in Marynook, he worked for GTE. “Stanley Walter Drigot, 1915-2006,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 2006.

<sup>68</sup> Originally from Washington, DC and educated at Howard, Reed was one of the handful of African American scientists who worked on the Manhattan Project during the war. Afterward, Reed earned his PhD at the University of Chicago and spent a long career at the Argonne National Laboratory, where he was working during the time of his activities in Chatham. “George W. Reed, Jr., 94” *Hyde Park Herald*, Sep. 16, 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Marcia Lane Vespa, “Chicago’s Regional School Plans,” *Learning Together: A Book on Integrated Education*, Meyer Weinberg, ed. (Chicago: Integrated Education Associates, 1964) 120.

families falling, and many “culturally deprived” students dropping out early and without a career path, city schools needed a new program of enrollment. If implemented soon, Havighurst hoped, Chicago could reverse these trends, which were both bad for children and for the city. A frank distinction between the educational needs of the urban middle class and the urban working class called for a three-tiered high school system that used ability, rather than geography, to determine enrollment. The top bracket would be a set of “large district” academic high schools, in which at least half of their students would be college-bound. Parallel to these would be a set of vocational high schools, and a “Work-Study” program for boys among the “slow learner” and “non-learner” categories.<sup>70</sup>

All summer, activists from Marynook and Chatham met regularly, in working groups and in public forum, developing the contours of a plan. The collected clout of the Chatham-Avalon Park-Marynook community attracted city elites to the table. In November, a dinner meeting brought Havighurst himself to a Marynook dining room, joined by representatives of Mayor Daley’s Human Relations Commission and the Citizens Schools Committee. While the spirit of interracial cooperation and civic commitment to public education joined the participants in common cause, the problem of student placement became an item of intensive debate. If high schools were to have no attendance boundaries, how free would parents and kids be to choose? What if they chose schools on the basis of racial prejudice, as had happened with other cities’ experiments with open enrollment? Would counselors at the elementary or high school levels be empowered to recommend or reject students? Would parents resist “compulsory placement” be resisted if they saw counsellors as condemning their children to the lower tiers of the region?<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> “The Non-Learners: The Schools’ Number One Problem,” *Chicago’s Schools*, September, 1960, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Vespa, “Chicago’s Regional School Plans,” 118.

In February of 1961, the team gave their answer in the form of the CAMP (Chatham-Avalon-Marynook Plan), a virtual reprint of Havighurst's recommendations. CAMP proposed to abolish the existing attendance boundaries for Hirsch, Hyde Park, South Shore, and Bowen high schools, replace them with a consolidated attendance area, and re-designate schools as Academic, Vocational, Commercial and Career Orientation, with a with an "open admissions" "student choice procedure" determining enrollment.<sup>72</sup>

Details of the plan revealed, however, that schools might do as much choosing as the students. The "academic" track school, "open to all students with an average or above-average record and the desire for a college preparatory or general academic program" recruited parents and counsellors into the role of social filters. The notion that the school system should have schools with specialized or selective programs was not new. Lane Tech on the North Side, Lindblom Tech on the South Side, and three vocational schools operated on expanded attendance boundaries and on an application basis. In replacing general education with categories like "career orientation," however, CAMP implied the more unvarnished reading of Chicago's class geography that Havighurst had supplied. For Reed and Drigot, these class-stratified tactics were needed "to deal creatively and courageously" with the problems of our "complex urban society."<sup>73</sup> They boosted the revitalizing and stabilizing force that the plan could have in the greater South East and stressed the care that had been taken to ensure that "the educable potential

---

<sup>72</sup> Joint Statement on Regional High School District Presented to the Chicago Board of Education Public Hearing on October 16, 1961 by the Chatham-Avalon Park Community Council and the Marynook Homeowners' Association, box 22, folder 348, IAF Papers. See also "Board Gets Plan Which Would End School Jim Crow, Cut Down Dropouts," *Chicago Defender*, October 16, 1961, 5.

<sup>73</sup> Joint Statement on Regional High School District Presented to the Chicago Board of Education Public Hearing on October 16, 1961 by the Chatham-Avalon Park Community Council and the Marynook Homeowners' Association, IAF Papers, box 22, folder 348.

dropout” would be provided for. “Low-grade” or “reluctant” students, Drigot and Reed insisted, were “of as great concern as those of the honor student.”<sup>74</sup> They would not be prisoners of the Career Orientation School, but would be free to transfer over to one of the other tracks once they had been properly oriented.

Promising “the death of the neighborhood school policy,” proposals for regional schools gave programmatic shape to the demand that the Chicago Public Schools take active steps toward integrated education. For this reason, along with the fact that it seemed to antagonize Willis, liberal and civil rights groups lined up to endorse regional school plans. On the South Side, there was significant overlap among those who opposed Willis because of his illiberal response to racial integration, those who identified favorably with the direct action of civil rights protest groups, and those who saw selective, regional school programs and racial stabilization as desirable goals. In addition to his work with the CAMP proposal, George Reed was also a member of the Chicago Committee for Equality in Education, an interracial network of activists that included rising stars in the local civil rights coalition, including Rosie Simpson, Harold and Paula Baron, and Faith Rich.<sup>75</sup> By the following year, both the Citizens Schools Committee and the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (the CCCO) released regional high school schemes for the greater South East, effectively endorsing the CAMP proposal.<sup>76</sup>

Marynook Homeowner Association president Donald Hartigan, who held a dual role as head of

---

<sup>74</sup> Vespa, “Chicago’s Regional School Plans,” 119.

<sup>75</sup> See Anderson and Pickering, 468, n 23.

<sup>76</sup> Vespa, “Chicago’s Regional School Plans,” 120-122.

the South East Community Organization (SECO) stepped up efforts to coordinate and combine plans being developed in other South Side organizations.<sup>77</sup>

*From Permissive Transfer to Selective Transfer*

Despite the substantial support that middle-class South Siders were amassing behind their proposals for regional high schools, Benjamin Willis evinced little interest in adjusting his attendance policies. As it became clear that Willis was uninterested in revamping the enrollment policies for Chicago's public high schools, Marynook homeowners began to strip their message down to its essentials. Presenting their case during a hearing the Board of Education in September of 1962, Marynook parents declared that they were "obliged to speak with a degree of candor" on the issues facing their community. While parents lauded neighborhood elementary schools as exemplary sites of high-quality integrated education, the situation at Hirsch High School had become urgent. At Hirsch, where fewer than thirty white teenagers could be counted among an enrollment of two thousand, parents declared that no white parent would submit their child to such "an abnormal social environment."<sup>78</sup> Setting aside the community-scale visions of the CAMP proposal, parents in the Hirsch attendance area now petitioned to be allowed to send their children to Hyde Park High School on a case-by-case allowance. At Hyde Park, black

---

<sup>77</sup> Policy Statement of SECO Schools Committee, March 1, 1962, box 2, folder 1, South Shore Commission Records, Chicago History Museum Research Center (hereafter SSC records); South East Community Organization's Presentation to the Board of Education Budget Hearing, September 19, 1962, box 2, folder 1, SSC Records.

<sup>78</sup> Again, abnormality was in the eye of the beholder. Fannie Rushing, a black student at Hirsch during the era of its transition, recalled it as the "worst experience of her life," but it was the violent racism of white students and the degrading prejudice of white teachers, not changing ratios, that made things unbearable. Rushing's recollections of her black classmates, who mocked her activism, bookishness, and unstraightened hairdo, were only a bit better. Park Manor Fannie Rushing (The HistoryMakers A2003.288), interview by Larry Crowe, 12/05/2003, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 2, story 6. <Accessed Jan 27, 2017>.

students outnumbered whites by large margins, but the academic program, including diverse offerings in foreign languages, honors classes in every subject, and college-credit opportunities by way of A.P. classes, signaled the high caliber sought by parents in a college-focused community. In asking to enroll their children in a majority black high school, a request which they believed most white Chicagoans could scarcely imagine, Marynook parents presented their bonafides as racially enlightened citizens. But their proposal was also a threat: unless “college preparatory education of the highest order” was made available, they would regrettably have to leave for another school district, precipitating the racial “turnover” yet another South Side neighborhood.<sup>79</sup> By October of 1962, the Board had appointed a special committee to review the Marynook proposal. In his report in November, Board member Bernard Friedman, another research chemist and South Shore resident, endorsed a “experimental” version of the plan, in which the basic premises of voluntary transfer might be tested on a limited basis. Friedman affirmed the goals that proponents of regional plans and voluntary transfer claimed to offer: stably integrated neighborhoods, improved utilization of staff and resources, and the maximization of individual student potential. Echoing the growing critique of the neighborhood school concept, Friedman asserted, these goals were routinely thwarted by the “rigidity of plans based on strictly geographical considerations.”<sup>80</sup>

While the Board warmed to proposals for selective integration, the direct action movement centered on overcrowding that Alma Coggs had initiated at Burnside expanded, thriving amidst a thicket of neighborhood organizations, clergy, student activists, and civil rights groups. In

---

<sup>79</sup> “Presentation to Board of Education, September 12, 1962,” Series III, box 101, folder 1101, CUL Papers.

<sup>80</sup> Citizens Schools Committee Report, (December 1962) 3-4, box 22, folder 345, IAF Records.

response, Willis initiated a tentative “permissive transfer plan” in which fifth through eighth grade students who attended schools with a class size over forty could apply for a transfer to designated schools with a class size under thirty and within a four-mile radius, with no provisions made for transportation. When only a few parents at the seven most overcrowded schools applied for transfers, Willis took it as proof that Chicagoans, black and white, accepted the neighborhood school as their preferred unit of educational management.<sup>81</sup> During public comment sessions at Board of Education hearings in November and December of 1962, dozens of citizen groups said otherwise, demonstrating the work that had been done in shattering the sanctity of the neighborhood school. Parents concerned with overcrowding at Oglesby announced that it was “time to stop building for what we presume must be containment.”<sup>82</sup> Spokesmen for the Independent Voters of Illinois stressed that far from an acceptance of the neighborhood school, black parents’ reluctance to transfer showed their fear for their children’s safety in white neighborhoods who lacked “adequate preparation” for integration. NAACP representatives railed against Willis’ maintenance of the “so-called neighborhood school policy,” and labelled the permissive transfer plan “a farce and a disgrace.”<sup>83</sup> Others, including the Urban League, called for more aggressive open-transfer programs and funding for student transportation.<sup>84</sup> Even the Chicago Teachers’ Union, which had previously supported Willis’

---

<sup>81</sup> In October of 1962, seven schools had average class sizes over forty: Pulaski, Oglesby, 72<sup>nd</sup> and Sangamon, Delano, Scott, Wadsworth, and Hale. See Citizen Schools Committee Report, (November 1962), box 22, folder 345, IAF Records.

<sup>82</sup> “Citizen Testimony On School Integration,” *Integrated Education* (January 1963) 22.

<sup>83</sup> “Citizen Testimony On School Integration,” *Integrated Education* (January 1963) 22.

<sup>84</sup> “School Budget Hearing,” *Chicago’s Schools*, vol. XXIX no. 2 (January 1963) 2; “Statement by H.B. Law, President Chicago Urban League to the School Policy Hearing of the Chicago Board of Education, November 19, 1962, box 22, folder 345, IAF Records.

color-blind approach and held a more generous view of Willis' permissive transfer program, announced that "neighborhood school policy should not be used to segregate" and called for a policy that would allow "the transfer of students as individuals," so long as the transfers did not also contribute to segregation.<sup>85</sup>

The summer of 1963 proved a critical moment for registering the impact that Chicago's new school-protest culture was having on the broader racial politics of the city. On the evening news, the racial backlash of the white South was in full force.<sup>86</sup> On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the NAACP met in Chicago for its national convention, and when Richard J. Daley spoke before the body, his mention of Chicago as a place with "no ghettos" was jeered and rebuked directly by delegates. In a subsequent parade through the streets, Daley had hoped to make a visible gesture of solidarity with moderate civil rights leaders. Instead, protesters descended on the event, heckling Daley and shouting down the black ministers who accompanied him. Increased participation by members of the CORE further widened the scope of civil rights agitation that summer, protesting at hospitals, shopping centers, and corporations, in addition to regular sit-ins at the Board of Education.<sup>87</sup>

As a vehicle for the critique of de facto segregation, the confrontation with Benjamin Willis proved exceptionally effective. At pickets and lie-ins across the city, the inequities tallied by researchers and the arguments put forward by attorneys were converted into snappy, enduring

---

<sup>85</sup> Chicago Teachers Union Position on Human Relations Within Chicago Public Schools, June 8, 1962, box 1, folder 2, Adams Papers.

<sup>86</sup> Anderson and Pickering, 106-110. Medgar Evers had been assassinated; Governor George Wallace had made his stand for white supremacy at the University of Alabama; and Bull Connor had unleashed the full force of police dogs and fire hoses on children in Birmingham.

<sup>87</sup> Anderson and Pickering, 111-113.

slogans. “Willis=Wallace” summed up Chicago activists’ equation of Northern and Southern segregationism. By the end of the summer, three demountable mobile classroom units—the same kind that Burnside parents had politely requested in 1959—had been burned in protest. For generations, the metal trailers would be called “Willis Wagons,” and the summer of 1963 would be recalled as a moment of black awakening in Chicago.

### *Choosing to Transfer*

In mid-August of 1963, while increasingly militant protests escalated into physical clashes with police, Superintendent Willis presented plans for a “selective permissive transfer program.”<sup>88</sup> The program, which Willis claimed to have been developing with staff since the beginning of the year, authorized transfer permits for high school students who ranked in the top five per cent of academic achievement at their schools. Characteristically, Willis presented his plan as an act of prudent administrative expertise, unrelated to any parental pressure or community proposal, and ought not be mistaken for anything resembling a “regional high school” plan. Having recently shifted to an electronically processed citywide battery of standardized tests, Willis explained, district and subdistrict administrators stood uniquely positioned to identify the highest achieving students in the system. This data, affirmed Willis, would allow educators to maximize one of the primary goals of the Chicago schools: “to help each child become all that he is capable of becoming” in accordance with “the changing needs of youth and of society.”<sup>89</sup> By clustering high achieving students at particular high schools,

---

<sup>88</sup> The protests centered around a vacant lot at 73rd and Lowe, where an entire temporary school was being constructed out of demountable units. Demonstrators departed from the rules of non-violent direct action, blocking trucks, chaining themselves to bulldozers, cursing and throwing stones at police.

<sup>89</sup> Benjamin Willis, “A Plan for the Selective, Permissive Transfer for Educational Reasons of Students of High Academic Ability Now Enrolled in Selected General High Schools” (August 14, 1963) in Case File,

teachers might have the critical mass of “teachable groups” to deliver fully on new college preparatory initiatives, like the Advanced Placement program.<sup>90</sup>

By the view of some observers, Chicago’s efforts at developing its most talented students had been slow in coming, especially when compared to the expanding offerings being boasted of in the surrounding suburbs. By 1960, one hundred elementary schools and thirty-seven high schools in Chicago claimed to offer a programs for “gifted” students, but the quality of such designations were judged spotty at best.<sup>91</sup> The city’s best-known outreach to high achievers was the “100 program,” which was mainly a series of recognitions for top achieving high school students, culminating with two annual dinners hosted by the *Chicago Tribune*. The proposals and petitions emitting from the far South Side joined a growing pressure on school administrators to professionalize and systematize the means by which the nation’s best and brightest would be identified and prepared for careers that required advanced degrees and specialized skills. As experts advised, education at all levels—college preparatory, technical, and vocational—could benefit from more rigorous screening and tracking processes. At the national level, the Office of Health, Education, and Welfare’s Panel of Consultants on

---

*McCormick etc. et al v Benjamin J. Willis*, Superior Court of Cook County, No. 63 S 26857, Archives Department of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, 30-31 (hereafter *McCormick* Case File).

<sup>90</sup> Initiated as a pilot program at seven U.S. high schools in 1952 with funding from the Ford Foundation, the Advanced Placement program was scaled up rapidly after 1955 under the stewardship of the College Entrance Examination Board. See Eric Rothschild, “Four Decades of the Advanced Placement Program,” *The History Teacher*, 32 no 2 (Feb 1999). In the Chicago metropolitan area, Evanston Township High School was among the first to pilot the program, and AP quickly became a standard feature of the suburban high school experience. By 1963, Chicago’s system counted just over 1600 students enrolled in AP. See “Chicago Schools Offer Learning at Seven Levels,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 3, 1963, 4. See also Gordon Gould, “Our Bright Kids Get a Break” *Chicago Tribune* April 20, 1958, C24.

<sup>91</sup> Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers, “Explanation of the Action Platform 1958-1959, Chicago Region,” 18 Series III box 101 folder 1104, CUL Records; Clay Gowran, “Schools Gear Studies for Talented: But Programs Are ‘Hit or Miss’ Affairs,” *Chicago Tribune* March 4, 1959, 16.

Vocational Education, chaired by Benjamin Willis, spread the word that vocational schools could not be the “trade schools” of yesteryear. The type of jobs that these technical educational tracks opened up were highly competitive and constituted “the most rapidly expanding occupations.”<sup>92</sup> In 1963, the Illinois legislature appropriated 6.75 million dollars to fund pilot programs for gifted students.<sup>93</sup> Within a year, four regional gifted demonstration centers had been opened in existing school facilities, where teachers were encouraged to experiment with a variety of novel teaching methods, including the “ungraded curriculum,” the Junior Great Books Program, and “individualized instruction.”<sup>94</sup>

In linking his new initiative to other programs for high achievers, Willis presented the selective permissive transfer program as unconnected to the civil rights battle roiling the city. Available sources deny insight into Willis’ full range of motives, but one can imagine a more cynical political calculus. While making a quiet concession to the notion that some black students may have been ill-served by their current school environments, the plan’s targeting of the “talented” was well-designed to drive a wedge between those among the black middle class whose activism had revealed a desire to protect a set of tenuous advantages, and those in the activist core of the movement who sought to upset the entire chain of clientelist paternalism that characterized black politics in Chicago. What followed revealed the degree to which the Civil Rights movement had activated new political formations, as the transfer program became an

---

<sup>92</sup> *Education for a Changing World of Work: Summary Report of the Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education requested by the President of the United States*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962).

<sup>93</sup> Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers, “Explanation of the Action Platform 1964-1966, Chicago Region,” 14, Series III, box 101, folder 1104, CUL Records.

<sup>94</sup> “Establish Four Gifted Child Demonstration Centers at Carver, Bryn Mawr, Tesla, and Bell,” *News of the Chicago Public Schools*, March 1964, 5.

immediate arena for pro and anti-integration forces to do battle. Hidden just beneath the surface of the battle over racial integration was a conflict about what the social function of schools was meant to be, and the class politics of the far South Side would once again be decisive.

By the end of August, just as Paul Zuber was announcing that the *Webb* case had reached an out-of-court settlement, the Board approved Willis' transfer plan, creating a list of fourteen "sending" schools, from which invited students of merit could elect to transfer to any high school of their choosing. In Marynook and Chatham, parents with hopes of sending their children to Hyde Park or South Shore were excited to see Hirsch on the list of senders. But when a single prospective black family from Hirsch was spotted visiting Bogan High School, an all-white school sited deep within an all-white homeowner community on the Southwest Side, parents from the surrounding communities of Marquette Park and Ashburn mounted an immediate and dramatic resistance. Official spokespersons like Dolores Giannini stressed that their opposition to transfers was based in concerns that Bogan was already filled past capacity, but local reporters found ample evidence that keeping blacks out formed the truest and strongest motivation for the Bogan movement.<sup>95</sup> Students and mothers gathered outside of the school during the day to chant their resistance to integration and shout "Go Home," to the as-yet-imaginary transfer students.<sup>96</sup> At evening community meetings attended by local aldermen and the district superintendent, men and women massed in the thousands, shouting down any attempts at patient explanation by civic authorities.<sup>97</sup> Bogan parents took their protest downtown, where they staged pickets at City Hall

---

<sup>95</sup> James Ritch, "Overcrowding an Old Thorn at Bogan High: Fear, Pride Factors in Protests," *Chicago Tribune*, September 16, 1963.

<sup>96</sup> "Whites Protest at Bogan High School," *Chicago Defender*, September 10, 1963.

<sup>97</sup> "2 New Schools are Picketed on South Side; White Parents on South Side Object to School Zoning," *Chicago Tribune*, September 10, 1963. "Few Students to Transfer, Willis Says,"

and the Board of Education and demanded meetings with Mayor Daley, Superintendent Willis, and Board President Clair Roddewig.<sup>98</sup> Boganites prevailed on all three demands. Clout was stacked fortuitously on the Southwest Side; alderman James Murray's father, labor leader Thomas Murray, was the vice-president of the Board. As Murray the elder insisted to his fellow Board members, nothing had generated "more strife, more trouble" for the Board than this single issue.<sup>99</sup> Just two weeks after the eruption on the Southwest Side, Willis unilaterally decided to eliminate fifteen high schools from the list of receivers, including Bogan.

The "bigots at Bogan," predominantly ethnic and Catholic, quickly became emblematic of Chicago's unenlightened white resistance, and would remain at the epicenter of anti-integration politics for the next two decades. As political spectacle, the white opposition on the Southwest Side could serve multiple strategic functions. For urban administrators like Willis and Daley who were under siege by liberal reformers and black civil rights groups, the mobilizations of the Southwest Side highlighted a base of support for their continued control over urban policy. For advocates of integration, the transfer debacle supplied the perfect illustration of their thesis—that Willis was the frontman for racism in the urban north. Segregationism was segregationism, whether fuming in ignorance from beneath housewives' curlers or buttoned up in the gray suit of urban technocracy. For Chicago's most ambitious activists, a mobilized base of urban segregationists also promised a more telegenic target than the technical construct of de facto segregation, as open housing marchers in Marquette Park would discover three years later.

---

<sup>98</sup> "Few Students to Transfer, Willis Says: Reports Many Prefer Own Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 1963.

<sup>99</sup> "Few Students to Transfer, Willis Says: Reports Many Prefer Own Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, September 12, 1963.

While Southwest siders rejoiced at the revision of the receiving school list, racial liberals eight miles to the east in Marynook were crestfallen. Among the schools removed from the list were South Shore and Hyde Park, where several top-achieving students from Marynook were hoping to attend. Not to be discouraged, Marynook lawyer and father Hugh Brodkey corralled an interracial cohort of four neighbors, including CAMP planner Stanley Drigot, and filed suit against Willis to compel him to comply with the requests for transfer. The students, Brodkey and his colleague Ralph Brown argued, had been “deprived of educational opportunity commensurate with their ability.”<sup>100</sup> Quoting Willis and Board President Roddewig, Brodkey pointed out that in establishing the program, school system officials had boasted of the social value inherent in the selective transfer program, and that in counseling students and parents to consider leaving their current high school and had conferred on high-achieving students “certain rights,” which Willis was now abrogating.<sup>101</sup> Board attorneys quoted Willis’ assertions that his reduction of the receiver-school list had everything to do with balancing technical questions of classroom space and size of teachable groups and not in response to any community pressure. Still, Willis took every opportunity to point out what his Bureau of Pupil Personnel Services had reported: that of the 474 exceptional students identified as eligible for transfer under the selective-permissive policy, only 105 students citywide were interested in transferring. For Willis, this was further proof that the civil rights activists and liberal reformers were pushing an agenda that no one was interested in. The only thing Willis claimed to have heard from boys

---

<sup>100</sup> Proceedings, *McCormick* Case File, 3 (65 of Case File).

<sup>101</sup> Complaint, *McCormick* Case File, 15.

and girls about their local schools were “expressions of approval.”<sup>102</sup> Judge Arthur Sullivan was not persuaded by Willis’ explanations, agreed that students’ “rights are being violated,” and decided in favor of the Marynook children, issuing a temporary mandatory injunction compelling Willis to immediately transfer three students from Hirsch to Hyde Park High School and one to South Shore.<sup>103</sup>

What happened next was to become a folkloric moment in the history of Chicago’s battle against Willis. When a deputy sheriff attempted to serve the superintendent with the injunction at the Board of Education offices on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, Willis slipped out the back door, down the back steps and headed home to the Edgewater Beach Apartments where the chief deputy bailiff finally tracked him down the following afternoon. Rather than submit to the order, affirmed by the Appellate Court of Illinois that same day, Willis chose to announce his resignation as superintendent, escalating a gifted-student transfer program into an institutional crisis.<sup>104</sup>

As civil rights groups rejoiced, business leaders and Willis’ allies on the school board scrambled to undo his departure. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, the Board voted not to accept Willis’ resignation and formed a committee aimed at “peace-making.” By mid-month, Willis was back on the job, expressing how “deeply touched” he and his wife had been by the various gestures of support provided.<sup>105</sup> The reaction from Chicago’s civil rights coalition was swift and spectacular. Turning to their most dramatic action yet, members of the CCCO decided to

---

<sup>102</sup> Statement from Benjamin C. Willis, General Superintendent of Schools- Press Conference, September 19, 1963, *McCormick* Case File, 3 (44 of Case File).

<sup>103</sup> Order, *McCormick* Case File, 36 (98 of Case File).

<sup>104</sup> On Willis’ escape, see coverage in *Chicago Daily News*, *Chicago’s American*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, October 5, 1963.

<sup>105</sup> See Stephen D. London, “Business and the Chicago Public School System, 1890-1966,” diss. University of Chicago, 1968, 133-136.

greenlight a plan hatched by Lawrence Landry, a local grad student and leader of the friends of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The plan—to launch a citywide boycott of the Chicago Public Schools, was unprecedented in scale, and exceeded the organizers expectations. On October 22, 1963, nearly 225,000 students did not show up to school, while 10,000 picketers massed on the streets downtown, calling for the removal of Ben Willis.<sup>106</sup>

### *Civil Rights and the Contingencies of Class*

The view from the Far South Side recasts this fateful moment in the fight against Benjamin Willis. From the superintendent's perspective, parental demands for ability-grouped college-preparatory options for the "talented" was doubtlessly less concerning than the mounting call for school desegregation. At a pivotal moment, however, the joining of these demands gave sudden shape to the call for integrated schools, and in doing so, proved the last straw for an embattled superintendent. In their direct challenge to enrollment policy and bureaucratic management of race relations, both the civil rights movement and the new meritocracy threatened the administrative autonomy that urban technocrats like Willis held dear.

In the context of the national civil rights movement, the Marynook suit occupies an unexpectedly crucial place in the chain of contingencies that ultimately brought Martin Luther King Jr. to Chicago. Had not the Marynookers prevailed, kicking off the fiasco of Willis's aborted resignation, the necessary conditions for the October boycott might not have revealed themselves. The school boycott highlighted the shifts in strategy and constituency that movement organizers in Chicago had begun to make. For boycott organizer Larry Landry, a mass strike against the schools was important for two reasons. First was as a manifestation of a

---

<sup>106</sup> See Anderson and Pickering, 116-120.

structural critique of public education, that, as Landry put it, the “system is compulsively preparing the masses of poor people—and most Negroes are poor—to be poor for the rest of their lives.”<sup>107</sup> The second reason for mobilizing the schools issue was more instrumental. In organizing black Chicagoans around schools, which touched the core of community life across class lines, radical activists like Landry could project a plausible vision of black political leadership that included those at the city’s bottom rungs. With mass participation and broad geographic reach, the boycott delivered an unprecedented challenge to the city’s black political establishment, shaking the core of Daley’s political power structure. As Landry declared, the boycott signaled a welcome recognition:

this was not a middle class movement for suburban housing or the right to eat in a restaurant; it was a movement of people from all social classes. People who ignore such a movement are ignoring history itself.<sup>108</sup>

In the context of the national civil rights movement, Chicago would not be long ignored, and it was arguably the mass involvement of poor people that most impressed Martin Luther King Jr. and members of the SCLC in their decision to bring their campaign to Chicago.<sup>109</sup>

The critique of de facto segregation that had mobilized Out South homeowners to bring lawsuits and stage sit-ins at the dawn of the decade constituted a radical challenge to urban administrative authorities like Daley and Willis. By the time of King’s arrival to Chicago, however, the frame for that critique—legalistic, liberal, integrationist—had shifted. The self-

---

<sup>107</sup> Landry quote in Edwina Chalmers Johnson, “Integration is Not the Issue,” *Integrated Education*, February-March 1965, 12.

<sup>108</sup> Lawrence Landry to STANDPOINT Editorial on Boycott of Chicago Public Schools (November 6, 1963) Box 89, Folder 965, CUL Records.

<sup>109</sup> See discussion in David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1986). 444.

consciously anti-poverty lens that King, James Bevel, and Bernard Lafayette applied to their Chicago strategy put them at a distance, and even at odds with those whose actions sparked the movement. The political vision of the black bungalow belt and black Democratic partisans, even “independent” ones, movement leaders suspected, was unambitious at best, and anti-poor at worst. The point of the movement, argued Bevel, should be to “stir people and loosen them from the Democratic party” and draw them to political alternatives.<sup>110</sup> Rather than building on what they saw as questionable bases of black political power in middle-class neighborhoods, movement leaders saw boycotts, marches, and organizing within poor communities as a path to “power by other means.”<sup>111</sup> Homeowners in Chatham, Avalon Park, and Burnside were, they assumed, “harder to get identified with the movement.”<sup>112</sup>

As the politics of organizing the poor took center stage, the schools issue diminished in profile, and larger critiques gained traction. In private meetings, Bevel portrayed the Chicago Freedom Movement as a three-front confrontation with racism, militarism, and capitalism. Local movement leaders were no less ambitious in their framing. Activist-teacher-organizer Timuel Black spoke of the city as “a monolithic structure of racial tyranny,” while CCCO leader and schoolteacher Al Raby talked of the need to push Chicago toward a “change in the entire culture.”<sup>113</sup> There was no explicit, official departure from the school integration issue, but against the systemic view of race and poverty that animated movement leaders, school problems

---

<sup>110</sup> Chicago Freedom Notebook Entry, box 14, folder 5, W. Alvin Pitcher Papers, Special Collections Research Center, The University of Chicago Library (hereafter Pitcher Papers).

<sup>111</sup> Alvin Pitcher to Omer Pitcher, box 14, folder 3, Pitcher Papers.

<sup>112</sup> Alvin Pitcher to Omer Pitcher, box 14, folder 3, Pitcher Papers.

<sup>113</sup> Timuel Black to Al Raby, April 6, 1966, box 14, folder 3, Pitcher Papers; Chicago Freedom Notebook Entry, box 14, folder 5, Pitcher Papers.

seemed epiphenomenal, the proposed solutions technocratic. Of the nine demands that Raby brought to the summit meeting with Mayor Daley in 1966, schools were nowhere to be found.

## **Conclusion**

The emergence of racial balance and specialized education as shared goals among civil rights leaders and liberal reformers was not an elite conspiracy. It was an earnestly believed, collaboratively built program to respond to the increasingly visible social problems of resegregation and inequality. Integration of the sort envisioned in regional schools created a new and resonant ideological fit with the material and political conditions of what would be called, by the middle of the decade, the urban crisis. In a moment when the automation and suburbanization of industrial jobs was remaking the regional landscape, and in which the racially marginalized and politically unincorporated were being recruited and enlisted into a wholesale critique of segregation, an interracial ideal of community based in education began to be built atop an older racial order which continued to be marked by residential property.

The fight against the neighborhood school defies easy categorization along abstracted spectrums of political action or periodized black awakenings. The efforts to expose Chicago's *de facto* segregated schoolscape were, at different moments moderate, militant, radical, and liberal. The posture vis-à-vis interracial education was similarly ambivalent. Integration was one strategy that Out South mothers could use to secure the aspirations of middle-class parenthood. Linking fortunes with a broad-based movement that included the poorest ranks of Black Chicago was another. While the Civil Rights Movement provided the moral rubric under which both strategies could be pursued in tandem, it was unclear how long these coalitions could endure and how such contradictory definitions of desegregation could coexist as policy.

For some white homeowners on the South Side, expressing sympathy with the latter notion while attempting to secure the former would become a defining feature of racial tolerance, both during the moment of civil rights upheaval and beyond. For middle-class white interracialists, the problem with “neighborhood” as a unit of civic belonging and school policy, was that it was drawn too tightly. “Community” promised to expand the physical dimensions of urban administrative units while tightening access along lines of status. Unlike neighborhoods, communities could be big enough to host regional specialized schools, tagging, tracking, and sorting students according to ability, rather than geography. Plans like CAMP—scripted by sympathetic social scientists, embraced by black and white homeowners, and endorsed by civil rights advocates—provided an early and instructive model of how to build a constituency for racial integration. In this way, the regional schemes and permissive transfer plans had provoked a clear rift among white Chicagoans—one which the press tended to cast as the difference between the racially tolerant and the morally ignorant. But racial tolerance was as much a political bargain as a moral awakening. In the urban context, the rising concern with college prep had provoked a reconsideration of the durable postwar arrangement that linked educational opportunity with the property values and political privileges of racially homogenous enclaves. In a moment of metropolitan transformation, some among the urban middle class seemed to realize, educational credentials might be a commodity worth protecting just as much as, and perhaps independent of, residential property. In pursuing bonds of interracial “community” over the tighter boundaries of “neighborhood,” white liberals hooked civil-rights arguments for integrated schools to their desire to protect a college-bound future for their children, all while hedging against the decline in land values that transition represented in a racialized real estate market. In the early 1960s, this mix of incentives and initiatives went nowhere, as Willis’ opposition to

reform prevented any substantive adjustment to the neighborhood school policy beyond those that permissive and selective transfer had opened. But throughout the period that civil rights activists and liberal homeowners organized against the neighborhood school, social science researchers were closely observing, assisting, and encouraging their efforts. In their proposals for “voluntary integration,” the liberal lessons of the early 1960s would go on to have an influential second life.

## Chapter 2: Activists, Educationists, and Chicago's Integration Research Project

When University of Chicago sociologist Robert Havighurst appeared with civil rights attorney Paul Zuber at a public panel to discuss the *Webb* case in November of 1961, the pairing would have surprised no one.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1930s, social scientists had been in the back rooms and on the front lines with liberal reformers and civil rights activists as they developed the legal grounds and civic language for the fight against segregation in American schools. As several generations of historians have argued, the ideological output of these collaborations, while potent in achieving the judicial interventions necessary to unseat Jim Crow schooling, bore the marks of a narrow intellectual tradition and a limited political imagination. “Racial liberalism,” “postwar pluralism,” or “racial individualism,” these accounts suggest, abandoned or eschewed earlier, more radical critiques that named and challenged the structural foundations of inequality in favor of a more conservative Cold War version, which privileged the language of individual rights and the assumptions of behavioral science. Evading analyses of political economy, and ignoring the strengths and potentialities of black institutions (or indicting them as hopelessly damaged), racial liberals, these histories posit, built an integrated imaginary, naively hoping that sitting white kids next to black kids would convert the former’s mind and transform the latter’s future. In this version, urgent calls for racial justice were converted into tepid experiments in prejudice education.<sup>2</sup> For some scholars, integrationism’s baggage left it with little to recommend it, save

---

<sup>1</sup> “Panel Group Will Discuss Equal Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 26, 1961, 56.

<sup>2</sup> The negative characterization of these features of the social-scientific/civil-rights worldview on race, poverty, and opportunity was born right alongside it. See Oliver Cox, *Caste, Class, and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1948). Historiography mapping racial liberalism’s intellectual limits, foreclosed opportunities, and submerged alternatives includes Walter A. Jackson, *Gunnar Myrdal and America’s Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938-1987* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Daryl Michael Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social*

for its potential as a point of entry for a broader critique of racial power in American institutions.<sup>3</sup> For others, these midcentury intellectual cul-de-sacs haunt contemporary discourses of diversity and implicit bias, continuing to stunt integration's real potential as a transformative movement.<sup>4</sup>

The liberal “therapeutic ethos” was undeniably present within the discourse of school integration in Chicago during the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> Prominent activists like Al Raby and Meyer Weinberg spoke often of school segregation as a double-edged sword of psychic damage, depriving black children of “hope for the future and a confidence in their own capacity,” while white children learned “to think of the Negro child and strange and unworthy.” Such conditions threatened

---

*Policy and the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1997); Lee D. Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954*; Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy and the Poor in Twentieth Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Daryl Michael Scott, “Postwar Pluralism, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the Origins of Multicultural Education” *Journal of American History*, 91 issue 1 (June 2004); Lani Guinier, “From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma” *Journal of American History*, 91 issue 1 (June 2004); Nikkil Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Risa Goluboff, *The Lost Promise of Civil Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Zoë Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race, 1900-1954* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Michael Katz, *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Leah Gordon, *From Power to Prejudice: The Rise of Racial Individualism in Midcentury America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> The field of Critical Race Theory owes its origins to the critique of the integration paradigm advanced by Derrick Bell during the high point of school deseg orders at the end of the 1970s. See Derrick A. Bell “*Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma” *Harvard Law Review* 93 (January 1980).

<sup>4</sup> See contributions to the public sphere by historians: Zoë Burkholder, “Can Anthropology Improve Antiracist Education?,” *Anthropology Now*, 3, no. 3 (December 2011); Leah Gordon, “By Focusing On The Individual, Foundations Have Missed The Mark On Racism,” *HistPhil*, August 10, 2015 <https://histphil.org>; Ansley Erickson, Brian Jones, Adam Sanchez, “As historians and New York City educators, here's what we hope teachers hear in the city's new anti-bias training,” *ChalkBeat*, May 17, 2018;

<sup>5</sup> The “therapeutic ethos” is Daryl Michael Scott's formulation.

hopes of “a progressive community” and “mock[ed] the promise of American democracy.”<sup>6</sup> Hal Baron, the active and influential research director at the Chicago Urban League, made frequent citations of psychologist Kenneth Clark’s appellants’ brief in *Brown* as he prepped local activists with arguments about the “centuries of cultural deprivation” that burdened black schoolchildren’s self-esteem, and the “confusion, conflict, [and] moral cynicism” that manifested in white children living in a hypocritical society.<sup>7</sup> Philip Hauser, one of the civil rights coalition’s chief accomplices in the University of Chicago’s sociology department, seemed to read directly from the racial-liberal script in his 1964 advisory panel report on school integration: “An understanding and ability to cooperate must exist between the Negro and white citizens of Chicago and the United States in order that the nation lives up to its democratic creed and justify its leadership of the free world.”<sup>8</sup>

As I demonstrate in this chapter however, the thinkers and researchers who lent their support to the local movement for integrated schools were hardly naïve about the economy of race, property, and development that had built segregation or the politics of black subordination that sustained it. Announcing that Chicagoland had been sorted into inner-city ghettos, angry white ethnic enclaves, and affluent suburban sprawl, Chicago’s integrationists spoke of the need to reorganize clout and class, not hearts and minds. For activists like Weinberg and Baron, who authored forceful historical critiques of the neighborhood school and the formation of the city’s second ghetto, Chicago’s purpose-built regime of containment and deprivation required

---

<sup>6</sup> Meyer Weinberg, “Hearts and Minds” [pamphlet], Teachers for Integrated Schools, May 17, 1962.

<sup>7</sup> Harold Baron, “An Equal Chance for Education” [preliminary edition], (March 1962), box 89, folder 965, CUL Records.

<sup>8</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 42.

ambitious plans that would break old patterns of attendance and enrollment and directly challenge the political beneficiaries of segregation. Social scientists like Hauser and Havighurst agreed on the need for bold interventions, but their analytical context was distinct. Filtering civil rights critiques through sociological frameworks of urbanization and metropolitanism at the dawn of the 1960s, Hauser and Havighurst saw Chicago's segregated schools as a politicized node within a broader postwar crisis. While the population of America's metropolitan areas had exploded, the spatial distribution of social class, race, employment, and housing, urbanization scholars noted, was settling into starkly unequal patterns, leaving American kids less likely to attend socioeconomically mixed schools than they had in the era before World War II. Big city school districts were hit hardest by these dynamics, as the suburbanization of jobs and middle-class families had created a growing space known as the "inner city," where teachers struggled to uplift the metro area's poorest youngsters. For sociologists viewing the school crisis from the bird's eye view of the regional economy, it seemed impossible to speak of improving the outlook for inner-city youngsters without also reviving the promise of the city itself.

The notion that interracial education should be a vehicle for a program of what Havighurst called "social urban renewal" was not a natural fit with the perspective of civil rights activists, many of whom were as critical of urban renewal as they were of segregated schools. But as the alliances on the far South Side had revealed, the civil rights critique of the neighborhood school and liberal anxiety about urban decline had produced something that many believed could not be found in the wild: a willing constituency for racial integration. Against Willis' prolonged intransigency, and with no intellectual off-ramps from pro-growth urbanism, academics developed a policy toolbox that would respond to the civil-rights critique of the neighborhood school, attract the commitment of middle-class liberals, and offer civic leaders a vision of a

prosperous and harmonious urban future. By the middle of the 1960s, the tools—racial quotas, open enrollment, and parental choice—condensed prevailing assumptions about black uplift, white flight, and urban revitalization, providing voluntary integration with both its technical content and ideological purchase. Until the end of Willis’ tenure at the helm of the school system in 1966, leaders in Chicago’s Coordinating Council of Community Organizations reiterated these models in their own advocacy. Upon Willis’ departure, however, perspectives within the CCCO diversified and splintered, revealing both the exhaustion with promises of technical fixes and the rising salience of Black Power in organizing circles. In his critique of new Superintendent James Redmond’s 1967 Plan for Desegregation, outgoing CCCO convener Al Raby expressed this ambivalence, condemning both the plan’s racist assumptions about the need to “anchor the whites” and avoid the advent of a “Negro city,” while also decrying the plan’s limited reach with regard to persistently segregated and disadvantaged students.<sup>9</sup>

Historians have tended to repeat Raby’s conclusions as the final word on a doomed or delusional initiative. As I argue here, however, the Redmond Plan represented a hard-won compromise between activist and educationist conceptions of how integrated education could be made to work without judicial intervention. Far from dying out, these conclusions institutionalized a new set of post-civil rights assumptions about where and for whom new experiments in urban education might be undertaken, how parents could be induced to participate, and how episodes of urban renaissance could be spurred by educational policy.

By chronicling how spatial conceptions of metropolitan development shaped the path by which integrationist urban educational policy was made, this chapter advises an adjustment to accounts that read American racial pluralist ideologies (racial liberalism, integrationism, and

---

<sup>9</sup> Anderson and Pickering, 334-337.

multiculturalism) as evasions of political economy. The contribution comes in stressing that what integration actually became in the 1960s and 1970s—as opposed to how it was being imagined in the 1940s and 1950s—was designed not by the psychologists of human relations, but by the sociologists of urban systems. It was their blend of pragmatic ecologism and urban renewal boosterism that defined the limits of racial ideology in the post-civil rights era. Far from being unschooled in the political economy of metropolitan inequality, integration planners sought to make integrated education into a catalyst for reinvestment in the inner city. Seen in this way, the material basis for interracialist and multiculturalist ideologies are brought into view, with urban schools playing a central role.

### **Part I: The Activists**

As the conduct of legal actions described in Chapter 1 make clear, civil rights advocates placed a high value on empirical research. As both courtroom evidence and publicity, data and analysis on classroom utilization, teacher pay and tenure, student achievement, attendance boundaries, and enrollment numbers were seen as fundamental to progress on the issue. In the late 1950s, well before Paul Zuber came to town looking to launch a test case, the Chicago Branch of the NAACP under the activist leadership of Willoughby Abner had put school segregation at the center of an in-house research agenda. While the NAACP's publicity department organized educational panel events with Kenneth Clark and Thurgood Marshall, research staffers Rita Phillips and Faith Rich visited schoolhouses, conducted door to door surveys of parents, and pored over attendance data from Superintendent Willis' office.<sup>10</sup> When

---

<sup>10</sup> “News from Chicago Branch NAACP: Thurgood Marshall to Speak at NAACP civil rights rally” Papers of the NAACP, Part 27: Selected Branch Files 1956-1965, reel 1, at 0091-93; “NAACP Call Conference On Supreme Court Decision and Chicago Schools,” *Freedom's Call*, October 1956.

their work hit the public sphere in a statement at the Board of Education in 1957, followed by a wave of coverage in the city dailies and a prominent print-up in *The Crisis*, they opened a decade's worth of proposals and plans that sought to define Chicago's segregation problem and propose solutions.<sup>11</sup> Though neither Rich nor Phillips had expertise in social science research methods or educational management, their recommendations—that districting, facilities citing, and transfer policies be revised with an intent to foster integrated schools; that staffing be deployed to minimize concentrations of inexperienced faculty and maximize the coverage by experienced mentors; that workloads and class sizes in schools seen as “unattractive” be reduced—expressed the mixture of concerns that civil rights groups sought under the umbrella of integration.<sup>12</sup>

Rich and Phillips' push on the schools issue revived the NAACP's local profile, but it also earned the ire of more conservative local politicians, who organized to unseat Abner as president in 1959.<sup>13</sup> Picking up the research agenda was Bill Berry's Chicago Urban League, which had taken a role as an active facilitator among Chicago's civil rights organizations. In 1960, Berry hired a new head of research, a thirty-year-old history PhD candidate and part-time college instructor named Hal Baron. A partisan of the political left and a dabbler in civil rights organizing during college, Baron credited his wife Paula for pushing his interest and awareness

---

<sup>11</sup> “NAACP Calls upon Chicago Board of Education to Integrate Chicago Public Schools: Releases Findings of School Survey.” Dec. 10, 1957 Papers of the NAACP, Part 27: Selected Branch Files 1956-1965, reel 1, at 00745.

<sup>12</sup> Internally, the Chicago NAACP noted that their activity on the schools issues had successfully elevated the organization's share of press coverage in the “non-Negro” press, jumping from 23 to 33 percent of stories and pictures, and from 18 to 30 percent of space. “Statistical Analysis of Publicity of Chicago Branch of the NAACP,” Papers of the NAACP, Part 27: Selected Branch Files 1956-1965, reel 1, at 00579.

<sup>13</sup> See Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) 183-191; Anderson and Pickering, 77.

in the school overcrowding controversy. Paula Baron, who Hal had met in an anti-McCarthyite group was a high school social studies teacher at Tilden Tech and a member of the interracial circle of South Side activists who had helped organize plaintiffs for the *Webb* case. Encouraged by Berry and given wide latitude to pursue research agendas, Hal Baron took up the schools issue as his primary focus, teaching himself basic methods of sociological survey and statistical analysis.

As he conducted the empirical work that proved Willis' active complicity in citing, building, scheduling, and boundary-drawing to enforce the city's segregated school system, Baron worked to build out the contexts in which his data would be presented. As had been obligatory in the briefs for the *Webb* and *Burroughs* cases, Baron would append his reports with passages from psychologists like Kenneth Clark, Martin Deutsch, and Thomas Pettigrew to cite the "social and psychological conditioning" that segregated schools imposed on the capacities and self-concepts of black youngsters.<sup>14</sup> But Baron was more compelled by the task of assigning blame than of describing harms. In this task, he found other sources of more relevance to the Chicago case, and used works of history and sociology to make his point. Using the work of black sociologists Charles S. Johnson, St. Clair Drake, and Horace Cayton, Baron argued that the phenomenon of segregated schools in Chicago was a contingent and contested feature of the city's history, attempted multiple times, repeatedly resisted, and only recently imposed with consistency. An all-black school in the 1860s had been disestablished after black parents stormed the mayor's office and Board of Education. With the rise of Chicago's ghetto in the 1910s, schools began to sync up with the residential color line, but even then, fewer than half of black schoolchildren

---

<sup>14</sup> Harold Baron, "An Equal Chance for Education" [preliminary edition] p. 4, (March 1962), box 89, folder 965, CUL Records.

attended segregated schools. It was during the 1920s and 1930s, Baron explained, when new neighborhoods turned over from white to black, that school administrators enacted the original tactics of educational racial containment—the constant redrawing of attendance boundaries, the overcrowding of black schools, the imposition of double shifts, the permissive transfers issued to white students, and the creation of “neutral areas” allowing students in racial borderlands to “choose” their way to an all-white or all-black school. Again in the 1940s, Baron emphasized, black parents fought back, enlisting the support of local civil rights organizations and sociologists at the University of Chicago, who succeeded in replacing an unresponsive school superintendent with one amenable to at least a certain set of “color-blind” reforms. In the postwar era, the system witnessed a greater surge in black school-age population than ever before, and in Willis, found a superintendent more willing to deploy the tools of segregation than ever before.<sup>15</sup> To Baron, the lessons of history were clear: segregation was a movable object, but not without the mobilized discontent of black citizens.

As he engaged with broader literature on school desegregation, Baron was drawn to analyses like those of Doxey Wilkerson, who stressed the positive necessity for “conflict” and “turmoil” in school desegregation.<sup>16</sup> By contrast, Baron concluded that too many of his fellow liberal accomplices continued to proceed under “inadequate hidden assumptions” about race relations:

Explanations of northern racial practices have stressed attitudes, values, and prejudices on the part of whites. On the part of Negroes, they have stressed

---

<sup>15</sup> Harold Baron, “An Equal Chance for Education” [preliminary edition], (March 1962), CUL Records, Box 89, Folder 965, p. 4-8.

<sup>16</sup> Harold Baron, “A Highly Important Book,” *Integrated Education*, issue 8 (April-May 1964) 18-21.

problems of personal adjustment to the dominant white society as though access to the total society would be gained once these adjustments were made.<sup>17</sup>

As Baron argued, the northern metropolis had developed “its peculiar institutions of racial subjugation,” that had diminishingly little to do with tropes of black migrant acculturation or specific instances of discrimination on the part of whites. Instead, Baron, explained, the sputtering civil rights suits and the Board’s inaction were evidence of a different dynamic:

The overall Northern system of *de facto* segregation is maintained by a complex of interacting and mutually supportive institutions whose combined effect is greater than the sum of the effects of each institution considered singly. *De facto* segregation constitutes an overriding system of race relations which perpetuates racial differentials and segregation in every particular segment of the metropolitan community.<sup>18</sup>

Because of Berry and Baron’s shared preference for keeping the Chicago Urban League at the center of the city’s civil rights agitation, Baron’s research department remained in attack mode throughout the decade, rendering a historicized analysis of “the making of racism into an urban institution.”<sup>19</sup> In addition to his work on school overcrowding and segregation, Baron catalogued inequities in school funding and conducted an extensive audit on the Chicago Housing Authority. Baron’s analysis of the recent history of public housing, which he passed on to the ACLU attorneys who brought the landmark *Gautreaux* fair housing lawsuit against the CHA in 1966, described how the politics of urban renewal and metropolitan growth had converted the redistributive dreams of public housing into “a catch basin for Negroes dislocated

---

<sup>17</sup> Harold Baron, “Northern Segregation as a System: The Chicago Schools,” *Integrated Education*, Issue 18 (December 1965-January 1966) 54.

<sup>18</sup> Baron, “Northern Segregation as a System,” 54.

<sup>19</sup> Baron, “Northern Segregation as a System,” 57.

by the process of rebuilding the city and making it accessible to suburbanites' automobiles."<sup>20</sup> In the successful mass mobilization that had formed against Willis—the sit-ins, boycotts, mass arrests—Baron believed he had seen precisely the sort of independent political movement capable of challenging Chicago's institutions of racial subjugation. But in the Urban League's institutional profile as an advocacy organization—as opposed to a political organizing outfit—Baron's contributions would remain in the realm of legal strategy and public policy, where the path for social change was constrained, and where a broader range of ideas and interests competed for emphasis.

Attempting to synthesize the voices of activism with the analysis of experts was a friend of Baron's, another historian and city college professor named Meyer Weinberg. Weinberg had grown up in an orthodox Russian Jewish home on the city's West Side where he absorbed a range of radical thought—from soapbox anarchists to leftist schoolteachers to his father's reading habits as a union carpenter. By the time he transferred from junior college to the University of Chicago to study history, Weinberg was a joiner, becoming an active member of the American Student Union, the Young Communist League, and the Marxist Club on campus. After graduation, Weinberg worked at the massive Dodge Chicago Aircraft Engine Plant, where he took up duties in a UAW organizing drive, both as a line steward for the union, and as a member of the Communist Party.<sup>21</sup> Immediately after the war, no longer a CP member, Weinberg got a teaching job at Wright Junior College, where he became active in the Chicago

---

<sup>20</sup> Harold Baron, "Public Housing: Chicago Builds a Ghetto," A Chicago Urban League Research Report, 1967, Chicago Public Library Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library.

<sup>21</sup> Carl Weinberg, "Rank and Filed Communist: An Oral History" (interview with Meyer Weinberg, 1989), in author's possession. Thanks are due to Carl Weinberg for sharing this document.

Teacher's Union, joining the executive board in the 1950s.<sup>22</sup> By the end of the decade, Weinberg had failed in a bid at the union presidency, but drawn a cadre of members into a militant bloc, the Independent Caucus, that joined a firm demand for collective bargaining with a call for integrated schools.<sup>23</sup>

In 1961, Weinberg, along with gym teachers John Walsh and William Moore, formed a new activist caucus called Teachers for Integrated Schools (TFIS), which was soon joined by one of Weinberg's former students, schoolteacher Al Raby. As part of their efforts to grow funds and rank-and-file support for the civil rights fight for school integration, Weinberg and Raby began publishing a pamphlet, "Hearts and Minds," in 1962, which, over the course of the next year would mature into *Integrated Education*, a bimonthly reader's digest on educational civil rights, reprinting articles and speeches by leading lights in education policy, intergroup relations, and civil rights activism from across the nation. Four dollars bought a year's subscription; an extra dollar would enroll a teacher as a TFIS member. As Raby and Weinberg became central figures in the CCCO, *Integrated Education* attracted a national readership and an all-star list of liberal academics to its editorial board.<sup>24</sup>

By linking the local school struggle with the national fight for civil rights, Weinberg hoped to highlight the analysis that activists like Baron, Berry, Landry, and Raby were articulating in Chicago. In an early editorial, Weinberg elucidated the educational circuitry of Baron's emerging account of a "complex" of racially oppressive urban policy:

---

<sup>22</sup> Prior to the 1970s, City College professors were Chicago public school employees, and thus members of the CTU.

<sup>23</sup> Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 161-162.

<sup>24</sup> These included Kenneth Clark, Thomas Pettigrew, Daniel Dodson, Frank Reissman, June Shagaloff, Herbert Blumer, Leslie Dunbar, Horace Mann Bond, August Meier, and John Hope Franklin.

The real estate interest is one of the central power groups in board of education decisions. Boards buy much land and they often have a lot of it to sell; regular commercial channels are used. The material interest of real estate groups is protected by enforcing the racial composition of neighborhoods. The neighborhood school policy helps assure an orderly and high-priced real-estate market.<sup>25</sup>

Not only was de facto segregation a “conscious, human decision,” Weinberg reminded readers, the men who sat on urban boards of education—“real estate men, construction executives, building-trades union officials, and bank executives”—were often the conscious humans making the decision.<sup>26</sup>

While Weinberg certainly worked his perspective onto the pages *Integrated Education*, his editorial touch was extremely light, and the publication hosted a full range of disciplinary and professional approaches to the struggle for integrated schools. Every issue began with a full and detailed chronicle of the latest court cases, actions, policy changes, and research studies from school districts around the country, which Weinberg sourced from newspapers and a wide network of activist contacts. But as an analytical digest, *Integrated Education* was characterized by a sense of miscellanea. A letter from an activist in Chicago might follow a reprint of an abolitionist-era speech by Charles Sumner, which might share the page with a lecture by Dr. Benjamin Spock on childhood self-esteem, the ideas of which might be refuted (though never directly) by another expert’s essay, which would be followed by the details of a school board

---

<sup>25</sup> Meyer Weinberg, “De Facto Segregation: Fact or Artifact, *Integrated Education*, 1, no. 1 (January 1963), 32.

<sup>26</sup> Meyer Weinberg, “De Facto Segregation: Fact or Artifact, *Integrated Education*, 1, no. 1 (January 1963), 32. In the same article, Weinberg warned of the creeping tendency of government officials in northern and southern cities to seek refuge behind the “de facto” construct. These warnings, coming on the eve of the *Gary v. Bell* decision’s endorsement of “de facto” as exoneration, highlight the fact that some activists anticipated the legal and rhetorical limits of the de facto framing. See Michael R. Glass, “From Sword to Shield to Myth: Facing the Facts of De Facto School Segregation,” *Journal of Urban History* (November 2016) 1197-1226.

transfer plan for a vocational program in another city, or the text of a recent court decision. Although Weinberg and many of his contributors shared the sense that school integration required a movement against powerful interests, the magazine captured the sheer variety of fixes that were being suggested, mandated, and experimented with in school districts across the country. In their local contexts, researchers like Weinberg and Baron struggled to discover the most productive relationship between ecosystems of activism and advocacy. As the Marynook lawsuit had revealed, the activist framing of the neighborhood school as a regime of racial containment had allowed policy allies to imagine a set of administrative solutions, but also invited new questions about whose interests would be served. In the context of Willis's general success at blocking integrative innovations for nearly a decade, the question was simpler. As Hal Baron recalled, it was during morning car rides to work that Bill Berry, after hearing the details of the latest imaginative school integration plan, would ask: "What are these kids supposed to do while we wait for these plans?"<sup>27</sup>

## **Part II: The Educationists**

As activist researchers like Baron and Weinberg worked to frame the structural injustices of school segregation within a rapidly changing social movement, academic experts in law, education, and sociology were drafted into service as auditors, investigators, and chairs of various panels and commissions. Lending their technical expertise and sociological imagination to the critique of Willis and to the initiatives under way on the far South Side, these scholars distilled the compatible elements of civil rights activism and liberal homeownerism into a coherent but constrained program for integrated education. Taking seriously their role as public

---

<sup>27</sup> Harold Baron, interview with the author, December 22, 2015.

intellectuals, these liberal academics became agents within the very civic ecosystem they studied, seeking a place of influence between the state and an increasingly fractious civil society. But Willis' confidence in ignoring these "independent" auditors and shelving their reports indicated that for as long as he was in charge, the educationists' work would be ceremonial, bestowing a blue-ribbon prestige to the civil rights arguments against segregation while exerting little in the way of political leverage. As a superintendency-in-exile, however, they staked the outer limits of Chicago's integrationist imagination, drafting a blueprint for what could be expected once Willis left office.

The first publication of this kind came when the Civil Rights Commission contracted Northwestern University law professor John E. Coons to report on Chicago's school segregation fight in 1962. Because of Willis' insistence that no racial data was kept on students, the law professor relied heavily on estimates made by local civil rights activists.<sup>28</sup> For as "incomplete" as Coons was forced to be in his report, he effectively affirmed the findings put together by Harold Baron of the Urban League and Faith Rich of the NAACP.<sup>29</sup> Coons' Civil Rights Commission report, which dropped in the wake of the October boycott, was embraced by Chicago's civil rights coalition.<sup>30</sup> Unlike Rich and Baron, however, who had begun to elaborate Zuber's critique of the neighborhood school, Coons was less eager to blame Willis, describing school segregation as "a pattern which was the product of other forces," the most urgent being

---

<sup>28</sup> John E. Coons, interview with the author, March 8, 2015; John E. Coons, "Chicago" in *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools: Cities in the North and West*, 182.

<sup>29</sup> John E. Coons, "Chicago," 216-227.

<sup>30</sup> Anderson and Pickering, 95-96.

that of “racial transition.” The problem, Coons believed, was accelerating; schools that reached a black pupil percentage of thirty were likely to become all-black within a year.<sup>31</sup>

Puzzling his way through the resegregation problem, Coons thought it “might be worth a try” to create wider attendance boundaries in the so-called working-class “fringe neighborhoods” of racial transition to engineer integrated student populations. To stabilize the racial character of such a school, Coons entertained the notion of a “benign racial quota” that would hold the black population below the theoretical tipping point that was thought to trigger white withdrawal.<sup>32</sup> But to “convince people...that schools are going to maintain their standards,” Coons supposed, quantitative caps on black enrollment might need to be combined with qualitative limits as well—“a carefully planned program to transfer students whose background and personal characteristics are not poles apart from the children in the receiving schools.”<sup>33</sup> As the tumult following Willis’s “selective” plan showed, support for such programs existed on the far South Side, but careful planning could still collapse under the force of politics. Coons’ conclusions revealed the three elements that would ultimately form the basis of urban school integration in the post-civil rights era: choice, quotas, and selectivity. Choice was unleashed by the concept of open attendance boundaries and permissive transfer. Quotas were seen as necessary blocks

---

<sup>31</sup> Anderson and Pickering, 186.

<sup>32</sup> The notion of using quotas toward integrative (rather than exclusionary) ends originated in public housing policy in an effort to foster “controlled occupancy” by black and white tenants. Between the late 1940s and early 1960s, public housing authorities around the country used some informal version of quotas to thread the needle between principles of nondiscriminatory open occupancy and guidelines that encouraged integration. See Hunt, *Blueprint for Disaster*, 103-108. By the early 1960s, liberal social scientists and civil rights lawyers were making the case for codifying a system of benign quotas into multiple public policy arenas. See discussions in PGA and MCG, “Racial Discrimination in Housing,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, 107 no. 4 (February 1959), 515-550; Oscar Cohen, “The Case for Benign Quotas in Housing,” *Phylon*, 21 no. 1 (1st Quarter, 1960) 20-29.

<sup>33</sup> “Expert on City Schools Tells New Opinions,” *Chicago Tribune*, Feb. 22, 1963, C9; Coons, “Chicago,” 233.

against rapid racial succession. Selectivity was contemplated as a strategic elitism, aimed at recruiting those whose academic success might also be promoted as a success for integration.

Coons' conclusions would be further developed when, at the end of 1963, the provisions of the out-of-court settlement in the *Webb* case triggered the formation of a five-man advisory panel, chaired by University of Chicago sociologist Phillip Hauser.<sup>34</sup> Hauser was the head of the Population Research Center, and a prolific scholar on a wide range of demographic topics, including birth control and urbanization. Like Coons before him, Hauser built his demographic picture from Baron's Urban League research, adding new analyses conducted by his University of Chicago colleague, Robert Crain. In their March 1964 report, the panel concurred with what civil rights groups and Coons had found. In its condemnation of the Board's inaction on segregation, and in its declaration that there was "nothing sacred" in the neighborhood school idea, the Hauser Report offered a more emphatic endorsement of the civil rights critique of Willis. Hauser, a product of all-white public schools on Chicago's West Side, attempted to frame the drama of school integration, as a civic reckoning, which would require "unprecedented mobilization of community resources and unprecedented co-operative action."<sup>35</sup>

Like Coons, the Hauser panel stressed the dangers that white flight posed to the promise of integrated schools. Hauser's team projected that white schoolchildren, who were already less than half of the elementary-age population, would constitute only thirty-five per cent of the system's overall enrollment by 1970.<sup>36</sup> The warning was clear: "Unless the exodus of the white

---

<sup>34</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 2; Casey Banas, "Report Due Tuesday on Study of Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, March 29, 1964.

<sup>35</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 6.

population from the public schools and from the City is brought to a halt, the question of school integration may become simply a theoretical matter.”<sup>37</sup> The tactics Hauser recommended—merging some contiguous neighborhood attendance areas to form enlarged ones and creating “modified open enrollment” or “clustering” as a staged step toward a policy of “city-wide general open-enrollment” for high schools—expressed, in technical terms, the conclusion that the moral mission of integration was necessarily tied to the civic goal of arresting white flight.<sup>38</sup>

In an interesting emphasis, the Hauser panel stressed that its “primary concern” was “*to protect and progressively expand the freedom of individual choice.*”<sup>39</sup> The stress on choice, which the panel characterized as “in keeping with American democratic traditions,” carried none of the overt market-driven valence that it would pick up later in the century.<sup>40</sup> Rather, it was a term of art that was consonant with the argument of black parents and their lawyers—like Alma Coggs and Paul Zuber—who saw the Board denying their right to freely choose where their children could attend school. It was also resonant with white liberals—like those in Marynook—who believed that a community should be empowered to manage the terms of an integrated future. At the same time, choice language was meant to reassure less liberal Chicagoans—like the segregationist parents at Bogan—who had expressed aversion to policies that compelled anything. Most fundamentally, choice was a practical means to achieve the sort of integration that experts saw as most feasible in a residentially segregated city, and without a court order. There could be no such thing as an integrated school unless parents were induced to choose *not*

---

<sup>37</sup> Hauser, *Report* 12.

<sup>38</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 27-29

<sup>39</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 26 (italics in original).

<sup>40</sup> Hauser, *Report*, 41.

to attend their neighborhood school.

Meanwhile, Robert Havighurst, Hauser's colleague in the sociology department at the University of Chicago, was already several months into an exhaustive survey of the Chicago school system. Joining other urban districts in a national moment of self-assessment, the Chicago Board of Education had authorized the creation of a Survey Committee in 1961 and appointed Havighurst, a specialist in the sociological study of education, to chair the team in 1963.<sup>41</sup> A published authority in his field and an active member of liberal citizens' groups in Chicago, Havighurst characterized his work in holistic, civic terms. What good were sociologists, he asked, "who can write good critiques, but cannot find their way around in a real community[?]"<sup>42</sup> Havighurst certainly knew his way around real communities. More than anyone else in the city, Havighurst grasped the special place that an involved community of racially liberal, college-focused, middle-class parents were taking in local education politics. But Havighurst did more than simply report on this phenomenon. He actively promoted it, pushing the notion that these groups, if properly coached, could reinvent schools and save the city. Whether appearing with Paul Zuber at publicity events for the *Webb* case or sitting in on regional school planning sessions in Marynook living rooms, Robert Havighurst embodied the nexus of middle-class educational activism and civil rights during the Willis era.

Because of Havighurst's public alliance with Chicago's civil rights coalition and his public stand against the neighborhood school, Willis opposed him at every turn, while liberal and civil

---

<sup>41</sup> See *Chicago's Schools*, vol. XXIX, no. 2 (January 1963) 3.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Havighurst to Francis Chase, April 6, 1955. box 22, folder 7, Robert J. Havighurst Papers, Special Collections Research Center, The University of Chicago (hereafter Havighurst Papers).

rights groups supported him.<sup>43</sup> On integration, Havighurst claimed to defer to the Hauser committee, but his report was both more thorough and more ambitious than anything the Hauser panel produced.<sup>44</sup> Havighurst's team took a multi-angled view of the school experience, gathering I.Q., achievement, class size, and socioeconomic data, inspecting curriculum materials, facilities, and student behavior at over 160 schoolhouses, observing and interviewing over 1300 teachers, and tabulating survey responses they received from over 70% per cent of the city's teaching staff. Havighurst attempted to render a picture of schools, teachers, and pupils as stitched into the broader fabric of social life, interdependent with the demographic and economic changes that the city and the metro region had experienced in the postwar era. Race, class, and migration, Havighurst argued, had sorted students into an irrational typology of "high-status schools, main-line schools, common-man schools, and inner-city schools."<sup>45</sup>

For the inner city, Havighurst proposed higher levels of funding to pay for a flood of extra staff, programs, and facilities. As for the "fate of the city," however, Havighurst stressed that the "more 'favored' types of schools," needed dramatic interventions as well.<sup>46</sup> In areas of racial transition, he emphasized, schools "may well be the *determining factor*" in retaining white and middle-class families.<sup>47</sup> If his pitch for a school-driven "social urban renewal" summoned visions of an integrated, white-collar metropolis, Havighurst took a more sober view of the short-term. Depending on "the consensus of sentiment" in a given neighborhood, Havighurst advised,

---

<sup>43</sup> On liberal support, see Paul West, "Many Groups Back School Survey Choice," *Chicago Tribune*, April 29, 1963, B17.

<sup>44</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 10-11, passim.

<sup>45</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 145.

<sup>46</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 182.

<sup>47</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 369, 374, emphasis in the original.

the Board “*should carry on practices to promote integration more vigorously in some areas of the city than in others.*”<sup>48</sup>

For those areas where stable integration was both desired and feasible, Havighurst recommended that “home rule areas,” managed by community councils, could adjust attendance boundaries to establish integrated, high-quality high schools that “compar[ed] favorably with the best suburban schools.”<sup>49</sup> Havighurst identified three regions, all clinging to the shores of Lake Michigan, that might be recruited into the “Area Plan for Neighborhood Stabilization” (see fig. 1).<sup>50</sup> The dynamic efforts afoot Out South and in the Greater Southeast earned them a prominent spot on Havighurst’s map. In the rest of the city, the neighborhood school concept could remain intact, unthreatened by “forced social change.”<sup>51</sup>

Many Chicagoans saw the Coons, Hauser, and Havighurst reports the way that Willis did: as an assault on the neighborhood school and as powerful tools for Chicago’s civil rights activists. For his part, Coons tried to tamp down the political commotion, noting that the focus on his report’s negative aspects were akin to “throwing just the conclusions of the Kinsey Report at the public.”<sup>52</sup> Conservatives in the local news media attempted to enlist Coons, “a likable and very sincere man,” as a counterweight to more militant demands for systemic integration.<sup>53</sup> The

---

<sup>48</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 383, 379, emphasis in the original.

<sup>49</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 379; Robert J. Havighurst “A Positive Approach,” speech to Citizens Schools Committee, fall, 1964, box 27, folder 3, Philip M. Hauser Papers, SCRC, University of Chicago Library, the University of Chicago, (hereafter Hauser Papers).

<sup>50</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 383-390, Havighurst’s estimated that these areas comprised roughly thirty per cent of the city’s population. See Robert Havighurst, “A Positive Approach,” box 27, folder 3, Hauser Papers.

<sup>51</sup> Havighurst, *Report*, 379, 381.

<sup>52</sup> John Madigan, “Standpoint, transcript” December 3-4, 1962. IAF Records, box 22, folder 348.

<sup>53</sup> John Madigan, “Standpoint, transcript” December 3-4, 1962. IAF Records, box 22, folder 348.

CCCCO lauded the Hauser report, until it became clear that Willis could disregard it. Anti-integrationists condemned the excesses of “Hauserism” and sent hate mail to the University of Chicago.<sup>54</sup> Hauser and Havighurst received various rebukes as “communists” and “useless sociologists” “who contribute nothing.”<sup>55</sup> Both men became public defenders of their work, with mixed success. Hauser was indelicate with the wider community, and local media relished when the ivory tower demographer let slip his disdain for the public. Booed by white parents at Bogan High School, Hauser snapped that many in the crowd could use more schooling.<sup>56</sup> In a speech at the City Club, he called Illinois’ General Assembly “a hillbilly legislature.”<sup>57</sup> Havighurst proved a smoother operator, boiling his message down for public consumption to “the urban community school philosophy,” which appeared to improve, rather than replace the neighborhood school concept.<sup>58</sup> In contrast to Benjamin Willis’ “four walls school,” which promised only to do what it could with the raw material that was forced into its classrooms, Havighurst called for schools that responded directly to the needs of neighborhoods, enlisting parents and community members into the process of renewal—a project that would “make the city exciting and attractive.”<sup>59</sup>

For Havighurst, his involvement in the fight against Willis and de facto segregation served to clarify his views on the relationship between civil rights, community schooling, and metropolitan

---

<sup>54</sup> See “Vote to Test Clustering of Public Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 27, 1964, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Letter, undated, box 6, folder 4, Phillip M. Hauser Papers, Special Collections Research Center, The University of Chicago. See also Chesly Manly, “Dr. Havighurst Has Heard Pinko Before,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 5, 1963, N1.

<sup>56</sup> Letter, box 6, folder 4, Hauser Papers.

<sup>57</sup> “Hauser Sees Legislators as Hillbillies,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 14, 1964, 11.

<sup>58</sup> Havighurst “A Positive Approach,” box 27, folder 3, Hauser Papers.

<sup>59</sup> Havighurst quoted in Lois White, “Havighurst Reviews his Own Report: Chicago Schools Get an F,” *Chicago Daily News*, Oct. 8, 1966.

change. In the 1962 edition of his widely-used textbook, *Society and Education*, Havighurst and his co-author had written apolitically of school desegregation as one example among many of an emerging “arousal of conscience,” which would soon remove an important “barrier to democratic pluralism” in the United States.<sup>60</sup> In the third edition, published in 1967, Havighurst wrote approvingly of the “Negro Revolution’s” role in pushing the schools question to the fore, quoting president Lyndon Johnson’s 1965 Howard University speech as proof of the movement’s civic value. Sections on intergroup relations, prejudice, and ethnocentrism were reduced dramatically, replaced by a new section detailing the court-ordered and voluntary tactics being pursued in the name of integrated education.<sup>61</sup> Havighurst had also sharpened his criticism of administrative intransigence. His 1962 edition presented a neutral description of the differences between “traditional” and “community” approaches to school management. By the 1967 edition, these sections read like a bitter brief against Willis. Partisans of the “four-walls” schools approach, Havighurst explained, “[made] clear to parents and interested citizens that the schools are run by professionals who know their business and who do not need help from other people in the community.”<sup>62</sup> As for the spatial processes of metropolitan inequality and stratification, Havighurst’s discussion in 1967 was identical to his earlier edition—and identical to the digest that Marynook homeowners had read in 1959. Integration, his textbook explained, could be but another goal within the project of “fundamental urban renewal,” which aimed to arrest the flight

---

<sup>60</sup> Robert Havighurst and Berenice Neugarten, *Education and Society* (second edition) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1962) 292.

<sup>61</sup> Robert Havighurst and Berenice Neugarten, *Education and Society* (third edition) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967) 365-383. Havighurst and Neugarten retained a “balanced” approach within these pages, noting that there were dissenters from the integration view, including segregationist academic eugenicists, “the Black Muslim group,” and some “inarticulate” factions of black parents.

<sup>62</sup> Robert Havighurst and Berenice Neugarten, *Education and Society* (third edition) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967) 229.

of middle-class populations and create mixed-income communities. In textbook form, “cross-sectional communities” whose “sentiment determines the speed and extensiveness of integration,” appeared as abstract propositions.<sup>63</sup> In Chicago, there were real neighborhoods where such planning was being undertaken, but they were also the ones where Havighurst or his ideas had already paid a visit.

For all of their efforts to booster the public profile of integrated education, Coons, Hauser and Havighurst worked under especially cramped conditions. Benjamin Willis was but the most obvious cog in the legal and political machinery that narrowed the scope of school desegregation in Chicago. On the legal front, the latest court decisions dimmed the hopes that Zuber and his colleagues had entertained just two years prior.<sup>64</sup> Memos passed within the city’s corporation counsel suggested that racial quotas might not be upheld in the courts but that the neighborhood school probably would be.<sup>65</sup> With the neighborhood school concept insulated from court challenge, the CCCO invited federal intervention, filing a Title VI complaint with the Office of Health, Education, and Welfare. For a flash of five days in 1965, HEW unilaterally affirmed the complaint by blocking \$32 million in new funding to Chicago’s schools, but this initiative was

---

<sup>63</sup> Robert Havighurst and Berenice Neugarten, *Education and Society* (third edition) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967) 378.

<sup>64</sup> Victories in *Taylor v. New Rochelle* (1961) and *Jackson v. Pasadena School Board* (1962) suggested that attendance-area concepts could be taken on using the *Brown* toolbox. The Supreme Court’s decision to decline review of the *Balaban v. Rubin* decision in New York put many urban integration reforms on firm legal ground, but quotas were explicitly disavowed. In 1963 and 1964, decisions in Indiana, Kansas, and Massachusetts all held that school boards’ maintenance of neighborhood attendance boundaries did not constitute “an affirmative act to achieve segregation.” Most emphatic among these was *Bell* in Gary, Indiana. See discussion of *Bell* in Glass, “From Sword to Shield to Myth.” For legal analysis from the era, see J.L.W. “Racial Imbalance in the Public Schools: Legislative Motive and the Constitution,” *Virginia Law Review*, 50, no. 3 (April 1964) 464-534. Paul Auster, “De-Facto Segregation” *William and Mary Law Review* 6, no. 41 (1965) 41-57; Owen M. Fiss, “Racial Balance in the Public Schools: The Constitutional Concepts,” *Harvard Law Review*, 78, no. 3 (January 1965) 564-617;

<sup>65</sup> Memorandum, John O. Tuohy to John C. Melaniphy, April 2, 1964, box 89, folder 973, CUL records.

quickly flattened. A quick meeting between Mayor Richard J. Daley and President Lyndon B. Johnson unfroze the funds, effectively returning Chicago's integration initiatives to local control.<sup>66</sup> By 1965, with no federal pressure, no court mandate, and Willis back on the job, Hauser and Havighurst were, as the *Sun-Times* and the Urban League put it, "Two Reports on A Shelf."<sup>67</sup>

### ***The Bureaucratic Daydream***

In the summer of 1966, leaders of Chicago's civil rights movement finally got what they wanted: the retirement of school superintendent Benjamin Willis. Among those that had battled Willis, new schools chief James Redmond was met with a certain level of optimism, which the new superintendent attempted to reflect.<sup>68</sup> Privately, the new superintendent confessed a deep "feeling of inadequacy" to the challenges facing him.<sup>69</sup> During the same summer that Redmond prepped for his job, the National Guard patrolled the streets of Chicago's West Side after several nights of rioting. Meanwhile, Martin Luther King Jr., who had moved to town in January, undertook a grueling schedule of rallies and marches, which, on more than one occasion, angry white residents greeted with showers of rocks and bricks. By the end of August, the unprecedented "summit" saw King and Mayor Richard J. Daley compete to stage-manage an

---

<sup>66</sup> Danna, *Desegregating Chicago's Schools*, 1-3; Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus: Segregated Schools and National Policy* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1978) 158-159; Stephen D. London, "Business and the Chicago Public School System, 1890-1966," diss. University of Chicago, 1968, 137-138.

<sup>67</sup> "Hauser and Havighurst: Two Reports on a Shelf, a re-publication by the Chicago Urban League (pamphlet), box 51, folder 17, Lincoln Park Conservation Association Records, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter LPCA Records).

<sup>68</sup> Casey Banas, "Want to Prove Big City School System Isn't Doomed" *Chicago Tribune*, May 12, 1966, 6.

<sup>69</sup> Redmond to Havighurst, May 17, 1966. box 28, folder 12, Havighurst Papers.

urban crisis in motion.<sup>70</sup> In January of 1967, the Board of Education received a report from the U.S. Office of Education highlighting areas of concern under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the report, Redmond was given explicit instructions to move immediately toward establishing integrated, innovative schools with broad attendance areas.

Within a year, Redmond had secured a HEW grant and convened a working group to produce a desegregation plan. A special team—staffed by Jack Coons, along with education scholar Michael Usdan of Columbia University, and assistant superintendent of Detroit schools Arthur Johnson—conceptualized a new regime of student assignment. The resulting report, known colloquially as “the Redmond Plan,” struck the same mix of integrationist mission and sociocivic cynicism that had informed the work of Coons, Hauser, and Havighurst. On “those elements of the white population that are least prepared,” the team advised Redmond to “avoid forcing the extreme pressures of school integration.”<sup>71</sup> In the short-term, the team recommended that permissive transfer be expanded, limited busing of black students be initiated, and quotas on black enrollment be introduced in fringe schools. As planners warned, “only a fraction of ghetto youngsters” would see any change in the racial demography of their classrooms in the coming decade.<sup>72</sup> These conclusions followed from what the broader community of Chicago-based demographers were predicting. Concurrent with the Redmond Plan working group, a second team, staffed by members of Real Estate Research Corporation, compiled population and real

---

<sup>70</sup> See Amanda Seligman, “‘But Burn, No’: The Rest of the Crowd in Three Civil Disorders in 1960s Chicago,” *Journal of Urban History*, 37 no. 2 (March 2011); Alan Anderson and George Pickering *Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 237-269, reference to Marquette Park at 258.

<sup>71</sup> Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, B-17, B-19.

<sup>72</sup> Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, B-17, B-19.

estate data into a set of projections on school enrollment for the next half-decade. In their report, appended to the final draft of the Redmond Plan, the RERC departed from Willis-era pretenses to color-blindness, warning that with a sustained “decrease in the [white] birth rates and the out-migration of white females of child-bearing ages” from the city, “the intensive transition” of neighborhoods from white to black could be expected to continue.<sup>73</sup>

If the Redmond team’s short-range proposals were framed to lower expectations against confounding demographics, their long-term goals were hardly conservative. As part of a “thirty-year undertaking,” the working group called for the development of a citywide system of racially integrated “educational parks.” A high-tech novelty in school facilities design, ed parks envisioned giant school complexes where students from kindergarten through community college would mass on a single campus, and resources could be deployed on a shared-use system.<sup>74</sup>

While the feasibility of the educational park model awaited further research, the team proposed that within three to seven years, nuclei could be constructed around something called the “magnet school.”<sup>75</sup> For Redmond’s team, the magnet school would have wide attendance

---

<sup>73</sup> Anthony Downs, et al. *Projections of Population and School Enrollment by Community Area for the City of Chicago, 1970 and 1975* (Chicago: Real Estate Research Corporation, 1968) IV-7; II-5.

<sup>74</sup> See *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*, 167-183; *Education Parks: Appraisals of Plans to Improve Educational Quality and Desegregate the Schools* (Washington: The United States Commission on Civil Rights Clearing House, 1967) 1-13; For a history, see Ansley Erickson,

<sup>75</sup> By the summer of 1966, school superintendents in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Pasadena had dropped the “magnet” name into their project proposals for ESEA funding, and Bertram High School in Philadelphia had been announced as on its way to becoming a magnet. Meanwhile, Syracuse, NY, East Orange, NJ, Berkeley, CA, Pittsburgh, PA, and Albuquerque, NM were in the planning stages of educational park facilities. See U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Pacesetters in Innovation: Fiscal Year 1966, Title III Supplementary Centers and Services Program, Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966) 34; Civil Rights Commission, *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools: A Report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967) 165-183; Civil Rights Commission, *Education Parks: Appraisals of Plans to Improve Educational Quality and Desegregate the Schools* (Washington: The United States Commission on Civil Rights Clearing House, 1967) 1-13.

boundaries and a computerized lottery to ensure integration, “outstanding” educational programs, and provisions for transportation, but beyond these criteria, the idea was a blank slate.<sup>76</sup>

As students of Chicago’s school enrollment patterns were well aware, there were already specialized high schools with enlarged attendance boundaries, but they still tended to be racially marked. On the North Side, technical high schools like Lane enrolled only a handful of black students while, on the South Side, Lindbloom and Chicago Vocational appeared to be transitioning toward an all-black student body, and without much ability to draw from beyond their immediate surroundings. Well-regarded vocational schools like Dunbar on the South Side and Lucy Flower on the West Side, were strongly “magnetic,” pulling motivated black students from well beyond their perimeter, but unable to draw any white pupils. Only Jones Commercial, an all-girls office-work school located in the South Loop, appeared successful at hosting an integrated student population that was truly drawn from across the city.<sup>77</sup>

In Chicago, novelty concepts like the “magnet school” and the “educational park” were vessels into which the political lessons of the Willis era could be concentrated and pitched anew, promising the first material response to the civil rights demand that the neighborhood school had to go and giving hope to white communities that stabilization was around the corner. With expanded attendance boundaries, these new structures promised to draw students from all corners of the segregated city to neutral turf. Tightly managed racial quotas would guarantee places for black students while easing white fears of rapid racial inundation, and the hype ginned up around new facilities and innovative programs would “anchor the whites,” ensuring that black

---

<sup>76</sup> Imagining a number of optional configurations, the report supposed that Chicago’s magnets might have technical or vocational specializations, or that they might operate in cooperation with suburban, private, or parochial schools. Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, B-6, B-9, B-24, B-26.

<sup>77</sup> Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, C-23-C-29 and maps 5-13 of 13.

kids had someone to integrate with.<sup>78</sup> One of the Redmond Plan's more remarkable proposals called for the creation of ten Lakefront peninsulas, each housing a massive integrated educational compound of 20,000 kids.<sup>79</sup> While these images were designed to tickle the civic-futurist imagination, they also revealed just how skeptical civic leaders were about the prospects of racial harmony; the best place they could imagine for integrated schools was in the middle of Lake Michigan.

## **Conclusion**

At the center of the Redmond Plan was the argument put forward by black civil rights litigants and academic educationists: the neighborhood school concept would have to be reformed or abandoned in order to give black schoolchildren a fair shot at urban education. But this conclusion had been joined to the belief that any new model of school enrollment would require an equally aggressive agenda that aimed at open-minded white middle class. Thus, with inclusion and expanded opportunity for those on the city's racial and social margins as the original problem, policy researchers came to endorse programs designed with people like themselves in mind. Against their own worst fears, proponents of voluntary desegregation also reimagined interracial peace as sophisticated pro-growth weaponry in the tussle over metropolitan resources. As anchors of community, high-status integrated schools might prevent the feared slide in land values that followed middle-class flight. As specialized incubators of a multiracial white-collar labor force, proposals also responded to the worry that the city's human

---

<sup>78</sup> Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, B-17.

<sup>79</sup> Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, B-24, B-25, B-28.

capital resources were being squandered by irrational and inefficient schooling. This meant, on the one hand, purging the school system of its racist assumptions about the capacities of black children, and on the other, tightening educational institutions' abilities to identify those students whose superior talents were being lost amid an ever-larger sea of the "disadvantaged." Only magnet schools promised to deliver such a wide range of civic benefits in a single package. But the educationist synthesis left fundamental questions unresolved. Was desegregation an egalitarian "opening" of the city, in which clout, class, and culture could be shaken loose from their uneven accumulations and redistributed evenly across the landscape? Or was desegregation a more pragmatic tinkering with the city's native norms, in which racial balance, even if only feasible in a few middle-class schoolhouses, might provide a prototype for improved social relations? As Hauser, Havighurst and the designers of the Redmond Plan saw things, the latter might provide the means by which the former could ultimately be achieved. As Jack Coons warned before leaving for Berkeley in 1968, however, "Public policy, particularly in Chicago, has a characteristic manner of being substantially less than what is envisioned by its planners."<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> John E. Coons, "Chicago" in *Affirmative School Integration: Efforts to Overcome De Facto Segregation in Urban Schools*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1967) 88.

**Chapter 3:**  
**Improvising a City Without Walls:**  
**Choosing the Integration Experiment in 1970s Chicago**



Figure 3: South Shore Commission Members Pass Flyers, 1968, South Shore Commission Records, Box 2, Folder 3, Chicago History Museum Research Center

**Introduction**

During the bitterly cold first days of 1968, Paul Hartrich, president of the South Shore Commission (SSC), left his house in the early morning hours to hit the streets. Joined by SSC secretary Albert Loving Jr., the pair planted themselves outside the South Shore Line's rail station at 71<sup>st</sup> and Jeffrey, and passed out flyers to commuters and passersby. On their way to

their daily routines, Hartrich and Loving's neighbors read that their community was engaged in a grand effort to save the Redmond Plan for school desegregation, and that their attendance was urged at any of five evening meetings, to be held over the course of the next week in South Shore. South Shoreites were encouraged to exert maximum pressure on the full roster of civic power players, and make it known that they demanded "meaningful integration" for their community rather than mere "tokenism." If they missed the flier at the train station, area residents could catch a reminder in the local papers, and on their evening television and radio news broadcasts. To accompany their press release, the SSC snapped a photo of Hartrich and Loving, bundled up against subfreezing temperatures, in interracial partnership, pounding the pavement to keep the dream of what they called "managed integration" alive (see figure 3).<sup>1</sup>

Provoking the SSC's scramble for popular support was Superintendent James Redmond's post-Christmas announcement that, as an initial step of implementing his desegregation plan, two busing programs would be initiated at the end of January. One was a one-way transfer of black students in Austin to all-white schools on the Northwest Side and the other would be an "intra-community pilot program," involving several schools in South Shore and the greater South East. For SSC members, the superintendent's declaration was the fulfillment of a dream long deferred. They had waited while Benjamin Willis shelved or trimmed every plan they endorsed during the 1960s. Now, old plans seemed ready to jump off the shelf and onto Redmond's desk, fusing with the SSC's own *South Shore Community Plan* of 1967. Hartrich and company now expressed "delight" that regional racial stabilization for the South East was only a month away.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Press releases, photos, January 5-6, 1968, South Shore Commission Records, box 2, folder 3, SSC Records.

<sup>2</sup> Julian Klugman to James Redmond, Dec 28, 1967, box 2, folder 4, SSC Papers.

Against the backdrop of urban politics at the end of the 1960s, there was every reason to see the staged snapshot of interracial cooperation in South Shore as an exceptional, endangered moment. Across the city, other community meetings were being convened, but anti-integrationists were doing the organizing. Just down the road from South Shore, young lawyer and aspiring politico Edward Vrdolyak filed a suit demanding public meetings on the pilot proposal and stood with crowds of women to vow boycotts if any pupil busing plans went forward.<sup>3</sup> On the city's Northwest Side, community-based organizations emphasizing their "Taxpayer" and "Homeowner" character staged rallies and motorcades, circulated petitions, penned letters, made obscene phone calls, and paid noisy visits to Board of Education meetings. Their energy captivated the press and drew politicians to their orbit.<sup>4</sup> In Springfield, Republican legislators threatened to stall state school funds if busing moved forward. Not to be outflanked, powerful Chicago Democrats like Congressman Roman Pucinski, chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor, huddled with constituents at neighborhood meetings and headlined thousand-strong rallies at football stadiums, proclaiming that unless Chicagoans stood firm against the Redmond Plan, "this [would be] the end of the neighborhood school."<sup>5</sup> In church gymnasiums and meeting halls from Logan Square to Norwood Park, the handful of citizens who showed up to support integration were booed, shouted down, and physically ejected. The rising profile of white resistance even provoked Mayor Richard J. Daley to break with his usual

---

<sup>3</sup> "Parents Map a Protest on Busing Plan," *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1968, 2; "300 attend busing meeting," *Chicago Tribune*, January 25, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> Danns, *Desegregating Chicago's Public Schools*, 33-34; "Callers Abuse Schools Chiefs about Busing," *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> "Parents Map a Protest on Busing Plan," *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1968.; "1,700 Attend Busing Parley at Steinmetz," *Chicago Tribune*, February 16, 1968.; "Hanson Pk. Busing Protest draws 2,000," *Chicago Tribune*, February 26, 1968; Pucinski quoted in Ellen Hoffman, "Chicago Kills Busing Plan," *Washington Post*, February 29, 1968.

reticence on school issues, declaring that “if a majority is opposed to something, then who in government has a right to set themselves above the authority of the people?”<sup>6</sup>

Increasingly, voices for integration were having difficulty finding a hearing in black neighborhoods, too. Over the 1967-68 school year, the salience of Black Power as a cultural touchstone for youth activism inspired new rounds of organizing on educational issues, evincing strong streaks of racial self-determinism. While the density and organization of protest were far below the levels marshalled during the Willis-era boycotts of the early sixties, students at high schools from the Near North Side to the West Side to the Far South Side staged dramatic confrontations with school authorities, made demands for Afro-American curricula, and pushed for the ouster of white administrators. The high point of coordinated action came in October of 1968, when “Black Monday” boycotts swept thirty-one Chicago public high schools.<sup>7</sup> Prominent black educational reformers pivoted as well, leaving transfer schemes and attendance boundary schemes aside in favor of experiments in community control and cultural self-definition. At the Chicago Urban League, young staff members accused Executive Director Bill Berry of running an organization “without the voiced desires of black people” and “frequently antithetical to the needs of the black community.” Taking aim at the League’s traditional notion that “quality education is integrated education,” dissenters demanded that “quality black education controlled by black communities” be the guiding mission.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Meyer Weinberg, [untitled article] *Integrated Education*, January-February, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> See Dionne Danns, “Black Student Empowerment Efforts and Chicago School Reform Efforts of 1968,” *Urban Education*, 37, no. 5, 638-650; and Jaime Alanis, “The Harrison High School Walkouts of 1968: Struggle for Equal Schools and Chicanismo in Chicago” PhD diss. University of Illinois, 2010; and “Chronicle of Race and Schools in Chicago, 1962-1976,” (compiled from *Integrated Education*), Chicago Board of Education Archives, Desegregation Collection.

<sup>8</sup> Meyer Weinberg, *Integrated Education*, July-August 1968.

Behind the headlines of black rebellion and white resistance, a select constituency of committed teachers, parents, administrators, and reformers pushed forward the project of integrated education, investing their hopes in whatever the new superintendent and his “magnet” idea could deliver. On the same day that nearly a thousand white demonstrators thronged Board offices to protest Redmond’s limited busing plans, the Board of Education approved the consulting contract for the city’s first magnet school construction project.<sup>9</sup> Between 1968 and 1974, Chicago’s Public Schools planned, staffed, and gradually filled enrollment in two new elementary schools and a new high school with expanded attendance boundaries and a racial integration mandate. The political headwinds that greeted busing programs and boundary redrawing at the end of the 1960s meant that the magnet school, as sole survivor, would become synonymous with integrated education in Chicago. Magnet schools, which opened enrollments beyond the boundaries of neighborhood, established integration by way of racial quotas, and attracted parents with new facilities and innovative curricula, were scarce, enrolling only a tiny sliver of the hundreds of thousands of youngsters in Chicago’s system. As well-resourced symbols of a racially integrated future for urban education, however, they held considerable power to command public attention. As the Redmond Plan had promised, if one magnet prototype could succeed, a “halo effect” would follow.<sup>10</sup>

This chapter tracks both the prototype and the halo, arguing that the South Side’s first magnet school constituted the last gasp of the the liberal project of regional racial stabilization that had been the original rationale for voluntary integration. In the wake of the stabilization paradigm’s collapse, the magnet concept’s start-from-scratch premise attracted a new set of educational

---

<sup>9</sup> “1<sup>st</sup> Pupil Busing Hearing Set,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan 25, 1968, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, E-8.

researchers and reformers, whose interests in experimentalist, multiculturalist, and antiauthoritarian education pushed the curricular content of the magnet concept in radically egalitarian directions. Reclaiming the civil rights slogan of “the open city,” educational planners and consultants translated the metaphor of barrier-elimination into architectural and curricular terms. In contrast to roiling ghettos and segregated traditionalisms, magnets promised an alternative urban dreamscape that was integrated, tolerant, and peaceful. But these efforts, introduced under the scaled-down conditions of a controlled experiment, subsumed the spirit of social movements within the imperatives of a nascent educational marketplace characterized by extreme scarcity. In the absence of a systemic program of reform, believers in the magnet vision struggled to judge their own success. By the mid-1970s, the market—measured in the numbers of students on magnet school waiting lists—supplied a provocative answer that some researchers and policymakers found themselves willing to promote: where there was a line of eager customers, integrated education was working.

### **Part I: South Shore and the End of Regional Integration**

Nowhere had the thesis that Marynook parents had advanced in their lawsuit against Willis in 1964—that the neighborhood school might need to be jettisoned in order to save the neighborhood—proven more compelling than in South Shore. A high-status Lakefront community for what resident Hal Baron jokingly recalled as “Lace Curtain Irish and Uptight Middle-Class Jews,” the neighborhood had, by the mid-1960s, become the new front line of racial change, and the epicenter of the South Side’s liberal hopes for a stable transition to an

integrated community.<sup>11</sup> Unlike their counterparts in Marynook and Chatham, however, where low-slung ranches and bungalows predominated, South Shore's homeowners were in the minority, with most residents renting units in a mix of Lakefront high rises, courtyard apartment buildings, three flats, and two flats. Against this diverse context of property transfer and tenure, area residents built one of the city's most sustained organizational responses to racial transition, the South Shore Commission. By 1967, the SSC had a seventy-five-member board, 3,500 dues-paying members, a \$90,000 budget, and a monthly newsletter that informed 29,000 households and businesses about the organization's fourteen different committees and fifty block clubs, all working "to offer hope and reassurance to people of all races who want to live in a stable inter-racial community."<sup>12</sup> With potent lines of influence to civic elites, political brokers, and the citywide media, the SSC was widely perceived in the terms that it laid out for itself—as "a leadership community," engaged in a "labor of love" to determine the fate of the entire South Side.<sup>13</sup>

Having begun as a tri-faith ministerial alliance in 1953, the SSC's arc toward managed integration began in 1959, when barely a handful of black families had moved east of Stony Island Avenue. Experimenting with a variety of strategies, SSC leadership sought to preserve

---

<sup>11</sup> Harold Baron, interview with the author. See Harvey Molotch, "Racial Change in a Stable Community," *American Journal of Sociology*, 75, no. 2 (September 1969) 226-228; Harvey Molotch, *Managed Integration: The Dilemmas of Doing Good in the City*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) 43-51

<sup>12</sup> The SSC's numbers were so impressive that one sympathetic sociologist reckoned that they were "perhaps the largest community organization in the United States." Molotch, *Managed Integration*, 9. See membership and organizational numbers in *New City*, Quote in The South Shore Commission, "The South Shore Community Plan: A Comprehensive Plan for Present and Future by the Residents of South Shore," April 1967, 25, Municipal Reference Collection, the Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago.

<sup>13</sup> See *The South Shore Community Plan: A Comprehensive Plan for Present and Future by the Residents of South Shore* (1967), Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library Center.

South Shore as a gentele neighborhood free from racial panic. “Where there is no fear,” declared the SSC’s first executive director Richard Jaffe, “there is no market for speculators.”<sup>14</sup> Some efforts were preemptive, as with the hundreds of “rumor clinics” SSC staffers ran to educate their neighbors about the dangers of prejudice, or the vigilant reporting of panic-peddling realtors to the state licensing agency.<sup>15</sup> Similarly defensive were SSC programs that sought stewardship of the area’s housing stock, by seeking code enforcement on negligent landlords and awarding prizes to well-maintained properties. More proactive efforts, ramped up in the middle-1960s under president Martin Rosene and ambitious executive director Julian Klugman, promoted interracialism as a positive goal while also working to curate the stock of people who inhabited South Shore properties. By way of a tenant referral program, the SSC worked directly with the University of Chicago’s community and real estate office to place hundreds of students and faculty in what commission leaders hoped would be a “Midway extension” or a “Second Hyde Park.”<sup>16</sup> In further pursuit of in-movers with “compatible cultural goals,” the SSC provided extensive technical support to landlords and realtors in the processing of tenant applications, including deploying an inspector to visit would-be tenants’ current homes where assessments were made of the unit’s condition, quality of housekeeping, and number of occupants.<sup>17</sup> All the

---

<sup>14</sup> M.W. Newman, “South Shore Detours Fear Peddlers,” *Chicago Daily News*, December 1, 1959, “South Shore,” clippings file, Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago (hereafter MRC clippings file).

<sup>15</sup> “How South Shore Fights Panic,” *Chicago Daily News*, Nov 30, 1959; M.W. Newman, “South Shore Detours Fear Peddlers,” *Chicago Daily News*, December 1, 1959, “South Shore,” MRC clippings file.

<sup>16</sup> “Statistics Reveal Stable South Shore Community,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 9, 1969, “South Shore,” MRC clippings file.

<sup>17</sup> Klugman quoted in Richard Hoffmann, “South Shore Pushes Battle to Preserve its Good Life,” *Chicago’s American*, Nov 22, 1964, “South Shore,” MRC clippings file; “Statistics Reveal Stable South Shore Community,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 9, 1969, “South Shore,” MRC clippings file; “South Shore

while, SSC staff and members undertook an intensive schedule of more typical neighborhood improvement activities—from open houses and art walks to youth recreation programs and neighborhood watch patrols.<sup>18</sup> Recognizing that cultural and technical nudges to the residential real estate market might not be sufficient, the SSC corralled dozens of its highest-caliber members—architects, planners, lawyers, ad men—and set to work researching and developing a comprehensive community plan, which sought to formalize and visualize the SSC’s brand of managed integration as a form of regional renewal.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the schools committee sought similarly aggressive shifts in public policy. In addition to signing on to proposals for “regional high school plans” with their neighbors in Marynook and Chatham, the SSC in the mid-1960s focused on the northwest corner of South Shore, where Parkside, O’Keefe, and Fermi elementary schools had “flipped” to all-black enrollments, followed closely by the demographic turnover of the surrounding area. Determined to save the well-regarded Bryn Mawr Elementary, from a similar fate, the SSC backed a complicated “petal plan” which would have created a five-section option-based attendance area to preserve the sixty-forty black-white balance at Bryn Mawr. Opposed by the PTAs at all the surrounding nearby schools (which included those on either side of “transition”), Board dropped the petal plan in 1965, citing the legal questions that quotas raised.<sup>20</sup> The following year, a team

---

Commission Plans Rosene Tribute,” *Daily Calumet*, July 19, 1966, South Shore Commission Papers, Box 1, Album 1, Chicago History Museum Research Center.

<sup>18</sup> Molotch, *Managed Integration*, 66.

<sup>19</sup> The South Shore Commission, *The South Shore Community Plan: A Comprehensive Plan for Present and Future by the Residents of South Shore* (1967).

<sup>20</sup> “Bradwell Plan Fails Approval,” *Southeast Economist*, March 7, 1965; Hope Justus, “4 PTA Groups Oppose Racial ‘Petal’ Plan,” *Chicago’s American*, March 6, 1965; Christopher Chandler, “Friends of Schools Group Studies South Shore Plan,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, March 10, 1965; Lillian S. Calhoun,

of SSC-member parents attempted to press the question with a lawsuit, arguing that the Board of Education had an affirmative duty to impose quotas, lest resegregation occur under its watch. The judge was unconvinced, noting that Illinois' Armstrong Law prohibited the use of race to determine admission.<sup>21</sup>

For SSC president Paul Hartrich, the arrival of Superintendent Redmond in 1966 promised another bite at the school-stabilization apple. Redmond's plan to bus students across the greater Southeast as part of an "intra-community pilot program," announced in the closing days of 1967, was the fulfillment of a dream long deferred. Hartrich and SSC leadership bundled up and hit the icy streets to enlist their neighbors in one more push for a region-wide system of "meaningful integration."<sup>22</sup> But Hartrich and the SSC found themselves in a bind. In the heart of South Shore, at north end of the region, where black families were numerous and several elementary schools had already "tipped," the SSC claimed to find abundant white support for the pilot plan. In fact, as SSC leadership explained, they wanted even more busing than Redmond was proposing, insisting that Board approve a region-wide, two-way transportation program for fourteen schools, rather than a "token" one-way plan. The further south, east, and distant from black residency one traveled, however, the fewer white volunteers for integration could be found. In South Chicago and Calumet Heights, white parents wrote to Redmond to make clear that they were not under the sway of the SSC and wanted no part of the plan.<sup>23</sup> Among young people,

---

"Willis To Redraw Area 'Petal Plan'" Week of March 13-19, 1965 [all clippings in South Shore Commission Records, Box 2, Folder 2, CHM].

<sup>21</sup> Case File, *Sklansky. et al v Board of Education of the City of Chicago*, Circuit Court of Cook County, No. 66 CH 6903, Archives of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

<sup>22</sup> See Press Releases, photos, January 5-6, 1968, box 2, folder 3, SSC Records.

<sup>23</sup> See Mrs. S. Emmerman to James Redmond, December 1967, , box 2, Folder 3, SSC Records. See further Bowen parent comment in Steffes, "Managing Integration," 17.

racial antagonism took physical form as Eckersall Park became the new forum for regular fights between South Shore's black teenagers and their white and Mexican counterparts from South Chicago.<sup>24</sup> Against this backdrop, many black South Shoreites had grown exhausted with the “elusive goals” and endless anxiety about racial stabilization.<sup>25</sup> Integration of the sort being proffered by the SSC relied on a political will that was in short supply, and on a demographic formula that many saw as a tool for a cadre of well-positioned whites to limit their exposure to their black neighbors, while shunting the burden to whites in adjacent neighborhoods. As SSC members' failed lawsuit had demonstrated, quotas may have seemed reasonable on paper, but any attempt to squeeze caps onto the churn of transitioning populations in existing schoolhouses were would necessarily displace black students in favor of white ones, further undermining support for integration.

It was this South Shore problem—resentment from black parents in the neighborhood and resistance from whites just outside of it—that highlighted the necessity of starting anew, with racial quotas built into the brick, mortar, and ethos of a new and desirable schoolhouse. The magnet school, while scrapping mandatory transfer completely and scaling back from plans for region-wide stabilization, promised to scrape the slate clean and build integrated education from the ground up. The South Shore Commission got its seat at the table, developing a working proposal for a “mini-magnet” school, to be split among two existing facilities—one at Robert

---

<sup>24</sup> “South Shore Commission Requests Increases in Parks,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 17, 1969.

<sup>25</sup> “FOCUS demands,” *Chicago Daily Defender*, August 3, 1968, 10; “South Shore Group Against 1-Way Busing,” *Chicago Defender*, February 7, 1968. See also Steffes, 16, and Danns, *Desegregating Chicago's Schools*, 36.

Black Elementary in South Shore, and another in a synagogue twenty blocks south in Pill Hill.<sup>26</sup> Children from nineteen schools south of 47<sup>th</sup> Street would be allowed to apply for the one hundred and fifty places in the inaugural cohort of first through sixth graders, with slots reserved for a racial balance of fifty per cent white and fifty per cent black.<sup>27</sup> The proposal was light on specifics, mentioning class sizes of twenty-five pupils, “outstanding art,” “modern mathematics,” and “multi-ethnic textbooks.”<sup>28</sup> In July of 1968, the Board approved the proposal, appointed a principal, and began hiring interviews with a multiracial pool of interested teachers.<sup>29</sup> In September, students starting their school year at neighborhood schools across the South Side were handed forms to apply to Robert Black. The magnet was strong, pulling over sixteen hundred applications, prompting the Board to expand its first cohort to three hundred.<sup>30</sup> The integrated faculty conducted a hasty self-guided in-service in the weeks before classes began.<sup>31</sup> On September, 30<sup>th</sup>, 1968, Chicago’s first magnet school students stepped off their buses and walked into Robert Black Elementary.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> *Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago*, December, July 10, 1968, 68-569. (hereafter, *Proceedings*).

<sup>27</sup> “News of the Chicago Public Schools,” September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968, School Files, box A-D, folder Robert Black, CBOE Archives.

<sup>28</sup> “News of the Chicago Public Schools,” September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968, School Files, box A-D, folder Robert Black, CBOE Archives, “Chicago Voter, Summer 1969” in Folder ‘Schools—Black School’ Clippings File, Chicago History Museum Research Center (hereafter CHM clippings file).

<sup>29</sup> *Proceedings*, July 10, 1968.

<sup>30</sup> “News of the Chicago Public Schools,” September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1968; *Southeast Economist*, September 19, 1968 in, folder ‘Schools—Black School’ Clippings File, CHM clippings file).

<sup>31</sup> “News of the Chicago Public Schools,” 3, no. 1, November 1968. School Files, box Magnet Schools, folder 1, Archives of the Board of Education, City of Chicago.

<sup>32</sup> “Magnet School to Open Today,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 30, 1968, A10. When making reference to the nation’s first magnet school, education scholars have tended to cite the rebranding of McCarver Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington in 1968. The story told here suggests that the title may at least have to be shared. See Christine H. Rossell, “Magnet Schools: No Longer Famous, but Still Intact,”

Meanwhile, the SSC's grip on the moral and technical efficacy of regional integration was slipping. Transition proceeded apace, with seventy percent of South Shore's residents counted as black in the 1970 census and Bryn Mawr joining its neighboring schools in hosting a fully black enrollment. In the press, prominent black journalists called the SSC to a moment of reckoning, collecting dissenting views from the typical boosterism on integration, and calling into question the SSC's rosy "propaganda" about new white families moving to the neighborhood.<sup>33</sup> Reporters now quoted black South Shoreites who preferred "mutual respect" over integration, which some described as "nothing more than white people trying to contain black people politically and economically."<sup>34</sup> Within the SSC, meetings became "serious and sober" affairs, with nearly every issue refracted through the perceived failure of the integrationist project. With the façade of ebullient self-promotion falling away, residents, black and white, now expressed frank disappointment with local conditions. Business owners complained of a severe downtick in the average income of newcomers, listing the dozens of businesses that had begun to close shop and follow white clientele to the South suburbs. Local politicians, block club leaders, and the SSC's own members linked perceptions of disorder at the schools to the rising rates of crime. The early 1970s witnessed a spike in crime citywide, but Police District 4, encompassing the south end of South Shore, reported the city's sharpest rise.<sup>35</sup> Struggling to

---

*Education Next*, 5, no. 2 (Spring 2005); repeated by citation in Erica Frankenberg and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, *The Forgotten Choice: Rethinking Magnet Schools in a Changing Landscape: A Report to Magnet Schools of America* (Irvine: The Civil Rights Project, 2008), 11.

<sup>33</sup> L.F. Palmer, "South Shore divisions run deep," *Chicago Daily News*, February 26, 1969.

<sup>34</sup> L.F. Palmer, "South Shore divisions run deep," *Chicago Daily News*, February 26, 1969.

<sup>35</sup> On the localized crime spike in South Side black middle-class neighborhoods during the early 1970s, see "Neighborhood Crime and Race," *Chicago Reporter*, August 1, 1975, 4. "Beef Up Force in South Shore," *Chicago Defender*, May 27, 1970; William Lloyd to various, February 18, 1972. SSC Records,

hold onto funds and membership, the SSC pivoted to a number of new initiatives as it transitioned to a black-led organization in what members feared was now a downwardly mobile community.<sup>36</sup>

On questions of local schools, concerns centered on the rise of gang influence, including what parents and police characterized as high-profile recruiting efforts by the Black P-Stone Nation. Even at Bryn Mawr, the educational gem of the community, teachers' inability to compel calm in tense and newly crowded classrooms provoked three administrative shake-ups in three years. On these questions, the SSC and other South Shore groups intensified their commitment to community vigilance, linking with block clubs, fathers' clubs, and parent patrols to assert what the assistant principal at South Shore High School called the "economic, political, and organizational muscle" of the black middle class.<sup>37</sup> Police negligence was called out and politicians were called in, as South Shoreites made headlines in the *Daily Defender* for their attempts to hold the line against gangs.<sup>38</sup> Amidst the struggle to regain control over public order and youth mores, the magnet at Robert Black was drawing more students and longer waiting lists every year. As many black parents learned, the magnet's quota tended to work against them. As

---

Box 1, album 3, folder 'February 1972.'; Thomas M. Gray, "S. Shore blames public schools," *Chicago Sun-Times* May 18, 1970.

<sup>36</sup> Departing from its prior identity as a tenant-screener *for* landlords, the SSC's new leadership began to organize tenant unions to check the abuses of negligent property managers. The SSC also became active in the movement to keep South Shore National Bank from leaving the community. See Saul Klibinow to Richard Linyard (undated); Saul Klibinow to Robert Johnson, March 24, 1972; Saul Klibinow to Harry Hardwicke, March 27, 1972; Saul Klibinow to George Charles, March 30, 1972; Saul Klibinow to James Hemmes, March 30, 1972; Saul Klibinow to Charles Brown, April 12, 1972; Saul Klibinow to WL Postweiler, April 12, 1972: all in box 1 album 3, SSC Records.

<sup>37</sup> Mart Gerchen and Barbara Reynolds, "South Shore parents unite against gangs," *Chicago Today*, July 6, 1970; See continuing anti-crime organizing in Ted Watson, "Bryn Mawr West On the Move.," *Chicago Defender*, July 20, 1974, 4.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Leroy, "South Shore Opens War on Stones," *Chicago Defender*, May 25, 1970, 1.

far South Side neighborhoods continued to lose white residents, the school stretched to fill its forty percent white quota, leaving black students overrepresented on the list of the unchosen.<sup>39</sup> School administrators responded by adjusting the black quota upward over the next several years. As the school's principal remarked at mid-decade, "Well, the residential integration certainly didn't work, but the school does."<sup>40</sup>

## **Part II: Embracing Diversity on the North Lakefront**

While South Shore's frantically planned magnet program was a consolation prize for the dashed dreams of regional stabilization, an opportunity on the North Lakefront, far from the live issues of racial transition, offered a chance for a magnet school in the ideal mold, "especially attractive, physically and academically," to be built from scratch.<sup>41</sup> In 1966, Superintendent Redmond announced that the Chicago Board of Education had placed a bid on an eleven-acre lakefront site at the southeastern edge of the Uptown community. The land had been declared federal surplus by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. For the price of one dollar, HEW promised to sell the parcel, which was valued at over five million dollars, to the government agency that would "make the best use of it." Competing with the City Colleges of Chicago and the Illinois Department of Mental Health, Redmond's Board of Education took an aggressive approach to developing a proposal for the land.<sup>42</sup> Even after the City Colleges

---

<sup>39</sup> Howard Willis, "Open Black Magnet to Hyde Park," *Daily Calumet*, May 16, 1975.

<sup>40</sup> Joy Darrow, "A Very Good Example of the busing principle," *Chicago Defender*, Dec 8, 1975.

<sup>41</sup> Quote in Redmond, *Increasing Desegregation*, B-26.

<sup>42</sup> "Competing Groups to Meet on Marine Hospital Use," *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1967, 13. The land's value—\$5,395,000—comes in Casey Banas, "U.S. Gives School 11 Acres," *Chicago Tribune*, Dec 22, 1967.

appeared to have won the bid, Redmond renewed his push with a full press conference and artist's renderings for public consumption, which appeared on the front pages of city dailies in September of 1967. "Never before," claimed Redmond, "have we had a site like the one under discussion or the planning of a school which had the potential of this school for the future of this city."<sup>43</sup> Redmond's public relations campaign paid off. In December, HEW announced that the Board of Education had been awarded the site.<sup>44</sup>

The Board opened the new year by hiring an A-list planning team of consultants, architects, and university educators. On the academic side was Dean B.J. Chandler of Northwestern University's School of Education. Bobby Joe Chandler had come to Northwestern in the mid-1950s, an academic refugee from desegregation fights in Charlottesville, Virginia where his support for school integration had put him in the crosshairs for local formations of massive resistance. As Dean at Northwestern, Chandler cultivated a network of education researchers and a pool of eager teacher-candidates with commitments to urban education, racial integration, and progressive pedagogy.<sup>45</sup> The designer of the new school would be Bill Brubaker, president of Chicago's premier architecture firm, Perkins and Will. Perkins and Will had struck a cozy relationship with the Board of Education during the Willis administration and Brubaker worked to deepen the bond under Redmond's tenure. In midcentury Chicago, a network of exclusive men's clubs bonded Chicago's civic and corporate elite to each other in an insider's world. Ambitious architects joined the clubs in search of big contracts. For Brubaker, "the single most

---

<sup>43</sup> Casey Banas, "'Magnet School' Plan Told: U.S. Hospital Site Sought by Redmond," *Chicago Tribune*, Sep 20, 1967, 1; Quote from Redmond in Banas, *Tribune*.

<sup>44</sup> Casey Banas, "U.S. Gives Schools 11 Acres," *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 22, 1967, 14.

<sup>45</sup> Frederick Erickson, Interview with the author, June 4, 2019.

conspicuous practitioner” of such networking, the strategy paid dividends, as dozens of school construction contracts in Chicago and the suburbs filled the firm’s portfolio over the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>46</sup> Coordinating the fusion of spatial, social, and curricular innovations into a unified vision would be Stanton Leggett, whose New York-based consulting firm, Englehardt, Englehardt, and Leggett, had brought the latest trends in corporate organization and child development to bear on the planning and management of public educational facilities. With nearly three decades of consulting work and published guidebooks to his name, Leggett was an influential authority in the field, promoting the urgent need to build flexibility and interactivity into the nation’s classrooms and schoolhouses, all in the name of maximizing the humanity and creativity of the American child.<sup>47</sup>

The consulting team determined that the school’s focus would be on the “arts of communication” including theater, photography, and television. In November of 1968, the North Side’s new “site of experimentation and innovation” was named in honor of Walt Disney, and veteran educator Lorraine LaVigne was appointed its first principal.<sup>48</sup> Given a courtesy faculty appointment at Northwestern and integrated into the high-powered consulting team, LaVigne felt

---

<sup>46</sup> The quote is Brubaker’s self-assessment. See Betty J. Blum, interviewer, *Oral History of C. William Brubaker*, Chicago Architects Oral History Project (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000); Blair Kamin, “C. William Brubaker, 75: Designed bank tower, more than 200 Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 29, 2002, 28.

<sup>47</sup> See N. L. Englehardt, N.L. Englehardt Jr., and Stanton Leggett, *Planning Elementary School Buildings*, (New York: F.W. Dodge Corporation, 1953).

<sup>48</sup> Englehardt, Englehardt, and Leggett, Inc., Educational Consultants, “Final Educational Specifications, Walt Disney Magnet School, Marine Drive Campus, Chicago, Illinois” (Draft 5, March 1969), Chicago History Museum Research Center, quote on p.2. The consulting firm was hired by a Board vote in January 1968. See “1<sup>st</sup> Pupil Busing Hearing Set,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 25, 1968, 6; On LaVigne’s appointment in November, see *Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago*, (1968), reports 68-756; 68-849-1.

her professional horizons broaden beyond the humdrum of the traditional principalship.<sup>49</sup> To secure a school-community partnership, LaVigne recruited a council of “community personnel,” constituted by members of civic organizations from across the North and West Sides. Over the next two years, the ad hoc group became the Disney Magnet Advisory Council, a thirty-person body with an elected membership ultimately split among community members, parents, and staff.<sup>50</sup> From the start and all at once, Disney had more administrative autonomy, more expert guidance, and more community participation than any school in the system.

While LaVigne facilitated community input, Leggett drove the team toward his vision of the magnet school as “an educational catalyst for the city as a whole.”<sup>51</sup> Leggett and Chandler subscribed to a philosophy of “Individually Guided Education” and “open classrooms.” IGE, developed in the mid-1960s at the University of Wisconsin, reimagined schoolteachers into flexible, cooperative teams of enterprising researchers. On a continuous cycle of assessment, instruction, and evaluation, IGE teachers tested and sorted pupils into ability-based groups. In place of traditional grade levels tied to age, students advanced on an individuated, “nongraded” progress-oriented scale.<sup>52</sup> The movement for open classrooms, which followed a spate of admiring press coverage of British infant schools in the mid-1960s, sought, quite literally, to tear down walls, clearing space for bright, carpeted expanses dotted with learning pods and modular

---

<sup>49</sup> Lorraine LaVigne, interview with the author, November 4, 2015.

<sup>50</sup> Engelhardt, Engelhardt, and Leggett, Inc., “Final Educational Specifications,” acknowledgements; Lorraine LaVigne, interview with the author; Sandra Simonson to Richard Reynolds, Information Concerning the Disney Magnet School, August 3, 1970, Box 22, Folder 12, Uptown Chicago Commission Records; Dieter Schulte, interview with the author, November 3, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Engelhardt, Engelhardt, and Leggett, Inc., “Final Educational Specifications,” ii.

<sup>52</sup> Herbert Klausmeier, et al, “Individually Guided Education in the Multiunit Elementary School: Guidelines for Implementation,” (Madison: Wisconsin Research and Development Center for Cognitive Learning, 1968).

furniture.<sup>53</sup> While the “eggcrate” and “gridiron” rigidity of nineteenth-century “ceramic vault” schoolhouses was the classic foil, the open classroom also posed dynamically across from the drab constrictions of suburbia, and as a humane refuge from the chaos of the ghetto.<sup>54</sup> Together, these perspectives joined Deweyite revivals of child-centered antiauthoritarianism to a managerial futurism that would disrupt the “subdued and static” practices of the traditional school.<sup>55</sup> Instead of the “order and standardization” that thwarted creativity in the traditional school, Disney’s play-based curriculum of “fun and excitement,” promised to encourage emotional self-discovery.<sup>56</sup>

In Chicago, the open classroom was meant to feed and feed off of the open city. The virtuoso promoter of Stan Leggett’s spatial vision was architect Bill Brubaker. In the same spirit that Robert Havighurst had denigrated the “four walls school” approach of the Willis era, Brubaker and Leggett sought to break with the image of the schoolhouse as “an island with a chainlink fence around it.”<sup>57</sup> Brubaker’s sketches, which became conference room wallpaper during

---

<sup>53</sup> See James Rothenberg, “The Open Classroom Reconsidered,” *The Elementary School Journal*, 90, no. 1 (September 1989) 71; William J. Reese, *America’s Public Schools: From the Common School to “No Child Left Behind”* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011) 276-281. For examples, see Leonard Buder, “Education: Breaking Down Formality for Fuller Expression of the Individual,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 1969, E9; Larry Cuban, “Fad or Tradition: The Case of the Open Classroom,” Larry Cuban on School Reform and Classroom Practice, [larrycuban.wordpress.com](http://larrycuban.wordpress.com) (Accessed, March 6, 2015).

<sup>54</sup> Alexander Frazier, *Open Schools for Our Children*, (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1972) 75; C. William Brubaker, Raymond Bordwell, Gaylaird Christopher, *Planning and Designing Schools* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998) 42; Harold Gores, of the Educational Facilities Laboratory, quoted in *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools*, 178.

<sup>55</sup> Klausmeier, 25.

<sup>56</sup> Engelhardt, Engelhardt, and Leggett, Inc., “Final Educational Specifications,” 11-12.

<sup>57</sup> Bill Brubaker, “Planning Seminar- Chicago’s Long Range Educational Facility Needs, Sponsored by Chicago Public Schools and Michigan State University, July 26, 27, 28, 1967” [sketchbook] Box 1, Folder 1, C. William Brubaker Papers, Ryerson Library, the Art Institute of Chicago.

energetic pitches, bubbled playfully with social visions of magnets as nodes of civic community, connecting a revitalized landscape of public works and transportation corridors<sup>58</sup> As Redmond

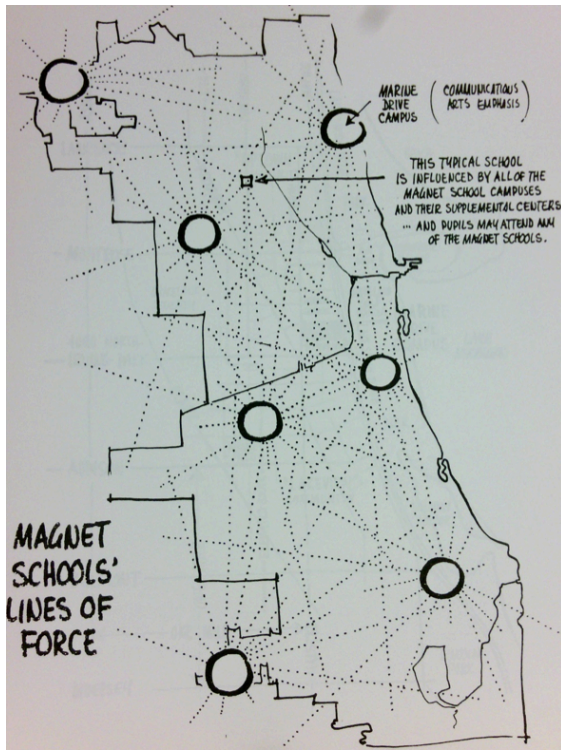


Figure 4A: C. William Brubaker, (untitled sketch), in Englehardt, Englehardt, and Leggett, "Final Educational Specifications for Walt Disney Magnet School, (unpaginated), Chicago History Museum Research Center.

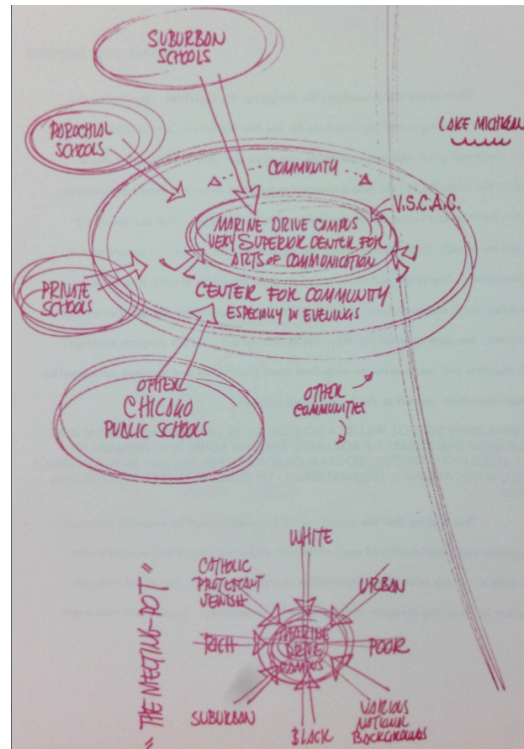


Figure 4B: C. William Brubaker, (untitled sketch), in Englehardt, Englehardt, and Leggett, "Final Educational Specifications for Walt Disney Magnet School, (unpaginated), Chicago History Museum Research Center.

affirmed of Brubaker’s drawings, “they express tomorrow” (see figures 4A and 4B).<sup>59</sup>

As Principal LaVigne took on an active schedule of interviews and speeches to ensure a a smooth public reception and a diverse pool of applicants, the Board voted to initiate a summer pilot program, a few months behind Robert Black, but well ahead of the groundbreaking for

<sup>58</sup> See Blair Kamin, “C. William Brubaker, 75” *Chicago Tribune*, May 29, 2002. See images in Englehardt, Englehardt, and Leggett, “Final Specifications” passim; Stanton Leggett, C. William Brubaker, et. al. *Planning Flexible Learning Spaces*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977) passim.

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Chandler, “Plan ‘Magnet School’ for Lakefront On North Side,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, September 20, 1967, 59.

Brubaker's new complex.<sup>60</sup> By July, a group of sixty preschoolers, selected to reflect racial ratios in a broad stretch of the North Side, were attending a summer session in makeshift classrooms inside the defunct hospital that still stood on the Disney site.<sup>61</sup> Over the following school year, the program doubled its enrollment, the Board of Education approved the Public Building Commission's \$12 million plans, and Brubaker's glass and steel construction began to rise along the lake.<sup>62</sup> With high stakes attached to Disney's success, the Board granted LaVigne significant autonomy in selecting teachers—and in dismissing those who did not have “personal qualities that would predispose them to experimentation.”<sup>63</sup> Psychological surveys helped match a “Profile of a Magnet School Teacher” to an interracial pool of applicants ready to defy the city's pervasive racial pessimism and embrace the school's curricular and architectural quirks.<sup>64</sup> Working at Disney implied a tradeoff; the opportunity to pursue an innovative curriculum might mean dispensing with certain protections. As LaVigne remarked of her staff, “They don't pull out their union cards when a chair has to be moved.”<sup>65</sup> While Disney's professional expectations were higher, so were its overall staffing levels. Once enrolled at capacity, Disney's 1800 students, split into primary, intermediate, and upper levels, were further divided into “pods” of

---

<sup>60</sup> Walt Disney Magnet School (Chicago Public Schools pamphlet), box 22, folder 12, Uptown Chicago Commission Records, Research Center, Chicago History Museum.

<sup>61</sup> Information Concerning the Disney Magnet School, Uptown Chicago Commission Records.

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Zilguch, “The Effect of Elementary School Environment: Magnet versus Traditional,” diss. Northwestern University, 1977, 24; Citizen Schools Committee Report, February 1971, 2, LPCA Records.

<sup>63</sup> “Proposal for Recruitment of Teachers for Walt Disney Magnet School,” January 12, 1972, School of Education, General Files, T-C Cooperating Schools, Northwestern University Archives, Northwestern University.

<sup>64</sup> “Cross-section at magnet may be impossible unless...” *North Town*, January 15, 1969.

<sup>65</sup> Joy Darrow, “Do quotas work? At Disney they do,” *Chicago Defender*, June 9, 1975

roughly 200 students. In addition to LaVigne's assistant principal, each level was assigned an instructional specialist, while each pod was staffed by ten teachers and four aides.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to innovations in curriculum and administration, the technical content of integration also underwent significant changes at Disney, marked by its North Side setting. While South Side quotas stuck to a black-white binary, other nonwhite classifications proved salient along the North Lakefront, where a diverse set of midcentury migrants from Appalachia, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and American Indian reservations had settled in among an older stock of Germans, Scandinavians, and Nisei Japanese. Social class was similarly varied, with working-class white homeowners inland, an expanding band of poorer migrants in the middle, and young singles and affluent old-timers closer to the Lake Shore.<sup>67</sup> Unlike the South Side, however, there was no advancing color line. While "Spanish-language" populations surged into substantial minorities across Lincoln Park, Lake View, and Uptown, black enclaves remained small and scattered.<sup>68</sup>

In 1970, the Disney Advisory Council recommended its balance formula, transmitting the newest U.S. Census classifications onto recent patterns of local migration. Disney's student body would be apportioned among five groups—white, black, Latin, American Indian, and

---

<sup>66</sup> John Wick, "Summary Evaluation of the Disney Magnet School," (Spring 1977), p. 2-3, Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library, Chicago.

<sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Warren, *Chicago's Uptown: Public Policy, Neighborhood Decay, and Citizen Action in an Urban Community* (Chicago: Loyola University Center for Urban Policy, 1979); Brian J.L. Berry, ed. *Chicago: Transformations of an Urban System* (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976); Nancy Giesecke, "Diversity Makes Lake View 'Sociologist's Dream,'" *Chicago Tribune*, November 7, 1968.

<sup>68</sup> The Chicago Fact Book Consortium, *Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Area, Based on the 1970 and 1980 Censuses*, (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1984), 14-17.

Oriental—reflecting their share of the North and West Side’s school-age population.<sup>69</sup> To draw black pupils, the Board dragged Disney’s attendance boundaries south to Roosevelt Road, allowing LaVigne to recruit from the West Side. The Board approved Disney’s new racial balance formulas, but with quotas still on uncertain legal ground, avoided the ‘q-word’ entirely.<sup>70</sup> LaVigne and the Disney Advisory Council also experimented with class-conscious definitions of desegregation. From the start, Leggett and LaVigne instructed teachers to disrupt lines of social class by composing learning groups that contained a “complete spectrum” of socioeconomic status among the children.<sup>71</sup> Data from the new census allowed Disney to translate these priorities into the school’s enrollment procedures. Within each ethnoracial group, students were slotted for acceptance to the school based on a five-category scale of occupational and educational backgrounds, determined by the solicitation of relevant information from parents.<sup>72</sup>

On the North Side at least, desegregation had become diversity.<sup>73</sup> Unlike most schoolhouses across the city, which Chicagoans could tag with an urban shorthand of racial and ethnic ownership, Brubaker’s new complex, opened in 1973, was a space where no one group prevailed, where all were celebrated, and where intercultural contact was explicitly encouraged

---

<sup>69</sup> Quotas were set at 45% white, 30% black, 19% Latin, and 6% Oriental and American Indian. Zilguch, 18; Cheryl Debbs, “Waiting list priorities told,” *The Booster*, July 19, 1972.

<sup>70</sup> Citizen Schools Committee Report (January 1970) p. 5, Box 52, Folder 17. Lincoln Park Conservation Association Records, DePaul University Special Collections.

<sup>71</sup> “Disney School Operation to Be Explained Tuesday,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1969.

<sup>72</sup> Walt Disney Magnet School Enrollment Policy, March 28, 1973, School Files, Box Magnet Schools, folder 1, Archives of the Board of Education, City of Chicago; Lorraine LaVigne, interview with the author.

<sup>73</sup> For regional and administrative histories of this phenomenon, see Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California, 1941-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); John Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

as an antidote to prejudice. Disney condensed an ascendant post-civil rights ideology of multiculturalism, where salad bowls, mosaics, and tapestries of cultural color replaced melting pot metaphors of ethnic disappearance. In the Communication Arts Center (CAC), a special high-tech assembly hall, selected students from other Chicago schools would attend Disney on a rotating schedule of three-week “residencies,” culminating in the staging of elaborate multimedia productions. In the immersive residencies, students would work with teachers to write a script, cast a play, make costumes, build sets, perform the show, and video-tape the entire spectacle.<sup>74</sup> In the CAC residencies, Disney students were deputized as ambassadors of Chicago’s multicultural hopes, inviting their peers to enjoy, however briefly, what it might feel like to live in an integrated city. Faculty had their own rituals by which they enacted their commitments to diversity. At a staff barbeque before the start of every school year, Disney teachers would “balance out” their class rosters, swapping student names until teachers in each pod had all achieved a racial balance among their assigned students.<sup>75</sup> Disney’s improvised embrace of diversity exerted a strong moral force for those whose fates were tied to the school, and solidified the magnet concept’s relationship to multicultural education.

Over the course of the decade, Disney’s reputation continued to soar, as the school’s status as a workable experimental site for teachers and researchers proved out. Multiple dissertation projects from Northwestern University’s Education Department used Disney students as their subjects.<sup>76</sup> Parents were just as attracted to the school. Between 1975 and 1978, Disney was

---

<sup>74</sup> C.F. Kramer, Jr. “Disneyland in Chicago: Schools Plus Fun,” *Chicago Daily News-Panorama*, October 9-10, 1976. [MRC Clippings File—Magnet Schools, 1975-76].

<sup>75</sup> Larry Page, interview with the author, December 16, 2015.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, Karen Andrea Schultz, “Variables Influencing the Difficulty of Rigid Transformations During the Transition Between the Concrete and Formal Operational Stages of Cognitive Development,” PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1977; Sharon Ann Welch

processing between 3,000 and 5,000 applications for its 250-student kindergarten. With LaVigne's race-and-class lottery accepting between 4 and 7 per cent of all applicants, the Disney experience had gained an unmistakably elite cachet.<sup>77</sup>

### **PART III: City as Classroom; Classroom as Laboratory**

Chicago's first magnet elementary schools had proven that integrated urban education could work, and that parents would line their kids up to be a part of it. As the sustained interest from Northwestern proved, magnets pulled not only children and parents, but educational researchers as well. In 1970, Chicago's Board of Education approved a third magnet program, this time for a high school.<sup>78</sup> The proposal for the Chicago High School for Metropolitan Studies, or "Metro High," as the school was to become popularly known, was the product of a unique confluence of intellectual currents and networks that ran between entrepreneurial ed school professors, corporate research and curriculum firms, and urban social movements at the end of the 1960s.

Paying close attention to these developments was an educational research entrepreneur named John Naisbitt and a former suburban high school principal named Donn Kesselheim. Naisbitt was an accomplished former HEW administrator, who had provided occasional support to Urban

---

Callaghan, "An Evaluation of a Data-Based Teacher Selection Process," PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1981); Marjorie Dixon Traxler Alschuler, "The Relationship of Teacher Characteristics and Behaviors to Pupil Growth in the SCIS Program," PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1980); Mary Beth Crowe, "Teachers' Goals: A Context for Studying Teaching" (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1983).

<sup>77</sup> Joy Darrow, "A Very Good Example of the busing principle," *Chicago Defender*, Dec 8, 1975; Joy Darrow, "Do quotas work? At Disney they do" *Chicago Defender*, June 9, 1975; Don Wycliff, "Chicago's magnet schools: Is the attraction worth it?" *Chicago Daily News*, February, 21, 1978.

<sup>78</sup> Donald R. Moore, Thomas A. Wilson, Richard Johnson, *The Metro School: A Report on the Progress of Chicago's Experimental "School Without Walls"* (Chicago: The Urban Research Corporation, 1971) 97.

League research staff in their fight against Ben Willis in the early sixties.<sup>79</sup> After a stint with a local curriculum subsidiary of IBM, Naisbitt started his own firm, the Urban Research Corporation, “predicated on the belief that the private sector must apply its expertise if major urban problems are to be resolved.” Employing a small army of graduate students to produce monthly reports on urban trends, Naisbitt imagined the URC as an research and development clearinghouse that would forge a “new kind of relationship” between corporate elites, people-power organizers, private foundations, and government agencies.<sup>80</sup> Kesselheim, having moved on from his career as a principal at New Trier High School in north-suburban Winnetka, now worked as a consultant and was an active player in Naisbitt’s circle of educational researchers and businessmen.<sup>81</sup> In December of 1968, Naisbitt caught wind of an idea that Kesselheim was pitching for a Chicago version of Philadelphia’s Parkway Program. The Parkway Program, opened less than a year earlier, was a Philadelphia District alternative high school run as an experimental “school without walls.” Parkway pulled teenagers from a citywide lottery, convened classes in scattered-site, real-world locations, and committed itself to the idea that the

---

<sup>79</sup> See acknowledgements in Harold Baron, “An Equal Chance for Education” (March 1962), CUL Records, box 89, folder 965.

<sup>80</sup> Quotes in *The Metro School: A Report on the Progress of Chicago’s Experimental ‘School Without Walls,’* (Chicago: Urban Research Corporation, 1971) 111-112. Naisbitt’s company would go on to become a powerful clearinghouse of research on global economic, demographic, “trends.” The annual “Trend Report,” for which American corporate executives throughout the 1970s paid top dollar subscriptions (later popularized through his *Megatrends* bestselling books), launched Naisbitt into a decades-long career as a thought leader on “radical centrist” policy and “global leadership.” See “Openers,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 30, 1975.

<sup>81</sup> Kesselheim was employed on contract by the National Alliance of Businessmen and the General Learning Corporation. See Moore & Wilson,

city “belonged to us all” and “not some select group.”<sup>82</sup> Compelled by the former principal’s ideas and his access to civic and business leaders, Naisbitt hired Kesselheim to pursue a project proposal under the URC’s name in January of 1969. Central to the pitch to Redmond and the Board of Education were three ingredients: that the school would be a racially integrated, that it might serve as a prototype for the imagined “Cultural-Educational-Clusters” that had yet to find their content, and that it would give a structured opportunity for downtown business leaders to help sharpen the cutting edge of urban education.<sup>83</sup>

In search of academic credibility, Naisbitt and the URC turned to the brand new School of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC), where a fresh crop of young progressive faculty stood eager to engage in local interventions in inner-city education. Taking up their posts in the full heat of the long, hot summers of the late 1960s, UICC scholars like Eliezer Krumbein, Armin Beck, and Fred Erickson (all former students of BJ Chandler’s at Northwestern) posed different questions than those that had animated Robert Havighurst, Philip Hauser, and Jack Coons when they had devised the terms of voluntary integration in the early sixties. Drawing approvingly from Black Power critiques of the integrationist paradigm, UICC’s urban ed scholars asked:

Since equality is based on equal power, and since schools are basically creatures and extensions of the white middle class, how can equality of power be obtained by black students and parents in a white school?<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Parkway’s original enrollment statement quoted in Joan Wofford and Joanne Ross, “Philadelphia’s Parkway Program: An Evaluation,” (Newton, MA: Organization for Social and Technical Innovation, 1975) 48. ERIC ED075534.

<sup>83</sup> Citizens Schools Committee Report, October-November 1969, p. 2, box 52, folder 17, LPCA Records.

<sup>84</sup> Armin Beck, Eliezer Krumbein, and F.D. Erickson, “Strategies for Change: Conditions for School Desegregation,” *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 50, no. 5 (January 1969) 283.

To seek answers, scholars like Krumbein, Beck, and Erickson suggested that educators needed to cut free from the tangle of tropes about deprivation and disadvantage that liberal social scientists had clamped down on the urban poor. Avowedly humanistic and antiheirarchical, Krumbein, Beck, and Erickson saw the current structures, norms, and staffing patterns of urban educational practice as brutalizing forces, destroying the creativity inherent in all young people and foreclosing the conditions for reciprocal social exchange that they believed any truly “integrated” society would require.<sup>85</sup> Instead, they advocated the abolition of existing educational structures, to be replaced by pedagogical practices that expressed the extant strengths within urban inner-city communities. While UICC’s progressive scholars defined themselves as antagonists to a racist social-science paradigm of cultural deprivation, their fascination with the ghetto as an artifact of cultural community and a font of revolutionary civic power inclined them toward a narrow view of black life that accorded with their own hopes for social transformation. In these portrayals, “the values, the knowledge system, and the expressive needs” of black communities were conjured and judged in circular reference to an improvised metric of authenticity, indigeneity, and militancy.<sup>86</sup> Echoing demands that civil rights advocates both before and during the Black Power moment had made regarding the need to hire more black administrators, educators, and paraprofessionals, Erickson, Beck, and Krumbein added that “a criterion” for the

---

<sup>85</sup> It was during this moment that progressive educators began to distinguish between desegregation and integration, suggesting that “mere” desegregation as expressed by numeric measures of racial balance said nothing about the “true” integration of African Americans into educational spaces, political power, or social order.

<sup>86</sup> Armin Beck, Eliezer Krumbein, and F.D. Erickson, “Strategies for Change: Conditions for School Desegregation,” *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 50, no. 5 (January 1969) 283.

hiring of educators from minority backgrounds must be their “ability to bring about the type of intellectual confrontation essential to good communication with their white colleagues.”<sup>87</sup>

In Chicago, a circle of black educational researchers and reformers had developed a variety of critical intellectual perspectives that departed from the integrationist hypothesis, providing salient points of reference for the spirit of inner-city innovation and confrontation coveted by white progressive educators, and answering the question that Urban League director Bill Berry had posed in his morning car rides with researcher Hal Baron: what are we supposed to do while we wait for desegregation? Reverend Arthur Brazier, demanding “good black schools now,” teamed his Woodlawn Organization (TWO) up with the University of Chicago to undertake a federally funded, experimental subdistrict for three schools in Woodlawn, where administrator Barbara Sizemore attempted to institutionalize increased parental governance under an aegis of race-pride and self-help. In South Shore, poet Haki Madhubuti’s Third World Press became a clearinghouse for Black Arts literature and Black Power pedagogy, while his wife, English professor and educator Carol Lee, became the director of New Concept Development Center, an independent Afrocentric school.<sup>88</sup> At Northeastern Illinois University’s newly opened Center for Inner-City Studies in Bronzeville, African-centered scholars like Anderson Thompson, Jacob H. Carruthers, and Carol Adams took on more direct roles as links between Chicago’s nodes of Black self-determinism and broader networks of radical educators.<sup>89</sup> For white progressives in

---

<sup>87</sup> Armin Beck, Eliezer Krumbein, and F.D. Erickson, “Strategies for Change: Conditions for School Desegregation,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 50, no. 5 (January 1969) 281.

<sup>88</sup> These are profiled in Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, chapters 4, 5, and 6.

<sup>89</sup> Jacob H. Carruthers, Jr. (The HistoryMakers A2002.072), interviewed by Larry Crowe, May 13, 2002, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 3, story 7; Carol L. Adams (The HistoryMakers A2003.066), interviewed by Larry Crowe, August 24, 2010, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 2, tape 7, story 3; Frederick Erickson, interview with the author.

Chicago, the active local scene of Black educational critique fit with their sense that at some point in the near future, the outmoded “white middle-classism” of public education would be upended and replaced with the “‘urbanness’ of modern society.”<sup>90</sup>

Soon, the publication of Paolo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Ivan Illich’s *Deschooling Society* would give these perspectives a set of core philosophical texts, allowing both fellow travelers and critics to capture an emerging research agenda in phrases like “critical pedagogy,” “progressive education,” or “alternative education.”<sup>91</sup> The clear incompatibility of these approaches with existing urban educational bureaucracies meant that critical progressives were drawn to transformations that could be built from the bottom up—within the cultural “subsystems” of interpersonal relations that ran between teachers, students, parents, and principals—rather than the district-level policy arenas that Havighurst and Hauser had hoped to move in directions of selective redistribution and reorganization. Surveying local programming in public, private, and parochial school settings, UICC’s educational progressives were drawn to those urban success stories that mixed a self-conscious cultural pluralism and an eager interdisciplinarity in the context of an embedded relationship with urban communities. Such experimentation, they believed, thrived when schools and communities were “hungry.” “Urban

---

<sup>90</sup> Armin Beck, Eliezer Krumbein, and F.D. Erickson, “Strategies for Change: Conditions for School Desegregation,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 50, no. 5 (January 1969) 282.

<sup>91</sup> Critical pedagogy’s moment relied on an uneven mix of residual social science discourses of cultural deprivation, the Black Power challenge to the same, the antinormative ethos of the global counterculture, the popularity of journalistic accounts of racist dysfunction in urban classrooms, and the Marxian and functionalist turns in the study of education. See Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970). Other influential texts included Herbert Kohl, *36 Children* (New York: New American Library, 1967); Jonathan Kozol, *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967). While not directly engaged in the rise of critical pedagogy, new studies in educational history echoed the critique of urban educational bureaucracies as inherently “class-biased and racist.” See Michael B Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

schools,” Beck and Krumbein argued in an exemplary passage a few years later, “need to behave as though their lives depend on recruiting the interest and support of a diverse group of students, parents and patrons, even though it may appear that they might comfortably coast along for a few years without much change.”<sup>92</sup>

At the same moment that the URC was reaching out for academic support, two scholars, Thomas A. Wilson and Donald R. Moore, freshly minted progressive Ed Doctorates from the Learning Environments program at Harvard, were independently shopping around a school-without-walls proposal. Don and Tom, as many would take to calling the pair, found their perfect storm in Chicago. Hired on as faculty at UICC, they were funded to join the URC design team for the proposed magnet high school. More traditionally social scientific, Moore and Wilson betrayed fewer Freirean impulses in their academic prose than some of their UICC colleagues, but as keen experimentalists, they found a sympathetic intellectual mix at Circle. By the summer of 1969, Redmond was sold and the Board approved a “Summer School in the Loop” as a pilot, followed quickly by the approval of a full proposal. The experimental magnet’s official name was the Chicago High School for Metropolitan Studies, but was quickly shorthand as “Metro High.” The high school without walls was more accurately a high school without a building, save for some office space and a row of lockers on the fifth floor of an aging South Loop high-rise. In their proposal, Moore and Wilson proclaimed that Metro’s “classrooms would be the city’s businesses, hospitals, art museums, theater companies, neighborhoods” or

---

<sup>92</sup> Eliezer Krumbein and Armin Beck, “The City as a Center of Learning,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 44, no. 3 (summer 1975) 404.

“wherever there is learning to be done.”<sup>93</sup> The URC planning team used their downtown connections to corral an impressive list of fifty-six institutions that agreed to donate space, equipment, and professional personnel that defined Metro’s first course offerings.

The speedy approval with which Redmond and the Board greeted the URC’s proposal hid significant tensions. Redmond was already warm to the notion of private-public partnerships in educational planning. He had proposed hiring the consulting firm of Englehardt, Englehardt, and Leggett on two new magnet projects; Booz Allen Hamilton was performing an organizational audit of the school system; and Northwestern University and the University of Chicago had each been hired to coordinate curriculum and conduct research—at Disney Magnet and the Woodlawn Experimental Schools Project, respectively.<sup>94</sup> Among Redmond’s staffers, however, the notion that the URC, a young, private corporation with no experience in school administration, would be executing key decisions on physical site, principal selection, and curricular design of a new public high school, was met with immediate suspicion by staffers. District 7 superintendent Bessie Lawrence, under whose authority the new school would ultimately be housed, sparred repeatedly with URC staff, beginning what Wilson and Moore would refer to as an “antagonistic” relationship between Metro High and the district superintendent’s office.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup> “Rationale & Program: Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies,” *The Metro School: A Report on the Progress of Chicago’s Experimental ‘School Without Walls,’* (Chicago: Urban Research Corporation, 1971) 97.

<sup>94</sup> Englehardt & Leggett “Final Specifications, Walt Disney”; Englehardt, Englehardt & Leggett, “Final Educational Specifications for Waller-Cooley CEC,” box 52, folder 5, LPCA Records; On WESP, see Todd-Breland, *A Political Education*, chapter 2.

<sup>95</sup> On the spats with Lawrence, see Paula Baron, *Metro: The Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies* (self-published, 2012) 9; Don Moore, et al, “Final Report, Volume III: A Multi-Method Study of the Development and Effects of an Alternative High School Learning Environment,” (Chicago: Center for New Schools, 1975) [NIE Project 3-2664, available via Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) eric.ed.gov, accession ED 115 726], p. 10-e (p. 825 of ERIC file), (hereafter Moore, “Final Report”).

On key issues, Wilson and Moore did get their way. Their top choice for principal, Nate Blackman, proved key to the school's success. Together, Wilson, Moore, and Blackman began devising a curriculum and set down the central tenets of the Metro philosophy which they listed as 1) expanding where learning takes place 2) transcending disciplinary boundaries 3) increased student control over their goals and over school governance 4) the use of diverse backgrounds as sources of learning and 5) a closer personal relationship between teacher and student. As they moved desks and a row of lockers into an office building in a South Loop high-rise and filled their staffing needs over the last months of 1969, it became clear that the principal, the planning team, and the teachers who had signed up to teach at Metro shared many of the UICC's cohort's beliefs about what was not working in "traditional" education. The antiestablishment ethos ran through various elements of the school. Opening with a racially balanced pilot group of teenagers drawn from across the city in February of 1970, Blackman, his staff, and the students began by altering basic norms. Metro students addressed their teachers and principal by their first names, designed their own classes, and conducted hiring interviews for new teachers. Prospective teachers, some of whom were pulled from UICC's teacher-training program, were invited to play games that tested their ability to relate and socialize with teenagers on the terms of the school's flattened social hierarchy.<sup>96</sup> Unconventional course offerings like "I Hate Math," "Black Awareness," "Sex and Love," "Witchcraft," and "Social Violence in American Society" became characteristic of the Metro curriculum. Similar to labor conditions at Disney, the planning team was given unique autonomy over hiring, allowing Blackman to select a "young and energetic" faculty, who stayed late, worked weekends, and were seen to thrive on their

---

<sup>96</sup> See interviews with Irvin Bibb, Mike Liberles in *Metro Lives* (film), Rana Segal, director, 2011; interviews with Carol Block, Judy Quanbeck, and Paula Cofresi in Paula Baron, *Metro: The Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies* (self-published, 2012).

commitment to the school's mission.<sup>97</sup> Much of the extra work came via their duties in racially diverse "counseling groups," which put teachers and students into a long-term social and academic relationship that included home visits, roller skating outings, softball games, and camping trips.<sup>98</sup>

Even Metro's more practical claim to uniqueness—the city-as-classroom – took a capacious and countercultural view of Chicago's educational resources. In their off-site classes, students had unique access to downtown professionals: ad men, architects, and telecommunications engineers. But these credentialed authorities stood on equal footing with less conventional experts—yogis, ex-cons, folk dancers, improv comedians, welfare mothers, and community activists—who also staffed classes out in the field.<sup>99</sup> Every quarter, students chose not only new course offerings, but also a new set of real-world locations, necessitating a routing and transit plan for that they were responsible for planning. Metro thus advanced a definition of the "urban" that resonated with the type of young educators, scholars, and activists were drawn to big city issues in the countercultural moment. The city-as-classroom, in this sense, was constituted not only by its official repositories of cultural capital, but by its informal and insurgent dynamics, and by the spirit of self-possessed adventure that a young person could call upon to make the city their own. As a sympathetic BBC documentarian described Metro's diverse sample of Chicago teens in 1971, they were "brash, colorful and self-assured; as restlessly mobile as the city itself."<sup>100</sup> These impulses contrasted with Disney's take on the magnet concept as a civic

---

<sup>97</sup> Moore, "Final Report," 24 (p. 844 of ERIC file).

<sup>98</sup> Moore, "Final Report," 79 (p. 478 of ERIC file).

<sup>99</sup> *The Metro School: A Report*, 13-35.

<sup>100</sup> See excerpts of BBC report in *Metro Lives* (film), Rana Segal, director, 2011.

incubator, in which the politically illiberal and demographically unstable forces of urban life would be kept at bay. Metro proposed to invite *in* the grit of the city in order to purge school of its stifling traditions.

Because Metro's first class was formed, not by lottery, but by way of a mid-year invitation to administrators at every city high school, the rumor spread that principals had "dumped" their most difficult students into Blackman's lap and that Metro was a school for delinquents.<sup>101</sup> The rumor was never entirely true, but Metro did enroll students from a wide range of motivations and backgrounds, from kids who had been counselled out of neighborhood schools to ambitious children looking for a an exciting and unconventional outlet.<sup>102</sup> Even before the program at Metro was up and running, Moore and Wilson saw their project as an innovation with potential for growth as a laboratory for "positive intergroup relations."<sup>103</sup> While organizing staffing, Moore and Wilson founded an educational non-profit they named the Center for New Schools (CNS). While Metro remained a Chicago public high school under the administrative authority of the superintendent's office, CNS used Metro as a working laboratory to conduct research and gather data on what effects the school's organizational and curricular innovations were having on their students. As Moore and Wilson explained to scholars at the 1974 American Educational Research Association, Metro provided "a rare research opportunity."<sup>104</sup> The school's lottery-

---

<sup>101</sup> Paula Baron, interview with the author, January 25, 2015.

<sup>102</sup> On pertinent demographics, Metro's initial class was 53% black, 43% white, and 4% Latino, and split evenly between boys and girls. 60% of students came from homes without any parents with college credit, while 20% had a parent with a degree. Moore, "Final Report," 19 (p. 839 of ERIC file).

<sup>103</sup> Baron, *The Metro School*, 37.

<sup>104</sup> Donald Moore and Thomas Wilson, "A Quantitative-Qualitative Study of Student Subcultures in an Alternative High School," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association [available via Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) [eric.ed.gov](http://eric.ed.gov), accession ED 099 410] p. 3 (hereafter Moore and Wilson, "A Quantitative-Qualitative Study").

based assignment of students had conveniently split a representative citywide sample of students into an experimental group—those who whose names were selected for enrollment at Metro—and a control group—those who had lost the lottery and attended their neighborhood attendance area high school instead.

In addition to this ready-made sampling and splitting of subjects, Moore and Wilson found Metro’s nonhierarchical cultural milieu an ideal setting for more anthropologically inflected methods as well, in which extensive participant observation could generate “emergent” hypotheses, to be tested by way of informal interviews.<sup>105</sup> From these mixed methods, Moore and Wilson created a typology to describe the sort of students that attended their school. They recognized that while Metro had drawn in a mix of students, it was a unique mix, which they interpreted along lines of lifestyle, social class, ethnicity, and outlook on school. Metro drew a substantial cohort of black and white students of the sort found in typical college preparatory tracks, including a subset of “Black-Consciousness” students who understood their success at school work in terms of contributing to a political project in black communities. There were students, black and white, who Moore and Wilson described as “alienated” from school, but who they saw as split along class lines. There were low-income “inner-city” blacks and “ethnic” or “greaser” whites, whose alienation appeared to be based in experience with conflict and academic failure at previous schools. Then there were the alienated middle-income whites, whose performance in traditional academic subjects was strong, but who expressed radical perspectives, including being “fed up” with school.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Moore, “Final Report,” 4-14 (403-413 of ERIC file).

<sup>106</sup> Moore and Wilson, “A Quantitative-Qualitative Study,” 43-44.

As Moore and Wilson were not surprised to learn, these countercultural types were those whose connection to Metro's curriculum and roving lifestyle was strongest, and who tallied the highest rates of graduation from the school. As for the lower-income, school-alienated students from the inner city, Moore and Wilson found that Metro's offers of freedom were not as eagerly embraced. The notion that what children of the inner city needed was exposure to the city's civic commons had become a folkloric trope among social workers and educators: the kid from the projects who had lived in Chicago all his life but had never seen Lake Michigan. (Both the Redmond Plan's imaginary peninsulas and Disney's actual lakefront campus had called on Lake Michigan's alleged powers of civic incorporation). As Moore and Wilson observed, however, it was the more mundane material and social features of living in poverty—the need to hand over their limited supply of bus tokens over to friends and family, the fears for physical safety that came with crossing gang territory, the absence of social networks with adults beyond their neighborhood—that impacted attendance and achievement, dampening low-income students' feelings of ownership over Metro's promise of a “tolerant, open, and supportive” city.<sup>107</sup>

Tracing their first set of graduates, Moore and Wilson were disappointed to find that their school appeared capable of reproducing many of the same gaps in attainment across lines of class that were observed at traditional high schools, tallying extremely low graduation rates among lower-income blacks and whites (16% and 11% respectively). For Moore and Wilson, these were especially frustrating findings, as they seemed to corroborate a dominant narrative that they had sought to rebuff: James Coleman's 1966 report on *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, which, in popular shorthand, asserted that schools, school reform, and school funding (including integration and experimentation) could not be counted on to even out the

---

<sup>107</sup> Moore and Wilson, “A Quantitative-Qualitative Study,” 12-15.

unequal lay of social class advantages that American students and their families brought to the classroom.<sup>108</sup>

For those students who did stick with Metro, Moore and Wilson could point to interview results that indicated much warmer and positive feelings of connection to the school and its teachers than those reported by those students who ended up at traditional high schools. In fact, the researchers concluded that it was neither as city-as-classroom nor academic preparatory that Metro offered its greatest benefits, but rather its normative revolution of the teacher-student relationship. By Moore and Wilson's judgment, these transformed relations could not be chalked up to selective hiring alone. Cool teachers who liked to rap with teens might be found elsewhere, but Metro provided the institutional milieu in which openness and informality were not only tolerated, but encouraged. Unlocked offices, shared lounges, and the intentional scheduling of large swaths of free time allowed students and teachers to further blur lines that would have been consistently reinforced at traditional schools. Students hung out and weighed in while teachers made major administrative decisions. Teachers hung out and chimed in while students socialized about their personal lives. Metro's small cluster of lounge, cafeteria, and offices became a therapeutic home base where students shared their inner lives with their teachers and where the authority of the school was in full view.<sup>109</sup>

Proud though they were of the unique culture that they had created, Metro's planners took seriously the concern that they had simply created a pleasant atmosphere that masked inequality. For other reformers and researchers experimenting with alternative schools, Moore and Wilson

---

<sup>108</sup> For more on the Coleman Report's moment, see special Policy Forum in *The History of Education Quarterly*, 57, issue 4 (November 2017), 570-578.

<sup>109</sup> Moore, "Final Report," 75-80 [ERIC 474-479].

advised against presuming that the freeing of children from the strictures of traditional schooling would organically produce a coherent system in which all could flourish. Building in a basic-skill-upgrading program into even the loosest setting would, they hoped, close the gap that prevented low-income students from thriving in alternative schools. Moore and Wilson also noticed that teaching staff might need additional support. While Metro's staff were known for their all-in ethos, the longer run would see some teachers defect from the initial time commitments, while others burned out and transferred to other schools.<sup>110</sup>

Increasingly, Moore and Wilson attracted support from an expanding system of federal education research grants. As part of the 1971 omnibus education bill that brought \$1.7 billion of new federal education spending, the HEW office created the United States National Institute of Education (NIE), a brainchild President Nixon's Working Group on Education, which provided grant funding for research and evaluation projects nationwide.<sup>111</sup> The NIE's general preference for hyper-local experiments made for a strong fit with CNS' style of school reform.<sup>112</sup> By 1975, Moore and Wilson had claimed nearly \$5 million of research grant funding from the NIE to pursue a number of independent projects, including their 1,200-page report on Metro.<sup>113</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Moore, "Final Report," 24 [ERIC 844]

<sup>111</sup> Lawrence McAndrews, *The Era of Education: The Presidents and the Schools, 1965-2001* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006) 21-23.

<sup>112</sup> By the mid-1970s, Congressional Democrats, teachers' unions, and First Amendment defenders claimed to have discovered the NIE's true ideological identity as a Trojan Horse for school voucher programs. As the NIE became home to a significant program of funding for voucher programs, Congress took aim at its budget. McAndrews, *The Era of Education*, 103.

<sup>113</sup> Other projects included a cross-city comparison of nine different experimental urban school programs, a study of five local "technical assistance" groups working with parent-school relations, and a legal accountability project that investigated how teachers might be sued for malpractice. Center for New Schools Progress Report, May-Oct 1975, box 25, folder 7, Latino Institute Records, DePaul University Special Collections and Archives, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter Latino Institute Records).

Because of their experience with Metro, Moore and Wilson's Center for New Schools became known experts on alternative schools and how to evaluate them, conducting audits on Metro analogs in cities throughout the country. By mid-decade, CNS had expanded its interests into the realm of parental empowerment, a feature that Moore and Wilson saw as lacking in the otherwise open lines of engagement at Metro. As a "linking organization" in Chicago, CNS took on projects aimed at making "public schools more responsive to the communities they serve."<sup>114</sup> This focus put CNS into direct and sustained contact with a citywide network of local educational organizers and advocates, relationships that Moore continued to cultivate after Wilson left Chicago. For Don Moore, it would be this focus on parental participation that would define the rest of his life's work. By the end of the decade, Moore's Center for New Schools had become Designs for Change, an advocacy organization that pushed for democratic governance models in public education. Throughout the early 1980s, Designs for Change became an aggressive watchdog of the Chicago Schools, pulling credibility from Moore's data-driven research methods, and from his embedded relationships with local political and educational progressives. Ultimately, Designs for Change would be counted among the most influential groups organizing support and lobbying for the School Reform Act of 1988, which brought Local School Councils to Chicago as a systemwide reform.

## **Conclusion**

Magnets like Black, Disney, and Metro had opened unique opportunities for reformers, researchers, and teachers to experiment with novel methods under conditions of relative

---

<sup>114</sup> "Minutes of the Board of Directors, Nov 3-4, 1974" box 25, folder "Bilingual Education/Center for New Schools," 1974, Latino Institute Records, DePaul University.

autonomy. But under conditions of where parents and children competed for a shortage of spaces in integrated schools, the civic definition of integration had also narrowed significantly. In 1976, with both state and federal mandates for systemic desegregation mounting, and Disney with eight years in operation, the Chicago Schools' Department of Research and Evaluation conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the magnet program. Using Leggett's original specifications as a guide, research director John Wick sought to assess how Disney was performing on its stated objectives. Mimicking the methods used by Moore and Wilson at Metro, Wick pulled two stratified random samples of students—one from Disney and one from the long list of applicants who had not gotten in to Disney. After observing the students and subjecting them to a battery of tests designed to assess their cognitive abilities and their “racial attitudes,” Wick released a report, which landed at the end of the 1977 school year. By Wick's metrics, Disney students were basically on par with their peers on math and reading skills. More troubling for those who held faith in the integrationist experiment was Wick's conclusion that Disney students in fact registered *more* racial prejudice than those students who ended up at other schools. “If one goal of the Disney school is to reduce racial prejudice,” Wick announced, “the initial findings are far from promising.”<sup>115</sup> As the news reached local media, Meyer Weinberg, who had moved on to a position at Northwestern University's Center for Equal Education, leapt to defend Disney, rejecting Wick's methods, claiming that a school-to-school comparison, rather than Wick's student-to-student comparison, could say more about the cultural change that educational settings had fostered.<sup>116</sup> Pressed to comment on what Disney *had*

---

<sup>115</sup> John Wick, “Summary Evaluation of the Disney Magnet School,” (Spring 1977), p. 56, Municipal Reference Collection, Harold Washington Library, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>116</sup> Meg O'Connor, “Disney School report assailed as ‘unscientific’” *Chicago Tribune*, Sept 21, 1977. See also Jess Carlos, “Prof hits critics of Disney school” *Sunday Star*, September 25, 1977; Roberto Suro, “NU Study rates Disney School highly,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, Spet 21, 1977; Wade Newton, “Disney

accomplished, Wick noted that the original goal was to create a school “which parents are flocking to get their children into.” “In that sense,” he admitted, “the school is successful.”<sup>117</sup>

---

School study hit,” *Chicago Daily News*, Sept 21, 1977; “Center raps critics of Disney Magnet School,” *Chicago Defender*, September 27, 1977.

<sup>117</sup> Casey Banas, “Pupils at high-cost Disney only average, study shows,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 7, 1977.

**Chapter 4:**  
**From Deseg to Diversity:**  
**Inventing Latino Education in the Segregated City**

Back in October of 1963, when Superintendent Benjamin Willis faced his most intensive challenge from civil rights groups, the Chicago schools undertook their first official “racial headcount.” In what was to become an annual ritual, teachers in every classroom across the city were asked to make visual observation of their students and tally them into columns marked “White” “Negro” and “Other.” The headcount demonstrated what investigators and civil rights advocates had already gone a long way toward proving: that Negro students were racially isolated and receiving an unequal share of the city’s education dollar.

From the perspective of the civil rights coalition pushing for the headcount, the “other” column was considered largely irrelevant. Inconsistently applied, the category netted less than three per cent of the entire system’s population, and tagged a mixed bundle of children: Oriental others in Chinatown; Puerto Rican others along the North Lakefront and the near Northwest Side; Mexican others in South Chicago and Pilsen. While all racial others had legible home turf, their spatial location on the non-black side of Chicago’s lines of residential segregation meant that none could be said to be attending racially isolated or segregated schools, and none had organized to declare that they were.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Chinatown’s local elementary schools—Haines, Sheridan, McClellan, and Ward—registered Asian others at levels between 15% and 33%. Along the Near North Lakefront where Puerto Rican migrants had taken up residence, teachers at Alcott, Arnold, Headley, LaSalle, Ogden, and Newberry spotted far more others than Negroes among their charges, constituting anywhere between a fifth and a third of their enrollments. On the near Northwest Side, five schools tallied Puerto Rican students as constituting over a fifth of their enrollments. Only three schools, Schley, in the heart of the maturing Puerto Rican enclave near Western and Division, and Jungman and Walsh, in Mexican Pilsen, did racial others constitute more than half of a school’s population. In all cases where racial others were tallied, the other most numerous group was white. The single exception to this rule was Thorp elementary in South Chicago, with only a 2.2% white enrollment, a 60% black enrollment, and a 40% representation of Mexican others. All stats

Over the course of the next two decades, Chicago’s racial tallying system shifted multiple times, reflecting changes in the conduct of the U.S. census, and in accordance with an expanding federal education state, which included rules governing racial desegregation and bilingual education. In 1968, Puerto Ricans were tallied in their own group, while other “Latinos” were white. Beginning in 1970, school administrators deployed the federal census’ “Spanish-surnamed” category along with its constituent ethnic subcategories, which netted nearly ten percent of Chicago pupils. In the federal census count that year, Chicago tallied the third-largest Spanish-surnamed population in the nation, with sizable Mexican and Puerto Rican enclaves spread across various neighborhoods (see fig. 5). In 1976, these groups were renamed “Hispanics,” who along with “Black Non-Hispanics,” and “Asian and Pacific Islanders,” were thenceforth “minorities” in Chicago Board of Education reports.<sup>2</sup>

---

come from Benjamin C. Willis, “Report to the Board of Education of the City of Chicago: ‘Head Count’” (October 22, 1963) in Chicago Urban League Papers, Series III, Box 89, folder 967.

<sup>2</sup> In following the interpretive lead of a number of studies—which posit the contingent and strategically constructed salience of the Latino/Hispanic category—I build out the unique local-level political contexts that invested parents, community organizers, and educational advocates in this project. See Suzanne Oboler, *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives: Identity and the Politics of Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Cristina Beltrán, *The Trouble with Unity: Latino Politics and the Creation of Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Arlene D’Avila, *Latinos, Inc.: The Making and Marketing of a People* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); G. Christina Mora, *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

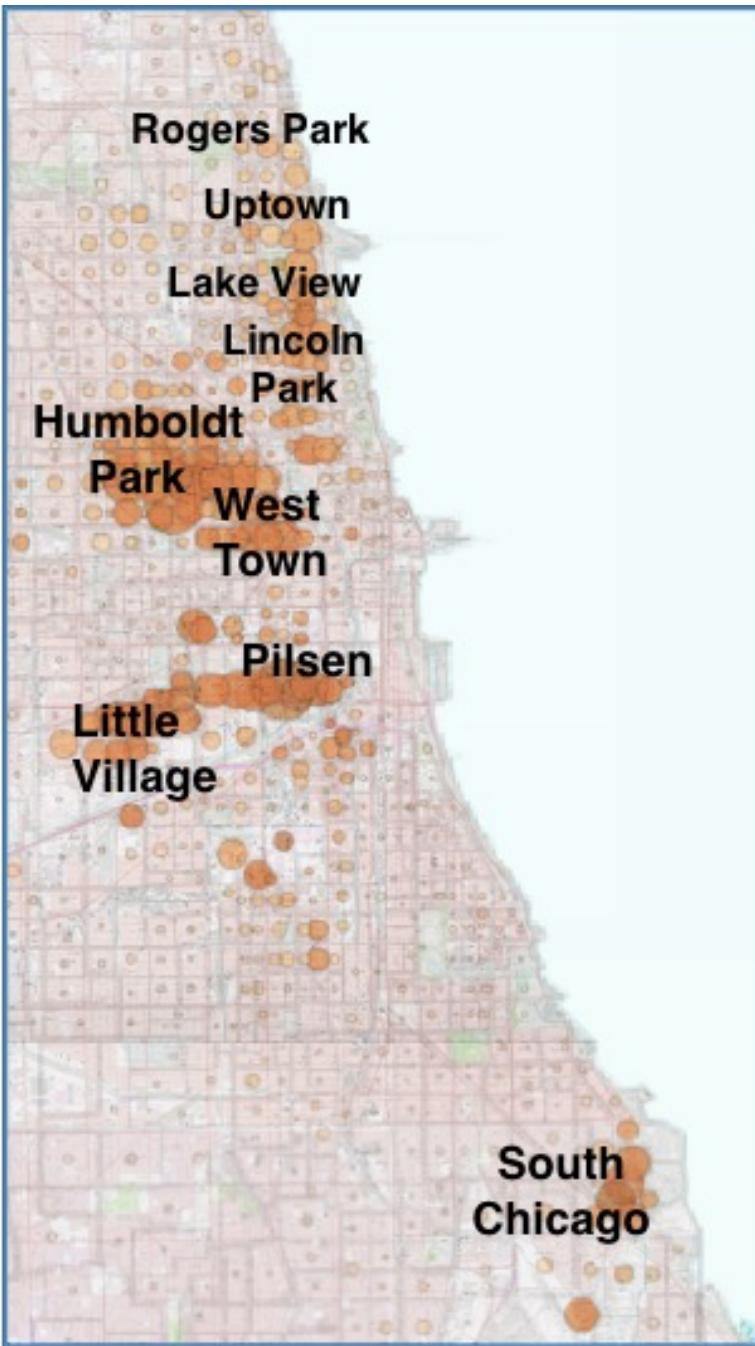


Figure 5: Areas of Spanish-surnamed populations in Chicago, 1970. Dot size indicates population size; dot darkness indicates proportion of Spanish-surnamed residents relative to rest of census tract population. Data sourced from US census via SocialExplorer.

Every year during this same period, while Latin American Chicagoans were being converted from ethnic others to racial minorities, their share of the annual racial headcount of public schools increased and tallies in the white column plummeted. “Minorities” had been in the majority since 1967, but the precipitous decline in white numbers during the 1970s had brought their slice of the school system’s racial pie chart down to twenty per cent by the end of the decade. During the same period, the Spanish/Latino/Hispanic headcount surged.<sup>3</sup> When press accounts reported that “Latinos exceed[ed] whites” in the 1980

<sup>3</sup> Board of Education of the City of Chicago, “Comprehensive Student Assignment Plan” (January 22, 1982) CBOE Archives, Desegregation Collection.

elementary school headcount for the first time, the data point meant for public consumption was simple: the Euro-American profile in the city's schools was diminishing and that of school-age Latinos was rising.<sup>4</sup> But reports like these concealed the political history that had transformed some "whites" and "others" of the 1960s into the Hispanics and Latinos of the 1970s, a group which was understood not only as ethnically other, but as racially nonwhite.<sup>5</sup>

In Chicago, these acts of reclassification reflected a multifaceted process by which local organizers and educators became both the political processors of state and federal education policy, and the urban ethnic representatives of new grassroots political formations. At the end of the 1960s, the incentives to combine ethnic affinities, linguistic challenges, cultural affronts, and class vulnerabilities into something resembling a racial community were substantial. There were the structural features of an emerging civil rights state, which tied grant-funded programming to "overcoming the educational disadvantages of minority group isolation," on the one hand, and the maintenance of "language and cultural heritage" on the other.<sup>6</sup> There was an urban political machine which, while active in white ethnic and black neighborhoods, had only the beginnings of a Latin line of patronage. There were local advocates, whose hopes of assisting Spanish-speaking parents to mobilize effectively on educational issues relied on claims of expertise about

---

<sup>4</sup> "Latinos exceed whites in city's grade schools," *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 1980, W1.

<sup>5</sup> There is, of course, no "real" difference between a race and an ethnicity, and there were various European races that became understood as ethnicities over the course of the early twentieth century. But in the American context, nonwhite racializations carried significant, historically unique consequences in law and custom in ways that ethnic identifications did not. The story here traces another journey across the race-ethnicity barrier: the way that the nonwhiteness of Mexicans in the Southwest could be dissipated and "ethnicized" (but not disappeared) in the context of migration to cities like Chicago with strong black-nonblack color lines, and then reconstituted in the politics of a post-civil rights racial order.

<sup>6</sup> Public Law 92-318, Education Amendments of 1972, Title VII—Emergency School Aid Act, Section 702. a. 3; Public Law 93-380, Education Amendments of 1974, Title VII—Bilingual Education, Section 702. a. 3.

their children as a distinctive group. And finally, there were nodes of countercultural and radical organizing, where both Chicano activists and Puerto Rican anticolonial radicals made claims to racial distinctiveness—motifs informed by their respective brands of cultural nationalism and a common critique of racism and American empire. The emergent race talk about Latinos in the 1970s bore the contradictory marks of these diverse influences, converting ethnic affinity into racial knowledge.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter, I demonstrate how these various strands related to one another, and how, in the realm of school politics, the emergence of a Latino political identity convened durable constituencies, reconstituted residential color lines, and settled a revised language of racial difference in Chicago’s post-civil rights political order.<sup>8</sup>

### **Part I: Ethnic Politics and The Education State**

In July of 1969, Chicagoans learned that the Board of Education would have its first Puerto Rican member. Though her positions were largely unknown, thirty-five year-old Maria Cerda was immediately slotted into the polarized politics of the moment. Liberal reformers greeted her with approval, while the spokeswomen of white ethnic conservatism viewed her with suspicion,

---

<sup>7</sup> While one of this chapter’s main characters and many of her associates were Puerto Rican, neighborhood-level action takes place among Mexican-led organizations in Mexican neighborhoods. The educational activism and reform in Chicago’s Puerto Rican enclaves has been presented elsewhere. See Cristina Pacione-Zayas, “Roberto Clemente Community Academy: A Counter-Narrative on Chicago School Reform, 1988-1998 (PhD diss. University of Illinois, 2009); Mirelsie Velazquez, “Brincamos el charco, y ahora que’: Historicizing the Education of Puerto Ricans in Chicago, 1967-1977” (PhD diss. University of Illinois, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> In supposing a post-civil rights “racial order,” I borrow from other scholars’ efforts to describe the ideological realm in which the anxieties provoked by changes to the social order are hammered into new common sense through the mediations of culture and the reproduction of languages of difference. For guides, see Barbara Fields and Karen Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (London: Verso, 2012); Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Race in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Ellen Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

labeling Cerda a product of “special interests” who could only be counted on to represent “the Spanish-speaking people.”<sup>9</sup> The Board had long been comprised of members of defined corporate entities, each with political connections back through to the mayor: the AFL seat; the CIO seat; the two business seats; two black seats. Though Cerda would not have grasped it at the time, her appointment, and the incorporation of “Spanish-speaking” interests into the political mix at the Board of Education would lay an important foundation for Chicago’s eventual transition to a post-civil rights racial order and a post-machine political order.

### ***Tinkering with the Ethnic Machine***

Cerda’s path to the Board of Education had begun over a decade earlier, with a police traffic stop on the Near West Side in 1958. Maria Rodriguez González, as she was known then, had been on the U.S. mainland for only a year, having come to Chicago from Lares, Puerto Rico to pursue graduate studies in psychology and social work at the University of Chicago. Her professors at the University of Puerto Rico had touted the UofC’s lofty reputation, but Rodriguez became enchanted by Chicago’s vibrant mix of urban neighborhoods, seeking opportunities to leave Hyde Park to volunteer with youth in the city’s growing Puerto Rican enclaves. One evening, after a day assisting in the office of a gang member reeducation program at Hull House, she and another social worker drove one of their clients home. Their ride was cut short by the blue light of a squad car, and Rodriguez suddenly found herself on the receiving end of police misconduct. Her colleague was unjustly detained and she was verbally abused. Incensed, Rodriguez went immediately to the Police Juvenile Division to lodge a complaint. Arriving to

---

<sup>9</sup> Peter Negronida, “Two Nominees OK’d for Board of Education: Full City Council Vote May Come Today,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 29, 1969.

take the complaint was a young Mexican-American lawyer named David Cerda, legal advisor at the recently formed Chicago chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens. A year and a half later, Maria Rodriguez had become Maria Cerda. Politically ambitious and socially engaged, the Cerdas soon came to embody the shifting shape of Latin politics in Chicago.<sup>10</sup>

A lawyer with an eye toward politics needed a base. For a Mexican-American lawyer in midcentury Chicago, this meant tapping into the ethnic submachinery of Mayor Richard J. Daley's Democratic organization. Lines of patronage for Mexican Chicago were scant, but those that existed ran through Arturo Velasquez, a jukebox magnate in multiethnic Pilsen, and Stanley Zima, the non-Mexican Tenth Ward boss in South Chicago, where the city's oldest Mexican enclave clustered in the shadow of the steel mills. Velasquez hosted the fundraising banquets while Zima organized the Mexican vote.<sup>11</sup> Maria and David Cerda made the strategic choice to buy a house in one the Tenth Ward's nicer districts, where David could do work for Zima, get access to Velasquez, and cultivate a political profile as an advocate on ethnic issues related to Mexicans.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Maria maintained and deepened the civic connections that she had made in Puerto Rican Chicago, which included Daley's principal Latin broker, an attorney named Sebastian Rivera. Rivera was active in Democratic politics, president of the Puerto Rican

---

<sup>10</sup> Dempsey Travis, Oral History Interview with Maria Cerda (transcript and audiorecording), October 25, 1985, box 2, folder 30, Dempsey Travis Papers, Roosevelt University Special Collections, Schaumburg, Illinois (hereafter Dempsey Travis Papers).

<sup>11</sup> Dempsey Travis, Oral History Interview with Maria Cerda (transcript and audiorecording), October 25, 1985, box 2, folder 30, Dempsey Travis Papers; Trevor Jensen, "Arturo Velasquez: 1915-2009: Educational, Political Leader in Chicago's Hispanic Community," *Chicago Tribune*, April 21, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Dempsey Travis, Oral History Interview with Maria Cerda (transcript and audiorecording), October 25, 1985, box 2, folder 30, Dempsey Travis Papers.

Chamber of Commerce, legal counsel for the Mexican Chamber of Commerce, and a director of the Chicago Economic Development Corporation.<sup>13</sup>

By the middle of the 1960s, the Cerdas' work was paying off. Selected to staff a state commission on Human Relations by Governor Otto Kerner in 1964, appointed as a traffic court magistrate in the Cook County Circuit in 1965, and seated on the Mayor's committee on police-community relations in 1966, David Cerda discovered a clear demand for his dual credentials as a loyal machine Democrat and a LULAC advocate.<sup>14</sup> At Democratic candidate slating in August of 1966, Cerda's name was advanced for associate judge, making him the first Latin American to stand for a citywide office. In press coverage, Cerda's candidacy was reported, along with a number of other slatings, as "R.J.D. specials," a reference to the mayor's tradition of awarding judgeships to local political loyalists.<sup>15</sup> In December, Daley looked on with pride as his specials took their oaths of office at the largest single induction of judges in the history of Cook County.<sup>16</sup>

During the same summer that David Cerda was politicking his way through the slating process, a police shooting of Puerto Rican youth Arcelis Cruz sparked a major, four-day civil disorder along Division Street in the Humboldt Park neighborhood. Instead of what the mayor likely hoped would be a rite of ethnic incorporation, the city's first "Puerto Rican Week" ended with the strident suggestion that the "urban crisis" in Chicago might come in brown as well as

---

<sup>13</sup> Dempsey Travis, Oral History Interview with Maria Cerda (transcript and audiorecording), October 25, 1985, Box 2, Folder 30, Dempsey Travis Papers; "He'll Push for Education for Latins," *Chicago's American*, April 24, 1969.

<sup>14</sup> "Kerner Selects 20 for Public Relations Unit," *Chicago Tribune*, February 16, 1964; "Circuit Court Judges Name 30 Magistrates," *Chicago Tribune*, May 1, 1965; "Daley appoints 23 to Study Police Department," *Chicago Tribune*, July 26, 1966.

<sup>15</sup> George Tagge, "Simon Proves he's a Tiger in Democratic Camp," *Chicago Tribune*, August 13, 1966.

<sup>16</sup> "Swear In 41 Judges in Record Ceremony," *Chicago Tribune*, December 6, 1966.

black.<sup>17</sup> With much of their political energy spent struggling to contain the challenge presented by Martin Luther King's Chicago Freedom Movement, Chicago politicians appeared blindsided by the simultaneous outbreak of Latin distress that summer. The moment of disorientation was brief, as subsequent outbreaks in August of 1966 and those following King's assassination in 1968 marked the black West Side as the city's primary crucible of crisis, leaving the prevailing racial frame for riot unchanged, understood by reactionaries and liberals alike.

Over the next three years, high school activism would blur these lines again, as increasingly organized youth activists converted educational space into a stage for the articulation of cultural identity, the presentation of political demands, and the choreographing of confrontations with quotidian power structures. While the vast majority of boycotts, walkouts, marches, disruptions, and altercations that swept city high schools between October of 1967 and June of 1968 were initiated by black students, Puerto Rican youth at Waller High School in Lincoln Park and ethnic Mexican students at Harrison High School in Little Village initiated their own demonstrations, taking their cues from the cultural nationalist turns in black activism and the Chicano awakenings of California and the Southwest. Both Harrison and Waller were known to be "racially troubled," but 1968 marked the first articulation of a self-consciously Latin component with a political sensibility. In ethnically and socioeconomically diverse Lincoln Park, students at Waller High School had created a United Latin American Organization and organized a set of

---

<sup>17</sup> The "Division Street Riots" are covered in Felix Padilla, *Puerto Rican Chicago* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987); Lilia Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); the most extensive analysis comes in Michael J. Staudenmaier, "Between Two Flags: Cultural Nationalism and Racial Formation in Puerto Rican Chicago," PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2016, 110-135. As Staudenmaier relates, the riots "radically altered the racial calculus," deployed by Puerto Ricans in Chicago, creating a pivot-point through which the cultural nationalism that had been cultivated within a paradigm of liberal Americanization was now mobilized in insurgent directions.

demands. At Harrison, Mexican American students formed a group called the Organization of Latin American Students. In October, OLAS members presented their “Latin American Manifesto” and staged a walkout, striking an uneasy solidarity with black student activists in The New Breed youth group, who were demanding the firing of racially insensitive teachers and the introduction of an Afro-American Studies curriculum.<sup>18</sup>

The punctuated manifestation of Latin consciousness among the civil disturbances of the late 1960s sent Mayor Daley in search of representatives to manage the Spanish-speaking front of the city’s urban crisis. As the leading history of postwar Latin Chicago argues, these initiatives, including the Chicago Commission on Human Rights inquiry that followed the Humboldt Park riots of 1966, evaded the principal drivers of urban unrest—lack of jobs and police brutality—choosing instead to frame Chicago’s “Puerto Rican problem” as a question of bridging cultural differences and making linguistic accommodations within city institutions.<sup>19</sup> Some at the time put things more bluntly. As one anonymous reader objected in response to a *Tribune* article on “The Puerto Rican Chicago” in 1967: “The only time so-called Puerto Rican ‘leaders’ are interested in the poor people of Chicago is when there is a riot...If you really want to help the Spanish-speaking people, talk to people who know what they are talking about, not people who have to talk nice in order to keep their jobs.”<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Alanis, “The Harrison High School Walkouts of 1968,” 103-124. For an account of the New Breed at Harrison and other black student organizing in 1968, see Dionne Danks, “Chicago High School Students’ Movement for Quality Public Education, 1966-1971,” *Journal of African American History*, 88, no. 2, 138-150.

<sup>19</sup> Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City*, 168-172.

<sup>20</sup> “Letters: The Puerto Ricans,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 16, 1967, 14.

But the relationship between elite-brokered cultural-linguistic reforms and the shape of popular insurgency was neither pure evasion nor blunt repression. Rather, a complex feedback loop, circling between federal education grants, city and state politicians, and school-and-community based social movement organizers at the end of the 1960s fostered the new political formations that Maria Cerda could claim to represent when she took her seat on the Board of Education. Well before the Division Street riots in 1966, Chicago's schools had secured Federal grants under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to hire 130 TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) teachers and sixty Spanish resource specialists, spread across four high schools and sixty-six elementary schools.<sup>21</sup> While TESL instructors were Board-certified teachers trained in language-learning, Spanish resource specialists, who served as translators, assistants, and the school's Spanish voice to parents, were pulled from a more diverse pool of local talent. The resource specialist positions opened part-time employment for Spanish-literate college students, housewives, and leaders of community organizations.<sup>22</sup> When grants expired and twenty-six schools began the 1968 school year without TESL support, the student demands in the Harrison and Waller October manifestoes—for a Latin American history curriculum, an expansion of TESL classes, and the hiring of bilingual faculty, staff, counselors, and clerks—were echoed by a wider community of parents and teachers. By January of 1969, a new ESEA grant filled the gap and extended the program, paying the salaries for sixty new TESL teachers and forty-five more resource specialists. Citywide, the footprint of Spanish-

---

<sup>21</sup> Joan Pinkerton, "Help Puerto Ricans Learn English," *Chicago Tribune*, May 7, 1967.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Getz, "Puerto Rican Culture Brought into Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, July 14, 1966, IND 2.

language assistance was expanding, with fourteen more schools hosting services in the 1968-69 school year than had been served in 1967-68.<sup>23</sup>

### ***The Education State's Second Language***

In the meantime, at both the state and federal level, the path to securing resources for Spanish-speaking students was being repaved and reinforced. Unique conditions of Cold War and civil rights politics in the mid-1960s transformed the notion of bilingual education from a niche interest among cosmopolitan language educators and Cuban expats into a major policy priority for federal politicians in both parties. Bilingual education's profile as a civil rights issue was guided by liberal Texas Senator Ralph Yarborough, who saw both the vulnerabilities of Mexican-American schoolchildren and the votes of Mexican-American parents as needs unaddressed by the omnibus protections of the 1964 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Institutionalized as Title VII of the ESEA, the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968 gave federal sanction to the argument that schoolchildren from non-English speaking families faced unique challenges and, by the following year, appropriated new grant funds that local advocates could direct toward neighborhood schools with concentrations of speakers of foreign languages. The BEA itself left the pedagogical and ideological content of bilingual education unarticulated. But throughout the hearings that preceded its passage, across the advocacy groups from the Southwest that supported it, and eventually within the administrative circles of President Richard M. Nixon's Office of Civil Rights, a rationale for bilingual education emerged. The justification, which ultimately placed limited-English-proficient (LEP) children under Title

---

<sup>23</sup> Joy Darrow, "Language Gap Plagues City Schools; 2nd Grader takes Up Tutoring Duties," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan 12, 1969.

VI civil rights protections, relied on analogizing the cultural deprivation that blacks were said to experience when they were segregated with the cultural denigration that Spanish speakers were said to experience when they were integrated. In contrast to a timely transition to mainstreamed instruction in English that TESL emphasized, the expected benefits of bilingual education came in fostering the long-term fluency and retention of children's home language and culture.<sup>24</sup> As Nixon's HEW secretary Elliot Richardson affirmed, the Office of Civil Rights expected bilingual education not merely to assist English language learners to adapt to American life, but to "incorporate, affirmatively recognize and value the cultural environment of ethnic minority children so that the development of positive self-concept can be accelerated."<sup>25</sup>

With the drive for bilingualism coming almost entirely from advocates in Texas, California, and the Southwest, the Congressional hearings for Yarborough's bill skipped the Midwest, leaving Chicagoans without a chance to provide input, even as some Latin leaders watched hopefully.<sup>26</sup> In the wake of the BEA's passage, local supporters of bilingual education sought to

---

<sup>24</sup> See John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2002) 188-222; Guadalupe San Miguel, *Contested Policy: The Rise and Fall of Federal Bilingual Education in the United States* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2004); Gareth Davies, *See Government Grow: Education Politics from Johnson to Reagan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007) 141-160; Natalia Mehlman Petrzela, *Classroom Wars: Language, Sex, and the Making of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 19-50. My summary recapitulates Skrentny and Davies, who render the politics of bilingual education as an "anticipatory" affair, portraying a top-heavy coalition of earnest reformers who wanted to see civil rights benefits extended to other vulnerable groups, and cynical political operatives who hoped that a Mexican-American voting block could be won over by whichever party could claim credit for delivering a targeted program. The interpretation is persuasive insofar as it covers the federal story, but for useful complications that I follow in this treatment of Chicago, see Mark Brilliant, "Without Anyone Noticing at All: The (Silent) Minority Rights Revolution," *Reviews in American History*, 33, no. 2 (June 2005) 278-286; and Adam Nelson *The Elusive Ideal: Equal Educational Opportunity and the Federal Role in Boston's Schools* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> Richardson, quoted in Davies, 153.

<sup>26</sup> See Rivera's reference to the Yarborough bill in Joan Pinkerton, "300 Attend Puerto Rican Conference," *Chicago Tribune*, May 28, 1967, 3.

influence state law and city Board of Education conduct in ways that would maximize Chicago's access to federal grants, and build the administrative and political capacity for longer-term commitments. Local support for bilingual education came from multiple fronts. Spanish-speaking parents had seen the benefits of TESL and demanded the continued commitment to supportive staffing that bilingual education could bring. Latin power brokers like the Cerdas and Sebastian Rivera saw the social benefits and political significance that educational provisioning bound specifically for Latin communities could deliver. By 1969, youth activists involved in the Brown Power awakenings in Pilsen and Lincoln Park spoke of bilingual education as a central feature of their vision for a decolonized curriculum. Meanwhile, white middle-class members of civic organizations like Lake View Citizens Council (LVCC) expressed concern that with rising numbers of Mexican and Puerto Rican children in elementary schools along the North Lakefront, teachers and principals were working overtime to handle LEP students' needs—and that other children might be getting short shrift.<sup>27</sup>

While the sources of support were diffuse, advocacy began to coalesce around points of discursive emphasis, which highlighted both the ethnic uniqueness of Latin culture and the notion that the civil-rights/war-on-poverty rubric had left the the needs of immigrants unaddressed. Though largely uncoordinated in the early stages, Latin politicians and other supporters of bilingual education began to pursue a multipronged strategy. At the school level, they organized parents and PTA bodies, organizing within nonprofits like the Puerto Rican scholarship assistance program, ASPIRA, or forming new groups like the Mexican American Council on Education (MACE) in Pilsen. They lobbied the Superintendent's Office of Government-Funded Programs to seek federal grants, pushed the Board of Education to endorse

---

<sup>27</sup> "Lake View Residents Try to Obtain School Funds," *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1969.

and put up money for its own programs, and coordinated pressure at the state level, pushing for a Spanish-Speaking People's Commission to convene experts on the question of bilingual education.

By October of 1968, Chicago had its first BEA program up and running at Lafayette Elementary in Puerto Rican West Town.<sup>28</sup> By the the following summer, roughly 700 children in Lake View, Uptown, and Pilsen were being clustered at five schools, designated as Bilingual Centers for federally-funded programs on a pilot basis, with full programs up and running for the 1969-70 school year.<sup>29</sup> Unlike previous TESL programs, the Bilingual Centers stressed not only the need to produce academic achievement and adaptation to English-language education, but to “impart an awareness and pride in their cultural heritage; and to integrate this heritage with that of the United States mainland.”<sup>30</sup> Children would spend half the day in Spanish-language instruction at the center and the other half at their home school. Much like the Individually Guided Education (IGE) model of “continuous progress” being deployed at Disney Magnet, the Bilingual Centers leaned heavily on small, flexible, proficiency-based grouping, low pupil to

---

<sup>28</sup> “Spanish-Speaking Pupils Begin Bilingual Program,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 19, 1968, W3.

<sup>29</sup> The programs were located at the Froebel branch of Harrison High, Jirka Elementary, and Komensky Elementary in Pilsen, Goudy Elementary in Uptown, and Hawthorne Elementary in Lake View. See Vinicio Reyes, *Bilingual-Bicultural Education: The Chicago Experience* (Chicago: Bicultural-Bilingual Education Studies, 1975) 9; Rita D. Hernandez, “The Silent Minority: Mexican Americans in the Chicago Public Schools, 1970-2001,” PhD Diss., Loyola University, 2002, 66-67. The funding package, roughly \$116,000 per school, was split between BEA (ESEA Title VII) funds and ESEA Title I funds, with 16% kicked in by the Chicago Board of Education. See U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Model Programs, Compensatory Education: The Juan Morel Campos Bilingual Center, Chicago, Illinois* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972) 18.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Model Programs, Compensatory Education: The Juan Morel Campos Bilingual Center, Chicago, Illinois* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972) 1.

teacher ratios, and frequent testing to aid in student assessment and ongoing program evaluation.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to hosting a laboratory for the new and developing practices of bilingual education, the schools provided a budding hub of cultural community and employment. The mix of justifications for bilingual education, which framed Spanish speakers as lacking in self-esteem and motivation, converged on one point: the cultural and educational rescue of Latin teenagers depended on employing more Latin adults. Expanding and diversifying the resource-specialist jobs that had existed under TESL, each Bilingual Center employed three full-time Spanish-bilingual teachers, three full-time English bilingual teachers, a Spanish-bilingual Resource Teacher, two Bilingual Teacher Aides, a School-Community Representative, a bilingual clerk, and at some locations, an artist-in-residence to assist with cultural education.<sup>32</sup> In addition, volunteer parents were enlisted into an ad hoc advisory council.<sup>33</sup> To staff expanding program needs, the superintendent's Bureau of Teacher Recruitment cast a wide net. In addition to sending job ads to colleges in Puerto Rico, New Mexico, and Texas, Chicago teachers and administrators flew to Puerto Rico, establishing a program of teacher exchanges. Closer to

---

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Model Programs, Compensatory Education: The Juan Morel Campos Bilingual Center, Chicago, Illinois* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972) 2-3.

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Model Programs, Compensatory Education: The Juan Morel Campos Bilingual Center, Chicago, Illinois* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972)

<sup>33</sup> "Announce Selection of Pupils to Begin at Bilingual Center," *Chicago Tribune*, October 12, 1969.

home, the Bureau worked with UICC to recruit forty bilingual-bicultural interns to deploy to Spanish-speaking schools.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, bipartisan efforts at the state and federal level afforded increasing opportunities to assemble advocates from across Chicago into a Latin voice on education. Between 1968 and 1972, Illinois played host to a procession of public hearings on Spanish-speaking issues: two forums on education convened by Democratic Lieutenant Governor Paul Simon in 1968 and 1969; a joint hearing held by representatives of the HEW Office and President Nixon's Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish Speaking People in 1970; nineteen meetings assembled by Governor Richard Ogilvie's Spanish Speaking People's Study Commission in 1971; and investigations and hearings on Spanish conducted by the Illinois State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. At these sessions, diverse advocates like Rev. Jose Burgos from the Pilsen Neighbors Community Council (PNCC), Mirta Ramirez from ASPIRA, Carmen Velasquez of MACE, Charlotte Newfeld of the LVCC, and field anthropologist Felipe Ayala presented both a portrayal of the "Latino" condition in Chicago, and unified endorsement of bilingual education as a proven program that could repair what they described as a fraying cultural bond between school, community, and child.<sup>35</sup> Advocates agreed on the quantitative case: Latinos were a surging group with a dire shortage of representation in positions of

---

<sup>34</sup> Raymond Principe, Bureau of Teacher Personnel & Otho Robinson, Department of Personnel to John L. McKnight, June 29, 1973 [Appendix in "Bilingual Education: A Privilege or a Right?"] p. 2-3; John Adam Moreau, "2 Puerto Rican Teachers Assist Pupils Here," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 4, 1969.

<sup>35</sup> See Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission: Report to the 77<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of Illinois (February 1971); "Bilingual Education: A Privilege or a Right? A Report to the Illinois State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights," (May 1974); Ann McFetters, "Propose Study of Educational Problems of Latin-Americans," *Chicago Tribune*, March 9, 1969, W6. As OCR staff reported, the term "Latino" had, by 1972, gained regional salience as a preferred term in Chicago, recognized to refer to both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, as well as other Latin Americans.

authority—from the teacher’s desk on up to the state superintendent. But as they rendered a cultural portrait of this this minority for different audiences, advocates revealed the mix of experiences, expectations, and expertise that had been corralled under the Latino label, and which relied on a delicate mix of analogy, affinity, and antipathy with regard to the conditions of black schoolchildren.

For the Illinois General Assembly, testimony was assembled in terms flattering to traditional senses of Americanness. Puerto Ricans were “an integral part of the United States,” but “justly proud of a unique national heritage.”<sup>36</sup> Mexicans were hard workers and non-complainers, for whom “public assistance is accepted only as a last resort” and who sought only “the opportunity to succeed through their own efforts.”<sup>37</sup> With long ties to the U.S. and homelands close at hand, members of the Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission explained, Illinois Latinos were more like migrants from Wisconsin or Indiana than from any far-flung corner of Europe.<sup>38</sup> For the OCR, advocates pitched their analogies in different directions, following the paths that had been laid in the Southwest and enshrined in the HEW Office. Chicago’s “history of white-dominated policies, programs, and hiring practices” it was stressed, put Latinos in conditions similar to those faced by blacks, experiencing alarmingly high rates of delinquency and dropouts. Like those who sought redress and reform on behalf of black schoolchildren, Latino advocates were compelled to begin their arguments with claims of cultural deprivation and psychic injury. For Latinos, however, the deprivation case was even more pronounced its cultural emphasis,

---

<sup>36</sup> Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, “Report to the 77<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of Illinois” (February 1971), 6 (hereafter Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, “Report”).

<sup>37</sup> Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, “Report,” 4.

<sup>38</sup> Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, “Report,” 2.

illuminating a separate path which black advocates would find difficult to follow. The problem, bilingual advocates argued, was not that Latinos, deprived of mainstream culture, were being left to their tangle of pathologies, but that their “home culture,” a source of strength and community, was being suppressed. While educational strands of the Black Power movement were making effectively identical arguments, the concrete reforms that bilingualists proposed (coursework in foreign languages) and the potent symbols they leveraged (of ethnic pluralism and immigrant self-making) had ready-made precedents and advocates in school districts nationwide.<sup>39</sup>

An early and enduring issue vocalized among Chicago’s advocates for bilingual education was the claim that Spanish speakers would miss their shot at federal support because Title VII grant funds were targeted for those schools with high concentrations of poverty, defined either as families making less than \$3000 a year, or those receiving Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). In addition to noting that many Latin children attended class-diverse schools, bilingual advocates advanced a picture of Spanish-speaking families in line with tropes of the hard-working immigrant—plenty poor, but too proud to apply for AFDC.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, sympathetic educational researchers ethnologically essentialized “Hispanic culture” into a cognitively cooperative, expressively familial, and spiritually open set of perspectives, ready to underwrite a “pluralistic educational process.”<sup>41</sup> Thus the ideal Latino—intelligently bilingual

---

<sup>39</sup> On African-centered educational reform in independent schools, see Russell Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independent Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, LVCC’s arguments in “Lake View Residents Try to Obtain School Funds,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 20, 1969.

<sup>41</sup> “Bilingual Education: A Privilege or a Right? A Report to the Illinois State Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights,” (May 1974), 18, [available via Education Resource Information Center, [eric.ed.gov](http://eric.ed.gov), ERIC accession ED: 097 167].

and constructively bicultural—was portrayed as the ideal American for the refashioned civic nationalism of “cultural democracy” of the post-civil rights era.

By April of 1969, Lake View’s State Representative Arthur Telcser, a liberal Republican, and chair of the Governor’s Spanish Speaking People’s Study Commission, introduced a bill proposing a special line of state funding for any school district with more than ten percent of families speaking a language other than English.<sup>42</sup> By summer, Telcser had gotten his first state bilingual funding bill passed, and \$600,000 was bound for Chicago, to be spent on curriculum development, parental communication, and staffing across twenty subdistricts in the city system.

By the end of the sixties, there was thus a double motive for Daley to designate a Latin member on the Board of Education. Elevating a well-vetted ethnic to a prominent post was an archetypal machine response to concentrated discontent, but in the new landscape of state and federal education funding, a Latin presence on the Board might also help Chicago leverage its Spanish-speaking needs, translating resources into targeted lines of public sector employment. In April of 1969, Daley’s intention to educationalize the Latin problem became public when he tapped Sebastian Rivera to sit on the Mayor’s Advisory Commission on School Board Nominations, who announced his intention to secure a Latin appointee to the Board of Education.<sup>43</sup> One of the positions being vacated on the Board of Education had been held by eighty-year old Loraine Green, a staunch Daley loyalist, judge’s wife, and one of three black

---

<sup>42</sup> “Telcser Bill Asks for Bilingual Program,” *Booster*, April 20, 1969;

<sup>43</sup> In response to longstanding pressure from reformers, the mayor had just revamped the nominating commission that same month, adopting the proposed format of the Citizens’ Schools Committee. While the new format secured representation from a variety of civic organizations, including the CSC, the AFL-CIO, the Regional PTA, the NAACP, the League of Women Voters, and the Urban League, Rivera was slotted into one of the three “at-large” slots, which were reserved for the Mayor’s hand-picked choices. See insert clips from CSC doc “He’ll Push for Education for Latins,” *Chicago’s American*, April 24, 1969.

members of the Board. By this point, Rivera would not have to think very long before Maria Cerda's name came to mind as a replacement. A year earlier, Rivera and Cerda had joined Ramirez as founding members of the Illinois chapter of ASPIRA.<sup>44</sup> When Rivera advanced Maria Cerda's name to replace Green, he may well have believed that he was ensuring a clear continuity—loyalist to loyalist, judge's wife to judge's wife. But Maria Cerda had entered educational politics at a transitional moment. The state and federal mandates for bilingual education provided a unique nexus in which the mobilization of Spanish-speaking parents, bilingual teachers, and educational experts formed a durable constituency for a particular set of policies, ultimately legible in the broader polity as “Latino concerns,” which could also pull from unincorporated parental and youth activism based in growing Spanish-speaking enclaves. In this way, Latino political power, while courted by Daley, was in fact growing in tandem with the expansion of the state and federal education state—and increasingly independent of traditional bases within the Cook County Democratic organization.

By 1972, eighteen Bilingual Centers were up and running in Chicago, and Springfield was busy turning the nearly forty proposed pieces of legislation from the Spanish-Speaking People's Commission into state law. While the legislative package addressed issues ranging from healthcare to housing to consumer protection, the most substantive policy changes—coming in several amendments to the school code and appropriations to the State Board of Education's Superintendent's Office—were designed to deliver the legal basis, staffing capacity, and funding sources for bilingual programming.<sup>45</sup> While downstate lawmakers expressed some skepticism, legislators from Chicago, well-briefed by bilingual advocates, read the emerging coalition's

---

<sup>44</sup> Maria Cerda CV, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>45</sup> Illinois Public Act 77-1524, p. 2802

talking points into the record.<sup>46</sup> By the time he stepped down from the commission chairmanship two years later, Telcser had managed to pass eighteen of his bills through the General Assembly, with very little resistance.<sup>47</sup>

Pairing state funds with federal BEA grants, Chicago continued to expand its count of Bilingual Centers, bringing the systemwide total to thirty-four schools by 1973, and nearly doubling the count to 67 in 1974. State appropriations for bilingual education far outpaced federal contributions, leaping from \$200,000 in 1971 to \$3.9 million in 1973, with five times as many program sites funded out of state coffers as from federal grants.<sup>48</sup> By September of 1973, the General Assembly's passage of the Transitional Bilingual Education Act had given Illinois one of the nation's strongest mandates for bilingual education, requiring any school with more than twenty children with a limited English-speaking skills to institute and staff a transitional English program. While the "transitional" frame suggested a lean toward language-mainstreaming over cultural retention, staff at the newly created Department of Transitional Bilingual Education within the Office of the State Superintendent chose to interpret the spirit of the new law in terms of biculturalism and cultural pluralism. The new department's chief, Ned Seelye, an applied linguist who had written extensively on the inextricability of language learning from cultural literacy, promised that his department would strive to ensure that in Illinois, no child would get the message "that his culture doesn't matter."<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, the exchange between State Senators Kosinski and Gilbert in Transcript, 77<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, June 22, 1972, [available via [ilga.gov](http://ilga.gov)].

<sup>47</sup> "O'Brien Elected Chairman of Latin Study Commission," *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1972, S5.

<sup>48</sup> Vinicio Reyes, *Bilingual-Bicultural Education: The Chicago Experience* (Chicago: Bicultural-Bilingual Education Studies, 1975).

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, H. Ned Seelye, *Teaching Culture: Strategy for Foreign Language Educators* (Skokie: National Textbook Company, 1974); H. Ned Seelye and Marylinn B. Brewer, "Ethnocentrism and Acculturation of North Americans in Guatemala," *The Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 80, iss. 2 (April

In addition to administrative features, section 10 of Illinois' bilingual law also introduced important new layers of parental governance and employment into certain school communities. At every school implementing a bilingual program, the law also required the creation of a Bilingual-Bicultural Advisory Committee (BBAC), which would have to review the grant proposal, conduct oversight of implementation, and participate in the evaluation of the program.<sup>50</sup> As for jobs, both the technical requirements and cultural justifications of bilingual education designated career tracks that could only be filled by native Spanish speakers. These were seen as clear victories for Latin advocates who, noting that their ethnic cohort now represented the only rising demographic within the city's school-age population, objected that the count of Spanish-surnamed school personnel was not keeping pace. Contrasts were frequently made to African Americans, whose share of the teacher workforce and administrative apparatus had surged under Redmond's tenure, representing nearly forty percent of the teacher workforce and thirty percent of supervisory positions by the early 1970s. Even with the newfound confidence and ethnic-self-assertion of the era, advocates counted only eighteen Latin administrators in the system, and Spanish-surnamed instructors accounted for just two percent of the teacher workforce.<sup>51</sup> Incentives coalesced to push the numbers slowly upward: at the Board, Maria Cerda urged rapid issuance of provisional teaching certificates to qualified teacher applicants with bilingual backgrounds; in Springfield, Telcser's laws earmarked scholarship

---

1970). Seelye quoted in Donna Joy Newmann, "Making Education Speak to All: Trends in Learning," *Chicago Tribune*, August 30, 1975.

<sup>50</sup> Section 10, Illinois Public Act 78-727.

<sup>51</sup> Raymond Principe, Bureau of Teacher Personnel & Otho Robinson, Department of Personnel to John L. McKnight, June 29, 1973 [Appendix in "Bilingual Education: A Privilege or a Right"] p. 5, (p.107 of ERIC file).

funding for Spanish-speaking teachers seeking to complete their certifications; at City Hall, a Career Opportunities Program recruited current Spanish-speaking teacher aides to enroll in teacher-ed certification; and Northeastern Illinois University and UICC expanded their teacher certification programming in bilingual teaching, targeting both teacher aides and immigrant teachers with foreign credentials.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Cultural Turns and New Directions***

As a Board of Education member, Cerda took her role as a representative of Latin interests seriously. At every board meeting where the question of bilingual education was advanced, Cerda exhorted her fellow Board members to push for the maximum possible number of programs at the greatest number of schools, urged that all transitional language courses be converted to “true” bilingual programs, and pushed for increased hiring and certification of bilingual teachers.<sup>53</sup> Increasingly, however, Cerda saw that her efforts to uplift Spanish speakers in Chicago would require more robust institutional contexts than those provided by the oversight duties that she held on the Board of Education. In 1974, confident that she had marked her place on the board as a permanent Latino seat, Cerda took herself out of consideration for a second term. Her work on bilingualism and Latino issues had broadened her network of local connections beyond Democratic politicians and into a growing community of education reformers,

---

<sup>52</sup> House of Representatives (Illinois) 77<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 147<sup>th</sup> Legislative Day, June 7, 1972, [available via [ilga.gov](http://ilga.gov)]; By 1973, 20% of the aides in the city’s Career Opportunities Program were Mexican American or Puerto Rican. On college programming, see for example, Bilingual-Bicultural Studies, Bachelor of Arts Degree, Northeastern Illinois University, 1975, [pamphlet], box 5, folder 3, Academic Affairs College of Education Files, Northeastern Illinois University Archives, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>53</sup> *Citizen Schools Committee Report*, May 1971, 7; *Citizen Schools Committee Report*, October 1971, 3.

progressive politicians, and philanthropic donors. It was within this context that Cerda's own educational and political philosophy evolved, as she fused her view of Latinos' need for political empowerment and civic incorporation with the broader critique of traditional school institutions and the call for culturalist, community-driven reforms. As a leading exponent of these views in Chicago, Cerda echoed the assessment that there were massive failures in urban education. In their drive to create "'employable' persons," argued Cerda, schools had abandoned their humanistic mission of transmitting cultural heritage to its citizens.<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, as craft unions kept an ethnically exclusive grip over the most lucrative and durable vocational tracks, the rapid churn of automation guaranteed that the skills that most black and Latin students graduated with were immediately obsolete. The result, Cerda explained, was a system that left minority students with neither the cultural standing to thrive as people nor the material means to rise above their station.

While locating urban education's sickness at the nexus of structural economic change and a racially segmented labor market, Cerda and other educational reformers turned to the themes of pride and self-esteem for solutions. As Cerda would argue to a packed house of fellow urban progressives at UICC's seminar on Chicago's "Agenda for Change" in 1974, the city's schools needed a revival of American education's cultural mission, but refashioned toward the goal of "humanization" within a multicultural society. To Cerda, the production of "fully human person[s]" required centering "the fundamental sacredness of each individual person: his or her inalienable right to be the best self he or she can become."<sup>55</sup> Countering accusations of

---

<sup>54</sup> Maria Cerda and Sam Bell, "Educational Change" in *Chicago's Future: An Agenda for Change*, Dick Simpson and Pierre de Vise, eds. (Chicago: Stipes Publications, 1974) 388.

<sup>55</sup> Cerda and Bell, "Educational Change," 391.

“flowery...sentimentalism,” Cerda argued that goals like self-esteem, cultural tolerance, and social adaptability were in fact “survival essentials” in an urban setting characterized by the disorienting swirl of occupational unpredictability and cultural diversity.<sup>56</sup> Taken to its logical conclusions in the management of the school system itself, Cerda saw her philosophy of “humanization for cultural democracy” as a call for further decentralization, with “cooperative/horizontal” systems of management to be de devolved to the level of the neighborhood schoolhouse.<sup>57</sup>

Cerda pulled from the new trough of Latin essentialisms as she claimed a special place of Latinos in her hoped-for urban educational renaissance. While “the Calvinistic conscience of America”—narrow, chauvinist, and paranoid—had driven educators to “minimize the crucial importance of the affective domain,” Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, Cerda announced, were primordially inclined to be more “human and tolerant” and thus become the champions of the humanistic “right to be”:<sup>58</sup>

We as a nation must face up to the reality that there are enduring elements of other cultures firmly but obscurely woven into American society. The traditions and cultures that we euphemistically call “Latino” are not strongly authoritarian or vertical, view humanity as perfectible, draw self worth from one’s own being, not from performance, perceive work as a tool for living, not as a sign of virtue, and view the world as valuable in its heterogeneous state without trying to reduce it to uniformity.<sup>59</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> Cerda and Bell, “Educational Change,” 391-392.

<sup>57</sup> Cerda and Bell, “Educational Change,” 404.

<sup>58</sup> Cerda and Bell, “Educational Change,” 404.

<sup>59</sup> Cerda and Bell, “Educational Change,” 395.

Cerda offered herself, a Catholic, “with both Negro and Indian blood” as the embodiment of the Latinized spirit that young Spanish speakers needed to see represented in positions of power and influence. Cerda’s pitch wooed urban progressives who projected their hopes for a continued shake-up of the city’s political order onto the premises of progressive and multicultural education. As dissident alderman Dick Simpson told populist broadcaster Studs Terkel in conversation with Cerda, multicultural and progressive education could bring about the change of character necessary to pitch the city away from its traditional stew of “race riots, prejudice, [and] hack politicians” and toward a new society.<sup>60</sup>

## **Part II: Institutionalizing Latinos**

While a number of nonprofit educational advocacy groups sprouted up in the early seventies with claims to enact social change through school reform, the undisputed clearinghouse for research and outreach on issues affecting Spanish speakers was Maria Cerda’s Latino Institute, which she opened in 1974. The Latino Institute owed its founding to the unique confluence of grassroots energy and philanthropic attention to urban issues that marked the early 1970s. In 1972, some two dozen Mexican and Puerto Rican groups in Chicago united under the banner of the Spanish Coalition for Jobs, demanding that local utilities, grocery store chains, and construction firms include Latin American Chicagoans among the minorities to whom they were obliged to open employment opportunities under affirmative action mandates.<sup>61</sup> Their success,

---

<sup>60</sup> “Maria Cerda and Dick Simpson discuss ‘Chicago: An Agenda for Change,’” October 8, 1974, Studs Terkel Radio Archive, [studsterkel.wfmt.com](http://studsterkel.wfmt.com) (Accessed, March 1, 2018).

<sup>61</sup> See Ramón A. Gutierrez, “What’s in a Name: Hispanics, Latinos, Chicanos, Boricuas,” in *The New Latino Studies Reader: A Twenty-First-Century Perspective*, Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Tomás Almaguer, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 43-44. As Gutierrez argues, these Chicago efforts likely constituted the first articulation of “Latinos” as a publicly expressed sense of group membership.

measured in thousands of job guarantees, convinced leaders that panethnic unity might accomplish still more, if properly organized and supported. Partnering with the Chicago Commons Association, the Coalition drafted a successful proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation, which funded the three-day “Latino Strategies for the 70s” conference, held at McCormick Seminary in Lincoln Park in March of 1973. As a networking event for Latinos with “quality of expertise” across multiple sectors of civic and corporate knowledge, the conference proved fruitful. Over the course of the next year, a task force emerged, identifying the central mission of “prepar[ing] leaders and potential leaders of Chicago’s Spanish-speaking communities for effective and unified participation in the decision-making processes that affect their communities in order to improve the quality of life of the Latino population of Chicago.”<sup>62</sup> In performing a single-sentence conversion of “Spanish-speaking” Chicagoans into “Latinos,” the task force projected the emergence of an awakened constituency, but also one that in order to achieve its hopes for uplift, would need to build ladders up, out, and beyond the barrio. The Latino Institute became the vehicle for these aspirations.

From the outset, the Latino Institute was invested in presenting Chicago’s Spanish-speaking residents as a community of shared interests whose political voice, though geographically fragmented and historically silent, was now ready to assert itself at a level on par with their rapidly rising numbers.<sup>63</sup> As the Institute’s statement of purpose asserted of Chicago’s Latinos, “though their accents may be distinct...their demands are not.”<sup>64</sup> “[B]etter schools, better

---

<sup>62</sup> Latino Institute Records, Box 3, Folder 4.

<sup>63</sup> Drafts of founding documents reveal the desire to round up the numbers of Latinos, beginning with an estimated range of between 350,000 and 650,000 before settling on 700,000. Latino Institute- Goals and Objectives, box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>64</sup> Instituto Latino: Declaración de Propósito, (translation mine), box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records.

housing, better health care, better jobs, and a voice in politics” were hardly new, but from Cerda’s perspective, they could best be pursued under the Institute’s goal of “unified participation.”<sup>65</sup> In spatial terms, unifying Latino interests meant uprooting from Latino neighborhoods. As Cerda and her staff hoped, the Institute’s downtown location at offices in the Loop would allow it to remain uninflected by Puerto Rican or Mexican ethnic interests, each of which clung to distinct and separate geographies.<sup>66</sup> Its initial Board of Trustees, which was mandated to be a Latino-majority body, reflected this intentional ethnic fusion, with Puerto Rican educator Samuel Betances, Mexican-American bilingual specialist Elena Beraluce Mulcahy, and Mexican-born architect Fidel López.<sup>67</sup> More to the point, Cerda imagined the Latino Institute as something bigger and more potent than a neighborhood organization—like The Urban League, but for Spanish speakers.<sup>68</sup> In its origins with Chicago Commons, its choice of downtown location, and its well-connected director, the Latino Institute promised the possibility of access to the city’s centers of corporate and civic power.<sup>69</sup>

By November of 1975, the Latino Institute had been incorporated as a nonprofit, granted exempt status with the IRS, and registered as a charitable trust organization with the state of

---

<sup>65</sup> Instituto Latino: Declaración de Propósito, (translation mine), box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records; By-Laws of the The Latino Institute, box 3, folder 2, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>66</sup> Sylvia Puente and Víctor Ortiz, “The Latino Institute: Promoting Latino Progress through Policy Analysis, Leadership Development and Advocacy” in *La Causa: Civil Rights, Social Justice, and the Struggle for Equality in the Midwest*,” (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2004), 58-59.

<sup>67</sup> By-Laws of the Latino Institute; Articles of Incorporation, 1975.

<sup>68</sup> Cerda credited CUL executive director Bill Berry for her rise to the Board of Education. By her recollection, it was his vote of confidence in her that swayed the members of the mayor’s school board nominating committee to support her nomination in 1969. Dempsey Travis, Oral History Interview with Maria Cerda.

<sup>69</sup> Puente and Ortiz, 59.

Illinois, allowing Cerda to pursue funders. In addition to a three-year start-up grant of \$400,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation, a \$70,000 operational funding grant from Community Fund of Chicago, and a \$45,000 pledge from Chicago Commons, Cerda personally persuaded a contact at IBM to loan the Institute an executive to be their in-house business manager.<sup>70</sup> Within a year and a half, the Institute had shed its training wheels, spinning off from Chicago Commons to become an autonomous agency with its own by-laws, financial base, and bookkeeping staff. Three years in, the Institute had hung onto its original funders, added the Joyce Foundation, the Community Fund of Chicago, and array of smaller-range donors, and become a member of United Way. Cerda directed Institute staff toward three principal missions, which eventually settled into programmatic divisions: Parent Leadership Training, which trained Latino parents for participation in school advisory councils and educational politics more broadly; Technical Assistance, which linked local Latino organizations and power brokers with corporate partners who conducted workshops, retreats, and consultations on management skills, proposal writing, and fundraising<sup>71</sup>; and Research and Documentation, “a data, document, and information center for Latinos in Chicago.”<sup>72</sup> Over the first year, Cerda struggled to strike the proper structure to execute these functions, constantly redrafting organizational charts. While Cerda joined the call for the school system to decentralize, her Institute took the opposite tack. Functions that began

---

<sup>70</sup> “The Latino Institute, The First Ten Years, 1974-1984, (booklet) Box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records; OBC Report, box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records; President’s Letter—Annual Report, 1977, box 4, folder 1, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>71</sup> Within the first two years, Cerda had formed partnerships with the Amoco Foundation, Standard Oil, Continental Bank, Illinois Bell, People’s Gas, and Zenith Radio to assist in either running these workshops or funding them with grants. Report from the Executive Director to the Corporate Board of Trustees, November 11, 1975, box 4, folder 3, Latino Institute Records. As these “technical assistance” workshops became known throughout the Chicago’s nonprofit ecosystem, Cerda was soon getting requests for sessions from Latino and non-Latino organizations alike.

<sup>72</sup> Latino Institute Program Description, ca. 1975, box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records.

as branches ramifying out to assistants, secretaries and liaisons, were snipped off and grafted back onto the main trunk that led back to Cerda's directorship.<sup>73</sup>

Because of Cerda's direct lines of knowledge and access to the Board of Education and the Chicago Schools, the zeitgeist of parent-driven reform, and the needs being articulated in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, the Latino Institute's Parent Leadership Training Program quickly became its most durable program, with five permanent bilingual staffers, funded initially through another pilot grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>74</sup> The five young staffers—two Puerto Rican and two Mexican-American—were trained over the summer months of 1975 in the latest intricacies of bilingual law, the bureaucratic structure of the Chicago schools, and theories of ethnic identity. By mid-decade, legal contexts had spurred an urgent demand on the part of the Chicago Board of Education to address its bilingual education needs: the Supreme Court's 1974 *Lau* decision had moved language-learning under the national-origins nondiscrimination protections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the provisions of the 1973 Illinois Bilingual Education Act were due to take effect; and in November of 1975, the Office of Civil Rights declared Chicago out of compliance with regard to services for non-English-speaking pupils. In communication with OCR, the State Board, and new Superintendent Joseph Hannon, Cerda offered the Latino Institute as a supportive agent in bringing the system into line with the law.<sup>75</sup> In autumn, Cerda deployed her staff to sixteen schools with the specific goal of offering the leadership-training program to members of the mandated Bilingual-Bicultural Advisory Councils

---

<sup>73</sup> Organizational Charts, 1974-75, box 3, folder 1, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>74</sup> Community Research Incorporated, "Final Report on the Latino Institute Leadership Training Program, 1975/76," box 44, folder 7, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>75</sup> Josue Gonzalez to Kenneth Mines, March 11, 1976, box 26, folder 'bilingual education,' Latino Institute Records.

(BBACs). This strategy allowed the Latino Institute to assess local compliance with state requirements, get BBACs up and running where they had not yet been formed, and get sustained access to schools and local parent leaders. After a sequence of orientation meetings, needs assessments, and work plan development sessions, trainers then led parents in an eight to twelve-week series of “capacity-building” modules, in which parents were taught both technical aspects of BBAC responsibilities and a still-developing curriculum on group processes, goal-setting, decision-making, and event-planning.<sup>76</sup> Staff issued weekly reports about their activities at the schools, and Cerda hired action-anthropologist Jean Schensul to observe and conduct an evaluation of the program.<sup>77</sup> Early audits of the program were not promising, as Schensul reported staff-level issues due to lack of leadership, inconsistent supervision, and low morale.<sup>78</sup> By the summer of the first pilot year, Cerda reorganized her staff, identified key leaders in school communities and had staff revise the curriculum and school selection process to address localized challenges. In the second year, staff developed intensive training institutes for parents with “strong leadership potential,” whom they intended to prepare for roles on BBAC executive committees and District Advisory Councils.<sup>79</sup> In the third year, staff and parents collaborated to convene regular district-level conferences in eleven districts, and Latino Institute staff began to

---

<sup>76</sup> Parent Leadership Training Program documents, 1975-76, box 43, folder 14, Latino Institute Records; Maria Cerda and Jean Schensul, “The Chicago Parent Leadership Training Program,” in *Working with the Bilingual Community*, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (Rosslyn, VA: InterAmerica Research Associates, Inc., 1979), p. 15-16 [available via Education Resources Information Center, eric.ed.gov, ERIC ID: 187 105] (hereafter Cerda and Schensul, “The Chicago Parent Leadership Training Program”).

<sup>77</sup> Community Research Incorporated, “Final Report on the Latino Institute Leadership Training Program, 1975/76,” box 44, folder 7, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>78</sup> Jean Schensul, “Review of the Latino Institute Leadership Training Program” (May 1977), box 44, folder 14, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>79</sup> Cerda and Schensul, “The Chicago Parent Leadership Training Program,” 22.

hold separate training workshops for teachers as well as parents. Meanwhile, funds from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) were used to train and employ parents as “trainer aides.” Through this training-of-trainers model, the Latino Institute’s parent empowerment module became institutionalized practice within multiple BBACs across the city, and Cerda’s staff systematized their methodology in a “Training Trainers” curriculum manual.<sup>80</sup> By 1979, the program had provided support to over forty BBACs, with nearly nine hundred parents and two hundred teachers and administrators having gone through a workshop sequence. By the terms that Cerda had laid out for the Latino Institute, the parent-leadership training program was a success. While the BBACs built power at the schoolhouse level, the regular district-level conferences allowed for articulation of community across neighborhoods, with school officials, and within the framework of Latino issues. By Cerda’s count, thirty-four parent graduates of her parent leadership training program had gone on to be elected to positions on district and city-level advisory councils. Meanwhile, Cerda and other staff from the Latino Institute were increasingly called upon as an experts at the intersection of multiple fields, presenting at conferences, publishing curricula, and running training sessions for other organizations.<sup>81</sup>

While pleased by these results, Cerda believed, as a matter of her time with the Board and in her studied imitation of the Urban League, that if the growing political activity of Latino parents around education issues was to have any long-term impact, it needed to be situated within an appropriate social-science/public-policy framework and compatible with the shifting legal ground and racial nomenclature of educational civil rights. The job of building and promoting

---

<sup>80</sup> President’s Letter—Annual Report, 1977, Latino Institute Records, box 4, folder 1.

<sup>81</sup> Cerda and Schensul, “The Chicago Parent Leadership Training Program.”

this framework would fall to the Institute’s Research and Documentation division, which gathered and curated thousands of documents, reports, and publications in its downtown library, fielding phone calls and offering up its resources to local researchers and reporters every time a Latino school issue crested into the local news.<sup>82</sup> With project-specific funding, the Institute also held forums and panel discussions that expanded public knowledge among Chicago’s educated classes on Latinos as a distinct subcultural unit on an array of public policy issues.<sup>83</sup>

The parent leadership modules, which as Institute documents described them, allowed “community, home and school to operate fully and harmoniously as a unified education system.”<sup>84</sup> Embodying Cerda’s Latino-culturalist view of educational reform, these framings of parental empowerment put Cerda on a natural course toward Don Moore and Tom Wilson at the Center for New Schools, whose work ran on similar tracks—and sometimes in the same schools and communities.<sup>85</sup> Taken together, the CNS, the Latino Institute, Aspira, and the Committee for Citizen Involvement in Public Education (CCEPE), where Maria Cerda joined a board of corporate leaders and neighborhood organizers formed an important ecosystem of nongovernmental nonprofits offering tactical support to parents navigating educational civil rights and community governance.

But in its practical implications, parental empowerment also captured Cerda’s identity as a political animal. In reports to funders, Cerda’s history as a connected power broker and a former

---

<sup>82</sup> President’s Letter—Annual Report, 1977, box 4, folder 1, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>83</sup> In 1975, for example, forums covered the place of Latinos in the criminal justice system, undocumented Latinos, Latina women, Latino unity, and Latinos in civil service. Report from the Executive Director to the Corporate Board of Trustees, November 11, 1975, box 4, folder 3, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>84</sup> History and Accomplishments, ca. 1977, box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>85</sup> See “Minutes of the Board of Directors, Nov 3-4, 1974” Box 25, folder Bilingual Education/Center for New Schools, 1974, Latino Institute Records.

Board of Education member were put forward as unmitigated assets. The Latino Institute, through Cerda, reports argued, had insider knowledge of policy and operations and special “access to all levels in the educational system,” heightening the chances that the services and workshops the Institute conducted with parents would in fact be incorporated into the institutionalized cycles of development and implementation in Chicago’s schools. As Cerda explained to fellow travelers in the bilingual education movement after two years of the Latino Institute’s operations, the people-power disruptions of the sixties were no longer appropriate: “We strongly believe that as an agent of change we must work within the system.”<sup>86</sup>

At the Board of Education and the Superintendent’s Office, Cerda’s hopes for a permanent institutional home for Latino educational issues were becoming a reality. Cerda’s slot on the Board of Education had been filled by a close associate, Carmen Velasquez, who, like Cerda, had feet in the old and new worlds of local Latin politics. Her father, Arturo Velasquez, Sr., was Daley’s man in Mexican Chicago, but Carmen had been an active independent, volunteering as a young woman in liberal Catholic circles, and organizing Mexican parents in Pilsen through MACE and LULAC. With work experience as an administrator in the Chicago Superintendent’s Office of Government-Funded Programs and the State Superintendent’s Office of Public Instruction, Velasquez could be counted on to keep a savvy eye on the structures that sustained Latino programming in the city.<sup>87</sup> Meanwhile, when new superintendent Joseph Hannon released his administrative chart in August of 1975, Velasquez, who had supported Hannon’s appointment, was thrilled to see a new department dangling directly in a direct reporting

---

<sup>86</sup> OBC Report, box 3, folder 4, Latino Institute Records.

<sup>87</sup> “Five show interest on city schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 28, 1974, 2; “...a fragmented school board,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 23, 1974, 12;

relationship to the superintendent's office: the Bureau of Multilingual Programming.<sup>88</sup> Moving bilingual programming out of the Office of Government-Funded Programs (reflecting its dependent relationship with the political winds in Springfield) had long been a demand of advocates in Chicago. By the end of the year, Hannon had appointed Elena Berezaluce Mulcahy to head up the new bureau.<sup>89</sup>

Mulcahy had been drawn into policy circles in 1972, when her old family friend, David Cerda, invited her to show up at public meetings to support Maria's work at the Board of Education. At that point, Mulcahy was the college-educated wife of an engineer, and a full-time mother of three young children on the Near North Side. Having neither roots nor residency in any of Chicago's Spanish-speaking enclaves, Mulcahy was not a "community" person, but as the daughter of Mexican immigrants from Tabasco, prided herself on speaking both Spanish and English with an unaccented confidence. Able to secure babysitters, Mulcahy quickly became a regular at state and city forums on bilingual education, earning a reputation as an unintimidated spokeswoman on behalf of bilingualism. By 1974, Mulcahy had been hired as a part-time consultant in Ned Seelye's State Department of Transitional Bilingual Education, where she developed policy expertise on bilingual programming, and became a founding board member at Maria Cerda's Latino Institute.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> The vote over Hannon's appointment to head the schools had marked a clear line of ethnic polarization in the Board's politics. A coalition of black organizations (Operation PUSH, the TWO, and the Urban League) had championed Deputy Superintendent Manford Byrd as the choice for the system's first black superintendent. Instead, Hannon got the job, with Velasquez joining a block of white Board members pulling together to prevent Byrd's appointment. Casey Banas and James A. Jackson, "Hannon likely school chief choice; blacks to protest," *Chicago Tribune*, July 23, 1975, 1.

<sup>89</sup> "A New Chart for Our Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, August 25, 1975, a2;

<sup>90</sup> Elena Berezaluce Mulcahy, interview with the author, April 10, 2018.

Taking charge of the city's Bureau of Multilingual Programming in 1976, Mulcahy worked to build out the bureaucratic home for bilingual education within the superintendent's office, as dueling views of bilingual education competed for sway over policy. On one hand was the OCR, which outlined specific lapses in Chicago's bilingual provisioning, noting that for pupils in schools where ELL students tallied less than twenty, Illinois' bilingual law was not reaching them. On the other hand was dissatisfaction among some Board of Education members, voiced most dramatically by Louise Malis and Catherine Rohter, who made public accusations that underqualified teachers who could not speak English were being deployed in classrooms across the city.<sup>91</sup> Negotiating a successful agreement with OCR, Mulcahy worked to adjust policies so that itinerant teachers or pull-out programs could reach those students not receiving services. In her efforts to secure programming against Americanist critics on the Board, Mulcahy found an ally in the person of Angeline Caruso, the associate superintendent for instruction. An unlikely collaborator with nearly four decades in the system, Caruso expressed uninhibited disdain for the entire genre of educational reform that advocates like Cerda and others in the progressive mold were promoting. Against a "frenzy of social engineering, founded in moral righteousness," Caruso declared, it was "time to give the profession back to the professionals" rather than the "amateurs, dilettantes, devotees, and outside consultants" with "the inside track to the latest catch phrases."<sup>92</sup> But while Caruso enjoyed being a traditionalist crank on most pedagogical topics, she was also a convert to multiculturalism—and a fully bilingual Greek speaker. The melting pot, she often pointed out, echoing the tenets of cultural democracy, was a faulty and inaccurate

---

<sup>91</sup> Citizens Schools Committee Report, (November 1976), p.4; "Bilingual Education An Emotional Issue to Many Critics; Chicago Program Pleads for More Time to Prove Itself," *Chicago Reporter*, January 1, 1979.

<sup>92</sup> Angeline Caruso to Thomas V. King, May 2, 1975, box 110, folder 1, Havighurst Papers.

metaphor for “a pluralistic society” where “diversity is our strength.” Though her name was an American mishap (in Greece, the name had been Karoutsos), Caruso claimed to be unmelted by the pot, and proved extremely sympathetic to Latino efforts to stake claims to their own ethnic community. Although trailing far behind Spanish speakers, Greek-speaking children formed Chicago’s second largest cohort of ELL students, with roughly 2,000 speakers in the Chicago system.

As Mulcahy explained to Caruso, the problem with state-mandated transitional bilingual programming was not only that it failed to cultivate bonds of cultural community, but that it left state-grant-funded teachers’ positions vulnerable to the yearly churnings of the Illinois General Assembly. To protect them, Mulcahy and Caruso devised a novel technical switch, whereby bilingual teachers were given available board-funded position numbers, allowing them to gain status as permanent budget lines, rather than yearly grants. By 1979, 718 permanent bilingual teachers were funded out of board funds, and only 448 supplementary bilingual teachers were paid by state grant money.<sup>93</sup>

### **Part III: *Chicanismo* and the Color Line**

Throughout the decade that Cerda, Velasquez, and Mulcahy were constructing the administrative apparatus for a Latino educational agenda, Spanish speaking parent organizers were busy at the neighborhood level, squaring local interests with the changing language of race, culture, and civil rights. The student walkouts that had rocked Harrison High School on the near Southwest Side in October of 1968 manifested the potent analogies to Black Power that young

---

<sup>93</sup> “Bilingual Education An Emotional Issue to Many Critics; Chicago Program Pleads for More Time to Prove Itself,” *Chicago Reporter*, January 1, 1979.

activists in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods were drawing. To many, however, the connection would have come as a surprise. In the youth street culture of the 1960s, Mexican ethnicity on the near Southwest Side, although legible to kids and grownups alike, was spatially white. While Mexicans in Chicago were often classed by Euro-American whites as “others” whose color, culture, and labor position pushed them somewhere toward the not-so-white fringes, and Mexicans brought a self-concept to Chicago that was also not-so-white in the American sense, the the color line that ordered the city’s residential property and school attendance boundaries stood between black and non-black enclaves.<sup>94</sup> On the near Southwest Side, that line ran down the middle of 16<sup>th</sup> street, veering southwest to hug the Burlington Railroad easement as it ran to the city limits. The racial boundary was one of the most solidly fortified in the city, trestled over by a two-block thick line of embankments and railyards, tunneled under only intermittently by cavernous viaducts. Atop these physical markers, the color line’s social reality was enacted by teenage street gangs in rites of communal violence. Gang disputes were a common occurrence throughout the 1960s, and Mexicans, Italians, Czechs, and Poles fought viciously over turf, honor, girls, and boys. But confrontations across 16<sup>th</sup> Street provoked something beyond the

---

<sup>94</sup> For arguments on Mexicans’ construction as not-white as well as not-black, see Lilia Fernández, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014) 7; Gabriela Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-39* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Michael Innis-Jimenez, *Steel Barrio: The Great Mexican Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940* (New York: New York University Press, 2013). My interpretation of the racially inflected ethnic place-making among Mexicans as connected to youth and schooling in Pilsen and Little Village builds on Andrew Diamond, *Mean Streets: Chicago Youths and the Everyday Struggle for Empowerment in the Multiracial City, 1980-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 231-239. On the whiteward movement of Mexican (and Puerto Rican) Chicago, see Michael McCoyer, “Darkness of a Different Color: Mexicans and Racial Formation in Greater Chicago, 1916-1960,” PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 2007; John M. Hagedorn, *The Insane Chicago Way: The Daring Plan by Chicago Gangs to Create a Spanish Mafia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). See also brief Chicago-specific discussion in Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) 137, 156-158.

typical rumble, and earned press coverage as “racial incidents.” In 1961, Matthew Tolbert, a black Harrison summer school student, was shot and killed on his way back north of 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The shooting provoked retaliatory attacks on “whites” by black Vice Lords and Cobras, which in turn spurred 2,000-strong mass meeting of youths organized by the Latin Counts in Pilsen.<sup>95</sup>

Harrison High School sat on this uneasy turf, its attendance boundaries straddling three ethnically distinct communities. To the East of Ashland was Pilsen, which over the course of the 1960s, had become an identifiably Mexican neighborhood, with over half of its residents counted as such by 1970. To the West of Ashland were Little Village and Heart of Chicago’s predominantly pan-Slavic white ethnic neighborhoods, which hosted an increasing representation of Mexican newcomers. Sealing the northern boundary for all three neighborhoods was the 16<sup>th</sup> Street color line, running straight down the middle of Harrison’s attendance area. In the white and Mexican enclaves to the south of 16th, only a handful of black residents could be found. To the north of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street color line was North Lawndale, where 96 percent of area residents were black.<sup>96</sup> The greenspaces, vacant lots, playgrounds, basketball courts, and baseball fields flanking either side of 16<sup>th</sup> were a minefield of racialized dangers that Harrison students learned to navigate at their own risk.<sup>97</sup> The organized participation of Mexican American students in Harrison’s walkouts of 1968 suggested that young people on either side of the 16th Street color line, rather than fighting each other, might share an interest in a struggle against

---

<sup>95</sup> See Diamond, *Mean Streets*, 231-232.

<sup>96</sup> “Community Area 31- Lower West Side,” in *Local Community Fact Book: Chicago Metropolitan Area Based on the 1970 and 1980 Censuses* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1984), 88.

<sup>97</sup> See testimony on the turf between Farragut and Harrison in Ronald Daly, (The HistoryMakers A 2003.286) interviewed by Larry Crowe, December 3, 2003, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 2, story 5.

racially biased school authorities, poor educational offerings, and neighborhood decay.

Harrison's OLAS students' Latin American Manifesto, echoing the broader ethos of the Chicano moment, supposed that the that the mistakes of earlier Latin advocacy had come in denying the ancestral distinctiveness of a people whose oppression had always been a racial question.

But this conclusion, insofar as it implied active political collaboration with blacks in North Lawndale, was not widely held. Press coverage of the walkouts tended to misidentify Mexican youth at Harrison as Puerto Ricans, revealing prevailing racialized understandings: Puerto Ricans could be imagined adjacent to black militancy; Mexican Chicago was an ethnic bulwark against the black color line.<sup>98</sup> For Many Mexican parents in Pilsen and Little Village, the lessons of the sixties did not incline them toward alliances that would take them north of 16<sup>th</sup> street. Violence had bred distrust, and expressions of Black Power in the schoolhouse were read by Mexican parents as signals that their power would need to be built separately. While problems of delinquency, dropouts, and poverty straddled both sides of the color line, the spiral of decline in North Lawndale appeared to be of an entirely different caliber. In 1966, Martin Luther King Jr. had chosen an apartment building there as the base for his Chicago campaign, and the civil disorders following his assassination in 1968 had left swaths of the neighborhood in wreckage, accelerating the steady retreat of jobs and commerce. Determined not to surrender their neighborhood to the forces of blight and disinvestment, North Lawndale residents enacted dense networks of block clubs, home buyers leagues, boys clubs, Model Cities grants, and political

---

<sup>98</sup> See discussion of press coverage in Alanis, For the decisive role of policing in the construction of Puerto Ricans as not-white over the course of the late 1950s and early 1960s, see Michael Staudenmaier, "‘Mostly of Spanish Extraction’: Second-Class Citizenship and Racial Formation in Puerto Rican Chicago, 1946-1965, *Journal of American History* 104, iss. 3 (December 2017) 681-706.

reform organizations.<sup>99</sup> As the commercial and industrial life of the area continued its decline, however, street gangs rose to greater and greater prominence, exerting a dominance over the public spaces and boundaries of the neighborhood with a more totalizing force than before.<sup>100</sup> By the early 1970s, unsuccessful efforts to organize youth, rehabilitate the neighborhood, and fend off crime and drugs had left even North Lawndale's most committed allies comparing the community to a war-torn dystopia.<sup>101</sup>

Meanwhile, south of 16<sup>th</sup> Street, signs of commercial vitality, manifest in the bumper crop of supermercados, mueblerías, panaderías, and tortillerías along the main drag of La Diciocho (18<sup>th</sup> Street), appeared to be moving in the opposite direction. In Pilsen's educational activism, Harrison and its links to North Lawndale would be cast as a social and academic failure which Mexican parents believed they had the right to avoid or abandon.<sup>102</sup> Unlike the parents in Marynook and South Shore who had proposed "managed integration" and racial quotas in their efforts to blunt their encounter with black neighbors during the 1960s, parents in Pilsen and Little Village lacked the outsized political prestige and access that attached to the white middle

---

<sup>99</sup> Amanda Seligman, "North Lawndale" in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*, <[www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org](http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org)>; See also Amanda Seligman, *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); Beryl Satter, *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009).

<sup>100</sup> See John M. Hagedorn, "Race Not Space: A Revisionist History of Gangs in Chicago," *Journal of African American History*, 91 no. 2 (Spring 2006) 194-208. See testimony of John Wesley Fountain, (The HistoryMakres A2012.114), interviewed by Larry Crowe, April 16, 2012, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 4, story 1.

<sup>101</sup> See Eugene Perkins, *Home is a Dirty Street: The Social Oppression of Black Children*, (Chicago: Third World Press, 1975); See also Michael Scott, Sr. (The History Makers A2004.021), interviewed by Julieanna L. Richardson, March 12, 2004, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 3, story 8.

<sup>102</sup> Black parents in North Lawndale expressed dissatisfaction with Harrison as well. See Fruteland Jackson (The HistoryMakers A 2007.064), interviewed by Sasha Dalton, February 13, 2007, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. Session 1, tape 2, story 5.

class.<sup>103</sup> What they had at their disposal instead was a dense tradition of community organizing, a network of productive centers of ethnic cultural revival, and an ascendant set of educational reform priorities that privileged culture, language, and local parental empowerment. Framing all of these efforts, and affording unique entrée into educational policy, was the revised language of racial difference that had made Latinos into racial minorities, and was quickly converting Mexicans into Latinos.

### *Organizing Pilsen*

When Mexican migrants and immigrants first began to make a substantial mark on the ethnic character of Pilsen in the middle of the 1950s, they came to a neighborhood in the midst of an organizing project.<sup>104</sup> In 1954, Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation opened shop on the Lower West Side in the form of Pilsen Neighbors. With the urban renewal fights in Old Town, Hyde Park, and the Near West Side echoing in their ears, IAF staff sought to organize the low-income descendants of Pilsen's Bohemians, Poles, and Italians into a workingman's bulwark of community preservation. In Pilsen, IAF saw a double-edged threat: the vice, crime, and physical disrepair that accompanied poverty on the one side, and the "chic monster" of urban renewal and "conservation" that had begun to strip other inner city enclaves of their affordability on the

---

<sup>103</sup> The very name of "Little Village" had been chosen by local residents to replace "South Lawndale" in order to distinguish its white ethnic character from the infamy attached to black North Lawndale. John R. Schmidt, "South Lawndale, aka Little Village," WBEZ blogs, [wbez.org](http://wbez.org), accessed Aug 15, 2019.

<sup>104</sup> There is evidence that Pilsen had eclipsed South Chicago as the leading receiver community for new Mexican migrants as early as 1928, but the proportional share of the area's ethnic makeup made its first substantial rise during the 1950s. As Fernandez makes clear, this was largely due to the in-migration of ethnic Mexicans from the Near West Side who were displaced by the construction of the UICC campus.

other.<sup>105</sup> In 1957, noting the substantial recent in-migration of Mexicans, Alinsky protégé Nicholas Von Hoffman asked if Pilsen Neighbors might want a Mexican organizer who spoke Spanish. His local organizer was “quite emphatic” that he could use one.<sup>106</sup> Still, the IAF was not optimistic about the prospects of mobilizing Mexican-Americans as an independent political force. First, their location in “West-Side Block-River Wards” placed them in the thick of Daley territory where Democratic footsoldiers had never shied away from thuggery to secure machine support. Second, from where Von Hoffman and other organizers sat, it appeared that, unlike the deep trough of racialized dissatisfaction that could be tapped in black Woodlawn, Pilsenites were not “suffering injustices from the political forces on account of their being Mexican-Americans.”<sup>107</sup>

Von Hoffman’s assessment would have come as a surprise to many Mexican-American residents, whose encounters with prejudice were various. Mexican Pilsenites recalled being called “dirty Mexicans,” or even “niggers,” by their white neighbors, and Ashland Avenue, patrolled by white gangs to the west, was avoided by many with as much caution as they treated the 16<sup>th</sup> Street line that separated them from blacks.<sup>108</sup> Unlike Mexican migrants who had found ladders into labor unionism in the early twentieth century—in South Chicago’s steel mills and Back of the Yards’ meatpacking plants—Mexican men arriving to Pilsen in the early 1960s encountered an urban industrial landscape in a state of contraction. Those unions that persisted

---

<sup>105</sup> Virginia Kay, “Pilsen’s Fight to Save the Fort,” *Chicago’s American*, February 2, 1964; Nicholas Von Hoffman to Saul Alinsky, “Subject: Pilsen Neighbors,” June 17, 1957, box 20, folder 316, IAF Records.

<sup>106</sup> Nicholas Von Hoffman to Saul Alinsky, “Subject: Pilsen Neighbors,” June 17, 1957, box 20, folder 316, IAF Records.

<sup>107</sup> Nicholas Von Hoffman to Saul Alinsky, “Election registration for Mexican-Americans,” box 12, folder 189, IAF Records.

<sup>108</sup> Fernández, 215-218.

were known to keep a discriminatory block on the entryway for Mexicans and illegals, and many Mexican newcomers instead filled the ranks of unskilled, unorganized, and migrant labor in Chicago and the region.<sup>109</sup>

Beginning in 1958, Pilsen Neighbors committed itself to building an “accepting and all-inclusive” approach to Mexican newcomers. The neighborhood cannot be strong, leaders declared, if “racial and national groups work at cross purposes.”<sup>110</sup> By 1963, as Pilsen Neighbors began setting up block clubs in the neighborhood’s Mexican enclaves, organizers had begun to get an orientation to the issues that faced Pilsen’s newest immigrants. Noting the unity of concerns across Pilsen’s ethnic neighbors, as when Mexican Pilsenites joined the fight against juvenile delinquency and exploitive landlords, leaders of Pilsen Neighbors persuaded local reporters that “the neighborhood that has introduced Irish, Germans, Bohemians, and Lithuanians to Chicago is now continuing the process and in an unusually straightforward way.”<sup>111</sup>

In addition to papering over the question of race prejudice, Pilsen Neighbors had also underplayed a crucial demographic shift. The neighborhood was transitioning, not simply from Euro-American to Mexican-American but from old-timers to young families.<sup>112</sup> For Mexican newcomers, neighborhood concerns clustered on problems of schooling in ways that was not true for elderly European ethnics. Parents in Pilsen noticed that their local schools—Cooper, Jirka,

---

<sup>109</sup> Fernández, 220; John Walton and Luis M. Salces, *The Political Organization of Chicago’s Latino Communities*, (Evanston: Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University, 1977) 17-22.

<sup>110</sup> Nicholas Von Hoffman to Saul Alinsky, Subject: Pilsen Neighbors, June 17, 1957, box 20, folder 316, IAF Records.

<sup>111</sup> “Pilsen Neighbors- Brotherhood in Action,” *Chicago Daily News*, February 18, 1963.

<sup>112</sup> By 1970, 60% of Pilsen’s population was under the age of 25. The average age for a head of household in Euro-American families was 57. Gwen Stern, “Ethnic Identity and Community Action in El Barrio” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1976), 22.

Jungman, Komensky, Walsh, and Whittier—were aging and overcrowded, but they were uninterested in the wholesale critique of the neighborhood school concept that Chicago’s civil rights coalition was advancing in the early 1960s. Freedom Day boycott organizers expected no participation from schools in Pilsen or Little Village in October of 1963, and anti-Willis organizers on the West Side took care to stay north of sixteenth street in planning their procession routes.<sup>113</sup> While black Chicagoans and their educationist allies were blasting Willis Wagons and demanding a break with the segregative character of educational localism, Pilsen stuck with the neighborhood, asking for more demountable units.<sup>114</sup>

Over the rest of the decade, Mexican ethnics continued to rise in their share of the area’s population, with an estimated 167% increase in Mexican-origin residents tallied between 1960 and 1970.<sup>115</sup> In 1966, the two dozen or so Mexican Americans that had joined Pilsen Neighbors, formed a separate caucus within the organization and launched an electoral bid for board membership, charging the white ethnic leadership with nepotism. The bid was unsuccessful, but the self-organized participation of Mexican ethnics had a multiplier effect in the neighborhood’s civic space. The consequences were most dramatic at Howell House, a local youth center that served as a key touchpoint for community among Pilsen’s adolescents. Funded and managed as a philanthropic settlement house, Howell hosted sock-hops, athletic clubs and a range of activities and social services for teens, children, and adults. Young Pilsenites who grew up in the

---

<sup>113</sup> Committee to Ban Ben Willis: Ban Ben Motor Cavalcade, March 1965, box 6, folder 40, Brenetta Howell Barrett Papers; Schools Participating in the Freedom Day School Boycott, box 89, folder 966, CUL Records.

<sup>114</sup> *West Side Times*, box 20, folder 317, IAF Records.

<sup>115</sup> John Ralph Bishop III, “Froebel: The Ethnography of an Urban School,” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1974), 20.

mix of wholesome activities at Howell became youth leaders and mentors for their younger peers, forging enduring connections across a segment of the neighborhood's postwar generation. Howell's salience as a social network was most influential for those not active in street gangs—the default associational life for most other young people in the area. In 1969, a cadre of these youth leaders succeeded in nominating one of their own, Arthur Vazquez, to become the head of Howell House. With several of Vazquez's peers energized by trips to the National Chicano Youth Conference in Denver in 1969 and Kansas City in 1970, Howell was converted to Casa Aztlán, a monument not only to Mexican ethnic arrival in the neighborhood, but to a strand of cultural nationalism that some activists believed would form the basis for a more relevant program of youth empowerment and a broader critique of the forces limiting their futures.<sup>116</sup> Inside and out, Casa Aztlán was decorated with a floorboards-to-rooftop coating of indigenist, nationalist, revolutionary, and spiritualist symbols. The mural project, led by painter Ray Patlan, was an improvised, participatory, affair, with local teens allowed to propose and paint to their tastes.<sup>117</sup> Casa Aztlán, along with neighboring El Centro de La Causa, opened in the basement of a church the following year, formed the cultural heart of the neighborhood, hosting similar activities as Howell House had done, but with new layers of Chicano activism, Mexican folkloric revival, social service provisioning, and an intensive schedule of local political meetings, which pulled from a wide ideological spectrum: Brown Berets mediating gang truces; college students

---

<sup>116</sup> Stern, "Ethnic Identity and Community Action," 70.

<sup>117</sup> *Viva La Causa*, Teena Webb, director (Kartemquin Films, 1974), available via [kartemquin.com](http://kartemquin.com).

organizing solidarity boycotts with the United Farmworkers movement; antiwar activists staging marches; anti-INS advocates planning lawsuits; medical students starting a free clinic.<sup>118</sup>

Veteran political observers and power brokers seemed bemused by Pilsen's burst of Chicano energy. *Chicago Tribune* reporters who "spent nine weeks learning about the Latinos" assembled scolding quotations from Mayor Richard J. Daley and organizer Saul Alinsky, who both expressed exasperation with aspiring community leaders who hadn't identified a unifying issue and couldn't name their precinct captain. Alinsky advised that Pilsenites needed to "forget the culture for a while and concentrate on winning."<sup>119</sup> Daley boasted of his own efforts to "involve the Latin-Americans," but stressed that without "votes and voters," activists were missing both the "beginning and end of the political process."<sup>120</sup> But these conclusions did not match what Maria Cerda was then discovering as she made her way through the thicket of new federal grants and educational nonprofits. Many of Pilsen's activists were learning similar lessons, finding that the college campus, rather than the ward office, was a more reliable source of strategic and technical support. Social science researchers and graduate students, especially from Northwestern University's Anthropological Research Unit, engaged in "action anthropology" projects in Pilsen, providing the neighborhood's nascent community organizations with staff support as block club organizers, survey data collectors, GED teachers, photographers, film documentarians, and grant writers.<sup>121</sup> The cultural reproduction of the community as a Latino

---

<sup>118</sup> Fernandez, 208, 234; Stern, "Ethnic Identity and Community Action," 102; Carol Oppenheim, "Latinos sue U.S. for harassment," *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1973, A2.

<sup>119</sup> "Are Latinos Listening? 2 Experts Preach Gospels of Politics," *Chicago Tribune*, December 17, 1971, 1.

<sup>120</sup> "Are Latinos Listening? 2 Experts Preach Gospels of Politics," *Chicago Tribune*, December 17, 1971, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Stern, "Ethnic Identity and Community Action," 103-104. Examples of such projects (which, it must be admitted, play an outsized role as source material for historians) include: Gwen Stern, "Ethnic Identity

“barrio” was so successful, one researcher recalled, that HEW would send grant officers directly to Pilsen to solicit proposals.<sup>122</sup>

Even with promising lines of support running through grant assistance, many Pilsenites sensed that there was some truth in the notion that without a unifying issue, a unified leadership, and political patrons, Pilsen would continue to be sidelined from the sort of sustained help that it needed to address long-term community problems, especially those connected to youth delinquency. While Pilsen’s Chicanist wing was claiming ownership of physical and cultural space in the neighborhood, the Mexican-ethnic cohort within Pilsen Neighbors Community Council (PNCC), had quadrupled its numbers, named itself the Alianza de Latinos y Americanos para Adelantado Social (ALAS), and was advancing on the civic front. Among the most active ALAS leaders was Mary Gonzales, a young mother of two small children at the time. Chicago-born and Pilsen-raised, Gonzales’ path to leadership had been urged on by her liberal pastor at Saint Pius Catholic Church, and underwritten by the example set by her mother, who had spent years advocating on behalf of Mary’s disabled brother, one of ten siblings.<sup>123</sup> In the wake of a 1969 controversy in which PNCC staff’s mismanagement had resulted in the revocation of OEO grant funds, Gonzales became part of the group’s renaissance as a Mexican-led organization with

---

and Community Action in El Barrio” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1976); Elias Sevilla-Casas, “An Experience in Chicago: New Roles for Psychiatric Anthropologists,” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1973); Emile Markgraff Schepers, “Voices, Visions and Strange Ideas: Hallucinations and Delusions in a Mexican-Origin Population,” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1974). Stephen Schensul, “Skills Needed in Action Anthropology: Lessons from El Centro de la Causa,” *Human Organization*, 33, iss. 2 (Summer 1974); Susan Stechnij, director, *Mi Raza: Portrait of a Family* [film] (1974) Chicago Film Archives, Paul Hockings Collection, 1962-1976.

<sup>122</sup> Stern, “Ethnic Identity and Community Action,” 104.

<sup>123</sup> “Mary Gonzales - The Environment and Its Relationship to Equity and the Economy,” available via youtube.com, accessed June 3, 2019.

an orientation toward issue-driven organizing, expanded membership, and political heft.<sup>124</sup> By 1972, Gonzales had been elected to the presidency. To Gonzales—and the several other mothers who filled positions on the often all-female executive board throughout the early and mid-1970s—schools were the most obvious and pressing issue that could bring fellow members into sustained and committed activity. As it happened, the flash of student activism at Harrison helped cement the conclusion among young mothers that the school was a lost cause.

### *Seceding from Harrison*

Discontent with the problems at Harrison settled on two principal concerns: the lack of safety and discipline manifest in the school's frequent gang and racial conflicts; and the seeming inability of the school to justify itself as a preparatory for well-paid work. Frustrated teachers fed the story of a school in crisis, petitioning the Board of Education for special interventions. "No student, white or black," teachers wrote, "is safe from the predatory efforts of the gangs that prowl in and about the building."<sup>125</sup> By the middle of the 1970-71 school year, Harrison's full-time police officer had been joined by twelve part-time cops.<sup>126</sup> In Pilsen, the neighborhood rumor mill churned with stories that cast the high school as a pointlessly violent pit stop on the way to unskilled labor. A favorite was the tale of the two boys, one a dropout and one a Harrison graduate, who both ended up with jobs unloading trucks, except that the dropout was earning better money.<sup>127</sup> Against a lurid chronicle of Harrison's hallways and lunchrooms as theaters

---

<sup>124</sup> "Pilsen Group May Lose Funds," *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 1969.

<sup>125</sup> "Harrison High Teachers Plea: Stop the Terror," *Chicago Tribune*, January 21, 1970, 3.

<sup>126</sup> "Calls for more police at 2 high schools," *Chicago Tribune*, February 12, 1970, W1.

<sup>127</sup> Ruth Horowitz, *Honor and The American Dream: Culture and Identity in a Chicano Neighborhood* (Newark: Rutgers University Press, 1977) 141. Sociologist Ruth Horowitz conducted interviews with

for violent acts—guns pulled, kids pummeled, fires started, teachers and cops assaulted—parables about the wise dropout were shared with a knowing smile. Dropping out was definitely dumb, but going to Harrison could be deadly.<sup>128</sup>

The unique arrangement by which ninth graders who resided east of Rockwell and north of 16<sup>th</sup> Street attended the Froebel branch in Pilsen, before being sent on to integrated Harrison made Froebel a singular place, where fears and frustrations took on an ethnic, neighborhood-based character. By the early 1970s, three quarters of Froebel’s five hundred students were ethnic Mexicans.<sup>129</sup> At Froebel, guidance counselors were known to steer higher-achieving freshmen away from Harrison and toward the selective technical programs at Lindblom, the vocational options for boys at Washburne Trade School, the secretarial, nursing, and cosmetology tracks for girls at Jones Commercial and Richards Vocational, or local Catholic high schools like Lourdes and De La Salle.<sup>130</sup> Unable to clear the barriers presented at these options by entrance requirements, transportation, or cost, some Pilsen parents recruited friends and relatives in other neighborhoods to provide fictitious home addresses, securing access to

---

Pilsen area Mexican and Mexican-American youth between 1971 and 1974. Many were students at Froebel and Harrison, which in Horowitz’s treatment were pseudonymized as “Marsh” and “Tudor.” Special thanks to Elizabeth Dia for her many tips on Pilsen sources, including Horowitz and Stern.

<sup>128</sup> Ruth Horowitz, *Honor and The American Dream*, 141-153.

<sup>129</sup> The remainder was comprised of some seventy whites, thirty-five Puerto Ricans, and fewer than a dozen blacks. Froebel’s distribution of “whites” (some of whom were the Chicago-born descendants of European ethnics and others who were Appalachian migrants) and “Mexicans” (among whom American-born “Chicanos” were twice as numerous as Mexican-born “brazers”) had effectively flipped over the past decade. When Froebel first opened as a branch of Harrison in 1963, Mexican “others” were tallied as 22% of the enrollment, with the remainder mainly white. By the early 1970s, 75% of students at Froebel were Mexican or Mexican American. Black enrollments increased only slightly. 1963 numbers in Benjamin Willis, Report to the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, “Head Count” October 22, 1963, box 89, folder 967, CUL Records; 1973 numbers in Bishop, “Froebel: The Ethnography of an Urban School,” 61.

<sup>130</sup> Horowitz, 141-142, 156.

neighborhood high schools they saw as safer options.<sup>131</sup> While Harrison loomed, Pilsenites were hardly thrilled with their close-to-home community at Froebel. In addition to their anger at the long-deteriorating conditions of the school's nearly ninety-year-old physical plant, Froebel students and parents complained of an inattentive, ineffective, and insensitive teaching staff.<sup>132</sup> While teens admitted to low grades and truancy, they reported that their teachers seemed similarly unmotivated, an attitude that permeated questions of school discipline. Individual punishments could be harsh and even corporal, but students often found faculty's pretenses to social control incoherent and ineffective. Frequent incursions into the school's space by non-students, usually gang members intent on settling scores with teens inside the building, confirmed the tenuous status of educators' authority and accentuated feelings among the faculty that the school needed to seal itself off from the community.<sup>133</sup> The gaps between school and community were reflected in the cultural distance between teachers and students. Seven teachers out of Froebel's staff of forty-eight were Latin, only two of whom were Mexican. Only three teachers lived in the Pilsen area.<sup>134</sup>

At odds with their surroundings, unable to control rowdier teens, and skeptical of presenting anything challenging or difficult to their students, Froebel's mutual pact of low expectations would have been recognizable to the journalists and researchers as archetypes of the beleaguered

---

<sup>131</sup> Horowitz, 157.

<sup>132</sup> Froebel, built in 1885, had been thrice slated for demolition since 1931, condemned in 1948, and upper-floor classrooms had been closed due to unsafe conditions, limiting classroom space and physical education. It was shuttered as an elementary school in 1961, but then reopened as a branch of Harrison later that year, in order to accommodate rising enrollments. See Bishop, 1-3.

<sup>133</sup> Bishop, 181-188.

<sup>134</sup> Bishop, 48.

“inner-city” school.<sup>135</sup> Early in 1972, rumors began to spread that due to the degraded physical conditions at Froebel and the leveling off of enrollment at Harrison, the Froebel Branch would be closed and all Pilsen-area ninth graders would attend Harrison. Over the course of the 1972-73 school year, the growing anticipation of Froebel’s closure fueled two consequential formations, one organized by parents and community members, and one staged by Froebel students. While their cultural politics moved in contrasting patterns, the two movements pitched local school affairs into the public eye and eventually cohered toward a single goal: the drive to establish a new high school for the Pilsen area.

### *Mobilizing Mexicanidad*

Mobilization began in March of 1972, when parents of students at Jirka and Jungman Elementary and Froebel Branch, convened a meeting of roughly two hundred people to develop a set of demands.<sup>136</sup> The manifesto that emerged carried a heavy emphasis on the “bad character” of the Jirka principal and of various teachers at all three schools. In accusing the principal of blunting efforts to expand bilingual and bicultural programs, parents saw resistance to what they believed was the rightful redefinition of the school as a conduit of local parental power and a condenser of Mexican influence. In this, parents objected not only to Kellberg’s personal insensitivity to Spanish speakers, but also to her alleged complicity in districting

---

<sup>135</sup> Horowitz, 140-149; Bishop, 35-37.

<sup>136</sup> “School boycott threat voiced by Latin group,” *West Side Times*, March 9, 1972, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Teresa Fraga Papers, DePaul University Special Collections and Archives, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter Fraga Papers). René Álvarez, “A Community that Would Not Take ‘No’ for an Answer: Mexican Americans, the Chicago Public Schools, and the Founding of Benito Juarez High School,” *Journal of Illinois History*, 17, no. 1 (2014), 189.

arrangements that could put Jirka in the same administrative unit as schools where “black people, could have something to say about our school and not our own people.”<sup>137</sup>

Subsequent amendments to the manifesto made more far-reaching demands with regard to staffing programs for TESL and bilingual education. The group, represented to the press by Presbyterian minister Rev. Jose Burgos and calling itself the Latin American Alliance for Better Education, submitted demands to the Board that bilingual and TESL programs be made permanent and that Latin American educators with bilingual and bicultural backgrounds be given preference in hiring for bilingual education. In April, parents made good on their threat to boycott, and Pilsen’s first parental action demanding “Latin” education was manifested. Half of the students at Jirka and a third of Froebel students participated in the boycott, with some attending “freedom schools” hosted at local community centers, while others joined the picket line.<sup>138</sup> These initial actions yielded no substantial response from the Board of Education, but parents continued to organize.

By December of 1972, the range of concerns that had motivated parents in Pilsen—discipline problems, dropout rates, racially insensitive teachers, bilingual programming, and interracial conflicts with blacks—coalesced under a more ambitious, concrete proposal, which foregrounded both the place-based ethnic Mexicanism of Pilsen and the racial and linguistic inflections of “Latino” education reform. In early fliers announcing the campaign for a brand new high school “for Mexican-Americans where the Latin culture and values might be taught,”

---

<sup>137</sup> “Boycott: Froebel and Jirka Schools- Spring 1972,” box 110, folder 3, Havighurst Papers.

<sup>138</sup> “2 Schools Boycotted by Latin Americans,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 4, 1972, A13; “School Boycotts Continue,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 6, 1972, A15.

organizers cited recent research on the “ABOVE 70% DROP-OUT” rate among Latin youth.<sup>139</sup> These figures, repeated often during the era, came from a 1971 report by Isidro Lucas, a local researcher and activist. Lucas’ research for the HEW regional office was in fact a targeted investigation of the Puerto Rican “dropout problem,” but in its description of alienated youth and militant gangs, activists in Pilsen drew a quick analogy to the problems they saw plaguing Mexican-American teens at Harrison. Meanwhile, with rumors of a shutdown further loosening the tenuous grip on authority inside Froebel, teens projected their frustration onto the school building with acts of burglary, vandalism, and arson.<sup>140</sup>

By February of 1973, Pilsen parents had raised enough noise to get a sit-down with District 19 superintendent Joseph Lee, one of several black administrators appointed under Redmon’s tenure. Emboldened by their recent political action, Mary Gonzales and fellow parent leaders Raquel Guerrero and Dan Acevedo declared that with the impending closure of Froebel, “We see a new high school in our area as the only possible solution to this untenable situation.”<sup>141</sup> Lee, well-versed in the civil rights toolbox of attendance and enrollment, heard what sounded like a non-starter, and attempted to educate Pilsen parents on the legal realities of the post-Willis era, explaining that schools could not close themselves off to outside racial groups. Coaching parents to reframe their concerns, Lee suggested that they avoid any “black versus Latino” terms in articulating their discontent. While some Pilsenites characterized the district superintendent as

---

<sup>139</sup> Coverage in *El Informador*, February 11, 1973, p. 1, quoted in Bishop, 198; Flier from December, 1972, quoted in Bishop, 197.

<sup>140</sup> Over several weekends in January of 1973, vandals broke into Froebel, stole school keys, broke windows, burned records, and defaced walls and furnishings. “Vandals invade Froebel; damage estimate \$1,500,” *West Side Times*, February 8, 1973, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>141</sup> “Parents promised hearing on new Pilsen high,” *West Side Times-Lawndale*, March 29, 1973, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

exhibiting “coldness” to parents, Lee’s tactical advice allowed parents to reframe their proposal, as they organized meetings with facilities planning staff in the weeks ahead.<sup>142</sup> Encouraged, parents invited Board of Education staff to a meeting at Casa Aztlán, where they hoped to stage a four hundred-strong display of people power. Administrators dodged the theatrics, inviting no more than ten parents to the Area B office in Archer Heights.

Undeterred, parents swelled the ranks of their organization over the course of the next month and designated subcommittees on building construction, personnel, and curriculum for their imagined high school. As leaders recruited more parents to join their efforts, Pilsen’s energy began to draw the attention and participation of a larger network of local activists.<sup>143</sup> With Mary Gonzales, and Froebel activists Lola Navarro and Juan Morales also in executive positions at Pilsen Neighbors Community Council (PNCC), the fight for a new high school became synonymous with the organization. Culminating their base-building operations with a show of community solidarity on March 28th, parents and youth staged a rally and procession of eight hundred supporters, marching from Harrison Park to the Board of Education offices downtown. Pilsen’s many generations and political dispositions were on display, as young and old mixed their messages across an array of placards declaring frustration with “80% dropout rates” and “Brown Power” fists clenching pencils. These mingled alongside multivalent symbols of

---

<sup>142</sup> “New high school for Pilsen possible, ‘but,’ says Supt. Lee” *West Side Times*, February 8, 1973, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>143</sup> Rudy Lozano, who had participated as a student in the calls for Mexican history curriculum at Harrison in 1968, and had moved onto UICC where, by 1973, he was leading sit-ins for Latin American studies and faculty recruitment, volunteered to help organize the curriculum committee. See “Parents promised hearing on new Pilsen high,” *West Side Times-Lawndale*, March 29, 1973, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.; Amalia Pallares, “The Chicago Context” in *¡Marcha! Latino Chicago and the Immigrant Rights Movement* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2010) 40.

Mexicanism, from mothers carrying the national flag, to straw *campesino* hats donned by Harrison students.<sup>144</sup>

Once inside the Board chambers, Pilsen parents communicated confidence in their newfound capacity. Meeting the board members' dismissive proceduralism with shouted demands, Raquel Guerrero declared that "minorities" were exasperated with technical handwringing about how a new school might affect racial segregation: "Where the hell are my kids gonna go, to the damn gutter, because the Board needs a professional to tell them what to do with the Latinos?"<sup>145</sup> Navarro threatened that the Board would "have problems if you don't listen to us." Despite admonishments from Board members that "they would never achieve anything" with their disruptive tactics, movement leaders secured another round of meetings and a promise from the new Area B superintendent to draft a progress report on the developing idea of a high school for the area was welcomed as a victory. Meanwhile, in their approach to First Ward Alderman Fred Roti, PNCC members got the gears of Daley's machine into preliminary motion. In addition to writing letters to Board of Education members, the alderman walked the neighborhood with advocates in their canvas for an appropriate site, and promised to arrange a meeting with the mayor.<sup>146</sup>

By June, the Board of Education had gotten the message, approving a statement of intent, in which they affirmed, without a feasibility study or a piece of land, the goal of constructing a high

---

<sup>144</sup> "800 march on school board to demand new high school," *West Side Times*, March 29, 1973, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>145</sup> *Mi Raza: Portrait of a Family*, [film] Susan Stechnij, director (1973), available via [chicagofilmarchives.org](http://chicagofilmarchives.org).

<sup>146</sup> "Roti, school board officials canvass Pilsen for H.S. site," *West Side Times*, April 26, 1973, 1, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

school in and for the Pilsen community.<sup>147</sup> Board member Catherine Rohter, who had exchanged shouts and insults with Pilsenites at their first downtown appearance, voted against the measure, which she saw as a “dangerous” precedent, telling reporters that she saw no reason why a community should be empowered to “choose not to send their children to a particular school for any reason.”<sup>148</sup> In fact, it was precisely this principle of negative parental choice that was rapidly becoming the basis for the city’s subsystem of permissive transfer, selective enrollment, and experimental programming that magnet schools had introduced, and which parents were taking up on an individuated basis as they filled out applications, called in favors, and sat on waiting lists. What was unique about Pilsen’s mobilization was that parents were asking to opt out on the scale of “community.”

Occasionally, the currents of racial conservatism running through Pilsen’s movement would rise to the surface. When Pilsen groups had joined a citywide march commemorating the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., their group split off from the main body of demonstrators before it massed at the Civic Center, choosing instead to march to the Board of Education. In June, during what were to be Froebel’s last weeks as a branch of Harrison High School, a protest march turned into a school occupation, with a banner dropped declaring “Chicano Takeover for a new High School,” and desks chucked out windows at police deployed to the scene. The one-day occupation, complete with arrests and injured police officers, was covered dramatically in major dailies and the evening news. Staff at the *Chicago Defender*, the city’s leading black newspaper, sent a white reporter into the crowd outside the Froebel

---

<sup>147</sup> “School Board votes high school for Pilsen,” *West Side Times*, June 17, 1973, 1, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>148</sup> Board Proceedings, June 13, 1973; “Board on Record for Pilsen School,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 14, 1973.

occupation, where he solicited statements from students who expressed their animus toward the “jungle” at Harrison in anti-black terms. The blacks “would eat us up” one teenager explained, while another half-joked that Mexicans fought plenty among themselves, and “we’d like to keep it that way.”<sup>149</sup> In general, however, the need to promote Mexican ethnicity and construct Latino politics served to keep activists’ public activity directed toward what they hoped to achieve rather than who they might wish to exclude.

The strategy made possible by the Latino paradigm—in which neighborhood-based ethnic nationalism could be leveraged in school politics—was quickly evaporating for Euro-ethnic whites. During the same months that Pilsen was winning its fight for a new high school, five miles to the Southwest, a coalition of parents at Gage Park High School were losing a pivotal battle. Attempting to revive the panethnic defense of white community that had worked so well for so many decades, the Gage Park Coalition assembled a group of Lithuanian, Polish, Greek, and Italian parents and lobbied the Board of Education for a westward shift of the school’s eastern attendance boundary. With the stated aim of reducing overcrowding, the proposal was clearly motivated by the desire to cordon off the high school from the black section of West Englewood, which contributed a rising proportion of new students each year.<sup>150</sup> During an eleven-week boycott at the beginning of the 1972 school year, an eruption of fights in November, and a schedule of regular pickets that winter, the Gage Park Coalition proved unable to conceal or contain the racial antipathy that bound their coalition together. By the middle of the school year, the “Fresh Air Health Club,” (Gage Park mothers’ playful name for their

---

<sup>149</sup> Robert McClory, “Race Key Issue in Froebel Row,” *Chicago Defender*, June 6, 1973. See also Louis A. Fitzgerald, “O.K, who’s brutal now,” *Chicago Defender*, June 11, 1973.

<sup>150</sup> “Gage Park High’s Shift Plan Dumped,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 1971.

morning picket line) had become, with help from white nationalist organizers, marches for “White Solidarity,” staged as counter-events to Martin Luther King’s birthday.<sup>151</sup> These were soon met with counter-protests by black parents and allies from Operation PUSH, and coverage of the “racial strife” at Gage Park quickly reasserted the Southwest Side’s reputation as the city’s headquarters of bungalow-belt bigotry.<sup>152</sup> While parents would ultimately succeed in negotiating a stabilized racial quota for the high school in 1975, the show of overt racial nationalism was a public relations disaster for Gage Park civic groups and foreclosed hopes among white parents that ethnic ownership over educational space on the mid-South Side could be maintained in their favor.<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> The active influence by far-right white racist organizations was documented by Chicago Police, whose surveillance of the Gage Park marchers included the tagging of individuals with known ties to Operation Crescent and the Legion of Justice. See Chicago Police Observation/Surveillance Report, January 2, 1973, CHM Red Squad Files, box 211, folder 1. Further mention of Illinois’ racial right in Sean Shesgreen, “Right-Wing Terrorism,” *New York Review of Books*, June 4, 1970.

<sup>152</sup> In the extensive press coverage of the Gage Park incidents, the school and its activists became local stand-ins for the broader moment of pundit-mediated analysis of Nixon’s putative “silent majority” of hard hats and housewives in the white ethnic enclaves of the urban North. In Chicago, as elsewhere, columnists staked out claims about the character of what journalist Ron Grossman called “the invisible man of the ‘70s: the inner city white.” Grossman’s sympathetic series on Gage Park provoked a vocal and appreciative response from “hardworking citizen(s)” who saw “courage” in the *Tribune’s* even-handed coverage of the “plight of the white people” at Gage Park.

<sup>153</sup> As a fallback position from their original demand for racial exclusivity, and given that Southwest Side groups had filed lawsuits against the very idea of quotas in 1970, Gage Park’s white parents had clearly compromised. In an important way, Gage Park’s 1975 quota, and a similar program instituted at Morgan Park High School the same year, signaled the reluctant acceptance and incorporation of the Southwest Side’s racial conservatives into the racial liberal paradigm of managed integration championed by upscale liberal homeowners a decade earlier. But on the South Side, where black school-age populations outpaced whites, quotas had the unambiguous effect of limiting black children’s access to “integrated” resources, while guaranteeing whites’ access to the same. In the first year of the quota, two hundred black students living in the Gage Park attendance area were turned away, even as the white quotas remained unfilled. On the lawsuit, see Robert Colvin, “Groups Charge Civil Rights Violations in Magnet Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 8, 1970, SCL3. On the quota’s impacts, see “Chronicle of Race and Schools in Chicago, 1962-1976,” CBOE Archives, Desegregation Collection.

In Pilsen, Mexican parents had found a path to ethnic ownership that steered them clear of white supremacists, but which required no bargains to integrate with blacks. By the start of the new year in 1974, it had been announced that Froebel would remain open until a new high school was built, and the Board of Education moved Pilsen's plans from an endorsed idea to a physical reality, authorizing the negotiation and purchase the land bounded by 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Cermak, Laflin, and Ashland. In an impressive show of civic clout, City Plan Commissioner Julian Levi announced that Mexico's star architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez would design the school, to be sited on five acres at the west end of Pilsen— then occupied by a chicken restaurant, a fruit stand, and a button and badge factory.<sup>154</sup> As representatives of the city entered into prolonged negotiations for the sale of each property, Pilsen Neighbors mobilized their membership for regular pickets at each site, repurposing anticonsumption symbols of the UFW grape boycotts as indictments of businesses unwilling to submit to a project of community uplift.<sup>155</sup> With some landowners refusing to sell, Gonzales and the PNCC turned again to direct action at the beginning of the school year, circulating petitions and organizing a boycott and picket at eight schools during the first week of the 1974-75 school year, while “alternative school” classes were held at Casa Aztlán and El Centro de La Causa.<sup>156</sup> Publicity for the boycott was extensive, attracting coverage in both English and Spanish-language dailies. Guerrero stepped into the

---

<sup>154</sup> “Seek Mexican Design for New Pilsen School,” *West Side Times*, April 21, 1974, [clippings file] box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>155</sup> Picket Photos, Benito Juarez Community Academy Archive, Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>156</sup> Extensive organizing took place that summer, with petitions circulated to secure commitments to the planned boycott. See School History Archive, Benito Juarez Community Academy Archive; For the four days after Labor Day, attendance at eight Pilsen area schools dipped dramatically, with the highest boycott participation rates at Jungman and Jirka, the original nucleus of parental activism two years earlier. Basil Talbott, Jr. “Latinos boycott 9 schools,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, September 5, 1974, A4; Intelligence Information Report, CP, Sept 6, 1974, Red Squad Records, CPD Intelligence Section, box 286 folder 9, Chicago History Museum.

role of boycott leader and photogenic symbol of barrio motherhood.<sup>157</sup> With an intervention by Alderman Roti, who promised to broker a meeting with Superintendent Redmond, the boycott was suspended, and Gonzales and Guerrero again proclaimed a victory.

Despite the tensions inherent in their strategy—in which mothers, children, and youth activists called for the shuttering of workplaces where many local men earned a living—advocates had succeeded in turning the movement for a new high school into the unified political expression of an entire community.<sup>158</sup> As Mary Gonzales explained later to the press, the manifest energy was proof of concept for the style of organizing that Pilsen Neighbors had led: “to make the power of many individuals one cohesive force and to direct it at one goal.”<sup>159</sup> Over the course of the year, Pilsen’s force had become legible at multiple levels. While the city brought suits to acquire the land through condemnation, the Board of Education authorized payment to purchase it, and the Illinois Capital Development Board approved the Board’s \$4 million grant to contribute toward construction.<sup>160</sup> Even the Chicago Plan Commission, which had instituted a freeze on new school construction approvals out of deep dissatisfaction with the Board of Education’s recent conduct on facilities planning, lifted the moratorium in order to approve the new Pilsen High School.<sup>161</sup>

---

<sup>157</sup> See various coverage including Huberto Leven, “¡Sí Habrá Huelga En Pilsen!,” *La Raza*, August 31, 1974; Abe Gomez, “School boycott planned in Pilsen,” *Chicago Today*, September 5, 1974. Like Gonzales, Guerrero was a rarely photographed without one of her younger children on her hip.

<sup>158</sup> See gestures toward these tensions in Alvarez, 91.

<sup>159</sup> “Pilsener Power,” *Chicago Magazine*, (April 1976), 10.

<sup>160</sup> Board of Education of the City of Chicago, Board Report 74-744, “Payment for Real Estate for School Purposes Located on West 21<sup>st</sup> Place and South Blue Island Avenue,” August 28, 1974, Benito Juárez Community Academy Collection.

<sup>161</sup> Scott Jacobs, “Call hearings on school construction,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 12, 1974, 38.

By the end of 1974, the Board of Education had acquired the land, and politicians staged competing theater to lay claim to an activated constituency. While Mayor Richard J. Daley touted his involvement in bringing Vázquez on board as architect, Governor Dan Walker, an anti-machine independent, made a personal visit to announce state funding.<sup>162</sup> Community-driven school reforms allowed political antagonists like Walker and Daley to court a growing Latino electorate, while also reinforcing a shared opposition to “forced busing.”<sup>163</sup> A community vote in March of 1975 illustrated the spectrum of contested political symbolism running through Pilsen’s movement. Rejecting namesakes of Mexican-American assimilation (a police officer and a WWII medal-of-honor winner)—but also avoiding more insurgent choices (like Cuauhtémoc or simply “La Revolución”)—Pilsenites opted for a solidly Mexican-nationalist choice, and Benito Juárez Community Academy became the new centerpiece of a community and a symbol of its political prowess.<sup>164</sup> Two-and-a-half years later, on Mexican Independence Day, 1977, parents from Pilsen and Little Village, flanked by the new mayor Michael Bilandic, the new governor James R. Thompson, and the consul general of México, watched as Benito Juárez Community Academy was dedicated.<sup>165</sup> On the exterior, the building’s stocky, earth-

---

<sup>162</sup> “Vasquez [sic], famed Mexican architect to aid with plans for new Pilsen high school,” *West Side Times*, May 16, 1974; Roberto Pérez Jara, “Nueva Secundaria de Pilsen es ya una Feliz Realidad de 9 Millones de Dolares,” *La Raza*, December 7, 1974; “Gobernador Walker anunció construcción de la secundaria para comunidad de Pilsen,” *El Mañana*, December 5, 1974, A-16 [clippings file], box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>163</sup> On Daley’s opposition to busing, see Meyer Weinberg, *Integrated Education*, January-February, 1968; On Walker’s opposition, see “Chronicle of Race and Schools in Chicago,” CBOE archives.

<sup>164</sup> E. Sifuentes, “Juárez, Cuauhtémoc y Revolución los Nombres finalistas para la Escuela,” *La Raza*, March 15, 1975, 3, [clippings file], box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>165</sup> “Mayor helps dedicate new Benito Juarez high school,” *West Side Times*, Thursday, September 22, 1977, [clippings file], Benito Juarez Community Academy Collection.



functionally nonwhite position in a post-civil rights racial order. In this way, Pilsen's ethnic arrival as a "Mexican" neighborhood was dependent on its racial incorporation as a "Latino" community.

## Chapter 5:

### Communities of Choice: Schools and Renaissance in the Third City

#### Introduction

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Brown* decision, Robert Havighurst announced that segregation was now principally a Northern, urban problem. Citing city-to-suburb migration statistics and William Julius Wilson's recent work on the urban underclass, Havighurst grasped for strands of hope. Metropolitan busing schemes were ideal, but politically inconceivable and legally moot. Youth employment programs might lift some at the bottom, but left racial isolation unaddressed. As he had done in 1964, Havighurst pinned his hopes on "renewal," endorsing the idea that multiracial, mixed-income magnet schools should follow in the wake of privatized redevelopment efforts in the urban core.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, the ideas that Havighurst had pitched to far South Siders at the height of the Chicago's civil rights struggle had been taken up by a new generation of urban renewers on the Near West and Near North Sides. Unlike the South Side white liberal homeowners of the early sixties, whose anxieties were based in the sociological complex of white flight and racial transition, the coalition of "central city" rehabbers, reformers, and school innovators of the late 1970s viewed themselves at the cutting edge of the opposite process. In this chapter, I chronicle the means by which the choice-driven integrationism of the urban magnet school concept became a meaningful tool for self-styled urban pioneers in their efforts to build middle-class community in the postindustrial city.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Central City Renewal and Education," box 21, folder 16, Havighurst Papers.

<sup>2</sup> The "Third City" is Larry Bennett's formulation, made in reference to what he characterizes as a post-1990 landscape of "a revitalized urban core, which...coexists uncomfortably with a belt of very poor to working-class neighborhoods reaching west and south" in which citizens are "erratically protective of the

This chapter is a story of schools reclaiming their spatial ties to the urban landscape, but under the revised language of a post-civil-rights polity and the shifting imperatives of a re-centralizing urban political economy. As Chapter 3's stories of Disney and Metro suggested, the educational missionaries who staffed Chicago's first magnets were committed to a social vision of sundering barriers. The magnet school would "open the city," breaking young people from the segregated traditionalisms of their neighborhoods and inviting them into a new civic project where a humane and multicultural future could be built together. The spatial optimism of Disney and Metro relied on the notion that the inequities that had been baked into urban real estate could be overcome by breaking schools' direct connection to the city's segregated turf. Educators, parents, and students testified earnestly to the changes in outlook and opportunity that these mixed-income, multicultural spaces had achieved. As evidenced in Chapter 1 & 2, however, these egalitarian hopes had always been undergirded by the more instrumental motive of attracting and anchoring white-collar professionals and white populations within the city limits. This aspect of the magnet concept's civic function—as a spur to consumer confidence in the project of middle-class urbanism—had never shaken loose its spatial roots. As I demonstrate in this chapter, school planners and neighborhood advocates were pushing forward these implications to impressive effect by the early 1980s.

One version of this story might suggest that with logics of middle-class fortification baked into magnets in the sixties, it should come as no surprise that they would become tools of middle-class revanchism in the eighties.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps magnets just did what they were designed to

---

city's unique built environment." See Larry Bennett, *The Third City: Chicago and American Urbanism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> For the classic argument in its 1990s context, see Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996). For an attempt to extend the argument into

do. But revanchism needs revanchists, and the story of how they prevailed is complicated. Consistent with my account of magnets' ideological and programmatic origins in chapters 1 and 2, I present the fruition of community renewal via choice-driven integrated schools as a contingent and contested process in which specific coalitions in particular neighborhoods found the right levers of influence to achieve their objectives. Even then, the triumph of new magnet programs came only after significant countermovements were overwhelmed, and just in time to receive positive reinforcement from state and federal mandates for desegregation plans at the close of the 1970s. The two stories related in this chapter—one from the city's Near West Side, and one from the Near North Side—demonstrate the different terms under which choice, community, and diversity became vehicles for educational renewal in each neighborhood. In both cases, the civil disruptions of the 1967-1972 period played an important part in shaping the paths taken by educational reform, as did as the local markets in real estate that swelled on the peripheries of crisis. On the Near West Side, a full fruition of the urban crisis cleared the slate, both physically and politically. In the wake of the riots of 1968 and the police suppression of radicals in 1969, the Near West Side played host to top-heavy management of educational policy, brokered by African American school administrators who saw the achievement of a successful college preparatory for motivated families on the fringes of the ghetto as a top priority. While contested at key moments, the project was ultimately carried out on the terms imagined by planners. On the Near North Side, where a longstanding civic space built by professional-class homeowners stood ready for occupation, activists on both sides of the color line leveraged radicalized discontent among the young and the poor to obstruct planning for

---

education policy, see, Pauline Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2013).

educational renewal in the early 1970s. Over the course of the decade, however, as both the poor and those seeking to represent them were displaced by upscale redevelopment, a new generation of professional-class residents found innovative, informal routes for the magnet school to fulfill its promise as a catalyst for middle-class renewal. Over the longer term, the outcome of these contests was unambiguous. In the world of urban educational policy, choice was ascendant. So also were the values of multicultural education, with integrated magnet high schools like Whitney Young and Lincoln Park able to market their racially diverse student bodies as points of strength in the 1980s, rather than harbingers of decline.

This chapter also tracks a moment of transition in voluntary integration's planning history. In June of 1967, the Board approved Superintendent Redmond's hiring of two consultants in educational facilities planning, Donald Leu of Michigan State University and I. Carl Candoli of Ohio State University, to conduct a long-range assessment of the feasibility of an "Education Park" plan for the city. Just months earlier, the Redmond Desegregation Plan had identified Education Parks as part of its inspirational long-range vision for integrated campuses to be constructed across the city. The Ed Park idea had caught fire nationwide as a conceptual catch-all among school desegregation planning experts in the middle of the 1960s, but was more likely to exist on paper than in real life. In districts across the country, neither the massive scale nor massive budgets necessary to undertake Ed Park projects appeared feasible in light of fiscal crunch and the baby bust of the early 1970s.<sup>4</sup> In Chicago, Leu and Candoli followed suit, making clear that with a \$2 billion pricetag, a true education-park system would be impracticable. A more feasible, middle-range goal would be the development of so-called Cultural-Educational-Clusters (C-E-Cs), which would link new facilities to local amenities like

---

<sup>4</sup> See Anslely Erickson, "Desegregation's Architects," *History of Education Quarterly*,

parks, libraries, and museums, but could also rely on upgrading existing structures in a given neighborhood, rather than creating brand new campuses. In the words of its planners, the C-E-C was “an ‘amoeba-like’ concept reaching towards all of the cultural-educational-social-economic resources of an area” where “innovation, experimentation, and evaluation of educational change” could be carried out on an ongoing basis.<sup>5</sup> Whenever asked to clarify what these buzzwords meant, planners and administrators tended to revert to the brand that had already proven itself at Robert Black, Disney, and Metro—the magnet concept. While retaining the notion of drawing integrated and motivated student populations, the C-E-C lowered horizons from soaring visions of citywide change, conceding that schools must “meet differing needs and to utilize the differing resources available within the sub-areas of the city.”<sup>6</sup> In the early stages, the vision stayed large, with twenty-six projects put on deck in 1968, and a funding arrangement between the Board of Education and the Public Building Commission to cover the estimated \$140 million in costs for site acquisitions, consults, design, and construction.<sup>7</sup> By 1971, with several projects still in planning stages, the costs had risen to \$220 million, prompting a shift to smaller-scale rehabilitation programs for some projects, and the cancellation of others. The early 1970s thus witnessed the scaling down and ultimate abandonment of grand visions for urban renewal via the Education Park model. More modest interventions, while still motivated by the broader civic program of renewal, were now taken up by specific constituencies who brought their local

---

<sup>5</sup> Donald J. Leu and I. Carl Candoli, *A Feasibility Study of the Cultural-Educational Park for Chicago*, [Educational Planning Study No. 1] (East Lansing: Michigan State University College of Education, 1968) D-1.

<sup>6</sup> Leu and Candoli, D-1.

<sup>7</sup> Created in 1955, the PBC acted as both real estate developer and landlord, issuing its own revenue bonds, contracting the construction, and then charging the Board of Education (and other city agencies) rent on the new facilities until the bonds were retired.

concerns to bear on the attendance and enrollment policies at magnet schools in their communities.

While fiscal and demographic factors drove the downsizing, the devolution of the planning process reflected the ascendant educational reform discourse of the moment, which privileged community engagement and involvement in the governance of urban schools.<sup>8</sup> Calls for “community control” at the end of the sixties were often infused with the political symbols of black militancy, but the demand for a parental check on an unresponsive and unequal urban system predated the Black Power turn, and was shared across a wide range of advocates and stakeholders from within, outside, and even in opposition to the social movements of the era. Prominent educational researchers stressed the need for imagination and flexibility on the part of inner-city administrators who faced schools where “the erstwhile, the downtrodden, and the apathetic [had] come alive.”<sup>9</sup> In Chicago, the push for decentralization had begun with an organizational audit by Booz, Allen, Hamilton in 1967, moving forward slowly with the creation of district-level Education Councils in 1969.<sup>10</sup> As advisory bodies charged with holding “meaningful discussions,” these councils elevated district administrators’ role as brokers between formations of local discontent and the central superintendency’s priorities in an era of

---

<sup>8</sup> For a global history of the policy impulse toward community, see Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> The quote comes from Human Relations academic Daniel Dodson, speaking at a Chicago Urban League-sponsored principals’ conference in May of 1968. See Dennis Fisher, “Inner-City Principals Must Operate Beyond Directive: Sociologist,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 29, 1968, [clipping] CUL Box 286, Folder 2986.

<sup>10</sup> Booz, Allen, and Hamilton, “Organizational Survey of the Chicago School System,” 1967, CBOE Archives.

shrinking fiscal capacity, all under the rubric of “encouraging self-determination.”<sup>11</sup> District Superintendents got to appoint the members of the council, determine its rules, and hire an additional assistant to free up the time they needed to work with the community. Even after the bodies shifted from an appointed to an elected membership in 1971, district education councils never reached the threshold of democratic governance, let alone “control.” But they did provide parents and community members with the possibility of access to power brokers within the system, creating new venues for ambitious individuals or community organizations to build reputations as leaders of and within their neighborhoods. As the Ed Park idea gave way to the Cultural-Education-Cluster concept, which gave way to magnet schools, spaces of public deliberation and contestation narrowed, allowing piecemeal bargains and improvised initiatives to gain a permanent footing and enduring community support, even when they often departed from promises of equity and access. In charting the political transition from one model to the next, this chapter rehearses, in educational space, the process by which large-scale acts of state-driven renewal laid the path for privatized acts of renaissance that came to characterize urban redevelopment in the post-1970 period.

### **Part I: Selective Rescue on the Near West Side**

In his *Design for the Future* planning document of 1968, hired consultant Donald Leu laid out a long-range plan for fifteen cultural-education-clusters, to be developed along a grid of strategic locations across the city. While the majority of these plans would take years to develop, Leu urged that three centers—one on the North Side, one on the South Side, and one on the West

---

<sup>11</sup> The theme of “Encouraging Self-Determination at the Local School Level” was clear among principals in the Urban League’s Advisory Committee. See CUL Principals Advisory Committee Policy Statement, box 286, folder 2986, CUL Records.

Side—be moved toward “immediate development.”<sup>12</sup> While the North and South Side locations remained unspecified, Leu identified the Near West Side as an ideal place for the first high school complex. At the time of the plan’s release, gestures toward the Near West Side were potent with meaning. Neighborhoods to the west of Damen Avenue were still cleaning up ash, glass, and rubble in the wake of the city’s most destructive civil disorder. To the east, bulldozers and concrete mixers continued the work that had begun with the broad trench cut by the Eisenhower expressway in 1955. With the University of Illinois-Circle Campus opened in 1965, Malcolm X College in 1968, and new additions to the Rush-Presbyterian-Saint Luke’s Medical campus under way, the sprawl of brutalist plazas and modernist cubes struck a vivid contrast with the riot-burnt blocks to the west. Crane High School, sited at the edge of renewal zone, had seen its reputation as a preparatory for technical and vocational tracks into the industrial workforce fall precipitously during the 1960s.

At Crane, the season of student insurgency that began in 1968 had taken a number of consequential turns. A five-hundred-strong boycott in May of 1968 had successfully drawn the principal into a series of meetings with student-leaders of Crane’s Afro-American Heritage Club, who demanded, in addition to the typical menu of cultural and curricular reforms, a renovation of the school’s physical plant. In the years since its transition to an all-black enrollment, the technical school’s once-impressive facilities had been left to deteriorate, with bathrooms in disrepair and the auditorium permanently closed.<sup>13</sup> Over the 1968-1969 school year, these initial acts of civil disobedience, which had produced an orderly ritual of meetings with the principal, James Maloney, escalated into a far more fractious affair, punctuated by episodes of violence.

---

<sup>12</sup> Donald Leu, *Design for the Future* (East Lansing: College of Education, 1968).

<sup>13</sup> “Boycott Pays Off at Crane High School,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1968.

One source of friction came as younger faculty at the school introduced Afro-American curricula, which other teachers and some parents associated with nationalist indoctrination. Meanwhile, teenagers were navigating an increasingly dangerous terrain in and around the schoolhouse.<sup>14</sup> Youth gang activity was on the rise on the West Side, and the borderlands between Crane and Marshall High School, located a mile and a half to the west, had become battlefields between Vice Lords and New Breeds.<sup>15</sup> As increased police patrols were layered atop the fray of youth gang activity, residents of the nearby public housing projects bore the brunt of a double threat. In October of 1969, a Crane student and his brother, John and Michael Soto, were shot and killed by the Chicago Police in two separate incidents. The elder Soto had been involved in neighborhood public safety advocacy, giving his death a political potency among activist-residents in the Henry Horner Homes, who considered the circumstances of the killings both tragic and suspicious.<sup>16</sup> Students at Crane launched a coordinated effort to memorialize the Sotos, but Principal Maloney refused to convene a school assembly. In response, students pulled the fire alarm and emptied into the street, but not before attempting to physically remove Maloney, who was injured in the process. Following altercations with police and mass arrests outside the school, Crane was shut down for two days, and Maloney went on what became a permanent leave of absence.

Two months later, Crane's urban crisis was given dramatic frame, when a two-flat building two blocks away from the school became the site of Chicago's most infamous episode of state

---

<sup>14</sup> "Crane Parents Hear Divergent Opinions on Student Unrest," *Chicago Tribune*, November 21, 1968.

<sup>15</sup> CIT NEEDED, see Hagedorn, Losier cites.

<sup>16</sup> The second episode came in the form of a shoot-out in which a ten-year-old girl and eight policemen were injured. See coverage in *Jet*, October 30, 1969.

violence. The killing of Black Panther activists Fred Hampton and Mark Clark by police officers in December of 1969 turned the blocks around Crane into a memorial site for the foreshortened arc of revolutionary politics, and a unifying focal point of outrage for black politicians, activists, and journalists. Crane students opened the new year with a wave of protests and disorders, drawing the attention of the local media. In January of 1970, Lu Palmer, Black Chicago's most prominent voice in the mainstream press, ran a front-page series on Crane in the *Chicago Daily News*. In Palmer's account, the school was a spectacle of failure: physically degraded facilities, disaffected teens, fights in the hallways, fires lit in classrooms, a principal on leave, and a staff helpless to impose order. Palmer's sympathies ran with the Black Student Union, whose demands he translated as a yearning for "guidance they can trust."<sup>17</sup> Following Palmer's exposé, the school shut down for eleven days, and teachers and administrators met to develop solutions. Teachers insisted on a return to order, proposing more security guards and a permanent police presence.

Stepping in to negotiate the new rules was district-level superintendent Albert A. Briggs.<sup>18</sup> Briggs was one among a cohort of black school administrators whose careers coincided with the urban bureaucratic response to the challenge of Black Power. In the wake of the student activism of '68, Superintendent James Redmond initiated both symbolic and material gestures of racial incorporation.<sup>19</sup> Most consequential was the lifting of a longstanding job ceiling on black

---

<sup>17</sup> L.F. Palmer, "Crane High: Factory for Futility" *Chicago Daily News*, January 15, 1970, 1,12.

<sup>18</sup> "Appoint Briggs to District 9 Post," *Chicago Defender*, January 30, 1970, 3.

<sup>19</sup> For a detailed account of the black student protest movement of 1968, see Dionne Danna, *Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools, 1963-1971* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 61-92. On the cultural and curricular front, the Board approved the development of an Afro-American Studies curriculum, and named over thirty new schools after African Americans. Chronicle of Race and Schools in Chicago, 1962-1976, (compilation from *Integrated Education*, June 1976), CBOE Archives, Desegregation Collection.

educators. Between 1965 and 1975, Chicago's system witnessed a tenfold increase in the number of black school principals, with prominent black appointees at the Board of Examiners and in the second-in-command post of Deputy Superintendent.<sup>20</sup> By the mid-1970s, a third of the city's district superintendents were black, along with forty per cent of its assistant principals.<sup>21</sup> Colonel Briggs, as the World War II vet and army reservist was widely known, was no stranger to the special role that black administrators played in the politics of the urban crisis.<sup>22</sup> As principal at Dunbar, a well-regarded vocational school in Bronzeville, Briggs had stage-managed two student walkouts in 1968, cushioning the blow of cuts to shop classes with mandates for an Afro-American Studies curriculum.<sup>23</sup>

Taking up his job in District 9 on the smoldering West Side, Briggs portrayed himself as a sympathetic negotiator between the insurgent anger of black youth and the aspirations for safety and stability among parents and teachers. In Briggs' view, the desire for community self-

---

<sup>20</sup> "Chronological Fact Sheet on Faculty Desegregation in the Chicago Public Schools," CUL Series III, Box 9, Folder 1000; Joy Darrow, "The quiet ones are often effective," *Chicago Defender*, August 4, 1975, 11; John Lyons, *Teachers and Reform: Chicago Public Education, 1929-1970* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 204.

<sup>21</sup> The most high-profile breakthroughs came in the elevation of two former principals to citywide positions: Frank Gardner to Secretary of the Board of Examiners and Manford Byrd to deputy superintendent, making him the highest-ranking black school administrator in the nation. Lyons, *Teachers and Reform*, 204.

<sup>22</sup> Briggs had gotten his BA at Roosevelt University, earned graduate credits at UofC, deployed for five years of active duty on the Italian Front during World War II, and taught in high school and elementary schools, before being elevated to serve as an assistant principal under Barbara Sizemore at Forrestville High School for seven years. He then worked in the superintendent's office as assistant director of the Bureau of Research, Development, and Special Projects before being appointed as principal at Dunbar in 1965: series I, box 281, folder 2937, CUL Records. A Lake Meadows resident, Briggs had connections with the Chicago Urban League, serving on their principals' advisory committee, while his wife staffed the ladies' auxiliary: series I, box 286, folder 2986, CUL Records.

<sup>23</sup> Betty Washington, "Dunbar Students List Grievances: Criticize Principal, Teachers," *Chicago Defender*, February 12, 1968, 1; Betty Washington, "Dunbar Students Stage Walkout Over Changes," *Chicago Defender*, February 6, 1968, 1; Faith Christmas, "Black Principals Approve of Student Movement," *Chicago Defender*, October 17, 1968, 1.

determination was best manifested not by the Panthers, but by black-consumer-driven projects like Jesse Jackson's Operation Breadbasket in the private sector, and in the public sector by men like himself: black urban administrators who would replace half-hearted white paternalism with responsive black mentorship.<sup>24</sup> By the end of the school year, Briggs could tally the District 9 meetings' achievements: a tightened security regime; a new principal ready for engagement with students and the community; a proposed revision of the curriculum along lines of cultural relevance; 3.5 million dollars for a facilities rehab; and a request that the Board employ black contractors to do the work.<sup>25</sup>

But Briggs' promises were in fact minor line items within the \$33 million budget slated for the first C-E-C project, which in April of 1971, Superintendent James Redmond announced would be constructed on the Near West Side, just blocks from Crane. As the plans for the new racially integrated complex, to be designed by Perkins and Will president Bill Brubaker, and named for recently deceased civil rights leader Whitney M. Young Jr., were released, reporters swooned. Press accounts judged Whitney Young Magnet High School, with its modular theater, television studios, enormous gymnasiums, swimming pools, and exercise rooms, to be the most expensive and "most exciting" high school ever built in Illinois.<sup>26</sup> Even for observers who found it difficult to square such expenditures with the deteriorating lighting and plumbing at neighborhood high schools throughout the city, a "visible uplift in the spirit" seemed necessary

---

<sup>24</sup> Albert A. Briggs, "Educational Decision Making," *National Association of Secondary School Principals* (May 1969) 176-180.

<sup>25</sup> Briggs BOE, April. *Chicago Defender*, December 14, 1971.

<sup>26</sup> Casey Banas, "A 'Device' to Chart Education's Future," *Chicago Tribune*, April 2, 1975.

to punch through the pessimism surrounding urban education in Chicago.<sup>27</sup> “White professional people on the North Side,” wrote education reporter Casey Banas, would now “have an avenue of escape” from local high schools they saw as inadequate to their children’s futures.<sup>28</sup>

As the planning cadre understood, it was not only whites who were seeking escape. In fact, Whitney Young’s West Side location meant that the administrators would have a difficult time attracting enough white students to meet their plans for a racial balance.<sup>29</sup> Hopes for a black-led, top-flight college preparatory were felt strongly across sectors of Black Chicago, responsive to concerns that the city’s other public incubators of black achievement—Harlan, Parker, South Shore, Hyde Park, and Lindblom—were losing their sheen. The school’s planning team, staffed by black administrators—Bernarr Dawson, principal of Calumet High School, and Charles Mingo, an assistant principal at Austin High School—was determined that the school be superlative in every regard. Dawson’s reputation as a competent and well-connected administrator preceded him. He had served as assistant principal at DuSable High School, and manned a successful administrative turnaround at Calumet High School in the wake of student protests in 1968. Both men’s familial connections (Dawson was a nephew of Congressman William Dawson, and Mingo was the son of Frank Mingo, a prominent labor leader) brought perceptions of political clout to the high-profile project. Whitney Young’s curriculum, with a special medical science track for college-bound students, was intended to feed off the nearby meds and eds landscape of urban renewal (see figure 7). But as Dawson’s recruitment messages

---

<sup>27</sup> Casey Banas, “The Young School overpowers its visitors,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 1975, B2.

<sup>28</sup> Casey Banas, “A ‘Device’ to Chart Education’s Future.”

<sup>29</sup> As late as 1978, Dawson estimated that of the 5000 applicants vying for 500 spots, 4000 were black. Given the rigidity of racial quotas, this meant, in fact, that odds of entry for the average black student were lower than for their white

stressed, Whitney Young's elite draw would be spread across multiple intelligences, promising the city's best facilities for young achievers in dance, art, and theater as well as the hard sciences.<sup>30</sup>

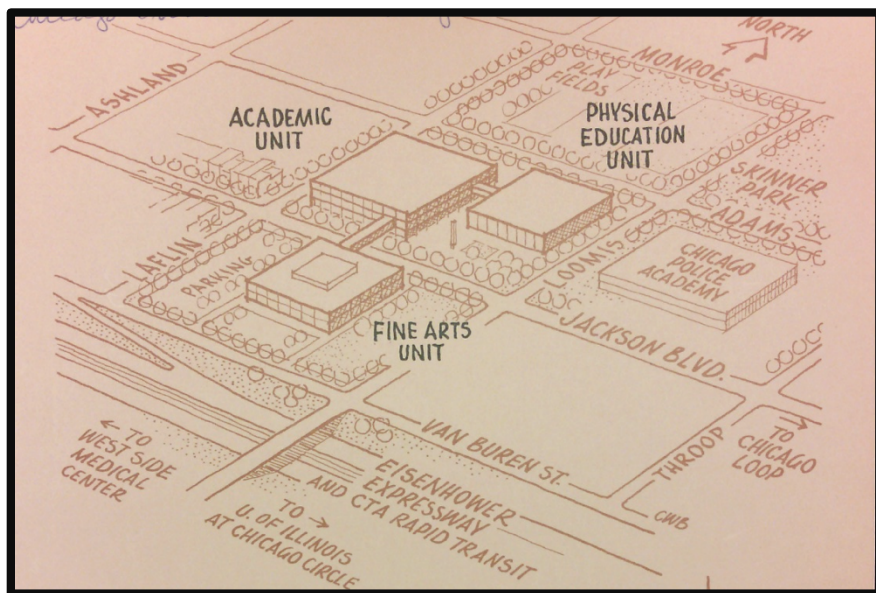


Figure 7: "Whitney M. Young Magnet High School" (pamphlet), School Files, Box 28 (West R-Z), folder 48 (Whitney Young), Chicago Board of Education Archives.

With high stakes invested in the success of the new school, substantial care and resources were devoted to creating a teaching staff that was both experienced and adaptable to individuated, college-preparatory approaches to planning and teaching.

Principal Dawson and Board of Education administrators pooled information to create a list of "invited" teachers who staffed the planning committees that met during the summers of 1974 and 1975 in the completed facilities. As assistant principal Mingo bragged to reporters, "we don't have to take whoever is sent to us."<sup>31</sup> Trained in daily workshops on individualized instruction, planning teachers were given priority once hiring decisions for the school's faculty were made. For the teachers involved, the advent of schools like Whitney Young introduced a change in

<sup>30</sup> Karen Odom, "The Magnet School: A New Concept in Learning," *Chicago Defender*, March 8, 1975; "Whitney M. Young Magnet High School" (pamphlet), box 28 (West R-Z), folder 48 (Whitney Young), School Files, CBOE Archives.

<sup>31</sup> Odom "The Magnet School."

professional self-concept. The planning experience allowed for more autonomy and intellectual challenge than had typically been given to or expected from teachers. For some motivated teachers, Whitney Young offered an escape from the increasing discipline problems at neighborhood high schools and supplied a boost to professional egos.<sup>32</sup> As one physics teacher recalled, he had begun his career in the early sixties with little sense of what constituted a better or worse posting within the system. By the time he was invited to teach at Whitney Young in 1975, he felt privileged to escape the chaos of the average high school, counting himself among a staff of “prima donnas,” who viewed their work as something more elevated than that done by other teachers in the system.<sup>33</sup>

To Crane parents who had sat on Briggs’ District 9 education council and heard promises of community input, the hype around Whitney Young was galling. Community, it appeared, did not always refer to those who lived in a given area. The new magnet school would construct its own community, shaped by the choices of a citywide population of parents, the random chance of an enrollment lottery, and the selective features of the school’s entrance requirements. Mobilizing local discontent was Earlean Lindsey, an active organizer from the Near West Side’s Mile Square Federation and a leader on the District 9 council. Lindsey, who had raised critiques of the Board’s negligence and Crane’s “insidious, chronic...academic deterioration” for nearly a decade, seized on Whitney Young’s construction as a new opportunity for redress.<sup>34</sup> Lobbying Briggs for a neighborhood attendance preference, Lindsey threatened to march on the new school

---

<sup>32</sup> Peter Insley, interview with the author, January 29, 2015; Melanie Wojtelewicz, interview with the author, December 14, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Peter Insley, interview with the author, January 29, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Lois Wille, “Fire Crane Area Chief, 2 Groups Urge,” *Chicago Daily News*, Dec 8, 1965,

on its opening day to enroll students from Crane.<sup>35</sup> As Lindsey insisted to reporters, her neighbors expected Near West Side schools to serve Near West Side students. Those who wanted an elite experience could “continue to send their children to private schools.”<sup>36</sup> Again bargaining between Board priorities and local tumult, Briggs extracted a concession: Whitney Young’s inaugural class would include a set-aside of three hundred seats for Crane students.<sup>37</sup>

While one battle for neighborhood representation had been won, others on the Near West Side were engaged in a longer war for the neighborhood itself. Down the street from Whitney Young, a cadre of self-declared “urban pioneers” had undertaken a heavy program of preservation for a stately row of Victorian two-flats. Rehabbers in the Jackson Boulevard Association expected Whitney Young’s “magnetism” to lend a substantial boost to their push for tasteful residential redevelopment. As enterprising professionals like Phil Krone and Bill Lavicka insisted at community forums, Whitney Young could only fulfill its hopes of pulling middle-class families if it abandoned gestures of inclusiveness toward the poor and the underprepared, and limited its enrollment to the best and the brightest.<sup>38</sup> Editorial staff at the *Tribune* agreed, declaring that “one frankly elitist school in the public system would not be too many.”<sup>39</sup> In its high school variety, a popular view of the magnet school had developed a sharp, culling edge. Expressing the grim view that Chicago’s racial and class biases were insuperable, editorialists wondered:

---

<sup>35</sup> Lindsey was a founding member of the Mile Square Federation Health Center.

<sup>36</sup> Connie Lauerman, “Elitist Tag hung on New School,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 9, 1975.

<sup>37</sup> Board of Education Hearing Notes, April 30, 1975, Charlotte Senachelle Papers, Box 1, folder 11; Casey Banas, “Group draws up quotas for magnet school,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 30, 1975;

<sup>38</sup> “Fight Plans for Young School,” *Chicago Defender*, April 9, 1975; Andy Shaw, “Young School Admission Battle Tuesday,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 7, 1975, 3, 20.

<sup>39</sup> “Magnet Schools need magnetism,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 31, 1975, A2.

Is it possible for a high school to be both magnetic and ‘representative of the citywide population’?...Will such programs as ‘basic clothing’ and ‘reading improvement workshop’ lure bright, ambitious pupils to travel to the West Side from all over the city?<sup>40</sup>

The ideal magnet school, affirmed the *Tribune*, “would have no racial quotas and would offer a more exacting, stimulating, and rewarding education than most pupils want or can digest.”<sup>41</sup>

Quotas weren’t going anywhere, but the victory for local inclusion that Briggs and Lindsey had brokered was revealed to be both contradictory and fleeting. In securing enrollment for some, Briggs had quelled local concerns that magnets were destined to serve only an outside elite. But this brand of selective inclusion functioned similarly to the small-scale transfer allowances that Superintendent Benjamin Willis had made at the height of the school protests in the early sixties. For those within the walls of the ghetto, the best hope was to be invited out. From those who had made it to the other side, such invitations were meant to be limited, and provisional. In 1978, the Board phased out Whitney Young’s neighborhood component and introduced a competitive entrance exam, placing the high school’s selective enrollment policy within the broader menu of new options in the system’s new Access to Excellence program, the choice-driven desegregative plan resulting from a suit brought by the Illinois State Board of Education. Racial balance at Whitney Young was maintained at forty per cent black, forty per cent white, ten per cent Latino, five per cent of other races, and five per cent left to the discretion of the principal. Whitney Young would remain a multiracial experience, and it would always have black administrators at its helm, but the experiment with local mixed-income inclusion was over. Over five thousand applicants competed for five hundred places in the new freshman class,

---

<sup>40</sup> “Magnet Schools need magnetism,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 31, 1975, A2.

<sup>41</sup> “Magnet Schools need magnetism,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 31, 1975, A2.

but the competition was tighter for black students.<sup>42</sup> With the West Side school drawing a much larger pool of black applicants than white ones, the quota-based admissions lottery left black hopefuls with only a five percent chance of getting in, while whites could count on a twenty-five percent shot.<sup>43</sup> Prominent Chicagoans, including new schools chief Joseph Hannon and Operation PUSH chairman Jesse Jackson enrolled their daughters at the school.<sup>44</sup> Chronicling the replacement of vacant lots and derelict warehouses with upscale townhouses and new apartments, local press ran with the story of a Near West Side renaissance, while education researchers declared Whitney Young the “nucleus for further residential development.”<sup>45</sup> The school had it had earned its stripes, both as an academic flagship and as a force for urban regeneration.

## **PART II: Schooling Renewal on the North Side**

While the central superintendent’s office was ultimately able to shape the educational landscape of the Near West Side to its objectives, other neighborhoods took a more participatory route to their encounter with the magnet concept. In the Near North neighborhoods of Old Town, Lincoln Park, and Cabrini-Green, magnet programs would become a central and dynamic

---

<sup>42</sup> Connie Moore and Daniel U. Levine, “Whitney Young High School of Chicago and Urban Renewal,” *Planning and Changing*, 7, no. 4 (Winter 1977) 152.

<sup>43</sup> Numbers calculated from estimates reported by Dawson in Levine, and in Don Wycliff, “Chicago’s Magnet Schools: Is the Attraction Worth It?” *Chicago Daily News*, February 21, 1978 [MRC Newsclippings Collection—Magnet Schools, 1977-1979].

<sup>44</sup> Casey Banas, “Hannon moves up, but seat’s still hot,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 24, 1975; Peter Insley, interview with the author; Melanie Wojtelewicz, interview with the author.

<sup>45</sup> Quote in Moore and Levine, 149; Elizabeth Brenner, “Near West Side boom spurs rent units,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 5, 1978; Elizabeth Brenner, “Near West Side Undergoes a Construction Renaissance,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 29, 1977.

feature of the local political culture by the end of the 1970s, well ahead of the “Options for Knowledge” desegregation plan that brought choice-driven programming to a citywide parental constituency in 1982. The Near North Side’s embrace of choice was shaped by layers of urban history: a high density of middle-class neighborhood conservation organizations dating to the late 1940s, the contained growth of a large-scale housing project that had transitioned to all-black by the early 1960s; the mobilization of anti-urban renewal activists in the late 1960s; and an energized cadre of civically-engaged real estate developers in the mid-1970s.

### *“Racial Stabilization” Moves North*

The “mixed” character of the Near North Lakefront presented both opportunities and anxieties for middle-class homebuyers in the postwar era. Amassing intelligence on the lay of the social texture of urban neighborhoods in the 1950s, community organizers with Saul Alinsky’s Industrial Areas Foundation described a densely packed “layer cake,” of social class and ethnicity running from west to east along the Near North Side. The “Negro layer,” based in the Chicago Housing Authority projects in the Cabrini and Green Homes extended as far east as LaSalle Street, after which point the “Puerto Rican/Hillbilly layer” picked up, followed by middle-class white artists and bohemians, topped off finally by the “frosting” of the upper-class Gold Coast along Lake Shore Drive.<sup>46</sup> When an ambitious round of urban renewal displaced the two middle layers in the late 1950s for the construction of the Carl Sandburg Village Apartments, low-income Appalachian and Puerto Rican renters moved north, taking up residency in Lincoln Park’s many rental units. At the same time, Lincoln Park’s east end was

---

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum on Near North Side “Needs” as per Telephone Conversation, Feb 15, 1956, box 17, folder 259, IAF Records.

becoming an enclave of professional-class homeowners, who had been drawn to the neighborhood's promise as a leafy, close-to-downtown community of brownstone row houses, graystone two-flats, and quaint cottages. These homeowners formed the core membership of the Lincoln Park Conservation Association, founded in 1954. Connecting the existing Old Town Triangle Association and the Mid-North Association, the LPCA became an active and influential vehicle for middle-class aspiration on the Near North Side.<sup>47</sup>

The in-migration of poorer residents had put LPCA members on alert to issues of crime, property maintenance, and schools. Crime in Lincoln Park, police commanders reported, was neither a "human relations" problem nor a juvenile delinquency issue, but rather a feature of the neighborhood's high density of taverns, where visitors coming from the suburbs or other neighborhoods were drawn into vice.<sup>48</sup> As for property, middle-class Lincoln Parkers' physical upgrades on their private homes had boosted the neighborhood's reputation as a "fancy community," and the designation of the area as a site for a federally funded General Neighborhood Renewal Plan (GNRP) in 1960 gave the LPCA's vision of urban renewal by way of "conservation" both city and federal sanction.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the large-scale clearance operations that had razed entire neighborhoods to erect high-rise communities, Lincoln Parkers aspired to an urban renewal with a lighter touch. But while it endorsed the preservation and maintenance of lower-density blocks of middle-class housing, the GNRP's staged program of redevelopment also proposed an aggressive agenda of clearance and replacement for areas inhabited by lower-

---

<sup>47</sup> Daniel Kay Hertz, *The Battle of Lincoln Park: Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Chicago* (Cleveland: Belt Publishing, 2018), loc. 1063-1084 of 2152, Kindle.

<sup>48</sup> LPCCC minutes 9/18/62, box 1, folder 5, LPCCC Records.

<sup>49</sup> "Workshop in Human Human Relations Focuses on Intergration," *The Booster*, October 6, 1963, [newsclipping] box 37, folder 7, LPCA Records.

income renters and working-class old-timers. While the mandated public hearings associated with the GNRP's Project 1 provided the principal arena for a political fight over the classed character of renewal on the North Side, the area's local schools became an important second front in what one scholar has called "The Battle of Lincoln Park."<sup>50</sup>

Managed administratively within the Near North's District 7, Lincoln Park's schools were, as promotional materials boasted, "characterized by great cultural and ethnic richness."<sup>51</sup> At the regional level, District 7 was more racially balanced than many areas of the city, with racial headcount percentages remaining relatively stable (42% white; 48% Negro, 12% other) throughout the middle of the 1960s.<sup>52</sup> But stability and balance at the district level expressed the starkly segregated arrangements between schools. On the South Side of North Avenue, elementary schools within the ambit of the Cabrini-Green and Marshall Field Garden Apartments—Byrd, Jenner, Manierre, Sexton, and Schiller—tallied black enrollments over ninety percent. For NAACP researchers at the end of the 1950s, this pocket of black schools on the Near North Side had been among the clearest examples of Willis' tactics of racial containment. While Jenner and Schiller swelled with enrollments of 2700 and 1500 respectively, all-white Ogden, protected by the attendance area line along LaSalle Street, hosted just over 700 students, with room to spare.<sup>53</sup> Cabrini parents proved themselves to be reliable supporters of Chicago's civil rights coalition. In 1963, the Near North's black schools had been among the

---

<sup>50</sup> Hertz, *The Battle of Lincoln Park*.

<sup>51</sup> District 7 Highlights (1965), box 51, folder 13, LPCA Records.

<sup>52</sup> Teacher Observation Headcounts, 1963, '64, '65, '66, box 51, folder 8, LPCA Records.

<sup>53</sup> "Testimony of the Northside unit-Chicago NAACP to the Chicago Board of Education - 1958 Budget Hearing Dec 18, 1957," reel 1, at 00746, Papers of the NAACP, Part 27: Selected Branch Files 1956-1965.

strongest participants in the Freedom Day boycott. By the mid-1960s, mothers in Cabrini, taking ownership of the political tactics of the moment, organized boycotts of their own, seeking and achieving the transfer of Jenner's principal, who they charged with race prejudice and poor leadership. The interim replacement, a rising white administrator named Bessie Lawrence, managed the crisis smoothly enough to be rewarded with a promotion to District Superintendent for District 7. Cooley High School, which had once hosted an integrated regional trade school, had been reopened as an attendance-area vocational high school in 1958, drawing students from the rising numbers of teenagers living in the Cabrini Extension, opened that same year. Typical of the Willis era, the change reinforced segregation, relieving overcrowding at Waller and Wells High Schools while reconstituting Cooley as a majority-black high school, sited near the heart of the Near North Side's largest ghetto.<sup>54</sup> White students withdrew in droves, tipping Cooley to a nearly all-black enrollment by the mid-1960s.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, in schools north of North Avenue in Lincoln Park, black children reached no higher than ten percent of enrollment at any school. "Others," as the Near North Side's Latin and Asian children were sometimes tagged, constituted substantial minorities on the non-black side of the color line, reaching as high as a third of enrollment at Alcott, Arnold and Headley. While the LPCA's middle-class counterparts on the city's South Side worried about the "turnover" that followed an advancing frontier of black homebuyers, most of the Near North Side's black residents did not have the means to purchase their way into Lincoln Park. Those that sought to rent north of North Avenue were often passed over by discriminatory landlords, who preferred to lease to Puerto Ricans and Appalachians,

---

<sup>54</sup> In both the 1960 and 1970 census surveys, tracts embracing the Cabrini-Green projects tallied both the highest numbers and highest proportions of children anywhere on the North Side. See US Census Data, 1960;1970; SocialExplorer.

<sup>55</sup> Teacher Observation Headcounts, 1963, '64, '65, '66, LPCA Records, Box 51, folder 8.

even as these migrants also faced bias from middle-class neighbors.<sup>56</sup> Still, over the course of the 1960s, Lincoln Park saw a net gain of black residents, most of whom were concentrated in a few blocks at the far Southwest corner of the neighborhood.<sup>57</sup>

Taken as a whole, the Near North Side's racial boundary, running west to east along North Avenue and north to south along LaSalle Street, appeared to be holding. As had been the case across the South Side, however, area high schools, with broader attendance boundaries than those hugging elementary schools, were more likely to pull an integrated student body. While Willis' administrative choices had cordoned off Cooley as a segregated high school for black kids from public housing, Waller, located in the heart of Lincoln Park's genteel east end, had a wide attendance area and enrolled roughly even numbers of black and white students, and a rising count of Puerto Rican "others." Color and culture at Waller, a direct reflection of the preponderance of black and Latin numbers in the adolescent age cohort of the Near North Side, served as an ongoing source of anxiety for LPCA members, who worried that the changing demographics at the high school would be read as a signal of a neighborhood in transition, even if no such turnover in residency patterns was afoot.<sup>58</sup> At the beginning of the decade, the LPCA's chief concerns for area schools included calls for improvements to staffing and programming: eliminating remaining double-shifts; reducing teacher-to-pupil ratios; more

---

<sup>56</sup> Hertz, loc. 826 of 2152, Kindle.

<sup>57</sup> See discussion in Warner, "The Renovation of Lincoln Park," PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 1979, 51-54,

<sup>58</sup> In Willis' inaugural systemwide headcount, tallies at Waller indicated a 66% white enrollment, with 28% Negro, and 6% other. By 1966, black and white headcounts were even at 47% a piece. By 1972, the attendance area served by Waller was 84% white, but the enrollment at the school was 87% black and Puerto Rican. For 1963, see Benjamin Willis, Report to the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, "Head Count" October 22, 1963, box 89, folder 967, CUL Records; for subsequent years, see Teacher Observation Headcount, District 7, 1964, 1965, 1966, box 51, folder 8, LPCA Records.

Spanish-speaking teachers and health programs for “newcomer groups”; tighter truancy enforcement; and increased security to fend off vandalism.<sup>59</sup> With the approval of the GNRP in 1962, however, the LPCA schools committee began to take a bird’s eye view of education as a central element in their broader plans for community renewal. Quoting Federal Urban Renewal Commissioner William Slayton, the LPCA reminded Willis and the Board:

The role of the schools in the success of new neighborhoods now emerging in central cities must not be underemphasized...For the urban renewal program, the success of both redevelopment and rehabilitation appears to be intimately related to the availability of superior educational programs attuned to the cultural pattern of new neighborhoods that are being created.<sup>60</sup>

LPCA leadership recognized the need to attune themselves to cultural patterns as well, forming a Human Relations committee in February of 1962 and issuing an official statement in favor of racial integration. Marshall Scott, dean of the Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations at McCormick Theological Seminary and a member of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations, and his wife Zoe of the Lincoln School PTA, took lead roles in building the LPCA’s human relations portfolio.<sup>61</sup> While the LPCA had always endorsed “a social climate appealing to men and women of good will regardless of color, race, or creed,” the organization now sought expert counsel from their “sister communities” on the South Side to learn the ropes of integrationism. Organizing an all-day workshop in October of 1963 on “The Challenge of Integration in Lincoln Park,” the Scotts brought in South Shore Commission (SSC) board

---

<sup>59</sup> Lincoln Park Conservation Association, Statement for Board of Education Budget Hearing, September 26, 1969, box 51, folder 11, LPCA Records.

<sup>60</sup> Statement of the Lincoln Park Conservation Association Regarding Public Schools—District 7, box 51, folder 12, LPCA Records.

<sup>61</sup> Background on Scott in “Adams, Havighurst to Speak,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 1965, n6.

members Paul Hartrich, Albert Loving Jr., and John Macsai for a “candid presentation” of South Side lessons. The SSC’s project, the representatives admitted, was in a state of development, but they stressed that the moral goal of defeating prejudice, undertaken largely by religious groups, needed to be accompanied by an aggressive interracial defense of “community standards.” In breakout discussion groups, the class tensions embedded in this advice became clear. As Hartrich noted, it was often “motley” bands of “outsider” whites who had provoked interracial troubles at South Side beaches, and as Loving suggested, Lakefront enclaves with higher rents “had less trouble” since black in-movers tended to have higher levels of income and education.<sup>62</sup> Middle-class Lincoln Parkers were able to square this advice well within their broader program of “up-grading.” Since, as some expressed, “we can expect antagonism toward new Negro residents from Gypsies, Puerto Ricans, and low-income white families,” the LPCA’s code enforcement and deconversion program, which had halved the number of rooming houses in eastern Lincoln Park, was reframed as a positive step in human relations.<sup>63</sup>

The first major test of the LPCA’s stance on human relations came in fall of 1964, when school Superintendent Benjamin Willis released a proposal for a new North Side regional high school. With the goal of relieving overcrowding at Waller, Lake View, Tuley, Wells, and Schurz, the plan proposed that a brand new high school be built in Hamlin Park, two and a half miles northwest of Waller. The LPCA schools committee sprang to action, condemning the plan. As they protested in testimony at the Board of Education and the City Plan Commission, the Hamlin Park proposal had not taken into account the community efforts to redevelop Lincoln

---

<sup>62</sup> “Workshop in Human Human Relations Focuses on Intergration,” *The Booster*, October 6, 1963, [newsclipping], box 37, folder 7, LPCA Records.

<sup>63</sup> “Workshop in Human Human Relations Focuses on Intergration,” *The Booster*, October 6, 1963, [newsclipping], box 37, folder 7, LPCA Records.

Park and conserve Waller's delicate racial balance. The attendance boundaries of a new school in Hamlin Park, Marshall Scott explained, would draw from the northern end of Waller's present boundaries, where nearly all white students resided. This siphoning off of white students would propel Waller's racial balance toward its tipping point, provoking a white exodus, "thus leaving Waller as an all-Negro school in a pre-dominantly white community and destroying a well-integrated high school." Such a transition, Scott warned, could be catastrophic:

If Waller moves from an integrated school to an all-Negro school because of an administrative decision by the Board of Education, it will be a body-blow to the Lincoln Park Conservation program. If the Lincoln Park Conservation program is destroyed, one of the most hopeful urban up-grading programs of Chicago will be lost, and all other neighborhoods on the north side will be in jeopardy.<sup>64</sup>

Scott's position on the Chicago Commission on Human Relations added clout to the LPCA's case. In January of 1965, the Commission sent a letter to the Board of Education, reminding them of their duty to consider the prevention of segregation, and urging them to "not jeopardize the good work of neighborhood integration" under way in Lincoln Park.<sup>65</sup> By July, the LPCA's lobbying efforts had drawn Board of Education members to their side of the dispute, with Board member Frank Whiston, in collaboration with the Department of City Planning, the Department of Urban Renewal, the Plan Commission, and the Commission on Human Relations, drawing up alternative principles that included upgrading Waller's facilities and add a new addition, doing the same at Wells High School, redistricting both toward a goal of racial balance, and only then

---

<sup>64</sup>Statement by the Lincoln Park Conservation Association to Members of the Board of Education and the Chicago Planning Commission, January 14, 1965, p. 4, box 51, folder 14, LPCA Records.

<sup>65</sup> Statement by the Lincoln Park Conservation Association to Members of the Board of Education and the Chicago Planning Commission, January 14, 1965, p. 4, box 51, folder 14, LPCA Records,

beginning construction of a new North Side school.<sup>66</sup> By the end of the 1964-65 school year, concerns about the rising proportion of black students at Waller were intensified when it was realized that Willis' permissive transfer plan, a concession to black activists' pressure on the South Side's overcrowding controversy, had allowed 342 students to leave Waller, the majority of whom were white.<sup>67</sup> Despite Willis' continued commitment to the Hamlin Park plan, the LPCA's lobbying of Board members had paid off, with none willing to approve the plan unless a full report of alternatives were presented.<sup>68</sup> The Hamlin Park plan died with Willis' retirement in 1966, confirming the LPCA's power to shape school policy on the Near North Side.

In borrowing from the discursive and policy toolbox of the South Side's integrationism, Lincoln Park's middle-class upgraders had joined the "liberal" side of the urban fray in Chicago's civil rights moment. But as had been the case in South Shore and Marynook, Lincoln Park's commitment to integration was anchored in concerns about the valuation of residential property. While the political work of urban liberal integrationism often involved dispelling white fears that individual black residents were a threat to property values, this mythbusting was always in tension with a broadly shared common sense: that the tipping and turnover of schools and neighborhoods to all-black was a fiscal threat, a moral failure, and a civic crisis. Thus it was that even in neighborhoods like Lincoln Park, where the plausibility of a community-scale transition was unlikely, liberal school policy proposals always had, as a central priority, the

---

<sup>66</sup> Waller High School, November 1965, , Box 3, Folder 19, Lincoln Park Community Conservation Council Records, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter LPCCC Records); "Lincoln Park Unit OK's Whiston Plan," *Chicago Tribune*, July 8, 1965, n4.

<sup>67</sup> "Calls for Waller Addition," *Chicago Tribune*, November 10, 1966, L1.

<sup>68</sup> Carol Kramer, "Willis Again Says Hamlin Park High Should Be Started," *Chicago Tribune*, March 6, 1966, Q3.

limitation of the numbers of black children into a given school-community-area. Set against the distinctive demographic conditions of the Near North Side, however, these anxieties drove middle-class reformers toward different policy goals, with the LPCA determined to save Waller, rather than allowing people to escape it.

### *Renewal Challenged*

With James Redmond stepping into the superintendency in 1966, Lincoln Parkers joined middle-class liberals across the city in the hope that bold new plans for managed integration and high-quality schools were afoot. In the wake of the Redmond Plan's release at the beginning of the 1967 school year, LPCA head Lyle Mayer wrote to Redmond to volunteer Lincoln Park for immediate involvement in the process. By November, Redmond had responded appreciatively, noting that the opportunity to develop magnet schools and educational parks would be forthcoming.<sup>69</sup> When a draft of consultant Donald Leu's Educational Park Feasibility Study was released in December, LPCA members devoured a copy of the eighty-page document, annotating pages with enthusiastic strokes of red pen, underlining, asterisking, and exclaiming on anything they saw that seemed to point to Lincoln Park as an ideal host community for the Cultural-Educational-Cluster concept (see fig. 2).<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> James Redmond to Lyle Mayer, Nov 28, 1967, box 3, folder 18, LPCCC Records.

<sup>70</sup> See copy of Leu, "A Feasibility Study for the Cultural-Educational Park for Chicago," box 51, folder 18, LPCA Records.

Armed with their interpretation of the C-E-C plans, LPCA schools committee members got a January meeting with Redmond's District 7 Superintendent, Bessie Lawrence, where they laid

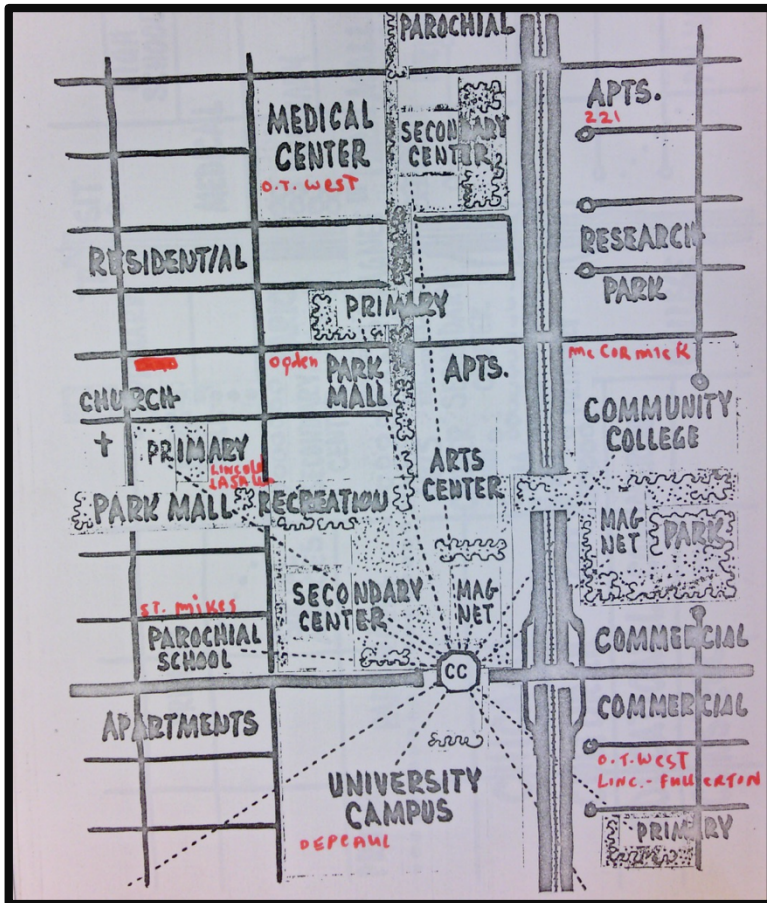


Figure 8, Copy of Leu, "A Feasibility Study for the Cultural-Educational Park for Chicago," box 51, folder 18, LPCA Records.

out their case. Lincoln Park, they argued, with its neighborhood university (DePaul), transportation corridors (the Howard and Ravenswood 'L' lines), and nearby cultural amenities (the Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago Historical Society, and the Chicago Academy of Sciences), was precisely what Leu and his team must have had in mind when they wrote about a "sub-system" of "cultural-educational-recreational-social-economic resources."<sup>71</sup> By the end of the following month, the

LPCA schools committee was downtown and at the table with Leu himself, along with Assistant Superintendent of School Planning, Francis McKeag. The nearly two-hour meeting left LPCA members feeling that their concerns were being listened to and confident that Lincoln Park would soon play host to a major educational renovation.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See, Leu, "Feasibility Study," D-1; "Report on a Meeting of the Schools Committee of LPCA attended by Farther Wangler as the Representative of the CCC on Monday, January 22, 1968," box 3, folder 18, LPCCC Records.

<sup>72</sup> LPCA Schools Committee 1968 Annual Report, January 1969, box 51, folder 3, LPCA Records.

But at the same moment that the Board of Education's program of integrated education appeared ready to align with the LPCA's hopes for neighborhood renewal, the organization's middle-class stewardship of civic space on the Near North Side was rupturing. In the two years since the death of the Hamlin Park Plan, the LPCA became riven by internal discord and assailed by external criticism, as antipoverty clergy and Lincoln Parkers from the lower rungs of the social order found occasions to confront and contest the view that renewal was a benefit to all.

### *The Urban Crisis Counterculture*

The bottom-up challenge to the LPCA's view of neighborhood redevelopment had been articulated as early as 1964, during mandated GNRP hearings on renewal Project 1, when the proposal for mass clearance of properties in Lincoln Park's west end provoked a coordinated opposition among a diverse set of area old-timers and working-class newcomers. Landlords, tenants, and small business owners organized against the Project 1 proposal, bringing a principled critique of the LPCA's worldview into public forums, including the LPCA's own monthly meetings. For those outside the LPCA's tight circle of upgraders, the public airing of the plan proved that Lincoln Park's affluent classes, insofar as they considered their working-class neighbors to the west, were not aiming for renewal, but for "replacement." The objections proved insufficient to prevent the project's final approval in December of 1965, but the LPCA was now forced to confront accusations that their program of "conservation" was no different than the slum-clearance projects that were already notorious on the South Side as "Negro Removal," even if the color of Near North displacement was mixed.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup> Hertz, loc. 1429-1448 of 2152, Kindle.

By the end of 1966, an ad hoc dissident caucus within the LPCA, the Concerned Citizens of Lincoln Park, had been organized by Human Relations Committee founder, Rev. James Reed. Reed, the pastor at Lincoln Avenue's Holy Covenant Evangelical United Brethren Church and an active member of citywide networks of liberal clergy, had been an early skeptic of the LPCA's skew toward bourgeois upkeep. Reed's church was a member of the North Side Cooperative Ministry, an active interfaith association of twenty-six liberal congregations. The NSCM collaborated on multiple projects during the middle-sixties, including Head Start programming, open housing, and peace activism. As Reed put it to the rest of the LPCA, "the task of the Human Relations Committee might be summed up in a short phrase: to insure that people receive as much consideration as property as we build for a greater Lincoln Park."<sup>74</sup> In pursuit of these aims, Reed coordinated bilingual outreach, formed partnerships with local Latin organizations, introduced new block club and committee structures, and pushed for a strong affordable housing plank within the LPCA's platform on redevelopment, especially in the lead-up to "Phase II" of the GNRP. Promoting his initiatives to the press, Reed told reporters that instead of imposing its will on "Negroes, Appalachian whites, elderly German residents, and Spanish speaking people," the LPCA "must work among the people who would like to have a voice."<sup>75</sup> But even as the LPCA built in new lines of ethnic representation and issued official statements of recognition of the displacement problem, a full incorporation of the voices of the poor within the association's existing priorities proved controversial. Seeking to join moral suasion to real power, Reed and his allies ran as a slate of candidates for the LPCA leadership in 1967. Their campaign materials

---

<sup>74</sup> LPCA Annual Meeting: January 25, 1965: Report of the Human Relations Committee, box 37, folder 1, LPCA Records.

<sup>75</sup> "Priority Issue Continues in Lincoln Park Area Plan," *Chicago Tribune*, October 27, 1966, 1.

diagnosed a community-scale crisis, declaring that “diversity of race, interest, opinion, age and income is disappearing from our community with the tacit consent of [an] LPCA leadership committed not to an urban community but a suburb in the city.”<sup>76</sup> As Reed became more radical in his framing, conservative members of the LPCA chose to see diversity as a source of growing problems, rather than a solution.

At Waller High School, the community’s chief barometer for mixed-income interracialism, Lincoln Parkers read urgent signals that social harmony was headed south. In March of 1967, Donald Ayen, a senior at Waller, snuck into the school auditorium in the early morning with a .30 –caliber carbine rifle, a gas mask, and over 1,200 rounds of ammunition. When students and a teacher entered the auditorium later that morning, Ayen attempted to hold the group hostage, and in a chaotic moment, fired six shots into the ceiling, scattering his captives, who then called police. After a brief standoff, the teenager was disarmed, apprehended, and arrested. Ayen’s story, repeated in local and national press, painted a grim picture of Waller’s race relations. The white teenager explained his armed expedition as an act of self-protection, having been threatened and extorted by his black classmates on an ongoing basis. At Ayen’s home, police found more weaponry and literature from the American Nazi Party.<sup>77</sup> Veteran principal Wesley Amar, desperate to stanch his high school’s draining reputation, insisted that Waller was a safe place, denying that gangs, extortionists, or Nazis had found a haven under his watch.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>76</sup> An Action Platform for Lincoln Park (1967) box 3, folder 3, LPCCC Records.

<sup>77</sup> Joseph Morang, “Waller Student Tells of Shooting,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 23, 1967, 1; “White Teen Shoots Up School, Blames Negroes,” *Jet*, April 6, 1967, 46. Ayen was subsequently found unfit to stand trial, and committed to a state mental hospital for schizophrenia. “Commit Teen Who Took Gun to His School,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 19, 1967, A9.

<sup>78</sup> “Waller Student Stays Silent as Court Continues Gun Case,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 24, 1967, 4.

Just before Thanksgiving, Waller made front-page news again. On the evening of November 18<sup>th</sup>, a Waller student, Michael Williamson, suffered near-fatal injuries when he was run over by two train cars on the L tracks of the CTA's Howard line in Edgewater. By Monday morning, rumors spread through Waller's lunchroom that he had been thrown onto the tracks by a gang of white teenagers.<sup>79</sup> By noontime, a shoving match had escalated into a series of physical confrontations, with black students beating up white classmates in the cafeteria and school corridors.<sup>80</sup> Fearing a full race riot, principal Amar dismissed students three hours early. While white students fled, groups of black teenagers engaged in a rash of property destruction, breaking shop windows along Old Town's main drag, grabbing merchandise, and throwing rocks, bottles, and insults at the seventy-five police officers deployed to stop the crowd of three hundred. As the riot traveled across the North Avenue color line, the crowd converged on Cooley High School, shouting to those inside until hundreds more left the school and joined in time to watch as several began smashing the windows of parked police cars. When two hundred police reinforcements arrived, youth fled into the Cabrini apartment towers, with cops in pursuit.<sup>81</sup> By the evening, police had dispersed the participants in the disorder, arrested 36 adults and 27 juveniles, and counted 12 injured.<sup>82</sup>

In the wake of the riot, Principal Amar faced immediate protest from students and parents for his handling of the incident. Students massed a group of 100 for a peaceful afterschool protest

---

<sup>79</sup> "School Gangs Fight Cops: 84 Arrested in 2 Areas of Disorder," *Chicago Tribune*, November 22, 1967, 1. The rumors were ultimately refuted, with neither the victim or eyewitnesses attesting to any such attack.

<sup>80</sup> "Waller Student Recounts Fears At Start of Violence," *Chicago Daily Defender*, November 22, 1967, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Hugh Hough, "Waller Principal Blames Disturbance On a Rumor" *Chicago Sun-Times*, Nov 22, 1967.

<sup>82</sup> "Adult Jailed 30 Days for School Riot," *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1967, a5.

demanding more culturally relevant curricula, while parents demanded to know why the principal had not intervened to stop the spread of racial rumor and why he had dismissed an angry mob onto the streets.<sup>83</sup> At the meeting with parents, Amar brought forward local police officials who promised to tighten lines of communication between their watch commanders, beat officers, and the permanent police officer who had been assigned to Waller's hallways since 1962.<sup>84</sup> For students, Amar structured an all-day seminar called "Let's Begin," staffed by faculty and attended by District 7 Superintendent Bessie Lawrence. Lawrence, owing to her experience at Jenner, had a history of proactive race-relations management. Students raised proposals of reform to student government and teacher student-relations, and made specific requests for more Afro-American and Spanish-American history courses.<sup>85</sup> Lawrence approved a wave of responsive policies, including the appointment of a black assistant principal, one of the city's first Afro-American curricula, arts partnerships, and the inclusion of Waller in the federally-funded Project Wingspread, a summer school exchange program that paired Waller's "inner-city" students with teens from the North Shore suburbs of Highland Park and Deerfield.<sup>86</sup> While some reported that these efforts had "cleared the air," a broader sense of social unease pervaded, and some parents appeared to be voting with their feet, with a latter-year survey of

---

<sup>83</sup> "Promise to Educate Boy Who Lost Legs," *Chicago Tribune*, November 30, 1967, D1.

<sup>84</sup> Harvey Meyerson, "How Waller High Principal Curbed Rowdyism At School," *Chicago Sun-Times* March 25, 1962.

<sup>85</sup> "Students, Faculty Air Waller Troubles," *Chicago Tribune*, December 2, 1967, c14.

<sup>86</sup> On Waller's involvement with Wingspread, see Harriet Talmage and Lloyd Mendelson, "Metropolitan Community Resources as the Interface for Open Communications," Paper Presented at the National Council for the Social Studies Conference, Denver, Colorado (November 1971), ERIC ED 063222.

students indicating that white students were perhaps only 25 percent of the student body.<sup>87</sup> The low tally was, in one sense, misleading, as this was the first time that “whites” were counted separately from Puerto Rican and Mexican students, producing the impression of a precipitous drop. In context, however, these acts of racial conversion were the culmination of a longer process by which Puerto Ricans in Chicago became seen by city authorities—most especially educators, social workers, and police—in racial terms somewhere outside of white.<sup>88</sup>

In Lincoln Park, this racial knowledge confirmed the braided class-and-culture prejudices that establishment LPCA members held about Spanish-speaking ethnics in their neighborhood, and cohered with the political orientation that some young people were beginning to take on the Near North Side. Prominent among these were the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican street gang, which, over the course of 1968, was being reorganized as left-militant community organization under the leadership José “Cha-Cha” Jimenez.<sup>89</sup> A street gang member, former drug user, and a Waller dropout, the twenty-year old Jimenez embodied the failure that the high school had come to symbolize for LPCA leadership. But for those sympathetic to Rev. James Reed’s Concerned Citizens, Jimenez’s embedded relationship with Lincoln Park’s young, poor, and disaffected was precisely the opportunity they had been looking for. While Jimenez, newly politicized from a

---

<sup>87</sup> “A Handbook of Information for the Use of the Visitation Committee in Reviewing the Self-Evaluation Made by the Faculty and Staff of the Waller High School,” (April 1968), CBOE records, School Files, Waller High School, Folder/document co-titled.

<sup>88</sup> The ritual of counting Puerto Ricans (but not Mexicans) as a new non-white, non-black, non-other category began in 1967, lasting for three years, until Chicago schools aligned its categories with that of the U.S. Census. See Chapter 4 of this dissertation. See also, Board of Education of the City of Chicago, *Comprehensive Student Assignment Plan* (January 22, 1983) p. 13, CBOE archives. “Teaching Subs Set Sick-In on Certification,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1967, a2; See Staudenmaier, “‘Mostly of Spanish Extraction.’”

<sup>89</sup> For more on the YLO, see Lilia Fernandez, *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012) 173-205.

sixty-day stay in County Corrections, was attempting to reorient his fellow gang members toward political action and social justice, Concerned Citizens hired a fulltime organizer, Pat Devine. Devine, a suburban newcomer to Lincoln Park, had been radicalized by her work with Reed's ministry, and took Concerned Citizens on an ambitious shift—from a caucus of internal reform within the LPCA to a role of outside antagonist. Over the course of 1968, Devine sharpened Concerned Citizens' rhetoric, allied with the Young Lords Organization, and ramped up a schedule of strident newsletters and vigilant attendance at community meetings.<sup>90</sup>

As activists pushed neighborhood politics to the left, Lincoln Park also became a local stage in the global theater of youth revolt. Twice, the community's lakefront greenspace was converted into staging grounds for visiting countercultural militants—once as an encampment and festival grounds for antiwar protesters during the Democratic National Convention, and again a year later when the Weathermen launched attacks on nearby storefronts and automobiles.<sup>91</sup> Scaled to spectacular dimensions, the events replayed the choreographed disorder that Waller students had rehearsed just a year before, along some of the same city blocks. The community's reputation as a tasteful destination for the urban middle-class now shared time with a profile as a bed for militancy. In the citywide Black Monday walkouts in October of 1968, Cooley and Waller were among the top participants, with over 2/3 of students absent on the day of the protest. In the case of Waller, where blacks were just over half of enrollment,

---

<sup>90</sup> Hertz, loc. 1529-1546 of 2152, Kindle.

<sup>91</sup> On Chicago's 1968 moment and activities in Lincoln Park and Old Town, see David Farber, *Chicago '68* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 165-191; Frank Kusch, *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) 57-68.

participation numbers suggested that among some students at least, solidarities of resistance could cross racial lines.<sup>92</sup>

Meanwhile, members of the LPCA's Human Relations committee again attempted to translate the new politics into a reform agenda, recommending that the LPCA's Board be expanded to include seats for representatives of minority groups, that black counselors be hired at Waller, and that the LPCA do a better job at publicizing its support for one-to-one replacement of units demolished under the GNRP.<sup>93</sup> A young liberal lawyer, Steven Shamberg, took over as president of the LPCA in January 1969, promising further moves toward inclusion.<sup>94</sup> To those who had already migrated to an adversarial position, however, the reforms were too little, and too late. By early 1969, Jimenez's Young Lords and Devine's group, reconvened as the Concerned Citizens Survival Front, were staking poles for a bigger tent, which they called the Poor People's Coalition. Inclusive of Reed's North Side Cooperative Ministry, the Coalition claimed additional membership from the Appalachian-white militant Young Patriots, the Young Comancheros street gang, and the Black-Active-Determined youth group which included Waller and Cooley students from Cabrini-Green.<sup>95</sup> It was at this moment, amidst a global and local atmosphere of youth radicalism, that Superintendent Redmond's plan for Cultural-Education-

---

<sup>92</sup> "24 Held in School Disorders," *Chicago Tribune*, October 16, 1968, 1; Danns, "Black Student Empowerment and School Reform Efforts of 1968," *Urban Education*, 37 no. 5 (November 2002), 645.

<sup>93</sup> Human Relations Committee Report, November 9, 1968, box 37, folder 7, LPCA Records.

<sup>94</sup> Hertz, loc. 1605 of 2152, Kindle.

<sup>95</sup> Poor and Working Demands to the Conservation Community Council, September 11, 1969, LPCCC Records, Box 3, Folder 16; Michael R. Gonzalez, "Ruffians and Revolutionaries: The Development of the Young Lords Organization in Chicago," MA Thesis, History, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2015, 127-128.

Clusters was dropped into Lincoln Park's splintering political scene, entangling the conduct of community planning for education with fights over renewal and displacement.

### *Planning Derailed*

In August of 1968, District 7 Superintendent Bessie Lawrence sent invitations to area PTAs and local civic organizations to discuss the formation of a community committee for long-term educational planning. An initial meeting was held in the Waller High School Auditorium, with planning consultant Donald Leu in attendance to make a public presentation on his cultural-educational-cluster plan for the area. Leu likely looked forward to his visit to Lincoln Park, having been subjected to "rude remarks" from standing-room-only crowds of anti-integration activists at planning meetings on the Southwest Side.<sup>96</sup> In Lincoln Park, middle-class white homeowners, with copies of Leu's own proposals in hand, were squarely on his side. But for people-power activists aligned with Devine and Jimenez, Leu and his mass-planning approach to educational reform appeared of a piece with the renew-and-replace orientation of the LPCA. Concerned Citizens partisans raised vocal objections at the initial meeting, taxing Lawrence's abilities to maintain her standards for an orderly meeting. By the end, a District 7 School Planning Committee (SPC) had been established, providing a new venue for Lincoln Parkers to fight their battles. A temporary chair, Rev. Jim Shiflett, a white liberal pastor, community theater founder, and ally of Devine's Concerned Citizens, was appointed to lead the bimonthly meetings over the remainder of the year. Convening on alternating sides of the District 7 color line, at Waller and at Cooley, discussions frequently ran aground in shouting matches, as representatives of the Poor People's Coalition continued to push the boundaries of civic

---

<sup>96</sup> Karen Daigle, "Residents Eye Plan on Schools," *Chicago Tribune*, August 18, 1968, M3.

discourse, refusing to allow planning to proceed until a formal structure for their representation had been established.<sup>97</sup> Sensing the urgent need for a point of consensus, Shiflett sent a letter to Redmond in November, urging “immediate favorable action” from the Board of Education in support of the broad parameters of their initiative—the closure of Cooley, and the rehab and expansion of Waller into a 5000-student magnet school.<sup>98</sup> The Board affirmed the SPC’s principles within a week, approving Redmond’s proposal to close Cooley, expand Waller by combining it with the Arnold Upper Grade Center, and seek several additional acres of land being cleared as part of the GNRP’s Phase II, but also reducing the project’s anticipated enrollment to 3500.<sup>99</sup> By the end of the year, the Board had approved the hiring of educational consultant Stanton Leggett, who was already at work on the educational plan for Walt Disney Magnet Elementary School on the North Lakefront. Tasked with producing a similar document for the Waller-Cooley replacement, Leggett explained that the final plan would be a reflection of the community’s priorities and aspirations. Unlike his work on Disney, where the well-insulated planning team sought only periodic consultation with a curated advisory board of community representatives, the Near North Side’s politically mobilized milieu made the task of discerning the will of “the community” a challenge all its own.

At the SPC’s December meeting, members attempted to salve their political differences with a move toward corporatism, splitting into several caucuses based on stakeholder status and ethnic identity: a student caucus, a teacher caucus, a black caucus, a white caucus, a Latin caucus, and a

---

<sup>97</sup> Policy Statement of School Planning Committee-EDUC-7, box 5, folder 14, LPCA Records.

<sup>98</sup> Ralph Cusick, “Implementation of the Leu-Candoli Report for Educational Change in Lincoln Park and Near North, Chicago, 1968 to 1973,” Ph.D. diss. (Education) Loyola University, Chicago, 1985, 65-66.

<sup>99</sup> Planning a New High School in District 7, part 2, p.1, box 51, folder 21, LPCA Records.

mixed caucus for those who refused to identify by race. At the January meeting, each caucus presented demands and questions to Leggett. The student caucus affirmed their desire for student choice in course selection, pass-fail grading, and on-site drivers' education. The teacher caucus expressed support for new technology, flexible classroom space, and expanded offerings in foreign language and fine arts.<sup>100</sup> The black caucus objected strongly to the planning process set by the Board, indicting the early and decisive sway that the LPCA's vision had been given in shaping the project parameters. As recompense, the black caucus proposed that their representatives—including Rev. Charles Marks, the newly appointed pastor of the Olivet United Presbyterian Church (a member congregation of Rev. James Reed's North Side Cooperative Ministry)—be nominated to lead the general body.<sup>101</sup> The white caucus advocated that the magnet school's attendance boundaries be wide enough to draw substantial white enrollment. The Latin caucus proposed increased Spanish-language programming and cultural training for teachers, as well as special programming to channel low-income students into vocational tracks and prevent dropouts. The mixed caucus proposed that the committee be reorganized without reference to race.<sup>102</sup> Deliberations and votes taken during the first meetings of 1969 resulted in an official tri-racial leadership structure for the SPC, with Rev. Charles Marks taking over as the chair, Cha-Cha Jiménez as vice-chair, and Shiflet as treasurer. In a rough approximation of racial demographics in District 7, the SPC steering committee was split among a ratio of 9-3-3-3 representation for the black, white, Latin, and mixed caucuses. While these officers presided over the general SPC body, each racial caucus conducted its own meetings along three policy

---

<sup>100</sup> Cusick, 74.

<sup>101</sup> School Planning Committee Meeting-Minutes-January 7, 1969, box 51, folder 1, LPCA Records.

<sup>102</sup> Cusick, 75.

areas. Shorthanded as “Feeder,” “Now,” and “Magnet,” caucus members worked on proposals that would tighten up the preparedness of all feeder schools, improve the conditions now at Cooley and Waller, and determine future plans for the anticipated magnet complex.<sup>103</sup>

It quickly became clear that these complex arrangements could not resolve the political cleavages running through the community, but they had achieved the effect of slowing down the magnet-school-planning process considerably. While the magnet elementary programs at Disney and Robert Black were enrolling their first cohorts of students, and similar C-E-C high school proposals on the far South Side and Near Northwest Side were moving ahead, the Waller-Cooley project remained mired in community committees, with important decisions delayed and deferred on multiple occasions. In fact, the delays that frequently frustrated Lawrence and her consultants were those created by Marks, as he sought to use the committee structure of the SPC to build political power for people in Cabrini and raise the public profile of issues facing black and poor people in the area, including degraded elementary school facilities and police harassment.<sup>104</sup> On occasion, Marks offered a political philosophy of educational planning, asserting, at the very least, an “advise and consent” role for the SPC with regard to the superintendent’s decision-making power within District 7. In more ambitious framings, Marks argued that the “District 7 SPC is the body which makes it possible for the School Board in fact to be the school board for the District 7 community.”<sup>105</sup> With the actual delegated powers of the

---

<sup>103</sup> Steering Committee Memo- March 26, 1969, box 51, folder 1, LPCA Records.

<sup>104</sup> Cusick, 77.

<sup>105</sup> Policy Statement of School Planning Committee EDUC-7, Relationship of Staff to School Planning Committee, box 3, folder 18, LPCCC Records.

SPC ambiguous, Marks' challenges edged the school planning process also toward a zero-sum power struggle between the SPC and the superintendent's office.

One such struggle came in creating what consultant Stanton Leggett had called a Planning Center, where Board of Education staff would share permanent office space with representatives from the neighborhood, who could then work together on an ongoing basis to coordinate a community-driven planning structure, agile and responsive to needs on the ground. In April, Rev. Marks presented recommendations that the SPC status as a "people power" body be validated, and be tasked with forming subcommittees that would conduct interviews for any principals or administrators applying to work in District 7. Marks began to coordinate outreach to local allies in the liberal-clerical circuit as potential funders and advisers for community staffing at the Planning Center.<sup>106</sup> District administrative offices had always been present at the neighborhood level, but the idea that non-staff members of the community would be incorporated into the daily operations was a novelty that administrators like Lawrence were extremely resistant to. By the summer, the debates over the Planning Center became a full-fledged fight over where the powers of the community (as constituted in the SPC) ended and where those of the superintendent's office (embodied by District 7 superintendent Bessie Lawrence) began. At a July convening of the SPC, Rev. Marks presented a resolution, calling for the formal construction of the Center, to be staffed by board personnel and local citizens. To prevent Rev. Marks' resolution coming to a vote, Lawrence abruptly adjourned proceedings and

---

<sup>106</sup> SPC Newsletter, August 22, 1969, p.2, box 51, folder 5, LPCA Records.

left the auditorium with her staff, leaving Marks to conduct discussions among those that remained.<sup>107</sup>

It was not Marks' presence on its own that had prompted Lawrence's retreat. Flanking him were members of the Young Lords, Cobra Stones, and Comancheros, who, as they took the stage, were said to have waved gang flags, and yelled slogans and obscenities.<sup>108</sup> Lawrence's read of the threat represented at the July meeting was informed by the broader context of political activity that summer, which included the continued intensification of militant direct action by neighborhood activists. Between January and August of 1969, groups associated with the Young Lords and the Poor People's Coalition had mounted successful occupations of two local institutional spaces—the McCormick Theological Seminary and the Armitage Avenue Methodist Church—and staged kinetic disruptions of public meetings of middle-class civic associations on at least five separate occasions. Especially dramatic were the May meeting of the Lincoln Park Community Conservation Council (the appointed organ of the GNRP), and the July meeting of the Mid-North Association, one of the LPCA's constituent organizations, both held in the Waller High School auditorium. At the May convening, Young Lords and Young Patriots shouted down the leadership, halting proceedings, and extracted an unprecedented resolution placing a moratorium on new demolitions in Phase II of the GNRP. In July, proceedings were thrown into complete disorder, as Young Lords rushed the stage, threw chairs,

---

<sup>107</sup> Carolyn Shojai, "District 7 Schools Await Reply on Planning Center," *Chicago Tribune*, August 10, 1969, N3.

<sup>108</sup> The exact conduct of the youth organization's members is unclear. Cusick—"Implementation of the Leu Candoli Report"—emphasizes the claim that gangs propped up Marks' resolution with disruption, and one newspaper account concurs: Carolyn Shojai, "Lincoln Park Group Disrupted by Gangs," *Chicago Tribune*, August 1, 1969, 2. Marks' account—SPC Newsletter, August 22, 1969—makes no mention of gang disruption, and a subsequent article by the same reporter is likewise silent: Carolyn Shojai, "District 7 Schools Await Reply on Planning Center," *Chicago Tribune*, August 10, 1969, N3.

and fought physically with representatives of the LPCA, resulting in four arrests.<sup>109</sup> By September, the mayhem had left the confines of community auditoriums, with firebombs thrown into the offices of the two local aldermen, actions that Lincoln Park Alderman Barr McCutcheon blamed on the Young Lords and their enablers in local churches, calling for aggressive police action and an investigative committee. At the end of the month, one of the Young Lords' most prominent allies, the Rev. Bruce Johnson of the Armitage Avenue Methodist Church, and his wife, were found stabbed to death in their Lincoln Park home. Over the course of the next year, the Johnsons' unsolved murders, a subsequent firebombing at their church, and the arrest of Cha Cha Jimenez on theft charges, joined the shootings of the Soto brothers and the killings of Mark Clark and Fred Hampton in a list of episodes that those among Chicago's network of left-insurgents perceived as a wave of political repression.<sup>110</sup>

Meanwhile at Waller, principal Amar, exhausted by the tumult of the 1968-69 school year, retired from his post. Bessie Lawrence appointed Ralph Cusick, principal at Cooley, to an expanded double-shift, manning the administrative duties for both schools in anticipation of their eventual merger into a magnet C-E-C. Cusick prided himself both on his loyalty to his fellow administrators and on his ability to talk through and respond to the "reasonable demands" of black students, despite "being Irish Catholic with a white face."<sup>111</sup> Cusick was foursquare behind the creation of the magnet high school, which he assumed he would be in charge of

---

<sup>109</sup> "Extent of Subversion in the 'New Left': Testimony of Hugh Patrick Feely and Harry F. Port, Jr.," *Congressional Record*, August 1970.

<sup>110</sup> For accounts of Chicago's moment of counterinsurgency, see Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther*, (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2011);  
Insert note on historiography of the broader moment of repression: Cunningham; Haas; Balto; J. Williams; Complications from Johnson; Pihos; Losier; Jones.

<sup>111</sup> "New Principal Named at Waller High School," *Chicago Tribune*, October 26, 1969, N7.

within two years.<sup>112</sup> Representatives on the SPC immediately objected to Cusick's appointment, reemphasizing their demand for direct authority over the principal selection process. While making early efforts to smooth relations with members of the SPC, Cusick had little sympathy for anything coming from the activist front of the Poor People's Coalition. Disgusted by the spectacle that had driven out his colleague, Cusick editorialized strongly in his education dissertation years later: "Their menacing antics, obscene language and threats drove many well-meaning community people out of the meetings."<sup>113</sup>

As it turned out, well-meaning community people were determined to keep meeting. At the same moment that Rev. Marks was attempting to push the SPC and his notion of community governance into the realm of official recognition, the LPCA was carving out other spaces of deliberation on a parallel track. In February of 1969, they had published their own independent study of the area's educational needs. Though presented as a simple statement of data on demographics and current educational resources on the Near North Side, Shamberg and his fellow authors sought to highlight their priorities for the new magnet, which they implied should take its cue from Lane Technical High School, the selective public prep school serving boys on the North Side, where 85 percent of graduates were said to go on to college.<sup>114</sup> With Waller faltering on questions of basic safety, let alone college prep, parents of girls expressed frustration that the North Side's surest path to college was a boys-only affair. As one heavily involved

---

<sup>112</sup> "New Principal Named at Waller High School," *Chicago Tribune*, October 26, 1969, N7.

<sup>113</sup> Cusick, 77.

<sup>114</sup> Lincoln Park Conservation Association, "Planning a High School for District 7, Part 1: Facts and Figures," (1969) p. 19, box 51, folder 20, LPCA Records.

Lincoln Park couple wrote to the Board president, bringing Waller up to par would ensure that “our daughter and other girls be granted their full and equal rights under the constitution.”<sup>115</sup>

The LPCA’s study also slipped in unsubtle digs at the SPC, describing those who attended its meetings as “presumably” members of area organizations, and noting that “existing organizations” like theirs were not given any official representation. In May and June, members of the LPCA hosted their own meetings with City Planning Commissioner Lewis Hill, and with educational consultant Stanton Leggett. While Leggett seemed a true believer in the SPC process, representatives of the city like Lewis Hill shared LPCA members’ disapproval with the SPC’s direction. From the vista of City Hall, the notion that the white-collar LPCA was losing ground to the SPC—a site of collaboration between liberal clergy, Left activists, black radicals, and street gangs—was extremely discouraging. At his visit with the LPCA, Hill implied strongly that he considered their organization to be “the people of Lincoln Park” and that they “would have full involvement in the educational plans that emerge[d] in the area.”<sup>116</sup> Encouraged, LPCA schools committee members prepared their own separate plans over the course of the next year, assured that the disputes between Rev. Marks and Superintendent Lawrence would keep the SPC in permanent gridlock.<sup>117</sup> Further weakening the SPC’s potency was another level of governance, the District 7 Education Council, which had been on the books since for over a year, but inconsistently convened. In 1970, taking her cue from administrators like Briggs, who

---

<sup>115</sup> Seymour Fleishman and Esther Fleishman to Frank Whiston, January 7, 1967, box, 51, folder 17, LPCA Records. Esther Fleishman was an LPCA schools committee member for a decade.

<sup>116</sup> Cusick, 80.

<sup>117</sup> Lincoln Park Conservation Association, Statement of Policy Regarding Plans for Enlarging and Improving Waller High School (July 9, 1969), box 8, folder ‘Schools,’ Peter Bauer Papers, DePaul University Special Collections.

treated his District 9 Education council as a venue for quieting local restlessness, Superintendent Lawrence reaffirmed the role of regular District 7 council meetings and elections, which had much clearer mandates and boundaries than the SPC.<sup>118</sup> While Rev. Marks attempted to keep his group active, his assessment—that the Board preferred to relegate the SPC to “a vocal but harmless interest group”—appeared to be bearing out.<sup>119</sup>

Meanwhile, LPCA leadership were experimenting with more aggressive ways to check the incursions that their neighborhood’s left flank had made into civic space. In August of 1970, LPCA executive director Patrick Feely and board member Harry Port traveled to Washington, D.C. to testify before an executive session of the Senate committee on internal security. There, they described Lincoln Park as a community awash in militant activities, with radical groups flocking to the area’s left-wing coffee shops, reading its locally published underground newspapers, and screening subversive films in its theaters. They named dozens of neighbors and local businesses, and told a story of how James Reed’s North Side Cooperative Ministry, “the mother of all these groups” had attempted to seize control of respectable community organizations and school planning committees, in an effort to set up front organizations and funding streams for a web of New Left radicals and their street-gang shock troops.<sup>120</sup>

News that white-collar Lincoln Parkers had informed on their neighbors did not land well back home, and to many, the LPCA’s mask of public-minded, above-the-fray leadership had

---

<sup>118</sup> District Seven Educational Council, Local Advisory Council Guidelines, box \_\_, folder \_\_ LPCA Records.

<sup>119</sup> SPC Newsletter, November 28, 1969, box 51, folder 5, LPCA Records.

<sup>120</sup> “Extent of Subversion in the ‘New Left’: Testimony of Hugh Patrick Feely and Harry F. Port, Jr.,” *Congressional Record*, Aug 1970, quote at 1069.

fallen away completely.<sup>121</sup> With polarized political camps pursuing separate power and retributive tactics, notions of “community” planning faced a crisis of confidence. To some LPCA members, the course was clear. It was time to cut loose from delusions of community, and return to the neighborhood. In October, LPCA member and local developer George Thrush wrote to Commissioner Hill, the Board president, and Superintendent Redmond, explaining that the future of Lincoln Park depended on squaring the solutions to two problems: “1. the need for improved educational opportunity for Cabrini Green students, and 2. The exodus of white middle class families from Lincoln Park.”<sup>122</sup> In his view, the notion that a racially integrated megacampus in the heart of Lincoln Park could accomplish both goals was unrealistic. Cooley had the third highest dropout rate in the city, and Waller was already a “trouble spot.” Combining schools into a bigger entity might well just mean bigger troubles. Instead, Thrush advised, the worthy goal of a high-quality magnet school might need to be paired with a separate intermediate institution that would “provide the intensive remedial education necessary to prepare students for entering this first-rate high school.”<sup>123</sup> In January of 1971, the transfer of a long-sought 14-acre parcel of city-cleared from the DUR to the Board of Education was approved, giving Waller the space it would need to expand into a new C-E-C magnet. But just as access to the land moved closer, the C-E-C concept itself was losing its grip on local imaginations. While some members of the LPCA stayed strongly supportive of the plan, others like Thrush and LPCA President Peter Bauer went on record to admit their doubts. Bauer bluntly expressed fears that a giant school would mean giant race riots.

---

<sup>121</sup> Hertz, loc. 1921 of 2152, Kindle.

<sup>122</sup> George H. Thrush to Lewis Hill, October 20, 1970, box 3, folder 18, LPCCC Records.

<sup>123</sup> George H. Thrush to Lewis Hill, October 20, 1970, box 3, folder 18, LPCCC Records.

By March, the LPCA had made Bauer's assessment—that “thinking in Lincoln Park has changed about the magnet school”—official.<sup>124</sup> With a new plan for a split-site magnet campus—one near North Avenue and one on the Waller site—the LPCA could retain the claim that the “amoeba” of the C-E-C was simply spreading its cytoplasm across several nodes. In June, Planning Commissioner Lewis Hill endorsed the LPCA's new direction, releasing his own proposal for a three-site project. On the District 7 Council, holdouts from the SPC and representatives of the LPCA's liberal wing saw little more than a plan to “keep the black kids from Cabrini out of the Lincoln Park neighborhood.”<sup>125</sup> Others, like LPCA president Steve Shamberg, called Hill's contribution a “good compromise” worthy of consideration.<sup>126</sup> In the end, Hill's three-site proposal spurred objections on all sides, and was rejected in a District 7 Council vote, sending the Board and the council into another round of negotiations. A year later, the Board attempted to salvage and synthesize what was left of the C-E-C with a proposal of three elements: the “Academy of General Studies” to be sited in a rehabbed and expanded Waller campus, a new “Academy of Vocational Skills and Technology” to be constructed near Clybourn and North Avenue, and—in a liberal borrowing from Metro High's model—a set of “Academies of Specialization” where students in art, design, music, and theater would be scattered to satellite classrooms in real-world cultural institutions across the Near North Side and downtown.<sup>127</sup>

Board members, concerned that the separation of sites would mean segregation by race, passed a

---

<sup>124</sup> Quote in Carolyn Toll, “High School Land Plea to be Made,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 24, 1971, N6.

<sup>125</sup> The LPCA member quoted was Esther Fleishman, a persistent believer in the C-E-C concept. “New 3-School Plan to Replace Waller Renews Controversy,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 3, 1971, N6.

<sup>126</sup> “New 3-School Plan to Replace Waller Renews Controversy,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 3, 1971, N6.

<sup>127</sup> A Cultural-Educational Cluster for Waller-Cooley Area (draft, March 1972), box 52, folder 5, LPCA Records.

resolution in June calling for a relocation of the vocational school onto the main Waller grounds. The LPCA, now officially opposed to a single-site project, collected over a thousand signatures against the revision and sent members to speak at Board Hearings.<sup>128</sup> Just as committees convened to wrangle another compromise on this latest iteration of the C-E-C, fiscal contexts brought the entire enterprise to a halt—this time for good. In August, the PBC announced that the raft of projects initiated as part of the 1968 C-E-C process had gone \$25 million over budget, and that Waller-Cooley, which had never moved past deliberations, would be cancelled.<sup>129</sup>

### ***Renewal Renewed***

In the wake of the collapse of the C-E-C initiative, Joseph Hannon, then Assistant Superintendent for Facilities Planning, reassured Lincoln Parkers that their educational concerns would not go unaddressed, that programmatic innovations were definitely not dead, and that money for an aggressive rehabilitation program could be directed toward Waller and Cooley in the immediate future. Members of the LPCA's schools committee took the turning point as a moment to assess their capacities and priorities. Taking charge was new chair Mamie Govea, who began by "weeding out" inactive members, and going on a replacement campaign, hoping to draw new blood from all of seven of the LPCA's neighborhood organizations. As Govea saw it, the committee could only regain its vision if it focused locally on current conditions, rather than the educational planners' inoperable visions and "faddish proposals."<sup>130</sup> Tactically, this meant

---

<sup>128</sup> Mamie Govea, LPCA Schools Committee Annual Report (January 1973), box 51, folder 3, LPCA Records.

<sup>129</sup> Edith Herman, *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1972, B16.

<sup>130</sup> Mamie Govea, LPCA Schools Committee Annual Report, January, 1973, box 51, folder 3, LPCA Records.

shifting schools committee meetings to home-based get-togethers, where Govea hoped to foster a closer feel among like-minded members. With these efforts, Govea helped finalize the LPCA's departure from attempts to build community with those who had brought disruption to civic space. In terms of race, space, and class, it was also an effort to define the polity and its educational resources in terms that cohered with the LPCA's original geographic constituency: "We need a school that will serve the residents of our area before we can furnish a school that will serve the entire North Side."<sup>131</sup>

During the 1972-73 school year, Govea and her team began to fulfill their mission of becoming what she called a "committee of action," rather than reaction. The strategy, to improve community educational resources, "not from the top down, but from the bottom up," bore on three fronts: a relationship-building initiative with Bessie Lawrence and other Board staff; an aggressive outreach to principal Cusick at Waller; and a survey of conditions at area elementary schools. Meanwhile, Govea put herself on a crash course, attending workshops run by the Citizens Schools Committee and making regular trips to the Board of Education hearings to get a grip on major players and processes.

At Waller, Cusick signaled a willingness to work with LPCA parents, and took on a regular schedule of visits to the LPCA's constituent neighborhood organizations to advertise the school to skeptical parent members. Meanwhile, Govea and the schools committee launched a "Send Your Child to Waller" campaign, hoping to get upscale parents to commit to enroll their children, rather than opting for Lane Tech, or the private programs at Francis Parker or the Latin School. If their children weren't ready for high school yet (or they determined that Waller

---

<sup>131</sup> Mamie Govea, LPCA Schools Committee Annual Report, January, 1973, box 51, folder 3, LPCA Records.

wasn't yet ready for their children), parents could also send their money. After several rounds of fundraising, Govea had created a "general fund" to assist the high school, which remained under the LPCA's control, but was used to support to Cusick's efforts to upgrade the school, including restoring the school's football team.<sup>132</sup> Inspired though they were by the energy being expended to reinvest in the school, Govea and the LPCA schools committee had not seen a shift in Waller's bad reputation. The creation of a small, optional satellite alternative school for potential dropouts, held at the Near North Urban Progress Center, gave shape to the idea of off-site schooling, but was also understood by many as a further signal that disorder at Waller had reached a point where many children were unable to cope with the social environment.<sup>133</sup> By 1973, enrollment was down, and discipline problems continued to plague the school.<sup>134</sup>

As Govea observed, drops in enrollment were even more troubling at local elementary schools, where dipping annual headcounts were known to provoke an unwelcome spiral. If the count at a school was down one year, a reduction in the school's budget would spur the loss a teacher-position, merging two under-enrolled classes into one crowded classroom, or cuts to special programs like art or music. Reading such cuts as a downgrade, parents would avoid the school if they could, provoking yet lower enrollment numbers the next year, and spurring further cuts.

But beyond the schoolyard gate, Lincoln Park's stock was rising. By the middle of the 1970s, the civic space held by emboldened street gangs and countercultural radicals had disappeared,

---

<sup>132</sup> LPCA Schools Committee Report, 1974, box 5, folder 3, LPCA Records.

<sup>133</sup> Jack Houston, "Schools Split Into Satellites," *Chicago Tribune*, March 30, 1972, W1.

<sup>134</sup> These included an assault on a teacher, a severe gang-related beating, and one instance of *Tribune* reporters visiting Waller and pelted by stones. Clifford Terry, "The resurrection of Lincoln Park," *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, April 26, 1981.

edged out by rising land values and eclipsed by a new wave of investment by professionals and real estate developers. Hippie bookstores gave way to boutique shops in the storefronts along Lincoln Avenue, while the apartments above them that had housed low-income families now hosted higher-income young singles. Many of the poorer populations that Pat Devine and Cha Cha Jimenez had hoped to organize had moved north and west of Lincoln Park, where costs of housing were lower. East Lincoln Park, just south of Waller, was widely seen as one of the highest-status enclaves in the city, hosting one of the city's highest concentrations of college-degree holders, and pushing area's the median income well above the city average.<sup>135</sup> From the standpoint of Govea's efforts at Waller, the best chance of "changing the school's image completely" would rely on tying its fate to the rising star of the Lincoln Park neighborhood. By 1974, Govea and company were recommending a name change—from Waller to Lincoln Park High School.<sup>136</sup>

The efforts to rebrand Waller by ran parallel to a complementary agenda to resolve the lingering questions about those not bound for college. In their plans for an "Area Vocational Center," Govea and the LPCA pushed their case for a magnet vocational school, where students would get "saleable skills and meaningful work opportunities," sited somewhere on the North or West Side, near a major transit hub.<sup>137</sup> While the committee stressed that such a school, if modeled on Chicago's more successful vocational programs, could be as magnetic as an academic center, there was a marked lack of enthusiasm in the proposal's language and framing,

---

<sup>135</sup> This account synthesizes analysis in Margaret Stockton Warner, "The Renovation of Lincoln Park: An Ecological Study of Neighborhood Change," Ph.D. diss, The University of Chicago, 1979.

<sup>136</sup> LPCA Schools Committee Report, 1974, box 5, folder 3, LPCA Records.

<sup>137</sup> A Proposal for An Area Vocational Center in District 7 (August 1972) p. 3, box 5, folder 2, LPCA Records.

suggesting that its authors expected the school to serve other people's children, and not their own.<sup>138</sup>

By the middle of the decade, the new blood that Govea had hoped to infuse into the LPCA was flowing. No one embodied this revival more than a young father named Stephen Ballis. A partner in his family's successful insurance and real estate business, Ballis had grown up in nearby Lake View, went away to college, and tried homeowner life in the suburbs for about a year before realizing how much he hated it. Moving to Lincoln Park's Old Town Triangle with his wife Elizabeth and his two preschool-age daughters in 1972, Ballis arrived just in time to miss the wars over renewal and schools that had recently rocked the neighborhood. Converting a hundred-year-old two-flat into a single-family home, Ballis joined the newest round of Lincoln Park rehabbers, some of whom were now staking claims further and further west, where the aging out and pricing out of lower-income old-timers had opened new fronts for white-collar settlement. Ballis valued what was left of Lincoln Park's multiethnic, mixed-income milieu, seeing its dense, neighborly charm as a place where his children might have a taste of the close-knit urban childhood that he had enjoyed when he ran free in Lake View twenty years earlier.<sup>139</sup> Along with friend and attorney Dean Bilton, Ballis quickly got involved in local civic life, attending Old Town Triangle Association meetings, and becoming an active member on Govea's LPCA schools committee.<sup>140</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> A Proposal for An Area Vocational Center in District 7 (August 1972), box 5, folder 2, LPCA Records.

<sup>139</sup> Stephen Ballis, interview with the author, November 28, 2017; J. Linn Allen, "The Building of a New Career," *Chicago Tribune*, May 27, 1989.

<sup>140</sup> LPCA Schools Committee Minutes, January, 29, 1975, box 51, folder 2, LPCA Records.

Beginning in 1974, Ballis took on Govea's call to recommit the community to its local elementary schools. Despite his own daughters not yet being school-age, Ballis got himself onto the PTA at LaSalle Elementary, and began an active schedule of advocacy on behalf of the under-enrolled, high-poverty neighborhood school. After a year of involvement with the school, Ballis concluded that much of the school's difficulties were due to an ineffective principal, and began to lobby for her removal at the District Superintendent's Office. By 1976, Bilton and Ballis were switching off as chairs of the LPCA schools committee, and considering ways to "sell our schools to the neighborhood."<sup>141</sup> Meanwhile, Bessie Lawrence had been elevated to the central office and District 7 had a new superintendent, former Ogden principal Margaret Harrigan. In Harrigan, Bilton and Ballis found a kindred spirit. The former principal of Ogden, Harrigan arrived with an eagerness to cut through bureaucratic process and encourage the efforts of local go-getters like those at the LPCA.<sup>142</sup> Within a year, Harrigan had succeeded in removing the principal at LaSalle, the LPCA had organized a mass recruitment drive among upper-income parents to fill a new half-day kindergarten class, and Stephen Ballis had been elected president of the District 7 Advisory Council. Long frustrated by the limited power that PTAs had over school resourcing decisions, Ballis went to a friend at McDermott, Will, and Emery to contrive a novel device for more community control. Soon, Ballis had in hand the charter for a 501C3 corporation called the Friends of LaSalle. Through the Friends corporation, the PTA gained the power to conduct major fundraising operations *and* retain control over how the money could be spent. New library resources, art installations, and field trips were soon

---

<sup>141</sup> LPCA Schools Committee Minutes, June 3, 1976, box 51, folder 2, LPCA Records.

<sup>142</sup> Katherine Lawson, "From Waller High to Lincoln Park," *Illinois Issues* (May 1985) 13-14.

being funded by the Friends of LaSalle.<sup>143</sup> A far cry from its besieged status at the beginning of the decade, the LPCA schools committee had been taken by Ballis and Bilton back to the center of civic influence on the Near North Side.

Still, the demographic realities within LaSalle's attendance area meant that under-enrollment remained a problem. As it happened, mounting state pressure for a desegregation plan would provide Harrigan, Bilton, and Baliss with a solution. In April of 1976, the State Board of Education put the Chicago system on probationary status for its non-compliance with Illinois desegregation requirements, prompting the Chicago Board to solicit desegregation proposals from District councils and community organizations from across the city.<sup>144</sup> For Lincoln Parkers, the call for proposals offered a chance to rethink enrollment policy on the Near North Side in a way that would solve the under-enrollment issues, build on the middle-class reinvestment happening at schools like LaSalle, and finally tackle the long-deferred reckoning with decline at Waller. Magnets were the answer. Rebranding a network of Near North schools—LaSalle Language Academy, Franklin Fine Arts Center, and Newberry Math and Science Academy—as integrated magnet schools, each with specialized programming, would bring enrollments up to sustainable levels and bring the reputation of local schools up to par with that of the neighborhood. Realizing that if the schools were “true” magnets, local residents could not count on access to the new programs, Ballis negotiated special guarantees of enrollment for attendance area residents.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> Stephen Ballis, Interview with the author.

<sup>144</sup> “Segregated Schools in Chicago Past: A History of Resistance,” [Illinois Civil Rights Commission] Chicago Reporter Files, Box----Folder---

<sup>145</sup> Stephen Ballis, Interview with the author. These were rescinded in 1980, as all magnets were mandated to be open to all students, without geographic preference.

The work at LaSalle lit the way for a revamp at Waller. Again working hand-in-hand with Harrigan, Ballis and LPCA members paid repeated visits to Waller between 1976 and 1978. While Ballis played booster, declaring that a million-dollar renovation project held enormous promise, Harrigan warned Principal Cusick and his staff that active community members like Ballis would be “paying close attention to Waller.” Harrigan put teachers on notice: “the high school considers itself isolated from this community. This attitude can no longer exist.”<sup>146</sup> Summarizing his exchanges with Cusick, Ballis described a deadlock between the school and the community: “ ‘Give us your talented kids and we’ll do better,’ versus “Show us that you can teach school and we’ll send you our kids.”” In a four-part Channel 2 news exposé in May of 1977, in which a reporter went undercover as a Waller High School student, Chicagoans were treated to footage of unsupervised pupils, unmotivated teachers, and vice of all kinds seeping out into the local community.<sup>147</sup> By the end of the school year, peeling plaster had been patched, graffiti painted over in bright colors, and Harrigan had replaced Cusick with new principal Dorothy Spielman, who promised to root out incompetent teachers and restore discipline. But the real reform came at the opening of the 1978-79 school year, as three new selective magnet programs in language, science, and art formed the nucleus of the school’s new identity. By the end of the year, the rebranding was official, as the Board approved a new name—Lincoln Park High School. With funding from the LPCA, Harrigan launched an ad and publicity campaign, putting Lincoln Park into competition with Whitney Young and Lane Tech the city’s high achievers (see figures 9A & 9B).

---

<sup>146</sup> Minutes of the District 7 Council, September 27, 1977, Box 51, Folder 2, LPCA records.

<sup>147</sup> “Jackson calls for ouster of Waller High principal,” *Chicago Tribune*, B19; Renee Ferguson (The HistoryMakers A2005.058), interviewed by Larry Crowe, March 3, 2005, The HistoryMakers Digital Archive, Session 1, tape 5, story 6.

By the early 1980s, the upshot of new arrangements on the Near North Side was clear: area schools were fuller, whiter, and coveted by more people than they had been at the dawn of the 1970s. The rebranding of Waller as Lincoln Park had achieved precisely the outcome that the 1960s-era LPCA leaders like Marshall Scott would have hoped for. The enrollment, having



Figure 9A: "Lincoln Park High School" (pamphlet), 1979, School Files, Box (), folder (Lincoln Park), Archives of the Board of Education, City of Chicago.



Figure 9B: "Lincoln Park High School" (pamphlet), 1979, School Files, Box (), folder (Lincoln Park), Archives of the Board of Education, City of Chicago.

bottomed out at 1,000 in 1977 was now cresting north of 1,600. Waller's white tally, having dropped as low as 12 percent in 1972, was now up to 36 percent. The surge in the white column was driven by the enrollment in Lincoln Park's new selective magnet programs: The School of the Arts, which auditioned talented young people in music, dance, and theater; the School of Science, which drew students with above-grade-level mathematics scores; and the prestigious International Baccalaureate Program, initiated in 1981, one of only two in the state. Competing with the new academic gatekeeping at Whitney Young, Lincoln Park's I.B. program was open only to students whose scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above.<sup>148</sup> In these programs, black students were consistently outnumbered by their white,

<sup>148</sup> "High-Powered Options for Lincoln Park Students," *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1981, g15.

Hispanic, and Asian classmates. In general, the black teenagers from Cabrini who had once formed the student population for Waller and Cooley, had been dispersed from the area. Their numbers at Lincoln Park High School had dropped back below fifty percent, and their overall share of teenagers attending schools in the Near North area was 62% in 1984, down from 74% in 1972.<sup>149</sup>

In the elementary schools, the goals that Mamie Govea and Stephen Ballis had driven toward were being achieved. LaSalle was enrolled at full capacity with over 400 students, and 700 on a waiting list.<sup>150</sup> At Newberry, the flip of the switch to a magnet program had also solved the under-enrollment problem, with attendance jumping nearly forty percent. As at Lincoln Park, the surge had come mainly in the white column, which increased six-fold. Compared to the threats of under-enrollment, loss of teaching positions, and cancelled programs that loomed over the schools in the early seventies, the magnet reboot was clearly a success. The schools were dynamic, sought-after environments, where kids from Cabrini shared space and linked fates with the clouted up families of the Old Town Triangle and ambitious others from across the city.

But as the reduced numbers suggested, problems of under-enrollment problem had merely been shifted elsewhere. While Lincoln Park, LaSalle, Franklin, and Mayer functioned as advertisements—for the neighborhood, for the concept of school renaissance, and for Ballis, who earned an appointment to the Board of Education—the low-slung brick structure in the triangle bounded by Clybourn, Larrabee, and Ogden stood as a reminder of visions unfulfilled. The Near North Magnet Career Academy, opened the same year as Lincoln Park, was meant to deliver the vocational programming that had been promised as part of the C-E-C and that had been lost

---

<sup>149</sup> Cusick, 130.

<sup>150</sup> LPCA Schools Committee minutes, Sept 18, 1980, box 51, folder 2, LPCA Records.

when Cooley was finally closed. While Ballis and Harrigan had hoped that Near North would be equally as magnetic and integrated as Lincoln Park, the school struggled to fill its enrollment. Its initial pull had drawn in a diverse student body, though with far fewer whites and Hispanics than were drawn to Lincoln Park. But its ambitious menu of programming—in graphic design, hospitality, landscaping, automotive repair, office work, metalwork, and ophthalmology—lacked qualified faculty and journeymen that could provide the latest in job training. Its location, south of North Avenue, and flanked by the high-rise Flannery Apartments of the Chicago Housing Authority, was enough of a deterrent for many non-black teens, whose unwillingness to venture near the projects had only grown over the past decade. By 1984, its non-black enrollment was at thirteen percent—lower than Cooley’s had been at had been at the end of the 1960s. Nor had any of the Cabrini elementary schools— Byrd, Jenner, Manierre, Sexton, and Schiller—been integrated. In the particular way that magnets functioned on the Near North Side, the incorporation of black students into school communities outside of Cabrini, relied both on drawing in more white enrollment to the region overall, and on maintaining segregated schools on the other side of the color line.

## **Conclusion**

There were clear continuities between the South Side’s faltering attempts at racial stabilization in the 1960s and the runaway renaissance of the Near North Side and Near West Side in the 1980s: the sharing of methods and perspectives; the squaring of propertied self-interest with liberal and antiracist ideologies; the dance between technologies of racial containment and racial integration. But there were also disjunctures. The vivid transgressions of urban space and social mores at the end of the 1960s, provoked, for some, a reduced confidence

in the blunt power of the state's educational institutions to exert their traditional role as a break on delinquency and disorder. For those who saw themselves as guardians of institutional competence and social cohesion, the need for more delicate, dispersed technologies, and decentralized, entrepreneurial authority was compelling. These tactics, if properly empowered, could channel the chaotic energies of the poor and the emboldened back into their own communities, and secure protected enclaves of calm for the middle class—whether in the peaceful, modernist corridors at Whitney Young, or at the scale of a pacified, genteel neighborhood like Lincoln Park.

The commodified spatial contexts for these dynamics had shifted as well. If, in the early 1960s, the mass-produced, suburban-style, single-family home—like the typical ranch or split-level in Marynook—was the fundamental unit of civic belonging in a consumer society, observers of urban life had, by the early 1980s, recognized a distinctive turn in this logic. The rehabbed, inner-city two-flat—an exercise in post-Fordist taste-making if there ever was one—had redirected the conscious urban consumer to neighborhoods like Lincoln Park. On the surface, a pioneering do-it-yourselfism typified the rehabber ethos, where everything, from fixing up an old two-flat to taking the lead to reclaim a local school, was rendered in terms of private initiative. But in the same way that midcentury homeowners came to count on state support in maintaining the color line around their local schools and home values, state-sponsored mechanisms like magnet schools could be leveraged to underwrite the development patterns of the urban renaissance.

## **Conclusion: Decreeing Choice, Schooling the Ghetto**

### **Epilogue: Choice Decreed**

In March of 1978, attorney Reuben Hedlund looked out from his office on the 78<sup>th</sup> floor of the Sears Tower and saw trouble. A decade and half earlier, as an attorney with Kirkland and Ellis, Hedlund had successfully defended Superintendent Benjamin Willis and the Board of Education against civil rights litigation in the *Webb* and *Burroughs* cases. In the wake of Richard J. Daley's death in 1976, civil rights lawyers had geared up for a new fight, enlisting the renewed energy of state and federal authorities on their side. With Chicago Urban League and branch offices of the NAACP pressuring the State Board of Education and the Federal Office of Civil Rights to mandate a compulsory pupil-reassignment program, the specter of enforced busing, which was becoming a fact of life in school districts throughout the United States, seemed poised to finally descend on Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Technical advisor and education scholar Gary Orfield, representing the newest generation of experts on school desegregation, declared that in terms of official policy and metrics of integration, little had changed since Willis was at the helm of the school system. For all his openness to decentralized experiments, magnet programs, and education parks, James Redmond left the system in 1975 with an even higher count of segregated schools than it had hosted in the sixties. As Orfield saw it, Chicago was undoubtedly in violation of state law, the federal Constitution, and the Civil Rights Act.<sup>2</sup> Hedlund penned a letter to Mayor Michael Bilandic and schools chief Joseph Hannon, assuring them that with "a vigorous and well-planned defense" the Chicago schools need not budge an inch to the new round of civil

---

<sup>1</sup> By 1980, major cities with a mandated transfer system included Boston, Las Vegas, and Nashville.

<sup>2</sup> Gary Orfield, "Integration in Chicago: A Report to the Illinois State Board of Education," (1978) p. 23, Box 2, Folder- Technical Assistance Committee, Desegregation Collection, CBOE Archives.

rights pressure, and that he would be happy to share his old files, which contained an “immense quantity” of evidence. The integrationists had lost in the sixties, Hedlund explained, and they would lose again.<sup>3</sup>

Hedlund’s prediction was half-right. Between 1977 and 1984, the Chicago Schools were compelled, first by a state pressure, and then by the terms of a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice, to develop plans for comprehensive desegregation. But compulsory pupil transfer would never be mandated in Chicago’s system. Instead, planners would build on the successes of voluntary integration, packaging a mix of specialized centers, magnets, and optional transfer programs as a civil rights remedy. While it was clear that those at the highest ranks of power—from the mayor, to the superintendent, to the Department of Planning and Development—shared the view that any mandatory student reassignment plan would be disastrous for Chicago’s civic and economic future, their view faced little opposition at the grassroots.<sup>4</sup> During the fifteen years that separated Hedlund and Orfield’s competing admonitions from the high point of civil rights agitation in the early 1960s, the tools of choice and tropes of community had transformed a movement for school integration into a niche market for integrated schools. New parental constituencies had coalesced around particular initiatives and programs, each with clear interests in limiting disruptions to Chicago’s tenuous educational order, but none interested in a mass program of student transfer.

---

<sup>3</sup> Reuben Hedlund to Joseph Hannon and Michael Bilandic, March 31, 1978; April 3, 1978, box 151, folder 2414, Michael Bilandic Papers, Daley Library, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Illinois at Chicago (hereafter Bilandic Papers).

<sup>4</sup> Mayor Michael Bilandic, schools superintendent Joseph Hannon, and Department of Planning and Development chief Lewis Hill kept close tabs on CWAC, hoping to steer the committee toward a plan that kept choice-driven programs at its core. See Harriet O’Donnell to Mayor Michael Bilandic, November 1, 1977, box 151, folder 2414, Bilandic Papers.

## *Choosing Choice*

This interaction of interests was given special occasion to display itself when, in 1977, a forty-member City-Wide Advisory Committee (CWAC) on school desegregation was convened for the first of twelve months of weekly meetings in a rehabbed nineteenth-century schoolhouse at the fringe between Cabrini-Green and the Gold Coast. Tasked with developing Chicago's newest plan for systemic desegregation, CWAC had been triggered into being by a sudden jolt of state pressure. After years of deferral and dilution of state-level interventions on school segregation, Joseph Cronin, the state's first superintendent of education of a newly constituted State Board of Education, had declared that Chicago and two other Illinois school districts would be put on "probationary recognition," threatening their access to state and federal funding. Cronin set a twelve-month deadline for the generation of a workable plan, with the added mandate that the planning be coordinated by a body of elected parent representatives from each of the city's district advisory councils, who would be joined by student representatives, and a combination of appointees from a range of community, civic, and special interest groups.<sup>5</sup> In among the representatives pulling up seats at CWAC's convening were key players in the city's many genres of school reform. In the role of Out South's elder statesman was attorney Ben Duster, who had been among the original petitioners against school overcrowding at Burnside in the late 1950s. Representing the era of high protest was Bob Lucas of the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, who had chaired CORE during the Chicago Freedom Movement. Though Hal Baron and Bill Berry had long moved on, the Chicago Urban League's research

---

<sup>5</sup> Special interests represented included banking and financial, business and industry, the Chicago Teachers Union, civil rights groups, clergy, municipal government, professions, senior citizens, transportation, and labor. Joseph P. Hannon, *Equalizing Educational Opportunities in the New Chicago*, (Chicago: Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1977), 13-16.

department was represented in the person of Judson Hixson. On behalf of the new generation of advocates was Maria Cerda of the Latino Institute, Mary Gonzales of Pilsen Neighbors, and Stephen Ballis of Lincoln Park.

Confusion abounded as to CWAC's mandate, in relation to the Board of Education, and engagement with state authorities. Before CWAC even convened for its first meetings, the Board of Education had passed a sweeping resolution, preemptively prescribing the programmatic boundaries of CWAC's work. In announcing its intention to expand three programs with racial quotas—career development centers, academic interest centers, and magnet schools—the Board channeled deliberations onto the arena of voluntary integration.<sup>6</sup> Early CWAC meetings struggled to find focus, and news media reported tales of shouting matches and general disarray.<sup>7</sup> With Duster and Ballis voted into leadership roles, and a technical advisor Edward Welling assigned to them by the State Board, CWAC began to settle into a committee structure.<sup>8</sup> Their main task involved sifting through over one hundred different position papers submitted by twenty-seven district advisory councils and dozens of civic, educational, and community groups. The proposals and statements ranged widely, reflecting the politics that had settled into different enclaves and advocacy circles. Position papers from organized parent groups on the Southwest Side held firm to the neighborhood school concept, declaring anything else “undesirable and detrimental to the children of Chicago.”<sup>9</sup> Mary Gonzales and Maria Cerda

---

<sup>6</sup> Appendix III, Resolution of the Chicago Board of Education, January 26, 1977 in Joseph P. Hannon, *Equalizing Educational Opportunities in the New Chicago*, (Chicago: Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Danna, *Desegregating Chicago's Schools*, 99.

<sup>8</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee of CWAC, 6/29/77, Harriett O'Donnell Papers, CBOE Archives (hereafter Harriett O'Donnell Papers).

<sup>9</sup> Position Paper #20; Position Paper #23; Position Paper # 26, box 4, folder 4, Harriet O'Donnell Papers.

cosigned a position paper calling attention to the special place of Latinos, a “non-Black non-White” group whose status as a “minority group” should guide racial quotas, but whose educational civil rights might also require strategic clustering of staff and students.<sup>10</sup> A plan from black parent groups in District 11 dabbled in stereotypes of mind, body, culture, and race, suggesting that special programs for music and dance should be sited in white neighborhoods to encourage black students to attend, while options for math and science could be placed in black neighborhoods to draw white children. The Urban League’s research team proposed a “desegregated life course,” in which every student in the system would spend their middle-school years in an integrated schoolhouse. Of the dozens of organizations and communities represented, only the Chicago Urban League and the Organization of the Northeast (ONE), a liberal activist group from the North Lakefront, voiced unmitigated support for mandatory transfer. Conversely, the one idea that virtually all proposals mentioned as a desirable, feasible, and uncontroversial unit of desegregation was the magnet school. Southwest Siders’ description of magnet expansion as as “buying a pig in a poke” was the exception that proved the rule.<sup>11</sup>

Over the next several months, magnets remained, as Stephen Ballis had hoped, “the foundation” of the developing plan, but the CUL’s representatives leveraged their influence to bring CWAC’s steering committee members around to the notion of including an automatic backup of mandatory transfer to achieve system-wide desegregation if the voluntary methods failed to achieve targets at all schools. In January of 1978, CWAC submitted its final proposal,

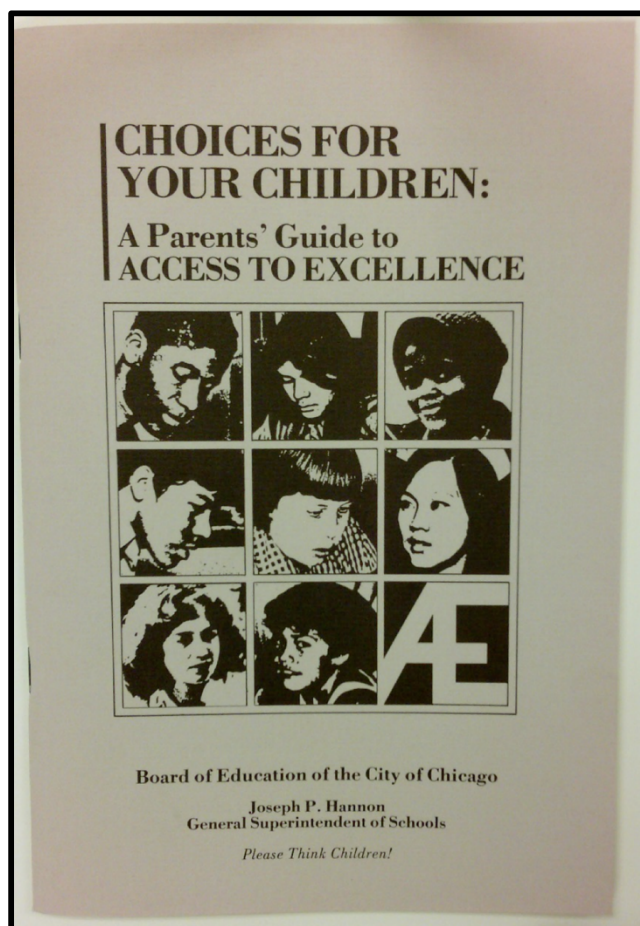
---

<sup>10</sup> Maria Cerda and Mary Gonzales, “Equalizing Opportunities in the New Chicago: Some Latino Perspectives and Positions,” box 4, folder 5, Harriet O’Donnell Papers. See also Bilingual Education and Desegregation: Conflict or Harmony?, Statement of Aspira-MACE before the Chicago Board of Education, December 15, 1976, series III, box 92, folder 1001, CUL Papers.

<sup>11</sup> Position Paper #20, box 4, folder 4, Harriet O’Donnell Papers.

which proposed robust system of citywide magnets and optional transfer programs, and a provision for mandatory desegregation as a backup.<sup>12</sup>

In a dramatic rebuke to CWAC's work, and to the CUL in particular, the Board of Education adopted CWAC's proposal, but dropped the mandatory backup, approving Access to Excellence (A/E), a purely voluntary desegregation plan in April of 1978. With funding assistance from



Continental Illinois Bank, Superintendent Joseph Hannon's coordinated rollout of A/E was virtually unrecognizable as a desegregation plan. Commercially produced posters, brochures, handbooks, buttons, bookmarks, bumper stickers, slide-and-sound shows, and speakers kits were sent out to schools and district offices, and to local media outlets for dissemination (see figure 10). In its slickly packaged marketing, A/E gave Chicago's jumble of choice the veneer of a systemic approach to citywide access, officially enlisting parents in roles as self-conscious consumers.<sup>13</sup> The list grew to

include over a hundred new opt-in programs, each with varying levels of selectivity and

<sup>12</sup> Danns, *Desegregating Chicago's Public Schools*, 107.

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum, June 1, 1978, Box 2, Folder Access to Excellence, Desegregation Collection- General, CBOE Archives.

attendance area rules. Curricular interventions designed to address isolation, deprivation, and cultural insensitivity were converted to menu items. Advanced placement programs, selective magnet schools and classical schools promised college prep at an early age. Language centers, bilingual centers, and dual language programs spoke to the bonds of ethnic community and the multicultural middle class. Even back-to-basics traditionalism had its place on the menu, with basic skills centers for the underprepared and scholastic academies for high achievers.<sup>14</sup> Over the summer of 1978, 17,000 students applied for A/E programs, but by the second week of the new school year, only 9,800 were counted as enrolled participants.<sup>15</sup>

For research staff at the Chicago Urban League, the Access to Excellence plan made clear that the real function of “voluntarism” was to convert a mandate for system wide desegregation into a “referendum of personal opinion and choice,” creating “limited opportunities of ‘escape’ for the chosen few.”<sup>16</sup> In a series of highly critical papers released throughout the 1978-79 school year, CUL researcher Judson Hixson attempted to revive integration as a project aimed at the the political empowerment of black Chicagoans, rather than a policy regime of white-flight-abatement. A/E’s “specially protected, separate little garden,” Hixson and CUL director James Compton charged, was but the latest in a line of “cumulative evidence of recalcitrant racism” in Chicago, abetted by fretful press headlines about the “impracticality” or “difficulty” of any proposal that might actually do anything. Exhaustion in Black Chicago was understandable, the CUL suggested:

---

<sup>14</sup> Access to Excellence, [Pamphlets, Posters] (1978), in author’s possession.

<sup>15</sup> Danns, *Desegregating Chicago’s Public Schools*, 112.

<sup>16</sup> Access to Excellence: A Minority Analysis, p. 16, , box 104, folder 1154, CUL Records.

If asked to choose between a public school system which stands as a monument to the subordination of black people's educational and social ambitions to white prejudice, and one which has no white pupils because they all fled from contact with blacks, we must choose the latter.<sup>17</sup>

Squeezing into an oak-paneled room at the Congress Hotel with anti-busing activists, bilingual advocates, and downtown businessmen in December of 1978, CUL director James Compton hoped to persuade the State Board of Education that Hannon's Access to Excellence had created, as he provocatively put it, an "Anti-Black School System."<sup>18</sup> Echoed by testimony from Operation PUSH and the NAACP, Compton suggested that a simple set of district boundary adjustments would foster more integration along lines of race and class than the maze of choice that A/E had created.<sup>19</sup> Unperturbed by the chorus of criticism, Superintendent Joe Hannon took his seat at the witness table to defend his program. Raising the demographic spectacle of white flight once more, Hannon held firm, explaining to his supervisors that "we must keep the stabilized city as a major goal of this plan, as well as the desegregation of the schools."<sup>20</sup> Cronin and the State Board were persuaded that A/E was the right foundation, but asked Hannon to develop additional features by the end of the school year.<sup>21</sup>

As Cronin was by then almost certainly aware, Office of Civil Rights investigators at the HEW office were preparing a case of their own against the Chicago schools. Supreme Court

---

<sup>17</sup> Chicago Urban League, Untitled Paper, series III, box 92, folder 1000, CUL Records.

<sup>18</sup> James W. Compton, Bernard Lacour, and Judson Hixson, "The Purposes and Goals of School Desegregation in Chicago," box 27, folder CUL, Latino Institute Papers.

<sup>19</sup> "A Sound Integration Plan," [editorial], *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 18, 1978, 51.

<sup>20</sup> "State Board of Education Gives Chicago Another Desegregation Pass," *Citizen Schools Report*, January 22, 1979, II, no. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Danna, *Desegregating Chicago's Schools*, 116-117.

decisions in *Keyes* (1973) and *Milliken* (1974) had defined federal responsibility for desegregation enforcement in de facto scenarios, while delimiting its scope to municipal (rather than metropolitan) contexts. By 1979, a nationwide collage of court-supervised consent decrees, transfer plans, and busing orders held sway in over 1,500 school districts, involving over twelve million schoolchildren.<sup>22</sup> By April, Hannon was defending A/E in front of federal authorities. In his OCR letter to Hannon and the Chicago Board, HEW secretary Joseph Califano narrated a long history of segregative action, most of which dated back to Willis' tenure. But he also highlighted the fact that many programs in Chicago—including permissive transfer and the construction of new community schools like Juarez—had effectively preserved a pattern of “identifiably black schools” and discouraged everyone else from attending them.<sup>23</sup> Throughout his administrative struggle with the state and federal civil rights suits, Hannon stuck to his view that A/E was sound at its core, declaring that “it is working well for those who have chosen it.”<sup>24</sup>

As Hannon scrambled to retool A/E onto footing that would be acceptable to the OCR, another crisis hit. In October, the Board took its annual vote on the school district's proposed budget. As had been the case in every budget passed since 1970, planned expenditures were several millions of dollars in excess of the anticipated revenues in the district's Education Fund. But this time, with the cumulative deficit in the CBOE's operating funds having reached \$125 million, and outstanding debts reaching \$548 million, bond-rating agencies took note and looked into the Board's recent financial history. Recognizing a range of unsustainable debt servicing

---

<sup>22</sup> James B. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 172.

<sup>23</sup> Danns, *Desegregating Chicago's Schools*, 123-124.

<sup>24</sup> “State Board of Education Gives Chicago Another Desegregation Pass,” *Citizen Schools Report*, January 22, 1979, II, no. 1.

tactics, Moody's Investors Service and Standard and Poors slashed the Board's credit rating to its lowest possible rank, prompting banks nationwide to refuse to lend to the Board without a city loan guarantee. Facing a possible default on a \$124.6 million note repayment, the Board voted in December to freeze payment to its 48,000 employees, spurring a full-scale crisis. During two months of frantic deal-brokering between dueling task forces from Governor James R. Thompson and Mayor Jane Byrne, multiple board members and superintendent Hannon resigned. Meanwhile, the threat of school closures—whether ordered by the board or brought on by a teacher's strike—loomed. While Hannon's interim replacement, Angeline Caruso, was deployed to design an aggressive series of program cuts, Governor Thompson convened stakeholders to design a three-phase bailout plan, consisting of a series of state loans and the creation of a five-man Chicago School Finance Authority, authorized to sell long-term bonds and exert oversight over a newly re-appointed Board of Education.<sup>25</sup>

On the heels of the finance crisis, HEW referred their civil rights case to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for prosecution. Months of negotiation with the DOJ produced a consent decree in September of 1980, introducing another layer of oversight to Chicago's school system. With white-tallied pupils counting for less than twenty percent of enrollment, the monitoring commission again allowed voluntary methods to form the basis of the new desegregation plan. While choice continued to limit the extent of integration, the politics of community further constrained its meaning. Across Latino Chicago, parents worried that the achievements of

---

<sup>25</sup> Account here compiled from Draft Report of the CUL Board of Directors—Chicago Schools Financial Crisis: A Discussion and Analysis, CUL Papers, series III, box 83, folder 922; Chicago Board of Education Investigation—Final (January 1981), State of Illinois Office of the Auditor General, Municipal Reference Collection, Chicago Public Library; Charles L. Kyle and Edward R. Kantowicz, *Kids First-Primero Los Niños: Chicago School Reform in the 1980s*, (Springfield: Illinois Issues, 1992) 29-37. Special thanks to Tracy Steffes for her sharing of sources.

bilingual education and community-based schools was threatened by desegregation plans. Maria Cerda's Latino Institute would take a key role in negotiating these tensions, running federal-grant-funded workshops for Spanish-speaking parents on their role in the desegregation process. While Cerda hoped the moment might be an opportunity for building coalitions with African American parent and civil rights groups, organizations in Mexican Pilsen continued to push hard against any changes to school attendance boundaries or the initiation of busing programs.<sup>26</sup> It was in this context that proponents of desegregation learned to be suspicious of Latino motivations. Urban League researchers suggested that in Chicago, the focus on Latinos was a non sequitur. "The mixing of whites with 'minority' pupils," League researchers declared, had never been the issue. "It is the growing avoidance of blacks, not the mixture of whites with any other groups that constitutes the basis of the segregation problem in Chicago."<sup>27</sup> The Citizens Schools Committee concurred, accusing the Board of Education of leaning cynically into the designation of Latinos as minorities in order to tag a number of schools without any black students as having "naturally integrated" conditions.<sup>28</sup> The Westside NAACP openly charged that Hispanic advocates were demanding bilingual magnets to avoid nearby black schools, and

---

<sup>26</sup> See Teresa Fraga, speech (1982), Box 7, Folder 13, Teresa Fraga Papers and "Miles de Latinos Marchan Contra el HEW," *El Mañana*, September 4, 1979; "Meet Tonight to Protest HEW School Desegregation," *West Side Times*, September 27, 1979; "Parents Protest Against School Busing," *West Side Times*, October 4, 1979, [clippings file], box 7, folder 8, Fraga Papers.

<sup>27</sup> Bernard Lacour and Jusdon Hixson, "The Purposes and Goals of School Desegregation in Chicago: A Position Statement to the City-Wide Advisory Committee," p. 6 Latino Institute Records, box 27, folder CUL 1977-79.

<sup>28</sup> Response of Citizens Schools Committee to the Chicago School Board Desegregation Plan, USA v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago, No. 80 C5124, p. 6, box 1, folder 6, Joyce Hughes Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center.

then volunteering themselves as racial minorities in order to “use up the whites” available for integration.<sup>29</sup>

A/E was ultimately replaced by Options for Knowledge in 1982, the Board program designed to implement the consent decree. With a goal of establishing “the greatest practicable number” of stably integrated schools, the Chicago Public Schools scaled voluntary transfer to a system-wide affair, and again ramped up the system’s count of magnet schools. While the regime of the eighties resulted in more integrated schools than Chicago had seen in previous eras, Options for Knowledge ratified the transitions that had taken place during the 1970s.<sup>30</sup> Choice was now at the core of the system, the color line had become a pie chart, but educational inequality was deepening. Cataloguing the intensifying stratification within the system was Donald Moore’s *Designs for Change*. By Moore’s calculations, of the roughly 40,000 students that entered a Chicago public high school in the year of the consent decree, fewer than half had graduated four years later. In the city’s selective magnet programs, graduation rates were on par with national averages. But in the “non-selective, segregated high schools,” where two thirds of the city’s students attended, completion rates hovered between thirty and forty percent. Among those who made it to their senior year, only twenty percent were at or above the national average in reading achievement.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Faith Rich to Kenneth Smith, Dec 15 1980, box 16, folder 5, Joyce Hughes Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center.

<sup>30</sup> In 1975, there were 147 schools in the system with less than 30% minority enrollment; by 1985, there was only one such school. Chicago Urban League, “Equal Educational Opportunity and School Desegregation” (August 1985), Series III, Box 92, folder 1000, CUL Records.

<sup>31</sup> *Designs for Change, The Bottom Line: Chicago’s Failing Schools and How to Change Them* (Chicago: Designs for Change, 1985).

## Conclusion: Schooling The Third Ghetto

Published in 1983, historian Arnold Hirsch's *Making the Second Ghetto* defined an entire genre of historical scholarship on the rise and perseverance of race and space in urban America. Although it shared its intellectual moment at the dawn of the Reagan era with the burgeoning field of social science studies of a reputed urban "underclass," Hirsch's work reanimated the research framework on race and housing that Hal Baron and others had brought to their advocacy during the civil rights fight against de facto segregation. In Hirsch's account, the "purposeful blend of private initiative and public power" that defined political and systemic racism in midcentury Chicago was rooted in property—homeowner populism, urban renewal liberalism, and politically cynical public housing policy.<sup>32</sup> For some social scientists in Hirsch's moment, the blend of subordinations in the post-civil rights city were just as potent, but also more impersonal. As William Julius Wilson became famous for arguing, civil rights achievements and post-industrial restructuring had allowed middle-class African Americans to escape the ghettos Hirsch had mapped, leaving those who remained at the foot of a social ladder without any bottom rungs. Schools, in Hal Baron and Meyer Weinberg's civil-rights-era analyses, had their place, both within the "complex of interacting and mutually supportive institutions" that sustained Hirsch's ghetto, and as condensers of the hopelessness and joblessness that plagued Wilson's underclass.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983) 133.

<sup>33</sup> The underclass thesis became a front for extensive dispute within academia, with fault lines forming along lines of disciplinary method and political orientation. For some like Wilson, the intensive impact of deindustrialization had rewritten the racialized dynamics of urban poverty, requiring a reconceptualization of "the ghetto" as a debilitating economic phenomenon rather than a legal and administrative apparatus of racism. Others like Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton built from Hirsch's contributions, declining to drop racism from the blend and arguing that the inner-city hardships of the eighties were unimaginable without the urban apartheid that preceded them and the discriminatory housing markets that sustained

By the 1980s, schools had taken on an even more determinative and dynamic role in shaping the city's unequal spatial and social order, even as their direct links to residential segregation were loosened. Durable and deepening inequalities, while continuous with the color lines of the fifties and propelled by the deindustrialization of the seventies, were, by the eighties, frequently experienced and contested in terms of educational policy and the problems of the “ghetto school.”<sup>34</sup> Demographically transformed into a “majority-minority” system, beset by fiscal emergencies, extensively policed, and increasingly branded an academic failure, the city's public school system appeared to many to have bottled up the woes of the “urban crisis,” even as broader fears of civic calamity had abated.<sup>35</sup>

---

them. Dissenting voices expressed frustration with the terms of the debate. Despite ghetto scholars' claims to structural seriousness and righteous concern, critics charged, they had never shaken their ethnographic fetish for cultures of poverty, casting the black poor as problems to be solved, cultures to be reformed, or worlds somehow apart from the rest of political and economic life in America. Political contexts only heightened the stakes of these debates, as liberal and left academics worried which findings would be taken up as fodder by eugenic revivalists and supporters of racial Reaganomics. For Wilson's classic exposition, see, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). For Massey and Denton, see *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993). For different strains of dissent, see Adolph Reed, Jr., "The Liberal Technocrat" (review) *The Nation*, February 6, 1988, 167-170 and Robin D.G. Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America*, (Boston: Beacon Books, 1997), esp. Chapter 1. For helpful syntheses of the massive literature, see Michael B. Katz, "Introduction," in *The Underclass Debates: Views from History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, The History of an Idea* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2016). For an overview of the massive literature, see Michael B. Katz, "Introduction," in *The Underclass Debates: Views from History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> On the “educationalization” of social ills in the late twentieth century, see Harvey Kantor, “Education, Social Reform, and the State” *American Journal of Education* 100, no. 1 (November 1991): 47-83; David Labaree, “The Winning Ways of a Losing Strategy: Educationalizing Social Problems in the United States,” *Educational Theory*, 58, no. 4 (2008), 447-460; Douglas Reed, *Building the Federal Schoolhouse: Localism and the American Education State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); David P. Baker, *The Schooled Society: The Educational Transformation of Global Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

<sup>35</sup> Donald R. Moore “The Bottom Line” (Chicago: Designs for Change, 1985); Charles Payne, *So Much Reform, So Little Change* (Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2008).

This third, schooled ghetto remained rooted in the racism of the second, but new policies of enrollment and new vocabularies of racial difference presented Chicagoans with a shifting common sense about what they could do about it. At the outset of the fight against Benjamin Willis in January of 1962, the black schoolchildren who huddled with their parents at the Burnside Elementary sit-in had a tightly defined path for their educational futures. Burnside was their elementary school and Harlan would be their high school. Over the next two decades, these rules, which civil rights activists had strategically framed as a regime of racial containment, were eroded in consequential ways by the mechanisms of choice. Just two years after the Burnside sit-in, the same children could apply for the regional gifted program at Bryn Mawr Elementary, the selective technical track at Lindblom High School, or the transfer program for high achieving teenagers that would take them to any of nine receiver high schools in other communities. By the end of the sixties, schoolchildren at Burnside would have received an invitation to apply for Robert Black Magnet Elementary in South Shore or the experimental program at Metro High in the Loop. By the mid-seventies, Harlan was a choice within a local “cluster” of three other South Side high schools, while permissive transfers and free transit might allow a student to attend an expanded list of thirteen receiver high schools, including several on the North Side. Additional applications, admissions lotteries, and connections might get a student into the magnet program at Hyde Park Career Academy, Jones Commercial, one of nine vocational high schools, or the citywide academic flagship at Whitney Young. Even before Access to Excellence’s rollout of hundreds of new options in 1977 and Options for Knowledge’s further expansion in 1982, a generation of parents had already learned the lessons of choice—and in an educationalization of Wilson’s argument about middle-class outmigration, allowed a subset of children to leave the ghetto school, even before their parents left the ghetto.

While many of the new rules and programs had explicitly integrationist missions, no federal commission or judicial decree had mandated the ascendant patchwork of attendance and enrollment, and no mass movement stood ready to claim them as a victory. While James Compton's Urban League was no less strident in its critique of Hannon's voluntary integration schemes at the end of the 1970s than Bill Berry's Urban League had been in its case against Willis' de facto segregation in the mid-1960s, Compton could not point to a social movement of integration activists to bolster his cause. Instead, the technical content of voluntary integration—open enrollment policies, racial quotas, funding for transportation—formed a bundle of finite benefits that urban parents with the requisite interest and energy could use to pursue individuated relief from the array of frustrations they experienced with their neighborhood schools. Importantly, however, these reforms left the basic foundations of the neighborhood school concept intact, converting “choice” into a two-way instrument in which parents' freedom to choose their escape was structured by schools' choice of who would be rescued.

\* \* \* \*

Schools had always sorted and stratified educational access along lines of class, vocation, and ability (as well as by geography, race, and gender). In the wake of the social movements of the 1960s, a number of reforms appeared uniquely positioned to disrupt the traditional paths that children took to adulthood. But schools' function as social sorting machines was never as straightforward as equipping the next generation with the necessary skills for a job market. In Chicago, planners designed schools with the promise of civic renewal, in which the choices of children and their parents were freighted with expectations for spatial revitalization and racial reconciliation. At early magnets like Disney and Metro, the preparation of the next generation was a cultural project, where students were encouraged to embrace the diverse, unruly spirit of

the city and the flattened hierarchies of new pedagogical approaches in the hopes that such contact would build a more humanistic urban future. In projects like Juarez, organizers found ways to reinvest in the ethnic boundaries of neighborhood under revised languages of racial community. At Whitney Young and Lincoln Park, hopes for cultural transformation were less important than the promise that an urban, college-preparatory education could be sheltered from the forces of decline and disorder. In this way, the capacity of communities to protect and revive their status became civic barometers of the health of the urban experiment itself. Taken together, these local stories of school reform constitute an important material basis for what might loosely be called “urban multiculturalism.” In the same way that Hirsch’s second ghetto was sustained by midcentury defenses of the neighborhood school, the liberal multiculturalism that rebranded Chicago as a “city of neighborhoods,” was built with reference to a third ghetto—which included the schools that no one chose. For many Chicagoans, this layering of new opportunities atop old inequities seemed unfortunate, but unavoidable. In her international best-selling memoir of 2018, South Shore girl and magnet school graduate Michelle Obama remembered her time at Whitney Young High School as rich with interracial contact, new friendships, and high academic standards. But she also recalled it as the place where she first glimpsed the “apparatus of privilege and connection” that elites and strivers in Chicago had built, “ready to connect some, but not all of us to the sky.”<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Michelle Obama, *Becoming* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2018) 58.

## Bibliography

### PRIMARY SOURCES

#### ARCHIVAL AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

##### **Archives of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago. Chicago, IL.**

Attendance Map Collection  
Desegregation Collection  
Harriett O'Donnell Papers  
*Proceedings of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago*  
School Collections  
Yearbook Collection

##### **Archives Department of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. Chicago, IL.**

Circuit Court of Cook County Case Files

##### **Benito Juárez Community Academy. Chicago, IL.**

Benito Juárez Community Academy Collection

##### **Chicago History Museum Research Center. Chicago, IL.**

Charlotte Senachelle Papers  
Cyrus Hall Adams III Papers  
Joyce Hughes Papers  
Newspaper Clippings File  
Red Squad Files  
South Shore Commission Records  
Uptown Chicago Commission Records

##### **DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, IL.**

Latino Institute Records  
Lincoln Park Conservation Association Records  
Lincoln Park Community Conservation Council Records  
Peter Bauer Papers  
Teresa Fraga Papers

**Municipal Reference Collection. Chicago Public Library. Harold Washington Library Center. Chicago, IL.**

Newspaper Clippings File  
Chicago Board of Education Publications  
Neighborhood Collections

**National Archives at Chicago. Chicago, IL.**

Records of the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division at Chicago.

**Northwestern University Archives. Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.**

School of Education, General Files

**Special Collections and University Archives. Daley Library. University of Illinois at Chicago. Chicago, IL.**

Chicago Urban League Records  
Industrial Areas Foundations Records  
Michael Bilandic Papers

**Ryerson Library. The Art Institute of Chicago.**

C. William Brubaker Papers  
Chicago Architects Oral History Project

**Special Collections Research Center. The University of Chicago Library. Chicago, IL.**

W. Alvin Pitcher Papers  
Robert J. Havighurst Papers  
Philip M. Hauser Papers  
Papers of the NAACP Selected Branch Files 1956-1965 (microfilm collection on interlibrary loan)

**Roosevelt University Special Collections. Schaumburg, IL.**

Dempsey Travis Papers

**Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection. Chicago Public Library. Woodson Regional Library. Chicago, IL.**

Brenetta Howell Barrett Papers

## **ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS**

Ballis, Stephen. interview with the author, Chicago, IL, November 28, 2017.  
Baron, Harold. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, December 22, 2015.  
Baron, Paula. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, January 25, 2015.  
Burroughs, Tony. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, November 21, 2016  
Coons, John E. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, March 8, 2015  
Erickson, Frederick. Telephone interview with the author, June 4, 2019.  
Insley, Peter. interview with the author, Chicago, IL, January 29, 2015  
LaVigne, Lorraine. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, November 4, 2015.  
Mulcahy, Elena Berezaluce. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, April 10, 2018.  
Page, Larry. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, December 16, 2015.  
Schulte, Dieter. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, November 3, 2015.  
Wojtelewicz, Melanie. Interview with the author, Chicago, IL, December 14, 2015.

## **FILMS AND VIDEORECORDINGS**

*Metro Lives*. Rana Segal, director, 2011.  
*Mi Raza: Portrait of a Family*. Susan Stechnij, director, 1973.  
*Viva La Causa*, Teena Webb, director. Kartemquin Films, 1974.

## **ONLINE PRIMARY SOURCE DATABASES**

Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). [eric.ed.gov](http://eric.ed.gov)  
The HistoryMakers Digital Archive. [thehistorymakers.org](http://thehistorymakers.org)  
ProQuest Historical Newspapers. [proquest.com](http://proquest.com)

## **NEWSPAPERS and PERIODICALS**

*The Booster*  
*Chicago* (magazine)  
*Chicago's American*  
*Chicago Daily News*  
*Chicago Defender*  
*Chicago Reporter*  
*Chicago Sun-Times*  
*Chicago Tribune*  
*Daily Calumet*  
*El Informador*  
*LaRaza*

*The New York Times*  
*North Town*  
*Southeast Economist*  
*Washington Post*  
*West Side Times*

## **GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS, REPORTS, and PUBLICATIONS**

- Coons, John E. "Chicago" in *Civil Rights U.S.A. Public Schools: Cities in the North and West*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Chicago" in *Affirmative School Integration: Efforts to Overcome De Facto Segregation in Urban Schools*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1967.
- Havighurst, Robert. *The Public Schools of Chicago*. Chicago: The Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1964.
- Hauser, Phillip, et. al. *Integration of the Public Schools—Chicago: A Report to the Board of Education, City of Chicago, by the Advisory Panel on Integration of the Public Schools*. Chicago: The Advisory Panel on Integration of the Public Schools, 1964.
- Blank, Rolf, et al. *Survey of Magnet Schools. Analyzing a Model for Quality Integrated Education. Final Report of a National Study for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation*. Washington: James H. Lowry & Associates, 1983.
- Spanish Speaking Peoples Study Commission, "Report to the 77<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the State of Illinois," February 1971.
- Orfield, Gary, "Integration in Chicago: A Report to the Illinois State Board of Education," 1978.
- Leu, Donald J. and I. Carl Candoli. *A Feasibility Study of the Cultural-Educational Park for Chicago*, [Educational Planning Study No. 1] East Lansing: Michigan State University College of Education, 1968.

## **DISSERTATIONS, THESES, and ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

- Berry, Brian J.L., ed. *Chicago: Transformations of an Urban System*. Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1976.
- Bishop, John Ralph III. "Froebel: The Ethnography of an Urban School." PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1974.
- The Chicago Fact Book Consortium, *Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Area, Based on the 1970 and 1980 Censuses*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1984.
- Cusick, Ralph. "Implementation of the Leu-Candoli Report for Educational Change in Lincoln Park and Near North, Chicago, 1968 to 1973." Ph.D. diss. Loyola University, Chicago, 1985.
- Horowitz, Ruth. *Honor and The American Dream: Culture and Identity in a Chicano Neighborhood*. Newark: Rutgers University Press, 1977.
- Stern, Gwen. "Ethnic Identity and Community Action in El Barrio." PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1976.
- Warner, Margaret Stockton. "The Renovation of Lincoln Park: An Ecological Study of Neighborhood Change." Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1979.

**SELECTED SECONDARY SOURCES**  
**(arranged by topic)**

**Race, Culture, and Ideas in Late-Twentieth-Century U.S. History**

- Brilliant, Mark. *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- D'Avila, Arlene. *Latinos, Inc.: The Making and Marketing of a People*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Hartman, Andrew. *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Holt, Thomas. *The Problem of Race in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Fields, Karen E. and Barbara J. Fields. *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life*. London: Verso, 2012.
- Frederickson, George M. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Gerstle, Gary. *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Johnson, Cedric. *Revolutionaries to Race Leaders: Black Power and the Making of African American Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Roots, Too: Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Mora, G. Christina. *Making Hispanics: How Activists, Bureaucrats, and Media Constructed a New American*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Novak, William. "The Concept of the State in American History," in *Boundaries of the State in U.S. History*, James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, Steven W. Sawyer, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015, 325-350.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. *The History of White People*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.
- Rodgers, Daniel. *Age of Fracture*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011.
- Self, Robert O. *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since 1960*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2013.
- Scott, Daryl Michael. *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1997.
- Skrentny, John. *The Minority Rights Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Ellen Wu. *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

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

Zimmerman, Jonathan. *Whose America: Culture Wars in the Public Schools*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.

### **Urban Politics and Metropolitan Development: History and Theory**

Connolly, N.D.B. *A World Made Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Harvey, David. *The Urbanization of Capital*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Katznelson, Ira. *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States*. New York: Pantheon, 1981.

Kruse, Kevin. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Lassiter, Matthew D. *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Massey, Douglas and Nancy Denton. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Mollenkopf, John. *The Contested City*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Molotch, Harvey and John R. Logan. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Peterson, Paul. *City Limits*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Sandoval-Strausz, Andrew K., "Latino Landscapes: Postwar Cities and the Transnational Origins of a New Urban America." *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (December 2014).

Sassen, Saskia. *The Global City: London, New York, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Self, Robert. *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Smith, Neil. *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Wilson, William Julius, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

### **Twentieth-Century U.S. Education**

Baker, David. *The Schooled Society: The Educational Transformation of Global Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014.

Cremin, Lawrence. *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980*. New York: Harper and Rowe, 1988.

Davies, Gareth. *See Government Grow: Education Politics from Johnson to Reagan*. Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2007.

Diamond, Andrew. *Chicago on the Make: Power and Inequality in a Modern City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017.

Dougherty, Jack. "Bridging the Gap Between Urban, Suburban, and Educational History" in William J. Reese and John L. Rury, eds. *Rethinking the History of American Education*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Erickson, Ansley. *Making the Unequal Metropolis: School Desegregation and its Limits*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Gordon, Leah. *From Power to Prejudice: The Rise of Racial Individualism in Midcentury America*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Katznelson, Ira and Margaret Weir, *Schooling for All: Class, Race, and the Decline of the Democratic Ideal*, New York: Basic Books, 1985.

Labaree, David. *Someone Has to Fail: The Zero-Sum Game of Public Schooling*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Balancing Access and Advantage in the History of American Schooling," in Rolf Becker, Patrick Bühler, and Thomas Bühler, eds., *Bildungsungleichheit und Gerechtigkeit: Wissenschaftliche und Gesellschaftliche Herausforderungen* (Bern: Haupt Verlag, 2013) 101-114

McAndrews, Lawrence J. *The Era of Education: The Presidents and the Schools, 1965-2001*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Payne, Charles. *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2008.

- Ravitch, Diane. *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Reed, Douglas. *Building the Federal Schoolhouse: Localism and the American Education State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Reese, William J. *America's Public Schools: From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind."* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.
- Rury, John L. *Education and Social Change: Themes in the History of American Schooling*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Urban Education in the United States: A Historical Reader*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Spring, Joel. *The Sorting Machine Revisited: National Education Policy Since 1945*. London: Longman, 1988.
- Steffes, Tracy, "Governing the Child: The State, the Family, and the Compulsory School in the Early Twentieth Century" in *Boundaries of the State in American History*. James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, Steven W. Sawyer, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.
- Scribner, Campbell. *The Fight for Local Control: Schools, Suburbs, and American Democracy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016.
- Tyack, David B. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

### **School Desegregation and the Urban North: History, Law, and Policy**

- Clotfelter, Charles. *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Delmont, Matthew. *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016.
- Dougherty, Jack. *More than One Struggle: The Evolution of Black School Reform in Milwaukee*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Fiel, Jeremy. "Decomposing School Resegregation: Social Change, Racial Imbalance, and Racial Isolation" *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 5 (October 2013) 828-848.

- Formisano, Ronald P. *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
- Geismer, Lily. *Don't Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- Klarman, Michael J. *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Logan, John R., Deirdre Oakley, and Jacob Stowell, "School Segregation in Metropolitan Regions, 1970-2000." *American Journal of Sociology*. 113, no. 6 (May 2008).
- Mirel, Jeffrey. *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1907-81*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Patterson, James. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Perlstein, Daniel. *Justice, Justice: School Politics and the Eclipse of Liberalism*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.
- Podair, Jerald. *The Strike that Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Orfield, Gary. *Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy*. Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Susan Eaton. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education*. New York: The New Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_ and Erika Frankenberg. *Educational Delusions: Why Choice Can Deepen Inequality and How to Make Schools Fair*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.
- Smrekar, Claire and Ellen Goldring, eds. *From the Courtroom to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2009.
- Stephanopoulos, Nicholas. "Civil Rights in Desegregating America," Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper No. 549. The Law School: The University of Chicago, October 2015.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. New York: Random House, 2008.
- Theoharis, Jeanne and Komozi Woodard, eds. *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Wells, Amy Stuart, Jennifer Jellison Holm, Anita Tijerina Revilla, and Awo Korantemaa Atanda. *Both Sides Now: The Story of School Desegregation's Graduates*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2009.

## Chicago Schools

Allensworth, Elaine and Todd Rosenkranz. *Access to Magnet Schools in Chicago*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2000.

Bryk, Anthony S., et al. *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons for Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Danns, Dionne. *Desegregating Chicago's Public Schools: Policy Implementation, Politics, and Protest, 1965-1985*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Something Better for Our Children: Black Organizing in Chicago Public Schools, 1963-1971*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Herrick, Mary J. *The Chicago Schools: A Social and Political History*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1971.

Kyle, Charles L. and Edward R. Kantowicz. *Kids First- Primero Los Niños: Chicago School Reform in the 1980s*. Springfield: Illinois Issues, 1992.

Lipman, Pauline. *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race, and the Right to the City*. London: Routledge, 2011.

Lyons, John F. *Teachers and Reform: Chicago Public Education, 1929-1970*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008.

Neckerman, Kathryn M. *Schools Betrayed: Roots of Failure in Inner-City Education*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Peterson, Paul. *School Politics, Chicago Style*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

Rury, John L. "Race, Space, and the Politics of Chicago Public Schools: Benjamin Willis and the Tragedy of Urban Education." *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no.2 (1999): 117-142.

Shipp, Dorothy. *School Reform, Corporate Style: Chicago, 1880-2000*. Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2006.

Steffes, Tracy. "Managing School Integration and White Flight: The Debate over Chicago's Future in the 1960s" *Journal of Urban History*, (February 2015): 1-24.

Todd-Breland, Elizabeth. *A Political Education: Black Politics and Education Reform in Chicago Since the 1960s*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Velazquez, Mirelsie. "Brincamos el charco, y ahora que': Historicizing the Education of Puerto Ricans in Chicago, 1967-1977." PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2010.

### **Postwar Chicago: Race, Space, Politics, and Social Movements**

Anderson, Alan B. and George W. Pickering, *Confronting the Color Line: The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986.

Bennett, Larry. *The Third City: Chicago and American Urbanism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Biles, Roger. *Mayor Harold Washington: Champion of Race and Reform in Chicago*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018.

Cooley, Will. "Moving Up, Moving Out: Race and Social Mobility in Chicago, 1914-1972." PhD diss., Hamline University, 1999.

Cohen, Adam and Elizabeth Taylor. *American Pharaoh: Mayor Richard J. Daley - His Battle for Chicago and the Nation*. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2001.

Drake, St. Clair and Horace Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1945 (with 1963 postscript, 2015 reprint).

Fernandez, Lilia. *Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Finley, Mary Lou, Bernard LaFayette Jr., James R. Ralph Jr., and Pam Smith, eds., *The Chicago Freedom Movement: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Rights Activism in the North*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2016.

Green, Adam. *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Grimshaw, William J. *Bitter Fruit: Black Politics and the Chicago Machine, 1931-1991*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Guterbock, Thomas, ed. *Machine Politics in Transition: Party and Community in Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Hagedorn, John M. *The In\$ane Chicago Way: The Daring Plan by Chicago Gangs to Create a Spanish Mafia*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Hirsch, Arnold R. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Helgeson, Jeffrey, *Crucibles of Black Empowerment: Chicago's Neighborhood Politics from the New Deal to Harold Washington*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014.

- Hertz, Daniel Kay. *The Battle of Lincoln Park: Urban Renewal and Gentrification in Chicago*. Cleveland: Belt Publishing, 2018.
- Hunt, D. Bradford. *Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Kahrl, Andrew W. "Capitalizing on the Urban Fiscal Crisis: Predatory Taxbuyers in 1970s Chicago." *Journal of Urban History*. 44, no. 3 (2015) 382-401.
- Losier, Toussaint. "Prison House of Nations: Police Violence and Mass Incarceration in the Long Course of Black Insurgency in Illinois, 1953-1987." PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2014.
- Pacyga, Dominic, *Chicago: A Biography* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011.
- Patillo-McCoy, Mary. *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.
- Rakove, Milton. *Don't Make No Waves...Don't Back No Losers: An Insider's Analysis of the Daley Regime*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.
- Ralph, James. *Northern Protest: Martin Luther King Jr., Chicago, and the Civil Rights Movement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Reed, Christopher Robert. *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910-1966*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Satter, Beryl. *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009)
- Sampson, Robert J. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Seligman, Amanda I. *Block by Block: Neighborhoods and Public Policy on Chicago's West Side*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Smith II, Preston, *Racial Democracy and the Black Metropolis: Housing Policy in Postwar Chicago*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2012.
- Squires, Gregory D., Kathleen McCourt, Larry Bennett, and Phillip Nyden, eds. *Chicago: Race, Class, and the Response to Urban Decline*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.
- Staudenmaier, Michael J. "Between Two Flags: Cultural Nationalism and Racial Formation in Puerto Rican Chicago," PhD diss., University of Illinois, 2016.
- Strickland, Arvarh. *History of the Chicago Urban League*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966.

Suttles, Gerald. *The Man-Made City: The Land-Use Confidence Game in Chicago*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Williams, Jakobi. *From the Bullet to the Ballot: The Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party and Racial Coalition Politics in Chicago*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.